



# **The Influence of English Youtube Videos on The Disoriented Language of The Mother Tongue Among Young Children on Their Language Development Process**

Paulina Novarita<sup>1</sup>, Wahyu Satya Gumelar<sup>2</sup>, Nur Ainun<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1,2,3</sup> English Education Study Program, Faculty of Teacher, Training, and Education,  
Universitas Islam Nusantara, Jawa Barat

Corresponding E-Mail: paulina@uninus.ac.id

Received: 2025-04-17 Accepted: 2025-07-10

DOI: 10.24256/ideas.v13i1.6401

## **Abstract**

This study investigates the influence of prolonged exposure to English-language YouTube videos on the disruption of mother tongue development among young children in Indonesia. Set within the growing relevance of digital media in early language acquisition, this qualitative research adopts a case study design involving seven children aged 3 to 7 years who are currently receiving speech therapy in Bandung. Data were obtained through in-depth interviews with parents and non-participant observations of the children's communicative behaviors. Findings indicate a recurring pattern of language interference, including frequent code-mixing between English and Bahasa Indonesia, limited mastery of native vocabulary, and dependence on non-verbal cues such as gestures or incomplete phrases. For instance, several children were observed substituting basic Indonesian words with English counterparts (e.g., "open" instead of *buka*), or forming syntactically incorrect sentences influenced by English structure. These disruptions are closely associated with the predominance of English-language input during daily screen time and a marked reduction in native language interaction—particularly during the COVID-19 lockdown period. The study underscores an imbalance in bilingual exposure, wherein English increasingly replaces Bahasa Indonesia in daily expression, potentially contributing to expressive language delays and syntactic confusion. To address these challenges, the research recommends increased parental mediation, purposeful mother tongue engagement at home, and implementation of media literacy programs tailored to early childhood contexts. While the study provides valuable insights into media-induced linguistic shifts in multilingual settings, it is limited by its small sample size and specific geographic focus. Future research should explore longitudinal outcomes and include diverse socio-cultural contexts to enhance generalizability.

**Keywords:** *Early language development, Language acquisition disorder, Mother tongue disorientation, YouTube exposure*

## **Introduction**

The development of technology has influenced society positively and negatively. The influence of technology on civilization is immense and multifaceted, shaping how human societies function, evolve, and interact. "Technology doesn't just change what we do; it changes who we are." (Turkle, 76: 2011). The Internet is one of the most transformative developments in the history of technology. "The Internet is a great tool for language learning. It allows learners to access vast amounts of information, engage with native speakers, and participate in real-world communication." (Crystal, 108: 2006).

YouTube, as one of the platforms on the Internet, provides entertainment, facilitates learning programs, offers communication tools, and supports business. YouTube has become an invaluable resource for language learning, offering a wealth of free, diverse, and engaging materials. Whether a beginner or an advanced learner, YouTube enables you to immerse yourself in the language, practice pronunciation, learn new vocabulary, and gain insights into culture all at your own pace. By integrating YouTube into a broader language learning routine, you can complement traditional study methods and make learning more interactive and enjoyable.

YouTube media plays a crucial role in language acquisition for children, providing them with the opportunity to learn English through natural habits and memory retention (Sakdiyah & Br.Perangin-angin, 2023). Moreover, YouTube is a popular platform for children to learn English through stories, songs, and vlogs, effectively teaching through repetition and training, with positive and negative reinforcement (Zulhantiar et al., 2024). Then, YouTube channels offer a safe viewing experience for preschoolers, influencing their second language learning through a variety of videos (B. Babilonia et al., 2023).

Video content enhances children's language learning by stimulating enthusiasm through singing and unconsciously memorizing English vocabulary, thereby fostering their language development and pronunciation skills (Anggraini et al., 2022). Besides that, YouTube is a popular tool for language learning, offering a variety of engaging videos suitable for various topics. It provides a rich source of teaching materials, enhancing students' understanding, skills, time management, group work, and technological literacy (Listiani et al., 2021).

Thus, children's language acquisition is a valuable strategy for character education in elementary schools, shaping their character traits, accountability, and adaptability to their environment (Mustoip et al., 2023). Furthermore, YouTube can be a valuable tool for young children's language development, but like any resource.

Linebarger & Walker stated that “interactive content, like videos that encourage participation, can positively impact language development (624-645: 2005). ” YouTube offers children a wide range of vocabulary through educational channels, songs, and stories.

Visual cues and auditory input help children’s associate words with actions or objects, supporting language and cognitive development. Digital media plays a crucial role in the extramural acquisition of English among children, potentially impacting their domestically dominant but globally small first languages (Sigurjónsdóttir & Nowenstein, 2021). YouTube can positively impact second language acquisition by triggering children to watch videos with foreign language speakers. Second language acquisition is a natural process, involving conversation and not influenced by training or teachers. Language learning is consciously taught between teachers and students, requiring communication and coordination (Farizqi, 2022).

The acquisition of language in a second language presents unique challenges for children, particularly those with migrant backgrounds, who often struggle with reading competence due to limited proficiency in the majority language and varying support levels (Stürmer, 2025). A second language acquisition is crucial for a child's political, economic, and educational purposes. In Indonesia, a child's first language is their regional language, and the process is not linear compared to first language acquisition (Liando & Tatipang, 2022).

Children can learn a second language through videos and online communication, but it's crucial to consider the negative language received from these videos (Rizki & Napitupulu, 2024). YouTube is a powerful educational tool, providing engaging multimedia content that enhances language acquisition. Its extensive collection of videos, tutorials, and lectures caters to various learning styles and requirements, making learning more effective (Salsabila et al., 2025). In addition, YouTube's passive learning approach hinders young children's language development, as it lacks real-life interactions and emotional connections. It encourages passive learning, limiting opportunities for physical play and direct conversation (Jasiah et al., 2023). This aligns with what Levin & Wainer stated: “YouTube creates passive learning from media, where children are not actively engaging in conversations.” (201-213: 2010). According to Pérez, M. A., & Martínez, R. (2017), in their article "Digital media and language development in young children, " the authors explore how digital media, including YouTube, addresses the negative influences of YouTube on language development, such as:

1. Overexposure to Passive Viewing

Over time, excessive screen time can also lead to children becoming more reliant on passive input from digital media, rather than interacting with family members or peers, which is essential for developing conversational skills and social language use.

2. Inappropriate Content

Another concern is the potential exposure to inappropriate content. Without proper supervision, children may stumble upon videos that contain unfiltered language, inappropriate themes, or even harmful messages. This unregulated exposure could negatively influence their language acquisition by introducing them to inappropriate words, slang, or concepts that are not suitable for their developmental stage.

3. Decreased Face-to-Face Communication

Pérez and Martínez emphasize the importance of face-to-face communication for language development, particularly for younger children. Overreliance on YouTube for language learning may limit children's opportunities for direct verbal interaction with others, which is crucial for practicing and refining their speaking skills. This can lead to poor conversational skills, disoriented sentence structures, and delayed language acquisition. Without **real-life feedback**, they may struggle with **turn-taking, sentence formation, and expressive language skills which causes language disorders such as disoriented language in children who are still learning their mother tongue.**

Some YouTube content emphasizes short, direct phrases rather than complete sentences, which may expose viewers to poor-quality language input (e.g., robotic voices, ungrammatical speech) leading to fragmented language use (Chakma et al., 2022). When children watch passively, they do not engage in the interactive conversations essential for proper language learning (Jasiah et al., 2023). Real-life feedback is crucial for children learning their mother tongue, as it helps them develop expressive language skills, preventing language disorders like disoriented language, which can lead to delays, confusion, and mixed-language development (Akram et al., 2022).

However, they develop various adaptive strategies to interact with others. According to Giles (1973), "Children with disoriented language often switch languages to align with the person they are talking to, especially if they are unsure of certain words in one language." In line with Giles' theory, Myers-Scotton (1993), in his Matrix Language-Frame Model, explains that "Children with disoriented mother tongues often use their dominant language as a base and insert words from their weaker language."

McNeill's Gesture Theory suggests that children with language confusion often use hand movements, pointing, or miming actions to express themselves. They also rely heavily on facial expressions to convey emotions when words fail. Various linguistic, cognitive, and social theories explain how these children use gestures, facial expressions, body language, and other nonverbal cues in communication. Expressive language disorder affects children's ability to communicate effectively,

necessitating a deep understanding of their condition to effectively develop their language skills (Rosmala et al., 2021).

Expressive disorder, a developmental or acquired condition, can manifest in children as grammatical errors, limited vocabulary, and difficulty in complex sentences. Adults may develop this disorder due to brain injuries, strokes, tumors, or seizures (Nzerem & Nzerem, 2020). Brown & Fraser (1963) and Sweller (1988) suggest that children with weaker mother tongues may use short, fragmented sentences to minimize mental effort. A weak mother tongue can paralyze thoughts and expression, hindering deeper understanding, new discoveries, appreciation, and expansion of ideas (Siahaan et al., 2022). Therefore, mastering the mother tongue is essential for effective communication.

During the pandemic in Indonesia, where all people, including young children, had avoided going out of their homes to decrease the number of people infected by the COVID-19 virus, the young children were left alone when the adults were busy doing their work-from-home jobs; the school children were engaged in their school tasks. Some parents kept their younger children busy by giving them access to YouTube channels, often without concern for the language used in the videos. This resulted in both positive and negative impacts on the children's early language acquisition. A possible benefit was their exposure to English, potentially improving their second language foundation. However, many children were observed to prefer using English over their native language, indicating a disoriented development of their mother tongue.

The phenomenon has attracted the attention of researchers who conducted preliminary observations at a speech therapy center, where an increasing number of children could not speak Bahasa Indonesia fluently despite coming from fully Indonesian-speaking families. While several global studies have addressed the effects of digital media on bilingualism, very few studies in the Indonesian context have explored the specific impact of English-language YouTube content on the development of the Indonesian mother tongue. Furthermore, limited research exists on how this phenomenon manifests in children undergoing speech therapy. Therefore, this study aims to fill that research gap by focusing on the linguistic behavior and communication patterns of young Indonesian children after prolonged exposure to English-language digital media.

To focus the purposes of the research, the researcher has limited the problem to two research questions:

1. What kind of English YouTube channels do the children watch during their leisure time?
2. How do the children communicate with other people who don't speak English?

## Method

This research focuses on the phenomenon affecting young children during their initial stages of language acquisition. Based on this observation, the researcher opted for a qualitative approach using a case study design. A case study involves an in-depth investigation of a bounded system, such as an activity, event, process, or individuals, utilizing extensive data collection (Creswell, 2007 in Creswell, 2012). The qualitative approach was selected because this study aims to understand the experiences of children and their parents regarding the use of English YouTube videos in the language development process. Through in-depth interviews and observations, researchers can delve into the deeper meanings and contexts of the phenomenon under investigation. The selection of a qualitative design was rooted in the necessity to gain a richer understanding of how children interact with YouTube content and its impact on their language development. Previous research indicates that both viewing duration and content type on YouTube are directly related to children's progress in language acquisition.

The location that will be used as a research site is at *"Terapi Wicara & Terapi Okupasi - Mysuperkidz"*, which is located in Bandung, precisely on *Jl. Pelana No.3, Nyengseret, Kec. Astanaanyar, Bandung, West Java*. My Super Kidz is a child development center in Bandung that offers various therapy services to support child development, such as Occupational Therapy, Speech Therapy, Physiotherapy, Stimulation Class, Hobby Class, Learning Class, and Fun Exercise. My Super Kidz is a place to address late speech, speech-language disorders, two-way communication disorders, social interaction disorders, emotional and behavioral disorders, learning disorders, lack of focus and concentration, hyperactivity, reading and writing difficulties, dyslexia, and other growth and development cases.

The research is scheduled to last two months, starting in January 2025. The technical implementation of the study will occur offline through interviews and direct observation. The participants for this study include children aged 3 to 6 years old who are enrolled in *"Terapi Wicara & Terapi Okupasi - Mysuperkidz"* and have access to YouTube, along with their parents who are actively involved in their children's language learning journey. Most children in urban Bandung come from low- to middle-income families, with Bahasa Indonesia as their primary language, with some families having limited exposure to Sundanese or English. The sampling method used was purposive sampling, in which participants were chosen based on specific criteria. These criteria included children who regularly watched English-language YouTube videos. The study involved seven children and their respective parents, ensuring the data collected was sufficiently representative of the research objectives.

The research instruments used for this study are interviews and observations. This research allows researchers to explore in-depth information about the experiences of children and their parents regarding the use of YouTube

videos. In this context, interviews were conducted using a semi-structured approach, where researchers prepared key questions but also allowed respondents the freedom to share their views and experiences openly. In-depth interviews enable researchers to understand the meaning behind individual experiences as well as the social and cultural contexts influencing their interactions (Creswell, 2012). In qualitative research, interviews serve as a highly effective tool for uncovering information that cannot be captured through other methods, such as surveys or quantitative approaches. Through interviews, researchers can capture emotional and social nuances that might not be visible in quantitative data collection. Sample questions included: 'How often does your child watch YouTube?', 'What language does your child mostly use at home?', and 'Have you noticed any changes in how your child speaks after watching YouTube content?'.

Observation is another crucial tool in this study. By directly observing children's interactions with video content and their communication with parents, researchers can gather highly valuable non-verbal data. Observation allows researchers to see how children react to the content they watch and how parents contribute to the process. According to Yin (2009), observation in case studies offers a direct portrayal of the phenomena under investigation, enabling researchers to gain a better understanding of the context and dynamics of the interactions. This observation was conducted at "Terapi Wicara & Terapi Okupasi - Mysuperkidz" or among children in the researcher's environment who exhibit similar symptoms as outlined in the study. Each child was observed twice a week for 30–45 minutes over the span of one month, using field notes to record behavioral and linguistic responses during YouTube viewing and parent-child interaction.

Therefore, researchers must ensure that each component of the instrument yields stable and reliable data. By prioritizing validity and reliability in developing research instruments, researchers aim to collect accurate and representative data about the experiences of children and their parents in using YouTube videos as a language learning tool. This study emphasizes not only the final results but also a systematic and well-planned data collection process. Credibility was strengthened through triangulation of interview, observation, and documentation data, as well as member checking by validating interview summaries with parents.

### **Research Procedures**

- 1) Preparing the research proposal and obtaining approval from the Lecturer.
- 2) Identifying the research location and subjects.
- 3) Conducting interviews with parents to gather preliminary data.
- 4) Observing children while watching YouTube videos.
- 5) Analyzing the collected data.
- 6) Compiling the research findings report.

Data analysis in case study research is a complex and structured process that aims to understand the phenomenon being studied in depth. At the data analysis stage, it is carried out after the data is collected through the process of interviews, observations, and literature studies during the research process. According to Miles and Huberman (Annisa, 2023: 4), qualitative data analysis techniques consist of three stages, including data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing.

1. Data collection: data collection using observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation or a combination of the three (triangulation).
2. Data reduction: summarizing data, selecting important things, and focusing on the main things.
3. Data presentation: presenting data by describing in the form of detailed descriptions and then drawing general conclusions.
4. Drawing conclusions: understanding and looking for meanings, explanations, causes, patterns, or propositions that are concluded in detail.

## Results

The first objective of this research was to identify the types of English YouTube videos that children frequently watch and to analyze how these videos contribute to their language development. Here are the data of the seven samples:

1. Alric is a 6-year-old child who has difficulty constructing sentences with correct structure, especially in Indonesian. Since childhood, he has been accustomed to using English as his first language, even though none of his family members actively use English in daily communication. His fondness for Transformers cartoons on YouTube made him even more familiar with English. During the pandemic, he increasingly used gadgets to pass the time due to the lack of direct social interaction, which exposed him to English more often than Indonesian. He started watching YouTube before the age of four and spends more than two hours per day watching English videos. His parents admitted that they sometimes understood the language used by their child but often had difficulty due to incorrect sentence structure. ***"Sometimes we understand what he says, but often we are also confused because the sentence structure is not right,"*** he said. They added that their children tend to absorb English vocabulary more easily, but have difficulty composing correct sentences in Indonesian. ***"Even when speaking Indonesian, the pronunciation is still like English,"*** they said. As a result, Sample 1 has difficulty speaking Indonesian fluently, absorbs English vocabulary more easily, but often faces challenges in forming correct sentences in Indonesian. He also continues to use English pronunciation even when speaking Indonesian. For example, the word

"Nenek" in Indonesian is pronounced as "Ninik" because, in English, the letter[e] is pronounced as /i/. Before undergoing therapy, his communication was limited to short phrases with incorrect grammar, making it difficult for his parents to understand him

2. Farras is a 5-year-old child who also experiences language confusion. Unlike Sample 1, she relies more on gestures than words to express her wishes. During the pandemic, she spent more time at home watching YouTube, especially Nursery Rhymes content such as Cocomelon and Baby Shark. Her busy parents often allowed her to watch gadgets without much interaction. She started watching YouTube before the age of four and spends more than two hours per day watching English videos. Her parents did not always understand the words she used in English, which made communication more difficult. ***"We don't always understand the English words he uses, so communication is often difficult,"*** his parents said. As a result, she preferred to use gestures rather than speaking, realizing that her parents did not always understand what she was saying. This hindered her language development, so her parents decided to take her to therapy to help her express herself better with words.
3. Jason is a 5-year-old child with a slightly different background compared to Sample 1 and Sample 2. His first language is Indonesian, but he also frequently speaks English. During the pandemic, he spent more time with gadgets as interaction with peers was limited. His parents took him to therapy because he had difficulty maintaining his mother tongue and often mixed English and Indonesian in one sentence (**code-mixing**). His habit of watching Nursery Rhymes like **Cocomelon** made him use English more frequently in daily life. He started watching YouTube before the age of four and spends more than two hours per day watching English videos. His parents fully understood the English he used, so they were not too worried about his English habits. ***"We fully understand the English spoken, so we are not too worried about the language habits,"*** his said. However, as a result, Sample 3 experienced barriers in using Indonesian, as he felt more comfortable speaking English.
4. Alunna is a 4-year-old child with a speech delay. The lack of social interaction during the pandemic worsened her condition, as she did not receive enough language stimulation from her surroundings. Her parents allowed her to watch YouTube for entertainment, unknowingly giving her excessive exposure to English content. ***"We let him watch YouTube for entertainment, without realizing that most of the content was in English,"*** he said. As a result, her Indonesian vocabulary was very limited, and she mostly used single words or gestures to communicate. She started watching YouTube before the age of four and spends more than two hours per day watching English videos. Consequently, she often used gestures to get her point across or only spoke in single English words, such as saying "rice" instead of "**makan**." Currently, after

two months of therapy with six sessions, her ability to communicate has improved significantly.

5. Ganesha is a 5-year-old child with an expressive language disorder, which was worsened by excessive gadget use during the pandemic. He spends more than three hours per day watching Nickelodeon Junior in English, which has caused English to become more dominant than Indonesian in his speech. Initially, his parents did not realize the negative impact, especially since they also spoke English. ***"We didn't realize the negative impact, especially since we were used to speaking English,"*** said the parents. However, when Sample 5 began showing difficulties speaking at school and was reluctant to use Indonesian, they realized that his language development had been affected due to the dominance of English digital content.
6. Arshaka is a 5-year-old child who experiences language confusion due to excessive gadget use during the pandemic. He mostly watched Harry the Bunny on YouTube for more than two hours per day and became more accustomed to thinking in English, even initially refusing to speak Indonesian. His parents fully understood the English he spoke, so they tended not to correct him when he used English more often. ***"We completely understand the English he speaks, so we tend not to correct him even though he uses English more often,"*** he explained. At first, his mother believed that her son was fine and that learning English was important. However, she later realized, after Sample 6 entered kindergarten, that mastering Indonesian was much more crucial before learning a second language. As a result, he had difficulty constructing sentences in Indonesian and often mixed the two languages in one sentence. He also continued to use English pronunciation when speaking Indonesian. For example, he pronounced the word "ade" as "adi" because, in English, the letter [e] is pronounced as /i/.
7. Flynn is a 7-year-old child who faces similar language barriers. Due to excessive exposure to gadgets during the pandemic, he absorbed more English from Nursery Rhymes on YouTube than Indonesian from daily interactions. When speaking, he tends to use short phrases in English or mix English and Indonesian, making his communication difficult to understand for his parents and those around him. ***"When he speaks, he often uses short phrases in English or mixes English and Indonesian, so sometimes we and the people around him have difficulty understanding what he means,"*** he explained. However, he has now begun to speak more Indonesian, although his spontaneous speech is still in English, and he continues to face difficulties in fully mastering Indonesian.

Based on interviews with parents, it was found that children are primarily engaged

with three main categories of content:

- a. Nursery Rhymes and Educational Songs Channels such as Cocomelon, Super Simple Songs, and Baby Shark were mentioned most often by parents. These videos use repetitive lyrics and melodic intonation, which help children acquire new vocabulary, recognize phonetic patterns, and improve their pronunciation. Parents observed that their children often imitate words and sentences from these songs, sometimes using them in daily conversations.
- b. Animated Cartoons and Storytelling Videos, children in this study watch shows like Peppa Pig, Nickelodeon Junior, and Transformers Animated, which feature English conversation. These programs introduce idiomatic expressions, question formats, and casual speech patterns, exposing children to natural dialogues that differ from structured language learning content. Some parents reported that their children adopt the intonation patterns and accents from these cartoons, sometimes sounding more like native English speakers when talking.
- c. DIY and Cooking Tutorials Channels like Tasty Junior and Art for Kids Hub are also popular among some children. These instructional videos expose children to imperative forms (e.g., "mix the flour," "cut the paper") and sequencing vocabulary (first, then, next, finally), indirectly supporting their understanding of structured language. However, parents noted that children rarely use this type of language in direct conversations.

Table 1. Data of Interview

No	Name	Favorite YouTube Content	Primary Language Used	Watching Duration
1	Sample 1	Transformers (cartoon)	English	>2 hours
2	Sample 2	Nursery Rhymes (Cocomelon)	English	>2 hours
3	Sample 3	Nursery Rhymes (Cocomelon)	English	>2 hours
4	Sample 4	Cooking, Nursery Songs	English	>2 hours
5	Sample 5	Nickelodeon Junior	English	>2 hours
6	Sample 6	Harry The Bunny	English	>2 hours
7	Sample 7	Nursery Rhymes	English	>2 hours

The second objective of this research was to examine how children communicate with their parents after prolonged exposure to English YouTube videos. Based on observations and reports from parents, this study identified three different communication styles:

- a. Code-Mixing and Code-Switching, some children integrate English words into their Indonesian sentences, such as "Mama, aku mau eat." This behavior is in

line with the early stage of bilingual acquisition, where children use words interchangeably before they fully understand the structure of each language.

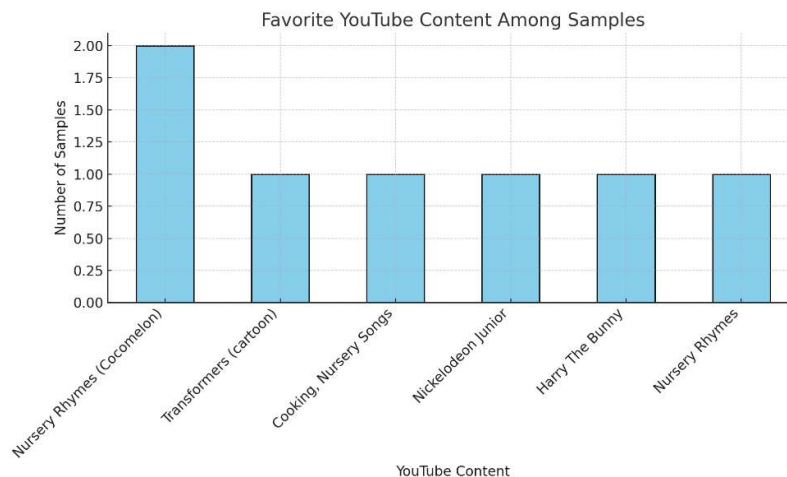
- b. Gestures and Minimal Verbal Interaction, children who experience speech delays or expressive language disorders rely on gestures or one-word responses to communicate. Parents expressed concerns that excessive dependence on digital media reduces their children's willingness to engage in direct conversations.
- c. Structurally Incorrect Sentences, Some children try to speak in English but construct grammatically incorrect sentences, such as "*Saya pergi sekolah kemarin*" (I go school yesterday) or "*Saya tidak mau makan*" (I not want eat). This supports the theory that language learners often apply the grammar rules of their first language when acquiring a second language. The table below summarizes the communication styles observed:

Table 2. Data of Interview and Obsevation

No	Name	Communication Style	Parental Understanding
1	Sample 1	Short phrases, incorrect grammar	Sometimes understood
2	Sample 2	Gestures, limited words	Difficult to understand
3	Sample 3	Code-mixing (English + Indonesian)	Easily understood
4	Sample 4	Gestures, Codemixing	Easily understood
5	Sample 5	Short phrases, Code-switching	Sometimes understood
6	Sample 6	Short phrases, Code-switching	Easily understood
7	Sample 7	Short phrases, Code-switching	Difficult to understand

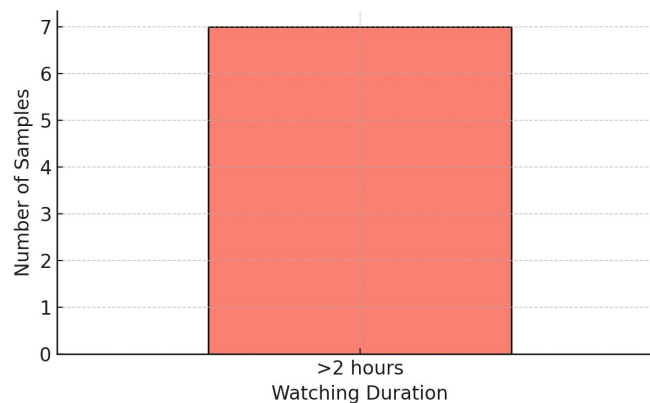
The table below summarizes the communication styles observed:

Figure 1. Favorite YouTube Content



Here is a bar chart showing the numbers based on their favorite YouTube content. It can be seen that the content "Nursery Rhymes (Cocomelon)" is most liked by two samples, while the other content is liked by one sample each. This chart helps illustrate the dominance of English content in the children's viewing duration.

Figure 2. Watching Duration



Here is a bar chart showing the YouTube viewing duration of all samples. It can be seen that all respondents (7 children) have a viewing duration of more than 2 hours per day, indicating high exposure to English content for a long time every day.

## Discussion

### 1. Analysis of Research Results Based on Theory and Previous Research

The results show that the children in this study have a habit of watching YouTube in English for a long duration, and this has a significant impact on their communication patterns with their parents. Language exposure from YouTube affects children's language preferences, the way they speak, and their interaction patterns with their families.

#### a. Language Acquisition through Digital Exposure

In this study, it was found that children who watch more YouTube content in English have a tendency to use English more often in daily conversations, even though their mother tongue is Indonesian. This finding is in line with Bruner's Social Interactionist theory (1983) which states that language is acquired through social interaction, where individuals absorb the language, they hear in the surrounding environment. Furthermore, early exposure to digital learning tools significantly enhances toddlers' language development, particularly in vocabulary size, sentence complexity, expressive and receptive language skills, and gesture communication (Sharma & Yadav, 2023).

However, in contrast to the traditional concept of social interaction, the

children in this study absorbed more language through digital media rather than direct communication with their parents or social environment. Digital Media usage can significantly impact language development, potentially hindering interactions between children and adults, and potentially altering the child's language learning environment independently (Sundqvist et al., 2021). In this case, children get language input from the characters in the videos they watch, rather than from the people around them. This results in them being more comfortable using the language patterns they learn from digital media, which in this study is predominantly English. In addition, this finding also supports the Critical Period Hypothesis (Lenneberg, 1967) which states that early childhood is a critical period in first language acquisition, where if children are exposed to a second language more than their mother tongue during this period, their mother tongue may be inhibited. In this study it was found that some children spoke English more fluently than Indonesian, even in situations where Indonesian should be used, such as when communicating with parents who were not fluent in English.

b. Code-Mixing and Difficulties in Indonesian Language Structures

The research also showed that many children in this study experienced code-mixing, which is the mixing of English and Indonesian in one sentence. For example, some children said "Mama, I want to eat" or "I'm finished", which is a combination of Indonesian and English structures. This phenomenon is supported by the findings of Lightbown & Spada (2013), who found that bilingual children often have difficulty in distinguishing the two languages they learn simultaneously, especially if exposure to the second language is more dominant than the first language. Bilingual children often learn different concepts in their mother tongue and societal language, highlighting the need for more knowledge about their vocabulary and semantic knowledge across both languages (Monsrud et al., 2022). The children in this study heard English from YouTube more often than Indonesian from their social environment, so they adopted English words and structures into their conversations in Indonesian. In addition, this study also found that children who use more English from YouTube often make mistakes in Indonesian sentence structure, such as directly translating grammar from English into Indonesian. Learning English through YouTube enhances engagement, but automatic translations can cause errors, such as contextual and grammar issues, affecting students' understanding (Adika, 2024). For example, they said "I went to school yesterday" (I go school yesterday) or "I don't want to eat" (I don't want to eat). These findings suggest that the unbalanced use of first and second languages can lead to

disruptions in children's grammar, which is in line with Anggraini et al.'s (2022) study which found that children who used English as their first language were more likely to make mistakes in their grammar. (2022) who found that children who frequently watched nursery rhymes content in English absorbed English vocabulary faster, but experienced obstacles in mastering Indonesian grammar.

## ***2. New Findings and Implications of Research Results***

In addition to confirming existing theories, this study also found several new findings that provide additional insights into changes in children's communication patterns due to YouTube exposure, especially in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. One factor that has contributed to the rise in YouTube consumption among children is the COVID-19 pandemic, where children are spending more time at home due to online learning policies and social restrictions. This situation has limited children's social interactions with peers and family, which in turn has led them to seek entertainment through digital media more often.

This finding supports research by Wong (2021) who found that during the pandemic, children's consumption of digital media increased significantly, which affected their communication patterns with parents. In the context of this study, it was found that children who spend more time watching YouTube in English tend to experience barriers in communication with parents who do not understand English well. Based on the analysis of the research results, it can be concluded that exposure to YouTube in English plays an important role in shaping children's communication patterns, especially in terms of the more dominant use of English in daily conversations.

This is due to the lack of balance between mother tongue and second language in the children's social environment. In addition, this study found that the COVID-19 pandemic accelerated the increase in digital media consumption, leading to reduced social interactions between children and their parents and surroundings. Therefore, more effective strategies are needed in managing digital media consumption so that children can still develop bilingual skills without sacrificing their mother tongue ability.

## **Conclusion**

This study demonstrated that exposure to YouTube content in English significantly influences children's communication patterns, especially in their everyday use of the language. Children who frequently watch English content tend to adopt the language naturally, which impacts their word choice, sentence structure, and overall communication styles. The findings indicated that most children in this study often mixed English and Indonesian within a single sentence (code-mixing), even in contexts that would typically require the exclusive use of

their mother tongue.

Additionally, the study found that children often made errors in Indonesian grammatical structures by translating directly from English without considering the grammatical differences between the two languages. This suggests that children are more familiar with the language structures they absorb from digital content than with their native language. Aside from its linguistic component, this study also found that the COVID-19 pandemic has contributed to amplifying YouTube's influence on children's communication patterns.

During the pandemic, children's social interactions with peers and family became more restricted, while gadget use increased significantly. In this context, YouTube serves as the primary source of language acquisition for these children, replacing the direct conversations they should have in real social settings. Consequently, children absorb more language from digital media than from daily interactions with their parents, teachers, or peers.

This study concludes that YouTube's influence on children's communication patterns increases their use of English in daily conversations while affecting their acquisition of their mother tongue. Children who consume more English content find it challenging to use Indonesian with correct grammar, potentially leading to an imbalance in their bilingual skills. Therefore, more effective strategies are needed to manage children's digital media consumption so they can benefit from learning English without sacrificing their mother tongue acquisition.

Future research is recommended to explore other factors that influence children's language acquisition in the digital age. The study's limitations include a small, homogeneous sample size, which may not represent the full diversity of children across Indonesia, and the lack of objective measures of language ability, such as vocabulary range, sentence structure complexity, or phonological awareness. Additionally, the study did not account for influential variables like gender, parental education level, and socio-economic status, which could affect language exposure and development. Future research should consider larger, more diverse samples, mixed methods, standardized tests, and the long-term effects of digital media-driven bilingual dominance on literacy, academic readiness, and cultural identity. A deeper understanding can help formulate the best strategies to balance children's first and second language use in the digital age.

## References

- Adika, D. (2024). *TRANSLATION ERRORS IN BASIC ENGLISH CONVERSATION VIDEOS FOR CHILDREN ON YOUTUBE*.
- Akram, S., Abbas, I., & Waleed, J. (2022). *A Descriptive study of Portrayal of Speech and Language Disorders in YouTube Videos*. 3(2).
- Anggraini, P. P., Apriliani, N. A., Supeni, I., & Handrianto, C. (2022). The Use of the

- Cocomelon YouTube Channel as a Medium for Introducing Children's English Vocabulary. *SAGA: Journal of English Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics*, 3(2), 81–90. <https://doi.org/10.21460/saga.2022.32.137>
- B. Babilonia, A., Claire R. Ibo, R., & C Laxarno, C. (2023). DIRECT AND INDIRECT EFFECTS OF YOUTUBE CHILDREN SONGS ON THE L2ACQUISITION OF PRE-SCHOOL CHILDREN: A CASE STUDY. *SIGEH ELT: Journal of Literature and Linguistics*, 3(2), 1–20. <https://doi.org/10.36269/sigeh.v3i2.2063>
- Brown, R., & Fraser, C. (1963). *The acquisition of syntax*. Dalam C. N. Cofer & B. S. Musgrave (Eds.), *Verbal behavior and learning: Problems and processes* (hal. 158–196). McGraw-Hill.
- Bruner, J. S. (1983). *Child's talk: Learning to use language*. W. W. Norton.
- Chakma, K., Ruba, U. B., & Riya, S. D. (2022). YouTube as an information source of floating agriculture: Analysis of Bengali language contents quality and viewers' interaction. *Heliyon*, 8(9), e10719. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.heliyon.2022.e10719>
- Chomsky, N. (1959). A review of B. F. Skinner's verbal behavior. *Language*, 35(1), 26–58.
- Creswell, J. W. (2012a). *Educational research: Planning, conducting, and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research* (4th ed.). Pearson Education.
- Creswell, J. W. (2012b). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approach* (4th ed.). Sage Publications.
- Crystal, D. (2006). *English as a global language* (2nd ed.). Cambridge University Press.
- Furwana, D., Muin, F. R., Zainuddin, A. A., & Mulyani, A. G. (2024). Unlocking the Potential: Exploring the Impact of Online Assessment in English Language Teaching. *IDEAS: Journal on English Language Teaching and Learning, Linguistics and Literature*, 12(1), 653-662.
- Farizqi, A. A. (2022). The Impact of The Use Of Youtube On The Acquisition Of Second Language In Children. *Journal of Social, Culture, and Language*, 1(1).
- Fishman, J. A. (1991). *Reversing language shift: Theoretical and empirical foundations of assistance to threatened languages*. Multilingual Matters.
- Gerbner, G., & Gross, L. (1976). Living with television: The violence profile. *Journal of Communication*, 26(2), 172–199.
- Giles, H. (1973). Accent mobility: A model and some data. *Anthropological Linguistics*, 15(2), 87–105.
- Ismayanti, D., & Syam, A. T. (2022). The Community Manipulation through Big Brother's Tyranny in George Orwell's Nineteen Eighty-Four. *IDEAS: Journal on English Language Teaching and Learning, Linguistics and Literature*, 10(2), 1556–1569.
- Jasiah, Umul Khasanah, Wina Asry, Nur Latifah, & Zulham. (2023). Improving Early Childhood Language Development through "Kiki Miu-Miu" YouTube Videos.

- Journal of Childhood Development*, 3(2), 24–35.  
<https://doi.org/10.25217/jcd.v3i2.3780>
- Liando, N. V. F., & Tatipang, D. P. (2022). English or Indonesian Language? Parents' Perception Toward Children's Second Language Learning Context. *Jurnal Lingua Idea*, 13(1), 61. <https://doi.org/10.20884/1.jli.2022.13.1.5749>
- Listiani, N. K. M., Suwastini, N. K. A., Dantes, G. R., Adnyani, N. L. P. S., & Jayantin, I. G. A. S. R. (2021). *YouTube as Digital Learning Resources for Teaching Bilingual Young Learners*: <https://doi.org/10.2991/assehr.k.210407.230>
- Leow, R. P., & Cerezo, D. (2019). Language acquisition and digital media: A look at the role of YouTube in children's language development. *Journal of Language and Literacy Education*, 15(1), 1–16.
- Lenneberg, E. H. (1967). *Biological foundations of language*. John Wiley & Sons.
- Levin, D. E., & Wainer, H. (2010). Children's television and the development of social and cognitive skills. *Journal of Educational Psychology*.
- Lightbown, P. M., & Spada, N. (2013). *How languages are learned* (4th ed.). Oxford University Press.
- Monsrud, M.-B., Rydland, V., Geva, E., Thurmann-Moe, A. C., & Halaas Lyster, S.-A. (2022). The advantages of jointly considering first and second language vocabulary skills among emergent bilingual children. *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism*, 25(1), 42–58. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13670050.2019.1624685>
- Mustoip, S., Al Ghozali, M. I., As, U. S., & Sanhaji, S. Y. (2023). Implementation of Character Education through Children's Language Development in Elementary Schools. *IJECA (International Journal of Education and Curriculum Application)*, 6(2), 91. <https://doi.org/10.31764/ijeca.v6i2.14192>
- Nzerem, J.-K. K. J., & Nzerem, H. (2020). REVIEW OF EXPRESSIVE LANGUAGE DISORDERS: COUNSELLING INTERVENTION AND IMPLICATION. *ANSU Journal of Language and Literary Studies (AJLLS)*, 2(1).
- McNeill, D. (1992). *Hand and mind: What gestures reveal about thought*. University of Chicago Press.
- Miles, M. B., & Huberman, A. M. (1994). *Qualitative data analysis: An expanded sourcebook* (2nd ed.). Sage Publications.
- Myers-Scotton, C. (1993). *Social motivations for code-switching: Evidence from Africa*. Oxford University Press.
- Pérez, M. A., & Martínez, R. (2017). Digital media and language development in young children. *International Journal of Education and Development using Information and Communication Technology*, 13(3), 103–118.
- Pinter, A. (2017). *Teaching young language learners*. Oxford University Press.
- Phillipson, R. (1992). *Linguistic imperialism*. Oxford University Press.
- Rizki, M. R., & Napitupulu, R. (2024). The Influence of Modern Video Games on

- Children's Second Language Acquisition: Literature Riview. *Jurnal Teknologi*.
- Rosmala, D., Nurul Hidayati, A., & Abdullah, F. (2021). Early Language Development of a Child with Expressive Language Disorder: A Parents' Narration. *J-SHMIC : Journal of English for Academic*, 8(1), 86–96. [https://doi.org/10.25299/jshmic.2021.vol8\(1\).6305](https://doi.org/10.25299/jshmic.2021.vol8(1).6305)
- Skinner, B. F. (1957). *Verbal behavior*. Appleton-Century-Crofts.
- Sweller, J. (1988). Cognitive load during problem solving: Effects on learning. *Cognitive Science*, 12(2), 257–285. [https://doi.org/10.1207/s15516709cog1202\\_4](https://doi.org/10.1207/s15516709cog1202_4)
- Sakdiyah, R., & Br.Perangin-angin, A. (2023). The Influence Of Youtube On Second Language Acquisition For Children 5th Years. *INNOVATIVE: Journal Of Social Science Research*, 3(5).
- Salsabila, D. A., Salam, U., & Rezeki, Y. S. (2025). *YouTube as a Tool for English Language Learning: A Meta-Analysis in EFL Contexts*. 10(01).
- Sharma, Dr. N., & Yadav, Dr. T. (2023). Study on the Effect of Early Exposure to Digital Learning Tools on Language Development in Toddlers. *International Journal of Life Sciences, Biotechnology and Pharma Research*, 12(4).
- Siahaan, D. G., Wattu, L. M., Bouk, E., & Emanuel, U. (2022). *Analyzing the Influence of Mother Tongues to English Speaking at the Eight Grade Students of Neonbat Junior High School*. 1.
- Sigurjónsdóttir, S., & Nowenstein, I. (2021). Language acquisition in the digital age: L2 English input effects on children's L1 Icelandic. *Second Language Research*, 37(4), 697–723. <https://doi.org/10.1177/02676583211005505>
- Stürmer, V. (2025). The acquisition of written language within a second language: Challenges and support opportunities in written language acquisition of multilingual children using German as a second language. *Gyermeknevelés Tudományos Folyóirat*, 13(2), 21–37. <https://doi.org/10.31074/gyntf.2025.2.21.37>
- Sundqvist, A., Koch, F.-S., Birberg Thornberg, U., Barr, R., & Heimann, M. (2021). Growing Up in a Digital World – Digital Media and the Association With the Child's Language Development at Two Years of Age. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 12, 569920. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2021.569920>
- Turkle, S. (2011). *Alone together: Why we expect more from technology and less from each other*. Basic Books.
- Yin, R. K. (2009). *Case study research: Design and methods* (4th ed.). Sage Publications.
- Zulhantiar, P. A., Mawarni, N., & Br.Perangin-angin, A. (2024). The Influence of Youtube Video in Learning English (A Case Study of 3 Years Old Child in Medan). *INNOVATIVE: Journal Of Social Science Research*, 4(6), 13.