



The Role of Family Background of Speaking Skill: A Comparison between Public and Private School Students

Nanda Kristia Santoso¹, Jamilah¹, Dyah Setyowati Ciptaningrum¹, Risgar Friassantano², Marina Lidya²

^{1*} Universitas Negeri Yogyakarta, Indonesia

² STIE Pembangunan Tanjungpinang, Indonesia

*Corresponding author email: nandamasda@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT

This study compared eighth-grade students from Tanjungpinang's SMPN 7 (a public school) and SMP Muhammadiyah (a private school) during the 2024–2025 school year in order to examine the impact of family background on students' English-speaking abilities. 60 students' responses to structured questionnaires and speaking assessments were gathered using a quantitative comparative design. A rubric measuring fluency, accuracy, pronunciation, vocabulary, and coherence was used to evaluate speaking performance, and questionnaires examined parental education, income, home language environment, and English learning support. Students attending private schools typically came from families with higher socioeconomic status and educational attainment, according to descriptive statistics. With notable improvements in pronunciation and fluency, these students also performed better in speaking than their peers in public schools. Speaking scores for the two groups differed significantly, according to inferential analysis using an independent sample t-test. Additionally, correlation analysis showed those students' speaking abilities and family background factors specifically, parental education and the frequency of English use at home were positively correlated. The results showed that students' oral English proficiency was significantly shaped by their family background, and that this influence was stronger for students attending public schools with fewer institutional resources. In order to promote equitable language learning opportunities, the study emphasized the combined effects of the home and school environments on language development and the necessity of cooperation between educators, parents, and legislators.

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INTRODUCTION

English has become a global language, serving not only as a means of communication but also as a key to access global information, education, and opportunities. Among the four fundamental English skills listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Speaking is often regarded as

the most crucial yet the most challenging skill for language learners, particularly in countries where English is learned as a foreign language (Richards, 2008). In Indonesia, English is taught from an early age, yet many students still struggle to communicate orally in English due to limited exposure and practice opportunities both inside and outside the classroom.

Speaking involves not just grammatical knowledge, but also the ability to use language appropriately in social contexts. This complexity makes speaking a difficult skill to develop without adequate input, interaction, and support. While classroom instruction plays a vital role in developing students' speaking abilities, it is widely acknowledged that factors outside the school environment particularly family background have a significant impact on students' language acquisition and performance (Bachman & Palmer, 1996; Padilla & González, 2001).

Family background refers to various aspects such as parental education, income level, home literacy practices, language spoken at home, and the emotional support provided to children. These elements can determine how frequently and meaningfully children are exposed to language-rich environments. For instance, children whose parents regularly engage them in conversation, storytelling, or reading are more likely to develop better vocabulary, pronunciation, and speaking confidence (Snow et al., 1998). Furthermore, socioeconomic status can affect access to resources such as books, tutoring, or language courses that reinforce speaking skills.

In line with Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory, children's language development is deeply rooted in social interactions, particularly those occurring in the home (Vygotsky, 1978). Parents and caregivers are considered the first and most influential teachers, and their involvement can create a foundation for lifelong language learning. Thus, differences in family background can result in significant variation in speaking skills among students, even when they receive the same instruction at school.

In the Indonesian context, another important dimension to consider is the type of school students attend. There is a clear divide between public and private schools in terms of facilities, teacher quality, curriculum delivery, and student support systems. Private schools often cater to families with higher socioeconomic backgrounds, allowing them to offer enriched learning environments, including better English programs, native-speaking teachers, and smaller class sizes (Suryadarma et al., 2006). On the other hand, public schools may face challenges such as overcrowded classrooms, limited teaching resources, and inconsistent English instruction quality.

These disparities may amplify the role of family background in shaping students' speaking ability. A student in a public school with limited access to English resources might rely heavily on support from home, whereas a student in a private school may benefit from both school and home environments. This makes it essential to compare the role of family background in the development of speaking skills between public and private school students. By doing so, we can gain a better understanding of how different home environments interact with school settings to affect students' oral English proficiency.

Several studies have examined the relationship between family background and English-speaking proficiency. A study conducted by (Pasaribu, 2021) found that students from higher socio-economic families performed better in speaking due to more frequent exposure to English media and supportive environments at home. Similarly, (Fitriana, 2019) in her comparative study found that private school students outperformed public school students in speaking tests due to better access to facilities and greater parental involvement.

Furthermore, (Aeni & Limbong, 2023) conducted a correlational study in West Java and found a strong positive correlation between parental education and students' confidence in speaking English. These findings support the hypothesis that family background significantly contributes to speaking skill.

However, few studies have conducted a direct comparison of the role of family background in influencing speaking skills between public and private school students. Therefore, this study aims to fill that gap by comparing the speaking performance of students from different school types and analyzing how their family background contributes to their speaking skills.

This study, therefore, aims to explore and compare how family background influences speaking skills in two educational contexts: SMPN 7 public and SMP Muhammadiyah private schools in Tanjungpinang. The findings are expected to highlight the importance of family involvement and identify any existing gaps that need to be addressed by educators and policymakers in promoting more equitable language learning opportunities.

To guide this investigation, the following research questions will be addressed:

1. What are the characteristics of family background among students in SMPN 7 public and SMP Muhammadiyah private junior high schools Tanjungpiang?
2. Is there a significant difference in English speaking skill between students from SMPN 7 public and SMP Muhammadiyah private schools Tanjungpinang?
3. How does family background influence students' English-speaking skill in SMP 7 public and SMP Muhammadiyah private schools Tanjungpinang?
4. Is the role of family background in speaking skill more significant in one school type compared to the other?

The main objective of this study is to investigate the role of family background in students' English-speaking skills and how this role differs between SMPN 7 public and SMP Muhammadiyah private school in Tanjungpinang settings. Specifically, this study aims to:

1. Identify the characteristics of students' family backgrounds in SMPN 7 public and SMP Muhammadiyah private junior high schools in Tanjungpinang, including aspects such as parents' educational level, socioeconomic status, language environment at home, and support for English learning.
2. Examine the level of students' English speaking skill in SMPN 7 public and SMP Muhammadiyah private schools to determine if there are significant differences in speaking performance based on school type.
3. Analyse the relationship between family background and students' speaking skill in SMPN 7 public and SMP Muhammadiyah private school contexts, in order to understand which family-related factors have the most influence on students' oral language development.
4. Compare the impact of family background on speaking skill between SMPN 7 public and SMP Muhammadiyah private school students, to explore whether family support plays a stronger or weaker role depending on the school environment.

By achieving these objectives, the study seeks to contribute to a deeper understanding of how home and school factors interact in shaping language learning outcomes, and to provide insights for teachers, parents, and policymakers to improve support for speaking skill development among students from diverse backgrounds.

METHODS

The population of this research consists 30 of eighth-grade students from public school of SMPN 7 and 30 of private junior high schools of SMP Muhammadiyah in Tanjungpinang, academic year 2024/2025. These students have received at least two years of English instruction and are expected to have developed basic speaking competencies.

This study applies a quantitative comparative research design. Comparative research aims to identify differences between two or more groups on a specific variable in this case, speaking skill based on their family backgrounds and school types (public vs. private).

According to (Creswell, 2012), comparative research enables researchers to explore relationships and differences by analysing numerical data from groups. The main objective is to determine whether there is a statistically significant difference in students' speaking skills based on their family background across different school types population and sample

Questionnaire: A structured questionnaire is used to collect data on students' family background. It includes both closed-ended and Likert-scale items covering:

1. Parental education level;
2. Monthly family income;
3. Frequency of parental help in English study;
4. Language spoken at home;
5. Availability of learning resources (books, internet, etc.).

The questionnaire is adapted from (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 2005) and translated into Bahasa Indonesia to ensure understanding.

Speaking Test: A speaking test is administered to measure students' oral proficiency. The test consists of three tasks:

1. Self-introduction
2. Describing a picture
3. Expressing opinions on simple topics (e.g., school, family, hobbies)

The speaking performance is assessed using a rubric based on Brown (2004), evaluating:

1. Fluency
2. Accuracy
3. Pronunciation
4. Vocabulary
5. Coherence

Each aspect is scored from 1 (very poor) to 5 (excellent). Two trained raters evaluate the performances to ensure inter-rater reliability.

The collected data is analyzed using statistical methods, as follows:

1. Descriptive Statistics: To describe the general characteristics of students' family background and their speaking scores.
2. Independent Sample T-Test: To compare the mean speaking scores between public and private school students.
3. Correlation Test (Pearson's r): To examine the relationship between family background factors and speaking skill.
4. SPSS software is used for the analysis.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Descriptive Statistics of Family Background

The family background data collected through the questionnaire revealed the following:

1. Parental Education Level: The majority of parents in SMPN 7 public and SMP Muhammadiyah private school groups had at least a high school education, with a higher percentage of private school students coming from families where parents had college degrees.
2. Income Level: A higher proportion of SMP Muhammadiyah private school students came from families with a monthly income exceeding IDR 5,000,000, while most SMPN 7 public school students came from families earning below IDR 3,000,000.
3. Language Environment at Home: Most SMP Muhammadiyah private school students reported that English was sometimes spoken at home, while SMP Muhammadiyah public school students mostly spoke Bahasa Indonesia or local languages.

These findings highlight the diverse educational and socio-economic backgrounds of the students, which may influence their language learning experiences and, consequently, their speaking skills.

Descriptive Statistics of Speaking Skills

The speaking skills of the students were assessed based on the speaking test. The average score for speaking skills among the SMP Muhammadiyah private school students was higher (mean = 18.2) compared to the SMPN 7 public school students (mean = 15.3). The scores were based on fluency, accuracy, pronunciation, vocabulary, and coherence, as outlined in the rubric.

SMP Muhammadiyah Private School Students: On average, SMP Muhammadiyah private school students performed better across all aspects, particularly in fluency and pronunciation.

SMPN 7 Public School Students: SMPN 7 Public school students scored lower in pronunciation and fluency, though they performed similarly to private school students in coherence.

This difference in speaking proficiency may be attributed to various factors, such as the availability of resources at home and the socio-economic background of the families.

Inferential Statistics

An independent sample t-test was conducted to compare the mean speaking scores of SMPN 7 public and SMP Muhammadiyah private school students. The results indicated a statistically significant difference between the two groups ($t(58) = -3.45$, $p < 0.01$), with SMP Muhammadiyah private school students outperforming public school students in speaking skills.

Additionally, a Pearson correlation test was conducted to explore the relationship between family background variables (e.g., parental education, income, home language environment) and students' speaking skills. The correlation analysis revealed a moderate positive correlation between parental education level and students' speaking proficiency ($r = 0.45$, $p < 0.05$). There was also a significant correlation between the frequency of English use at home and speaking skills ($r = 0.38$, $p < 0.05$).

The findings of this study confirm the hypothesis that family background plays a significant role in students' speaking skills, especially in the context of SMPN 7 public and SMP Muhammadiyah private school differences.

Influence of Family Background on Speaking Skills

The results of the descriptive statistics indicate that students from higher socio-economic backgrounds, such as those attending SMP Muhammadiyah private schools, tend to have better speaking skills. One possible explanation for this is that students from wealthier families often have access to more learning resources, including books, private tutoring, and exposure to English media. The frequency of English language use at home also appears to have a significant impact on speaking proficiency, supporting previous studies (Pasaribu, 2021).

On the other hand, SMPN 7 public school students, whose families generally have lower incomes and less access to English resources, scored lower in speaking assessments. This finding is consistent with research by (Sun et al., 2020), which found that family socio-economic status can significantly affect a child's language development.

The Role of School Type (Public vs. Private)

The significant difference in speaking scores between SMPN 7 public and SMP Muhammadiyah private school students can be attributed to various factors, including differences in curriculum, class sizes, and teacher qualifications. SMPN 7 Private schools often have more resources dedicated to language learning, such as English-speaking clubs, language labs, and smaller class sizes, which may contribute to better speaking performance. In contrast, SMP Muhammadiyah public schools may face limitations in resources, which could affect the quality of English instruction and, consequently, speaking skills.

This aligns with the findings of a study by (Hendajany, 2016) which found that private schools generally offer a more supportive environment for language acquisition due to their greater access to resources and specialized programs.

Parental Involvement in Language Learning

The correlation between parental education level and speaking skills suggests that students whose parents are more educated are likely to have better speaking proficiency. Educated parents are more likely to understand the importance of language learning and provide support at home. They may also have higher expectations for their children's academic performance and encourage them to engage in language-related activities, such as reading books in English or watching English-language media.

This finding is in line with the work of (Epstein, 2001), who argued that parental involvement in a child's education is a key factor in academic achievement, particularly in language skills.

In conclusion, the family background of students, particularly parental education level and socio-economic status, significantly influences their English-speaking skills. The findings suggest that SMP Muhammadiyah private school students, who generally come from more privileged backgrounds, tend to perform better in speaking assessments compared to SMPN 7 public school students. Additionally, the study highlights the importance of a supportive home environment for language learning, emphasizing the role of parental involvement and access to English resources in enhancing speaking proficiency.

CONCLUSION

The idea that family background significantly influences students' English-speaking ability is supported by this study, especially in the context of Indonesian EFL (English as a Foreign Language). Significant differences in students' speaking abilities are found when

Tanjungpinang junior high school students from public (SMPN 7) and private (SMP Muhammadiyah) schools are compared. These differences are mostly caused by variations in socioeconomic status, parental education, language exposure at home, and parental involvement.

According to the results, SMP Muhammadiyah students—who typically hail from families with higher socioeconomic standing and higher levels of education—perform better than their SMPN 7 counterparts in a number of speaking domains, including coherence, vocabulary, pronunciation, and fluency. These findings support those of (Halommi & Stevens, 2023), who showed a direct correlation between students' oral language proficiency in EFL contexts and parental involvement, including the provision of learning materials, supervision of English homework, and discussion of school-related activities.

Furthermore, it is impossible to overestimate the significance of active parental involvement. According to recent studies, students' confidence, motivation, and engagement are increased when parents actively assist their kids in learning a language. According to (Sumanti & Muljani, 2023), children whose parents took part in their English language learning activities demonstrated greater levels of self-efficacy, which had a favourable effect on their speaking confidence and academic performance.

On the other hand, students from lower-income households, like those enrolled in SMPN 7, frequently encounter obstacles that impede their ability to speak. Poorer performance is caused by a lack of parental English proficiency, restricted access to English-language resources, and fewer opportunities for structured language practice at home. According to (Alias & Kamal, 2023), socioeconomic status affects parents' psychological and emotional ability to participate in their children's education in addition to their ability to provide material support. Lower-income families frequently put immediate financial survival first, which limits their capacity to fully engage in at-home educational support.

Theoretically, these results are consistent with Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory (1978), which highlights the critical role that social interaction plays in language and cognitive development. Learning, according to Vygotsky, starts on the social level through interactions with more experienced people before internalizing into one's own cognitive processes. Parents are the "more knowledgeable others" in this situation, and their emotional support and language input can have a big impact on how their kids develop their speaking abilities.

The combined impact of institutional and familial factors is further highlighted by this study. Structured speaking opportunities are provided by private schools, which frequently have more qualified teachers, smaller class sizes, and more enriched curricula. The positive effects of a nurturing home environment are enhanced by these institutional advantages. Students in public schools, on the other hand, might rely more on their families to make up for the dearth of English-language resources available in schools.

The study suggests a multi-stakeholder approach to enhancing students' speaking abilities in light of these revelations. By offering parent education programs, easily accessible educational resources, and avenues for frequent communication between the school and the home, schools can actively engage families, particularly those from underprivileged backgrounds. Legislators ought to create inclusive education policies that close socioeconomic divides and enable all families, irrespective of wealth or educational attainment, to actively engage in their kids' language development.

In conclusion, classroom instruction alone does not determine junior high school students' development of English-speaking abilities; rather, the learners' familial context plays a

significant role. Achieving equitable English-speaking proficiency across diverse student populations requires empowering families through education, resources, and school collaboration.

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