



## Exposing Two Languages to A Young Child: Parent's Strategies on A Child's Language Development for Speech Delay

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### Abstract

Raising bilingual children in this modern era is essential. Every parent needs to introduce English for their future academics and careers. This study examined how parent's strategies successfully introduce two languages into their child and the effect of raising the child into bilingualism from birth. This study employed a couple of parents, members of families, professional therapies, who actively gave exposure to bilingual children. One Parent One Languages (OPOL) approach into this language policy starts from the age of 18-24 months old, and poster, video and audio English speakers as the parent's strategies. This is a case study that was an analysis used by Creswell, which consisted of six stages. This study employs observation as data collection methods. This study shows that the child was not able to produce two words together but the child has shown comprehension improvement by gaining many new vocabularies in both English and Indonesian. The child's expression ability has developed only in Indonesian that is affected by dominant languages and there is very slow improvement in English. This study aims to give recommendations for parents, similar researchers, and future generations to raise any children into bilingualism as early as possible.

**Keywords:** *Bilingual, Language Learning, Early Age, One Parent One Language, Speech Delay*

### Introduction

Raising bilingual children can be started early. As the people who are very close with the child, parents have a big role in giving language exposure. The amount of time in language exposure influences the vocabulary size. The amount of vocabulary in each language will influence how the child masters in using each word whether the child could speak at a fast speed with a good pronunciation or the child could easily receive others words from the same languages. (Fazeli, 2012;

Adel et al, 2021) the most exposure to language which has the most clarity and fluency of spoken language influences the large vocabulary.

According to Wilson (2021) investigates 164 French-English bilingual families through questioners and two in-depth case studies involving interviews and observation. The study showed that parents generally reported positive attitudes towards language mixing, but they should avoid language mixing at home. This study took a girl who has been exposed to two languages since baby, Indonesian and English. There were seven people who lived with the child. The child's mother, aunty, and cousin use English and Indonesian or it is called mixed languages. The rest include my father, grandfather, grandmother, and two caregivers who use Indonesian. There was no strict regulation on how two languages are used in exposure to the child. They spontaneously used both English and Indonesian whatever they wanted. This study naturally created language mixing in the home environment.

The other media that used to promote bilingualism are posters, English songs, and English videos. Due to the eating issue, the parent took to YouTube as a media for screening time for helping the eating process. The first caregiver gave the YouTube media without time management. However, there was no screen time a day for the baby under two years old (WHO,2019). At the age of 18 months old, the parent deeply saw the child's ability in producing the words. The child could not reach the same language development as the children who were the same age. The parent paid attention to their cousin's child when visited at home who had the ability to produce '*cicak*', '*hello*', '*gak mau*', '*bakso*' very clearly. The habit of watching YouTube from a parent's mobile phone or iPad without time limitation was much of screening time duration.

There were two causes of the possibility of delayed experiences, much of screening time and mixing-languages at home environment that might have caused language confusion. The parent took the child into professional health. This condition caused the child to have a diagnosed developmental language disorder of speech delay. According to Sword (2021) developmental language disorders are categorized in two types of receptive language delay and expressive languages delay. Receptive languages refer to the ability in understanding the languages, and expressive languages delay refers to how the children could use the languages. The child had good development in receptive languages.

It could be seen when the parent gave instruction both in Indonesian and English. According to Kids First, (20250 Having trouble putting words together into sentences or making correct grammatical phrases might also be a sign. It's normal for bilingual children to mix languages (code-switching) and make some grammar mistakes, and that's not a big issue. However, if a child keeps having trouble making or understanding sentences that other kids their age can handle, it could mean they're behind in their language development.

Some research shows the interest of raising a bilingual child. Sohrabi, (2023) set her son to learn the parent's language, Persian, and culture at home. The son has taught English only in the school. The concept is to learn only one language at home and learn another language outside of the home environment. Kurniatan, et.al., (2024) looked at bilingual children who have autism. They found that being bilingual might help reduce some autism symptoms, like trouble understanding others' viewpoints. The study says that bilingual kids with autism might get better at taking others' perspectives because switching between languages involves understanding different words, expressions, and gestures.

This improved ability to see things from others' points of view can boost their empathy and social skills, which are important for kids with autism. Wright, et. al., (2022) 108 professionals took part in an online survey to help us understand their views on spoken language bilingualism in deaf children and the advice they give to bilingual parents. We focused on three types of practitioners that parents are likely to encounter soon after their child is diagnosed as deaf. These are Teacher of the Deaf (ToDs), Audiologists, and Speech and Language Therapists (SLTs).

The previous study learns about bilinguals with deaf diseases and autistic children. Another previous study learns about how to raise children with the language's policy based on the linguistic environment set. To address this gap, this study focuses on developing the child into bilingual in the home environment only as the child is not ready to enter the school. This study qualified the parent's strategies on developing learning two languages, English and Indonesian, from a very young age with the disease condition of speech delay. Both Indonesian and English will be taught at home, then the child could learn two languages at the home environment because there is also a very limited bilingual school near the child's residence. This study aims to help the parent, school principal, and future study to learn about raising bilinguals from a very young age.

Based on this case study, this study launches the following research questions to give the result of investigation:

1. What specific parental strategy is used to facilitate bilingualism?
2. How does early bilingual exposure affect the child's language development in each language, English and Indonesian, in the case of a speech-delayed child?

The findings may motivate researchers to explore the pedagogy of raising children to bilingualism from diverse backgrounds, particularly those diagnosed with speech delay. Furthermore, this study offers valuable insight that might serve as a foundation for developing bilingual children and reducing the potential reasons that can cause speech delays.

## Method

### Research Design

This research used a qualitative case study approach, which means the researcher studied a real-life situation in its natural setting and collected information using different kinds of evidence (Yin, 2018; Thomas, 2021). A case study was chosen because raising a bilingual child with a language delay is complicated, especially when the child's language learning happens naturally and without a structured plan within the family. The study used a descriptive method with a focus on understanding the personal experiences of raising a bilingual child. The way a child develops two languages is seen as a special and unique experience (Creswell, 2009). Watching the process helped the researcher understand how language learning in the home environment affects a child's language growth. The study mainly focused on the child, but also included input from family members who helped support the child's bilingual development.

Since no outside organization or school was involved, the researcher made sure the study followed ethical guidelines by thinking carefully about the right things to do. The study took place in the family's home, and all the adults gave their permission, both verbally and in writing, before taking part. They were told about the study's purpose, how data would be recorded, and that they could leave at any time. The researcher, who is also the child's mother, was careful to protect everyone's privacy and keep everything confidential. The child's safety, respect, and well-being were always the top priority, and all the information was made anonymous when it was shared.

### Data Collection Method

### Time, Setting, and Participants

This study took place in East Java, specifically in the city of Surabaya. The child comes from a home with a middle-to-lower income level, where English is not often used in everyday conversations. However, all of the child's family members have at least a bachelor's degree, which has created a supportive attitude towards learning English. The child mostly stays at home and does not often take part in activities outside the family.

The study ran for six months, starting when the child was 18 months old and ending when she turned 24 months. Eight family members that are included of two caregivers were part of the child's daily life. Three of them were interviewed: the father, the first caregiver, and the grandmother. They were picked because they were the adults who interacted with the child most often in both Indonesian. The mother, who was also the researcher, didn't have a formal interview with herself, but she kept a reflexive journal to write about her thoughts, feelings, and understanding throughout the study. This journal acted as a way of self-interview and helped with analyzing the study.

No	The Subject of this study	No	The Family Members
1	<i>The child is 18 months old, girl.</i>	1	The mother
		2	The father
		3	The grandfather
		4	The grandmother
		5	The aunty from mother
		6	The child's cousin
		7	The first caregiver
		8	The second caregiver

## Data Collection

In this study, different ways of collecting data were used to make the results more reliable. These methods included watching children in their homes during everyday activities like eating, playing, and storytelling. The researcher used a phone to record both audio and video of these observations. All the notes were kept in Google Sheets, along with short descriptions of what was happening, who was involved, and which languages were being used.

Three interviews were done with the father, the first caregiver, and the grandmother. Each interview had five open-ended questions to learn about how languages were used at home, how the child was doing in learning two languages, and how people talked with the child. When possible, interviews were done in English, but some were done in Indonesian because that was the language the participants were more comfortable with. All the interviews were recorded and written down exactly as they were spoken, and then checked for accuracy before being used for analysis.

## Data Analysis

The data was analyzed using six steps suggested by Creswell (2009): first, organizing and getting ready for analysis; second, reading through all the data to understand it generally; third, breaking the data into meaningful parts by coding; fourth, describing the setting, people involved, and the kinds of categories that came up; fifth, finding and sharing the main ideas or themes; and sixth, explaining what the data means.

The transcripts and field notes were coded by hand. The researcher started with simple codes like switching between languages, repeating words, learning by example, and mixing languages. These were then grouped into bigger categories. After comparing and reflecting on the data many times, three main themes were found: (1) Parental bilingual exposure strategies, (2) The child's responses to bilingual input, and (3) Family support in facilitating speech development.

## Data Validation, Member checking

To make sure the findings were trustworthy, the researcher shared the initial results with the child's father and the first caregiver. They explained the main themes and interpretations they found, and asked the participants if the results matched their real experiences and practices. Some small changes were made based on their input, and these were included in the final analysis. Since the researcher was also the child's mother, it was important to be reflective throughout the study. She kept a journal to help separate her personal feelings and ideas as a parent from the actual analysis. This helped avoid bias and made the study more reliable by ensuring the results showed real family interactions, not just what the researcher thought was happening.

## Result

This study investigates the experiences of a child's language development who has exposure to two languages. The following research issues were addressed using Google Sheets to distribute observations in daily language communication, Google Docs to translate from audio interviews of people around the subject, and document analysis: 1) What specific parental strategy is used to facilitate bilingualism? 2) How does early bilingual exposure affect the child's language development in each language, English and Indonesian, with a speech delay child case? The findings were summarized to address the research questions, and the teachers' experiences were highlighted, examined, and narratively.

### ***The Specific Parental Strategies to Facilitate Bilingualism***

Bilingual children mean learning two languages. The child in this research has taught Indonesian as the national language and English as the foreign language. Before having a diagnosis of speech delay, the child has shown receptive language development in both English and Indonesian. In the six-month-old, the child has shown the languages develop the same as other children. The child is only able to bubbly and the last syllabus such as 'ba', 'da' and it does not give any specific meaning. In language development at eighteen-months-old, the child has not reached the standard of word ability to produce.

Ikhsania (2022) states that children aged 12 to 18 months can speak with a total of 20 words and those words could be spoken with proper pronunciation and each word has clear meaning. In this case, the child is only able to speak one word 'mama'. However, the word 'mama' does not have a specific meaning. It may have the meaning of mother, oma (how the child calls her grandmother). The naturalistic observation shows 'mama' means woman. The child calls every woman mama. Then, there is no specific meaning of mama.

At the age of eighteen-months-old, the child has been diagnosed by the specialist as speech delay disease. The disease is seen clearly on how the child is not able to produce the standard total of words. Hartnett (2022) explains some

characteristics of language development, including understanding the language, expressing that understanding through words or actions, and the sound of words being pronounced clearly and understandably by adults. Bilingual exposure without strict rules since a very early age and the use of screening media without any limitation time is the reason for speech delay. However, the bilingual exposure has given good comprehension of both English, and Indonesian to the child in this case.

Table 2. bilingual language development in Indonesian and English comprehension.

No	Indonesian	English
1	'Buka pintunya'.	'Close the door'.
2	'Matikan lampunya'.	'Turn off the light'.
3	'Nyalaikan lampunya'.	'Turn on the light'.
4	'Kebalik pakainya'.	'It's opposite'.
5	'Duduk'.	'Sit down'.
6	'Tangan kanan'.	'Use your right hand'.
7	'Awas bahaya'.	'Dangerous'.
8	'Drink water'.	'Minum air'.
9	'Minum dari gelasmu sendiri'.	'Drink the water in your glass'.

Table 2 shows the instructions from anyone at home. All the instructions are often used in daily communication. 'Buka pintunya' and 'Open the door', 'Matikan lampunya' and 'Turn off the light' have the same meaning. The bilingual result shows that the child could receive this instruction in both languages. Table 2 shows all nine instructions for each language. It means that there are eighteen instructions in total. However, the problem is found in expressive language development or it is called speech delay. Speech delay means the children are not able to speak the right words with the good pronunciation.

To facilitate this condition, the parents used 'One Parent One Language' or OPOL strategies to pursue bilingualism. Piler, and Gerber, (2021): Koelewijn, et al (2023) analyzing of post on an Australian parenting forum, observed that posters almost unanimously recommended OPOL as the best strategies and the one they use, or planned to use themselves, while language mixing was regarded negatively. According to this condition, the child is expected to be able to communicate both in Indonesian, as the national languages, and English, as the foreign languages.

Table 3. Language's rules

Person	Languages used
Mother	English
Father	Indonesian
Grandfather	Indonesian
Grandmother	Indonesian
Mother's sister	Indonesian
The child's cousin	Indonesian
The first caregiver	Indonesian
The second caregiver	Indonesian

The policy has changed by giving one language to every person at home. Table 3. Shows there is only the mother who exposes English in the child's vocabulary. The mother gives exposure to English to the child every day. Before sleeping, the child and the mother always have interactions together and there are only two of them at one time. Tsushima and Guardado (2019): Koelewijin (2023) explains the mother's awareness about raising the children in other languages. Japanese mothers in Montreal families want to speak with their children in their national language, Japanese. However, they prefer to reduce prioritizing Japanese to promote the development of other languages.

Regarding the OPOL approach, Koeleijin, et al (2023) shows that some mothers are worried whether their child may be able to acquire 'authentic fluency' in their national languages when it is only hearing from the family. In this study, the mother has no worries about the dialect that will be produced by the child. The mother gives additional media to help the child learn about English and native English dialect. There are three media that the mother uses to help the children learn English; youtube, book, and poster. The mother has shown the native English speaker by listening to songs such as 'the wheels in the bus', 'if you are happy and you know it' and it was watched by youtube.

Picture 1. Youtube media



Picture 2. Youtube media



The mother uses YouTube media to facilitate bilingualism learning. Picture 1 is the video of 'If You Happy and You Know It Clap Your Hands'. In this song, the lyric mentions some parts of the body like 'clap your hands', 'stomp your feed'. These lyrics ask the audience to understand where the hand is, and the feed is. The lyrics contain pursuing activity too and the child has easier to follow the instruction. This instruction directly teaches the child the name of her body. The second video is 'Wheels of the bus'. This song is funny and cute. The music is easy to sing alone without the music. This song has played in many places such as malls, playgrounds, and public areas. The popularity of this song has made it easy to remember the objects that have been shown in this video such as the bus, wheels, and window.

YouTube, according to Poramathikul et al. (2020), also plays an important role in how children learn language. Language learning happens when children interact with adults who are better at speaking in a natural environment, as mentioned by Rudd and Lambert, as cited in Poramathikul et al. (2020). The use of YouTube media is not applied when the child is with the mother. The caregivers often use the YouTube media in English. This is the mother to expose English.

Picture 3: Animal poster



Poster 4. Fruit poster



The other media that the mother uses to facilitate bilingualism is using posters. The mother introduced the child's name of the animal, fruit, by reading from an audio-poster. These posters could produce the sound of animals. The most familiar animals to the child are cow, and cats. Those two animals are often seen by the child in real life. There is a religious tradition where the society buys cows and puts them in the nearest street. This habit is often used when the mother and the child do some activities before sleeping.

The child can recognize the cat because there are many cats around the house. The child has easier to remember the name of the animals if these animals are close with the child's personal life experience. According to Jouannaud (2023) Poster is categorized as visual aids, whose use in language teaching has a long history. Poster enhances children's autonomy in the classroom because they can be used as a crutch when they need to produce languages.

### ***The effect of bilingual exposure on a child's language development with speech delay***

Raising the child into bilingualism is challenging and there is speech delay found in the process of learning into bilingualism. This case finds the child has speech delay due to irregular policy of language used. The parent has applied 'One Parent One Language' in the specific parental strategy to facilitate English and Indonesian exposure to the child. This approach has goals to avoid the possibility of

language confusion due to the use of languages mixing in every person's language used. This study shows that language mixing has made language confusion and it develops the potential of speech delay.

In this study, two languages applied, English and Indonesian. English was exposed by the mother and Indonesian was exposed by the rest of the family members. Those are the father, the grandfather-mother, the mother's aunt, the cousin, and the two caregivers. From this language separation, English is only taught by only one person. There is an unbalanced portion of two languages. To maximize the English exposure, the mother builds deep bonding in the 30 minutes before sleeping which is three times a day, afternoon, evening, and night. There are some activities which try to develop English, such as reading English books, storytelling in English, introducing the animals and fruit from the poster. However, the child has had more interaction with the first caregiver who takes care of her since the child has turned into six months old.

Indonesian has become a very dominant language because the media such as YouTube has minimized the time of duration. Another reason for causing speech delay is the use of media without time controlling. Due to the unbalanced language used, there is no equal development in both languages. Seven people have exposed Indonesian and this condition makes Indonesian grow as a dominant language. Potter et al. (2019) believe that children can easily translate non-dominant languages into the dominant language when compared with it. Table 5 and table 6 compare the effect of pursuing bilingualism in the child with speech delay before the OPOL approach and before.

Table 5 Language development of Indonesian and English before OPOL approach

NO	Word	English		Indonesian	
		Say	Action	Say	Action
1	Yakult		✓	Ak kut	✓
2	Banana	Nana	✓	Sang	✓
3	Apel	Pel	✓	Pel	✓
4	Candy	ndi	✓	Men	✓
5	Ball	-	✓	Ola	✓
6	Eat	-	✓	kan	✓
7	Sleep	-	✓	-	✓
8	Shower	-	✓	-	✓
9	Close	-	✓	-	✓
10	Open	-	✓	-	✓
11	Drink	-	✓	Mik	✓
12	Moping	-	✓	-	✓

13	Big	-	-	-	✓
14	Hot	-	✓	-	✓
15	Cold	-	✓	-	✓
16	Hello	Lo	✓	Lo	✓
17	Sorry	-	✓	-	✓
18	Ipad	Peh	✓	Peh	✓
19	Money	Any	✓	wang	-

Table 6. Language development of Indonesian and English after OPOL approach

NO	Word	English		Indonesian	
		Say	Action	Say	Action
1	Yakult		✓	Ak kut	✓
2	Banana	Nana	✓	Sang	✓
3	Apel	Pel	✓	Pel	✓
4	Milk		✓	Susu	✓
5	Rice	es	✓	Asi	✓
6	Candy	ndi	✓	Me	✓
7	Ball	-	✓	Ola	✓
8	Doll	-	✓	Oeka	✓
9	Cooking	-	✓	Sak	✓
10	Barbie	Berbi	✓	Berbi	✓
11	Balloon	Balun	✓	Balon	✓
12	Eat	-	✓	kan	✓
13	Sleep	Sleep	✓	Dur	✓
14	Shower	Wer	✓	Mandi	✓
15	Close	Os	✓	Tutup	✓
16	Open	Open	✓	Ukak	✓
17	Drink	Drink	✓	Mimik	✓
18	Moping	-	✓	Pel	✓
19	Big	-	-	Sar	✓
20	Hot	Hot	✓	Nas	✓
21	Cold	-	✓	Ngin	✓
22	Hello	Hello	✓	Halo	✓
23	Thankyou	Cencu	✓	Asi	✓

24	Sorry	-	✓	-	✓
25	Help	-	✓	Long	✓
26	Yellow	Elo	✓	Ning	✓
27	Pink	Pink	✓	-	✓
28	Green		✓	-	✓
29	Ipad	Pad	✓	Pad	✓
30	Money	Any	✓	wang	✓

The check mark in the table indicates that the child performed or demonstrated the expected response during the observation period. The blank cells mean the child was not able to show the understanding of the words. The column labeled 'say' refers to verbal responses (spoken words or vocalizations), while the column labeled 'action' refers to physical gestures, movement, or other nonverbal expressions used to respond to a communication situation.

There is a significant difference in the OPOL approach in child's language development especially in speaking or producing words. At the age of 24 months old, the comprehension is more developed. OPOL approach influences language development. Table 6 shows both English and Indonesian growth together in a proper way. The child could express thanks and separate the language between 'thank you' and 'terima kasih' even though the pronunciation is not clear yet. There are some English words that are not giving any development such as cold, eat, sorry, moping, big. Six months applied the parental strategies of bilingualism.

The child has more understanding about separating languages. Mother says 'Child, do you want water?', 'yeaa'; 'Nak mau minum ta?', 'mau'. The responses are based on the language. This is called language change automatically. The expression goes as well as the comprehension's language development. The child naturally uses Indonesian only to the person who speaks Indonesian; 'ayo tidur', 'ukak' while the child expresses those words in English 'sleep', 'pen' to the mother.

Both table 5 and table 6 shows the word production in two languages, English and Indonesian, has been pronounced in incomplete words. The word "rice" should be pronounced 'rice', but the child says 'es'. In Indonesian, 'nasi' should be pronounced 'nasi', but the child only said 'asi'. The child has only spoken the last syllables of the words. 'Rice' and 'nasi' have the same meaning. The child understands that those words are the same object. According to Weetalker (2022) All children, whether they have a speech delay or not, use phonological patterns. These are the ways kids make sound mistakes as they learn to talk. Most of these sound patterns go away by the time they are three years old.

Table 7 Natural bilingual exposure at home

Period	Child's Age	Main Activity	Development Focus	Notes
Month 1-2	18-19 Months	Daily Observation and starting OPOL Strategies	The child is able to produce Indonesian word and briefly express her want both in Indonesian and English	Introducing Bilingual concept with languages rules
Months 3-4	20-21 Months old	Continued OPOL application	Give exposure through posters, and books.	The parent reduces the use of screen time
Months 5-6	22-24 Months old	Consistent bilingual routines	Separating English and Indonesian	Beginning of expressive speech
After 24 months old	-	Speech therapy begins (not part of current study)		Follow-up stage, not analyzed in this research

The timeline in table 7 shows the child's natural process in learning two languages. The observation timeline was divided into three main phases over six months. The study only covered the natural bilingual exposure period within the home environment. The formal speech therapy process began after the child turned 24 months old and therefore was not included in this analysis.

The findings of this study align with previous research showing that unstructured bilingual exposure can temporarily delay expressive vocabulary development in early childhood (Thordardottir, 2015; Paradis, 2019). Similar to Andyani et al. (2024), the child in this study demonstrated greater receptive than expressive language ability, suggesting that understanding precedes production in a bilingual environment. However, unlike studies where both languages were equally balanced (De Houwer, 2021), the current study revealed an unequal exposure ratio, with Indonesian being dominant due to the larger number of Indonesian-speaking family members (seven versus one English speaker). This asymmetry likely contributed to the slower pace of English expressive language development.

Despite providing valuable insight, this study has several limitations. First, the duration of the observation was limited to six months, which may not capture the full developmental trajectory of bilingual language acquisition. Second, the study was conducted within a single household, where language exposure occurred naturally without external institutional influence such as preschool or daycare. Third, the OPOL strategies applied to father as Indonesian speaker and mother as

English speaker while the six other member families are representative as national language where the languages used in the country where the child's living. They use Indonesian.

## Conclusion

This single case study explored a bilingual child's language development within a naturalistic home environment over six months. The finding shows that unstructured bilingual exposure and much of screening time contribute to delayed expressive language although receptive understanding continues to develop steadily. Parental strategies, including consistent OPOL use and contextual bilingual media, supported vocabulary growth in both languages.

For parents, it is recommended to create structured language exposure by assigning each caregiver a consistent language, balancing the child's input between both languages. For practitioners, early guidance bilingual families should emphasize natural language use and environmental balance before considering speech therapy. For future research, longer-term studies involving multiple families and more balanced bilingual environment are needed to explore how language dominance evolves and how early intervention may accelerate expressive vocabulary growth.

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