

# The Language Teachers' Perspective on Parental Involvement: A Focus on Primary State Schools in Greece

*Christina Nicole Giannikas and Stavroula Nikitaki*

## Abstract

The research literature has shown that teachers' beliefs and attitudes towards parental engagement have an influence on sustaining parents' balanced involvement in education. This current study aims to raise awareness of the issue within the Greek primary English Language Teaching context and provides suggestions on how balanced and effective parental involvement can be achieved. In this study the authors conceptualized teachers' perspective of parental involvement in state school language education as a multidimensional construct and examined the association of these elements with teachers' attitude and confidence regarding their profession. Online surveys were distributed to primary state school English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers. The surveys contained 27 questions and addressed several topics, such as background information, parents' attitude towards EFL from the teachers' perspective, teachers' collaboration with the parents, and their expectations of the parents. This article attempts to shed light on the significant issue of parental involvement by examining the language teachers' perspective and offering suggestions for further studies in this underresearched area of language education.

Key Words: parental involvement, teachers' perspective, English Language Teaching (ELT), English as a Foreign Language (EFL), primary language education, Greek state schools

## Introduction

Parental involvement is a core issue in the field of education (Koutrouba et al., 2009), as effective communication between parents and teachers helps ensure positive learning outcomes for students (Barón Velandia & Corredor Daza, 2007). In fact, according to Redding (1992), parental involvement relates to parental engagement in children's learning, which is not restricted to within the home environment or to specific learning exercises. On the contrary, the formation of habit and attitude create opportunities for children's academic learning and development and are the key components of parental involvement.

Although a number of valuable contributions have shed light on parental involvement from the parents' viewpoint (see, e.g., Antony-Newman, 2019; Liang et al., 2020; Snell, 2018), the literature also displays research concentrating on teachers' beliefs and attitudes towards parental involvement and their influence on sustaining balanced parental involvement in education. Teachers' knowledge and guidance can determine the likelihood of partnership between the two parties and the use of similar strategies in order to achieve mutual goals (Souto-Manning & Swick, 2006). Teachers who are aware of the meaning and effects of parental involvement have been observed using various strategies for improving parents' involvement in education via regular communication, keeping them informed, providing school/class websites, and so on (Pakter & Chen, 2013). Christianakis (2011), who investigated parental involvement from the teachers' perspective through narratives, revealed that teachers saw parents as supportive figures, rather than partners working collaboratively. When it comes to the influence of parental involvement on foreign language learning, research has shown that it has positive influence on children's second language (L2) development (Panferov, 2010), as it affects their achievement, motivation, and social and cognitive development (Emerson et al., 2012).

This current study aims to raise awareness of the issue within the Greek primary English Language Teaching (ELT) context and to provide suggestions on how effective parental involvement can be achieved. More specifically, the research focuses on the following questions:

1. What parental involvement challenges do state school language teachers face?
2. What are teachers' understandings of parental involvement?

For the purpose of the present study, it is pertinent to look at *how* teachers perceive parental involvement and the expectations they have of parents when it comes to English as a Foreign Language (EFL) in primary Greek state schools.

## The Context

Research data concerning parental involvement in the Greek context are not extensive and mainly concentrate on elementary education. There is evidence, according to Poulou and Matsagouras (2007), that Greek parents adopt a very different role to that of their child's teacher, due to the fact that teachers are seen as having indisputable authority. Parents are viewed as those who are self-entrusted with their children's out-of-school activity, social/emotional development, and assistance with homework. Matsagouras (2008) has argued that the distinction of these roles strengthens the sense of authority of the school and the dominant role of teacher, whereas parents generally do not intervene in their children's in-school academic development. The result of this could explain outcomes of studies indicating that Greek parents believe that only the provision of help during homework can be advantageous, while other parental engagement in school activities can cause damage (Pnevmatikos et al., 2008).

Nonetheless, parental involvement has been emphasized by the educational authorities in the country (Xanthakou et al., 2013), and parents' participation has been formalized with the establishment of a Parents' Association in every school unit (Lazaridou & Kassida, 2015). However, the Greek law concentrates on the formal and legal dimension of parental involvement in the school unit, while there is less interest in an essential pedagogic relationship between the family and the school (Xanthakou et al., 2013). It is important to mention here that, currently, efforts to improve parent-school communication and involvement have been put on hold due to the country's economic crisis, teachers' relocations after school closures, extended employment freezes (Filippidis et al., 2014), and troubles caused by the pandemic, which have all led to an overall reduction in the teaching workforce. Understandably, teachers have been facing an increased workload and have limited time for collaborating with parents (Anastasiou & Papagianni, 2020). However, parents' will for their children to learn the English language is strong and could be characterized as unique. As Greek is a lesser spoken world language, Greek parents believe in the necessity of mastering English, which will allow their children to communicate with speakers of other languages beyond the borders of their country. English is expected to provide children with important educational, professional, and socioeconomic opportunities, which makes it the first foreign language the majority of Greeks choose to learn (Angouri et al., 2010). Within this context, the present study should be seen as an attempt to shed more light into the matter of parental involvement in EFL learning in Greece and share outcomes of the particular (and similar) context with stakeholders and policy-makers in order to improve the situation for everyone involved.

## Literature Review

Parental involvement that supports an understanding regarding the purposes and meaning of academic performance and creates strategies that students can effectively use can have the strongest positive relations with achievement (Hill & Tyson, 2009). The term parental involvement has been used to describe parental beliefs and expectations in academic achievement and parental multifaceted behavior at home and in school that will help improve children's educational performance (Hill & Taylor, 2004). Furthermore, it has been asserted that the home is the primary environment in which the child's potential and personality takes shape (Barge & Loges, 2003). Therefore, it is vital that a positive atmosphere is created in order to support what happens in the classroom and motivates children to learn. Research has also shown that family-school collaboration holds a variety of benefits for practitioners due to the fact that teachers and parents are considered to be pedagogical allies, which helps teachers be confident (Garcia, 2004), feel accepted and rewarded as a professional (Ryan & Cooper, 2007), and hold high levels of job satisfaction (Christenson & Cleary, 1990). Furthermore, according to Molland (2004), teachers who maintain a close relationship with parents are likely to form a better understanding of a child's multiple learning needs.

When teachers and parents collaborate, they can help students construct knowledge and reach success in their academic life (Dooley, 2010). Furthermore, parental involvement in English language learning has been explored (see Cojocariu & Mareş, 2014; Necşoi et al., 2013), and it has been found that even when parents are not proficient in the English language, they still have the potential to help with EFL learning from a non-linguistic perspective by monitoring children's homework, providing advice, and creating conducive learning conditions at home (Aldemar et al., 2016). Similarly, Gao (2012) argues that parents may influence their children's EFL learning directly and indirectly; (a) directly when parents work as learning advisors and nurturers, training their children to be good language learners, and (b) indirectly when parents act as learning facilitators and teachers' collaborators and by motivating children to learn English. Nonetheless, the assumption that foreign language learning development is largely the teachers' responsibility exists (Ustunel, 2009) and makes the parental involvement and language learning situation relatively complex. Research in relation to English language education reflects parents' belief that their involvement had a significant influence on children's achievement (Mahmoud, 2018); however, in one study, parents' actual involvement was not sufficient, despite being aware of its significance (Al-Mahrooqi et al., 2016).

It has also been documented that it has not always been possible for a teacher to develop a positive relationship with the parents; many teachers either

avoid contact (Cullingford & Morrison, 1999), indicate parents' unwillingness to be involved in their children's schooling (Dauber & Epstein, 1993), or feel it is not necessary to communicate with parents as their students grow older (Tozer et al., 2006). Furthermore, empirical evidence has shown that practitioners often encourage parental involvement when it comes to children's well-being and homework support. However, the literature has documented that teachers provide parents with little or no guidelines to help their children at home (Finders & Lewis, 1994) and that there is a fear of parents' criticism or negative involvement. However, some studies suggest that teachers who reach out with positive contact early in the school year are less likely to receive criticism and more likely to be able to partner with the parents should difficulties with the student arise (Ramirez, 2002).

The researchers of the present study have identified two gaps in the existing literature, which will be discussed in this article. First, although parental involvement has been widely explored in a number of Western countries, little research has been undertaken within the Greek context. Second, previous studies of parental involvement have had a major focus on children's overall learning. Few studies have explored how teachers perceive parental involvement in the primary EFL context. Thus, the present study follows the definition of parental involvement that emphasizes parents' observable activities in foreign language education.

## Method

For the needs of the study, an online survey, created by the researchers, was distributed to primary state school EFL teachers. The survey was offered in English and was created on Google Forms with built-in features to facilitate data collection and analysis. The survey contained 27 questions (6 Likert style questions, 3 open-ended questions, 10 demographic questions, 4 yes/no questions, and 4 multiple option selection) and addressed the following themes: (1) background information; (2) parents' attitude towards EFL; (3) teachers' collaboration with the parents; and (4) teachers' expectations of the parents. The survey, estimated to take approximately 25 minutes to complete, reached its audience via email requests. The email sent to individual respondents contained information regarding the purpose of the study and the link to the online survey. Participants were sent a reminder email with the survey link again after a four-week period.

The analysis attempted to find natural clusters in the dataset and distinguish the various characteristics of parental involvement within the context. Microsoft Excel was used for straightforward functionality and the descriptive

analysis conducted on Google Forms facilitated the process. The researchers also adopted a coding process for the open-ended responses, which involved the manual allocation of categories to the practitioners' responses (see Giorgetti & Sebastian, 2003); the open-end responses were coded and categorized into groups.

### **The Demographics**

The Greek context provides language learners with a number of options when it comes to language learning and foreign language exposure. Students from across the country begin their language learning at a very young age, in both the private and public sector (in most cases, simultaneously). The language learning that takes place in the private sector is known as "shadow education," and focuses mostly on the preparation for language examinations and creating successful "language exam takers." This is not the case in mainstream schools. Although there is a focus on language learning rather than language testing, state schools lack in other domains. For instance, there is a limited amount of time for language lessons and a lack of facilities (technology, etc.) and infrastructure. Due to the "testing culture" that exists in the country, many parents tend to focus on the language learning that takes place in the private sector rather than the public sector. This creates a vicious cycle where teachers in mainstream schools feel they are not taken seriously since parents are not as involved in their children's state school language learning as they are in their private language education (see also Tsagari & Giannikas, 2021).

The online survey was distributed across Greece, including the regions of Attica, Thessaly, Achaia, Messinia, Loutraki, Viotia, and Argolida. There were a total of 54 teachers (from a rough estimate of 98 schools) who participated in the study and taught in schools that were a mix of different socioeconomic groups. According to the data, 29.6% of the participants were between the ages of 31–40 years, 53.7% were 41–50, and 16.7% were over the age of 51. Additionally, only 3.7% were male participants; the vast majority (96.3%) were female. Half hold an MA, which was the highest degree stated. The majority (92.6%) were permanent teaching staff, while only 7.2% were substitute teachers. Furthermore, 61.1% have been teaching from 11–20 years, and 31.5% for over 20 years; 51.9% work in one public school, 25.9% work in 2 schools, 11.1% work in 3, and 11.1% work in 4 different schools. The majority of the participants (44.4%) have been working in their current schools between 2–5 years, and 24.1% between 6–10 years. The vast majority of the respondents (87%) teach English to Year 5 students (age 10), and 83.3% teach English to Year 4 students (age 9). Slightly less (81.5%) teach Year 3 and 6, and 68.5% teach Year 1 and 2. The responses indicate that the participants teach students in multiple years.

## Results

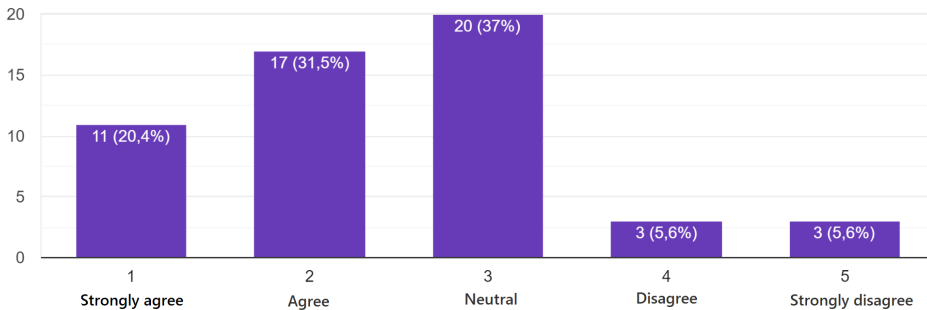
This section will present detailed descriptive statistics for specific items and variables employed in the study. The areas of focus revolve around the teachers' opinions on parental involvement, the EFL teachers' attitude, parental involvement regarding EFL homework, and teachers' recommendations and propositions for change.

As shown in Figure 1, 37% of the respondents have a neutral attitude towards the lack of parental visits and whether it indicates indifference towards their children's language learning at schools. However, 31.5% Strongly Agree, and 20.4% Agree with this statement, an anticipated high outcome as parental visits at schools are the principal mechanisms of communication between parents and EFL state schoolteachers. These visits refer to prearranged or impromptu parent–teacher individual meetings, which are the typical practices in Greek state schools for all teachers.

Figure 1. Teachers' Perspective of Parents' Level of Interest and Whether They Stay Informed About Their Children's Language Learning in State Schools

I feel that parents who do not make the time to come to school to ask about their children's language learning do not really care.

54 responses

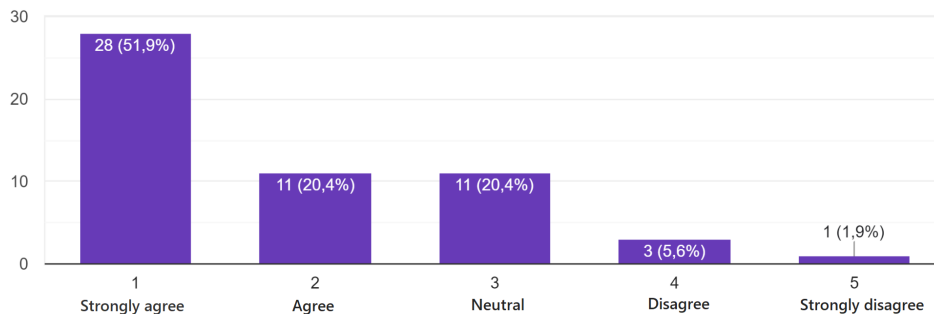


As seen in Figure 2, a little over half (51.9%) of the respondents strongly encourage parents to visit them at school to discuss their children's progress. A lower percentage of 20.4% of the respondents are neutral towards inviting parents to discuss at school, indicating a sense of distance between the two parties. Less respondents (5.6%) are reluctant to encourage parent visits, while only 1.9% are completely against it. There was no mention of online parent–teacher meetings.

Figure 2. Encouraging Parents to Visit at School to Discuss Their Children’s Progress

I encourage parents to visit me at school to discuss their children's progress or issues.

54 responses

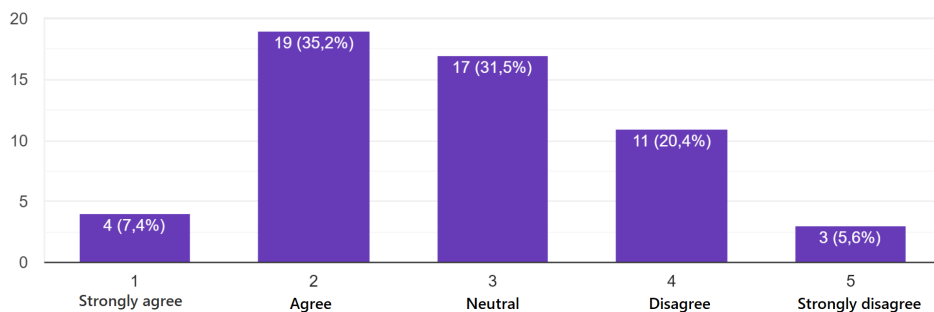


Findings displayed in Figure 3 tend to differ as the question shifts the focus to appreciation of their work done in language learning in state schools. A high number of respondents moderately agree (35.2%), and a very close number of respondents are neutral to the issue (31.5%), which indicates that teachers are not positive whether or not their efforts are appreciated.

Figure 3. Parental Appreciation Regarding State School Teachers’ Work in the Language Classroom

The work I do with my students at school is fully appreciated by their parents.

54 responses



Over half of the respondents believe that parents’ educational background plays an important role and can interfere in their engagement when it comes to school visits. A slightly lower but significant percentage, 40.7%, believe that teachers and parents have a very different perception of what classifies for parental involvement, indicating that while teachers may expect parents to

pay them visits to ask about their children's progress, this may not agree with parents who may not see EFL learning at state schools as being important. It is important to mention here that social class often determines employment times and regulations. Working class parents in shift work may not have jobs that allow them to go to the school. Nonetheless, how teachers perceive parental involvement and whether parents' time and convenience is taken under consideration says a lot about collaboration between the two parties.

The data collected show that the teachers' need for parent–teacher meetings, which could invite more effective and efficient communication among teachers and parents, are not encouraged in all schools (as stated by 49.1% of the participants). This could be alarming as it deprives students from holistic language education and possible collaboration between parents and teachers that could lead to better results. It shows the need for raising awareness on the issue of parental involvement at an institutional level, as well as in language teacher training programs where practitioners need to be informed on how to sustain a healthy balance and effective collaboration with parents. Teachers also stated that *None* have experienced full parental attendance when and if teacher–parent meetings take place. It is important to mention here that the participants have not specified whether parent time and convenience was considered, nor have they mentioned whether parents are offered any alternatives if they cannot attend at the set times.

According to the data, teachers are equally divided on whether or not they make the effort to display the work they do with students to their parents. This has an immediate connection to whether parents take an interest in what is being taught in state schools and whether language teachers' work in the language classroom is appreciated as much as the work done in private language schools. It is possible to assume that if teachers made it a point to show their work to the wider public, including the parents, their stance as language educators might be viewed differently. Consequently, parents would be informed of the progress and innovations their children are exposed to and would be more likely to provide state school language teachers with the acceptance and reassurance they may be craving from their community as professionals.

According to the data, teachers' own views about parental involvement indicates that they believe the parents' role is to help children with their homework (51.9%), speak to their children about different cultures (70.4%), and encourage the children to search for online resources (88.9%). Furthermore, the vast majority (92.6%) of teachers indicate that the parents' limited involvement is due to the fact that they rely on the language lessons that take place in private language learning (shadow education, as previously mentioned). A second high perspective (74.1%) is that parents' lack of attention to state school language

classes is due to parents' professional responsibilities, and 35.2% argue that parents do not see English as one of the challenging subjects taught in school.

The assignment of homework is almost equally divided; 55.6% of the participants claim to assign their young learners homework after every lesson, while 44.4% do not. Homework, in the productive sense, can bring the parent closer to what is being done in the language classroom.

The participants also indicated about modifications (less homework or easier assignments) teachers made in homework assignments (response options: (1) no modifications, (2) decrease the number of tasks that the young learners have to do, (3) provide additional information to students' parents so they can help their children, (4) other). Teachers were able to add items they thought were missing from the survey's checklist and would have been their answer. Data shows that teachers modify students' homework so as not to overburden them (70.4%); few provide additional information to prompt parents to help at home (16.7%), and only 9.3% of the respondents do not modify the homework load at all.

On a scale of 1–5 (1 = no, 2 = sometimes, 3 = indifferent, 4 = most of the times, 5 = always), the highest percentage response on whether or not teachers inform parents if students do not attend to their homework is indifferent (51.9%). This indicates poor communication between teachers and parents and degrades the use of homework and the child's efforts to work at home.

The open-ended question, "What recommendations do you give to your students' parents to help their children with their foreign language development?" invited a number of responses. A sample is provided in Table 1.

Table 1. Excerpt of Sample Responses of Recommendations to Parents to Help Their Children With Their Foreign Language Development

Survey #	Open-Ended Response
Survey 5	They should help them at home when needed.
Survey 8	To encourage them and avoid causing them anxiety towards English.
Survey 10	To focus more on their children's language learning that takes place AT STATE SCHOOL!
Survey 17	To encourage them to read English literature or English magazines in their free time.
Survey 18	Read books, provide links to educational sites for extra practice.
Survey 22	I ask them to check [that] they do homework.
Survey 23	To help them listen to various English sources and encourage them to read in English various texts.
Survey 27	Actually, I advise them not to do their children's homework when they have difficulties. I need to be sure what they don't know so that I can help. Also, I recommend encouraging their kids to listen to English songs or play educational games on the PC under their supervision.
Survey 32	I mainly focus on the fact that the language learning process in state school is not inferior to the process in private institutions.
Survey 35	Nothing.
Survey 40	They should tell their children that English taught in school is as important as any other subject (including English taught in private English schools).
Survey 46	Discussion at home about the importance of the English language. To learn to pay attention as if it is Maths or any other subject. Parents cannot have a saying about how I conduct my lesson. With cooperation we can solve all the behavioral and cognitive problems, but they cannot interfere with my work.
Survey 47	To come in touch with me and to check if they do their homework—not correct it!
Survey 50	None. They don't ask for any.
Survey 54	First make sure that their children do their homework. I give them vocabulary lists, so at least they can help them with that.

Five common themes emerged according to the responses. These are displayed in Table 2.

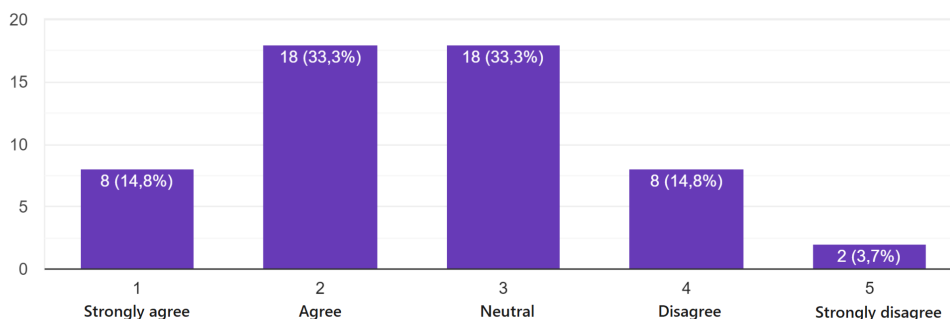
Table 2. Emerging Themes According to the Responses

<i>N</i>	Themes
<i>n</i> = 11	Encouragement
<i>n</i> = 12	Help with/check homework
<i>n</i> = 6	Authentic material
<i>n</i> = 6	Focus on state school language learning
<i>n</i> = 2	Let children do their homework themselves

Based on teachers' responses, as seen in Figure 4, 14.8% strongly agree that home-based involvement is vital, and 33.3% moderately agree. The same number of respondents (33.3%) were indifferent to home involvement, which displays teachers' doubts. A lower percentage of 14.8% moderately disagree, and 3.7% strongly disagree.

Figure 4. Home-Based Involvement for Language Education From the Teachers' Perspective

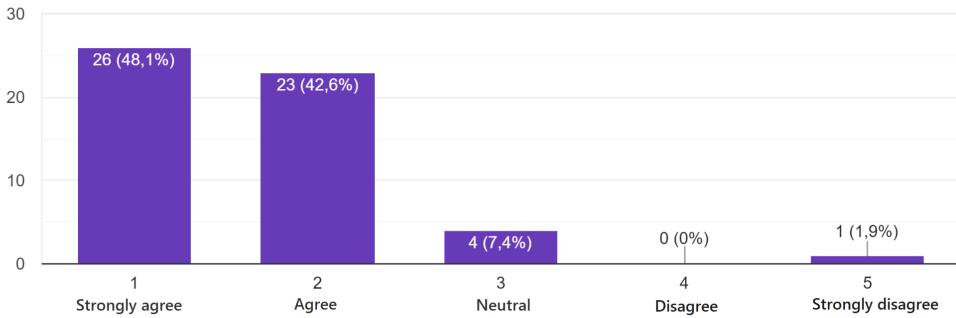
I view home-based involvement as an integral component of students' language education.  
54 responses



It is also important to share that the vast majority of teachers either Strongly Agree (48.1%) or Agree (42.6%) that they welcome parents' questions regarding students' homework, as it is a very important part of the respondents' teaching, as seen in Figure 5.

Figure 5. Encouragement of Parents' Questions Regarding Their Children's Homework

I welcome parents' questions about their children's homework  
54 responses



The data showed that slightly over half (55.6%) hope for change of the current situation, while 40.7% are not sure if they would like things to change in their collaboration with parents. Finally, teachers were asked to give their own suggestions on how to improve the balance of parental involvement. Only 24 out of 54 participants provided responses to this prompt. Table 3 provides a sample.

The research also analyzed the differences of demographic characteristics (e.g., parents' education level, socioeconomic status, and marital status). According to the data, the demographic characteristics were factors that influenced parental involvement; however, they make no significant difference on teachers' perceptions about it.

Table 3. Teachers’ Suggestions for the Improvement of Parental Involvement Within the Greek Context

Survey #	Open-Ended Response
Survey 2	Teachers should keep a distance from parents.
Survey 9	I believe that they should get informed about the goals and the methods of teaching before they interfere or criticize.
Survey 22	Parental involvement is welcome as long as it does not interfere with the methods adopted by the state teacher. It is also anticipated in cases of children’s misbehavior and learning difficulties. Parents are invited to discuss what works best for their child as they are supposed to know him or her on a deeper level than the teacher does. Then the teacher will be ready to differentiate his or her teaching where needed.
Survey 25	Teachers should organize activities that include and welcome parents’ participation. Parents should pay more attention to language learning at school.
Survey 32	A formal article by the Ministry of Education to be read by parents at the start of the school year, regarding the levels of ESL taught at state schools, so as to enhance the professional status of English teachers.
Survey 36	Read books, provide links to educational sites for extra practice.
Survey 38	I ask them to check they [the children] do homework.
Survey 40	Parents should start regarding English at school as being as important as the other subjects and encourage their children to do the same.
Survey 44	To help them listen to various English sources and encourage them read in English various texts.
Survey 45	Actually, I advise them not to do their children’s homework when they have difficulties. I need to be sure what they don’t know so that I can help. Also, I recommend encouraging their kids to listen to English songs or play educational games on the PC under their supervision.
Survey 46	PARENTS SHOULD NOT GET INVOLVED IN THE TEACHING AND EVALUATION PROCESS!!!
Survey 52	They need to realize that the English language learning CAN happen at school, that language learning is not about getting a certificate, that the “frontistirio” [private language institutions] lessons do not guarantee adequate basis for their child’s school course, and that the school English lesson is much more than “a revision” (sic) for the afternoon private schools’ curriculum.
Survey 53	Since most of the ESL teachers do not have permanent positions in Greek public schools and most of them go to two, three, or even four schools per week, parental involvement—which is a complicated issue in any case—will always be a problem.

## Discussion

In this study the authors have conceptualized teachers' perspectives of parental involvement in state school language education and examined the association of these elements in teachers' attitude and confidence regarding their profession. This particular issue and set of teachers are a neglected area in the literature, and one that needs to be highlighted. English language teachers face a number of obstacles that other teachers in the same setting do not—they are required to teach multiple grade levels at multiple schools, in a context where there is perceived competition with private classes on the same subject (although with a different approach). Extra supports are needed to assist these teachers in establishing positive and efficient communication with all their students' families, and it is to the authors' understanding that individual meetings are not entirely feasible in this circumstance and therefore suggest that group parent meetings and/or brief text messages or emails might be more beneficial.

The findings suggest that there is uncertainty on behalf of state school language teachers as to how involved they would ideally want the parents to be. On the one hand, the majority of teachers state that they encourage parents to perform school visits and help their children with homework; nonetheless, teachers claim that a low percentage of parents respond to school invitations regularly and help children with their English at home. On the other hand, they fear that parents' zeal may lead to complications and negativity as parental involvement stretches over to areas within the school that are traditionally teachers' sole domain (as indicated in the teachers' responses in Table 3), which may constitute a threat towards teachers' pedagogical autonomy (Back, 2010). The data also revealed signs of potential resentment towards parents, as the participants feel there is little appreciation for their work and state school status. Some teachers focused directly on parent limitations, reflecting on the control issues inherent in the parent–teacher relationship (see also Ramirez, 1999). As confirmed in Fischer (2009) and in line with our findings, many of the teachers describe difficulties collaborating with parents and handling those who question their quality as a language teacher. This may have prompted teachers to lose faith in creating a healthy relationship with the parents to benefit their language learners. These mixed emotions have shown that teachers desire limitations when it comes to parental involvement, especially where assessment and evaluation are concerned (see Table 3).

Previous research has presented teachers' views regarding parental involvement and has contributed to our understanding of practitioners' and parents' attitudes towards family and school initiatives and collaboration (Ryan & Cooper, 2007). Koutrouba et al. (2009) showed that Greek school mainstream

educators embrace parental involvement without hesitation and seek to improve collaboration. Within the same context, this study sheds light on a very different outcome and emphasizes the fact that although mainstream state school educators see parental involvement positively, state school language teachers are divided and see parental involvement positively up to a point, which, if exceeded, can develop into a threat (see also Epstein, 2008).

The vast majority of the language teachers in this particular study describe communication with the parents as being weak. According to the data, missed opportunities largely happen due to conflicting schedules, professional obligations, personal responsibilities, and/or social background. This outcome has also been confirmed in previous studies, such as Fisher (2009) and Sanders and Lewis (2005). However, an important finding of the current study is that not all schools support language teachers in the efforts they make to establish healthy and balanced communication with the parents.

The data reveal that teachers are in need of the support of their institutions and the Greek Ministry of Education, as it plays a leading role in the country's centralized education system. Participants suggest that the Ministry should inform parents and guide them towards their involvement in their children's learning. This is a sign that teachers are trying to maintain a collaborative relationship with the parents on their own; however, they have not been provided guidance or training on how to achieve the balance that would be beneficial to their students and facilitate an effective relationship with the family unit. The potential applications of the data compiled in this article are important due to the fact that the negativity and hesitation language teachers reveal, in comparison to the more positive attitudes of Greek mainstream teachers in previous studies, that the chain is no stronger than its weakest link. Language teachers are in need of specific training, support and appreciation, not only from parents, but from the broader educational community, which would lead to increased school efficiency.

## **Conclusion**

The present study sought to investigate the significant issue of parental involvement by examining the language teachers' perspective. The main findings and implications could be summarized as follows: (a) hesitation and negativity towards parental involvement beyond homework and misbehavior, (b) lack of appreciation for the status and efforts of the state school language teacher, and (c) the need for support and specified training. It is also important to highlight that, according to the data, teachers are conscious of their language lessons and the significance of homework responsibility when it comes to the children's

academic work. Therefore, with respect to parental involvement from the teachers' perspective, they feel their work and contribution to their student's English language development are overlooked. Finally, demographic characteristics generally made no significant difference on teachers' perceptions about parental involvement.

Acknowledging the limitations of the quantitative study for drawing causal inferences, more research is required to further explore the findings displayed above. Longitudinal studies involving parents and children will offer a more holistic view of the situation in the particular or similar contexts. Further research is needed in the field, specifically, involvement through the parents' viewpoint. This could shine even more light on how the parent–teacher relationship works and how it could be improved for the benefit of all.

One of the most significant practices for educational success is to construct partnership between teachers and parents. This article offers insights to policymakers and stakeholders on parental involvement and should prompt immediate interference, training, and support towards the relationship between families and state school language educators in order to reinforce students' achievement and promote the quality of education (Mafa & Makuba, 2013). The above findings advance our knowledge and awareness of the reasons why parents adopt the type of involvement in their children's language education in state schools within the Greek context, as well as teachers' attitudes towards this involvement.

## References

- Aldemar, S., Torres, H., & Castañeda-Peña, H. A. (2016). Exploring the roles of parents and students in EFL literacy learning: A Colombian case. *English Language Teaching, 9*(10), 156–165.
- Al-Mahrooqi, R., Denman, C., & Al-Maamari, F. (2016). Omani parents' involvement in their children's English education. *Sage Open, 1*–12. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2158244016629190>
- Anastasiou, S., & Papagianni, A. (2020). Parents', teachers', and principals' views on parental involvement in secondary Education schools in Greece. *Education Sciences, 10*(3), 69. <https://doi.org/10.3390/educsci10030069>
- Angouri, J., Mattheoudakis, M., & Zigrika, M. (2010). Then how will they get “the much-wanted paper”? A multifaceted study of English as a foreign language in Greece. In A. Psaltou-Joycey & M. Mattheoudakis (Eds.), *Advances in research on language acquisition and teaching* (pp. 179–194). Greek Applied Linguistics Association.
- Antony-Newman, M. (2019). Parental involvement policies in Ontario: A critical analysis. *School Community Journal, 29*(1), 143–169. <https://www.adi.org/journal/2019ss/Antony-NewmanSS2019.pdf>
- Back, U. K. (2010). “We are the professionals”: A study of teachers' views on parental involvement in school. *British Journal of Sociology of Education, 31*(3), 323–335.
- Barge, J. K., & Loges, W. E. (2003). Parent, student, and teacher perceptions of parental involvement. *Journal of Applied Communication Research, 31*(2), 140–163.

- Barón Velandia, J., & Corredor Daza, A. P. (2007). *Depicting family–school participation in scheduled activities* (Unpublished monograph). Universidad Distrital Francisco José de Caldas, Bogotá.
- Christenson, S. L., & Cleary, M. (1990). Consultation and the parent–educator partnership: A perspective. *Journal of Educational and Psychological Consultation*, 1(3), 219–241. [https://doi.org/10.1207/s1532768xjepc0103\\_2](https://doi.org/10.1207/s1532768xjepc0103_2)
- Christianakis, M. (2011). Parents as “help labor”: Inner-city teachers’ narratives of parent involvement. *Teacher Education Quarterly*, 3, 157–178.
- Cojocariu, V., & Mareş, G. (2014). A study on the primary school teachers’ view upon the essential factors determining the (non)involvement of the family in the education of primary school students in Romania. *Procedia–Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 142. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2014.07.681>
- Cullingford, C., & Morrison, M. (1999). Relationships between parents and schools: A case study. *Educational Review*, 51(3), 253–262.
- Dauber, S. L., & Epstein, J. L. (1989). *Parents’ attitudes and practices of involvement in inner-city elementary and middle schools* (Report No. 33). Johns Hopkins University, Centre for Research on Elementary and Middle Schools.
- Dooley, C. M. (2010). Young children’s approaches to books: The emergence of comprehension. *The Reading Teacher*, 64(2), 120–130.
- Emerson, L., Fear, J., Fox, S., & Sanders, E. (2012). *Parental engagement in learning and schooling: Lessons from research*. Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth (ARACY) for the Family–School and Community Partnerships Bureau.
- Epstein, J. L. (2008). Improving family and community involvement in secondary schools. *The Education Digest*, 73(6), 9–12.
- Filippidis, K., Anastasiou, S., & Mavridis, S. (2014). *Cross-country variability in salaries’ changes of teachers across Europe during the economic crisis*. 5th International Conference on International Business, University of Macedonia.
- Finders, M., & Lewis, C. (1994). Why some parents don’t come to school. *Educational Leadership*, 51, 50–54.
- Fisher, Y. (2009). Defining parental involvement: The Israeli case. *US–China Education Review*, 6(11), 33–45.
- Gao, L. (2012). *Impacts of cultural capital on student college choice process in China*. Lexington Books.
- García, D. C. (2004). Exploring connections between the construct of teacher efficacy and family involvement practices: Implications for urban teacher preparation. *Urban Education*, 39(3), 290–315.
- Giorgetti, D., & Sebastiani, F. (2003). Automating survey coding by multiclass text categorization techniques. *Journal of the American Society for Information Science and Technology*, 54, 1269–1277. <https://doi.org/10.1002/asi.10335>
- Hill, N. E., & Taylor, L. C. (2004). Parental school involvement and children’s academic achievement: Pragmatics and issues. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 13(4), 161–164. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.0963-7214.2004.00298.x>
- Hill, N. E., & Tyson, D. F. (2009). Parental involvement in middle school: A meta-analytic assessment of the strategies that promote achievement. *Developmental Psychology*, 45(3), 740–763. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0015362>
- Koutrouba, K., Antonopoulou, E., Tsitsas, G., & Zenakou, E. (2009). An investigation of Greek teachers’ views on parental involvement in education. *School Psychology International*, 30(3), 311–328.

- Lazaridou, A., & Kassida, A. (2015). Involving parents in secondary schools: Principals' perspectives in Greece. *International Journal of Educational Management*, 29(1), 98–114.
- Liang, E., Peters, L. E., Lomidze, A., & Akaba, S. (2020). "I like being involved in school stuff": Perspectives around their participation in family engagement in universal prekindergarten. *School Community Journal*, 30(1), 59–87. <https://www.adi.org/journal/2020ss/LiangEtAlISS2020.pdf>
- Mafa, O., & Makuba, E. (2013). The involvement of parents in the education of their children in Zimbabwe's rural primary schools: The case of Matabeleland North Province. *IOSR Journal of Research & Method in Education*, 1(3), 37–43.
- Mahmoud, S. (2018). Saudi parents' perceptions of the kind of help they offer to their primary school kids. *English Language Teaching*, 11(3), 102–112.
- Matsagouras, E. (2008). School–family relations: Alternative approaches to school psychology international. In A. Brouzos, P. Misailidi, A. Emvalotis, & A. Efklides (Eds.), *Scientific Annals of the Psychological Society of Northern Greece: School and family* (pp. 35–68). Ellinika Grammata [in Greek].
- Molland, J. (2004). "We're all welcome here". *Scholastic Instructor*, 115(1), 22–26.
- Necşoi, D. V., Porumbu, D., & Beldianu, I. F. (2013). The relationship between parental style and educational outcomes of children in primary school in Romania. *Procedia–Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 82, 203–208.
- Pakter, A., & Chen, L.-L. (2013). The daily text: Increasing parental involvement in education with mobile text messaging. *Journal of Educational Technology Systems*, 41(4), 353–367. <https://doi.org/10.2190/ET.41.4.f>
- Panferov, S. (2010). Increasing ELL parental involvement in our schools: Learning from the parents. *Theory Into Practice*, 49(2), 106–112. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00405841003626551>
- Pnevmatikos, D., Papakanakis, P., & Gaki, E. (2008). Parental involvement in children's education: Investigation of parents' beliefs. In A. Brouzos, P. Misailidi, A. Emvalotis, & A. Efklides (Eds.), *Scientific Annals of the Psychological Society of Northern Greece: School and family* (pp. 196–216). Ellinika Grammata [in Greek].
- Poulou, M., & Matsagouras, E. (2007). School–family relations: Greek parents' perception of parental involvement. *International Journal About Parents in Education*, 1, 83–89.
- Ramirez, A. Y. (1999). Survey on teachers' attitudes regarding parents and parental involvement. *School Community Journal*, 9(2), 21–39. <https://www.adi.org/journal/fw99/Ramirez-Fall1999.pdf>
- Redding, S. (1992). *Parent scale to measure the efficacy of strategies to enhance the curriculum of the home* (paper presentation). American Educational Research Association Annual Meeting, San Francisco.
- Ryan, K., & Cooper, J. M. (2007). *Those who can, teach* (11th ed.). Houghton Mifflin.
- Sanders, M. G., & Lewis, K. C. (2005). Building bridges toward excellence: Community involvement in high schools. *The High School Journal*, 88(3), 1–9.
- Snell, A. M. S. (2018). Parent–school engagement in a public elementary school in southern Arizona: Immigrant and refugee parent perspectives. *School Community Journal*, 28(2), 113–137. <https://www.adi.org/journal/2018fw/SnellFall2018.pdf>
- Souto-Manning, M., & Swick, K. (2006). Teachers' beliefs about parent and family involvement. Rethinking our family involvement paradigm. *Early Childhood Educational Journal*, 34, 187–193.
- Tozer, S. E., Senese, G., & Violas, P. C. (2006). *School and society historical and contemporary perspectives* (5th ed.). McGraw-Hill.

- Tsagari, D., & Giannikas, C. N. (2021). The impact of cert-mania of English language learning and teaching: The Cypriot case. *The European Journal of Applied Linguistics and TEFL*, 10(1), 193–215.
- Ustunel, E. (2009). The comparison of parental involvement for German language learning and the academic success of the students. *Procedia–Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 1(1), 271–276. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2009.01.049>
- Xanthakou, Y., Babalis, T., & Stavrou, A. N. (2013). The role of parental involvement in classroom life in Greek primary and secondary education. *Psychology*, 4(2), 118–123.

Christina Nicole Giannikas is a consultant and founder of CG Education and Research Consultancy, and she works in higher education at Cyprus University of Technology. She is a teacher trainer for preservice and in-service teacher education programs in Cyprus and beyond and specializes in the areas of early language learning, age-appropriate digital pedagogies, digital literacies, assessment, and teacher education. She is chair of the EuroCALL Teacher Education SIG and the EuroCALL National Contact for Greece. Correspondence concerning this article may be addressed to Dr. Christina Giannikas at [christina.giannikas@cut.ac.cy](mailto:christina.giannikas@cut.ac.cy)

Stavroula Nikitaki is an English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teacher in primary education in Greece. Her research interests include foreign language (FL) teaching, technology-enhanced teaching, online teaching, Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL), and Mobile Assisted Language Learning (MALL).