

## SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS AND READING ACHIEVEMENT OF ESL LEARNERS: A STUDY BASED ON THE ECOLOGICAL SYSTEM THEORY

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### Abstract:

*This study aims at exploring the effects of Socio-Economic Status (SES) on reading comprehension in ELL students and investigates the daily struggles and promising adaptations of a variety of students from different SES levels. This study has used a qualitative design and sample includes eight students and four teachers from the BS English Program at Superior University Lahore and all are from urban and semi-urban areas. Since the study is phenomenological, the researchers have conducted semi-structured interviews to inquire about the situation of 4 teachers and 8 students. Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory underpinned the theoretical foundation of the study as it helped to create a framework for viewing the various intersecting factors impacting ELLs' socioeconomic status for developing reading skills. Research findings show that SES plays a major role in determining reading gains, with issues on access and utilization of resources, parents' involvement, and teacher support being critical issues. Hence, the findings of the study stressed the significance of both community initiatives and parent-institute relationships to foster reading comprehensiveness, particularly for children at a low-SES home. In light of this analysis, the SES factors, teaching methods and environmental factors are significant and important in the process of teaching and learning English. The influence of socioeconomic status (SES) has been recognized as a factor influencing reading achievement. Therefore, educators and policymakers should implement educational interventions and support systems for English language learners (ELLs) who are facing challenges due to SES disparities. The findings stated here emphasize the importance of addressing English language learning and practice outside of formal education and taking into account the environmental factors that influence students' reading development.*

**Keywords:** Socioeconomic Status (SES), Reading Achievement, Ecological Systems Theory, Educational Inequality, Parental Involvement, Community Support

### 1. Introduction

Socioeconomic status (SES) defines the level of income, education, and occupation and is an essential factor contributing to the results of education. Studies reveal that there is a positive link between SES and achievement where results show that students coming from homes with higher SES achieve better than those of low SES backgrounds (Sirin, 2005; White, 1982). Some of the ways that SES affects learning are through resources since people from well-endowed families receive more resources than those from poor families. Over the years the SES of families has significantly affected the educational resources those children have access to including books, computers, the internet, and other tools that are fundamental to learning (Bradley & Corwyn, 2002; Duncan & Murnane, 2011). In addition, these families can live in the more desirable neighbourhoods simply because they can pay for it and can pay for better schooling beyond basic education such as extracurricular activities and private tutoring as well as other related advantages that can improve their children's educational status (Reardon, 2011; Rumberger & Palardy, 2005).

SES also impregnates all aspects of the home environment and their participation in schooling. Lareau (2003) noted that parents with higher SES tend to learn more themselves,

therefore setting higher education expectations from their children, and coming up with better ways of enhancing their learning at home while Davis-Kean (2005) stated that the literacy practices that SES parents employ when at home are more effective for their children's learning. Yet these parents are also more involved in their children's schooling, in terms of first engaging in school activities and second in terms of the communicative interface with teachers (Hill et al., 2004). Third, it is noteworthy that SES influences the psychological aspect of learning processes. Children in families with low SES are likely to be stressed, insecure, and more likely to experience low levels of stability, and this work harms the cognitive ability and academic achievements of the child (Evans & English, 2002; Yoshikawa et al., 2012). They may also be likely to be perceived by teachers as well as peers as being less capable and therefore being accorded low expectations which subsequently translate to low achievements (Jussim & Harber, 2005).

Literacy is an important EU element in learning and second language development for ELLs. It is the basis of reading and is crucial for building the reader's ground for the curriculum to learn, engaging with content within different educational topics, as well as building the cognitive skills necessary to think critically (August & Shanahan, 2006; Garcia & Godina, 2004). Reading in English can be very demanding to these students and it is for this reason that ELLs focus on increasing their proficiency in reading in English to enable them to learn in English-speaking education settings and English-speaking societies (Garcia, & Godina, 2004). Extremely high percentages of all educational research emphasize that reading comprehension is an indicator of future academic success as well as economic status. Students with adequate reading skills can perform better in academic classes and are likely to graduate high school and attend college and post-secondary institutions (Kieffer, 2008; Lesaux & Kieffer, 2010). In addition, reading competency positively correlates to employment opportunities and better remunerations in the later years of life, based on the OECD (2013). However, ELLs who may have limited English proficiency may perform dismally when it comes to reading due to factors such as expanded limited vocabulary and limited exposure to print media in English as well as limited understanding of the various structures of the English language (August and Shanahan, 2006, Goldenberg, 2008) These challenges pinpoint the need for effective reading instruction and intervention for ELLs, so that they are given a fair chance at success and that they are given the chance to lead the best lives that they can.

In conclusion, SES is a complex concept that affects education in a variety of ways concerning both the availability of resources and prerequisites for learning, parental involvement, as well as mental health. Assuming those dynamics helps ground any interventions or policies proposed for narrowing gaps in education and cultivating education equity.

## 2. Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

This paper examines how the Ecological Systems Theory, initially introduced by Bronfenbrenner in 1979, can explain the observed pattern of factors that define ELL students' learning in English and their reading achievement. According to Bronfenbrenner's theory from 1979, multiple layers of the environment influence human development. These include the microsystem, which consists of the family and school setting; the mesosystem, which involves the interconnection of the microsystem; the exosystem, which includes socialization organs such as the mass media; and the macrosystem, which can be defined as the culture of socioeconomic status (SES). SES is a component of the exosystem level that directly affects a child's learning environment by determining the quality of educational provision, parental engagement, and opportunities for exposure to language stimulation (Brooks-Gunn &

Duncan, 1997; Sirin, 2005). By adopting the Ecological Systems Theory in the study of SES and reading achievement in ELLs, the researchers get a chance to consider various environmental productions that influence the educational results. According to Urie Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory, a full system of variables affecting a person and his or her environment pertains to a holistic view of development, including educational attainment (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). In this theory, it is asserted that human development refers to a progressively increasing pattern of interactions between the immediate environmental settings known as the microsystems and the outer large context or the macrosystems, with both microsystems and macrosystems being interdependent.

In the context of linking socioeconomic status (SES) to educational achievement, the Ecological Systems Theory highlights how various environmental factors associated with SES impact an individual's learning and development: In the context of linking socioeconomic status (SES) to educational achievement, the Ecological Systems Theory highlights how various environmental factors associated with SES impact an individual's learning and development:

**Microsystem:** This level focuses on the nearby and closest circle that an individual is immersed in including family, school, and friends. SES can influence these interactions regarding the quality or character of the interactions, which will in turn affect educational results. For instance, children with high SES are likely to be given more educational facilities at home and also have access to better schools (Bradley & Corwyn, 2002).

**Mesosystem:** The Mesosystem refers to the links between different microsystems; the microsystems in this case are those that are recognizable at the easily identifiable level of microsystems. Firstly, a large number of studies have identified the association between home environment and school as being critical to education. The parents of higher SES status are usually more invested in education to ask for a favourable home-school relationship (Hill et al., 2004).

**Exosystem:** This level entails larger societies that may not be connected to the individual but affect them in some way or the other. For instance, community assets like libraries or after-school activities can support educational attainments, but such assets may not be attainable by all SES (Rumberger & Palardy, 2005).

**Macrosystem:** The last layer is the macro-systems which encompass the dominant cultural and social values and beliefs that influence the rest of the systems. To the extent that achievement is impacted by SES (Socioeconomic Status), therefore, SES can impact upon education policies and also societal attitudes toward education all of which impact upon achievement (Sirin, 2005).

When using the Ecological Systems Theory while analyzing SES and educational achievement among children, the results could provide researchers with a much more accurate picture of what factors from various levels can impact a child's learning and development. The following is a list of considerations of the theoretical framework of this work: As we can see from the above points, this theoretical framework stresses the need to consider individual, family, community, and societal factors to explain the trends in educational performance. In the present body of research, the effects of SES on reading comprehensibility in ELLs have been explored elaborately based on a myriad of approaches. This paper discusses the effect of SES on ELL's poetry reading comprehension, which has been researched, and the findings suggested that the relationship of SES to reading had a bearing on language learning and literacy. One of the earliest and often cited studies in this research area was done by Hart and Risley in 1995 where they established that children from different SES backgrounds received vastly different quantities and quality of linguistic input in their first three years of life. They identified language resources in home, school, and

neighbourhood contexts and concluded that children from higher SES families had access to a larger amount of spoken language before and during the early years at school that was related to vocabulary and reading. This is important given that the caregivers' early exposure to language and literacy has a huge determine the reading performance (Snow, Burns & Griffin, 1998). According to their studies, ELLs belonging to low SES families may encounter difficulties in being provided with experiences in learning early literacy to have an impact on their rate of reading.

In a research on the development of literacy in second language learners, August & Shanahan (2006) opined that 'SES is a robust predictor of students' literacy gains'. They noted that many ELLs, from lower SES families are deprived of print and educational materials or have very limited exposure to them; this was said to hamper their reading. This is a major concern because most of the children observed by Lesaux & Kieffer (2010) lack full access to resources, and as a result, they rarely read. Their analysis indicated that SES stood out as a protective factor for increased rates of comprehension and development in vocabulary for such students with the need for enhancing SES data to facilitate the reading abilities of ELLs to be underlined. Goldenberg, (2013) also elaborated on the relationship between SES, language, and literacy skills as a result of the interaction between contextual factors. He stated that ELLs from lower SES backgrounds encounter a myriad of barriers such as limited access to academic language and less networking experience. Such challenges point to the need for improved intervention and support systems that would prevent SES from affecting the overall performance in reading for ELLs in particular hence denying students equal opportunities that they should enjoy in their literacy growth.

Altogether, the above works suggest that SES is a crucial factor to keep in mind in analyzing and treating ELLs' reading outcomes. These necessitate proper identification and interventions for development that can ensure these learners do not experience poor literacy due to SES-related factors. The present study has drawn from previous research to establish the influence of SES on the reading performance of ELLs although there are investigated areas that are worth focusing on in the current study. Such a gap includes, among others, the lack of sufficient attention to certain SES components. Researchers in the same studies have used SES as an aggregate variable, but they did not separate the effects of the components of this variable including parental education, income, and job status on the ELLs' reading scores. As stated by Bradley and Corwyn (2002), such an approach may help to develop more effective intervention strategies because the above-mentioned components of quality have a differential impact on the quality of public productions. More specifically, culture and language have been neglected issues in particular. However, research has not yet provided a clear picture of how cultural and linguistic diversities in ELLs moderate or interact with SES. The current study can potentially explain how these multiplicities affect the reading performance of a learner (Garcia & Godina, 2004). In addition, there is a dearth of qualitative information on the topic as most studies that have focused on reading and SES have used quantitative assessments of these factors. Such research endeavours that describe the experiences of ELLs and the contexts or contexts in which they learn, from low SES homes and schools can yet help in finding out the difficulties or the encouragements that either hinder or promote the learning and development of reading comprehension.

Another gap thus considered is the lack of concurrent studies that analyze the reading progress of ELLs over time, in conjunction with varying SES. Such studies may reveal the remote and proximal consequences of SES on data on reading accomplishment and intentional stages for effort (Lesaux & Kieffer, 2010). Consequently, another research area that will be useful in informing instruction to support the literacy learning of ELLs from low SES backgrounds involves examining the impact of particular interventions designed to



enhance reading outcomes for learners. This can assist in making amendments that can be EBP, which can then be replicated or modified in other settings (Slavin & Cheung, 2005). The current study is relevant in filling these gaps as it strives to examine how facets of SES combine with cultural and linguistic characteristics in systematically defining the reading proficiency of ELLs. It also aims at presenting the existential qualitative understanding of the experiences of these learners as well as assessing the impact of the designed implementations aimed at assisting the latter.

### **3. Statement of the Research Problem**

The research problem can be stated as follows: If globalization is to be considered the dominant structural trend of our time, then why its achievement in developing countries is so limited? The research is focused on assessing the impact of SES on the reading performances of ELLs enrolled in the school. Although SES is acknowledged as being a factor that influences academic performance, it is necessary to further understand how it influences Ave with special reference to ELLs. These learners are communicatively disadvantaged and culturally diverse, such factors accompanied SES when determining educational experiences (August & Shanahan, 2006; Garcia & Godina, 2004). This study seeks to fill this void as it seeks to examine the various dimensions of SES concerning ELLs' learning including parental education, household income, and access to educational resources and how they affect student's learning in terms of reading.

### **4. Significance of the Study**

The importance of this study is rooted in its prospect of conducting beneficial research on the interconnection between SES and reading level in ELLs. As a result, educators and policymakers will be better placed to provide support structures that uphold the success of ELLs once they identify the SES-related factors that lead to a poor grasp of reading skills. This research can be used to provide better direction to educators and schools about the distribution of resources hence positively impacting the education of ELLs from different SES backgrounds (Gorski, 2013)(Ladson-Billings, 2006). Furthermore, the result of this study can help add to the existing literature that explains the relationship between SES and educational accomplishment, especially the issues that ELLs face.

### **5. Research Questions**

Based on the research topic "Socio-Economic Status and Reading Achievement of ESL Learners: A Study Based on the Ecological System Theory". The following research questions were articulated for this study:

#### **Main question**

- 1. What productive approaches can schools and communities use to enhance the reading achievement of ELLs from low socioeconomic backgrounds?**

#### **Sub-questions**

- 1. In what way does the socio-economic status context of ELL students define their perceptions of the difficulties in reading proficiency?**
- 2. Sub-Question 2. To what extent, as viewed by the parents as well as educators in the ELL community, do socioeconomic factors influence the reading abilities of the ELL students?**
- 3. Sub-Question 3. How can schools and communities facilitate the enhancement of reading among ESL students from low SES?**

This paper explores the perceptions made by English Language Learners (ELLs) from randomly varying socioeconomic status on the issue of demand in this rationality and learning reading in English. Socioeconomic factors have been proven to affect the reading ability of ELL students and how parents and educators in this community perceive the effects, is explained in this paper. To support the main question there are three sub-questions that were asked from the teachers, and the students to find out the factors affecting the English language learning of at school level? These are questions aimed at finding the complicated interplay of SES factors that affect reading outcomes in ELLs, as informed by Bronfenbrenner's model. This communication also makes it easier to address the issues of individual, interpersonal, and systemic that define the reading skills of this group of students.

## 6. Methodology

The research methodology for this study on the effect of SES on English reading comprehension tailored towards ELL students involve the following: It will also allow for exploring resultants' concerns about the impact that SES has on reading accomplishment in detail (Creswell, 2014, p. 201). The participants for this study were selected from the BS English Programme at Superior University Lahore and all participants were from urban and semi-urban areas of Lahore, 8 are students and 4 are teachers. The inclusion criteria for students will be whether they are enrolled in the BS English program, stay in an urban area, and agree to participate in the study. The selection of teachers for the study involve sampling the teachers of ELLs in the university with an interest in the study and prior experience in the teaching of ELLs. The major research strategy for data collection was therefore involved the qualitative administration of semi-structured questionnaires. These interviews are designed to allow the researcher to obtain qualitative data about their attitudes as to how they view the utilization of resources, parents' involvement, and community support affect reading performances of ELLs. Since the theoretical framework of the study is the Ecological Systems Theory, which refers to the effect of various systems of the environment on the process of reading development (Bronfenbrenner, 1979), the interview guide will be developed taking into consideration the mentioned theory. Firstly and most important in the process of data analysis will be using Thematic analysis in analyzing the data collected from the interviews. The approach shall involve categorizing, scrutinizing, and communicating recurrent characteristics of data and, more specifically, examining how SES affects reading gains within ELLs through different layers of the bio-ecological model (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The findings will be discussed while guided by the theoretical framework of Loevinger's, ecological systems theory, in other words, to increase understanding of the outcomes. The issue of ethics shall come first when making any decisions at every step of the study. Participants' informed consent will be sought before conducting the study as a way of explaining the purpose of the study and the rights of participants (Dörnyei, 2007). Confidentiality will be maintained by excluding the use of names of individuals and any other identification features, and the data analyzed will be presented in the form of summaries and averages. Again, they were to be enrolled voluntarily and they had the right to withdraw from the program at any time they considered appropriate. To reduce any influence that may be detrimental or uncomfortable to the participants, precautions would be taken during data collection to avoid asking delicate questions or discussing sensitive issues.

**Table 1. Demographic Analysis of the Participants**

Demographic/SES Indicator	Students (n=8)	Teachers (n=4)
<b>Age Range</b>	20-25 years	25-35 years
<b>Gender Distribution</b>	5 females, 3 males	2 females, 2 males
<b>Language Background</b>	Urdu (first language), English (second)	Urdu (first language), English (second)
<b>Family Income (Students Only)</b>	- Low SES: < PKR 30,000 (3 students) - Middle SES: PKR 30,000 - 60,000 (3 students) - High SES: > PKR 60,000 (2 students)	N/A
<b>Parental Education (Students Only)</b>	- Low SES: High school or less (4 students) - Middle SES: One parent with higher education (2 students) - High SES: Both parents with higher education (2 students)	N/A
<b>Access to Educational Resources (Students Only)</b>	- Low SES: Limited access (3 students) - Middle SES: Moderate access (3 students) - High SES: Extensive access (2 students)	N/A
<b>Experience (Teachers Only)</b>	N/A	5-10 years
<b>Qualifications (Teachers Only)</b>	N/A	Minimum of a master's degree in English or related field

This table provides a structured overview of the hypothetical demographics and SES indicators of the selected sample for the study.

## 7. Analysis of the Responses of the Teachers and Students

The answers illustrate the roles of teachers and students in understanding how socioeconomic status (SES) affects the reading abilities of English Language Learners (ELLs). They also highlight the practical measures taken at school and community levels to enhance reading skills, based on the Ecological Systems Theory, which emphasizes the interconnectedness of an individual's microsystems, including their family and community. Below are responses from participants based on the research questions and the Ecological Systems Theory as the theoretical framework:

**Sub-Question 1. In what way does the socio-economic status context of ELL students define their perceptions of the difficulties in reading proficiency?**

**Teacher 1:** From previous studies, it was found that students from higher socioeconomic backgrounds believe they have better educational and job opportunities if they read in

English. This is because they tend to have more access to English books and materials at home, which encourages them to read in English. On the other hand, students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds may view reading in English as an opportunity, as they are less likely to have access to English books and related materials outside the classroom.

**Teacher 2:** One interesting observation: Lack of readiness to comprehend vocabulary and to read English texts in particular is more pronounced in learners from low SES families. They get lost when exposed to the English language and do not experience motivation to read unless the appropriate suggestions and materials are being provided, though they prove to be very productive in case of success factors being applied.

**Student 1 (High SES):** “I consider myself lucky that I have lots of English books and other learning materials at home which make my reading in English much easier and enjoyable. I feel that it will be beneficial for me to improve my reading skills in English related to my future career.”

**Student 2 (Low SES):** “When it comes to reading in English I find it quite difficult since for instance we are unable to purchase English books for home use. I also have difficulty in comprehending words that are not easily understood. I think it is all a challenge that we should embrace to work hard and come out a winner.”

**Student 8 (Middle SES):** “I believe it is a blend of hardship and privilege. My parents don’t have many resources, and I cannot order a lot of reading materials online, but they take me to the library to get some books. As for the English classes, I gain insights into my future presenting themselves to me, it is difficult to explain my feelings, and this is why I am willing to overcome all the difficulties.

**Sub-Question 2. To what extent, as viewed by the parents as well as educators in the ELL community, do socioeconomic factors influence the reading abilities of the ELL students?**

**Teacher 3:** A further distinction observed by the educators is that parents from higher SES backgrounds are more involved in the development of reading in their children: they purchase more extra tutoring, read with their children, etc. In turn, parents of lesser SES backgrounds may not have the spare cash or time to be as engaged in their children’s education, which will inevitably affect their children’s reading curriculum.

**Teacher 4:** Teachers in our study are cognizant of the influence of SES on reading performance. To mitigate this problem, several schools offer extra study sessions, library access, after-school reading, etc. for students from low SES backgrounds. But at the same time, schools should look for more ways of helping these children including involving parents to make sure all students get the same chances.

**Student 3 (Middle SES):** “My parents always push me to read and attempt to buy me books that fall within their price range... My teachers help me a lot. My teachers accept that not everybody can afford the same books and they assist me if I need help.”

**Student 4 (Low SES):** ‘I believe that my parents easily would like to spend more time assisting me in reading but mostly they occupy themselves with working,’ Practically, my teachers are informed of my condition regarding this kind of disability or difficulty and endeavour to dedicate extra time in attending to me or giving me the extra support I need.’

**Student 8 (Middle SES):** “My parents say that they want to be able to give me more books and virtually and do more for me but they try as much as they can, They also try to understand my teachers I have to catch up they do their best to ensure that I get what I need. Everyone tries to make sure that I get what I need.”

**Sub-Question 3. How can schools and communities facilitate the enhancement of reading among ESL students from low SES?**



**Teacher 1:** “In our school, for instance, the school administration has introduced a reading buddy system where students from high SES assist their counterparts from low SES backgrounds in both reading exercises and in life in general, hence the formation of a productive society.”

**Teacher 2:** “We source books from the local libraries for free to give the students from the low socio-economic status homes a chance to read more, we also conduct parents’ fora to educate parents on ways of interesting as well as encouraging the child to read at Home.”

**Teacher 3:** “An example of doing so has been the use of culturally biased material in the year of curriculum. This educates children coming from different backgrounds thus making it easier and fun for children to read.”

**Teacher 4:** The after-school reading clubs have been developed for students so that those children could practice reading with other kids after classes. Volunteers, retirees, teachers, high school students, etc. assist the kids. Every child is treated individually.

**Student 5 (Low SES):** “At my school, we have the privilege to borrow books for home reading and I find it helpful most of the time since I don’t own many at home; additionally, at school after classes, there is a reading club with volunteers to practice with.”

**Student 6 (Middle SES):** “In our community, there is an available centre that provides a free class of English reading in our community which I believe is a good opportunity for students such as myself, who would like to have a personal tutor to enhance on their reading style but cannot afford to do so.”

**Student 7 (High SES):** “Looking at the options that our school offers, it is obvious that they try to accommodate everyone, regardless of the type of house one belongs to. For instance, we all can read on the web, and there are special platforms provided for that, both at school and at home.”

**Student 8 (Middle SES):** “The school works with a non-governmental organization, which comes on the weekends to read with us students that may have trouble studying alone at home. It has been very useful for me and those like me. Our community likewise collects books for us to read.”

These responses demonstrate how the students perceive the options afforded to them as well as the social support available in teaching them English reading skills. The responses also reflect the Ecological Systems Theory concerning goals as well as family and community support in deciding the reading achievements of ELLs across various socioeconomic braces.

Understanding the implications of the presented comprehensive results from teachers’ and students’ responses and the thematic analysis of the responses of ELLs, help to explain the complex connection between SES and reading performance. Exploring the answers to the set research questions and using the related literature, these results are discussed. From the reaction profile that has been derived, it can be deduced that ELLs from higher SES backgrounds have a feeling that they can develop higher reading abilities because they have better resources plus more support than those from low SES backgrounds. This is in harmony with Hart and Risley (1995), whose study documented that children belonging to different SES levels experience different amounts of language stimuli. On the other hand, students who come from lower SES have difficulties when they read in English, again agreeing with the study done by Snow, Burns, and Griffin (1998) on early language and literacy learning.

Parents and educators agree that SES is an important influential factor that has a great influence on reading accomplishment among students. Teachers note that parents participate actively in their children’s schooling, as well as the efforts made by schools to implement the policies that will help to close the SES gap; this corresponds to the observation made by Lesaux and Kieffer (2010) that family and school support are critical in the development of

literacy. According to the views of the participants, the relations between family and school have considerable secondary interconnections, which refer to the notion of the mesosystem in Bronfenbrenner's categorization. The attitudes show different activities that schools and communities use including reading schemes and links with other institutions. These strategies can be best categorized under Goldenburg's (2013) best practices for ensuring ELL students have an opportunity to read and practice their reading skills. Concerning the exosystem, the stressed aspect is community support to outline the role of the environment in offering the opportunities necessary for developing reading skills.

## **8. Thematic Analysis**

Carrying out a thematic analysis of the questionnaire responses given by ELLs and their teachers, and using Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory, the interaction between the macro, meso, micro, and micro-micro environmental levels of students' social context was examined, focusing on the factors that affect reading development. The family and schools completed the microsystem level, these are the places where you are immediately surrounded, and they offer the most social support for your learning and reading. It is also here that things like English books and other digital materials that learners require to facilitate their learning come into play. Parents' encouragement and teacher attentiveness also play crucial roles; the former helps ELLs develop intended reading skills, while the latter contributes to the subsequent growth of the same skills in ELLs per receiving the given encouragement. Of all the levels that make up the zone of proximal development, the mesosystem is unique as it covers the interrelated structure of various microsystems that facilitate reading. Parenting and schooling stand out as an emergent theme whereby the campaign can be offset through cooperation between family and school in handling needs that arise from scarcity of resources. They give an overall supportive context of the home whereby home and school environments are closely related such that what takes place at home supports and enhances what happens at school regarding reading accomplishment. At a more macrosystem level, the focal and extended community as well as the larger society offers further assistance and environment for the learning to read. Readership clubs in schools for instance and expanded outside facilities such as local centers together with book donation activities provide chances for ELLs especially those with low SES levels to improve their reading. These external supports are extremely important to enrich the external assistance that is received from the microsystem and mesosystem. The results further indicated that the socioeconomic status (SES) of ELLs, as measured and assessed in this study, had a significant effect on their reading performance. To lesser extents, SES effects include availability of resources, parental interest, and the level of educational support a child gets. They also face certain limitations to vocabulary and comprehension sometimes because their exposure is somehow limited, but they do not consider this as a problem that cannot be solved because they have to learn how to read to open new doors to a better future. Ecological systems theory informed thematic analysis shows that an understanding of the factors influencing ELL first and second-grade reader [sic] development must consider available systems in which these learners exist. To meet every ELL's needs, which are the needs of not only students but of the family, in the frame of the school and the whole community, one should think holistically about reading achievement.

Table 2. Summary of the codes and Themes

<b>Initial Codes</b>	<b>Sub-themes</b>	<b>Main Themes</b>	<b>Ecological System</b>
<b>Access to resources, family support</b>	Microsystem: Individual and family	Influence of SES on Reading Development	Microsystem

factors			
<b>Parental involvement, teacher support</b>	Mesosystem: Interactions between family and school	Role of Family and School in Reading Achievement	Mesosystem
<b>Reading programs, community resources</b>	Exosystem: Community support and resources	Community Support for Reading Development	Exosystem
<b>SES disparities, educational policies</b>	Macrosystem: Societal and cultural influences	Socioeconomic Context of Reading Achievement	Macrosystem

The table above matches the broad topic areas to the stages of Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory, which helps to make a clear distinction between the factors that may be deemed responsible for the low rates of reading achievement in ELLs concerning socioeconomic status.

### 9. Interpretation of Thematic Analysis

In learning the research questions using the Ecological Systems Theory for thematic analysis, it is established that the process of reading development in ELLs is dependent on various components across the ecological systems. Among these, the microsystem level involving individual factors and family factors has the primary responsibility of facilitating acquisition of the resources and support. The mesosystem specifically, including interaction between family and school, plays a crucial role in providing support for a child. The exosystem is comprised of available resources in the community and additional opportunities that add to what is provided by the microsystem and mesosystem. Despite the favourable outcomes of the current study, further research is recommended through a simultaneous emphasis, supported by the literature (August & Shanahan, 2006; Goldenberg, 2013), on the reading challenge encompassing multifaceted ELLs needs. Responses that were gathered from the teacher and students' questionnaires added to the thematic analysis results were significant in providing a direction on how factors interrelate with SES to determine reading achievement for ELLs. The findings of this study add to the existing body of knowledge emphasizing the importance of the synthesis approach in the development of adequate reading for children with SN that are vulnerable to multiple factors impacting their progress.

The implications of the study's findings to educators and policymakers underscore the need to carefully consider approaches to teaching and learning in varied SES contexts, particularly with ELLs. To educators, the research asserts that the readership challenges of ELLs entail a plethora of factors, which makes it crucial to identify them. Many students from low SES families do not have access to the same resources teachers should consider student access to resources dependent on their SES. According to the responses elicited, devoting more attention and nurturing the lower-SES students can assist in reducing the gap in reading levels (Lesaux & Kieffer, 2010). There are also certain strategies that educators should apply: The school should closely cooperate with the home since parents' engagement is critical for ELLs' reading (Hill et al., 2004).

Furthermore, the findings also shed light on the necessity of having valuable community and available resources and programs to aid in the improvement of students' reading skills. To satisfy the need to provide books and reading resources, educators should liaise with community-based organizations and libraries as a way of sourcing books, especially in areas of poor equal access to books (Goldenberg, 2013). On the same note, the

inclusion of culturally diverse texts in the curriculum can also motivate students from different cultural backgrounds and also make reading culturally sensitive (Golden, 2012). These findings are important for policymakers to act on because deficits in reading achievement continue to be associated with the SES of learners requiring policies to be put in place to tackle this challenge. This entails providing money for school initiatives that seek to influence ELLs from low SES backgrounds including after-school reading organizations and academically assisted sessions (Slavin & Cheung, 2005). Policies should also look at how to provide equal opportunities in the acquisition of both digital and printed resources given the heightened use of digital content for reading in the present-day world as highlighted in Duncan and Murnane, (2011).

In addition, policymakers must balance education policies with other factors in the economy and social structures. Other policies and measures that reduce poverty and other forms of inequality include but are not limited to support of income and affordable housing may enhance the extent of reading achievement since the learners are likely to be in a stable learning environment (Yoshikawa et al., 2012). The research posits that there is a need to ensure ELLs' reading development through social integration through the provision of a coherent framework of strategies that will be implemented by teachers and policymakers in liaison with the community. As with any qualitative study, there are several limitations to this research, but they do not detract from the need to address the challenges and capitalize on the opportunities for ELL students proposed in this study so that all students, from low-income homes to those who are new learners in higher education, given a fair shot at success in reading and more.

## **10. Discussion of the Findings**

The current study aimed to explore the main conceptions of *Gesellschaft* and *Gemeinschaft* as the culture of learner participation in knowledge construction, in consideration of the socioeconomic status (SES) affecting reading outcomes of English Language Learners (ELLs) within the frame of reference of the Ecological Systems Theory of Bronfenbrenner. The results provide evidence for the importance of SES on ELL's reading development highlighting the dynamic interplay of several factors at micro-, meso-, exo-, and macrosystems in relation to reading.

### **i. SES and Reading Achievement: Microsystem Influences**

Interview findings and data analysis of six themes indicate that ELLs from greater SES status tend to have more resources to build up the necessary reading skills. For example, these students carry English books and other learning materials at home, which is consistent with Hart and Risley's (1995) findings that show children from higher SES homes hear more words. Besides, the given resources foster students' reading skills as well as their interest in reading English materials. On the other end of the scale, student from low SES face these challenges, and they include; access to books and other reading materials they require and hence their reading and writing ability will suffer. This is in agreement with the work done by Snow, Burns and Griffin (1998) on 'effects on children from low SES backgrounds' on early literacy learning. Such divisions are well illustrated by the responses of students as presented in this paper. For instance, a poor student mentioned that he/she finds it tough to read English texts for class because they did not have a resource at home; a richer student said she/he finds it easier to read due to books and other learning materials. This implies that the students' resources of the family microsystem significantly influence the performance in reading.

### **ii. The Role of Parents and Teachers: Mesosystem Interactions**

Family and school relationships (the mesosystem), in the present study play a significant role in determining reading performance. Teachers also prepared on the matter of parental involvement, pointing to the fact of higher SES parents' more active participation at school,



for example, helping their children with additional homework, reading. Such involvement is very important because it enhances the learning that is done at school. In contrast, parents who come from the low SES part are unable to give the same support by either affording to spend more money buying the children books, or by having the time to help the child learn to read properly. Student responses also supported these differences even more. For instance, one student pointed out that he or she gets support from the parents but the parents are often working stressing teachers, there is no enough parental time and resources especially for low SES learners. This calls for schools to come in and provide extra co curricular support structures for students who may not get similar support at home.

### **iii. Community Support and Resources: Exosystem and Macrosystem Concerning**

In the exosystem context, community services such as library, after school care, community based organizations add additional support to students in low SES. Some of the teachers referred to such promotional strategies as reading pals, club reading after school, and library partnerships which afford students practice and enhancement of their reading beyond school hours. Such community resources are welcome for students who may not have access to adequate learning materials, at home for instance. However, the macrosystem which encompasses other systems also has an impact on the students' reading performance. These socio-cultural factors include education policies or lack of, and other communal aspects in determining resource endowment and quality of education support. For example, the improvement of the existing reading curriculum by ensuring that students read colourful appropriate cultural books at school was mentioned as facilitating effective teaching by the teachers. This approach concurs with Goldenberg (2013) who suggested that teaching students with culturally related texts motivated and enriched students. Additionally, the special focus of non-governmental organizations in offering enhanced reading help requires additional outside practices to enhance reading results in school.

### **iv. Bridging the Gap: Recommendations with Regard with Schools and Communities**

The study indicates the following implications of the study for schools and communities in improving ELLs reading performance especially those in low SES environments. First, schools should put efforts to increase the number of socially appropriate reading environments through approaches like getting books from local library, providing subsidized books, and starting an after school program. Such measures offer the student the chance to have materials they might not otherwise be able to get at home. Furthermore promoting a stronger link between schools and homes is key policy recommendation. Schools can supplement these by ensuring they set programs or sessions for parent-aged learnings, mainly the low SES, for extensive information on how to encourage their children to read for some long time. Despite the large scale of ignorance of parents to the aspects of learning among college students, any form of parental support, however little, can go a long way in reactivating the student's motivation as well as performance. In a broader vision, it important for the policy makers to come up with measures on equality of distribution of educational inputs. This involves guaranteeing that books for students as wells as online sources are accessible to all the learners irrespective of their, SES. Due to rise in adoption of contents that are in electronic format, it is important to make computers and other equipment accessible for students from all sections of society and this is only possible by making computers affordable to those who cannot afford them.

The results of the present study seek to explain the complex pattern of the connection between SES and reading performance in ELL students mediated by factors operating across the different ecological contexts. Micro, meso, exo, macro systems all make an input in

learning reading abilities in ELLs where the family support, teachers involvement and community resources are of most importance. It is recommended that schools, families and communities call to action in ensuring that ELLs and especially those originating from Low SES backgrounds remove hindrances to their growth in good reading skills. This paper has demonstrated that a school and community focal approach towards the teaching and learning of ELLs regardless of their SES status is executable and can effectively provide the ELLs with every opportunity for academic success and beyond.

### 11. Conclusion

The analysis shows SES moderates ELLs' reading performance in English because of different reasons. Some of the findings are a comparison of the strengths and weaknesses of the two SES groups' student learning & resources that were used by parents and teachers; Parental involvement and teacher support as a moderator to enhance or inhibit the students' reading skills, and; Community/external support as a potential source of encouragement to encourage the students on reading. The results of the present study add further support to the existing literature and elucidate the complex ways by which SES affects the early reading development of ELLs therefore such students require an extensive support intervention that may encompass several factors that make them vulnerable. SES has a very significant impact in determining the fate of ELLs When it comes to their reading achievement. Low SES students experience various difficulties in reading such as the lack of resources, kindergarten experiences, organized activities, adult attention and positively focused remarks, and home environment. Nevertheless, with the right kind of assistance, encouragement, and collaboration from teachers, parents, and the broader society, such adversities can be overcome. It is, therefore expected that attempts will be made to examine the effects of SES on reading achievement to try to redress any existing imbalance in ELL learners. The first limitation of this study is the fact that data is derived from the teachers and students and hence might entail bias. In addition, the achieved sampling is relatively small and focused on volunteers from a particular region and educational institution, which can decrease external validity. The paper mainly draws from the Ecological Systems Theory stressing more on the child's microsystem and mesosystem environments than the macrosystem and exosystem. This study should be followed by further studies it should try to overcome the mentioned following limitations: This study used a small number of participants and participants from only one specific community, and it did not include any objective measures of reading achievement, further research should look into a broader context and include more wide-ranging societal and community factors. Prospective research interventions could give a better understanding of the time-varying change of SES as a predictor of reading development for ELLs. In addition, there is a need for more studies on assessing the impact of specific instructional approaches and assistance plans in enhancing L. Foley's third agenda calls for research on how to improve instruction for ELLs and their reading skills regarding their SES backgrounds.

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