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College of Humanities and Social Sciences

Involvement of Armenian Parents in Their Children's EFL Learning and Its  
Relationship with Learners' Motivation and Achievement

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partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree  
Master of Arts in Teaching English as a Foreign Language

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>List of Tables .....</b>	<b>v</b>
<b>Abstract.....</b>	<b>vi</b>
<b>Chapter One: Introduction .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Chapter Two: Literature Review .....</b>	<b>4</b>
2.1. The relationship of parental involvement with children’s learning process.....	4
2.2. Children’s age and gender and parental involvement. ....	8
2.3. Ethnicity and parental involvement.....	10
2.4. Parental involvement and students’ academic achievement and motivation .....	11
2.5. Summary of Literature Review .....	13
<b>Chapter Three: Methodology .....</b>	<b>15</b>
3.1. Settings and Participants. ....	15
3.2. Instruments. ....	15
3.3. Procedure.....	17
3.4. Data Analysis .....	17
<b>Chapter Four: Results .....</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>Chapter Five: Discussion and Conclusion .....</b>	<b>26</b>
5.1. Limitations and Delimitations .....	29
5.2. Suggestions for Further Research. ....	30
<b>References.....</b>	<b>31</b>
<b>Appendices.....</b>	<b>37</b>
<b>Appendix A .....</b>	<b>37</b>
<b>Appendix B .....</b>	<b>39</b>
<b>Appendix C .....</b>	<b>40</b>

## LIST OF TABLES

Table 1. Means and Standard Deviations of Parental Involvement.....	19
Table 2. Regression Models of Parental Involvement Dimensions .....	21
Table 3. Means and Standard Deviations of Students' Motivation and Final Test Grades.....	23
Table 4. Regression Model of Parental Involvement Relationship with Child's Final Grades .....	24

## ABSTRACT

The importance of parental involvement in children's educational life is well-documented and researched, but few research studies show how exactly Armenian parents are involved in their children's language learning. The purpose of this study is to explore various dimensions of Armenian parents' involvement and to examine its relationship with children's motivation and achievement. Participants of this study are 333 Armenian language learners and their parents. Two adapted questionnaires are used to assess parental involvement and student's motivation, and students' achievement is assessed by their final test grades. Means across parental involvement dimensions were compared to explore the pattern of Armenian parental involvement, and regression analyses were conducted to examine the relationship between parental involvement and children's motivation and achievement. Results showed that Armenian parents had high level of involvement in parental advising, followed by homework involvement, parent-teacher conferences and helping for tests. Regression analysis showed that no significant relationship was found between Armenian parent's involvement and children's motivation, that is to say Armenian students are very much motivated to learn English regardless the involvement of their parents. However, children's achievement had significant relationship with parental involvement; in particular some parental involvement dimensions showed negative effects on students' achievement.

## CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Much research studies show the role and the impact of parental involvement on students' learning and developmental processes. Different studies indicate that when parents are actively involved in students' learning process efforts to improve students' performance and achievement are more effective (Henderson & Berla, 1994; Fan, 2001; Fan & Williams, 2010; Denessen & Bakker, 2007; Gonzalez-DeHass, Willems & Doan Holbein, 2005; Grolnick, 1994). Studies indicate that in different cultural groups, parents may be involved in their children's education in different ways and to different degrees (Fan, 2001; Lau & Rao, 2011). However, there is little evidence on how exactly Armenian parents are involved in their children's learning. We know little about the nature of Armenian parents' involvement in their children's language learning and its association with their motivation and achievement. The main purpose of this study is to investigate in what ways Armenian parents' are involved in children's education and discover its influence on learners' motivation and achievement. The results of this study can be useful and significant information source for teachers in organizing effective teaching process. Moreover, this study can help parents to be effectively involved in their children's educational life. The research questions of this study are;

1. In what ways Armenian parents are involved in their children's EFL learning?
2. What is the relationship between the parental involvement and children's motivation and achievement?

First of all it is important to have a clear understanding of what is parental involvement and in what aspects generally it influences the learning process.

Synthesizing the literature it can be claimed that it is not so easy to give a clear definition of parental involvement because this term has different definitions and clarifications given by various authors. Some authors refer to parental involvement as parent behaviors related to the child's school or schooling (Denessen & Bakker, 2007; Gonzalez-DeHass et al, 2005). Likewise, many authors describe parental involvement as a set of parental beliefs, attitudes and values, such as knowing where is the child, being acquainted with child's friends (Grolnick & Slowiaczek, 1994), also the belief that parents should take an active role in child's education, like helping the child with homework, staying in contact with teachers etc (Tam & Chan, 2009).

Motivation is another term that has different definitions given by various authors (Dörnyei, 1994). In general sense motivation is defined as the internal process that initiates, guides and maintains our behaviors to act and achieve some goals. A considerable amount of research studies investigating the nature and role of motivation in second language learning process, show that motivation is one of the main determinants of success. Almost all motivation assessment uses some sort of "self-report" measure that helps to elicit the respondent's own beliefs and from which researchers make inferences (Dörnyei, 2002). This study uses a scale assessing students' academic motivation adapted from motivation scale developed by Vallerand et al. (1992).

Student's academic achievement is the extent to which a student has achieved in his or her education. It is mainly measured by either test scores or school grades which reflect the knowledge that students have achieved during their learning process (Fraser, et al., 1986). In this study students' final grades are used as instruments to measure learners' achievement.



The current study provides a review of literature discussing what is parental involvement in general and how parents' in different ethnicities are participating in their children's education. Also it discusses the influence that age or gender may have in parental involvement and the relationship between parental involvement and students' achievement and motivation. It also presents the result of a study conducted to investigate Armenian parents' involvement in education and its influence on learners' achievement and motivation.

## CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1. The Relationship of Parental Involvement with Children's Learning Process

It has been recognized that parents have significant impact on students' learning process. In particular, research studies emphasize the importance of parental involvement during the early years for maximizing children's readiness for school (Grolnick, 1994, Lau et al., 2011, Harvard Family Research Project, 2006; Crammer, 2002; Tam & Chan, 2009). According to other studies parental advising positively predicts students' academic self-efficacy as well as intrinsic motivation (Fan & Williams, 2009). The literature shows a significant influence of parental involvement on students academic achievement (Grolnick, 1991, Nancy & Tyson, 2009; Nancy et al.. 2004; Bakker & Denessen, 2007; Fan, 2001; Marchant G. et al., 2001) and motivation (Izzo et al. 1999, Steinberg et al. 1992, Marchent et al., 2001, Grolnick 1991, Grolnick and Slowiaczek, 1994, Gonzalez et al., 2002; Urdan T. et al., 2007). The results of a a qualitative research conducted by Urdan et al. in 2007 show that students perceive a range of types and sources of familial influence on motivation. The data of this research was collected using the methodology of interviews and the analysis of the data revealed five patterns of family influence which are family pleasing pattern, family obligation, family support, aversive influence and no influence (Urdan, et al., 2007).

It is worth mentioning the fact that not all the research studies show positive or at least some influence of parental influence on children's educational outcomes. Some studies on parental involvement show diverse and even contradicting results (Desforges & Abouchaar, 2003; Fan, 2009). For example, the results discussed in the study of

Desforbes et al. (2003) showed that the more parents talk to teachers, the less well their children seemed to be progressing (Desforbes & Abouchaar, 2003).

One main reason for this diversity of results of studies on parental involvement is the complexity of the concept, that is the lack of a clear operational definition of parental involvement (Bakker & Denessen, 2007; Fan & Williams, 2009; Fan, 2001).

Parental involvement is a multidimensional concept (Lau et al., 2011, Fan, 2001, Fan & Williams, 2009). It can be claimed that the effects of parental involvement on students' educational outcomes may depend on which dimension of parental is studied.

In general sense, parental involvement is parents' participation in their children's education and the extent to which parents are aware of their children in order to promote their success (Fishel & Ramirez; 2005, Gonzalez-Pumariaga et al., 2011; Grolnick, et al., 1994; Bakker & Denessen, 2007; Fisher, 2009).

This broad definition has been modified by different studies and various dimension of parental involvement has been revealed. Specifically it was suggested that parents can manifest their involvement in their children's schooling in at least three ways: through their behavior with regard to school, through the child's perception of their affective and personal availability, and by exposing the child to cognitive and intellectual activities (Grolnick and Slowiaczek, 1994).

Epstein's (2001) model for parental involvement includes six dimensions which are parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision making and collaborating with the community. Ho (2003) categorizes parental involvement into four types: home discussion, home supervision, school communication and school participation. Similarly, Lau, et al. (2011) and Pomerantz, Moorman & Litwack (2007)

distinguish parents' home-based involvement and school-based involvement. In particular, it is important to note that according to Lau, et al. (2011) parents' practices of school based activities predict fewer variances of Chinese young children's readiness for school outcomes than their practices of home-based activities. In addition, Fantuzzo, et al. (2004) highlights the importance of parental involvement in supporting children's learning in the home environment. This involvement may be demonstrated in helping with homework, reading with the kid, limiting children's time amount spent watching TV etc (Savacool, 2011; Tam & Chan, 2009). For instance, the study of Tam & Chan (2009) discusses parental involvement in Chinese children's homework. The results show that parental involvement in children's homework process varies, in particular impact on children's academic efficacy with higher parental involvement levels is observed among junior primary students (Tam & Chan, 2009).

Fan and Williams (2010) in their study focus on eight dimensions of the construct of parental involvement: parental aspiration for students' postsecondary education, parents' participation in school functions, family rules reflecting parental home supervision, parental advising, parental participation in extracurricular activities, parent-school communication concerning students' school problems, school – initiated contact with parents and parent-initiated contact with schools (Fan & Williams, 2010). The findings of this study provide the first evidence that parent-school communication concerning students' poor performance and behavior problems had fairly strong negative associations with students' motivational factors (Fan & Williams, 2010). These results clarify the evidence that different dimensions and different content of parental involvement leads to potentially differential associations with students' academic

achievement and motivation. Parental involvement is not only a multidimensional concept but also different authors identify various parental roles. An example illustrating this point is Greenwood and Hickman's (1991) study, which identifies five different roles of parents in children's education: parents as audiences, parents as learners, parents as teachers, parents as volunteers and parents as decision makers (Greenwood & Hickman, 1991). The terms for parental involvement are as varied as the definitions. Some theorists and practitioners refer to home-school partnerships (Park, 2004), some prefer to call it parental participation (Henderson & Berla, 1994), some parents as partners (Ferrara & Ferrara, 2005).

These facts indicate that the results of parental involvement in children's education may vary depending on the focus of the study on different dimensions and variables of parental involvement in a particular educational outcome. This is the reason why some researchers report that some dimensions of parental involvement may have noticeable effects on students' academic achievement and some studies find very little or no influence of parental involvement in children's education.

The diversity of parental involvement measurements may play important role in controversial results of parental involvement in students' academic outcomes. It is believed that different dimensions of parental involvement should be measured separately (Fan & Williams, 2010). Parental involvement is usually measured in one of three ways: from students report, from parents report and from teachers report (Fan, 2009). In much research studies on parental involvement the source of information is the child. However, in this case the issue of age and objectivity may rise. Interview or survey results gained from kids would probably give an understanding of their perception of parental

involvement which is though very informative and useful information for researcher but it may vary from what the real extent of parental involvement in their educational life (Gray, 2000).

Another source of information commonly used in studies on parental involvement is the parents themselves. Several studies collect their data using diaries, questionnaires or surveys designed for parents, various scales that measure different dimensions of parental involvement etc. (Ferrara & Ferrara, 2005; Hoover-Dempsey et al., 1997).

Other sources of information may also be included in order to increase reliability and validity of the data such as teacher, and other relatives.

It is clear that for gaining reliable and valid results and for having a clear picture of the relationship of different parental dimensions and particular educational outcomes the choice of methodology and the possible prevention from all external factors that may affect the data collection is the most important issue.

## 2.2. Children's Age and Gender and Parental Involvement

Students' age plays an important role in the effect of parental involvement and it may be one of the reasons of inconsistent findings in the area (The Harvard Family Research Project, 2006). Some studies focus on elementary school students' focusing on the influence of parental involvement on their readiness for school (Gonzalez M. 2005, Lau et al. 2011), while others try to find the relationship of parental involvement with higher grade learners educational outcomes (Ho & Douglas, 1994; Cripps and Zyromsky, 2009; Nancy, et al., 2004). It is commonly believed that the role of parental involvement is more consistent and significant for younger students. Moreover, a few studies show

that no measurable effect can be revealed of parental involvement on academic achievement of high school students (Hill & Tyson, 2009; Fan & Williams, 2010; Pomerantz, et al., 2007; Tam & Chan, 2009). This fact is disputed by other researchers who have reported some positive effects not only on students' achievement but also on behaviors and attitudes. The results of a research study about parental involvement in children's homework provide evidence that variation in parental involvement in homework is found to relate to grade level (Tam & Chan, 2009).

It can be claimed, that parental involvement is inclined to decrease as children move to high school, according to Eccles and Harold (1996) this, in part, is because parents think that they cannot assist with more challenging subjects, and because adolescents are becoming autonomous (Eccles & Harold, 1996). Family involvement can be strengthened with positive results for young children and their school readiness (Harvard Family Research Project, 2006, Lau, et al. 2011). However, we cannot deny the fact that parental involvement remains associated with academic outcomes in adolescence (Epstein & Sanders, 2002; Hill & Tyson, 2009).

Children's gender may also be important while determining the effects of parents' involvement on children's achievement. Such involvement may be less important to the academic functioning of girls (Pomerantz, et al, 2007). Because girls are considered more self-disciplined than boys, and in many cases girls have higher grades than boys (Duckworth & Seligman, 2006; Pomerantz et al., 2006). The results of a survey conducted with 3187 students by SARI (Students Affairs Research and Information) show that female students had greater parental involvement than males. Additionally, a greater percentage of female students with uninvolved parents wanted more participation

from their parents (9%). On the other hand, more male students wanted their parents to decrease involvement (8%) (Park, 2004).

### 2.3. Ethnicity and Parental Involvement

Another variable that is believed to change the nature and the degree of parental involvement is ethnicity. Many research studies indicate that in different cultural groups, parents may be involved in their children's education in different ways and to different degrees (Goodwin & Ring, 2002; Denessen, et al., 2001; Franco, 2005). For example, according to the research of Lau et al. (2011) Chinese parents tend to practice more home-based than school-based involvement. Israeli parents are convinced that it is their right to be partners and to be involved in every aspect of their children's education and they want to actively participate in all decision-making processes (Fisher, 2009). Ho (2009) claims that home-based involvement is more popular in Asian context (Ho, 2009). Another research study claims that Asian and Hispanic students had the lowest level of parental involvement (Franco, 2005).

Many research studies discuss the relationship between social economic status and parental involvement in students' education (Lopez 2001; Tam & Chan, 2009). The results of the study of Tam & Chan (2009) show, that the variation in parental involvement in homework is not only related to grade level, but also to family socioeconomic status. Research shows that parents from lower classes and from ethnic minorities tend to be less involved in their child's education (Lopez, 2001; Chavkin, 1993).



#### 2.4. Parental Involvement and Students' Academic Achievement and Motivation

One of the educational outcomes of parental involvement that most studies reveal is the academic achievement. In particular the results of a study on parental involvement conducted by Hill et al. (2009) suggest that during middle school parental involvement is positively related to achievement. However, the types of involvement in which parents engage matter. Among the types of involvement, parental involvement that creates an understanding about the purposes, goals, and meaning of academic performance; communicates expectations about involvement; and provides strategies that students can effectively use has the strongest positive relation with achievement. Involvement pertaining to homework assistance and supervising or checking homework was the only type of involvement that was not consistently related with achievement. School-based involvement—including visiting the school, volunteering at school, and attending school events—was moderately positive in its association with achievement.

Students' motivation as an academic outcome only recently was investigated. Studies of students from elementary school to high school show that parental involvement has its positive influence on learners' school engagement (Izzo et al., 1999, Steinberg et al., 1992, Gonzalez-De Hass et al., 2005), intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, perceived competence, control (Marchant et al., 2001), self-regulation and goal orientation (Gonzalez et al., 2002). Studies reviewed in this study indicate that parental involvement, both in home-based or school-based context is associated with positive outcomes for students' motivation. Marchant et al. (2001) conclude that parent involvement, that communicates achievement as a worthwhile enterprise rather than

general parenting style, are more strongly related to student motivation (Marchant et al., 2001).

As research studies have concluded parent involvement generally benefits children's learning success and achievement, but student motivation as an outcome of parental involvement was only recently discovered and studied by various authors (Lau et al., 2011; Fan, 2001).

It is important to note that according to some authors' parental involvement may also have controversial influence and the main reason for this diversity may be the complexity and vagueness of the concept and also the variety of research methods used to assess levels of parental involvement.

On the one hand there is the firm belief that the relationship of parental involvement and learners' motivation indicate that parent involvement; both in the home or school context is associated with positive outcomes for the student's motivation (Gonzalez-DeHass et al. 2005; Fan & Williams, 2009; Tam & Chan, 2009; Pryor, 2009). On the other hand some research studies show negative influence of parental involvement in learners' educational outcomes (Keane, 2007; Lee & Bowen, 2006; Ho, E. 2003).

The literature shows that the effects of parental involvement on students' motivation are two-sided. According to cognitive evaluation theory, parental involvement can be informational or controlling. Excessively controlling involvement from parents' side is negatively associated with students' motivational orientations and, in contrast, when parents receive weekly information about their kids' progress and give positive reactions to the grades, that their children receive, the motivation increases (Ginsburg and Bronstein, 1993).

It is interesting to see the results of the studies that discuss how students' perceive the parental involvement and what are the effects that their parents' involvement has on their motivation and achievement. Research shows that children perceive more autonomy support and more involvement from mothers than fathers (Grolnick, 1991). Moreover, students perceive a broad range of types and sources of familial influence on motivation (Urdan et al. 2007). Urdan's article (2007) is a qualitative research analyzing the results of interviews held with 47 high school seniors in order to examine whether and how family members affect children's academic motivation and achievement. The analysis of the interviews reveals five patterns of family influence; (Urdan et al., 2007)

- Family pleasing pattern; desire to make the family proud
- Family obligation pattern; children that feel indebted to their parents for their sacrifices and financial opportunities provided for them
- Family support; authoritative parents who held high academic expectations for their children providing nurturing support for them
- Aversive influence pattern; the negative influence of parental involvement
- Lack of influence; little or no influence on children's motivation

## 2.5. Summary of Literature Review

The examples of cultural differences of parental involvement in different ethnicities, and the influence of other variables discussed in the literature review lead us to believe that Armenian parents also should have their beliefs on what is their role in children's education, to what extent they tend to be involved in children's academic life and what is the relationship of this involvement in students' achievement and motivation. The present study aims to address this gap by exploring the pattern of parental

involvement among Armenian parents and the relationship between this parental involvement and students' motivation and academic achievement. This study views the concept of parental involvement from four categories: parent participation in explaining and helping with homework, helping to study for tests, participating in parent-teacher conferences and parental advising. According to Fan and Williams (2010) different parental involvement dimensions may negatively or positively influence students' motivation and achievement. This study also aims to find out the relationship of these parental involvement dimensions and students' motivation and achievement.

## CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

### 3.1. Setting and Participants

This study was conducted with Armenian English language learners taking Course organized by American University of Armenia. English Experimental Course is designed for all those schoolchildren who are interested in developing their knowledge of English of different levels. EEC offers classes for learners from beginner level to upper-intermediate, which are classified in following sections: pre-preparation, preparation, construction, communication, pre-information and information.

Subjects of the present study included 333 English language learners (139 males and 194 females) and their parents enrolled in EEC course in American University of Armenia during summer term 2012. The students' age varied 6-17.

### 3.2. Instruments

Data for this study were collected using two questionnaires to assess Armenian parents' involvement and learners' motivation to learn English (see APPENDICES A and B). Survey items assessing parental involvement that are similar to those in this study were used in various empirical studies and demonstrated good reliability and validity.

Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler (2005) realized a major project involved a three-year research program designed to develop and refine scales necessary to test parental involvement. The development of the scale that was adapted and adjusted for this study began with qualitative work involving content analyses of interviews with parents of elementary students. Based on the findings Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler (2005) developed an objective survey measure to assess parents' beliefs and behaviors concerning their children's education.

Accordingly, to adapt this scale specifically for Armenian parents a qualitative analysis of interviews with some Armenian parents was done. According to the results several particular items were added in the scale in order to fit to some culture specific beliefs that are typical for Armenian parents (see APPENDIX C).

In particular Armenian parents tend to have informal conferences with teachers and even they prefer to learn about their children's achievement from teachers rather than from their children. Interview results also showed that Armenian parents are more involved in their boys' learning process than girls' considering the fact that girls are more disciplined and autonomous in learning process. Based on these findings some items were added to the questionnaire.

The parental involvement scale includes questions on four dimensions of parental involvement which are (1) parent participation in explaining and helping with homework, (2) helping to study for tests, (3) participating in parent-teacher conferences and (4) parental advising. Each scale employs a 6-point Likert-type response scale. The response scale for belief items asked the respondent to "indicate how much they agree or disagree with each of the statements.

Each of these dimensions include several items; *parent participation in explaining and helping with homework* consists of 3 items ( $\alpha = .75$ ), *helping to study for tests* consists of two items ( $\alpha = .85$ ), *participating in parent-teacher conferences* consists of 4 items ( $\alpha = .75$ ) and *parental advising* consists of 2 items ( $\alpha = .85$ ).

In addition, parents filled in self-evaluative items assessing their proficiency of English language, which was included in parental involvement questionnaire ( $\alpha = .86$ ).

A scale assessing students' academic motivation was adapted from motivation scale developed by Vallerand R. et al. (1992). Each scale employs 6 points asking the respondents indicate which of the items corresponds most to their feelings ( $\alpha = .85$ )

Students' academic achievement is mainly measured by either test scores or school grades (Fraser, et al, 1986). To find out the relationship of parental involvement with students' academic achievement students test scores are used that they pass at the end of the program. Final tests of EEC program classes are level specific, so these tests are not uniform for all students. This fact makes the comparison across levels more challenging.

### 3.3 Procedure

First of all three purposefully selected Armenian parents with different parenting styles and perceptions of parental involvement were interviewed in order to reveal some specific beliefs that Armenian parents have toward their involvement in children's learning.

Parental involvement scale was administered to the sample in the study during the 4<sup>th</sup> week of the term. The scales were presented to the parents in Armenian language in order to prevent any kind of misunderstandings.

Students were given the academic motivation scale at the last week of the program. Students' test scores are provided after the last day of the course.

### 3.4. Data Analysis

#### 3.4.1. Involvement of Armenian Parents

First, survey analysis assessing parental involvement of Armenian parents was examined including four dimension of parental involvement scale (PI1) parent

participation in explaining and helping with homework, (PI2) helping to study for tests, (PI3) participating in parent-teacher conferences and (PI4) parental advising. To obtain statistical analysis descriptive statistics and multiple regressions were performed on each parental involvement dimension. Multiple Regressions were examined to analyze the relationship of parental involvement categories with student's age, proficiency level, gender and parents' self-reported proficiency level.

#### 3.4.2. The Relationship of Armenian Parental Involvement with Their Children's Motivation and Achievement

To investigate the relationship between parental involvement and children's academic achievement and motivation firstly the descriptive analysis was conducted presenting Means and Standard Deviations of students' motivation and final test grades by child's gender, proficiency level, age and parent's self reported proficiency level. Secondly, multiple regression analysis was conducted to see the influence of different dimensions of parental involvement, child's gender, proficiency level, age and parent's self reported proficiency level on learner's motivation and final grade. To obtain descriptive and regression analyses results SPSS software was used.



## CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS

The purpose of this study was to investigate the pattern of Armenian parental involvement as well as to find out the relationship between parental involvement and children's achievement and motivation.

### 4.1. Research Question 1

It was found out that the levels of Armenian parents' participation varied across different parental involvement dimensions (see Table 1)

Table 1

Means And Standard Deviations (In Parenthesis) of Parental Involvement by Child's Gender, Proficiency Level, Age and Their Parent's Self Reported Proficiency Level.

		Categories of Parental Involvement			
	N	PI1	PI2	PI3	PI4
<b>Child's gender</b>					
Boys	139	4.4 (1.5)	3.9 (1.5)	4.4 (.92)	5.0 (1.1)
Girls	194	4.3 (1.1)	3.9 (1.5)	4.2 (.96)	5.0 (1.0)
<b>Child's proficiency</b>					
Beginner	112	4.8 (.80)	4.5 (1.3)	4.6 (.90)	5.2 (.85)
Elementary	104	4.6 (.92)	4.1 (1.4)	4.4 (.91)	5.1 (.99)
Low-intermediate	68	3.9 (1.2)	3.5 (1.4)	3.0 (.88)	4.7 (1.0)
Intermediate	22	3.3 (1.0)	3.0 (1.3)	3.7 (.86)	4.4 (1.2)
Upper-intermediate	27	2.8 (1.1)	2.3 (1.4)	3.6 (.92)	4.2 (1.5)
<b>Child's age</b>					
6-8	113	4.9 (.80)	4.6 (1.2)	4.7 (.90)	5.3 (.80)
9-11	114	4.5 (.94)	4.0 (.94)	4.3 (.93)	5.0 (.99)
12-14	70	3.1 (1.2)	3.1 (1.5)	4.0 (.80)	4.7 (1.3)
15-17	36	3.2 (1.2)	2.7 (1.3)	3.6 (.91)	4.4 (1.3)
<b>Parent's proficiency</b>					
0	22	4.1 (1.3)	3.6 (1.7)	4.4 (1.0)	5.0 (1.3)
1	46	3.9 (1.2)	3.4 (1.7)	4.3 (1.1)	4.8 (1.1)
2	50	4.2 (1.1)	4.0 (1.2)	4.5 (.82)	3.0 (1.0)
3	72	4.3 (1.1)	4.0 (1.4)	4.2 (.89)	3.0 (.96)
4	79	4.4 (1.1)	4.0 (1.4)	4.3 (.85)	5.1 (.98)
5	64	4.6 (1.1)	4.0 (1.7)	4.2 (1.0)	4.9 (1.2)
<b>Total</b>	333	4.3 (1.1)	3.9 (1.5)	4.2 (9.5)	5.0 (1.0)

Table 1 presents the summaries of Means and Standard Deviations of four categories of parental involvement for all variables. The highest level of parental involvement dimensions reported by the participating Armenian parents was *parental advising* (mean =5.0; SD = 1.0), followed by *Homework Involvement* (mean=4.3; SD=1.1), *Parent-Teacher conferences* (mean=4.0; SD=.96) and *helping for tests* (mean =3.9; SD = 1.5).

The data were also analyzed by Multiple Regressions, using as predictor variables children's age, gender, proficiency level and parents' self-reported proficiency.

Multiple regressions were performed with each parental involvement dimension as dependent variables. Using backward method all the independent variables, which were not significant, were excluded.

The regression model investigating the effects of child's proficiency, age, gender and parent's proficiency on parental involvement dimensions showed that for three parental involvement dimensions included in this study children's proficiency level and age have significant influence on the extent of parental involvement; *parent participation in explaining and helping with homework, helping to study for tests, participating in parent-teacher conferences* (see Table 2). In particular Armenian parents have the highest level of involvement in beginner level learners' education. It can be claimed that the higher learner's proficiency and age the lower levels of parental involvement are documented. Results showed that the dimension of *parental advising* has no significant relationship with children's gender, age and parents' self reported proficiency only children's level has influence on parental advising of Armenian parents.

Table 2. Regression Models of Parental Involvement Dimensions

<p>PI1: <i>parent participation in explaining and helping with homework</i></p> <p>ANOVA results showed significance with (<math>F_{4,33} = 37.997</math>, <math>p &lt; .001</math>)</p> <p>Adjusted <math>R^2 = .309</math></p> <p>PI1 = <math>5.567 - .089*age + .130*parentsprof - .317*level</math></p>
<p>PI2: <i>helping to study for tests</i></p> <p>ANOVA results showed significance with (<math>F_{4,33} = 20.467</math>, <math>p &lt; .001</math>)</p> <p>Adjusted <math>R^2 = .190</math></p> <p>PI2 = <math>5.872 - .122*age - .285*level</math></p>
<p>PI3: <i>participating in parent-teacher conferences</i></p> <p>ANOVA results showed significance with (<math>F_{4,33} = 20.467</math>, <math>p &lt; .001</math>)</p> <p>Adjusted <math>R^2 = .141</math></p> <p>PI3 = <math>5.597 + .227*gender - .117*age - .055*parentsprof - .112*level</math></p>
<p>PI4: <i>parental advising</i></p> <p>ANOVA results showed significance with (<math>F_{4,328} = 9.416</math>, <math>p &lt; .05</math>)</p> <p>Adjusted <math>R^2 = .092</math></p> <p>PI4 = <math>5.638 - .280*level</math></p>

#### 4.2. Research Question Two

To answer to the second research question of this study which aims to investigate the relationship of Armenian parents' involvement with students motivation and achievement a regression analysis was conducted. In addition, children's age, gender, proficiency level and their parents' self-reported proficiency level were entered as

independent variables to examine whether they have influence on students' motivation and final test grade.

First of all Table 3 shows the Mean and Standard Deviations of students' motivation and final test grade.

Student motivation scale was not conducted with 6-8 year-old kids considering the fact that they are not mature enough to complete a scale themselves and in order to have more valid results.

Armenian EEC learners' are highly motivated in learning a foreign language regardless their age, proficiency level and also their parents' proficiency level (see table 3). The gender plays only slight role in Armenian language learners' motivation. As shown in table 3 girls are slightly more motivated in learning English than boys.

Surprisingly, this is not reflected in learners' final grades because results indicate that boys have higher grades in their final tests than girls. Also in learners final test grades an important role plays their level of proficiency, the higher the level of students, the lower is the final test grade. On the contrary, parents' proficiency level has controversial results: the lower learners' parents' self-reported proficiency the higher is learners' final grade.

**Table 3.** Means And Standard Deviations (In Parenthesis) of Students' Motivation and Final Test Grades by Child's Gender, Proficiency Level, Age and Parent's Self Reported Proficiency Level.

	N	Student's motivation	N	Final test grades
<b>Child's gender</b>				
Boys	81	4.1 (.65)	127	91 (10.1)
Girls	124	4.2 (.63)	174	90 (10.1)
<b>Child's proficiency</b>				
Beginner	-	-	92	96 (7.3)
Elementary	75	4.3 (.69)	106	90 (10.0)
Low-intermediate	63	4.1 (.50)	65	85 (11.0)
Intermediate	22	4.2 (.77)	22	81 (10.9)
Upper-intermediate	27	4.3 (.57)	26	90 (7.5)
<b>Child's age</b>				
6-8	-	-	92	96 (7.1)
9-11	101	4.1 (.67)	106	90 (9.8)
12-14	68	4.2 (.62)	70	86 (11.7)
15-17	36	4.1 (.56)	33	87 (8.6)
<b>Parent's proficiency</b>				
0	14	4.0 (.57)	18	91 (8.5)
1	27	4.1 (.61)	40	92 (7.6)
2	29	4.2 (.63)	47	91 (9.8)
3	47	4.1 (.73)	65	91 (10.1)
4	54	4.2 (.59)	72	89 (11.1)
5	34	4.1 (.64)	59	88 (11.2)
<b>Total</b>	205	4.2 (.64)	301	90 (10.1)

The Regression Model was analyzed using as predictor variables parental involvement dimensions, children's age, gender, proficiency level and parents' self-reported proficiency. Multiple Regressions were performed with learners' motivation and achievement as dependent variables separately.

The regression model of analysis aiming to investigate the effect of parental involvement dimensions and child's gender, age and level on students motivation indicates that the coefficient of adjusted  $R^2 = -.003$ .

The ANOVA results showed that this regression model is not significant:  $p > .05$ .

It can be claimed that in this study learners' motivation has no relationship with parental involvement and other predictor variables.

The regression analysis investigating the relationship of learners' achievement with parental involvement dimensions and learners' age, gender, level and parents' proficiency level indicate that the variability in child's age, gender, level, parents' proficiency and parental involvement are explaining the variation in learners' final test grade by 18% (see Table 4).

The backward method of multiple regressions showed the following results:

Table 4. Regression Model of Parental Involvement Relationship with Child's Final Grades

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ANOVA results showed significance with $F_{5, 258} = 9.228, p < .001$
Adjusted $R^2 = .178$
Final grade = $114.590 - 1.626 * \text{age} - 1.060 * \text{parentsprof} - 1.030 * \text{PI2}$

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According to the results, parents' involvement in helping their children to study for tests was negatively linked to children's grade. Armenian learners' achievement has also significant relationship with age and their parents' proficiency level.

## CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

In this study we aimed to investigate Armenian parental involvement in their children's language learning as well as its association with children's motivation and achievement. Although the importance of parental involvement has been documented in the literature, there are very few studies about Armenian parents' involvement. This study makes an important contribution to the literature by filling this gap and by demonstrating information on how Armenian parents are involved in their children's learning process.

Specifically, our study provides the first evidence regarding parental involvement as a multidimensional construct, dividing it into four dimensions; parent participation in explaining and helping with homework, helping to study for tests, participating in parent-teacher conferences and parental advising. It was found out that the levels of Armenian parent's involvement varied across different parental involvement dimensions.

The following are the main insights that this study provides on Armenian parents' involvement:

- Armenian parents are more involved in advising their child's, that is to say Armenian parents are more likely to communicate with their children, provide guidance on the things that they are learning. It is to note that although all the other parental dimensions are very much influenced by children's age or level, the extent of parental advising does not significantly change with children's age, gender or proficiency level.
  - Armenian parents are also very much involved in helping their children with homework, especially parents of lower level learners show higher involvement.
- Taking into consideration the status of English as a foreign language among Armenian



society parents' proficiency level also plays an important role in helping children with homework. The lack of Armenian parents' knowledge may affect this result because to help higher level learner with English homework the knowledge of English language is important; consequently, it is not surprising that parents who reported higher level of English knowledge are slightly more involved in helping their children with homework as well as in helping to study for tests.

- Armenian parents' involvement in their children learning process is not only home-based, but also Armenian parents are active in school context. Most of them prefer to have informal parent-teacher conferences and learn about their children's achievement from the teacher. However, it is worth mentioning that here again children's age and level have great role in the extent of parental involvement. The level of parental involvement in school context is higher with younger children.

- Findings of this study not only confirm the evidence that student's age plays an important role in the effect of parental involvement but also provide new evidence that in Armenian context learner's level also is important factor to be considered in discussing parental involvement. The reason of this finding may be specific to Armenian parents considering their background knowledge and the language barrier that Armenian parents may meet as they try to be involved in helping with homework, studying for tests or explaining some difficult materials. This fact may explain the reason why Armenian parents are less involved in helping to study for tests or explaining the homework and why they are actively participating especially in communicating and having informative conversations with children.

- As it has been recognized child's gender may also play an important role in parental involvement considering the fact that according to some authors girls are more self-disciplined in the academic context than boys and consequently parents may be more involved in boys' educational life. Another key finding of this study is that Armenian parents, supporting the above mentioned evidence, showed higher level of involvement for boys especially in parent-teacher conferencing dimension, whereas in all other dimensions Armenian parents are equally participating in their girls and boys educational life. It can be concluded that boys' parents are having usual parent-teacher informal conferences mostly being interested in problems concerning the discipline and behavior.

The second research question of this study aimed to investigate the influence and the relationship of this parental involvement with learners' motivation and achievement. Main highlight of the study on the relationship of parental involvement and learners' motivation and achievement are as follows:

- Parental involvement is not necessarily linked to learners' motivation. Armenian English language learners are highly motivated and no significant relationship was found between parental involvement and students' motivation. This result should be regarded as positive assuming that Armenian English language learners realize themselves the importance of this language and, they are not influenced by their parents wish. Learners are very much conscious of the importance of English language in their future and are highly motivated in learning it regardless their parents' involvement and participation.
- The impact of parental involvement on learners' achievement was found significant; in particular parents' involvement in helping their children to study for test

was negatively linked to children's grade. This negative relationship may point to cause-and-effect relationship between students' final grade and parental involvement. On the one hand parents may be more involved in their children's test preparation in those cases when the child has low grades or some difficulties studying the language. On the other hand parental involvement may be the reason of children's low grades. These surprising results may mean that parental involvement in helping to study for test may result in additional self-confidence in children's mind which can have negative effect on their final grade and achievement. Studying for tests with parents may decrease students' autonomy for working alone at class and thus lead to negative relationship of parental involvement with learners' final grade.

In conclusion, it can be claimed that Armenian English language learners are highly motivated and they are not influenced by the involvement of their parents. In addition, Armenian parents' participation in their children's language learning may have negative influence on learners' achievement affecting their autonomy and self-confidence. Some pedagogical implications that may be concluded from these finding is that autonomy is playing an important role for successful language learners, and one of the crucial factors that parents should take into consideration is to be vigilant enough not to be too much involved in children's learning process in order not to affect their autonomy and freedom to learn the language independently.

### 5.1. Limitations and Delimitations

This study has several limitations and delimitations that should be taken into consideration while generalizing the results. Firstly, the data for this study was collected during summer term of English course that lasted five weeks; this short period of time

might not be enough for parents to get involved in their children's education. Second important limitation is the fact that final tests that the participants of this study took were not uniform. For each level of students' different tests were designed, so the tests for different proficiency levels were not cross-validated.

The main delimitation of the study is the fact that participants of the study were all only from EEC course and the results cannot be generalized to other schools of Armenia. The next delimitation is the definition and choice of parental involvement dimensions; some important parental involvement dimensions affecting learner's motivation or achievement may be neglected in this study.

## 5.2. Suggestions for further research

Considering the few number of studies on Armenian parents involvement, more studies should be conducted in the future. Assessing parental involvement future studies might use different informants, including children's perception of their parent's involvement and teachers' evidence, and also conduct more longitudinal studies to gain more thorough understanding of the profile of Armenian parents' participation and its influence. One important factor that further researchers should take into consideration is the cross-validation of final tests for all levels of learners. Also researchers shall look for other factors that may reduce predictor errors and increase the variability of those factors.

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## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX A: Parental Involvement Scale

All personal information will remain confidential and will only be available for the researcher. Thank you for your consideration.

- My child taking EEC course is :      a) a boy              b) a girl
- Age \_\_\_\_\_
- English proficiency level \_\_\_\_\_

Mark the item that corresponds more to your beliefs	Disagree very strongly	Disagree	Disagree just a little	Agree just a little	Agree	Agree very strongly
1. I make sure that my child's homework got done	1	2	3	4	5	6
2. It's my job to explain tough assignments to my child.	1	2	3	4	5	6
3. I always help my child with homework.	1	2	3	4	5	6
4. It's my job to make sure my child understands his or her assignments	1	2	3	4	5	6
5. I help my child study for tests or quizzes.	1	2	3	4	5	6
6. I talk to my child about what he or she is learning.	1	2	3	4	5	6
7. I find it helpful to talk with the teacher	1	2	3	4	5	6
8. My child's teacher knows me well.	1	2	3	4	5	6
9. I prefer to learn about my child's academic achievement from <b>the teacher.</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6
10. I prefer to learn about my child's academic achievement from <b>my child.</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6

	Often	Once so far	About once a month	Once every two weeks	Once a week	After each class
11. I have informal conferences with the teacher.	1	2	3	4	5	6
Mark the item that corresponds to your English proficiency	Disagree very strongly	Disagree	Disagree just a little	Agree just a little	Agree	Agree very strongly
12. I can understand television programs and films without too much effort	1	2	3	4	5	6
13. I can understand long and complex factual and literary texts.	1	2	3	4	5	6
14. I can talk on a wide range of subjects related to my field of interests.	1	2	3	4	5	6
15. I can write, detailed text on a wide range of subjects related to my interests.	1	2	3	4	5	6
16. I can take an active part in discussion in familiar contexts.	1	2	3	4	5	6

My child's name is

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## APPENDIX B: Students' motivation scale

All personal information will remain confidential and will only be available for the researcher. Thank you for your consideration.

Mark the item that corresponds more to your feelings.	Disagree very strongly	Disagree	Disagree just a little	Agree just a little	Agree	Agree very strongly
1. Learning English is one of the most important tasks for me.	1	2	3	4	5	6
2. I really feel that I am wasting my time in this course.	1	2	3	4	5	6
3. I am taking this course to prove to my parents that I can complete this course.	1	2	3	4	5	6
4. I am taking this course because it makes me feel important.	1	2	3	4	5	6
5. I am taking this course because my parents praise me.	1	2	3	4	5	6
6. I am taking this course because it will help me to find better jobs.	1	2	3	4	5	6
7. I am taking this course to prove myself that I am a smart person.	1	2	3	4	5	6
8. I am taking this course because of my parents wish.	1	2	3	4	5	6
9. I believe that an additional course will improve my knowledge.	1	2	3	4	5	6
10. I am taking this course because I like overcoming challenges.	1	2	3	4	5	6

My name is \_\_\_\_\_

### Appendix C: Parents Interview Questions

1. What is your child's gender?
2. What is your child's age?
3. Do you prefer to learn about your child's achievement from the teacher or from your child?
4. Describe how you communicate with the teacher about your child.
5. Are you encouraged to attend parent meetings and other parent activities? Why?
6. Do you think parent-teacher conferences are useful and informative?
7. Do you think helping children with homework is helpful?