

## PUBLIC AWARENESS: THE KEY TO IMPROVE CHILDREN'S ENGLISH READING SKILL

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URL: <https://jeell.upjb.ac.id/index.php/files/article/view/52/version/52>

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.32682/jeell.v12i2.52>

### Abstract

This study aims to analyze the awareness of the community in Bulu village, Kraksaan, towards the importance of English reading skills in children. This research uses qualitative methods with instruments of questionnaires, documentation, and questions involving 10 parents and 15 children in Bulu village. The results of the analysis show that most people understand the importance of English reading skills, but some parents still do not realize the importance of English education in everyday life. In addition, children in Bulu village also lack motivation about the importance of English education due to the lack of support from parents and the surrounding community. Therefore, community awareness is very important to help the development of children English reading skills. This research has implications for the importance of increasing community awareness and support from parents and the surrounding community in improving children's English reading skills.

**Keywords:** *public awareness, children motivation, reading skill*

**To cite this article:** Suciati, A.S., Ferdiyanto, F., & Hamdani, B. (2025). Public awareness: the key to improve children's english reading skill. *JEELL: Journal of English Education, Linguistics and Literature*, 12(2), 40-53. <https://doi.org/10.32682/jeell.v12i2.52>

### Introduction

The importance of English reading skills in children cannot be underestimated, considering that this ability is a crucial foundation for their academic success and personal development in an increasingly competitive globalization era, where English often serves as the medium of instruction in various fields, including education, business, and technology. Public awareness regarding the



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importance of reading skills also needs to be increased, as many parents and community members may not fully realize the long-term impact of a lack of reading skills on their children, which can lead to poor academic performance and limited access to better educational opportunities (Wijaya et al., 2022).

Debrah et al., (2021) said that the way to raise public awareness is through literacy programs that involve the entire community. Activities such as workshops, seminars, reading sessions, etc. are organized to enable parents and children to participate in the reading learning process and understand the importance of their role in improving children's reading skills. Research has shown that children who participate in reading activities outside of school experience significant improvements in their reading comprehension. This shows that support from parents and the community can have a significant impact.

Reading comprehension is a fundamental skill that is very important for academic success, especially for children. Reading is a kind of a crucial activity in an attempt to master a certain language (Olbata et al., 2023). In addition, reading plays an important role in the education system because it enhances critical thinking, analytical, and communication skills (Hamdani, 2020). Therefore, developing reading skills is very important and can be done with effective reading strategies such as reading together, discussions, and understanding context. Thus, children can reach their academic potential to the fullest and become lifelong learners .

Reading English plays an important role in facilitating language development, as study conducted by Hamdani (2020). The more students read, the more they develop their vocabulary knowledge and broaden their horizons. According to (Ferdiyanto et al., 2024), reading is a stepping stone to achieving success, both in education and everyday life. By reading, students can enhance their critical thinking, analytical, and effective communication skills. In addition, technology can also play an important role in improving children reading comprehension. Various applications and digital platforms specifically designed for children make the process of learning to read more engaging and interactive (Activitty, 2022).

Parental involvement is one of the biggest support systems for success in teaching and learning. Choosing the best school for their child's education, additional English language learning outside of school is a way for parents to provide support (Islam, 2023). Parents believe that the best schools do not depend on higher monthly fees, but on professional teachers and the system in the school. Research has shown that children who participate in reading activities outside of school experience significant improvements in their reading comprehension. This shows that parental and community support can have a significant impact.

A study conducted by Bautista et al (2024) on public awareness shows that, "Public awareness of the importance of literacy can significantly improve children reading skills." Thus, the above explains that efforts to raise public awareness about reading significantly contribute to creating an

environment that supports the development of children's literacy skills. Furthermore, research by (Prasetia et al., 2022) on community programs to improve literacy shows that "community initiatives involving parents and children in reading activities can strengthen children's reading interest and reading skills."

Although there have been many previous studies examining public awareness of children's reading abilities, there are still shortcomings in this area. Based on this research, there are differences in the methods, subjects, or levels used by previous researchers. In the research we conducted, this has never been done by previous researchers, as previous researchers focused on student awareness and teacher awareness. However, research on community awareness regarding the importance of children English reading skills has never been conducted. Therefore, we are interested in conducting research on community awareness regarding children's English reading skills.

So, the aim of this research is to deeply investigate how public awareness can affect children's reading skills, as well as to analyze the role of parents in supporting and facilitating the process of learning to read English at home. the researcher took the initiative to analyze and present the importance of English language education for children, with the hope that through various programs designed to involve parents, they will become more active in their children's learning process. By involving parents in shared reading activities, it is hoped that children's interest in reading will increase, which in turn will strengthen their overall reading skills. Previous research shows that parental involvement in reading activities not only enhances children's literacy skills but also fosters positive reading habits from an early age, which is crucial for their academic and personal development (Ahmad et al., 2021).

## **Research Methods**

This research strategy is to use a qualitative descriptive research method, namely a research method that is based on the philosophy of postpositivism and is usually used to conduct research in natural and objective conditions, where the researcher acts as the main instrument. The aim is to apply this method to produce research that is appropriate to existing conditions. observation. Therefore, this method uses descriptive qualitative data, (Sugiyono in Dawadi et al., 2021). This type of qualitative descriptive data analysis is often used to analyze an event, phenomenon or situation socially. Therefore, we collect and process data in descriptive form, such as text and images from interviews and documents.

## **Design**

The research approach used in this observation is qualitative research. According to several experts, such as (Denzin & Lincoln in Anggito & Setiawan., 2018), (Poerwandari in Haryono and Rukin., 2011) qualitative research is conducted in a natural setting with the aim of understanding

phenomena that occur through various methods, and emphasizes meaning, reasoning, and the context of everyday life. Based on this definition, qualitative research aims to collect data about events or phenomena that occur in everyday life to be interpreted. In this study, the researcher observed and analyzed the community's awareness of children's English reading skills through approaching families with children, as well as describing the factors that influence children's reading skills and analyzing the role of parents and the community in supporting the importance of English education for children.

### ***Participants***

Participants in this research included several members of the public and also parents. The number of respondents will be determined based on data sufficiency criteria, where the number of respondents is sufficient if the data obtained has reached the level of saturation and no new information has emerged. This research was conducted in Bulu Kraksaan village, Probolinggo, precisely in the Sumber hamlet RT 02 RW 01 which was chosen as the relevant research object, where in this hamlet there are many children and parents who lack literacy and do not understand the importance of English education in reading ability. The participants in this study consisted of 10 parents and 15 children.

### ***Instrument***

This study used research instruments in the form of questionnaires and interview guidelines. This study used structured questionnaire with 10 closed questions for children and 10 closed questions for parents was used to collect data on the perceptions of 20 children and 10 parents regarding the importance of English education in improving children's reading skills and the role of parents in supporting children's English education. The questionnaire aimed to clearly illustrate the respondents' views on these two aspects, so as to provide useful information for the development of more effective English education. In addition, interview guidelines were used to gather more in-depth information about parents' and children's experiences and perceptions of English reading skills, with questions covering reading strategies, English learning resources and expectations for improving English reading skills. By using these research instruments, it is expected that accurate and comprehensive data can be obtained to answer the research questions. This questionnaire and interview guide will be used to collect data from 20 children and 10 parents in Bulu Village.

### ***Data Collection***

Data collection was carried out for 3 days using the method of distributing questionnaires directly from house to house to 10 parents and

15 children, as well as in-depth interviews with one of the parents about the importance of English education. This of course allows us to get some of the data we need. The data collected is then analyzed descriptively to provide a clear picture of the conditions studied.

### ***Data analysis***

The data analysis technique used in this research is descriptive analysis technique. This research aims to describe, and provide a systematic, factual and accurate description of the data in the phenomenon being studied. Therefore, descriptive analysis techniques are used because this technique is useful for providing a careful picture of the condition of individuals, language, symptoms and certain groups. Descriptive research is a research method that attempts to describe and interpret objects according to what they are. Lim (2024) states descriptive approach can be interpreted as research that attempts to provide a systematic and careful description of the actual facts and characteristics of a particular population.

## **Results and Discussion**

### ***Results***

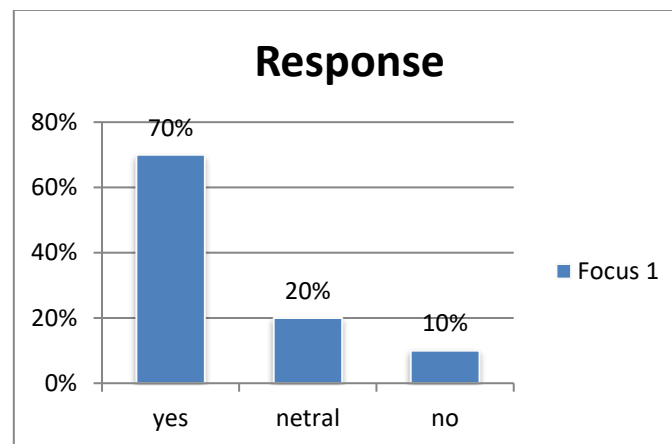
In this section, this study presents findings on the community's role in improving children's English reading skills, based on data collected through questionnaires from 20 children and 10 parents in Bulu Village, conducted from January 27 to 30, 2025. This study aims to describe the community's views and perceptions of the importance of English education in improving children's reading skills, as well as the role of parents and the community in supporting children's English language development. Thus, this study is expected to provide useful information for the development of more effective English education in this community. The data collected will be analyzed descriptively to provide a clear picture of the conditions studied.

The purpose of this data collection is to understand the public and students' perceptions of English language education, and to identify factors and challenges in the implementation of English language education. The results of this data collection are expected to provide valuable information for the development of more effective and efficient English language education programs.

The questionnaire for parents or the community consists of 10 questions which are divided into 4 main focuses, namely general awareness about English education, the role of parents in children's reading ability, awareness of English education, and support and challenges in reading education. The first three focuses aim to measure the level of awareness and

involvement of parents or the community in English education, while the fourth focus aims to measure the level of support and challenges faced by parents or the community in helping their children improve their English reading skills.

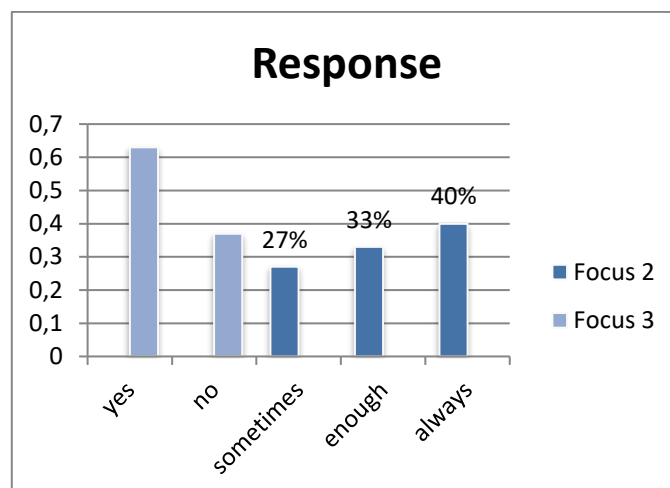
### ***Questionnaire 1 for Parents or Community***



***Figure. 1 : General awareness about English education***

The results of this study show that from the first focus, most parents realize the importance of reading skills in children's development and believe that good language education at an early age can help improve children's reading skills. From the results of the questionnaire distributed to 10 respondents, it was found that 70% of respondents stated that reading ability is a very important skill for children's development, and that children's reading ability affects their performance at school, and they believe that good language education at an early age helps improve children's reading ability. Meanwhile, 10% of respondents stated that reading is not a very important skill for children's development, that children's reading does not affect their performance at school, and that they do not believe that good language education at an early age helps to improve children's reading. In addition, 20% of respondents stated that they were neutral to the statement. This shows that the role of parents is very important in helping their children improve their English reading skills, and that parents' awareness of the importance of reading skills can affect their children's English reading skills.





**Figure 2 : The role of parents in children reading ability and Awareness of English education**

From the percentages above, it can be concluded from focus 2 that most parents realize the importance of English education in helping their children develop, including in reading. From the results of the questionnaire distributed to 10 respondents, it was found that 63% of respondents stated that English education is very important to help children develop, including in reading, and that English education needs to start from an early age, as well as their children getting opportunities to learn English outside of school. Meanwhile, 37% of respondents stated that English education is not important to help children develop, including in reading, and that English education does not need to start from an early age, and their children do not get the opportunity to learn English outside of school. This shows that the role of parents is crucial in helping their children improve their English reading skills and that parents' awareness of the importance of English education can influence their children's English reading skills.

From the results of the research that has been conducted on focus 3, which is about awareness of English education, shows that the role of parents is very important in improving children's English reading skills. From the results of the questionnaire distributed to 10 respondents, it was found that 40% of respondents stated that they always make time and provide reading materials for children, 27% of respondents stated that they sometimes could not make time and provide enough reading materials for children, and 33% of respondents stated that they felt they had enough knowledge and ability to teach children to read well. This shows that parents have a significant role in helping their children improve their English reading skills, whether through guidance, motivation or support in the process of learning to read English. Therefore, there is a need for increased awareness and participation from

parents in helping their children improve their English reading skills, so that children can achieve better educational goals and have better English reading skills.

#### *Support and challenges in reading education*

The results of this study indicate that some parents experience challenges in teaching their children English reading. Based on the results of the questionnaire distributed to 10 parents, it was found that some of the challenges faced by parents in English reading education were limited time, children who are lazy to learn, limited access to quality reading materials, and children's lack of interest in reading. These challenges can affect children's English reading skills and make it difficult for them to understand the subject matter given at school. From the questionnaire results, 6 parents chose that lazy children were the main factor in the challenges in reading English. This shows that the lack of motivation and interest of children in learning to read English is the biggest challenge for parents. Lack of motivation and interest in children can be caused by various factors, such as lack of awareness of the importance of reading English, lack of support from parents and teachers, and lack of access to quality reading materials. Therefore, there is a need for increased awareness and participation from parents and teachers in helping children increase their motivation and interest in learning to read English.

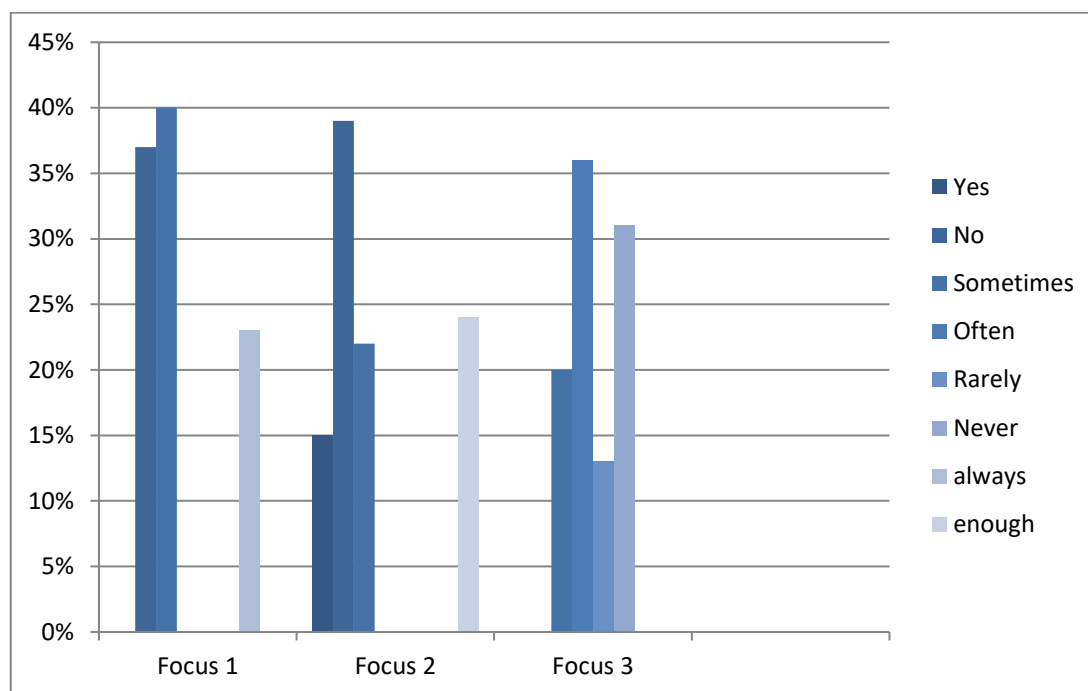
In addition, 2 parents said limited time was also a factor that influenced children's English reading ability. This shows that parents' limited time in helping their children learn to read English is also a significant challenge. Parents' time constraints can be caused by various factors, such as work commitments, household chores, and lack of awareness of the importance of reading English. Therefore, there is a need for increased awareness and participation from parents in managing their time to help their children learn to read English. Two other parents also said that limited access to quality reading materials and also the child's lack of interest to read can also be a major factor that influences children's English reading ability. This shows that lack of access to quality reading materials and lack of children's interest in reading can affect children's English reading skills. Therefore, there is a need to increase access to quality reading materials and increase children's interest in reading to help them improve their English reading skills.

#### **Questionnaire 2 for Children**

The questionnaire for students consists of 10 questions which are divided into 4 main focuses, namely reading habits in English, reading ability



and comprehension, support and learning English, as well as factors that influence English reading ability. These four focuses aim to measure the habits, abilities, and factors that influence students' English reading abilities, as well as to understand how English language support and learning can influence their reading abilities.



**Figure. 3: reading habits in English, reading ability and comprehension, support and learning English**

Data obtained from a questionnaire distributed to 15 respondents showed that parents have a significant role in improving children's English reading skills. From the results of the questionnaire in focus 1, it was found that 23% of respondents stated that they always read materials in English, while 37% of respondents stated that they did not feel interested in reading materials in English and did not read them regularly. Meanwhile, 40% of the respondents stated that they sometimes feel interested in reading materials in English and read them regularly. This shows that parents who have an interest and habit of reading English can influence their children's English reading ability. Therefore, there is a need for increased awareness and participation from parents in helping their children improve their English reading skills.

In addition, analysis of the data obtained from the same questionnaire shows that general awareness of reading and comprehension skills is still not optimal. From the results of the questionnaire in focus 2, it was found that only 15% of the respondents stated that they could easily understand the

reading and explain the content back after reading the material in English. Meanwhile, 39% of respondents stated that they could not understand the reading easily and had difficulty in understanding vocabulary and sentences in English. In addition, 22% of respondents stated that they could sometimes understand the reading easily, while 24% of respondents stated that they could understand the reading easily enough. This shows that there is still a sub-optimal awareness of the importance of reading and comprehension skills, especially in English.

Based on these findings, it appears that the general awareness of awareness in English education is still uneven. From the questionnaire results in focus 3, it was found that only 20% of respondents stated that they sometimes get support in learning to read English at home, while 31% of respondents stated that they never get such support. In addition, 13% of respondents stated that they rarely ask their parents or teachers for help when they do not understand the content of the reading, while 36% of respondents stated that they often ask for such help. This shows that there is still a suboptimal awareness of the importance of support in English education, especially in the family and school environment. Therefore, there is a need to increase awareness and participation from the community in raising awareness in English education.

#### *Factors that influence English reading ability*

The results of this study indicate that several factors influence the ability to read English in children in Bulu Village, Sumber Hamlet. Based on the results of the questionnaire distributed to 15 children, it was found that the factors most often chosen by children were The factor that helped them in reading English was more reading practice (53.3%). This shows that regular and structured reading practice can help improve children's English reading skills.

Another factor that was also chosen by children was help from teachers and parents (26.7%). This shows that the role of teachers and parents is very important in helping children improve their English reading skills. Assistance from teachers and parents can be in the form of guidance, motivation, and support in the process of learning to read English. In addition, 20% of children also chose watching English-language films or shows as a factor that helped them improve their understanding of English. The results of this study indicate that these factors can help improve children's English reading skills. Therefore, there needs to be increased awareness and participation from teachers, parents, and the community in helping children improve their English reading skills.

## ***Discussion***

From these results, interesting new findings were found that were not found by previous researchers. This study found that public awareness in Bulu Village, Sumber Hamlet regarding the importance of English language education, especially in reading skills, is very low. This is because they think that English is a foreign language that does not need to be learned because English is not used in everyday life. These results add to the debate of previous researchers who said that "English education is very important, especially for early childhood, because it can help improve communication skills." (Junnisa Alda Miranda & Achmad Yudi Wahyudin, 2023). In addition, previous research also stated that "public awareness of the importance of English education is very important in improving children's reading skills." (Yapp et al., 2023).

Based on these findings, it is known that the people in Bulu Village, specifically Sumber Hamlet, still have minimal motivation towards English language education, which is one of the important factors in improving children's reading ability. Apart from that, the children in Dusun Sumber also do not know how important English education is for them, due to lack of knowledge and understanding of the benefits of English education in everyday life. The factors that influence them to be less interested in English are the lack of encouragement and motivation from those around them, especially from parents, which is one of the important factors in improving children's reading ability.

In addition, the results of this study indicate that public awareness of the importance of English education has a significant impact on children's reading ability. This is in line with previous research which found that public awareness of English language education can increase children's motivation to learn, so that they are more motivated to learn English and improve their reading skills. In addition, this study also shows that public awareness of the importance of English education can influence children's reading abilities, because people who are aware of the importance of English education will pay more attention and support their children in learning English.

However, the results of this study also show that there are still many people who are not aware of the importance of English education for children. This may be due to a lack of knowledge and understanding of the benefits of English education in everyday life. There are several reasons why people pay less attention to their children and give less motivation to their children about the importance of English education, such as lack of knowledge and understanding of the benefits of English language education, as well as lack of adequate educational resources and facilities. However,

some people also admit that English education is important, because it can help improve communication skills and understand other cultures.

Therefore, support and motivation from parents and the community is very important for the development of children's education, especially in English reading skills. This is in line with previous research which found that public awareness is the main key to children's academic development. Therefore, there is a need to increase public awareness, especially regarding action on English language education issues. Campaign activities and exposure of English language education issues in public media can run better and more effectively if accompanied by promotional examples and increasing public awareness of English language education issues. In addition, there needs to be cooperation between the government, schools, and society to raise public awareness about the importance of English language education.

In addition, the role of parents and teachers is also very important in increasing public awareness of the importance of English education. Parents and teachers can be role models and sources of inspiration for children to learn English. They can also help raise public awareness of the importance of English language education through educational and training activities conducted in schools and communities. In addition, parents and teachers can also help improve children's reading skills by providing appropriate support and motivation. Thus, children can have better English reading skills and increase public awareness of the importance of English education.

Ultimately, this study suggests that public awareness of the importance of English language education should be increased through various means, such as campaign activities, exposure of English language education issues in public media, and the role of parents and teachers as examples and sources of inspiration. In this way, it is hoped that public awareness of the importance of English language education can increase, so that children can have better English reading skills. In addition, this study also suggests that there needs to be increased cooperation between the government, schools, and communities to raise public awareness about the importance of English language education.

## **Conclusion**

It can be concluded that community awareness of the importance of English education, especially in reading skills, is still very low in Bulu Village, Sumber Hamlet. This is due to the lack of knowledge and understanding of the benefits of English education in everyday life. In addition, the lack of support and motivation from parents and the surrounding community is also a factor that affects the low awareness of the community about the

importance of English education. This study also found that community awareness of the importance of English education has a significant impact on children's English reading skills. This is in line with previous research which found that community awareness of English education can increase children's motivation to learn English and improve their reading skills.

In the long run, increasing people's awareness of the importance of English education can help improve children's English reading ability and increase people's awareness of the importance of English education. Therefore, this study hopes that the results of this study can serve as a reference for the government, schools and communities to increase public awareness of the importance of English education.

Based on the results of this study, some suggestions that can be taken are increasing public awareness about the importance of English education through campaign activities and exposure about English education in the mass media. In addition, there needs to be cooperation between the government, schools and communities to increase public awareness about the importance of English education. The role of parents and teachers is also very important in raising public awareness about the importance of English education. This study also suggests that governments, schools and communities need to work together to raise people's awareness of the importance of English education. In addition, there needs to be increased support and motivation from parents and the surrounding community to improve children's English reading skills. Thus, children can have better English reading skills and increase community awareness about the importance of English education.

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