"THE ROLE THAT PARENTS AND FAMILY SUPPORT PLAY IN THE EFL LEARNING PROCESS OF 9TH GRADE STUDENTS IN A PRIVATE SCHOOL IN CALI"

MASTER'S REPORT

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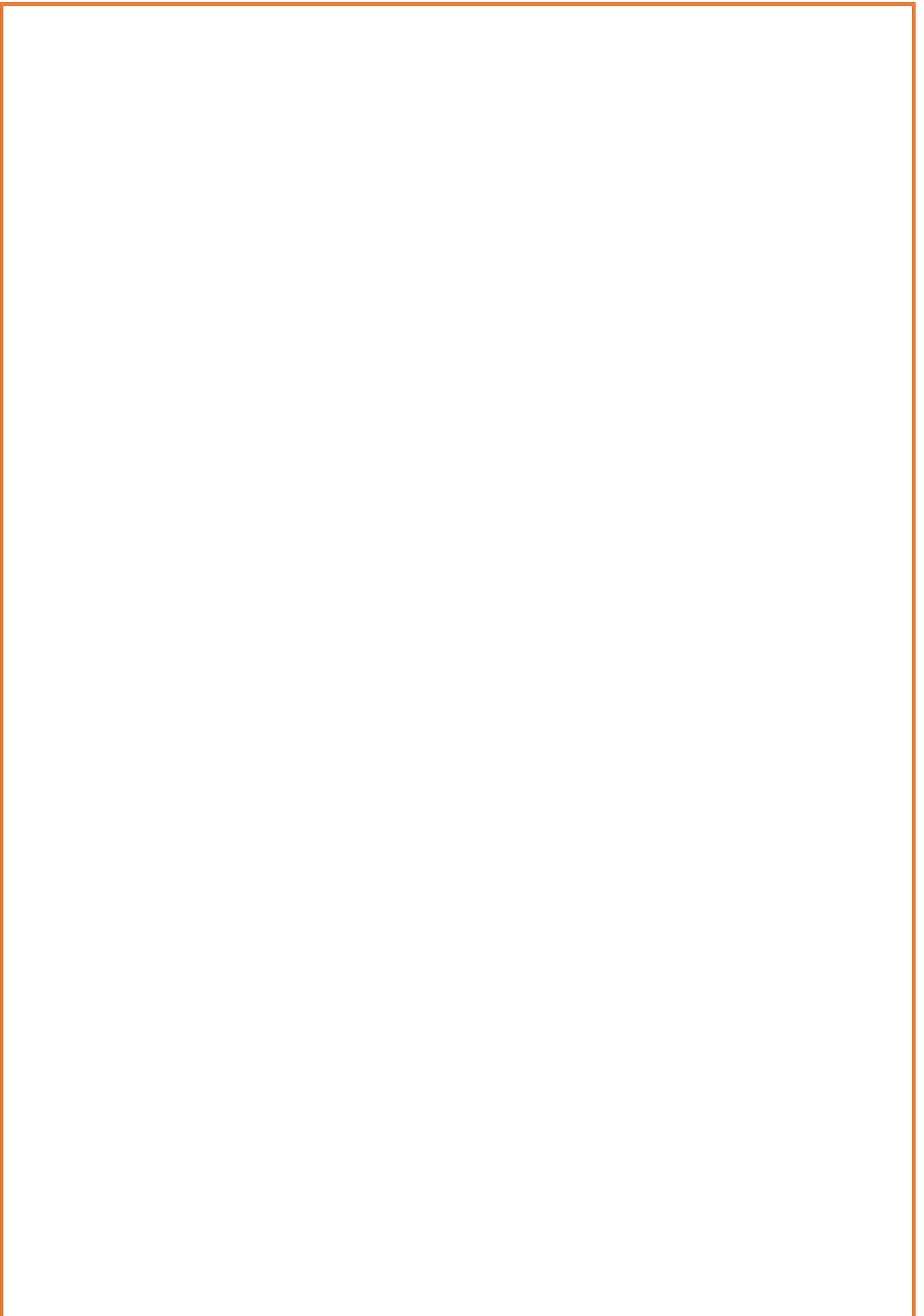
DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this research study titled "The role that parents and family support play in the " EFL learning process of 9th grade students in Cali" presented to the Master's program in Teaching English as a Foreign Language is an original work done by me under the assistance of Diana Margarita Diaz. The information written in this research is authentic to the best of my effort and knowledge with exception of the sources listed in the bibliography which have been cited and referenced.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my loved ones:

My wife

Paola Andrea Lozada

My Daughter

Isabella Chavez Lozada

Myparents

Samuel Chávez
Nora Milena González

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CHARTS

ABSTRACT

The language learning process gets influenced by many factors, some of them are internal to the language and the individual and some of them are external to the language and the learner. The aim of the present study was to investigate in an exploratory way some of those external factors that could influence the outcome of the English language learning process. These factors were: The roles that parents and family were taking when supporting the language learning process of their children. The relationship between parents' support and the students' outcome in the English language subject at the school. The kind of motivation that students build from the support they get from their parents and the influence that academic background has on parents when they support the EFL learning process of their children.

Focus group technique and deep interview of 6 study cases were used to gather qualitative data. The teacher and a sample of parents were also interviewed to confront information received from all the participants.

It was found that parental involvement does play a major role in students' academic performance but that the roles which parent were taking not always worked as support for the process and could undermine it. Results showed that High levels of positive and honest two-way communication along with a good strategy of supervision result in a good grade, Positive and constant moral support is also a predictor of a good performance and that students felt motivated from the communication, sharing of experiences and moral support of their parents. The message sent by parents shaped a specific kind of motivation.

Key Words:

Parents, support, involvement, Parental involvement, family support, motivation

INTRODUCTION

The learning process of a new language implies many different aspects to be taken into account. One of those aspects is the social component that is always present in the learning processes. The context and the environment in which the EFL learning process takes place can determine the success or failure of this. In this sense, parents support is one of those contextual elements that can influence the EFL learning process. Several studies about parents support to the language learning process have been made. This Master's report research study takes several of them as a point of starting to; investigate what is going on regarding support from parents and its influence on academic performance in the specific setting of a school located in Cali, Colombia. The subject of analysis were the 26 students of the 9th grade of a medium socio-economic strata school, and the study covered the areas of supervision and help from their parents, communication regarding language matters, cognitive and moral support towards the process and developing of literacy skills to reinforce the language learning process. Also, the students were asked about their motivation for learning English and the sources from which it can come from. Parents and the teacher also participated to include and contrast their vision of the process. This data was collected through means of focus groups and individual interviews.

The syllabus of the school is constructed to give tools to the students for them to develop skills in the English language, it follows the communicative method, and it is adjusted to the context in which the school works, all of this taking into account enough practice of the language and CEFR descriptors for each level. Despite this, students do not have the expected level in the academic performance of the language according to the grades they get in the subject. This study aim to explore if parents not taking an active role in their children's process or parents not supporting the process at home may be problematic factors and, if for cases for which support does exits, this is a decisive factor.

This paper is organized in thirteen parts, in the first five the problematic question, the statement of the problem, the objectives to accomplish, the review of existent literature about the issue, the theoretical framework and the methodology to follow are presented. In next four parts it is presented the information gathered from the focus groups, the individual interviews and the parents. From this information the findings, the analysis and the conclusion are presented in order to answer the research question and accomplish the objectives. The limitations of the study are also presented to finally state some recommendations both to teachers and future researchers

in order to continue and improve the understanding of the role that family and parents support play in the EFL learning process. The two last chapters present the supportive bibliography for this master's report and the annexes used during the research process.

I.   JUSTIFICATION

Several factors affect academic performance of students in the English language learning process. One of those factors can be the support that family gives to the students and the role that family members play in this process. It is important to get to know what those roles are in the specific context; how relatives are supporting the students and the connection these actions have with academic performance in the English class. When teaching methodologies, strategies and teacher support are not enough to promote students' learning and performance, it is necessary to explore other factors that can be influencing academic performance. This research describes the roles that family takes and explores if the support given by the family is a determinant in the academic performance of students. Hopefully it will provide a better understanding for teachers to be able to reflect upon the context of their students and about their own teaching practice. This will let teachers to continue improving their strategies and tools.

There are studies that have pointed out that family support does play a role in academic performance of the students, (Castro et al., 2015; González-Pienda and Núñez, 2005; López, Quesada & Salas, 2014; Martinello, 2000; Reza, 2012; Suarez et al., 2011; Torres and Castañeda-Peña, 2016). It is necessary to explore this idea in the specific context of Cali to be able to identify other possible factors affecting the EFL classroom.

II. RESEARCH PROBLEM

1. PROBLEM STATEMENT

The school Mayor Santiago Cali has stated an English program that aims to comply with the requirements of the National Ministry of Education of Colombia regarding the learning standards and learning rights derived from the Common European Framework of Reference. The syllabus is constructed to give answer to that aim and the approach for the classes follows the directives of the communicative method to develop the four basic skills of the language. In 9th grade of the school the students have 4 hours of English class per week, the teacher conducts activities for the development of the four skills and the students participate on a regular basis in the activities proposed. Last year a textbook was introduced to support the teacher's instruction and to frame the advance through the CEFR levels. Taken into account the previous considerations, some fluency it is expected from students in which they can maintain a basic conversation about general topics being taught in the class using the structures covered by the syllabus. The majority students do not meet these expectations even with the different ways of approaching the situation that the teacher provides and the support of text book, work book and other complementary activities. It is important to mention that some students perform in the expected level while others do not, the difference between those in terms of family support is the interest of this study to explore if parents not taking an active role in their children's process, not supporting the process at home may be problematic factors leading to this situation.

2. QUESTION

What is the role that family support plays in the EFL learning process of 9th grade students in a private school in Cali and what is it's relation to students' academic performance in the English class?

3. OBJECTIVES

3. 1 General objective

To identify and describe the roles that family support plays in the EFL students' learning process and the possible effect on their academic performance

3.2. Specific objectives

- To describe the role that family plays in EFL learning process of the students.

- To explore the possible effects/impact that family support on students' academic performance in class.

- To describe students' perceptions about the impact that family support may have on their motivation or willingness to learn English.

III. LITERATURE REVIEW

While there is no doubt that school is important, a significant number of studies have focused on the impact of parental role on children's educational achievement(Ávila and Garavito, 2009; Castillo and Camelo, 2013; Castro et al., 2015; Desforges and Abouchaar, 2003; González-Pienda and Núñez, 2005; Martinello, 2000; Suarez et al., 2011; Torres and Castañeda-Peña, 2016).However,when it comes to parental influence on their children's education, and the roles that parents play, we see that it is necessary to understand which are those roles, their actions and the implications in the academic life of the students. Martinello (2000) proposed a taxonomy to identify and conceptualize the different roles that parents can take regarding their children's education. The first role proposed is parents as responsible for their children's nurturing. This category describes the actions taken for nurturing and protection of children including the creation of proper settings that allow children to go to school. As a second role, the author mentions parents as teachers, this to describe how parents support, supervise and continue with the process developed in school at home. The third function refers to parents as support agents for the school; it describes how parents support the school's necessities with money, time, and materials. Finally, there is the role of parents as agents with decision power, where the role of the parents is to make the best decisions regarding their children's academic process and the policies and actions of the school. Although the combination of all these roles puts parents in a position of supporting the learning process of their children, Martinello found that the role that has more impact in a successful academic life of the students is the one named "parents as teachers". In this role, parents continue the process started in the school by supervising the activities done in the school, involving actively in the process of helping complete homework, research projects and developing reading comprehension and writing skills.

Wigfield, Essoles, Schiefele, Roeser, and Davis-Kean (2006); (as cited in Butler and Le, 2017) also identified four major influential parental factors that determine the role they take: (a) parent, family, and neighborhood characters; (b) parents' general beliefs and behaviors; (c) parents' child-specific beliefs; and (d) parent-specific behaviors. The first one refers to parents' education, occupations, income for house holding, and ethnicity. The second one is related to child-rearing beliefs, parenting styles and efficacy beliefs. Parents' child-specific beliefs factor refers to the expectations that parents have about their child's performance as well the perceptions of their child's abilities and talents. Finally, the last aspect refers to the time parents

spend with their children, teaching strategies, provision of toys and equipment, and other educational guidance. These two approaches of the roles that parents take towards the learning process of the students give an overview of the conceptualization of the roles of parents in the language learning process.

Parents' involvement in their children's education and the support given by relatives is crucial and of great importance for academic achievement(Castro et al., 2015; González-Pineda and Núñez, 2005; López, Quesada & Salas, 2014; Martinello, 2000; Reza, 2012; Suarez et al., 2011; Torres and Castañeda-Peña, 2016). Children whose parents take an active role in their learning process are more likely to succeed in their academic goals and are also able to face challenges in a better way. Regardless of that, the way in which parents involve themselves in their children's process can foster or discourage the results of the learning process. Students whose parents participate in their process but at the same time get a certain degree of autonomy in their responsibilities present better results in their learning process (Castro et al., 2015; Desforges & Abouchaar, 2003; Kovacs, 2011; Martinello, 2000). This means that parents who accompany and supervise activities, help children in a planned way and monitor the process in addition to family members' attitude towards learning a second language are also of a great influence for students (Segura, 2016). Other main factors to consider are the expectations and beliefs that parents have about their children's language learning process. These were found to have a relationship with students' performance (Butler& Le,2017; Castro et al., 2015). Students whose parents expect a high outcome and believe they can do it, have a better performance in the learning process. In a study carried out in Switzerland by Villiger, Wandellerand Niggli (2013), they found, although it was in an EFL context, that parents' expectations not only influenced students' performance but also played a major role in their motivation to learn the second language. This is consistent with the study done by Lopez, et al. (2014), in Costa Rica, which found that support and expectations from parents increased motivation and willingness to learn of students.

With regards to second language learning, research has shown that not only the role of parents already mentioned but also their educational background and socio-economic status (SES) play an important role in language learning. The social context, the SES, the culture, the educational level and the income of the parents, have a big influence in the process of language learning (Huang, Niu & Zhi, 2017; Kormos & Kiddle, 2013; Kovacs 2011; Lopez et al., 2014; Reza, 2011 Segura, 2016). These findings became relevant to this study because the individuals to be interviewed belong to a very similar SES between them. Butler and Le (2017) found in a study in

China that parental income and their educational level had a positive relationship with students' English performance. In a study undertaken in Taiwan Huang et al. (2017) found that a higher SES background is associated with earlier exposure to English language and more contact with English and that a higher SES background would be a predictor of better speech production. Reza (2012) also encountered that SES is a predictor of motivations towards the learning of a second language in students. Kormos and Kiddle(2013) also found that social class has an effect on the motivation of the students. In sum, the role assumed by parents, the ideas and support of parents and relatives given to students and the socio-economic aspects play a major role in students' learning process and their motivation. This study will explore the level of motivation of the students according to the different roles that their parents may take towards their learning process and how those roles affect in a positive of negative way that motivation.

Research in the field of parent support to language learning to students in Latin America is not abundant but there have been some efforts to study and understand this phenomenon in some countries. Kormos and Kiddle (2013) carried out a research in Chile to study the motivation of English language learners according to their social class. They found that social class has a "medium-size" effect in language performance and that higher social class students seemed more motivated towards the process of learning the language. They didn't cover the parents' role or effect for the students in this process. Lopez et al. (2014) carried out a research study in Costa Rica to explore different social conditions that can influence and affect the language learning process. They did include the parental aspects and found that even with the lack of parents' economic resources to help their children in the process of English language learning, they did consider it important to know the language; from this, students felt motivated to continue in the process. Findings also showed that parents gave moral support to students in order for them not to dropout their studies and this increased students' motivation and willingness to learn. Finally, students felt motivated to finish their studies so they could be able to get better jobs, improve their social condition and help their families. In Colombia, the field of parents' role towards the English language learning of their children has been understudied. There is a research project done by Segura (2016) in Cali to explore how social context such as family, school, income and relation with peers influence the students' ideas about learning English. The author found that students did consider their families as a factor that influenced their ideas about learning English. Mixed reasons were found as some students pointed out that their families motivated them to learn the language in order to get better-paid jobs in the future, to be able to travel to another country, to

be able to achieve their different goals and to be more competitive in this era. Also, some students commented that they didn't receive support from their families because they didn't consider English an important subject. Finally, students felt motivated to learn English they thought that by doing this, they would be able to enter to university and get better-paid jobs for them to help their families.

Torres and Castañeda-Peña (2016) carried out a study in El Doncello, Caquetá, and found out that parents who give positive advice, encouragement and models to follow to their children about EFL instruction can shape student's mind for success in this aspect. Torres and Castañeda-Peña also found that when parents offer cognitive and emotional support students assume positive attitude towards their own language learning process. Another parental contribution that the authors discussed was regarding those parents offering feedback for the development of EFL homework of their children. This was done by monitoring children's performance in homework assignments, clarifying concepts, helping them to process information and giving feedback of the result. The authors concluded, consistently with the other research mentioned in this review, that parents that are involved make a great contribution to their children's language learning process. Castillo and Camelo (2013) also conducted a research in Colombia to explore the participation of parents as a tool to support children's EFL process. One of their findings showed that parents were not giving enough support to their children because they did not know the language. Although this is not the research question of this study, parents' level in English language can become an important factor regarding the roles that parents take towards their children's education. Castillo and Camelo found that once parents were trained in basic aspects of the language and they started to get involved in their children's homework assignments, the latter showed a positive effect in literacy development. Avila and Garavito (2009) carried out a research study in Bogota to explore the concept of English homework tasks as a way to include parents in the process. Findings showed that once the parents get involved in the process of doing EFL homework with their children the communication among the both of them improves and it works as a vehicle to improve communication between parents and the school. The authors could conclude that involvement of parents with their children´s assignments generated an important interaction and better interaction resulted in better performance in school.

All the previous research mentioned in this review played a significant role in the present project due to the fact that they provided a framework to understand how parental roles affect children's language learning process. The mentioned research also offered an overview of the

state-of-the-art in relation to this topic in different contexts. Therefore, this study benefitted from the findings and conclusions that previous research has given.

The methodological approach of the discussed research was another aspect from which this study gained from because it provided parameters to approach this kind of qualitative research. Finally, existing research within the same context as the present study provided an approach for the analysis of the findings of this study. Several research projects such as the ones mentioned in this review have been done from different viewpoints, on the role of the parents in their children's educational process and in the process of learning a language. Their results and conclusions have been consistent in the majority of the cases among the different research shown here, even in different contexts. This gave a starting point to this research to establish a pathway to work with. Besides that, it is important to know that this field is being researched in many different places around the world and through this, many different socio-cultural contexts are being analyzed.

Considering all of the previous aspects, the present research project covered an existing gap in the field since, the role that parents and family support play in EFL learning process of students in the Colombian context, has not been sufficiently studied. The importance of this research lies in that findings and conclusions drawn will allow the school to know and understand the current situation and develop or improve its programs for parent involvement. The results of this research project will also allow English language teachers at low social strata schools to become more aware of what is going on regarding their own students and to understand some of the reasons for the situations that they face every day at their schools. Additionally, this study also invites English language teachers of low social strata schools to reflect on their students' learning processes. Reflection will allow them to become aware of the strategies they are using and if those are taking into account elements that are outside the classroom. It will also offer them the opportunity to become aware of issues that arise in their classroom in relation to their students' social background and learning process, all of this will provide them information to know what can be continuously improved and what can be changed.

IV.   THEORETICAL FRAME WORK

This chapter analyzes key concepts that provide a framework to understand the phenomena studied. It presents definitions and concepts in connection to this project. The main concepts, the role of the parents in the learning process of their children, the academic performance, the social context and the motivation of the students for language learning.

1. ROLE OF THE PARENTS

The role of the parents in the educational process of their children is understood in literature in a wide way to refer to different attitudes, functions, strategies and actions that parents take towards the learning process of their children. Epstein, (1990) defined the role of the parents as "one component of effective schools that deserves special consideration because it contributes to successful family environments and more successful students" (p. 7). Furman and Buhmester (1985) discussed that no matter the independence of the learner, the family continues to be important for children. Martinello (2000) proposed a taxonomy to try to clarify the concept of parental roles. In this taxonomy, she states 4 roles that parents take within the educational process of their children. The first role is parents as responsible for their children's nurturing, describing the action taken for upbringing and protection of children including the offer of proper settings that allow children to go to school. For the second role, the author mentions parents as teachers, this to describe how parents support, supervise and continue the process that takes place in school. The next function is parents as support agents for the school; this one describes how parents support the school's necessities with money, time, and materials. Finally, the author describes the role of parents as agents with decision power. The role of the parents is to make the best decisions regarding their children's academic process and the policies and actions of the school. According to Avila and Garavito (2009) parental involvement means "the participation of parents in regular, two-way and meaningful communication involving student academic learning and other school activities" (p, 106). The definitions of parents as teachers and parents as agents of support for the school proposed by Martinello in which they play a role of active support, supervise, help and follow up activities like homework, research projects, development reading and writing skills, talk to their children, and attend different school activities, will give the

framework for the categories of analysis. Also the one given by Avila and Garavito in which they state that involvement means meaningful two way communication about academic learning and other school activities will enter into the mentioned framework for the categories of analysis chosen for conducting the interviews, developing the discussion and analysis of results. An addition is made to point out that parents' active support also means cognitive and moral support given by them to the learning process of their children and that this will be also considered in this research.

The conceptualization of the previous mentioned categories were: 1. Active support: this category refers to the way in which parents use their academic and practical knowledge of the English language as well as their background experience to help their children to achieve the learning objectives. This goes from helping with assignments to sharing strategies for study and sharing material, also the way in which parents encourage and praise their children for them to be able to give the best of themselves, to overcome difficult situations, and to set strategies for success. It was analyzed the kind of things that parents said to their children and the way they said those things. 2. Supervision of homework and assignments: this category refers to the way in which parents make sure the students have homework and assignments and the strategies to have the students do them. 3. Help and follow up activities like homework and assignments; this is understood as the way in which parents get involved in helping with their children's assignments developing different strategies. The effectiveness of those strategies was analyzed. It was also taken into account if the strategies carried out really redounded in an effective outcome. 4. Developing literacy skills: this category analyzed if parents took actions to develop their children's literacy skills. Did parents make their children read different material? Did they make them write? Was there a plan for developing these skills? 5. Involvement in school's activities: this category studied the way in which parents got involved in different school activities as were meetings, briefings, projects, leisure activities. It was analyzed the way in which they participated and what their contribution in those different activities was. 6. Maintaining a good, clear and honest communication: this was related to the way in which parents and students communicated on a two-way basis being honest about the expectations, the strengths, the weaknesses and the results of the process. For purposes of the interview process and organization of the information the category of active support was divided into Cognitive support and moral support. Cognitive support refers to the way in which parents used their academic and practical knowledge of the English language as well as their background experience to help their children to achieve the

learning objectives and moral support refers to the way in which parents encouraged and praised their children for them to be able to give the best of themselves, to overcome difficult situations, and to set strategies for success. On the other hand, two categories were put together: a) supervision of homework and assignments along with help and follow up with homework or assignments, b) talking to the children and maintaining a clear honest two-way communication regarding language matters. The conceptualization of these categories was done following the ones given by Martinello (2000) and Avila and Garavito (2009).

2. ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

For this research the academic performance of the students was understood under the interpretation of the grades they get in the English language subject for the different activities. These numbers indicate the extent to which a person has accomplished specific goals.

3. MOTIVATION

Motivation for language learning is one of the constructs with the most studies and analyses undertaken and published. Authors like Gardner (1985, 2000) and Dornyei (2005) have studied motivation under different perspectives and scopes and have given definitions for it. For example, Gardner (1985, p. 21) defined this motivation as "the combination of effort plus desire to achieve the goal of learning the language plus favorable attitude towards learning the language".

Dornyei (2005) explains that motivation is the reason why people select a particular activity, how long they are willing to persist at it and what effort they invest in it. It is to say that the different individuals have different goals for learning the language; these reasons differ from person to person and must be necessarily related to learning the language. Since there can be so many different reasons and goals, it was necessary to establish a way of classification for them. Gardner and Lambert (1959) introduced the terminology of Integrative and instrumental orientation or motivation for learning a language to classify those different reasons. Under the classification of integrative motivation we can find reasons like learning the language in order to know the culture of that language, learning the language for being able to read literature in its original language, or all other reasons that the students may give under the idea of learning the language for reasons of intellectual growth. This can be analyzed as an inner orientation that motivates the student to learn the language: intrinsic motivation. On the other hand, instrumental motivation gives reasons that are more in the field of the actual benefit derived from learning a language, for

example getting a better paid job, traveling abroad or even passing school's exams. In this case the student is getting an external orientation that motivates him to fulfill the task: Extrinsic motivation. In this study motivation will not be assessed and analyzed as a factor but it will be addressed regarding its presence and connection with support that parents give to their children.

V. METHODOLOGY

The present study aimed to explain the role that parents and family support play in the EFL learning process of students and its connection with the academic performance understood as the grades they get in English class. The study also aimed to explore if the support given by parents responds to the perceptions they have about the language as well as to explore how the students think those roles affect their motivation towards the process and their academic performance.For this study, a qualitative, exploratory approach was proposed. To collect data focus group discussions and group or individual semi-structured interviews with the students, the parents and the teacher were done. Thematic analysis (TA) was used to identify, organize and offer insight into themes that are across a dataset according to Braun and Clarke (2012). *The primary attention in TA is on what is said rather than how, to whom or for what purpose"* (Riessman, 2007. p, 54). Thematic analysis allows the researchers to find meaning in collective situations and experiences and is a way to identify what is common and also meaningful among participants in a specific topic being addressed. Thematic analysis was chosen because of its flexibility and accessibility, TA *"offers a way into qualitative research that teaches the mechanics of coding and analyzing qualitative data systematically, which can then be linked to broader theoretical or conceptual issues"* (Braun & Clarke, 2012. p, 2). TA is a method of data analysis within the qualitative research that allows the researcher some flexibility to connect with other methods and approaches.

1. CONTEXT

The study took place in Colegio Mayor Santiago de Cali. This is a private school in a 2 and 3 strata neighborhood called "El Troncal" in the north area of Cali. The study was carried out with the 26 students of the only 9[th]grade group in the school. They lived within the same neighborhood as medium low social class citizens.

2. PARTICIPANTS

The participants of this qualitative study were:

- 26 ninth-grade students
- 6 students who agreed to take part in in-depth interviews to organize case studies
- The parents of 3 of them.
- The 9th grade teacher of the school

The students were aged between 13 and 15 years old. They study at Colegio Mayor Santiago de Cali. This is a non-bilingual school of 2 and 3 social strata, they have 5 hours of English class per week and for the majority of them this is the only contact they have with the language. As mentioned above parents of three of the students participated in the study too. They were employees in different positions as secretaries, operatives or messengers. The last participant was the teacher; she holds a degree in English language teaching and has worked in the school for the last two years.

3. THE DATA COLLECTION PROCESS

This study consisted of six stages.

Focus groups, semi-structured interviews and talks were used as part of the data collection methods. These, according to Quinn and Cochran (2002) are the most common methods used in qualitative research. In each stage, the data gathered was analyzed following the data analysis procedures proposed by thematic analysis. The steps taken in the study are explained as follows:

Stage 1 of the data colection process

The first stage consisted of:

- 4 focus groups with 5 students participating in each group and 1 focus group with 6 students participating.

The focus groups lasted 15 to 20 minutes. Quinn M., and Cochran, M. (2002) defined interview groups as "any discussion with a group of people" (p, 16). According to them, this could include informal and spontaneous talks or chats with groups in different communicative settings, but, for research purposes, more formal and structured groups were organized. Morgan (1997) explained that the planning to do focus groups includes a number of decisions about how the data is collected. Those decisions are made regarding who participates in the group, what is the level of structure of the group and the number of participants in each group. The first stage consisted of 5 focus groups made up of 5 students each group and 1 focus group made up of 6 students. For this study a number of 5 participants per group were chosen. The reason for this was to have a group that allowed group conversation but that was small enough to keep track of students' interventions. This is supported at some point by what Quinn M., and Cochran, M. (2002) who point out that: "Groups typically have between 6 and 10 people. Below 6, it may be difficult to

sustain a discussion; above 10, it may be difficult to control it" (p, 17). Due to space issues it was decided to have groups of 5 people and only one of 6.

The focus groups were done to get collect data, to take notes and to generate candidate themes as stated by Braun and Clarke (2006) in their model. The purpose of this activity was to find out the main ideas that students have about the support they receive from their parents and also their own ideas and expectations about this issue. The focus groups were also helpful to select the students for the second stage and to provide further information to finish shaping the questions of the interview.

Before conducting the 5 focus groups, 6 categories of analysis were established in order to lead the questions and the discussion with the students (see Annex 1). The data gathered through audio recordings and taking of notes was coded systematically by highlighting each code and generating a data corpus. The transcription of the recordings and the notes taken were analyzed, sorted out and the codes were grouped to generate themes. From this, the subsequent interview format was revised. Six participants of the groups were selected for the next step; these were the ones reported by the teacher as three who have a good performance and three who have a bad performance in the English class.

<u>Stage 2 of the data collection process</u>

For the second stage of this study there were:

- 6 participants selected from the focus group carried out in the stage 1, this was done following the information given by the teacher of the students about which ones of them have a good performance and which ones have low levels of performance. In this sense, there were 3 students with a high performance and three students with a poor performance in the English class.

They were interviewed individually using a semi-structure interview format (see Annex 2). These interviews lasted 20 to 30 minutes each. There were six interviews, one per student. According to Quinn and Cochran (2002) interviews are one of the most common methods to gather information in qualitative research. These authors also give definitions about the types of interviews: structured, semi-structured and the less structured one. The interviews for this project were made up of open-ended questions According to Quinn and Cochran's definition for semi-structured interviews. The questions came from the candidate themes defined from the

information analyzed in the focus groups which was used to develop and refine those themes. The data collection was done through audio recordings and taking of notes from the interviews to the 6 students. The same procedure of coding was used and the themes were analyzed and systematized to form coherent patterns.

Stage 3 of the data collection process

For this stage the participants were:

- 3 parents.

The parents were selected from the students who were interviewed in stage 2. These semi-structured interviews were conducted in order to contrast and enrich the data in order to be able to have a more robust analysis. The method used was the semi-structured interviews explained above (see Annex 3).

Stage 4 of the data collection process

In stage 4, the teacher of the students who had taken part in the research was interviewed. The aim of this semi-structured interview was to identify the perception of the teacher in relation to the role parents and family support play in his students' learning process (see Annex 4).

Stage 5 of the data organization

The complete analysis of the information gathered was done using the six steps of thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The first step was to familiarize with the data; the information received was read and re-read before starting the coding step. Then, using highlighters, the information was coded to look for as many potential codes and themes as possible. The codes were identified by using the same colors for codes that can be integrated together. After this, the codes were grouped in order to create themes; these themes had the codes that referred to similar information, visual aids as mind maps and graphic organizers were used to help organizing the codes into themes. The themes were reviewed to see if the codes allocated in them belong to that specific theme. The themes were also reviewed to see how they answer to the research question. After organizing the themes, these ones were given names and were evaluated to see if sub-themes were suitable to be established and to see how the themes and sub-themes fit in the overall narrative of the information gathered. There were 6 case studies

that were also analyzed using the previously mentioned steps. Finally, the results, the analysis, the discussion and the conclusions of the process were organized and written.

<u>Stage 6 of the data analysis</u>

Results, analysis, discussion and conclusions of the research study were provided and added to the final report.

VI.   RESULTS

The results of the interviews with the 5 focus groups, the personal interview with 6 students, the interview with the English teacher and the interview with three parents all of them from Colegio Mayor Santiago de Cali are presented in this chapter. The results were organized in the following way: the information gathered from the 5 focus groups, 6 case studies of 6 students, the information gathered from the interview with the teacher and the information from the interviews with three parents. The instruments to gather the information were:

- Semi-structured interviews applied to the 5 focus groups (see Annex 1)
- Semi-structured interview applied to 6 students individually (see Annex 2)
- Semi-structured interview applied to the English teacher of the students (see Annex 3)
- Semi-structured interview applied to three parents of the students(see Annex 4)

The results of this study are divided in three parts. In the first part, the data collected with the semi-structured interviews in the 5 focus groups and organized as described in the stage 5 of the methodology is presented. After this, 6 study cases are presented as well, these 6 study cases go deeper into the categories chosen in the focus groups and intend to specify the findings gathered from them, they were collected using the same type of interview and analyzed following the same procedure. A third part presents the overview given by the teacher and the three parents as support data to the findings of the previous parts, both teacher and parents answered also semi-structured interviews.

The participants of the focus groups talked about the following aspects that were the main categories to lead the interview: 1.Supervision and help with homework and projects' assignments. 2. Maintaining a clear and honest two-way communication regarding language class matters. 3. Cognitive support. 4. Moral support. 5. Involvement in school's activities and requirements. 6. Developing literacy skills.   The students shared their insights, situations, perceptions and understanding of each one of those categories. It was expected to find several coincidences and also some particularities among the information given by them and that was what actually happened.   The information from the following section is presented using the categories previously mentioned.

1. FOCUS GROUPS INFORMATION

1.1 Supervision and help with homework and project assignments

Participants in the focus groups explained that parents had the habit of asking about homework every day, this refers just to the act of asking the question but not going beyond and actually checking; they did not really check their children's notebooks or text books to see if there is or there isn't homework indeed. Parents, using their authority, commanded students to "Do your homework" not checking if that homework did or did not exist. In the same way, when the students were in fact doing homework, parents did not use a supervision strategy to see whether the students were doing what they had to do, following instructions or were already done with their assignments, they just observed or went around their children when students were doing their homework. Parents did not offer any kind of help from their initiative and only answered questions when the students asked them. These answers were mostly regarding the mechanics of the assignment but not going deeper into the content. It was found that parents considered important everything meant to be done in the notebook but not other kinds of assignments as textbook exercises, handcrafts and paintings. By the time the students finished doing homework, parents just asked if they had finished but they did not supervise and check the quality, validity and accuracy of the homework done. It was found that as an incipient strategy, parents used the word "investigate" meaning that the students should use the internet to find answers to the doubts they had; they also led the students in the direction of asking the specific technical questions they could not answer to a relative who knew English. Besides all the previous, it was found that there was not a schedule for doing homework stated by the parents and it was the students themselves who organized their schedule to comply with their assignments. It is to note that students expressed they felt the lack of support from their parents.

On the other hand, few students expressed that their parents did help them with homework by asking and checking the type of assignment, sitting down with them and helping them through the process of completion, answering both mechanics and technical questions and using support resources as dictionary, internet and other books along with the students.

1.2. Clear and honest two-way communication regarding language matters

For the second category, maintaining a clear and honest two-way communication regarding language class matters, it was found that parents showed some interest about the

performance their children had in all the school subjects including English. In this sense, they asked the students about their performance and grades in the English subject to get to know if that performance was positive and to know if the students understood the requirements of the class. In case students said no, parents' strategy was to pay a private tutor to help the student overcome his/her difficulties. Parents seem to be very concerned mostly about the grades in the class. Students expressed that their parents did not ask them about their personal perception of the class and of the English language nor about their motivation towards it, the reason that parents provided about their concern is that they consider that English language is very important for the future of the students. There were no findings that parents shared their experiences and anecdotes about their process of learning English with their children. From the side of the students 12of them expressed that they communicated everything related to the English subject even if it is good or bad. The other half of students expressed that they only shared the positive things, keeping to themselves bad grades and other problematic situations in the class. When the students were honest with their difficulties in the subject, the parents used formulaic expressions as: "*you need to make a bigger effort*" and "*you must pay attention in class because English is important for your future*".

All of the students expressed that they were motivated, and assured that they had told the same to their parents. Their motivations are mostly extrinsic: better job, better income, being able to travel abroad or being able to reunite with family abroad. The students also expressed that they felt motivated by the way in which the class was taught and the activities and assignments provided. From the 26 students, 6 of them pointed out that they felt motivated towards English because with it they could communicate with native English speakers, they could understand what other people are saying when speaking in English and they can share their thoughts and emotions with other people in English.

1.3. Cognitive support

For the third category, cognitive support, it was found that a lot of parents did not provide cognitive support to their kids. Findings showed that the majority of the parents did not know the language. In this sense, these parents did not have strategies to offer cognitive accompaniment to their children and, since they had not had the opportunity of going through a process of learning the language, they could not provide suggestions, directions or even particular experiences about study and learning strategies. According to students, parents express that it was the students'

responsibility to go through their assignments and obligations. A very small number of parents knew English, they were English teachers, the children of these parents expressed that their parents shared experiences of their learning process and set study and learning strategies to provide cognitive support to their children. Some of the strategies were: watching kids' movies in English for the students to be able to follow the speaking of the characters. Another strategy is to read books written in English in order to enlarge vocabulary. A mother that was attending a language institute replicated the things that she sees her teacher doing when assessing them with her daughter.

1.4. Moral support

It was found that parents seemed to have very similar ways or formulas to give moral support to their kids; many parents tried to give motivational speeches to their children in an attempt to motivate them and push them to do things. An example of those speeches is the one about the importance of English language nowadays in a globalized world for the students to be able to get a better job, to be able to travel and to be able to get better income. The students pointed out that their parents repeated these ideas a lot. Another example of a motivational speech used by the parents is the one in which they express they believe in their children's capacities and repeat phrases like: "*I know you can, you are an intelligent boy/girl, remember this is important for your future*". Findings showed that beyond these two types of motivational speeches used by parents there was not a clear strategy to tie this to a cognitive support as it was pointed out in the previous category. In the field of moral support it was found that most of the parents preferred dialog over scolding when it came to discussing bad grades; many parents insisted on the idea that good grades were the student's only obligation. 5 students expressed that they were nagged by their parents when they got bad grades and they were grounded with strategies like no TV, no video games, not going out. One student expressed that her mother invited her to eat out or to the movies when she got good grades.

1.5. Involvement in school activities and requirements

The findings in this categories showed that many parents did not get involved in other activities of the school; even when it comes to doing follow up of their children's process, the majority of them did not attend the school by their own initiative. Most of the students expressed that their parents only go to school when they have citation from a teacher or from a school authority. Many parents did not get involved in other activities like fundraisings, artistic day,

sports day, etc. Due to this issue, parents did not share other spaces and activities of the school with their children. Nevertheless, there were 2 students who expressed that their parents did go on a regular basis to the school to get informed about their performance.

1.6. Developing literacy skills

Most of the students declared that they had good reading examples from their parents; this means, that they had seen their parents reading several times since they were little. Findings showed that these parents also asked their children to read. The most common way to do this, according to the findings, was parents asking their children to read something in order to improve orthography and to get new vocabulary. Findings showed that parents most of the time left the option open about what to read to their children as long as they did read something. Some parents suggested topics of reading according to their own interests in reading. Many parents even had a strategy to do follow up of the reading their kids are doing. For example, a father sent news via whatsapp to his son and at night he asked him to give him a summary of the news read. Another mother liked to read esoteric literature and suggests this strongly to her daughter, later she sits down with her and discusses the book together. Findings also showed that there was not a strategy and an attempt from parents to make their children write. All students declared that there was not a request in this sense from their parents to them.

2. CASE STUDIES INFORMATION

1.CASE STUDY 1

This was a 15-year-old male student. He had been in the school for 3 years. The student showed a good performance and had in average, good grades in the English class. He lived with both his parents and studied English in the school and in a private academy. There was certain support from his parents regarding the English language subject assignments but there was also a lot of autonomy for the student to do things on his own. Parents seemed to be interested in supporting and participating in their son's process but not with a specific strategy. Regardless, the student had a good level in the language and his parents morally supported him mostly with motivational sentences and examples in their own family. The following information responds to the same categories analyzed for the focus groups.

1.1 Supervision and help with homework and project assignments

Findings showed that the student's parents asked him every time about homework and different assignments. They supervised until some point if the student did his homework because, according to the student, they relied on his responsibility and only provided options for helping him in case he needed help.

1.2.Clear and honest two-way communication regarding language matters

The student reported that his parents usually told him that they would be proud if he became a proficient user of the language. The student also reported that his parents had never asked about his motivation for learning English. According to him, they pointed out that English was extremely important for life, giving as an example several relatives that speak good English.

1.3.Cognitive support

Findings showed that there was not a strategy from the parents to support the learning process of the student. Sometimes they shared some strategies of their time learning English for the student to follow.

1.4 Moral support

The student reported that his parents always tried to maintain a frank and constructive conversation for moments in which he faced difficulties and bad performance in class. They used to point out the student's capacities and addressed motivational messages to him.

1.5 Involvement in school activities and requirements

Findings showed that the parents of the students were not really involved in school activities. They did not go to other activities as sports or artistic ones. They just went to the school for report meetings and that was when they were informed about the student's performance.

1.6 Developing literacy skills

The student reported that very often his parents asked him to read. Their idea was that the student could read some books in order to gain more knowledge and to read the dictionary to have more vocabulary. Regarding writing, the student reported that there was not a strategy or a requirement of working in this ability.

2. CASE STUDY 2

The second case study was a 15-year-old male student. He has been in the school for 8 years. At the moment of the interview, he was reported by the teacher for having bad grades. The student lived with his grandmother. He had contact with his parents who asked about his academic performance, demanding him to do homework without further support, strategy or purpose. He did not study English anywhere else. There was not a support or accompanying strategy for learning the language. The student was on his own with intermittent involvement of his mother. His grandmother scolded him and repeated some formulaic sentences to have him do homework.

2.1.Supervision and help with homework and project assignments

The student reported that his grandmother asked about homework when she realized that it was around 9pm or later. She said it was necessary for the student not to be awake until 1 or 2am doing homework. Beyond that, there was no evidence of any kind of supervision up to the point that the student could be doing something completely different and the grandmother did not notice. Regarding help, the solution that she offered was to call a relative that knew English. According to the student those relatives, who lived abroad, did not always answer the calls.

.2.2. Clear and honest two-way communication regarding language matters

The student reported that there was not any kind of communication between him and his grandmother or his mother when he got to see her. They did not ask about his performance, motivation or expectation for the English class. The student did not share any of this information either.

2.3. Cognitive support

The student reported that his grandmother and his mother did not know English. In addition, they did not offer any kind of support for the student to achieve the learning objectives.

2.4. Moral Support

The grandmother usually scolded the student for not doing homework on time or for getting bad grades in the different assignments. There was no evidence of dialog or reflection around the problem. When the student was in contact with his mother, she pointed out that it was his responsibility to have good performance in school.

2.5.Involvement in schools activities and requirements

Findings showed that the grandmother was not really involved in other school activities. Sometimes when the mother was in the city, she would go to the school to ask about his son's performance. They did not attend other meetings, cultural or sport events.

2.6. Developing literacy skills

The student reported that there was not a real request from his grandmother for him to read something. Sometimes he read but from his own initiative. Regarding writing there was no evidence of development of this skill.

3. CASE STUDY 3

He was a male student aged 15. This student has been in the school for eight years. His grades were average. The student lived with his mother but both parents seemed to show some interest about his academic performance and homework, again no clear strategy seemed to be used in order to help him. His father knew some English and had lived in the United States. There seemed to be a fluent communication about the subject with the father and he shared with him anecdotes and some strategies he used when he learned English as a motivational strategy.

3.1. Supervision and help with homework and project assignments.

The student said that his parents had placed most of the responsibility on him, this is why they had clarified to the student that he had to organize his own schedule for homework and had accomplished it every time. This given, parents asked about homework but did not check or did not supervise if the student was doing it. His father was there to help him with basic things, due to his limited knowledge of English, and when assignments became too complicated and he could no longer help, his strategy was to have the student ask to another relative.

3.2. Clear and honest two-way communication regarding language matters

According to the student, there was a good dynamic of communication regarding language matters mostly with his father. The father asked about the student's performance in class and the student shared quality information about this matter. His father regularly shared anecdotes and some strategies he once used to learn English with his son expecting his son to apply them. The mother did the same but less often. His father had told the student more than once that he would

like him to learn English so he could travel and have a better job. His mother had said the same thing but, according to the student, not as convinced as his father and very less often.

3.3. Cognitive support

Even with the father knowing English, findings showed that there was not a strategy for supporting the student. Parents limited their participation to answering basic questions.

3.4. Moral Support

According to the student, the role of his parents in this aspect was to scold him when he did not accomplish what was expected on his own. Parents repeated the same requirement: that is the student himself who has to organize his time and cope with everything, over and over.

3.5. Involvement in school's activities and requirements

The student reported that his parents did not get involved in any school activity of any kind, sports, artistic, school government, etc. They communicated with the school via Whatsapp.

3.6. Developing literacy skills

According to the student, his parents did not read. He reported that he had not seen his parents read in a long time. In this sense, parents did not ask him to read or write anything either.

4. CASE STUDY 4

This case was a male student aged 15. He had bad grades in English language subject. According to findings, he showed difficulties in learning the language. He lived with both parents. The student has been one year in the school. There was not a strategy from the parents to help the student overcome the situation. Still, there seemed to be a fluent communication about the process of learning the language.

4.1. Supervision and help with homework and project assignments

The student reported that his parents asked about homework and assignments and supervised the existence of this. Regardless, parents did not offer any help, they just supervised if the student was doing what he had do. As pointed out by the student, the parents were there but did not offer any kind of help.

.4.2. Clear and honest two-way communication regarding language matters

According to the student he shared information about his performance in the English class with his parents regularly, he also pointed out that they asked him about this very often trying to understand his difficulties. The student reported that his parents acknowledged there were difficulties and that they would like him to overcome this by signing the student up to an academy.

4.3. Cognitive support

Findings showed that there was not any strategy from parents to help the student to overcome this situation. The closest to that was the idea of complementing the process in a language academy.

4.4. Moral Support

The students reported that his parents tried to reflect upon the situation with him, more when the student had bad grades and reports. They repeated phrases like "*you can do it*", *you are intelligent*", *make a bigger effort*", to him.

4.5. Involvement in school activities and requirement

The student reported that his father maintained constant and fluent communication with the school, he called very often, and he went to the school every time he could to stay informed about the student's process. Beyond that, the father did not get involved in other activities.

4.6. Developing literacy skills

According to the student, his parent's did not have a reading routine but they did ask him to read. There was not a specific requirement for reading except what the student liked. Parents said that this was a good strategy to improve critical thinking and reading.

5. CASE STUDY 5

This was a 15 year-old female student with very bad grades in the English language subject. She lives with her mother. There seemed to be a total absence of communication between them both. The mother did not supervise or follow up her daughter's process. In addition, there were no cognitive strategies to support the student or any kind of moral support. The student seemed to be on her own in her learning process.

5.1. Supervision and help with homework and project assignments

The student reported that she did not have any help or supervision from her mother. The student said that most of the time she did not do homework or any other assignment. The mother did not ask about this in particular. When the student asked for any help or guidance the mother said that she did not remember anything about the subject and that anyhow, the one studying was the student and not her. Her father did not help her either. The student reported that she felt like it did not matter if her performance was good or bad.

5.2. Clear and honest two-way communication regarding language matters

The student reported that there was not communication regarding language matters between her and her mother. Her mother did not ask anything about the school to her daughter and the daughter did not share any information.

5.3. Cognitive support

In the same line of the other aspects, the student pointed out that she did not find any support for developing homework and assignments. The mother did not apply any strategy for this matter.

5.4. Moral Support

Findings showed that there was not really a support in this field. When the student met with her father, he scolded her saying that if she failed a school year he would lose money. He repeatedly showed an image saying that a shovel is heavier than a pencil to her. Once when the mother found out that the student had gotten a bad grade, she grounded her by forbidding television.

5.5. Involvement in school activities and requirements

The student reported that her mother very rarely goes to school for anything, not even to get performance reports.

5.6. Developing literacy skills

According to the student, her mother worked selling books so, sometimes she asked her to read something; whatever the student would like read. Findings showed that there was no requirement for the student to write or read anything specific.

6. CASE STUDY 6

The student was a 15-year-old female student who lived with her mother and grandmother. She has been one year in the school. She had good grades in English language subject. Her mother seemed to be very interested in her daughter's process and applied some strategies to support her. There was good communication between them both.

.6.1. Supervision and help with homework and project assignments.

The student reported there was a schedule, organized by her mother to do homework. The mother checked the nature of homework assignments and supervised if the student was actually doing them. When the mother saw mistakes, she had the student correct them as soon as possible and sat down with her to help and to supervise. The mother helped many times in the correction of mistakes. The mother also checks the notebook frequently.

6.2. Clear and honest two-way communication regarding language matters

According to the student, there was a constant communication regarding language matters in which the mother asked different things and the student shared information about it. Every day her mother asked about the school day and about what they did. When the mother detected that the student did not understand something she sat down with her to help. The mother offered to hire a private tutor if needed to overcome any problematic situation. The student reported that her mother very often said that English is important for travelling and working abroad.

6.3. Cognitive support

According to the student, her mother sat down with her when she had homework, analyzed the homework together and established guidelines for the student to accomplish the task. The mother helped her in any case needed according to her knowledge. If she could not offer quality help, she arranged a private class with a specialized teacher in the subject to help the student. Every Sunday that the student met with her father he had organized a schedule to sit down with her and help her do homework. The father also had the strategy of checking and correcting mistakes.

6.4. Moral Support

In this aspect, it was found that both parents congratulated the student for her good performance and when this was not the case, there was a reflection upon the thing that could have had influence on that. They constantly repeated phrases like: "*you can do it*", "*you are intelligent*", and "*we trust your capabilities*".

6.5. Involvement in school activities and requirements

The student reported that her mother went to the school very often. She went and looked for teachers to ask about her daughter's performance, she also communicated with the head teacher via Whatsapp. Regarding other activities the student reported that her mother got involved in many of them, artistic, English, sports, etc. The mother is the representative of the parents for her daughter's class in the school government.

6.6. Developing literacy skills

The student reported that her grandmother read constantly. In this sense, the latter asked the student to read whatever she would like but to read something. The father of the student bought her books regularly and asked her to read them and to give him some kind of report about him.

3. PARENTS' INFORMATION

In the following section the information gathered from the parents will be shown. Although they were interviewed also in the light of the six aspects in which students were, parents answers will be presented as the summary of the result of the information they provided around those six aspects.

The parents interviewed considered that supporting their children with homework and assignments was a very important duty they needed to do, even if work issues didn't leave enough time to accomplish that responsibility. They also pointed out as very important the development of autonomy that they could provide to their children; it was because of this consideration that they reported they helped the students in the case they needed it trying to be available at anytime they were needed but at the same time allowing students to complete their task and solve the majority of the conflicts they could face during that process. Two of the parents reported that they

had established a schedule for their children to do homework and the other one said that she left that option open to her child as long as they had done homework at a specific time at night.

Regarding communication, parents considered this a very important aspect and again, recognized that work and house issues could work against a good quality time in which they could share and communicate with their children. Parents reported that they tried to ask every day if the students had homework and have them doing it. They also asked at least once a week about the performance in the school, difficulties, easy aspects and aspects to improve. Parents also made the effort of asking the students about their motivation for English. Parents pointed out that communication with teenagers could become difficult sometimes because of aspects related to their age.

The strategies for support that parents used were found to be similar in all cases, sitting down with the students to answer questions, making the students correct any mistake they had, having a set schedule, calling relatives who could give a better support about the subject and calling specialized teachers who can solve deeper doubts and problems. Regarding moral support parents agreed that they used some formulaic phrases to motivate their children, for example, "*you are intelligent*", "*you can do it*", "*the only thing you need is to make a bigger effort*". For the aspect of involvement in school activities parents declared that due to their work and house obligations they were not as present as they could be in the school. The three of them pointed out that if they were called by a teacher or by a school's authority they went, but beyond that, it was difficult for them to attend any other kind of activities. Finally, about developing literacy skills all parents agreed on the importance of reading for, according to them, improving vocabulary, orthography and knowing about other places. No matter this, parents acknowledge they did not have a strategy to have their children reading.

4. TEACHER'S INFORMATION

The following is the report of the information gathered in the interview with the teacher. In this, the 6 aspects were also considered even when it was a general report of her perception about each one.

Regarding support and help with homework and assignments the teacher considered that the support was not enough; there was some support but it did not seem to be enough when the students needed to show their progress and knowledge of the language. According to the teacher,

there was a strong idea spread through parents about giving independence to the students and developing their autonomy. This was pushed to the limit by parents and resulted in a lack of real support and supervision from parents to students. Also, she considered that parents tended to say something when in the school, but actually did something different in the real practice.

The teacher considered that there is not a good communication between students and parents; according to her, the students did not share real, valuable information about language matters with their parents and they did not ask about it either or did not ask the proper questions. Regarding cognitive support the teacher pointed out again that parents are taking the strategy of giving independence and autonomy to the students too far, so they are not helping and supporting the students' process and they are rather leaving them alone. The teacher reported that she did not have knowledge about how the parents were morally supporting their children so she did not make any comment about this aspect.

About parents' involvement in school activities she pointed out that this was minimal, according to her, parents only went to school when they were called upon and most of the times, parents rushed the meeting because they needed to go back to work as soon as possible. Finally, about developing literacy skills, the teacher reported that she had the perception that parents did not really read or write and did not ask their children to do so. The teacher pointed out the case of one mother who sat down with her daughter to read and analyze books. She did point out that students seemed motivated both for extrinsic and intrinsic motives, traveling, getting a better job, living abroad, being recognized in their community for speaking another language, being able to communicate with speakers of English and being able to understand different materials written in English.

VII.   ANALYSIS

1. ORGANIZATION OF THE INFORMATION

According to the information gathered, three levels of response from parents were allocated for each one of the categories studied in the six case studies. Responses went from low levels of response, to high levels of response, with a medium level in each category. These levels of response were also assessed as being positive or negative according to the description of the categories given by the authors. This was done to organize the information, allow the identification of patterns and find relationships between the levels of response from parents within each category and the performance (grade) of the student. These three levels were named as: Low, medium and high; and were labeled as positive or negative. Each category had the three of them, for instance, Cognitive support low, medium or high. This referred to how much parents got involved within each category and if the role they were assuming in each category answered in a positive way to the expected one described by the authors. The analysis was done by categories using the information from the six study cases and coded in colors for the three levels of response. The range of the grades is the one that the school used which starts from 0.0 and finishes in 5.0.The following chart shows the way in which information was organized, the patterns found and the relationships established.

2. DATA ANALYSIS

Code Conventions

🔴 High   🔵 Medium   🟢 Low

Chart 1. Analysis of results 1

	1. SUPERVISION AND HELP WITH HOMEWORK AND PROJECT ASSIGNMENTS.	2. CLEAR AND HONEST COMMUNICATION REGARDING LANGUAGE MATTERS.	3. COGNITIVE SUPPORT	4. MORAL SUPPORT	5. INVOLVEMENT IN SCHOOL'S ACTIVITIES	6. DEVELOPING LITERACY SKILLS	GRADE
CASE 1	🔵	🟢	🟢	🔴	🟢	🔵	1.8
CASE 2	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	3.2
CASE 3	🔵	🔴	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	3.9

CASE 4	🔵	🔴	🟢	🔴	🔴	🔵	2.3
CASE 5	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🔵	2.0
CASE 6	🔴	🔴	🔴	🔴	🔴	🔴	3.8

The analysis showed that the cases with good grades presented some recognizable patterns. In the first place, those cases were the ones in which good communication strategies from parents were being applied, this happened because parents were concerned asking their children about the process and assuming roles such providing feedback, motivation and support according to the situation. Also a positive and honest two-way communication was being carried out allowing parents and students to discuss the details of the process and making decisions regarding the best way to proceed in order to maintain or improve results. The honesty with which students communicated their parents the difficulties in the process led to actions like deeper parent-student explanations, better communication and work strategies involving the school, or external tutoring to help the students to overcome those situations. This was found to be an important role in the getting good grades. Besides, when parents shared their expectations about the process with their children and even shared their own experiences about their learning language process, the students could reflect upon the way to act within their own process and the importance of learning the language. When sharing their concerns, strategies and motivation with their parents, the students found a way to assess the different situations they could face. These were students who were skillful enough to adapt their own strategies to overcome problematic situations and to adopt a future vision of how important can be learning the language for them, always knowing that they had the communication channel with their parents open all the time.

Another pattern found for those students was that at least some degree of supervision was present. The analysis showed that the role of parents being there asking about homework, checking the development of it, providing guidance, setting time schedules, or just observing the students finishing their duties played an important role in getting good grades. Students who had that supervision adopted roles that helped them finish their homework taking into account quality and appropriateness of content. Since they knew they had an adult that was paying attention to their process, they felt complied to accomplish their tasks, something that is still necessary for teenagers at this age. Also, having that supervision created in the students the sense of

responsibility in which they understood the importance of being in charge of their own process, accomplish their obligations and managing their own process. In this sense, the analysis showed that the idea of autonomy that parents were applying was paying good results on the condition that they did not leave the students on their own completely.

Finally, the last pattern found for cases with good grades was the presence of a good positive moral support. The analysis showed that the students for which their parents preferred to exercise dialogue, to discuss the situations and that always had a word of support for them, had better results. The role of a supportive parent constantly addressing motivational words, reminding the students' capabilities, using positive examples from family and other people, offering different kinds of help and exercising discipline along with dialog had a positive outcome. Students with this kind of support felt the accompaniment and the expectations of their parents as a boost for them to improve and were convinced of the importance of working to have an effective process. Also this support created in the students the idea of responding to their parents' accompaniment and the desire of making them feel proud. This also motivated the students to continue improving in their process.

As showed in the results, motivation played a significant role in getting good grades. Those students who had good communication with their parents and who could listen to several reasons why it is important to know English, built a strong idea about the language and used their motivation as a strategy to face the language learning process. Students with instrumental motivation set goals and found a real-life pay off to the effort of learning the language. It can be thought that since students did not live in an English speaking country they did not really find reasons like communicating with other, belonging to a group or sharing experiences with peers in English language as vehicles for them to be motivated to face and succeed in the learning process. In this sense, the idea of being able to travel to another country to expand their life project, the expectation of getting a better paid job because of knowing English or the hope of being able to help their family in the future motivated them to continue making an effort and to refine their learning and study strategies. This motivation was constantly nurtured by the moral support and the good communication from their parents, who were a supportive feature for enhancing the other aspects addressed in this study. Regardless of what was said before there were some very specific cases in which the students also had intrinsic motivational factors playing a role in their language learning process.

On the other hand, some patterns were found for the cases that presented low grades and poor performance. As stated before, the analysis showed that communication was an aspect that played an important role in the learning process of the students. So it was found that cases with poor performance were the ones in which parents did not apply good communication strategies or did not communicate at all with their children. These parents did not ask their children about the development of the class, did not ask about homework and there was no sharing of valuable information between them and their children. Students whose parents did not show interest in their process, who did not have the opportunity to share important information with their parents about the English class for feedback and for whom there were no moments in which they could have an honest communication with their parents, presented a dramatic drop in grades far from the better ones. These students did not see the English language as more than being a subject in the school given that they never had the opportunity to share motivations, feelings, expectations, concerns and support words with anyone in their family. In this sense, students did not see and did not have the guide to see English language as a valuable asset for their lives and did not pursue the consecution of a good performance in it.

Another aspect found to be present in these cases was the lack of strategies for helping and supervising the students as well as the negative application of these. Those cases in which no supervision was provided showed that even with the idea of autonomy that parents applied, teenagers still needed some degree of supervision in order to accomplish their duties. Similarly, the supervision consisting only in observing the students or walking around them with no further strategy did not pay good results. As pointed out before, students needed structured supervision and rules for them to be able to finish their assignments observing aspect of quality, completeness, validity and reliability.

The analysis also showed that another aspect triggering bad grades was the absence of cognitive strategies for helping the students. It was found that for the cases with low grades the parents were not providing any kind of cognitive strategy for the students to get to know how to study, how to address the homework, how to solve problems and how to accomplish their duties in the best way. These students needed that kind of support for them to have a starting point in which they could have a clear view of the pathway they needed to follow in order to fulfill their responsibilities. The lack of assistance left the students without an important stage of the learning process in which parents support and complement the work done at school. In this case, the idea of autonomy that parents were applying did not work as expected. It was necessary for students

to have accompaniment and to get cognitive help for them to understand the nature of the homework assignments, its content and the best way to approach to get the best result out of it.

Finally, regarding the development of literacy skills, this was found to be a weak aspect for the cases of bad grades. In these, parents were not leading their children in a way in which they could get reading and writing habits to help them to improve in their literacy process, parents were not providing the students with strong mental structures that helped them overcome difficulties and approach the process of studying in the best way. For these aspects it could be thought that more than teaching their children in an effective way, parents were interfering with their children's learning process using strategies that were unresponsive to the objective of academic improvement. It can be thought that what was necessary for students to improve their academic performance was not only the accompaniment from their parents but a well-structured set of actions that really helped the students improve in their process and did not act as a factor of interference and distraction.

The SES in which the students lived had always shaped an idea of what English is important for. López, Quesada and Salas (2014) concluded that socio-economic factors created clear resolutions in students' minds and shaped their motivation to learn English, in this sense this study found that people in this middle-class community have had the idea that knowing English and consequently traveling abroad could be a factor of professional and financial development. This finding goes in a different direction in relation the study done by Segura (2016). The author found that students were aware of the difficulties presented in their communities, the lack of work opportunities and the low economic conditions and that those were issues for students to consider the second language learning as an important matter. In this present study, participants had developed the idea of English as a factor of development, supported by their parents. They were convinced that learning English was going to help them get a better paid job or even get a job overseas which could help them support their family financially and try to find the way out of their SES to move up in the social scale. Students also believed that by learning the language they would be able to look for study opportunities abroad and also travel. Due to the reasons explained above, it is understandable that this was the most frequent type of motivation in these students, a motivation very attached and in context to their current situations and their expectations for the future having English as a tangible asset to help them achieve specific goals.

The aspects and categories addressed before are just part of the elements needed to succeed in an academic process of learning a foreign language. It is necessary to mention that not only the support from parents will mean good results, there are some other aspects, not covered in this study, that are present in the process of learning a language. Aptitude, attitude, learning and study strategies, attributions and the wish of doing the best also play a major role in this complex process of learning. It is important to mention that those are also aspects in which parents can provide help and guidance.

VIII.   DISSCUSION

1. DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

The central question guiding this study was about the role that family support played in the performance of the students in the second language learning process. In this sense, talking about roles, it was found that, as proposed by Martinello (2000), roles adopted by parents to support their children could be organized taxonomically for their identification and conceptualization and that this was a good way to approach the exploration of those roles. Martinello found that the most important role was parents as teachers helping and supervising the students, doing homework and assignments, supporting them cognitively and morally and talking to the students. In this study it was found that the most important action within that role was parents talking to their children, in other words and as it was categorized in the study, this meant parents getting involved with an honest communication with their children and asking from the latter the same in order to construct a meaningful two-way communication process. This showed to be a determinant factor for high performance. This role was explored also by Avila and Garavito (2009) and proposed by them as fundamental for success in the learning process. In this study it was also found that parents were giving some sort of autonomy to their children regarding how and when to comply with assignments. This was consistent to what Castro et al. (2015),Desforges and Abouchaar(2003), Kovacs(2011)and Martinello(2000);encountered when they pointed out that the way in which parents got involved could foster or discourage performance of the students. Nevertheless, in this study, it could be seen that this autonomy was not being handled correctly by parents, they were giving too much or too few of it. For that reason that idea of autonomy was paying good results in some cases and providing bad results in others. This led to think that parents needed to check their idea of autonomy and actually needed to get more involved with their children's process providing valuable support.

Another pattern found in the study was that some degree of supervision was a factor influencing good grades. This was pointed out by Segura (2016) who found that parents who accompany and supervise academic activities help children and increase their chances of success. Segura could also conclude that family support is important and it plays a major role in students' performance. In the study, the actions that parents were taking for supervising students were not always giving good results but did help in some way to students who had good grades.

The last important factor found in this study was the one of parents providing valuable moral support. Children whose parents did that had better grades. Torres and Castañeda-Peña (2016) reached the same conclusion; they found that positive encouragement and advice was influencing results of the students in the language learning process. In this study it was found that not all parents knew English but still were trying to provide moral support to their children and making up for their circumstance of not being able to help due to their lack of knowledge of the language. This situation was covered by Castillo and Camelo (2013) as they found that one of the reasons for which parents were not supporting their children was their ignorance in the language. This was not the main finding in this study but it was mentioned by the students both in focus groups and in the individual interviews as one of their beliefs about why parents did not get involved so much in their process. Parents confirmed that they felt insecure when helping their children without knowing the language being taught.

Regarding motivation, results showed that most of the motivation came from what parents had said to the students about the importance of English language but it was also constructed from the positive feedback and moral support provided by parents. In this sense, in the first place it could be said that this aligns to what Kormos and Kiddle (2013) found about social class influencing motivation of students. As it was pointed out before, motivation in this case was found to be extrinsic, answering to the clear needs and expectations of people in this social class; these expectations were getting better jobs, traveling, getting better paid jobs. It could be also assumed that students constructed their motivation from the good communication and moral support they had from their parents. Lopez, et al. (2014) found that motivation was influenced by the expectations that parents had about their children. In this study it could be seen that when parents shared anecdotes of themselves and let the students know their expectations about the learning process it was a trigger for the latter to make a bigger effort and perform better in the language learning process.

In general, findings in this study go in the same direction of those in most of research done in the same field. Parental support did play a significant role in the students' performance. As it was expected, students whose parents supported them consistently and in a positive way showed better results than the others but it could not be evidenced that the absence of this support meant poor performance of the students.

IX.   CONCLUSIONS

This master's report explored the role that parents' support has in the performance of their children in learning English as a foreign language. The following objectives were proposed to carry out this research project:

The general objective was to identify and describe the role that family support plays in the EFL learning process of the students and the relationship to their academic performance. To accomplish this, four specific objectives were established: A. To describe the role that family plays in EFL learning process of the students. B. To explore how family support connects with the academic performance of the students in the English class. C. To explore if the level of family support responds to the perceptions family has about the importance of English. D. To describe the way students believe that family support is related to their motivation to learn English.

Regarding objective A it could be concluded that parents were assuming roles of supervisors and providers of elements of help but were not giving valuable cognitive support and supervision strategies for completion of homework and assignments. Parents were observing the students doing their homework and pointing out tools for support but they were not really getting involved in the process. Parents who were assuming roles of fostering communication had a better result in their supporting process.

About objective B it can be concluded that family support was definitely related to academic performance of the students. When parents provided useful cognitive support and meaningful moral support, they enhanced motivation of students and the response was a bigger effort to overcome the demands of the process. Here it is also important to note that meaningful two-way communication was a powerful strategy for parents to maintain involvement in the process and by doing this, they achieved adequate support for their children. This was translated into good results.

About objective C it was found that students felt motivated from what their parents said to them. The experiences shared by parents, their expectations and their comments about what was the importance of English language shaped in the students a type of motivation that was accompanying them through the process.

To sum up, it can be concluded that:

- High levels of positive and honest two-way communication along with a good strategy of supervision result in a good grade.

- Positive and constant moral support is also a predictor of a good performance.

- Students felt motivated from the communication, sharing of experiences and moral support of their parents. The message sent by parents shaped a specific kind of motivation.

- Unclear and non-useful strategies for developing literacy skills worked as an interfering factor in the learning process.

X.   LIMITATIONS

The study was carried out with a sample of 26 students divided into 5 focus groups and 6 study cases, this number of students provided useful information to explore patterns and to express some degrees of regularity. With a greater number of participants it could be possible to fully identify and organize the information in patterns and understand the regularities presented.

The questions for the interviews were set as semi-structured as they were given by the theme being analyzed and followed the lead that conversation provided as it flowed. A structured questionnaire previously set could be useful in order to support the dialog process and to assure that very important aspect will be covered.

The results found in this study work as information of certain students to be analyzed as individual cases and from which some ideas of regularity can be taken out to establish patterns. Having said that, it is still to validate conclusions through further research with a bigger number of participants.

XI.   RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations are addressed to two different actors in the language learning process, Teachers and future researchers.

1. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR TEACHERS

- The school and the teachers should create workshops for parents in which they can see the importance and the influence that their support has in their children's process.
- The teachers should foster two-way, honest communication both with parents and students in order to improve communication channels and the quality of the information.
- Teachers should continue encouraging supervision from parents to children in order to develop a level of autonomy that allows students to fulfill their duties.

2. RECOMMENDATION FOR FUTURE RESEARCHERS

- To go deeper into this topic by increasing the number of students of the sample.
- To previously set a structured questionnaire for the interviews in order to get exactly the information needed and as much as possible of it.

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XIII. ANNEXES

1. ANNEX 1: SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW APPLIED TO THE 5 FOCUS GROUPS

1. Presentation (1 Minute)

Good morning everyone, my name is Andres Chavez. I want to start today by thanking all of you for your participation in this research. We will be talking about some concepts related to the English class for half an hour. The reason of these groups is to gather your opinions, comments and attitudes about the role that the support of your parents play in your performance in English class; this is, to find out if your parents are supporting you, how are they doing it and how is it influencing your performance in class. I will be asking you questions, encouraging and moderating participation. I ask you to be as honest, clear and direct you can be. This focus group will be recorded for me to be able to recall the discussion and your answer. The identities and the answers of all the participants will remain strictly confidential. In this moment I may ask if you and your parents already signed the authorization form to participate here. Before we move on I want to set some rules

2. Setting of rules (2 Minutes)

These rules will allow us to have a more fluent and productive conversation

a. Only one person speaks at a time. This is to be able to listen among us and to have a clear recording.

b. Please, avoid side conversations

c. Not everyone has to answer every single question but the participation of everybody is important

d. There are no wrong answers, just different perspectives and cases.

e. Everything we discuss here remains confidential

f. If you need to go to the bathroom please ask in a break between questions

g. Feel free to enjoy snacks and beverages

3. Introduction of participants (2 minutes)

Before we start I'd like to know about each of you, please tell me your name, your age.

Questions (25 minutes)

Question 1: Talk to me about the way in which your parents inform about homework and supervise you doing it

Question 2: Talk about the communication between you and your parents, regarding school and English language
Question 3: Talk about the way in which your parents help you doing homework
Question 4: Talk about how do your parents praise you or scold you according to the situation, is there moral support? Talk about the motivation you feel for English class and if it is related to the support of your parents
Question 5: Talk about the way in which your parents get involved with activities in the school
Questions 6: Talk about the example you have from your parents about reading and what do they ask you to do about this
Closing: (1 minute)   *Thanks for coming today and talking about these issues. Your comments have been of great help for the research: thanks for your time. Have a nice day*

2. ANNEX 2. SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW APPLIED TO 6 STUDENTS INDIVIDUALLY

1. Presentation (1 Minute)   *Good morning as I already introduced myself my name is Andres Chavez. This is the next step in the research project. The idea of this interview in to go deeper into some of the topics and themes that rose in the focus groups. Again, I thank you for your participation and encourage you to have a very honest and concrete conversation here in this meeting that will last about 30 minutes. This interview will also be recorded and your answer will be completely anonymous.*
2. Setting of rules (2 Minutes)   *Some rules very similar to the ones of the focus groups*   *a. Please answer with honesty and clearness*   *b. feel free to have snacks and refreshment*
Questions – Semi structured (25 minutes)
Question 1: Can you please go over the information you shared in the focus group about your parents supervising you? I will make some questions along the road
Question 2: Can you please go over the information you shared in the focus group about communication with your parents? I will make some questions along the road
Question 3: Can you please go over the information you shared in the focus group about your parents helping you with cognitive support? I will make some questions along the road

Question 4: Can you please go over the information you shared in the focus group about your parents giving moral support to you? Also, please give deeper explanation about your motivation for the class taking into account all possible aspects. I will make some questions along the road

Question 5: Can you please go over the information you shared in the focus group about the way in which your parents get involved in the activities of the school? I will make some questions along the road

Questions 6: Can you please go over the information you shared in the focus group about your parents' reading habits and your reading habits? I will make some questions along the road

Closing: (1 minute)

Thanks for coming today and talking about these issues. Your comments have been of great help for the research: thanks for your time. Have a nice day.

3. ANNEX 3. SEMI-STRUCTURE INTERVIEW APPLIED TO THE ENGLISH TEACHER OF THE STUDENTS

1. Presentation (1 Minute)

Good morning my name is Andres Chavez. I'm conducting a research about the role that parents' support play in the performance of their kids in the English class. I already talked to your students and now I would like to ask you some questions in order to have you viewpoint, your opinions and insights about this topic. This is the next step in the research project. This is an exclusively academic research. I would like to ask you to answer in the most sincere way possible and in a very precise way. I will be recording your answer but everything that is said here will remain strictly confidential.

2. Setting of rules (2 Minutes)

Some rules for this session

a. Please answer with honesty and clearness

b. feel free to have snacks and refreshment

Questions – Semi structured (25 minutes)

Question 1: How do you feel parents' supervision when you send homework and other assignments? Can you please argument your answers?

Question 2: What do you think about students-parents communication? Is it seeable within the process?

Question 3: Do you observe cognitive support from parents when helping students to do

their homework? Do you think it is working?
Question 4: Can you notice moral support from parents to children? Do you feel the students are motivated? Does it have to be in some way with parents' support?
Question 5: How is the involvement of parents in different activities of the school?
Question 6: can you notice that parents are developing literacy skills in their children by their own beyond the school's work?
Closing: (1 minute) *Thanks for coming today and talking about these issues. Your comments have been of great help for the research: thanks for your time. Have a nice day.*

4. ANNEX 4. SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW APPLIED TO THREE PARENTS OF THE STUDENTS

1. Presentation (1 Minute) *Good morning my name is Andres Chavez. I'm conducting a research about the role that parents' support play in the performance of their kids in the English class. I already talked to your children and now I would like to ask you some questions in order to have you viewpoint, your opinions and insights about this topic. This is the next step in the research project. This is an exclusively academic research that will not have any incidence in your children's grading in the school. I would like to ask you to answer in the most sincere way possible and in a very precise way. I will be recording your answer but everything that is said here will remain strictly confidential.*
2. Setting of rules (2 Minutes) *Some rules for this session* *a. Please answer with honesty and clearness* *b. feel free to have snacks and refreshment*
Questions – Semi structured (25 minutes)
Question 1: How is your process to get informed about homework and supervise the students doing it?
Question 2: How is the communication between you and your child? Is it honest? Does it happen in two-ways? Is it fruitful?
Question 3: How do you help your child doing homework? What strategies do you apply? Please argument your answers
Question 4: Do you provide moral support to your child? Do you praise him/her? Do you

scold him/her? Do you feel you child motivated for English language?
Question 5: How do you get involve in schools' activities? Do you attend to different activities? How often? Why? Why not?
Question 6: Do you give example of reading to your child? Do you ask him to read? Why/why not? Do you have a particular reason and a particular strategy to do so?
Closing: (1 minute) *Thanks for coming today and talking about these issues. Your comments have been of great help for the research: thanks for your time. Have a nice day.*