



A Systematic Literature Review on the Impact of English Media on Vocabulary Development in Bilingual Toddlers

Agnes Monica Rahayu¹, Adrefiza², Failasofah³

^{1,2,3} English Department, University of Jambi

Corresponding E-Mail: agnesmnrhy@gmail.com

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Abstract

This systematic literature review looks into how bilingual children vocabulary development is affected by their exposure to English media. The early years of childhood, from 1 to 6 years old, are the most pivotal time for language development, impacted by social, environmental, and biological factors. Bilinguals' vocabulary development is usually impacted by a number of aspects, such as media exposure, home literacy environments, and parental participation. Using the PRISMA 2020 framework, five studies published from Januari 2021 to March 2025 were selected from three databases; Google Scholar, ERIC, and Taylor & Francis. Results indicate that interactive and socially supported media use can successfully improve L2 vocabulary, whereas passive media exposure alone may impede language development. Furthermore, the context, quality, and adult supervision of media intake have a significant effect on language results.

Keywords: Bilingual Toddler, English Media, Systematic Literature Review

Introduction

Early childhood development is a crucial stepping stone for cognitive, social and emotional development in children. The rapid language development of the children during their golden age -from birth to six years of age, impact their future academic and social (Nungala, 2024). Several factors which are biological predispositions, environmental stimulation, and sociocultural background influence the children's developmental process. Several studies noted that during the children's golden age, where they are in their most responsive to language input, is the most important of their early period of language development (Setyaningsih & Katoningsih, 2021). Children who are actively acquiring and applying two languages are called bilingual. Bilingual children might be exposed

differently to each language, and the level of proficiency in both languages can vary. Being a bilingual can affect the development of L1 (first language) and L2 (second language) vocabulary, with differences in the proficiency of lexical based on factors such as the amount of exposure, sociocultural context, and media influence (Zhang & Lau, 2024; Tsui et al., 2022).

The increasing exposure to more than one language has raised interest in understanding bilingual children acquire their L2 proficiency, particularly in relation to learning and cognitive context. The core of bilingual study is whether exposure to more than one language supports or obstructs linguistic development. However, the current study by Muszyńska et al. (2025) suggested that bilingual or multilingual children are able to complete their early developmental milestones at the same age as their monolingual fellows. Additionally, research has shown that bilinguals gain benefit from cognitive and metalinguistic over monolinguals, especially when it comes to tasks that involve abstract reasoning and metaphor comprehension (Alipour & Ranjbar, 2024). Exposing more than one language to children in their early childhood years can occur in various ways, one of which is by using media. **English-language media use** refers to interaction with the language via digital platforms (e.g., smart phone, YouTube, television, etc.) or print media (e.g., books, newspaper, etc.). The English media exposure in the context of L2 acquisition is very crucial since the input from media exposure can occur outside of classroom settings.

Vocabulary acquisition is one of the most pivotal areas of research in L2 (second language) development. Children who are bilingual should develop their vocabulary in two languages with unequal exposure. The vital aspect of bilingual lexical development is the employment of translation equivalents, particularly cognates- terms with the same form and meaning in two languages. Phonological overlap leads to children acquiring cognates quicker than non-cognates, which promotes expressive vocabulary development in both L1 and L2 (Mitchell et al., 2024). Additionally, Tsui et al. (2022) illustrated that phonetic similarity supports retention and speeds up early childhood L2 word acquisition.

The children's L2 development might be caused by parents and environmental interactions. Zhang and Lau (2024), for instance, discovered that the child's interest in English as well as the exposure of English in the household were powerful indicators of English language proficiency in Chinese bilinguals. Furthermore, Huang and Wang (2025) identified that the combination between maternal education and employment status influences the children's memory of their L2 lexicon. The results highlight how sociocultural context and input quality are able to facilitate the children's L2 acquisition.

Moreover, digital platforms and media exposure also play a significant role in L2 acquisition. Sufa and Dzulfikri (2023) showed that even without instruction, a Javanese toddler's lexicon developed through extensive exposure to Youtube content with English-language. While the result showed the advantages of media

exposure, Alroqi et al. (2023) recommend that the quantity, content, and context of screen time—especially when adults are absent to supervise—might bring a bad impact to the children's L2 vocabulary and syntactic development.

Thus, the following research questions were developed to investigate the effects of English media exposure on bilingual children's L2 development in order to gain a better understanding of how it affects bilingual children's second language (L2) vocabulary development.

- RQ 1: What effect does exposure to English language media have on bilingual children's L2 vocabulary development?
- RQ 2: Which type of English media exposures are most effective for enhancing bilingual children's L2 vocabulary development?
- RQ 3: How does adult supervision influence the effectiveness of English media exposure for L2 vocabulary development on bilingual children?
- RQ 4: Is the amount of screen time associated with enhancing bilingual children's L2 vocabulary development?

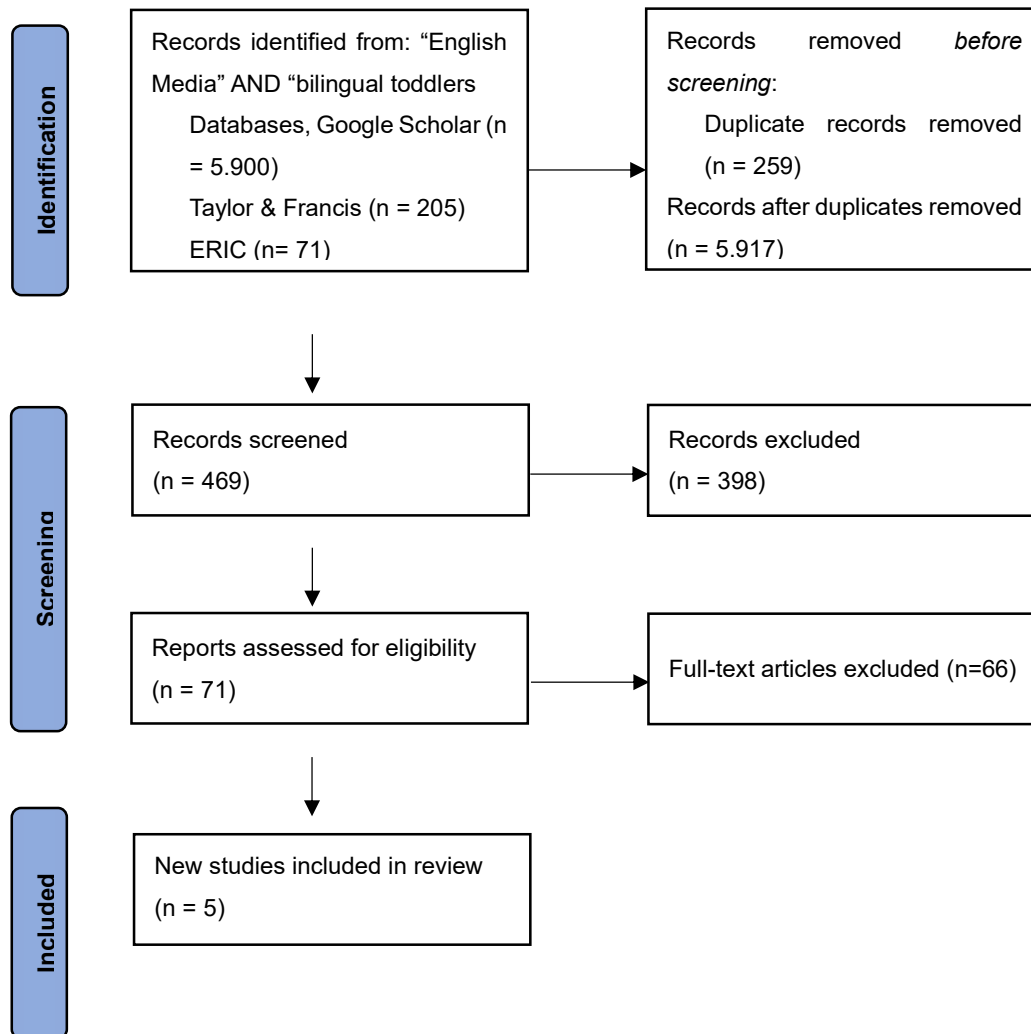
Methodology

In this paper, the flow diagram — also referred to as PRISMA 2020 (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Review and Meta-Analyses) was used as the guideline. A flow diagram of PRISMA illustrates the procedure of identifying relevant data and deciding whether or not to incorporate it into the review. Articles were sourced from Google Scholar, ERIC, and Taylor & Francis using the keywords “English media” and “bilingual toddlers.”

To ensure the relevance and quality of the sources, a few inclusion criteria are taken into consideration in order to do a systematic literature review. The inclusion criteria required that articles (1) the journals be published in the last 5 years, between January 2021 and February 2025, (2) the journals should be written in English, (3) the area of the study must be relevant to the exposure of English media, and the papers should at least include elements regarding the L2 vocabulary development of bilingual children, (3) the study should focus on toddler age 1 to 6 years old.

Conversely, the exclusion criteria eliminated (1) studies that didn't specifically focus on vocabulary acquisition or L2, (2) the participants are not bilingual toddlers age 1 to 6 years old, (3) studies published in languages other than English. Only the most pertinent and methodologically sound studies made it into the final synthesis thanks to this thorough sifting.

Figure 1 Flow Diagram



There are five stages of PRISMA namely; search related articles, screening, arranging based on inclusion and exclusion standards, investigate the articles to determine the eligible, construct the review. As the first step of PRISMA, the researchers searched the keyword of the related topic. The researchers chose 3 databases which are Google Scholar, Taylor & Francis, and ERIC with 5 years arrangement of year. The keyword that the researchers used is "English media" and "Bilingual Toddler" on the data bases. The result showed 5.900 from Google Scholar, 205 from Taylor & Francis, and 71 from ERIC. In total, the researcher found 6.176 articles. From these 3 databases, the researchers found that there are 259 duplicates articles. Thus, the total articles are reduced to 5.917.

The next is screening process. At this stage, the researchers excluded 6.150 articles due to unable to access the articles. To choose articles, the "include and exclude criteria." were used to make the first conclusion and eligibility stage. The full-text screening was carried out by the researcher. The researcher chose which articles to "include/exclude" through reading the abstract. The criteria of choosing

the articles were; the articles should be addressing the exposure of English media to bilingual early age of childhood, the study should be in form of research articles, those articles should be published from January 1st 2021 to March 31st 2025. The researchers faced some obstacles while accessing the articles due to the full text of articles was not accessible. After reading the result of eligible articles, the researchers chose to review 4 articles.

Table 1. List of Article

The five empirical investigations that are part of this comprehensive literature review are shown in Table 1. Every study was chosen according to stringent inclusion criteria and advances the study of English media exposure and how it affects bilingual toddlers' vocabulary development. Each article's year, title, and source journal are compiled in the table, which attests to its academic reputation, relevance, and recentness.

Keywords	Year	Title	Journals
“English Media” AND “bilingual toddlers	2022	An Evaluation of a Prescribed Joint Book Reading Intervention for Preschool Children with Speech, Language and Communication Needs	Child Language Teaching and Therapy
	2022	Exposure to Foreign Languages through Live Interaction Can Facilitate Children's Acceptance of Multiple Labeling Conventions across Languages	Cambridge University Press
	2022	Bilingual Daycares in the Netherlands: An Analysis of the Implementation of Bilingual Input and Underlying Ideologies	International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism
	2023	COVID-19 and bilingual children's home language environment: Digital media, socioeconomic status, and language status	Frontiers in Psychology
	2023	The association between screen media quantity, content, and context and language development	Journal of Child Language

Table 2. Themes

Each included study's main emphasis and thematic direction are listed in Table 2. Diverse research interests are reflected in the themes. These themes serve as the basis for comprehending how bilingual toddlers' language development is impacted by various types of English media exposure.

No.	Title	Focus	Sources
1.	An Evaluation of a Prescribed Joint Book Reading Intervention for Preschool Children with Speech, Language and Communication Needs	The study concentrated on the screen time and reading habits of parents of children with SLCN. It sought to document the experiences of caregivers who read books together every day. The intervention placed a strong emphasis on reading books every day while fostering interaction.	International Journal of Speech-Language Pathology 645-655, DOI:10.1080/17549507.2022.2115137
2.	Exposure to Foreign Languages through Live Interaction Can Facilitate Children's Acceptance of Multiple Labeling Conventions across Languages	The study focused on how the expectations of children related to labeling conventions are impacted by foreign language exposure. It examined the impact of live social interaction versus media on children's acceptance of other languages labels.	Journal of Child Language (2024), 51, 470-484 DOI:10.1017/S0305000922000472
3.	Bilingual Daycares in the Netherlands: An Analysis of the Implementation of Bilingual Input and Underlying Ideologies	The study examines the reasons behind bilingual teaching in Dutch preschools. It looks at Dutch's place in the educational system. Integration of children who do not speak Dutch is one of the main goals.	Current Issues in Language Planning, 23:2, 157-175, DOI:10.1080/14664208.2021.1939988
4.	COVID-19 and bilingual children's home language environment: Digital media, socioeconomic status, and language status	The study focuses on bilingual children's home language environment during the COVID-19 pandemic. The research explores both conventional and digital media language environments.	Frontiers in Psychology 14:1115108. DOI:10.3389/fpsyg.2023.1115108
5.	The association between screen media quantity, content, and context and language	The research focuses on the associations between screen media use practices and children's language	Journal of Child Language (2023), 50, 1155-1183 DOI:10.1017/S0305000

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Table 3. Participants

The age ranges of the kid participants and the kinds of English media exposure examined in each study are listed in Table 3. Every study that is included focuses on kids between the ages of one and six. The table shows the variety of media formats that were examined and how they affected the formation of early bilingual vocabulary.

No	Title	Age Group	Media/Exposure Type
1.	An Evaluation of a Prescribed Joint Book Reading Intervention for Preschool Children with Speech, Language and Communication Needs	2 – 6 years old	Parent-child shared storybooks
2.	Exposure to Foreign Languages through Live Interaction Can Facilitate Children's Acceptance of Multiple Labeling Conventions across Languages	3 – 4 years old	Live interaction and video of the same speaker as live interaction
3.	Bilingual Daycares in the Netherlands: An Analysis of the Implementation of Bilingual Input and Underlying Ideologies	0 – 4 years old	English via songs, games, storytelling
4.	COVID-19 and bilingual children's home language environment: Digital media, socioeconomic status, and language status	1 – 5 years old	English via text, audio, images, and animation formats
5.	The association between screen media quantity, content, and context and language development.	1 – 3 years old	Screen media (Television, touchscrenn, computer)

Table 4. Result of the Review

Table 4 provides a comprehensive summary of each study's aims, methods, findings, and practical recommendations.

No	Author	Aim	Method	Findings	Recommendation
1.	Karin Myberg, Inger	The purpose of the study was to look	Qualitative Approach	The study found that support is	The study suggested that caregivers pick

	Lundeborg Hammarstrom	into the reading preferences of parents of children with SLCN. It also sought to document caregivers' experiences reading books together.		required for interactive book reading for caregivers of children with SLCN. Following the intervention, there were notable increases in the frequency of reading. The joint book reading intervention was well received by caregivers. The intervention can be included into speech-language pathology services and is practical.	books with plenty of graphics and less text. Using elaborations and encouraging expansions while reading was among the suggestions. Each household received tailored book reading recommendations. Based on the experiences of caregivers, SLPs displayed interesting reading techniques. Making recommendations for books that were appropriate was essential to raising kids' interest in reading.
2.	Lee Hyuna, Song Hyun-joo	The aim of the study was to examine whether children's expectations about labeling	Qualitative Approach	The research found that children with more exposure to foreign languages	The results indicate that the children's proficiency in a foreign language, comparatively a limited

		conventions can be influenced by limited exposure to a foreign language, specifically Korean and Spanish, among three-to four-year-old Korean children.		through live social interaction are more likely to accept both labels for a novel object, unlike those with media exposure. Furthermore, the study emphasizes the importance of social interaction in shaping children's understanding of different labeling conventions and suggests implications for foreign language education in linguistically homogeneous communities.	exposure to foreign languages can bring impact to the children's acceptance of certain labels that are comparable to those of bilingualism. Similar to children who are bilingual, children who are exposed to a foreign language even for a brief period might notice that the same thing is referred to in a different label in both languages.
3.	Darlene Keydeniers, Suzanne Aalberse, Sible Andringa, Folkert	The aim of this study is the children who speak Dutch to learn English as a second	Mix-method approaches	The study reveals two ideologies regarding bilingual education in Dutch	The long-term effects on Dutch language status should be investigated in future studies. Examine how

	Kuiken	language. For improved community inclusion, childcare facilities target children who do not speak Dutch. The benefits of bilingualism for future employment and cognitive abilities are highlighted. The program helps kids develop their ability to study several languages at once.		preschools. One important tenet is that children who speak Dutch learn English as a foreign language. For greater assimilation, children who do not speak Dutch must be exposed to the language. For the benefit of the kids, teachers transition between languages, demonstrating flexible language control. Project MIND, pilot research, investigates the use of multilingual education.	bilingual education affects the mechanisms involved in language acquisition. Think about how children who do not speak Dutch can be assimilated into the Dutch community.
4.	He Sun, Justina Tan, Wenli Chen	This study aims to explore the extent to	Quantitative Approach	The study found that children's language	The findings suggest that caregivers should be

		which bilingual children's home learning environment has been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, and whether such environment is affected by SES and societal language status		input patterns increased significantly since COVID-19, affecting both conventional and digital media resources. Higher-SES families had more conventional materials and activities, while lower-SES families had more digital media. Children had more English materials and activities compared to Mandarin, indicating a disparity in language exposure.	mindful of digital media use to prevent it from replacing everyday interactions, minimizing potential drawbacks.
5.	Haifa Alroqi, Ludovica Serratrice, Thea Cameron-Faulkner	The aim of this study is to examine the predictive relationship between the aforementioned	Quantitative approach	The study found that screen media context significantly predicts	The study suggests including verbal interaction measures on co-viewing. Interactive co-

		ed three screen media use parameters (quantity, content, and context) and language outcomes among children under 3.		expressive and receptive vocabulary in 12-to 16-month-olds. In older children (17-to 36-month-olds), excessive screen time negatively impacts expressive vocabulary and mean length of utterance. Child age was a significant predictor of language outcomes in the older group, linked to vocabulary spurt around 18 month. Time spent in shared reading activities predicted expressive vocabulary in older children but	viewing may indicate a more supportive home environment, enhancing child development.
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Discussion

This systematic review found that English media quality, context, and interactivity have a great impact on bilingual toddlers’ L2 vocabulary acquisition. It is crystal clear from the evaluated studies that media use without active engagement doesn’t promote language results and hinder the development of vocabulary and grammatical structure (Alroqi et al., 2023; Florit et al., 2021). Conversely, more meaningful language use and higher vocabulary acquisition are linked to interactive media experiences, especially those that require caregiver interaction.

For instance, children who engaged in joint book reading with adults showed increased frequency of language use and improve expressive vocabulary (Myrberg & Hammarström, 2023). These results align with other studies that emphasize the importance of shared verbal interaction and co-viewing during media use (Alroqi et al., 2023; Sufa & Dzulfikri, 2023). Children’s comprehension and memory of new lexicon seem to be supported by adult interaction, which maximizes the exposure’s developmental effectiveness.

Furthermore, social interaction proved more beneficial than passive media input in the acquisition of labeling conventions. According to Lee and Song (2022) children who are exposed to foreign languages via live interaction were more open to accept different labeling systems compared to those who are exposed to pre-recorded videos. This indicated that responsive, real-time engagement has a special role in influencing language understanding and flexibility.

In short, this review highlights how, when used purposefully, media in English can support the development of children’s L2 vocabularies. To optimize its benefits, factors such as interactive engagement, adult co-viewing, and content quality are essential. In order for screen time to support early bilingualism acquisition, media design and parenting strategies should prioritize on educational content and support co-viewing.

Conclusion

This systematic literature review concludes that the exposure to English-language media has the benefit to improve bilingual children’s L2 vocabulary development, especially if it is occurred in a setting that is supportive and socially engaged. The quality of the content, the interaction, and adult supervision is having a significant impact on how effective English media exposure is. Interactive media format such as joint book reading or co-viewing media content proven to be more advantageous than passive or unsupervised media use. Ultimately, English media can be a very effective tool for bilingual language development if it is used wisely. It’s should be used to support-not replace- direct communication, shared activities,

and other forms of rich language input during their golden age.

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