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Parents as Multidimensional Reading Partners for Young Children's Reading Development: A Scoping Review

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Abstract

This scoping review aims to identify the appropriate roles of parents that can help address problems related reading development amongst young learners. The topic of parents as reading partners needs to be explored given that having the involvement of parents would advantage language learners to minimize their reading problems from different aspects including interest, fluency and comprehension in reading. Parents' role is in fact, an effective indicator of high language proficiency level. Numerous studies that explored reading development found that most young learners are still facing challenges in mastering different types of reading skills. This problem seems unending despite various approaches, methods and interventions are applied to tackle reading issues among young learners. Therefore, a more practical and reliable way of learning that can cater to students' individual needs should be devised. A scoping review protocol was established for this study. A total of 42 articles from 2010 to 2020 were qualitatively synthesised. Out of 42 articles, twenty-six articles are on parents' role in young learners' reading problems and sixteen articles highlight reading problems aided by parents' roles were isolated and analysed. The findings suggested that parents' roles are effective as motivator, tutor and facilitator in aiding children's reading problems from the aspects of their interest, fluency and comprehension. The involvement of parents in learners' reading development is beneficial as it also offers reliable references for teachers to adopt in school programmes.

Keywords: Scoping Review, Parents' Role, Parents as Reading Partners, Reading Development Parental Involvement

Introduction

Reading has always been one of the most essential components in an individual's successful language learning. However, reading has always been a common problem in the English language learning as it requires an acquired rather than a natural developmental process (Vaughn & Fletcher, 2021). Based on the statistics reported by National Assessment of Educational Progress

(2013), there are approximately 50% of the children's population in United States could not read fluently and likely to read below basic. According to Uribe-Enciso (2015), reading allows learners to perform better in their expansion of vocabulary when expressing ideas, as well as to build stronger cognitive skills for them to be autonomous in learning. On top of that, reading is also significant in constructing knowledge of syntactic structures in an individual (Uribe-Enciso, 2015). The underlying factor of learners' disability to make meaning from the reading text is believed to be their reading fluency as the primary cause. As a relation to better reading comprehension, Fuchs et al. (2001) asserted that oral reading fluency is a possible determiner.

Since oral reading fluency and comprehension are highly related to each other (Pretorius & Spaull, 2016), a framework proposed by Epstein (2011) which emphasizes on collaboration between school and parents could be the key to unleash children's potential in their learning. Likewise, a reading programme or activity which is implemented with the involvement of parents demonstrates a positive outcome on the children's reading development (Erion & Ronka, 2004). Garg (2017) defines reading development as a continuum in lifetime reading which comprises of two stages, namely 'learning to read' and 'reading to learn'. Parents can effectively involve themselves as teacher support for their children at home (Resetar, Noell & Pellegrin, 2006; Sénéchal & Young, 2008). Kim and Barrett (2019) describe parental involvement as the efforts and practices provided to cater children's academic and learning activities. In another explanation, parental involvement also can be defined as the participation of parents in children's learning and school activities as well as performances by providing support cognitively and emotionally to their young learners at home (He 2015). The scope for this scoping review generally covers the various dimensions of parents' role on children's reading development as well as types of reading problems which can be aided for the children.

The Importance of Parents as Partners

Regardless in ESL or EFL literacy learning, involvement of parents as partners are considered as a construct in multi-dimensions (Ringenberg et al., 2005). Parents are important as they are the first teacher of their children since infancy, thus should play the active role in their learning (Liu, Sulaimani & Henning, 2020). Bronfenbrenner (1979) also emphasized on the importance of parents' active role in shaping children's life for their personal achievement outside the school. Hence, parents' words of encouragement, attitudes and perceptions make tremendous impacts on their children's development (Hedenbro & Rydelius, 2019). Promoting and magnifying parental involvement in children's learning had been taken place in many places across the globe such as in Turkey (Erdem, 2020), Poland (Bak-Średnicka, 2018), China (Yang, 2016), United Arab Emirates (Sanderson & Preedy, 2016), South Africa (Pitt et. al 2013), Australia (Marshall & Swan, 2010) and the United States (Edie & Mcnelis, 2008).

Similarly, in most of these countries, there is an emphasis on the presence of parents' concern on children's literacy to develop them in their subsequent process of learning at the secondary and tertiary level of education (Dere, 2019). Hurley and Huscroft-D'Angelo (2018) added notwithstanding the settings of the children's learning process occurs, parents' roles are effective. Parents are highly possible to create a huge positive impact on their children's learning provided they are facilitated consistently and given sufficient support school teachers or other parents (Hurley & Huscroft-D'Angelo, 2018). Researches indicate that parental involvement at

home has a significant impact on children's success in learning (Dauber & Epstein 1989) such as better grades and scores (Epstein, 2018; Mata et al., 2018), promote children's socio-emotional development (Hedenbro & Rydelius, 2019; Langevine, 2020) and also linguistic achievement (Tan et al., 2019).

Focusing on children's linguistic achievement, parents' roles are definitely paramount in their reading development. Studies show that most of the common problems that children face in reading include oral reading fluency (Percle et al., 2020; Akbar et al., 2015) comprehension (Spencer & Wagner, 2018; Wawire & Zuilkowski, 2021). These problems are widely known in ESL and EFL classrooms as most of them are still facing barriers to read. It is believed the time spent reading in the classroom is inadequate with teachers (Torres & Castañeda-Peña, 2016). As active partners, parents can play multidimensional roles as either a motivator (Klauda & Wigfield, 2012; Capotosto, 2017; Ong'ayi, Yildirim & Roopnarine, 2020), a tutor (Erion & Ronka, 2004; Martini & Sénéchal, 2012; Dong et al., 2020) or a facilitator (Axford, 2007; Yildirim & Rasinski, 2014; Paige, 2020) in children's reading development. These roles are significant in developing values in reading, teach and support reading with materials and also consistently monitor the reading progress of their children. The importance of this review is emphasized as follows. Firstly, the roles of parents are significant as there are the only individuals who spend the longest hours with children and able to contribute to the development of their children's reading. Secondly, given the lack of emphasis on reading with the teachers in the classroom, incorporating parental involvement is crucial (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). This review aims to identify to what extent the parents' roles can be executed in minimizing their children's reading problems.

Method

This research employed a scoping review methodology (Arksey & O'Malley, 2005) to analyse research on parental involvement and their effectiveness for young children's reading fluency and comprehension. This methodology follows five framework stages that will be discussed in turn: (1) identifying the research question, (2) identifying relevant studies, (3) study selection, (4) charting the data and (5) summarising and reporting the results (Arksey & O'Malley, 2005).

Scoping Review Research Questions

The research question served as the starting point for delineating the parameters of the study, and concepts contained in the research question will be defined in order to clarify the focus of the study (Arksey & O'Malley, 2005). Our preliminary guiding research questions were: 1) What are the parents' roles in developing young children's reading development? 2) What are the reading problems that parents' roles can aid in young children's reading development? The general concept of 'parental involvement' guided the research in order to encompass a broad definition of parents' roles in children's learning, allowing articles focused on reading development, oral reading fluency, and/or mutually reading comprehension to be included. The focus of this review was on 10 - 12-year-old students, encompassing students in upper elementary school level serving the same age group (e.g. Pagan & Sénéchal, 2014).

Identification of Relevant Studies

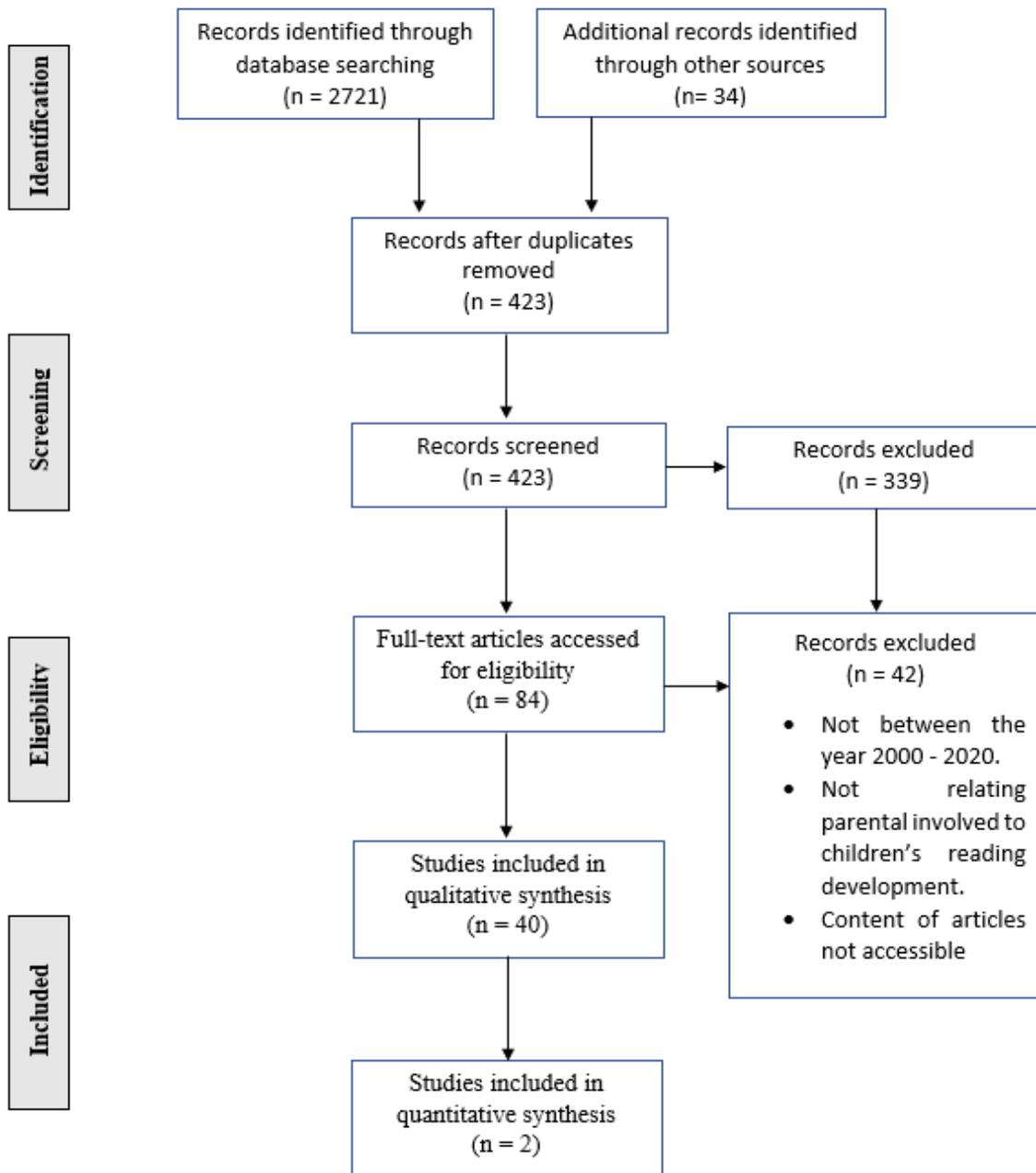
Relevant keyword searches were conducted from the Education Resources Information Centre (ERIC) and Mendeley electronic database. The reason the database was chosen because it contains the most of the peer-reviewed educational journals which are easily retrievable. Articles from the years 2000–2020 were mostly chosen and some from late 1990s were also selected to provide deeper insights on the topic of the research. The search terms used for this review were ‘parental involvement + (reading fluency)’ (402 results), ‘parental involvement + (reading comprehension)’ (550 results), ‘parents + reading fluency + comprehension’ (1135 results) and ‘reading fluency + comprehension’ (634 results) These keyword searches yielded a total of 2721 references including some duplicate articles which were detected through multiple searches.

Study Selection: Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Peters et al. (2020) recommended articles which are retrieved to be screened at two levels evidently. In the first level, the titles and abstracts of the identified articles were screened. Their abstracts were also reviewed to ensure their relevance to the current topic. In the second level, the full texts of the retrieved articles were screened. The inclusion criteria include articles that have been retrieved from a peer-reviewed publication written between 2000 and 2020. An additional inclusion requirement is that the topic of the article should be relevant despite being presented in a different format. Therefore, all theoretical articles (e.g., literature reviews and recommendations based on cited research) and empirical articles (e.g., original qualitative or quantitative method studies) were included in the review. The exclusion criteria were formulated during the article screening process in order to remove those articles that did not focus on parents’ role for improving reading fluency and comprehension among learners. An article was excluded from the review if the following exclusion criteria were satisfied: 1) the article was not published between 1995 and 2020; 2) the article does not describe parents as the treatments for children’s reading problems; and 3) the article is related to research title but not accessible. After reviewing the 84 retrieved articles, 42 were included in the analysis.

Charting the Data

After the selection process, each article was ‘charted’ or sorted according to its main issues and themes (determined based on its research question) (Arksey & O’Malley, 2005). To answer the first research question, the articles were categorized into motivator, tutor or facilitator. On the other hand, for the second research question, the articles were divided into three emergent categories based on the impacts from parents’ role, namely fluency, comprehension and motivation. Figure 1 presents a PRISMA 2009 Flow Diagram that illustrates the flow of identifying the relevant studies included in this review.



Adapted from: Moher, D., Liberati, A., Tetzlaff, J., Altman, D. G., The PRISMA Group (2009). Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses: The PRISMA Statement. PLoS Med 6(7): e1000097. doi:10.1371/journal.pmed1000097

Figure 1. PRISMA 2009 Flow Diagram

Findings

A total of 43 journal articles discussing the various roles and impacts of parents for addressing problems related to the reading development of young children were eventually selected. These articles were published in various countries between 2000 and 2020. Some articles published in late 1990s were also selected for more insights in the findings. Table 1 and Table 2 indicates the results for Research Question 1 and Research Question 2 respectively.

Table 1. *Parents' Role in Children Reading Development*

No.	Authors	Parents' role as:		
		Motivator	Tutor	Facilitator
1.	Torres & Castañeda-Peña (2016)	√		
2.	Pagan & Sénéchal (2014)	√		
3.	Moè, Katz & Alesi (2018)	√		
4.	Fletcher & Nicholas (2018)	√		
5.	Capotosto (2017)	√		
6.	Chen & Wu (2010)	√		
7.	Klauda & Wigfield (2012)	√		
8.	Ong'ayi, Yildirim & Roopnarine (2020)	√		
9.	Rasinki & Stevenson (2005)			√
10.	Axford (2007)			√
11.	Yildirim & Rasinski (2014)			√
12.	Paige (2020)			√
13.	Luong (2008)			√
14.	Erion & Ronka (2004)		√	√
15.	Johnson et al. (2008)		√	
16.	Sénéchal (2006)		√	
17.	Martini & Sénéchal (2012)		√	
18.	Dong et al. (2020)		√	
19.	Silinskas et al. (2012)		√	
20.	Yang (2016)		√	
21.	Sénéchal & LeFevre (2014)		√	
22.	Strasser & Lissi (2009)		√	
23.	Driessen, Smit, & Slegers (2005)			√
24.	Jeynes (2010)			√
25.	Pomerantz, Moorman, & Litwach (2007)			√
26.	Lamborn et al. (1991)			√

Parent's Roles in Children's Reading Development

Maximizing the involvement of parents as a motivator in children's reading development could serve as an effective approach. (Torres & Castañeda-Peña, 2016; Pagan & Sénéchal, 2014). Moè, Katz & Alesi (2018) also asserted that parents' continuous motivation in giving sufficient moral, financial and material support potentially creates children's positive attitudes towards learning. In their findings (Fletcher & Nicholas, 2018), it was noticed that despite some parents received

less educational qualifications, their personal interests, experiences and reading ability were seen to be affective in motivating their children to read and explore the content of the reading materials. Motivation is also given by parents in the form of extrinsic rewards for children with low intrinsic motivation to spend time reading (Capotosto et.al, 2017; Chen & Wu, 2010). In relation to the capacity of motivational support given, studies (Klauda & Wigfield, 2012; Ong'ayi, Yildirim & Roopnarine, 2020) identified that mothers provided greater reading motivation than fathers.

On the contrary, Rasinski and Stevenson (2005) see the importance of parents' role as a facilitator as the findings in their study indicated that parents or any members of a family that received additional information and materials to assist their children who read below their grade level had drastically improved based on higher scores recorded in post-test than their pre-test. A mutual situation is also found in a study implemented by Axford (2007) that most of the early grade Australian pupils who took part in an intense reading program where parents were regarded as teaching support showed a tremendous elevation in their reading scores in at least one-year level. Additionally, Yildirim & Rasinski (2014) and Paige (2020) have indicated that young learners require consistent facilitation and frequent practices at their instructional reading level at home in aim to accomplish a satisfactory level of fluency in reading, thus strengthening the ability to comprehend. Apart from that, in a study, Erion and Ronka (2004) and Luong (2008) also asserted that silent reading does not help in enhancing children's oral reading fluency, thus to improve, frequent chances of reading added with consistent monitoring progress by parents are substantial in guiding the children.

As teachers may not have sufficient time in school to give children reading support, Erion and Ronka (2004) also added that children's reading fluency can succeed, provided parents functions as tutors to guide them reading and recorded their words correct per minute (WCPM). Parents would be even more confident and motivated to demonstrate positive results with their children in progressing an appropriate level of reading fluency when they are given proper guidance and support (Epstein 1988). On the other hand, Johnson et al. (2008) reported that there is only a moderate relationship between parental involvement and children reading progress as a reading tutor due to distinct reading abilities between both parents and children. Sénéchal (2006) disagrees with the report and argues that the relationship is stronger between parents and learner's reading ability provided that the role of parents as reading peer to their children remained consistent.

The ambiguity of the two findings is believed to have two different definitions perceived by researchers on the term 'parental involvement' (Dong et al., 2020) whereby the first approach emphasizes on "parental-teaching centred" (Martini & Sénéchal, 2012; Silinskas et al., 2012) and the latter focuses on "children-learning centred" (Yang, 2016; Sénéchal & LeFevre, 2014; Strasser & Lissi, 2009). Studies (Driessen, Smit & Slegers, 2005; Jeynes, 2010; Pomerantz, Moorman, & Litwach, 2007; Lamborn et al., 1991) concerning on the importance indicate that the variation in parental monitoring and parenting styles is possible to affect the extent to which parental involvement and children's achievement in reading are correlated.

Table 2. *Reading Problems Aided by Parents in Young Children's Reading Development*

No.	Authors	Types of Reading Problems		
		Fluency	Comprehension	Interest
1.	Cotter (2012)			√
2.	Brown et al. (2019)	√	√	
3.	Yildirim et al. (2020)	√	√	
4.	Levy, Hall & Preece (2018)			√
5.	Choi, Kang & Sheo (2020)			√
6.	Yeo, Ong & Ng (2014)			√
7.	Dobbs-Oates, Pentimonti, Justice and Kaderavek (2015)			√
8.	Kathy (2016)			√
9.	Zambrana et al. (2019)	√		
10.	Sawyer et al. (2018)	√		
11.	Pagan & Sénéchal (2014)	√	√	
12.	Henry (2008)	√	√	
13.	National Reading Panel (2000)	√	√	
14.	Shany & Biemiller (2009)		√	
15.	Gabl et al. (2007)		√	
16.	Blanch et al. (2013)		√	

Reading Problems Aided by Parents in Young Children's Reading Development

Having young children to be able to read is one of the expectations from the parents as well as the teachers (Pagan & Sénéchal, 2014). This is because they highly hope children to be able to engage emotionally in the materials they choose to read and realise the satisfaction and build interest in reading (Sénéchal & LeFevre 2002; Sénéchal, 2006). In order to foster children to read voluntarily and independently, the main condition which needs to be fulfilled is that children must understand what they read (Pagan & Sénéchal, 2014) by interacting and deriving the meaning from the reading materials they select (Kruger, 2008). To enhance reading comprehension among children, they first must be able to read at an appropriate speed to ensure the reader's functional working memory is triggered when chunking and comprehend words they read (Courbron, 2012).

Parents who function as a continuous motivator and consistent reading tutor increases children's interest to induce questions during reading (Cotter, 2012), thus able to read with automaticity and prosody (Brown et al., 2019; Yildirim et al., 2020) that leads to a better comprehension skill. Additionally, parents' role is also impactful in building the interest of reading among the children. Findings (Levy, Hall & Preece, 2018; Choi, Kang & Sheo, 2020; Yeo, Ong & Ng, 2014) indicate that children enjoyed doing shared reading during the protected time spent with parents as they are not forced for proficiency judgment contributed more on reading outcomes and reading interest. On the other hand, Dobbs-Oates, Pentimonti, Justice and Kaderavek (2015) suggested that the positive attitudes of parents in doing reading are crucial in developing the initial interest in doing reading with their children. Children are able to read

beyond their age level if their joy and eagerness of reading are maximized through positive relationship among parents, teachers and young learners (Kathy, 2016).

In another study by Zambrana et al. (2019), the researchers concluded that the perception and role of parents are paramount in influencing young children's oral reading fluency and their account for contextual factors. Brown et al. (2019) also yielded the same results as they realised that children's fluency and comprehension significantly increased after parent-child reading consistently for five months. At the same time, the researchers (Cotter, 2012; Sawyer et al., 2018) also managed to prove that parents who modelled correct reading behaviour and gave consistent encouragement and support to their children during the paired reading moment aids in their reading fluency. It was realised that having parents included in children's reading activity were able to help correct their educational deficits (Crimm, 1992).

In addition, studies (Pagan and Sénéchal, 2014; Henry, 2008) which investigated on the impact of parental involvement in children's reading progress during reading program also indicated that children who were involved tend to have stronger reading and receptive vocabulary skills at the end of the programme. This made children indirectly gains better oral reading fluency and later comprehension (National Reading Panel 2000) which opened up another opportunity to practice making inferences from the word meaning (Shany & Biemiller, 2009; Gabl et al., 2007). It is believed rather than the effect of long hours reading with children, the improvement of children's reading comprehension is likely to be related to the amount of support provided throughout the whole reading process (Blanch et al., 2013).

Discussion

Reading development among children is not a new issue to be addressed in educational research. However, the existing reading problems remain unsolved and it has the worthiness to be studied deeper from different aspects of approach from the view of parents since the reading ability among most young children are still below their grade level, especially in terms of reading fluency, comprehension and also interest (Álvarez-Cañizo, Suárez-Coalla & Cuetos, 2015). Studies from 2000 to 2020 have attempted to propose this issue while recommending possible effective roles from parents to integrate children's reading development outside the school hours. Based on the findings collected, there are three possible parents' roles which are effective in helping children's reading development: motivator (Torres & Castañeda-Peña, 2016; Pagan & Sénéchal, 2014; Moè, Katz & Alesi, 2018; Fletcher & Nicholas, 2018; Capotosto, 2017; Chen & Wu, 2010; Klauda & Wigfield, 2012; Ong'ayi, Yildirim & Roopnarine, 2020), tutor (Erion & Ronka, 2004; Sénéchal, 2006; Johnson et al., 2008; Strasser & Lissi, 2009; Martini & Sénéchal, 2012; Silinskas et al., 2012; Sénéchal & LeFevre, 2014; Yang, 2016; Dong et al., 2020) and facilitator (Erion and Ronka, 2004; Rasinki & Stevenson, 2005; Sénéchal, 2006; Axford 2007; Luong, 2008; Martini & Sénéchal, 2012; Paige, 2020).

These roles are believed to be effective in promoting children's reading development from the aspect of fluency (National Reading Panel, 2000; Henry, 2008; Pagan & Sénéchal, 2014; Sawyer et al., 2018; Brown et al., 2019; Zambrana et al., 2019; Yildirim et al., 2020), comprehension (National Reading Panel, 2000; Gabl et al., 2007; Henry, 2008; Shany & Biemiller, 2009; Blanch et al., 2013; Pagan & Sénéchal, 2014; Brown et al., 2019; Yildirim et al., 2020) and interest (Cotter, 2012; Yeo, Ong & Ng, 2014; Levy, Hall & Preece, 2018; Choi, Kang & Sheo, 2020;

Dobbs-Oates, Pentimonti, Justice and Kaderavek, 2015; Kathy, 2016). Traditionally, the roles as a motivator, tutor and facilitator in young learner's reading were given larger emphasis on the teachers in the classroom. These roles played solely by teachers are not sufficient due to inadequate time of reading spent with learners in a classroom. Therefore, researchers have recommended two-way collaboration between parents and teachers in increasing learners' development in reading (Torres & Castañeda-Peña, 2016; Pagan & Sénéchal, 2014). Parent's roles are indeed effective for children because they complement supports which are given insufficiently by teachers in school due to limited classroom interaction hours.

However, a few researchers argued on the ambiguity of parents' roles as there are various external factors which could influence the effect of the parents' roles in children's reading development. Cheng, Chen & Chou (2015) argued that children's development in reading is determined by how 'motivated' and 'willing' the parents are in cultivating interest in them to read. McGeown et al. (2012) relates parents' motivation to their genders, where mothers tend to be more motivated and willingly to read more with their children compared to fathers in the study. This is because reading is claimed to be 'more feminine' activity as compared to maths and science which is normally associated with males (Meece et al., 2006). On the other hand, Levit, List, Metcalfe and Sadoff (2016) complained some parents were showing less concern about their children's school reading programme and their engagement was only improved after being offered with incentives. Parents are recommended to be aware and express more concern on the importance of their roles in their children reading development. With the correct value educated by the parents, children can definitely create better reading experience for themselves (Cheng, Chen & Chou, 2015).

Apart from that, several studies (Erion and Ronka, 2004; Sénéchal, 2006; Martini & Sénéchal, 2012; Silinskis et al., 2012; Blanch et al., 2012; Dong et al., 2020) indicate parental involvement in the children's reading is not always as easy as expected because parents may encounter some difficulties and challenges. Parents who are from different educational background and professions might encounter barriers in teaching and guiding their children to read and comprehend. For instance, parents from low to no educational background are possibly to be struggling readers and lack hands-on strategies to take up the role as reading partner at home (Brown et al., 2019). Teachers or any education professionals should provide support to the parents in terms of reading resources as well as effective strategies to promote and enhance their children reading development (Mcmahon, 2010). In addition, parents who had issues with job situations could be extremely challenging as they hardly can sort out time to read with their children and give frequent guidance. The parent-child reading activity only occurred when parents had more time opportunity to spend on reading with children during global lockdown and school closures due to pandemic Covid-19 (Bhamani et al., 2020). The longer hours spent in consistent monitoring and reading together would definitely increase children's reading fluency and comprehension. It is necessary for schools and teachers to sort out solutions to make parental involvement as doable as possible for the parents.

Conclusion

The emphasis of parents' role in young children reading development is observed to be on timely from this review. Especially with the current issue of pandemic Covid-19, some parents are

reluctant to send children to school despite schools are open. This indirectly contributes to a significant decline of reading development if reading does not occur at home consistently. Parents' roles were important but are now seemingly crucial as they are the closest partners for their children to reach for reading at the in the middle of the pandemic season. Previous studies show that parents' roles as motivator, tutor and facilitator are effective in developing reading skills amongst ESL and EFL learners such as fluency and comprehension. Parents' roles in children's reading have always been a concern in countries where English is adopted as a second language. In Malaysia, the Ministry of Education (MOE) has also steered their attention to parents as one of the stakeholders to increase their engagement and involvement, who are crucial in transforming the education system. This review therefore provides insights that can help curriculum planners, educators and teaching material writers to put more concern on what and how parents can do rather than only what teachers can implement in their teaching and learning of reading in the classroom. Having awareness about reading fluency and comprehension are paramount for young children as a foundation to acquire second or foreign language. Future studies should amalgamate motivator, tutor and facilitator as a package of parents' role in developing children's reading to investigate the impacts on their children fluency and comprehension. Other aspects such as the design of reading evaluation material, degree of personal reading intervention from parents and effects of parents' roles in children reading development in Malaysian context are also considerable focuses for future researches. As parents' roles are incorporated into language teaching to improve the reading fluency and comprehension of students, one should not go too far in implementing new strategies for teaching reading and comprehension. There are rooms for justification about quantifying the results obtained from various teaching strategies, learners' competence and perception, training and resources and measurement of effectiveness. The lack of substantial findings regarding the aforementioned aspects reminds researchers to be aware of and search for answers over time. Overall, parents' roles are the best approach to aid teachers in improving students' reading development by using the extended hours outside the classroom to read with their children at home. This eventually will lead to a positive reading development among the children as fluent and comprehensive ESL readers.

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