

The Roles of Home Support and Parental Collaboration in the Progress of EFL Students' Speaking Skills at Lower Secondary Schools in Duhok, Iraq

Dilkhosh Ismat Abed

Administrative Technical Institute/College of Polytechnic /Duhok
dilkhoshmizory@gmail.com

Lureen Ibrahim Naser

Department of English/College of Education/University of Duhok/Iraq
lureen.naser@uod.ac

Submission date: 21/ 20/2025

Acceptance date: 20/1/2025

Publication date: 26/5/2026

Abstract

This paper examines parental engagement in English speaking of lower secondary students in Duhok, Iraq, through a mixed methods approach based on parent and teacher surveys and student focus groups. The goal of the research is to investigate school-based cooperation and home-based support as well as their effect on the success of the students in speaking English. The findings show that concerning school-based collaboration and home-based support, parents have shown moderate engagement with $M = 3.76$ and $M=2.99$, respectively. According to teachers, parents engage in the provision of learning materials, such as CDs, English classes, shows on television, and mobile applications. It was pointed out by the students that they had made the greatest progress in speaking when they were encouraged emotionally at home and when they had interactive practice. The paper has elaborated the importance of parents in strengthening English speaking abilities outside the classroom and highlights the necessity of practical strategies and interventions to strengthen home based support. The implications of these findings suggest that the policymakers, educators as well as families should promote holistic development of English-language speaking among EFL students.

Keywords: Parental involvement, Home Support, School Collaboration, EFL teaching

**دور الدعم المنزلي والتعاون الأبوي في تطوير مهارات التحدث لدى طلاب اللغة
الإبغليزية كلغة أجنبية في المدارس الإعدادية في دهوك، العراق**

دلخوش عصمت عابد

معهد التقني الإداري/ جامعة بوليتكنيك/ دهوك

لورين إبراهيم ناصر

قسم اللغة الإنجليزية/كلية التربية/جامعة دهوك/العراق

المستخلص

تناولت هذه الدراسة تدخل الوالدين في تعليم اللغة الإنجليزية لطلاب المرحلة المتوسطة في دهوك، العراق، من خلال منهجية بحثية مختلطة تعتمد على استبيانات للآباء ولقاءات مع المعلمين ومجموعات نقاش مركزة مع الطلاب. هدف البحث إلى دراسة التعاون الأبوي والدعم المنزلي، وتأثيرهما على نجاح الطلاب في التحدث باللغة الإنجليزية. أظهرت النتائج أن التعاون الأبوي والدعم المنزلي

كان متوسط التأثير (المتوسط=3.76) والمتوسط=2.99؛ ووفقاً للمعلمين، يساهم الآباء في توفير مواد تعليمية، مثل الأقراص المدمجة، ودروس اللغة الإنجليزية، والبرامج التلفزيونية، وتطبيقات الهواتف المحمولة. وأشار الطلاب إلى أنهم حققوا أكبر تقدم في التحدث عندما تلقوا التشجيع المعنوي في المنزل، وعندما مارسوا اللغة بشكل تفاعلي. تُفصّل هذه الورقة البحثية أهمية دور الأهل في تعزيز مهارات التحدث باللغة الإنجليزية خارج الفصل الدراسي، وتُبرز ضرورة وجود استراتيجيات وتدخلات عملية لدعم الأهل في المنزل. وضحت الورقة البحثية أهمية دور الوالدين في تعزيز مهارات التحدث باللغة الإنجليزية خارج الفصل الدراسي، وسلطت الضوء على ضرورة وجود استراتيجيات وتدخلات عملية لتعزيز الدعم المنزلي، مثل تزويد الوالدين بالمعلومات حول كيفية المشاركة والممارسة الفعّالة. إن دلالات هذه النتائج بالنسبة لصنّاع السياسات، والمعلمين، وكذلك الأسر الراغبة في تعزيز التنمية الشاملة لمهارات التحدث باللغة الإنجليزية لدى متعلّمي اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية.

الكلمات الدالة: مشاركة الأهل، التحدث باللغة الإنجليزية، الدعم المنزلي، التعاون المدرسي، دهوك، المناهج المختلطة، متعلّمي اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية

1. Introduction

The phrase "home-based parental involvement" refers to guardians' active participation, support, and involvement in their children's academic development at home. It encompasses a variety of actions and attitudes that parents take to support their kids' education, mental well-being, and general growth outside of the classroom. In a home context, typical examples of parental involvement include helping with homework, reading aloud together, playing educational games and activities, talking about learning subjects, keeping track of academic progress, encouraging curiosity and exploration, setting expectations and goals, and offering emotional support and nurturing[1].

The parental involvement in improving the educational achievements of the students is a well-studied topic, but few studies have been conducted to investigate its contribution towards the growth of the EFL speaking skills in Duhok schools. This narrow-scale approach is critical because learners in Duhok as a distinct educational and linguistic setting are part of a larger Kurdish territory. Many parents of Kurdish backgrounds have limited English speaking skills, and this creates considerable difficulty for them to monitor their children's involvement in English speaking activities. This is an especially severe problem in these families. The purpose of this study is to investigate the relationship between parental involvement or lack of it on the Kurdish students' English-speaking skills. This is done by attending not only to the acts of family involvement but also the beliefs and consequences of such practices in order to identify and describe the nature of the phenomena and to explore how this type of involvement might be used to enhance the children's language skills in English. This paper, thus, tries to answer the following questions:

1. To what extent are parents involved in the English-speaking development of their children at intermediate school in Duhok?
2. How do Kurdish parents support the English-speaking abilities of their children at home?

2. Theoretical Background

Parental support correlates with diverse language learning factors such as motivation, anxiety level, or self-confidence[2]and[3].Students' attitudes to learning English impact their motivation, because they pick up their parents' views regarding the importance of English proficiency for educational success and career prosperity[4]. Existing research has proven a link between parental attitudes and student motivation, and it has also been documented that children absorb their parents' beliefs and expectations for language learning[5].Parental involvement is often regarded as an important aspect in second language acquisition (SLA).Research has demonstrated that when parents actively participate in their children's language learning, it can lead to increased motivation, higher exposure to the language, and, eventually, enhanced linguistic ability[6]. Since the last few years, there has been a growing concern for the role that parents play in fostering language learning, especially in the case of learning English as a foreign language (EFL)[7].

A considerable amount of research has been conducted on the role of parents in providing an environment in which language learning can take place, showing that children like being supported with direct as well as indirect parental support, including structured language activities, evaluation of behavior, and access to English language resources [8]. The extent and nature of parental involvement should be understood in developing strategies to improve students' English-speaking proficiency, especially for the case of the Kurdish learners who do not have direct exposure to English at home.

There is not only direct parental support in language acquisition, but also other forms of parental participation in promoting children practicing English outside of formal academic settings[9]. According to studies, parents are very instrumental in improving the kids' speaking ability by actively participating in English based activities at home, such as watching English movies, reading English books or speaking English in the house[10,11]. As a result, parents who value English proficiency will build a home setting that promotes ongoing language practice and skill development.

Besides, local studies also highlighted the importance of parental involvement. Mohammed [12]developed a comprehensive study on the roles and issues of parental involvement of non-displaced and displaced families in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq. The research used a mixed-methods design on a large scale involving 569 parents and 130 teachers in different educational backgrounds. The findings showed that the socioeconomic status and education level of parents as well as the amount of time available to them played a significant role in determining the level at which they could aid their children in learning. Parents that were highly educated and financially stable were more likely to engage in academic support activities and school communication. Nevertheless, families with less education and poor financial conditions also stated that they were struggling to continue regular engagement. The structural constraints impacting the efficacy of family school partnership described in Mohammed's study are a necessity to develop school policies that encourage fair participation among the socioeconomic groups. These results are more applicable to the current research that focuses on the role of parental involvement in the development of English-speaking skills by students at lower secondary level.

Other studies, in their turn, examined the connection between parental engagement and the academic success of students in governmental schools of the Kurdistan Region [13]. In their quantitative findings, they showed that the cooperation of the parents with the teachers had a significant positive correlation with the performance of the students, their motivation, and behavior in the classroom. Schools that proactively facilitated constant communication channels like frequent meetings, feedback systems and collaborative problem solving posted higher student engagement and academic performance.

The impact of socioeconomic status is more likely to be mediated by cultural and family requirements [14]. Nevertheless, even in such environments, parents with varying socioeconomic statuses were equally involved in children's education, and they were forced to use the community and school to counter the material or financial limitations by referring to the social and economic level of the family. This observation is in line with the framework of parental involvement developed by Epstein[15] which determines collaboration to be one of the six dimensions that determine the result of learning among students. The applicability of this study to the present research is that it has shown that school-home partnerships directly increase student engagement, especially when learning a language.

One of the most well-known frameworks is Epstein's [16,17] Six Types of Parental Involvement, which provides a systematic typology that is frequently used by researchers and practitioners. Epstein's typology reveals communication, parent participation at home, parent participation at school, and some additional unique forms in which parents can actively engage in all of them. First of all, fostering a supportive home environment is crucial for promoting academic success. Parents can help their children's education by providing fundamental support such as health, safety, nutrition, housing, parenting skills, and child-rearing activities to prepare them for school. It's crucial to help families develop a home environment that promotes optimal learning at all levels. Home-school communication facilitates knowledge sharing regarding the curriculum and child development. To encourage parental participation, it is important to keep them informed and make it easy for them to ask questions and express concerns. Volunteering activities, parent room programs, and parent patrols are all examples of effective practice. Steinberg [18] discovered a substantial relationship between parental attendance at school events, workshops, and extracurricular activities and student progress.

3. Methodology

Data were gathered in lower secondary schools in Duhok, a city at the northern part of Iraq, Kurdistan region in the academic year 2024-2025. The research setting consisted of four secondary schools: two schools for boys, one school for girls, and one mixed school for both boys and girls, all covered under the West Education Directorate. Lower secondary level was chosen as it represents a critical stage in the progress of students' English-speaking skills, since at this age students have a high level of cognitive, social and linguistic development that has a direct impact on their oral language skills [19]. Language proficiency is increasingly emphasized during adolescence. However, parental involvement at this stage is often less noticeable, as parents may assume that

their children are becoming more independent and capable of handling their own learning[16,7]. This perception can decrease direct parental support, even though research consistently emphasizes the positive influence of family engagement on students' academic achievement and language development[20,21].

At the beginning of the study 160 parents were asked to fill in the parental involvement questionnaire. Out of these, 10 questionnaires were not returned and a further 10 returned incomplete, which means that there were 140 valid responses. The questionnaire consists of three questions of Likert scale ranging from 5=Never to 1=Strongly Disagree. The questionnaire items were distributed across two key themes each, carefully designed to cover the research questions of the study, which include parents' collaboration and home support

The sample of teachers was 12 English language teachers who were involved in the qualitative part of the study by participating in semi structured interviews. The answers they gave were very helpful in terms of the quality of parental engagement and their feeling about parental impact on students' English-speaking skill.

Besides teachers and parents, students were also involved in focus group discussions to ensure that their views and experiences in the English-speaking practices and parental support at home are taken into consideration as the main aim of the study. The 4 focus groups were chosen for each group of 10 students for co-educational school (5 girls and 5 boys) to be balanced and manageable setting that facilitates participation and interaction [22]

The mixed-method approach was chosen to encompass both quantitative and qualitative data collection procedures to be able to get a wider and deeper insight into the research issue. Within the framework of the given research, quantitative data, obtained with questionnaires, were supplemented with qualitative data obtained through interviews with teachers and focus group discussions with students, which ensured a more comprehensive and more credible analysis of the issue of parental involvement and its effects on the students' English-speaking skills.

Besides, the questionnaire was the sole instrument to gather quantitative, measurable information on parental collaboration on English speaking skills of student's achievement. The questionnaire forms were distributed to parents via their children in schools because parents could not easily be reached through emails.

Semi-structured face to face interviews with 7th and 8th grade teachers at selected schools were then used to extract qualitative data to complement the information obtained from the questionnaire. Through such interviews there was the opportunity to explore in depth the experiences of teachers, their perceptions, and other aspects of the context to which the questionnaire would not be able to provide sufficient information. The interview guide was developed based on three open-ended questions that were grouped into two major thematic areas (collaboration and home support) which reflected the research questions.

Additionally, the interviewer, through focus group discussions consisting of eight students, has asked the students about the following items.

A "How often do your parents and teachers talk about your progress in speaking English?",

B “What kind of progress do they talk about in meeting or group chat, and how does that help you?”

C “Do you feel that the cooperation of your parents and teachers really helps you in improving you English speaking?”

D “Can you share an example of how they worked together to support you?”

These questions were framed up to get answers to find out how knowledgeable students are of home-school and collaboration, whether they are enjoying its advantages. The student perspectives help enrich exploration by delving into his/her experience in interaction with parents and the collaboration with the teacher, which are the key elements of providing information of the level of collaboration.

Moreover, the data obtained with the help of the focus group became the supplement and validation of the questionnaire results and interview result. Although the questionnaire was quantitative in terms of parental involvement, the focus group was able to give detailed information on the experiences and perceptions of parental involvement as perceived and realized by students. Particularly, the discussion in the focus group clarified both the frequency and the nature of parental involvement, as well as the quality and effectiveness of such support in the development of the English-speaking skills.

Through the integration of the international model by Epstein [16] and the local framework by Mohammed[12], the current research has developed a theoretical and empirical base. This incorporation enables the study to explore the general aspects of parental involvement as well as the local circumstances that apply to Kurdistan region.

With respect to the validity of the data collection instruments, content validity was guaranteed by requesting feedback from local experienced higher education teachers through email correspondence to ensure the applicability of the items and their alignment with the research objectives. In accordance to their feedback, some amendments were done to the form and quantity of questions of the three tool used in the study.

The mixed design adopted in this study, thus, aimed to reflect the experiences and practices of parents, EFL teachers and students in the selected schools. The statistical analyses were done with the IBM Statistical Package of Social Sciences (SPSS) version 26. The three item of qualitative data about parental involvement questionnaire were analyzed with the help of descriptive and inferential statistics. Means, standard deviations, frequencies and percentages were calculated.

Thematic analysis was used to analyze the qualitative data of this study that were collected in the form of semi-structured interviews of three items and focus group discussions of four items[23]. In order to allow proper data management, all audio records were initially transcribed with the help of the voice note transcription application called Otter, which guaranteed consistency and reduced the number of transcription mistakes. The transcribed texts were then imported into ATLAS.ti qualitative data analysis software in order to facilitate systematic coding and organization of the data. With the assistance of ATLAS.ti, the researcher coded significant portions of the data that made sense, categorized similar codes and selected common themes among the participants. Quotations that gave the best illustrations of each of the themes were picked to maintain the original voices of the participants and increase the validity of the results.

Otter.ai was utilized in conjunction with the ATLAS.ti to code, which offered a rigorous and clear structure to perform the thematic analysis to ensure that the qualitative findings were credible and organized in a systematic manner to analyze and answer the study research questions [24] and [25].

4.Results and Discussion

This section presents the results of the questionnaire items and discusses their interpretation. It also explains the results compared to past research. Table 1 represents the overall answers of the parents on questionnaire items. The table includes Frequency 'F', Percentage '%', Mean 'M' and Standard Deviation 'SD' of the responses, t-test 'T' results and significance values.

Table 1

Overall responses of parents to the questionnaire items

No. of Items	Always		Often		Sometimes		Rarely		Never		Mean	SD	T	P.value
	Fr.	%	Fr.	%	Fr.	%	Fr.	%	Fr.	%				
1	6	4.3	18	12.9	42	30.0	25	17.9	49	35.0	3.66	1.203	11.45	<.001
2	6	4.3	22	15.7	26	18.6	19	13.6	67	47.9	3.85	1.292	12.37	<.001
3	44	31.4	38	27.1	25	17.9	24	17.1	9	6.4	2.40	1.268	-0.93	=.352

This section, which includes the descriptive analysis of the three items, shows that parents differ in how much or how little involved they are in supporting their children's English language speaking development. This section is based on a five-point Likert scale, which has five response options with two extreme sides starting from (always and ending with never) and a neutral option (sometimes) that is linked to the middle answer options. It is analyzed using two measurements (frequency and percentage).

Item No.1. “How often do you communicate with teachers about your child’s English-speaking progress?”

Results indicate that the frequency of parents and teachers communicating about the children's English-speaking progress is relatively infrequent. The analysis showed that 17.2 % of parents claimed to regularly talk with teachers, but the biggest group (35 %) reported that they never do so. The mean score is 3.66 (SD=1.203) indicating little involvement. Variation concerning this behavior between the sample is statistically significant (T= 11.45, $p < .001$).

Item No.2. “How often do you provide feedback or suggestions to teachers about your child’s English learning?”

The item of providing feedback or suggestions to the teachers has the highest mean score in the results (3.85; SD=1.292), indicating that this is the least commonly practiced type of parental involvement. Only a small proportion (4.3%) of the participants said that they always provide feedback and suggestions to teachers, whereas almost half (47.9%) reported that they had never done so. Statistically significant (T=12.37, $p < .001$), this result posits a strong disparity in engagement levels of parents in this domain.

Item No.3. “How often do you encourage your child to practice English daily?”

This item was a measure of parental encouragement of daily English-speaking practice. These findings indicate that this behavior was often reported (31.4% of parents

reported always, 27.1% parents reported often), resulting in a total percentage of 58.5. The item received a low mean score ($M=2.40$, $SD=1.268$), meaning a rather high degree of reported parental intervention in the motivation of speaking practice. Nevertheless, the variation in the responses was not statistically significant ($t = -0.93, p=.352$), implying that the responses of parents with varying backgrounds were similar. This observation suggests that the majority of parents indicate the same rates of support on practicing English speaking, but the real possibilities of speaking English might differ at home.

In second language acquisition, it is important to practice language daily. This question assesses the development of consistent language habits at home by parents. Rahimi [25] claims that proper exposure and usage can make a learner internalize the patterns of language and develop fluency. This question establishes the support that parents give to the habituation of English language skills at a level outside school.

4.1. Research Question No. 1 on Collaboration

In the current study, a one sample t-test was used to compare the mean responses against a neutral test value of 2.5 which is the central point of the 5-point Likert scale. The outcomes show that collaboration theme had a high average score ($M=3.76, SD = 1.07$). A statistically significant value was found ($t = 13.85, p < .001$), which proved that the difference between the means was not accidental. Moreover, the range of the 95% confidence interval of the mean difference was between 1.08 and 1.44 that does not cover the value of zero and this is also an indication of the statistical significance of the result as shown in table (2).

Table 2 :One-sample t-test results for the thematic variables of the questionnaire

Q	Theme	Mean	SD.	t	95% CI for MD		Sig. (2-tailed)
					Lower	Upper	
1	Collaboration	3.76	1.07	13.85	1.08	1.44	<.001
2	Home Support	2.99	0.96	6.03	0.33	0.65	<.001

Figure 1 also shows that most of the respondents came across very high around collaboration with the largest percentage being the one with "Always". The level of collaboration reported as "Sometimes" was ranked the second most common with the ranking "Often" and "Rarely" occupying the biggest and the smallest percentages of answers respectively. This distribution argues that even though there may be differences as highlighted by the t-test, the acts of collaboration are accepted to have been a common activity among the people surveyed.

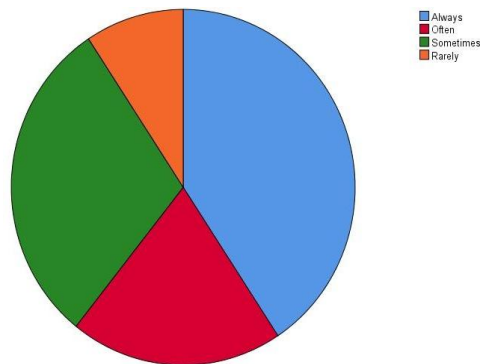


Figure 1 :Parents responses regarding collaboration with schools on their children's English-speaking progress

The results are in line with the findings in the literature, which have emphasized the importance of collaborative practices in language achievement. Similar results were reported in a study by Rahimi[26], who investigated parental collaboration in Iranian EFL classrooms with a mean of 3.89(SD=0.95). They concluded that parental collaboration promotes participation in classroom settings and encourages the motivation of learners and speaking as well as other language activities. Combined with the existing results, their research confirms the idea that collaborative environments play a positive role in language development.

The existing findings are also consistent with the results of Mohammed [12] who used 569 parents and 130 teachers in the Kurdistan Region and reached the conclusion that the level of parental engagement is affected greatly by socioeconomic and educational factors. Though no specific ways were mentioned, the importance of effective collaboration in the student learning outcomes was noted in the study. In the same manner, Faraj et al.[13] established a statistically significant positive association between the teacher-parent collaboration and students in academic performance, behavior and motivation in the Kurdistan Region. Their findings emphasize that collaboration improves learning attitudes and learning outcome of students,

To elaborate the quantitative results, qualitative data was also examined. The qualitative data started with private interviews among 12 teachers of four selected schools with open ended structured questions.

The interviewer asked the question "How do you perceive collaboration with parents to support students' English-speaking skills?" One of the teachers stated that ""Involving parents helps kids emphasize what they learn in class by giving them extra chance to practice speaking at home". This is informed by the belief that what is taught at school would be strengthened by parental involvement at home resulting in an effective learning process.

Collaboration does not mean passive support but active communication and co-responsibility between school and family. This interactivity in the role of the teacher is reflected in a quote of another teacher "Cooperation with the teacher can follow the lesson." This is an indication that where parents and teachers work together e.g. by following up on what the child learned in lesson or by checking the homework; the

children stand a better chance of remaining on course and also approaching English with more confidence. The use of communication platforms was also a feature of this collaborative process identified by teachers: "Write me in WhatsApp and Viber". This demonstrates that digital technology is being utilized to ensure frequent parent-teacher interaction which reinforces practices of collaboration and fosters the notion of constant learning beyond the school walls. One educator went even further asserting that collaboration is not only useful but necessary: "Collaboration with parents is mandatory; teachers and parents together are responsible for students' education. Teachers give good instruction, then with parents' support, students practice and follow up, which enables fluency in speaking.", This quotation best describes the belief that partnership is a collective responsibility and that the contributions of the teacher and the follow-up by the parent establish an atmosphere of learning that makes children confident and fluent in speaking English.

Teachers stressed that productive cooperation presupposes not only supporting learning at home but also continuing communication with the child on a regular basis both in face-to-face mode and using digital channels of communication like WhatsApp and Viber. Moreover, this collaboration consists of common aspirations between schools and families so that pupils can have consistent support in both settings as one teacher stated, "Parents and teachers encourage their kids to speak in English even if they make mistakes in pronouncing words or letters.". This collaborative approach decreases anxiety around speaking and supports learners build fluency through practice and continuous speaking. Furthermore, the partnership is grounded in shared goals between families and schools, ensuring that students receive continuous support across both environments.

Student's interviews also supported the idea of the significance of cooperation between parents and teachers in the process of the English-speaking skills development. The students always talked about a collaborative system where the teachers and parents assume complementary roles to aid their language learning. Such cooperation is particularly apparent in information exchange and follow-up between school and home.

One of the students replied: "Every week, our teachers evaluate and share our achievement in all English skills with parents." This shows that constant communication helps keep parents informed and involved in their child's progress. As well as repetition and reinforcement can take place, which are two factors that prominently feature in language acquisition. Students also gave clear illustrations of the way such collaboration works. One of the students stated: "My teacher gives me activities and explains them, and at home my parents follow up the instructions and ask me to practice with my sister." Another noted "Whenever my teacher gives new vocabularies, my parents ask me to translate them verbally and use them." Such examples are an indication of active parent-teacher association, under teacher guidance that enhances practice and knowledge acquisition out of classrooms.

The learners also felt that this collaboration made learning easier and more active. One said: "My teacher shares new subjects and asks my parents to help me in getting an idea of it, so when I am at school I easily learn and practice it." Such home preparations ensure an easier understanding and participation at school. Likewise, one student said:

“My teacher and my parents regularly work cooperatively to develop my speaking of the English language whether at home or at school.”

All the above responses indicate that not only does collaboration between parents and teachers help in speaking skills development but also makes students more confident and eager to learn. The initiative shown by the teacher in establishing the contact and the support of the parents in following up the learning process at home seems to be a very productive pattern which is identified by the students and is highly valued by them.

4.2. Research Question No. 2 on Home Support

Home-based parental support is very significant in the academic growth of the students, especially in the learning of languages. Examples of home-based involvement include offering an English-rich environment, promoting language usage on a daily basis, helping with homework, and issuing emotional support, which increases the confidence of the learners. The home is the first place, where exposure and motivation to learn a language is among factors that affect the impact of the parents [6,7].

This theme is reflected through the two questionnaire items “How often do you encourage your child to practice English daily?” and “How often do you participate in English conversations with your child?”. These questions help to measure the level of parental motivation not only in terms of its frequency but also in the extent to which parents and children interact directly using language within the home. Research has indicated that the frequent involvement of parents in activities involving language has a potent effect on improving fluency and confidence in speaking abilities of the students [26] and [6], making support at home an important aspect of second language learning.

The findings, shown in Table 2 (p.7) that the home support mean slightly exceeds the neutral response level, ($M = 2.99$, $SD = 0.96$). This shows that parents tend to think that they provide middle levels of support at home. The statistical testing of the differences revealed that it is statistically significant, $t(139) = 6.03$, $p < .001$. These results are in line with the findings revealed by Hill and Tyson [27] the frequent support provided by parents at home had a significant positive effect on the speaking performance of the Saudi learners of English attending middle school ($M = 3.02$, $SD = 1.01$; $t(120) = 5.87$, $p < .001$). This proves the universal significance of home-based reinforcement in the process of second language acquisition.

These results emphasize the idea that parents feel themselves involved into the English-speaking development of children actively at home. To further illustrate these perceptions, Figure 2 presents the distribution of parent responses across the five-point scale. A sizeable number of parents stated that they offered home support indicated in their “Sometimes”, “Rarely” and “Often” responses. Fewer percentages marked “Always”; whereas the lowest number of parents marked “Never”.

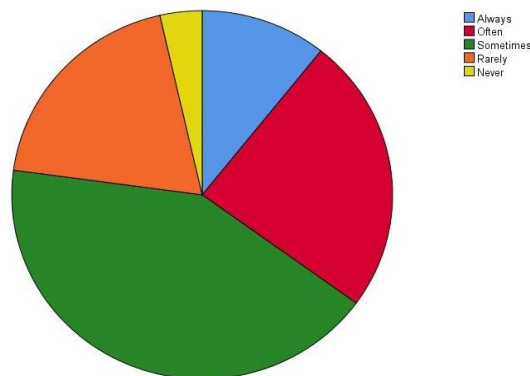


Figure 2 :Parents' perceptions of home support in their children's English-speaking progress

To sum up, the statistics show the positive trend of parental home involvement. Although the general impression is positive, the difference in the response rates presents possible opportunities that high schools and teachers may use to improve the communication and support network that can further assist less involved parents to be more regular contributors to the language development process of their children.

Table 3: Collaboration and Home Support Teacher Interview Data.

Theme	Code	Quotation	Interpretation
Collaboration	Working together	"Contact with me in WhatsApp, Viber, parents, in cooperation with the teacher can follow the lesson and the new vocabularies."	Shows teacher-parent cooperation to track lessons and vocabulary.
Collaboration	Awareness of English importance	"Parents understand that English speaking is so important to communicate with other people outside the country, both with the cooperation with teachers and their collaboration."	Parents recognize the value of English and cooperate with teachers.
Home Support	Practicing at home	"Parents speak with their children at home every day... provide CDs, enroll in courses, TV shows, and apps."	Parents actively support English speaking at home through multiple strategies.
Home Support	Confidence & reinforcement	"Working together with parents makes a difference... gives extra chance to practice speaking at home."	Collaboration and home support improve students' confidence and reinforce classroom learning.

It table 3, the view of teachers on the role of families in shaping the development of English-speaking skills of the students outside the school setting was taken. Two questions were used to interview teachers based on open-ended questions in the following

manner: “How do parents support their child’s ability to initiate and maintain English conversations?” and “What activities or practices do parents undertake to improve their child’s speaking such as books, CDs, or language apps or other educational tools?” As one of the teachers pointed out, “those parents who speaks with their children at home every day. In that way, speaking English will be improved.”. This face-to-face interaction on a day-to-day interaction creates confidence and familiarization to the language, stimulating the encouraging practice of simple conversations at home. Also, parents who are educated speak with their children in English daily at home and support their children to speak in public as highlighted by one of the teachers “Some parents encourage their children to speak English in public and at home”, This was termed as practices that support daily conversational habits that are not confined in the classroom only, which is an attempt to make its usage a regular phenomenon in various contexts.

Moreover, teachers emphasized that some parents usually push the children suggesting them to speak English with family members such as siblings “some parents take different activities such as putting siblings or relatives together those who speak fluently with those who speak little English and when children exchange conversations, they get better. Others help their children to memorize English songs to motivate fluency”. This helps children to use English consistently and with enjoyment. Teachers also mentioned that positive reinforcement is used by parents even when the children make mistakes and this prevents the fear of making mistakes and results in further speaking: "Parents and teachers encourage their kids to speak English even though they make mistakes in pronouncing words and letters."

The data also showed that some parents have other measures that they undertake, to improve the speaking capacity of children. Parents were observed by teachers and students to distribute such routine materials as dictionaries, transcripts, books in English with a view to facilitating pronunciation and vocabulary. Other parents contribute to the education process through encouragement to visit the libraries, providing the children with some applications concerning learning and recommending some media stations that use English. According to the observation of one teacher, the good activities that parents could take at home to enhance speaking skills included the following: Visiting libraries and presenting dictionaries and some educational apps and channels “Parents provide books, apps, videos, or CDs to help kids learn and speak English”

As a result , the interviews with the teacher prove that the parent cooperation with the teachers and active support found at home have great impact on the improvement of English speaking of the students. The use of such tools as WhatsApp and Viber assists parents to follow lessons, daily practice in the home environment, offering learning material and exposure to English media support classroom learning and develop the confidence of the students.

Table 4 :Collaboration and Home Support Students Perspective

Theme	Quotation	Interpretation
Home Support	“I and my father read books and then he asks me to give a summary of it.”	Parents help students practice speaking and explaining in their own words.
Home Support	“My mother asks me to name objects at home and describe what they are used for.”	Supports vocabulary development through everyday activities.
Home Support Collaboration	“Me and my family watch movies together, and I love discussing them with my family. They provide me with songs. My mother prefers I speak with my siblings, which allows them to learn and practice English too. Me and my father play video games and exchange ideas. I am playing iPad games and educational applications.”	Shows multiple forms of parental involvement and collaborative activities at home, reinforcing English speaking, vocabulary, and communication skills.
Home Support	“I participate in singing a song with my parents.” / “I enjoy playing games as it is fun and I get to use English without pressure.”	Learning through fun, informal activities encourages English use.
Collaboration	“My parents encourage me to speak English with both relatives and siblings to avoid forgetting it.” / “They encourage me to practice English with my friend because we have close topics to talk about.”	Parents promote regular communication and peer practice in English.
Home Support	“I enjoy listening to podcasts; it helps me get fluency.”	Media exposure at home enhances fluency.

Within the focus groups interview with students, some emphasized more rigorous academic-like interactions. One stated, “I and my father read books and then he asks me to give a summary of it, which helps me explain in my own words”. Another commented, “My mother asks me to name objects at home and describe what they are used for”. These routines imply interactive approaches to teaching that support children to build meaning and speak with a purpose, which is the emphasis of Lightbown & Spada [28] in successfully learning languages at home.

Creativity and games also became significant as interactive activities that promote language learning, especially speaking. Students reported playing role-play games, singing songs with their parents and taking part in card games which also involve using English. One student explained, “I participate in singing a song with my parents.” while another said, “I enjoy playing games as it is fun and I get to use English without pressure.” This reaction shows that games are viewed by students as low-stress and interesting situational context to use language. These informal learning environments correspond to sociocultural outlooks, which focus on meaningful language use in the interactive and playful environment[29]. In response to the question concerning encouragement to speak English outside the home, most students admitted that their parents contributed to their wider language use. One student noted, “My parents encourage me to speak English with both relatives and siblings to avoid forgetting it.” This response indicates that the learner is in a family setup where English is actively practiced within the family, which is not common with most families in Iraq where English is normally not used in day-to-day communication. These practices of parents can be signs that they were exposed to English through the experience of their family

members at one of the foreign countries or continuous contact with the English-speaking environment so as to ensure that the student can maintain the language and continue to use it outside school. Another said, "They encourage me to practice English with my friend because we have close topics to talk about." These answers are linked to the study that the role of parents is a facilitator who extends the language around their children into the broader social context [30]. This belief goes with what [29] has stated in his study.

Lastly, students also talked about how they used technology and digital media. Some of them said they used iPad, podcasts, and education applications. As one noted, "I play iPad games and use educational applications," and another added, "I enjoy listening to podcasts; it helps me get fluency." The comments describe the implementation of technology-enhanced learning into home support practices, which Stockwell [31] identifies as a very effective method for independent and family-guided second language practice.

To sum up, the interviews determine that students are better in improving their speaking skill when they receive a mix of emotional support, interactive learning, and training at home. The results in this case support the role of families as key players in the achievement of the English speaking by children through both planned and unplanned activities.

5. Conclusion

This paper investigated the role of parental collaboration and home support in enhancing the English speaking of students at lower-secondary school level specifically 7th and 8th grade, on both quantitative and qualitative data. The results of the quantitative research showed that parents had moderate to high collaboration with schools and support towards English learning of their children. Items in the questionnaires associated with the parent-school communication, keeping track on the progress of the students and offering encouragement and learning materials had somewhat higher mean scores indicating that parents usually realized the necessity of collaboration with teachers and encouragement of speaking practice at home.

These results were supplemented by the qualitative results that demonstrated how parental collaboration and support worked in practice. Parent and teachers identified that frequent communication, school support, and parent encouragement provided an encouraging learning condition that enhanced the confidence and desire of students to learn and speak the English language. The participants stressed that the support provided by parents matched with that of teachers, the students were more motivated and had fewer anxiety-related feelings when speaking English. It implies that specific awareness campaign and available home-language strategies are required to enhance parental role in the speaking development in the Duhok context.

CONFLICT OF IN TERESTS**There are no conflicts of interest****References**

- [1] Li, Y., Xie, J., & Huo, Y. Parental involvement and students' academic achievement: The roles of parental expectations and school support. *Educational Studies*, Vol. 46, No. 6, pp. 1–17, 2020.
- [2] Gardner, R. C. *Social psychology and second language learning: The role of attitudes and motivation*. Edward Arnold, London, 1985.
- [3] Lehmann, W. *Choosing to labour? School–work transitions and social class*. McGill-Queen's University Press, Montreal, 2006.
- [4] Deci, E. L., & Ryan, R. M. *Intrinsic motivation and self-determination in human behavior*. Plenum Press, New York, 1985.
- [5] Bizer, G. Y., Barden, J., & Petty, R. E. Attitudes and attitude change. In Hogg, M. A., & Cooper, J. (Eds.), *The SAGE handbook of social psychology*, Sage Publications, London, pp. 233–254, 2003.
- [6] Montgomery, C. Supporting parents to improve educational outcomes. *Educational Review*, Vol. 66, No. 2, pp. 145–160, 2014.
- [7] Hornby, G., & Lafaele, R. Barriers to parental involvement in education: An explanatory model. *Educational Review*, Vol.63, No.1, pp.37–52, 2011.
- [8] Mahmoud, S. S. Saudi parents' perceptions of the kind of help they offer to their primary school kids. *English Language Teaching*, Vol. 11, No.3, pp. 102–110, 2018.
- [9] Goodall, J., & Montgomery, C. Parental involvement to parental engagement: A continuum. *Educational Review*, Vol. 66, No. 4, pp. 399–410, 2014.
- [10] Franzoi, S. L. *Social psychology* (3rd ed.). McGraw-Hill, New York, 2003.
- [11] Fakeye, D. Students' personal variables as correlates of academic achievement in English as a second language in Nigeria. *Journal of Social Sciences*, Vol. 22, No. 3, pp. 205–211, 2010.
- [12] Mohammed, P. J. *Parental role in child learning process among displaced and non-displaced people in Iraqi Kurdistan*. Doctoral dissertation, University of Debrecen, Debrecen, 2024.
- [13] Faraj, S. M., Mohammed Salih, D. T., Azam, K. O., Saeed, S. A., Mahmood, O. M., & Kareem, A. H. R. The impact of teacher and parental involvement on students' academic performance: A statistical analysis in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq. *Journal of Philology and Educational Sciences*, Vol. 3, No. 2, pp. 38–57, 2024.
- [14] Ahmed, S. Parental involvement and students' academic achievement in secondary schools of Baghdad, Iraq. *International Journal of Education and Research*, Vol. 8, No. 3, pp. 123–135, 2020.
- [15] Epstein, J. L. *School, family, and community partnerships: Preparing educators and improving schools* (2nd ed.). Westview Press, Boulder, 2011.
- [16] Epstein, J. L. *School/family/community partnerships: Caring for the children we share*. Phi Delta Kappan, Vol. 76, No. 9, pp. 701–712, 1995.
- [17] Epstein, J. L. School, family, and community partnerships in teachers' professional work. *Journal of Education for Teaching*, Vol. 44, No. 3, pp. 397–406, 2018.

- [18] Steinberg, L. *Adolescence* (4th ed.). McGraw-Hill, New York, 1996.
- [19] Lightbown, P. M., & Spada, N. *How languages are learned* (4th ed.) Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2013.
- [20] Fan, X., & Chen, M. Parental involvement and students' academic achievement: A meta-analysis. *Educational Psychology Review*, Vol. 13, No. 1, pp.1–22, 2001.
- [21] Wilder, S. Effects of parental involvement on academic achievement: A meta-synthesis. *Educational Review*, Vol. 66, No. 3, pp. 377–397, 2014.
- [22] Krueger, R. A., & Casey, M. A. (2015). *Focus groups: A practical guide for applied research* (5th ed.). Sage Publications.
- [23] Braun, V., & Clarke, V.(2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2),77–101.
- [24] Friese, S. (2019). *Qualitative data analysis with ATLAS. ti* (3rd ed.). SAGE Publications.
- [25] Rahimi, M., & Karkami, F. The role of parental involvement in students' English language learning: Evidence from Iranian secondary schools. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research*, Vol. 6, No. 3, pp. 517–524, 2015.
- [26] Goodall, J. *Parental engagement to support children's learning: A practical guide for teachers*. Routledge, London, 2017.
- [27] Hill, N. E., & Tyson, D. F. Parental involvement in middle school: A meta-analytic assessment of the strategies that promote achievement. *Developmental Psychology*, Vol. 45, No. 3, pp. 740–763, 2009.
- [28] Lightbown, P. M., & Spada, N. *How languages are learned* (4th ed.). Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2013.
- [29] Pinter, A. *Teaching young language learners* (2nd ed.). Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2017.
- [30] Epstein, J. L., Sanders, M. G., Simon, B. S., Salinas, K. C., Jansorn, N. R., & Van Voorhis, F. L. *School, family, and community partnerships: Your handbook for action* (2nd ed.). Corwin Press, Thousand Oaks, 2002.
- [31] Stockwell, G. Using mobile phones for vocabulary activities: Examining the effect of the platform. *Language Learning & Technology*, Vol. 17, No. 3, pp. 1–17, 2013.