

Teacher-parent Collaboration for Young EFL Learners: A Thai Teacher's Experiences

Joe Lei¹ & Jutarat Vibulphol¹

¹ Faculty of Education, Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok, Thailand

Correspondence: Joe Lei, Faculty of Education, Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok, Thailand. E-mail: joe.chula2024@gmail.com

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Abstract

This case study explored how an English teacher in Thailand engaged parents in supporting their young children's English language learning during remote teaching in 2021-2022. The teacher's strategies for establishing teacher-parent collaboration reflected the importance of acknowledging parents' input, empowering their participation in their children's learning, and addressing challenges to collaboration. Data were collected through an online semi-structured interview and analyzed thematically with member checking. The analysis focused on the teacher's efforts to address parents' concerns and ensure their involvement in supporting their children's English learning. The study found that the teacher employed various strategies to engage and empower parents with diverse backgrounds, perspectives, English abilities, and confidence levels. These strategies included providing video clips of teaching for parents to learn from or play for their children, equipping parents to be English teachers at home, and sharing examples of students being supported by their parents. This case study underscores the significant role an EFL teacher can play in engaging parents to support their children's English learning at home, even when parents have limited English proficiency.

Keywords: teacher-parent collaboration, parents' support, remote teaching, learning at home

1. Introduction

To enhance parent engagement in supporting their children's learning, many schools organize parent-teacher conferences to facilitate the exchange of information about a student's development and performance, allowing parents and teachers to collaborate on strategies to support the student's growth (Munthe & Westergård, 2023). These conferences cover not only academic progress but also personal development. However, during 2020-2021, education worldwide faced significant disruption due to the COVID-19 pandemic, leading to lockdowns and extended periods of remote teaching and learning. This disruption created uncertainties and stress for all stakeholders as traditional teaching methods, classroom activities, and assessment processes had to be re-designed (Cui et al., 2021; Garbe, Ogurlu, Logan & Cook, 2020; Klusmann, Trippenzee, Fokkens-Bruinsma, Sanderman & Schroevers, 2022; Koskela, Pihlainen, Piispa-Hakala, Vornanen & Hämäläinen, 2020; Lau & Lee, 2021; Lavery & Dahill-Brown, 2024; Minihan et al., 2022; Misirli & Ergulec, 2021; Nyanamba, Liew & Li, 2021; Putri et al., 2020; Spinelli, Lionetti, Pastore & Fasolo, 2020). As students transitioned to remote learning, parental engagement became increasingly critical (Balayar & Langlais, 2021; Flores, Espinosa & Tadler, 2021; Koskela, et al., 2020; Lau & Lee, 2021). While parents needed support and communication from schools and teachers (Lau & Lee, 2020; Misirli & Ergulec, 2021), schools and teachers relied heavily on parents to ensure that remote teaching could be successful (Gunzenhauser, Enke, Johann, Karbach, & Saalbach, 2021; Klusmann et al., 2022).

For young learners, who often cannot manage their learning independently, parental involvement is crucial during remote teaching (Koskela, et al., 2020; Putri et al., 2020; Tao & Xu, 2022). In the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning in Thailand, encouraging parents to create a conducive environment for their children to learn English at home poses a significant challenge for schools and teachers. Many Thai parents do not use English in their daily lives, making it difficult to engage them in their children's English education (see also Murshidi et al., 2023). As a result, asking them to support their children's English learning is likely to require additional effort and creativity.

Research focusing on parent-teacher collaboration during remote teaching has generally examined the stress or impact on teachers (Mutch & McKnight, 2023; Klusmann et al., 2022; Lavery & Dahill-Brown, 2024; Minihan et al., 2022), parents (Flores et al., 2021; Garbe et al., 2020; Koskela, et al., 2020; Misirli & Ergulec, 2021; Murshidi et al., 2023; Nyanamba et al., 2021), and students (Balayar & Langlais, 2021; Jiang, Mo & Altinyelken, 2024), or the interactions among these groups (Cui et al., 2021; Lau & Lee, 2021; Putri et al., 2020; Spinelli et al., 2020). However, little research has specifically focused on the collaboration strategies between EFL teachers and parents to support children's learning at home. This case study aimed to fill that gap.

To explore best practices, this case study examined how an EFL elementary school teacher in Northeastern Thailand, Sophia (pseudonym), collaborated with the parents of her first- to sixth-grade students during remote teaching in 2020-2021. The parents of her students were predominantly farmers, with about 60% of them engaged in agricultural activities and the rest working in local government. Their English proficiency was limited, and many had low confidence in supporting their children's English learning. Additionally, some parents had not anticipated the responsibility of overseeing their children's English education.

Sophia's practices in collaborating with parents were analyzed using the models of "Parent Voice" and "Parent Presence" from McKenna and Millen (2013). This analysis examined how Sophia addressed parents' input and empowered them to be present in their children's English learning. This study's insights are valuable for EFL educators and teacher educators, as it highlights exemplary parent-teacher collaboration between EFL teachers and parents during a challenging period. The skills and strategies used to engage parents in supporting young learners in both crisis and non-crisis situations are crucial for in-service and pre-service teacher education.

The objective of this research was to explore how the EFL teacher identified and addressed parents' concerns and how she worked with them to support their children's English learning at home during the period of school lockdowns in 2021-2022.

2. Literature Review on Teacher-parent Collaboration

Parents are often the first and most important teachers for their children (Wright & Stegeline, 2003). Through their experiences of caregiving and observing their children's growth, parents acquire a significant amount of knowledge and experience in nurturing their children. As children begin formal education, the expertise of teachers becomes critical to both students and their parents. However, Visković and Jevtić (2017) suggested that teachers should also value parents' roles as "advisors," recognizing that teacher-parent collaboration is a two-way process involving mutual communication and cooperation. Parents' insights, observations, and experiences can help broaden teachers' understanding of their students and the learning paths they take.

Regarding the role of parents as advisors, Stroetinga, Leeman, and Veugelers (2021) noted that teachers in their study found parents' "specific knowledge and experience" to be reliable because parents knew their children best and could provide useful advice to teachers. They also defined teacher-parent collaboration as a situation in which both teachers and parents are interested in the perspectives of others, willing to recognize the practices and views of others, and willing to be aware of and even reflect on their own practices and perspectives (Stroetinga, et al., 2021).

Munthe and Westergård (2023) expressed that parents could be "experts" based on their knowledge and experience in caring for their children. This area represents an opportunity for teachers to seek advice from parents. Stroetinga et al. (2021) further emphasized that teachers needed to understand students better through parents' sharing of their knowledge and experiences to deliver the best education to their students. Koskela, et al. (2020) also found that parents were the facilitators of their children's learning in many aspects during the period of remote learning caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Parents were essential partners in education (Flores, et al., 2021). Thus, both teachers and parents can play complementary roles as advisors to each party, sharing what they perceive as beneficial to the students.

Todorova (2018) also noted that "mutual trust, respect, and shared responsibility" form the foundation of a successful teacher-parent partnership. This underscores that educational partners, both teachers and parents, can mutually benefit each other through collaboration and shared effort (Todorova, 2018). Olvera and Olvera (2012) described this collaboration as a growing relationship between families and educational systems, aiming at helping students reach their full learning potential. It also serves as a platform to address challenges in supporting students' learning.

Because of school lockdowns caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, Gunzenhauser, et al. (2021) considered it essential to enhance parents' capabilities to support their children with appropriate and supportive attitudes because parents were the first to help children when they faced learning challenges. Misirli and Ergulec (2021)

found that students who experienced consistent contact with their teachers during school lockdowns were better able to adjust to the drastic change in teaching modes. Koskela, et al. (2020) identified that a good understanding between parents and school personnel was extremely important for enhancing parents' participation in students' learning.

According to McKenna and Millen (2013), "Parent Voice" and "Parent Presence" are two key models of the Contemporary Parent Engagement Model. These two models focus on parents' perspectives, concerns, and efforts in supporting their children's educational development (McKenna & Millen, 2013).

"Parent Voice" refers to the parent's rightful role in expressing their knowledge about the child's educational experiences, including parental desires, goals, hopes, and dreams for their children, as well as frustrations, concerns, or anger over isolation and exclusion (McKenna & Millen, 2013). Essentially, any input or feedback from parents regarding their children's development is considered part of "Parent Voice." Under this model, parents are encouraged to communicate with teachers and schools, creating a two-way exchange that facilitates understanding between parents and educators (McKenna & Millen, 2013).

"Parent Presence" describes a parent's eagerness to be involved in their children's education. It includes a great variety of "subtle ways in which parents are active in a child's life, which are more difficult to quantify and measure" (McKenna & Millen, 2013, p. 36). It encompasses a parent's participation, either potential or actualized, in supporting children's learning. "Parent Presence" includes a broad range of activities, from providing basic needs to setting behavioral models and cultural teachings at home, as well as school involvement, parent advocacy, and relationship-building within the school environment (McKenna & Millen, 2013).

McKenna and Millen (2013) noted that when teachers engaged parents through the models of "Parent Voice" and "Parent Presence," they demonstrated respect for family members as "experts" on their children and as partners in their children's learning and development. When allowed to express themselves, parents could offer a great deal of information to teachers. "Parent Voice" needs to be attended to and channeled to the school personnel, while "Parent Presence" in supporting children's growth and development in social, cultural, and educational aspects needs to be identified and recognized through teacher-parent communication. The mutual understanding and trust between teachers and parents will then be possible to develop for the good of the students.

For the Contemporary Parent Engagement Model, there are four crucial conditions for effective parent engagement (McKenna & Millen, 2013). Firstly, engagement has to be developed over time. Secondly, it has to be active and deliberate. Thirdly, parent engagement has to be culturally sensitive. Finally, as teacher-parent communication is relational, engagement has to involve actions based on both the broader communal teacher-parent relationships and personal relationships (McKenna & Millen, 2013). The models of "Parent Voice" and "Parent Presence" have to be blended to form the Contemporary Parent Engagement Model (McKenna & Millen, 2013) (Figure 1).

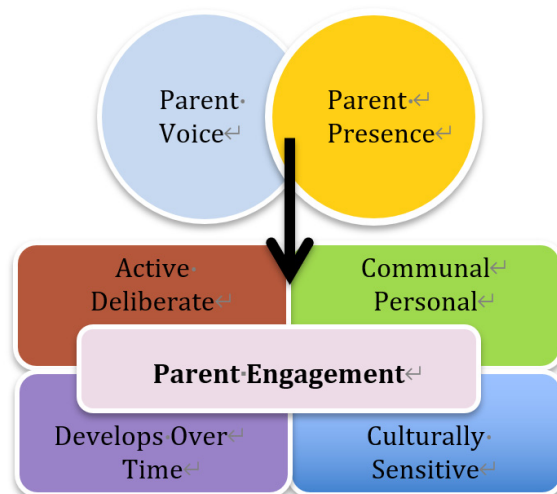


Figure 1. Contemporary Parent Engagement Model

(Source: McKenna, M. K., & Millen, J. (2013). Look! listen! learn! parent narratives and grounded theory models of parent voice, presence, and engagement in K-12 education. *School Community Journal*, 23(1), 9-48.)

For their study, McKenna and Millen (2013) confirmed that parents valued the relationships and communication paths, opportunities, and efforts between school and home as essential components of schooling. They also established that it was not only important for parents to be given opportunities to voice their perspectives but also an essential component of parent engagement, which delivered the message that schools cared for their children (McKenna & Millen, 2013). It also delivers the message to parents that teachers respect their perspectives, knowledge, and experiences in caring for their children. Teachers stand a very favorable chance to engage parents when they commit themselves to long-term development in their relationships with the parents, both personally and communally, and maintain active and deliberate moves in engaging the parents with cultural sensitivity.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design

The goal of this case study was to explore how an EFL teacher in Thailand engaged parents to support young EFL learners during an extended period of remote teaching. The qualitative paradigm assumes that "reality is socially constructed" and that it is shaped by the participant's perception of the situation (Creswell & Miller, 2000, p. 125). Given this assumption, the main sources of data in this study are the participant's experiences and narratives. To ensure data relevance, purposive sampling was used to select the participating EFL teacher.

Preliminary data were collected through online meetings with the participant and in-person meetings with parents in Northeastern Thailand. Open-ended questions were used to collect data from the participant's own experiences and narratives.

3.2 Participant

The participant, Sophia (pseudonym), was a local Thai EFL teacher at an elementary school in Northeastern Thailand. She had nine years of teaching experience in secondary schools and had taught English at the elementary school for thirteen years. An interview with Sophia in late December 2022 revealed that she had experience building collaborative relationships with parents during both face-to-face and remote teaching.

Although the socioeconomic statuses of the parents varied from government civil servants and teachers to farmers, Sophia successfully engaged them in supporting their children's education. During a meeting with two parents, both primary school teachers, they expressed that Sophia had helped equip them to teach their children English at home. They had participated in online parent English lessons, learning how to teach their children English at home. They were glad to get help and advice from Sophia and had observed subsequent progress in their children's spoken English.

Before the period of remote teaching, Sophia and her team focused on teaching English as a communication tool, encouraging students to speak English as much as possible without excessive correction. In Grades 1-3, Sophia emphasized English communication and phonics, with grammar instruction incorporated into sentences and conversation. She believed that teaching phonics could enhance students' motivation to study English. In Grades 4-6, she focused on both communication and grammatical rules, especially as students had to achieve good results in public examinations to ensure a better future.

During remote teaching, Sophia noted that the teaching content remained the same, but the methods of delivery had to change. This required greater involvement from parents. Sophia would spend 30-40 minutes teaching and then allow students time to work in groups during remote learning. She used the mobile app "TikTok" to demonstrate lessons, raise questions, and provide sample sentences, allowing students to watch as often as they wanted. Sophia also held Zoom meetings with parents to get feedback on her remote teaching and to understand their challenges in supporting their children. For parents who could not attend the Zoom meetings, she followed up with phone calls.

3.3 Data Collection

An online semi-structured interview with Sophia was conducted in mid-January 2023. Seven open-ended questions were used in the interview (see Appendix A). Sophia was also asked to freely initiate topics that she wanted to share regarding her experiences working with parents. The interview was recorded, with Sophia's prior consent, for data processing, transcription, and analysis, following the steps of description, analysis, and interpretation (Wolcott, 1994). Follow-up or clarification questions were asked as needed during the interview.

3.4 Data Analysis

The interview was transcribed, and the transcript was read and reread multiple times until the researchers became "intimately familiar" with its content (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). During this process, categories were created

based on the data, and open coding was used to identify themes. Notes and memos were taken for analytical purposes, leading to the emergence of clusters of thoughts, beliefs, and related actions.

3.5 Trustworthiness

Member checking was employed twice (Creswell & Miller, 2000; Marshall & Rossman, 2016). The interview transcript and the identified themes were sent to Sophia for her review and approval. A copy of the transcript was sent to Sophia two weeks after the interview, followed by a write-up with the findings and themes twelve months later. Sophia confirmed the data, findings, and themes were correct; no amendments were needed.

4. Findings and Discussion

The analysis of Sophia's interview data yielded four key findings in her ways of engaging parents for collaboration through her acknowledging "Parent Voice" and identifying, facilitating, and channeling "Parent Presence" to support the students. The findings were, firstly, Sophia's beliefs about teacher-parent collaboration; secondly, her adjustment to her teaching roles and strategies for engaging parents; thirdly, her perspectives on relationship building with the parents; and finally, her strategies for dealing with difficulties in building teacher-parent collaboration.

4.1 Sophia's Beliefs about Teacher-Parent Collaboration

Regarding Sophia's approach to engaging parents in supporting students during remote teaching, two major beliefs were identified in the interview. Firstly, Sophia believed that parents were the key facilitators of their children's English learning at home. Secondly, she believed that parents were ready to collaborate with teachers because they cared about their children's English learning.

4.1.1 Parents as Key Facilitators for Students' English Learning at Home

Believing that parents were the key facilitators in English learning at home, Sophia put her beliefs into practice by motivating parents to render support to their children. Sophia provided parents with video clips of her remote teaching to facilitate their children's understanding and parents' checking of their children's work. Sophia's sending of the video clips to parents was based on what she learned about parents' needs, or "Parent Voice" (Excerpt 1).

The kids and the parents, they supported each other and they supported me. When I taught through Zoom class, they paid attention to my teaching, so they could understand. If they didn't understand something, they let me know, and then I made a (video) clip and sent it to them. It was the same content as my online teaching, but most of the time, I would create answering clips for them. When I gave them exercises, the parents helped me check their kids' work. (Excerpt 1, Lines 246-255)

Having learned that some parents could not teach their children English at home, Sophia created video clips for them to show their children how to learn English. By either playing Sophia's video clips for their children or learning from the clips to teach their children themselves, Sophia ensured that students had the same opportunity to learn, regardless of their parents' social and educational backgrounds. In this scenario, Sophia addressed the parents' voices and concerns about their limitations in teaching their children English at home by supporting the parents with her video clips of teaching. It was obvious that playing the video clips for their children was one form of "Parent Presence" parents could choose, or learning from the video clips the ways of teaching English was another form of "Parent Presence." Sophia was thus reinforcing the parents' role as facilitators in their children's learning by attending to "Parent Voice" about their needs and limitations and strengthening "Parent Presence" by supporting them with resources in performing their roles at home (Excerpt 2).

...another problem would be when the parents couldn't support their children because they were farmers and didn't know how to teach English. I recorded my teaching clips and sent them to the parents and students through Line, a short learning clip. The parents could turn it on for their kids. If they wanted to teach their kids themselves, they could learn from me and then teach their kids. Some parents who couldn't teach just turned on the clips for their children, giving them the same opportunity to learn. (Excerpt 2, Lines 213-240)

Some parents had expressed their desire to learn English more, with the ultimate goal of teaching their children English at home. Sophia addressed this kind of unique parental aspiration and need by organizing online parent English lessons. Two parents confirmed that they got help and advice from Sophia when they joined the parents' online learning. Sophia's input reflected both her acknowledging "Parent Voice" and actual support to parents for "Parent Presence" in teaching their children English at home (Excerpt 3).

Some parents said, 'I want to learn more English.' I taught them after school or after work as they had jobs. They learned English through Zoom... If parents wanted to teach their kids themselves, they could learn from me and then teach their kids. (Excerpt 3, Lines 217-220, 235-237)

Sophia considered parents to be crucial partners in her teaching; she recognized that she could teach better with their help. This belief was sustained even after the period of remote teaching because Sophia had experienced "Parent Presence" in supporting her students' English learning; she preferred to keep up this teacher-parent collaboration by facilitating "Parent Presence" (Excerpt 4).

Even now, COVID-19 is not in crisis... I still communicate with the parents because, after COVID-19, I see that having parents to support my teaching is better than teaching alone. Even though students come to school normally, I still create some video clips about important or difficult topics. If my students still have problems understanding, I explain more and send it to the parents. (Excerpt 4, Lines 462-474)

Sophia valued parents' roles in facilitating students' learning and supporting teachers. In her perspective, parents were, in fact, crucial for students' learning, and teachers should seek their help and support. These reflected her recognition of the parents' efforts, "Parent Presence," in supporting the children's learning (Excerpts 5, 6, and 7).

In the classroom, you teach alone. When you teach online, they [the students] have parents at home. So, it must be the parents who support you. I just try whatever I think will support and help my students. (Excerpt 5, Lines 617-620)

As long as you (teachers) intend to make your students learn, you can ask for help from parents. I just do it because it's a chance to make my students learn. (Excerpt 6, Lines 609-614)

The main thing is parents, materials, resources, and yourself. You have to improve yourself as a teacher and remember that teachers and parents are facilitators. (Excerpt 7, Lines 400-403)

In Sophia's perspective, both teacher and parents were facilitators in the students' education. She actualized her beliefs through her active involvement in attending to "Parent Voice" and supporting "Parent Presence" in helping their children's English learning. Her beliefs and actual actions in supporting the parents aligned with what Gunzenhauser, et al. (2021) mentioned about enhancing parents' capabilities to support their children with appropriate and supportive attitudes, as parents were the first to help their children when they faced learning challenges. The ways Sophia helped the parents, in fact, showed them the direction of "Parent Presence" in supporting their children's learning.

4.1.2 Parents Being Ready to Collaborate with Teachers

Since parents deeply cared about their children's English learning, which was part of "Parent Voice," Sophia helped the parents take the teaching role at home by empowering them to teach their children English, thus enacting "Parent Presence" in supporting their children. Sophia listened to parents' difficulties and desires concerning their children's English learning at home ("Parent Voice") before she could start teaching parents how to strengthen "Parent Presence" (Excerpts 8 and 9).

So, how do you get parents to help you as a teacher? You have to teach parents how to be teachers too. If you have great communication, parents are ready to support you because they also care about their kids. So, whatever you ask them to do, they will help you. (Excerpt 8, Lines 122-129)

The quality of students' work comes from two sources: first, from the students themselves, and second, from the parents. Some parents want to support but don't know how. That's when you, as a teacher, need to work with them to address this problem. Apart from teaching your students, you need to teach parents as well. If parents feel needed to help their kids, they will be more inclined to seek your help and support. Then, they can support their kids. (Excerpt 9, Lines 561-570)

Sophia recognized that understanding the parents' concerns about their children's education was critical to strengthening parents' readiness to support their children. When parents understood her eagerness to help students learn English, they would be more open to supporting their children's English learning. This reflected her understanding of parents' fundamental aspirations and concerns ("Parent Voice") before she initiated the concrete ways for the parents' participation ("Parent Presence") in their children's English learning. Sophia put herself in the shoes of parents (Excerpt 10).

...When you understand something, you agree to it, and you will do it. If they see that I am doing this not just for myself, but for their kids, it can change their mindset. As a teacher, I want kids to learn. Why wouldn't their parents want the same? When parents understand this, they are more likely to support the teacher and their children. Understanding is like the key that opens their minds, leads to agreement and acceptance, and ultimately gets them to act in support of their kids' education. Once you gain their trust, everything becomes easier. (Excerpt 10, Lines 292-304)

Fostering parents' understanding of teachers and their teaching could promote parent-teacher communication. Sophia maintained an open-door policy, allowing parents to ask questions and seek help as needed. By doing this, Sophia was open to "Parent Voice" about their knowledge, hopes, concerns, and dreams for their children's learning. Sophia had also approached some parents individually, especially those parents who were absent from the teacher-parent meetings. Sophia valued the parents' opinions, perspectives, and difficulties. "Parent Voice" needed to be listened to and attended to. She could consequently learn from the parents about their perspectives and identify what she could do to support the parents to actualize "Parent Presence" (Excerpt 11).

Not just only one time. In the beginning, it might be once a week, then once for two weeks, or once a month. They could call me whenever they wanted to ask questions or any help. Also, some parents who were farmers, could not access the Zoom meeting, I would call them directly, or I had my assistance (to call them). Even if I did not have (assistance), I also checked it myself. If some parents could not attend the meeting, I would call them, what were their reasons for not attending the meeting, asking "Do you agree with my process or plan of teaching your children during the COVID-19 time?" Or "Do you have any problems with technology?" "How can we solve this problem together?" "What is the convenient way that you want to do? So try to communicate and try to make more understanding between teachers and parents." (Excerpt 11, Lines 270-284)

Sophia's belief-driven actions above were grounded in her communication with parents, in which she listened to and attended to "Parent Voice." She acknowledged their needs and figured out specific measures targeted to parents' needs, concerns, and aspirations about their children's English learning at home. This helped her tailor-make her support to strengthen the parents' efforts in supporting their children. The "Parent Presence"—parents' eagerness to be involved in their children's education—was then enhanced with some supportive moves from Sophia. She also approached the parents individually to learn about their perspectives on her remote teaching and their unique difficulties by approaching the parents both communally, through teacher-parent meetings and online parent English lessons; and personally, through her follow-up calls to parents absent from the meetings.

Sophia's initiatives in exploring and addressing the parents' concerns and difficulties ("Parent Voice") in supporting their children's English learning not only brought about parents' trust but also helped her formulate concrete and specific measures in resolving the difficulties of supporting their children. Sophia did not just list out what the parents should do to help the students. Instead, she strengthened the parents' roles as the key facilitators (Koskela, et al., 2020) at home by providing necessary support to the parents; this support boosted the parents' eagerness and actual actions to help their children ("Parent Presence"). In addition, Sophia's initiatives in exploring parents' perspectives reflected her understanding of them, rendering her greater opportunities in enhancing parents' participation in their children's learning (Koskela, et al., 2020). Since parents were of different socioeconomic statuses, Sophia was sensitive to the parents' educational and socio-economic backgrounds.

With the beliefs of seeking parents as their crucial partners in education, teachers stand an incredible chance to listen to and address "Parent Voice" in relating to the parents. They also stand on the frontline to identify the existing "Parent Presence" and to modify the potential "Parent Presence" with teachers' professional advice or observations. In fact, Lau and Lee (2021) had established that parents' stress could be lessened when they had better support to guide their children's learning. Parent engagement can be cultivated through teachers' deliberate actions in listening to "Parent Voice" and concrete support to reinforce and facilitate "Parent Presence." Sophia's experiences of engaging the parents in supporting the EFL learners demonstrated that the models of "Parent Voice" and "Parent Presence" could be adopted in engaging the parents with limited English proficiency, provided teachers took active and deliberate actions in attending to "Parent Voice" and facilitating "Parent Presence."

4.2 Adjusting Teaching Roles and Strategies in Collaborating with the Parents

Due to the school lockdowns and emergency remote teaching, Sophia adjusted her teaching roles and time allocation for each session (Excerpt 12).

As I said, the changing is not the content, but is about "how," how to teach them; the changing is about time as well. Normally, I teach 60 minutes per period, but when I teach online, I cannot let my students sit still for 60 minutes, so I have to re-plan But during the COVID-19 time, I taught only about 30 or 40 minutes, I still kept the warm-up activities and I had to find more activities for them to warm up, and then the presentation, and I extended more time for the production stage. Normally in classroom learning, But during the COVID-19 time, I let them work by themselves or I left some time for them to work with their groups. They could call their friends, use Line calling, or even create video clips. ... But during the COVID-19 time, I used TikTok to help me as well. ... it is the same as in the classroom, it's the real-time video clips broadcasted

during the online classes. So the students would have more time to spend with themselves, they created their clips as much as they could. They could do the video clips as often as they wanted. When they were happy with the clips, they could submit them to me. So, the advantages of it, teaching online like this, we had more (much) time to check student's work, and students had more (much) time to do their work as well. (Excerpt 12, Lines 155-188)

Parents were also involved in supporting their children's homework assignments, especially with the technical aspects of creating video clips. This "Parent Presence" contributed to their children's success in making video clips as their assignments (Excerpt 13).

The students had their parents supporting them with technology, using cameras, presenting in front of the camera, and recording a clip. They gained more than just English content from online learning; they also gained skills in making video clips. They had the opportunity to create clips alone and spent more time with their families. (Excerpt 13, Lines 188-194)

In addition to redesigning her teaching plans, activities, and outcomes for the production stage, Sophia also addressed parents' voices and needs as they did not understand her teaching. The video clips Sophia sent to the parents could serve dual purposes in strengthening different forms of "Parent Presence," either playing the video clips for their children or learning from the video clips to teach their children. Sophia's active and deliberate moves in making and sending the video clips to parents of different backgrounds ultimately facilitated "Parent Presence" in supporting their children's English learning (Excerpt 14).

Some of the parents could not teach their kids themselves because they were farmers. I would record my teaching clips and send them to the parents and the students through Line, a short clip learning. So they could have micro-learning from my clips. Micro-learning is learning about something short, a small topic, the students wanted to learn, and they could learn by themselves. The video clips made by me like the ready-made worksheets and teaching from me to be sent to the parents (including the parents who were farmers) through Line. The parents just had to turn it on for their kids. If the parents wanted to teach their kids themselves, they learned from me and then taught their kids. Some of the parents could not teach, they just sat there with the children and turned on the clips, and showed the clips to their children. So, the students would have the same opportunity to learn. (Excerpt 14, Lines 220-240)

Sophia also supported parents who wanted to learn more English. She tailored her support to accommodate different paces, strengths, and weaknesses by providing parent English lessons and video clips. By doing so, she could help those parents with strong motivation to teach their children, thus maximizing the "Parent Presence" of those parents with such aspirations (Excerpt 15).

Some parents expressed, "I want to learn more English." I taught them after school, or after work as they had work. They learned English through Zoom. "If the parents wanted to teach their kids themselves, they learned from me and then taught their kids." (Excerpt 15, Lines 217-220, 235-237)

This kind of parental aspiration and initiative could have been overlooked if there was inadequate attention to this specific "Parent Voice." Stroetinga, et al. (2021) advocated that teachers practicing the models of "Parent Voice" and "Parent Presence" should bear an attitude of equality, recognizing parents' views and practices as legitimate as the teacher's own. Parents' views and perspectives are of the same weight as those of the teachers (Stroetinga, et al., 2021). Furthermore, Sophia's extra efforts and flexibility in expanding her scope of teaching to the parents reflected her active and deliberate moves in empowering the parents in performing their "Parent Presence." Without these active and deliberate moves, which were one of the crucial conditions of the Contemporary Parent Engagement Model, parent engagement would not be complete (McKenna & Millen, 2013).

Even though some parents had limited English proficiency and could not help teach their children English, Sophia's support to them in the form of providing video clips of her teaching could really help them to support their children. In Tao and Xu's (2022) study, they found that parents who lacked English skills and knowledge could support their children by providing English reading materials and mobilizing digital resources. Sophia's provision of digital resources, which were concrete means of supporting "Parent Presence," aligned with what Tao and Xu (2022) found in their study.

Teachers and parents are complementary to support students' learning when they both commit themselves to the greater good of the students. Parents' strengths, expertise, wisdom, eagerness, and care about their children can be identified through genuine teacher-parent communication. It is the teacher's role to listen to and attend to the "Parent Voice"; and to seek ways to strengthen the parents' eagerness to involve themselves, the "Parent Presence" in nature, in supporting the children's learning. In other words, listening to "Parent Voice" helps shape the direction

of the teacher's moves in reinforcing "Parent Presence." Otherwise, a single focus on either "Parent Voice" or "Parent Presence" cannot bring about parent engagement.

4.3 Sophia's Perspectives on Relationship Building with the Parents

When asked about how she gained parents' trust, Sophia noted that parents naturally cared for their children, which was the essence of "Parent Voice." Parental trust in her had been established well before the COVID-19 lockdowns. She fulfilled her role as a teacher while parents could observe their children's achievements. Certainly, this kind of parent engagement took time to develop mutual trust between teacher and parents (Excerpt 16).

As students at this age, just like the parents' hearts, parents love their kids so much, care of their kids, and care of everything, every activity that they can do. So you can see that you as a teacher, you take care of their kids, you pay attention to your teaching, and they will trust you for sure. Actually, they trust me not just during the COVID-19 time, but before the COVID-19 time, they see the teaching, they see the students' achievements, they see their kids' changing and improvement, and then they trust in me. I cannot just tell them, "Okay, this is the COVID-19 time, you need to cooperate with me, you need to believe me." No! But they trusted me before COVID-19 time, they didn't come to school to see my teaching, but they see from their kids, their kids (and they) are believing it. (Excerpt 16, Lines 435-447)

The fact that Sophia viewed her relationships with her parents as akin to relationships among siblings in Thai culture made her develop further close relationships with parents. Sophia's words "Anything I can do for you?" (line 495) invited the parents, her brothers and sisters in her culture, to express their "Parent Voice" (Excerpt 17).

Just like my friends, my sisters, my brothers. In Thai culture, the one older than you, you call them Pii; you call them brothers and sisters. I still take this. As you visited me in my town when I walked in the street, I would like to say "Hi" to everyone I am acquainted with, lots of friends, those friends are not friends from school but they are parents. I will ask them, "Anything I can do for you?" When they see me, they always ask me "How are your kids?" Or if they want me to help them, they just tell me. We are quite close to each other. They are just like my friends, my sisters and brothers, some of the parents, I just ask them to teach me some profession that they are good at. (Excerpt 17, Lines 489-500)

Sophia had indeed laid the foundation for parent engagement by fulfilling her roles as an EFL teacher long before the period of school lockdowns. It took time for parents to observe her commitment and their children's progress in learning English, and parental trust in her was gradually built. Sophia had also embraced her Thai culture of kinship with the parents, considering them as her family members in the community. Sophia invited the parents to share their "Parent Voice" when they met (line 495). These two moves aligned with what McKenna and Millen (2013) advocated about effective parent engagement: that engagement evolves over time and should be culturally sensitive.

The lesson from this reveals that parental trust in teachers has to be earned, not granted, through teachers' commitment to fulfill their teaching roles and initiatives in building collaborative relationships with the parents through practicing the models of "Parent Voice" and "Parent Presence" (McKenna & Millen, 2013). Listening to the parents' perspectives and appreciation of parents sharing their information reflect the teachers' equality approach in collaborating with parents (Stroetinga, et al., 2021). Teachers have to invest in long-term relationship building with the parents, spending time listening to parents, committing themselves in teaching, communicating with parents, and trusting the parents' experiences, expertise, and wisdom in supporting the students' learning. Teachers can also learn from the parents' eagerness to be involved in their children's education as they are also advisors in students' education (Visković & Jevtić, 2017), and both of them can reflect on their own practices and perspectives (Stroetinga, et al., 2021). In addition, parents are teachers' crucial partners in education; this partnership can be realized through "inclusion in a real activity and doing something together" towards common goals between teachers and parents (Todorova, 2018, 787).

4.4 Strategies for Dealing with Difficulties in Collaboration

For parents who struggled to understand the importance of supporting their children's learning, Sophia focused on building trustful relationships by fulfilling her teaching role and demonstrating facts about students' achievements, which the parents cared about (Excerpt 18).

I cannot (just) tell them, but to show them. I used to talk to you as you visited me, "Actions Speak Louder Than Words." As you start, you need a trick. You need a parent that you are close with, to cooperate with you. I accepted that I used a few students as examples of other students, saying, "See, these students who get the support from the parents and see their achievements and they can speak English well, they can do exercises well." So, you show them first. Once they trust you, they will do whatever you tell them to do. As students at

this age, just like the parents' hearts, parents love their kids so much, care for their kids, and care of everything, every activity that they can do. So you can see that you as a teacher, you take care of their kids, you pay attention to your teaching, and they will trust you for sure. (Excerpt 18, Lines 425-439)

When some parents considered it not their responsibility to help their children, Sophia did not struggle with their perspectives but employed strategies of "trying to explain," "letting go," and "observing other students with good progress" to engage those parents (Excerpts 19 and 20).

Some parents are busy and don't have time to support my students. I have to accept that it's okay. It's true that they sometimes say, 'Why does all the work come to the parents? Why don't teachers do it?' No! Teachers work hard. If some parents don't understand, I try to explain, but if they still don't get it, I let it go. You (teacher) have to accept it. (Excerpt 19, Lines 511-519)

...If you try, you still have a chance to succeed. If parents don't care or don't want to help support their kids, just let it be and do your best. From my experience, 90% of the parents support my students. When some parents don't support them initially, they might change after they see how other students, who have parental support, progress. They can't stand to see their kids fall behind, so they will change their behavior, come back to me, and support their kids. You can't force change in one day; sometimes you have to let it be and let the positive actions of supportive parents speak for you. But you cannot stop supporting the students. (Excerpt 20, Lines 526-542)

Changes in "Parent Voice" of those parents occurred when they identified the differences between their children and those students with good achievements. Those parents' concerns generated from comparison became other forms of "Parent Voice." The behavioral changes in those parents reflected changes in parents' perspectives on supporting their children's learning. These behavioral changes were, in fact, changes in "Parent Presence." Certainly, these changes took time to develop before students' progress could be observed and comparisons brought about changes in those parents' perspectives. Sophia's strategies of "letting go" and "observing other students with good progress" became alternate measures in engaging parents.

This exemplifies the important fact that parents can modify their behaviors when there are substantial changes in such "Parent Voice" as perspectives, concerns, worries, and needs about their children's education. As long as the parents deeply care about their children's educational needs, teachers are still in a good position to observe changes in "Parent Voice" and "Parent Presence." This will be more possible when some parents identify some positive signs through other parents or students. Certainly, teachers have to be patient with the paces of those parents, and it takes time to build good models among students and parents while teachers keep fulfilling their roles in teaching and building paths for engaging the parents.

It is natural for teachers and parents to have different perspectives on students' development. When teachers and parents share common goals and interests for the well-being and educational needs of the students, they can mutually benefit each other through collaboration and shared effort (Todorova, 2018). Teachers and parents also have their unique areas to learn from others (Stroetinga, et al., 2021). Being education professionals, teachers bear the responsibility to keep working on their common points and seek ways to expand their shared visions of students' education. To make parent engagement possible, teachers' attention to "Parent Voice" and "Parent Presence" renders themselves grounds for cultivating parent engagement (McKenna & Millen, 2013).

5. Conclusion

Sophia's efforts in addressing "Parent Voice" and helping parents involve themselves more in rendering "Parent Presence" brought about parent engagement even though some parents had limited English proficiency and different levels of confidence. The ways she listened to "Parent Voice" enhanced her collaborative relationships with parents as they found different ways of participation in their children's English learning, ranging from being equipped as teachers at home to playing video clips for their children. This can inspire other teachers to seek partnerships with parents with unique strengths, as there are always "Parent Voice" worthy of exploring and listening to. "Parent Presence", potential or actual, always exists among parents because they care about their children's education, which teachers can help empower, direct and support with an aim of supporting the students' learning. In addition, "Parent Voice" and "Parent Presence" can be dynamic when parents find new perspectives in view of supporting their children. In this case study, some parents became more eager to take a teaching role at home, while some parents experienced changes in their mindset from being uninvolved to being present in their children's English learning when they identified some students with good performance. Teachers need to be sensitive to "Parent Voice" and be capable of promoting "Parent Presence" at parents' paces especially when there are difficulties in developing teacher-parent collaborative relationship.

The experiences of an EFL teacher in engaging parents to support their children's English learning provide educators with a starting point for assessing parent engagement with the models of "Parent Voice" and "Parent Presence" in contexts where trustful collaborative relationships with parents can gradually be built. This can be done through sustainable, active, deliberate acts from teachers and their dedication to communicating with parents communally and personally with sensitivity in the parents' social and cultural contexts. Teachers, would-be teachers and educators can further assess and reflect on teacher-parent collaborative relationships by using the models of "Parent Voice" and "Parent Presence" even though this case study bears limitations in generalization. However, this study reflecting the true experiences of a Thai EFL teacher may offer some insight into exploring teacher-parent collaboration to a greater extent and depth.

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Appendix

Seven open-ended questions were used in the Semi-structured Online Interview

1. How did the parents support the students' learning?
2. How can you make students concentrate on learning when teaching remotely?
3. How did you invite the parents to help the students?
4. How do you describe the parents' help in the whole process?
5. How did you work with parents to bring about changes in students' learning?
6. How did you gain the parents' trust?
7. Can you give some advice for those teachers experiencing difficulties in establishing teacher-parent collaboration?

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