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### Child Language Acquisition in Family Interaction: A Psycholinguistic Analysis of Phonological and Syntactic Development

*Pemerolehan Bahasa Anak dalam Interaksi Keluarga: Analisis Psikolinguistik terhadap Perkembangan Fonologi dan Sintaksis*

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#### Abstract

Child language acquisition develops naturally through continuous interaction within the family and social environment. This study aims to analyze children's language acquisition from a psycholinguistic perspective, focusing on phonological and syntactic development as well as the influence of family interaction on early language growth. The study employed a qualitative descriptive method using observation and note-taking techniques. The data were obtained from the utterances of a child aged 2 years and 3 months during daily communication with family members. The findings reveal that the child produced simplified phonological forms and simple syntactic structures to express needs, emotions, and responses to surrounding situations. Repetition, parental verbal stimulation, and direct interaction significantly supported vocabulary acquisition and communication development. The study also indicates that active family communication contributes more effectively to language acquisition than passive digital media exposure. These findings highlight the importance of supportive interaction in promoting healthy language development during early childhood.

**Keywords:** Child Language Acquisition; Psycholinguistics; Family Interaction; Phonological Development; Syntactic Development

#### Abstrak

Pemerolehan bahasa anak berkembang secara alami melalui interaksi yang berlangsung terus-menerus dalam lingkungan keluarga dan sosial. Penelitian ini bertujuan menganalisis pemerolehan bahasa anak dalam kajian psikolinguistik dengan fokus pada perkembangan fonologi dan sintaksis serta pengaruh interaksi keluarga terhadap perkembangan bahasa anak usia dini. Penelitian menggunakan metode deskriptif kualitatif melalui teknik observasi dan pencatatan. Data diperoleh dari ujaran seorang anak berusia 2 tahun 3 bulan dalam komunikasi sehari-hari bersama anggota keluarga. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa anak menghasilkan bentuk fonologis yang disederhanakan serta struktur sintaksis sederhana untuk menyampaikan kebutuhan, emosi, dan respons terhadap situasi sekitar. Pengulangan kata, stimulasi verbal orang tua, dan interaksi langsung berperan penting dalam perkembangan kosakata dan kemampuan komunikasi anak. Penelitian ini menegaskan bahwa komunikasi aktif dalam keluarga lebih efektif mendukung pemerolehan bahasa dibandingkan paparan media digital secara pasif.

**Kata Kunci:** Pemerolehan Bahasa Anak; Psikolinguistik; Interaksi Keluarga; Perkembangan Fonologi; Perkembangan Sintaksis



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## INTRODUCTION

Language acquisition is an essential part of children's development because language becomes the primary medium for expressing thoughts, emotions, and needs in everyday communication. From an early age, children begin recognizing sounds and responding to verbal interaction from people around them.<sup>1</sup> Gradually, children develop the ability to imitate words, understand meanings, and produce simple utterances according to their developmental stage. This process occurs naturally through repeated communication experiences within the family and social environment. In psycholinguistic studies, children's language acquisition is considered an important phenomenon because it reflects the relationship between cognitive growth, social interaction, and linguistic development during early childhood.<sup>2</sup> Therefore, the study of language acquisition provides valuable insight into how children gradually develop communication abilities through everyday interaction.

The family environment has a major influence on the development of children's language abilities. Children who frequently engage in direct communication with parents generally develop vocabulary and speaking skills more quickly compared to children with limited verbal interaction.<sup>3</sup> Daily conversations, repeated expressions, and communicative responses from adults help children understand the function of language in practical situations. In addition, children are often exposed to language through social interaction with peers, television programs, songs, and digital media.<sup>4</sup> These various sources of linguistic input contribute to vocabulary growth and communication development during early childhood. However, direct interpersonal communication remains an important factor because children learn language more effectively when interaction occurs actively and meaningfully within their surrounding environment.

Children's language acquisition should develop through continuous verbal stimulation and supportive communication experiences during early childhood. Parents play an important role in encouraging children to communicate by responding to utterances, asking simple questions, and involving children in everyday conversations.<sup>5</sup> Through repeated interaction, children gradually learn how language is used to express desires, emotions, and information. In addition, a supportive communicative environment helps children become more confident in producing speech and participating in social interaction. The development of language abilities is not limited to vocabulary acquisition alone, but also includes children's understanding of pronunciation patterns and simple sentence structures used during communication. Therefore, consistent interaction and positive communication experiences become essential elements in supporting healthy language development in children.

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- 1 Beth Bonniwell Haslett and Wendy Samter, *Children Communicating: The First 5 Years* (Routledge, 2020).
  - 2 Mazhar Nawaz et al., "Analyze How Children Acquire Language and the Cognitive Processes Involved, Including the Role of Environmental and Social Factors," *Bulletin of Business and Economics (BBE)* 13, no. 3 (August 28, 2024): 239–47, <https://doi.org/10.61506/01.00483>.
  - 3 Sarah R. Edmunds, Sara T. Kover, and Wendy L. Stone, "The Relation between Parent Verbal Responsiveness and Child Communication in Young Children with or at Risk for Autism Spectrum Disorder: A Systematic Review and Meta-analysis," *Autism Research* 12, no. 5 (May 16, 2019): 715–31, <https://doi.org/10.1002/aur.2100>.
  - 4 Annette Sundqvist et al., "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 (March 18, 2021), <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2021.569920>.
  - 5 Jessica Taggart et al., "Parents' Roles and Question-asking during Pretend and Real Activities," *Social Development* 29, no. 3 (August 15, 2020): 767–82, <https://doi.org/10.1111/sode.12436>.

Several previous studies have examined children's language acquisition from different psycholinguistic perspectives. Some study discussed phonological acquisition in early childhood and found that children often simplify pronunciation during the initial stages of speech development; however, the research mainly emphasized sound production without exploring interactional influences within the family environment.<sup>6</sup> Another study analyzed syntactic development in young children and revealed that children gradually acquire simple sentence structures through repeated communication, although the discussion focused primarily on grammatical patterns rather than natural communication contexts.<sup>7</sup> Other research investigated the role of social interaction in language acquisition but concentrated mainly on educational settings and provided limited explanation regarding language development within everyday family interaction.<sup>8</sup> These limitations indicate that further discussion concerning children's natural communication experiences in daily life remains important.

Based on these conditions, this study focuses on examining children's language acquisition in everyday life through a psycholinguistic perspective. The research specifically analyzes patterns of phonological and syntactic development in children's utterances as well as the influence of family interaction on communication development during early childhood, as done by Pratama et al. (2025).<sup>9</sup> Through direct observation of children's speech behavior in natural settings, this study aims to provide a clearer understanding of how children gradually acquire language through daily communication experiences. In addition, the study is expected to contribute to psycholinguistic discussions regarding the relationship between environmental stimulation, social interaction, and the development of children's communication abilities during early childhood.

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- 6 Abdullah Alfaifi and Fawaz Qasem, "Phonological Substitution Patterns in Yemeni Ibbi Arabic Child Speech: A Markedness and Natural Phonology Perspective," *Cogent Arts & Humanities* 11, no. 1 (December 31, 2024), <https://doi.org/10.1080/23311983.2024.2360795>; Annisa Sakilah, and Muhammad Hasyim Syah Batubara. 2025. "Psycholinguistic Factors Affecting Speech Delay in 3-Year-Old Children: (Faktor Psikolinguistik Yang Mempengaruhi Keterlambatan Bicara Pada Anak Usia 3 Tahun)". *Theosynesis: Journal of Integrative Understanding and Ethical Praxis* 1 (3): 26-37. <https://darulilmijournal.com/index.php/theosyn/article/view/43>.
  - 7 Naama Friedmann and Julia Reznick, "Stages Rather than Ages in the Acquisition of Movement Structures: Data from Sentence Repetition and 27696 Spontaneous Clauses," *Glossa: A Journal of General Linguistics* 39, no. 1 (December 23, 2021), <https://doi.org/10.16995/glossa.5716>.
  - 8 Elizabeth Redcay and Leonhard Schilbach, "Using Second-Person Neuroscience to Elucidate the Mechanisms of Social Interaction," *Nature Reviews Neuroscience* 20, no. 8 (August 28, 2019): 495–505, <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41583-019-0179-4>; Khotimah, Husnil. "Language Understanding in ChatGPT: A Psycholinguistic Study of an Intelligent Machine and Its Social Implications: Pemahaman Bahasa Pada ChatGPT: Studi Psikolinguistik Tentang Mesin Cerdas Dan Implikasi Sosialnya". *Theosynesis: Journal of Integrative Understanding and Ethical Praxis* 1, no. 3 (2025): 1-12. <https://darulilmijournal.com/index.php/theosyn/article/view/31>; Abdullah, Walib, and Adi Maladona. "Integration of the TPACK Model to Teachers' Pedagogical Competence: An Analysis of Impact and Effectiveness: Integrasi Model TPACK Terhadap Kompetensi Pedagogis Guru: Analisis Dampak Dan Efektivitas". *Theosynesis: Journal of Integrative Understanding and Ethical Praxis* 1, no. 3 (2025): 13-25. <https://darulilmijournal.com/index.php/theosyn/article/view/33>; Pratama, Muhammad Yusuf, Desy Nataliya, Siti Nur Aisyah, Luthfan Nursyamsul Ahfi, Ibnu Nuzul Murtadlo, Lailani Sarafina Aulia, Fatima Noor Aulia, Maulana Hakim Cahyono, and Lutfiyah Lutfiyah. "Peningkatan Nilai Moderasi Dan Karakter Anak Melalui Peringatan Hari Anak Nasional Di Sdn 1 Sidomulyo, Kendal." *MIMBAR INTEGRITAS: Jurnal Pengabdian* 5, no. 1 (2025): 13-29. <https://www.unars.ac.id/ojs/index.php/mimbarintegritas/article/view/7096>
  - 9 Pratama, Muhammad Yusuf, Abidah Khoirunna'imah, Nazilatul Aisyiah, Muhammad Syaquurrobi, Rikza Afiful Amna, Ananda Pramesthi Yunita Sari, Syifaunnisa AFidatus Safira, Zida Haniatus Syifa, and Lutfiyah Lutfiyah. "Transformasi Budaya Anti-Bullying Berbasis Moderasi Beragama: Model Partisipatif Di Sekolah Dasar." *Mimbar Integritas: Jurnal Pengabdian* 5, no. 1 (2025): 30–48. <https://doi.org/10.36841/mimbarintegritas.v5i1.7104>.

## **Method**

This study employed a qualitative descriptive method with a psycholinguistic approach to analyze children's language acquisition in everyday communication. The qualitative approach was selected because the study focused on understanding the natural process of language development experienced by children during social interaction.<sup>10</sup> The data source of this study consisted of utterances produced by a child aged 2 years and 3 months during daily activities at home and in the surrounding environment. The research emphasized the observation of children's spontaneous speech, including the use of simple vocabulary, sentence formation, and communication responses during interaction with parents and family members. Through this approach, the study aimed to describe patterns of phonological and syntactic development occurring naturally in early childhood language acquisition.

The data were collected using observation and note-taking techniques during direct interaction between the child and family members in everyday situations. The researcher observed the child's speech behavior, recorded several utterances, and documented communication contexts related to the child's responses and expressions. The collected data were then analyzed descriptively using psycholinguistic analysis techniques. The analysis process involved identifying patterns of pronunciation, vocabulary usage, and simple sentence structures produced by the child during communication. Furthermore, the researcher interpreted the findings by relating the observed utterances to theories of child language acquisition, particularly aspects of phonological and syntactic development in early childhood.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Patterns of Child Language Acquisition in Daily Life**

Child language acquisition occurs naturally through everyday interactions with family members and the surrounding environment. Children acquire their first language not through formal instruction, but through repeated exposure to sounds, words, and expressions used in daily communication. In early childhood, language development is strongly influenced by the intensity of interaction between children and the people around them, especially parents.<sup>11</sup> Words related to routine activities such as eating, sleeping, drinking, and playing are usually acquired more quickly because they are heard repeatedly in meaningful contexts. In addition, children gradually begin to recognize the communicative function of language through responses given by adults during conversations. This process indicates that language acquisition develops continuously through direct social interaction and daily communication experiences that occur naturally in the child's environment.

Based on observations conducted on a child aged 2 years and 3 months, it was found that the child had begun actively producing simple utterances to express desires and respond to surrounding situations. The child frequently used incomplete words during interactions with family members at home. These utterances generally appeared when the child wanted something, called a family member, or reacted to activities taking place nearby. The child also seemed capable of understanding simple instructions given by parents, such as commands related to eating, playing, or taking objects. This ability demonstrates that children at this stage are not only imitating sounds but are also beginning to associate language with specific meanings and communicative purposes. Frequent repetition of words by family members significantly

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10 John W Creswell and Cheryl N Poth, *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing among Five Approaches* (Sage publications, 2016).

11 Ning Yang et al., "Language Development in Early Childhood: Quality of Teacher-Child Interaction and Children's Receptive Vocabulary Competency," *Frontiers in Psychology* 12 (July 15, 2021), <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2021.649680>.

contributed to the child’s ability to remember and reproduce certain expressions in everyday interactions.

**Table 1.** Observation Results of Language Acquisition in a 2-Year-3-Month-Old Child

Child’s Utterance	Context of Use	Meaning
“au”	When asking for something	Expressing desire (“mau”)
“mama”	Calling the mother	Referring to the mother
“ain”	When wanting to play	Referring to “main”
“cucu”	When asking for milk	Referring to “susu”
“ayah pigi”	When seeing the father leave	Conveying simple information

*Source: Author analysis*

As shown in Table 1, the child had begun using simple and incomplete utterances to communicate needs and respond to daily situations. Although several words were not pronounced perfectly, family members could still understand the intended meanings through contextual interaction. This finding indicates that language acquisition in early childhood emphasizes communicative function rather than pronunciation accuracy. At this developmental stage, children tend to simplify words according to their articulatory abilities while still attempting to convey meaning effectively.<sup>12</sup> The child also demonstrated an understanding of relationships between words and objects or actions within the surrounding environment. Such patterns reflect a natural stage of language development in which children gradually build vocabulary and communication skills through repeated interaction and practical language use in everyday life.

In the process of language acquisition, children generally respond more actively to direct verbal interaction than to passive exposure from electronic media. During observation, the child appeared more enthusiastic when parents used expressive intonation, facial expressions, and simple questions during conversations. For example, when the mother asked whether the child wanted to eat or play, the child immediately responded verbally or through gestures. These interactions demonstrate that two-way communication plays an important role in helping children understand language as a tool for expressing intentions, needs, and emotions. Parents who consistently engage children in conversation indirectly provide continuous linguistic stimulation that supports vocabulary growth and communication skills. Therefore, active interaction within the family environment becomes one of the most influential factors in early language acquisition.

Apart from family interaction, the social environment also contributes significantly to children’s language development. Children who frequently interact with peers tend to acquire new words more quickly because they are exposed to various forms of communication during play activities. Based on simple observations, children often imitate expressions or words used repeatedly by friends or adults around them. In some situations, children also attempt to follow conversational patterns commonly heard in their environment. This condition indicates that language acquisition develops not only through imitation but also through social participation and communicative experience. The broader the child’s social interaction, the richer the linguistic input received during the developmental process. Consequently, everyday communication experiences become essential components in shaping children’s language abilities during early childhood.

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12 Theresa Schölderle et al., “Intelligibility, Articulation Rate, Fluency, and Communicative Efficiency in Typically Developing Children,” *Journal of Speech, Language, and Hearing Research* 64, no. 7 (July 16, 2021): 2575–85, [https://doi.org/10.1044/2021\\_JSLHR-20-00640](https://doi.org/10.1044/2021_JSLHR-20-00640).

Technological development has also influenced patterns of language acquisition among children in modern society. Many children are now exposed to language through videos, songs, cartoons, and digital media accessed through electronic devices. In several cases, children can imitate words or phrases obtained from frequently watched content. However, excessive exposure to digital media without parental interaction may reduce opportunities for active verbal communication. Children may become more passive because communication from digital media is generally one-directional. Therefore, the use of electronic devices should be balanced with direct interaction between parents and children to maintain healthy language development. Although digital media can introduce new vocabulary, face-to-face communication remains the most effective method for helping children develop meaningful language skills and social communication abilities in everyday life.

### **Development of Phonological and Syntactic Abilities in Children’s Utterances**

The development of children’s language abilities can be observed through the gradual improvement of phonological and syntactic skills during early childhood. Phonological development refers to children’s ability to recognize and produce language sounds, while syntactic development relates to the ability to arrange words into meaningful utterances. In the early stages of language acquisition, children generally experience limitations in pronunciation because their speech organs are still developing.<sup>13</sup> As a result, many utterances are simplified, shortened, or produced imperfectly. Despite these limitations, children are usually able to communicate their intentions effectively through context and repeated interaction with people around them. This process demonstrates that language development does not occur instantly but progresses gradually according to cognitive growth, articulation ability, and communicative experience obtained in everyday life.

Based on observational findings, children aged around two years commonly produce simplified pronunciations when attempting to articulate certain words. Several consonant sounds are often omitted or replaced because they are still difficult for children to pronounce clearly. During the observation, the child pronounced the word “main” as “ain” and “pergi” as “pigi.” These utterances indicate that the child was still developing articulatory control and had not yet mastered several complex consonant sounds. Nevertheless, the intended meanings remained understandable within the context of communication. Such pronunciation patterns are considered normal during the phonological development stage because children tend to prioritize ease of articulation over accuracy. Through repeated exposure and interaction, children gradually refine their pronunciation abilities and become capable of producing more accurate speech forms over time.

**Table 2.** Phonological Development in Children’s Utterances

<b>Child’s Utterance</b>	<b>Standard Form</b>	<b>Linguistic Analysis</b>
“ain”	main	omission of initial consonant
“pigi”	pergi	consonant substitution
“cucu”	susu	sound replacement
“mamam”	makan	reduplication pattern
“tatut”	takut	consonant simplification

*Source: Author analysis*

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13 Arya Wiranda, Tiara Dwi Lestari, and Yani Lubis, “The Role Of English Consonants In Language Development: Acquisition And Articulation,” *Jurnal Multidisiplin Dehasen (MUDE)* 2, no. 3 (July 7, 2023), <https://doi.org/10.37676/mude.v2i3.4393>.

As presented in Table 2, children frequently simplify words according to their articulatory abilities during the early stages of phonological development. These simplifications usually occur because children have not fully mastered the coordination of speech organs needed to pronounce complex sounds accurately. In many cases, children tend to omit consonants that are difficult to articulate or replace them with sounds that are easier to produce.<sup>14</sup> Although the pronunciations differ from standard adult speech, the utterances still carry communicative meaning and can be understood by family members. This phenomenon indicates that phonological errors in early childhood are not signs of language disorder, but rather part of the natural developmental process. Continuous exposure to correct pronunciation and active verbal interaction help children improve their phonological accuracy gradually.

Besides phonological development, children also experience significant progress in syntactic ability during language acquisition. At the beginning of this stage, children usually produce single-word utterances to represent complete meanings or intentions. Over time, they begin combining two or more words into simple sentence structures. During the observation, the child produced expressions such as “ayah pigi,” “mama mamam,” and “au susu” to communicate desires and describe situations. Although these utterances were grammatically incomplete, they already reflected an understanding of relationships between words and meanings. This development demonstrates that children gradually learn how language functions structurally in communication. The ability to combine words into simple patterns marks an important stage in syntactic acquisition because children begin organizing ideas into understandable verbal expressions.

**Table 3.** Syntactic Development in Children’s Utterances

Child’s Utterance	Intended Meaning	Syntactic Pattern
“ayah pigi”	ayah pergi	two-word sentence
“mama mamam”	mama makan	subject-predicate pattern
“au susu”	mau susu	expressing desire
“adik main”	adik bermain	simple declarative sentence
“mau bobok”	ingin tidur	simple intention structure

*Source: Author analysis*

Based on Table 3, children at this developmental stage have started constructing simple sentence patterns consisting of two or more words. These utterances indicate that children are gradually understanding how words can be combined to convey information, desires, and activities. Although grammatical structures remain incomplete, the child already demonstrates the ability to arrange words meaningfully according to communicative purposes. The emergence of simple syntactic structures reflects the child’s cognitive growth and increasing awareness of language organization. At this stage, children rely heavily on repeated exposure to speech patterns from parents and surrounding adults. Consequently, consistent communication within the family environment greatly contributes to the improvement of children’s syntactic abilities and overall language development.

The development of phonological and syntactic abilities is strongly influenced by interactional experiences within the child’s environment. Children who frequently engage in conversation with parents, siblings, or peers generally show faster progress in speech production and sentence

14 Kathryn Crowe and Sharynne McLeod, “Children’s English Consonant Acquisition in the United States: A Review,” *American Journal of Speech-Language Pathology* 29, no. 4 (November 12, 2020): 2155–69, [https://doi.org/10.1044/2020\\_AJSLP-19-00168](https://doi.org/10.1044/2020_AJSLP-19-00168).

formation.<sup>15</sup> During everyday interaction, adults often provide indirect correction by repeating children's utterances in more complete forms. For instance, when a child says "ayah piggi," parents may respond with "iya, ayah pergi kerja." This type of interaction helps children gradually recognize correct pronunciation and sentence patterns without formal instruction. Repetition, imitation, and contextual understanding become important mechanisms in the acquisition process. Therefore, language development in early childhood is closely connected to the quality and intensity of communicative interaction experienced by the child on a daily basis.

Overall, the development of phonological and syntactic abilities in children's utterances reflects a gradual and natural process of language acquisition. Children initially produce simplified sounds and incomplete sentence structures due to limitations in articulation and linguistic understanding. However, through continuous interaction and repeated exposure to language, they progressively develop clearer pronunciation and more organized sentence patterns. Observational findings demonstrate that phonological simplification and simple syntax are common characteristics of early childhood speech development. These patterns should be understood as part of normal developmental stages rather than communication deficiencies. With sufficient linguistic stimulation and supportive interaction from family members, children can gradually strengthen their ability to pronounce words accurately and construct more complex sentences as they grow older.

### **The Influence of Family Environment on Children's Language Acquisition**

The family environment plays a fundamental role in children's language acquisition during early childhood. Parents become the first source of linguistic input because children spend most of their early developmental stages within the household environment. Through daily interaction, children gradually learn vocabulary, sentence patterns, and communicative expressions commonly used by family members. The frequency and quality of communication between parents and children strongly influence the speed of language development. Children who are regularly engaged in conversations tend to develop broader vocabulary and better communication skills compared to those with limited interaction. In addition, emotional closeness between children and parents also supports language acquisition because children feel more comfortable responding and expressing themselves verbally.<sup>16</sup> Therefore, the family environment functions as the primary foundation for children's early language development and communicative growth.

Based on observational findings, children who frequently receive verbal stimulation from parents appear more active in producing utterances during everyday interaction. During observation, the child often imitated words repeatedly used by parents in routine activities such as eating, playing, and preparing for sleep. For example, when parents consistently used expressions like "ayo makan" or "mau susu," the child gradually began reproducing simplified forms of those utterances during communication. This phenomenon indicates that repetition and consistent exposure significantly influence vocabulary acquisition in early childhood. Furthermore, children tend to imitate not only vocabulary but also speaking habits, intonation, and emotional expressions used by adults around them.<sup>17</sup> Such patterns demonstrate that

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15 Meredith L. Rowe and Catherine E. Snow, "Analyzing Input Quality along Three Dimensions: Interactive, Linguistic, and Conceptual," *Journal of Child Language* 47, no. 1 (January 31, 2020): 5–21, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0305000919000655>.

16 Xiaoxia Cheng and Shike Zhou, "The Influence Mechanism of Parental Emotional Companionship on Children's Second Language Acquisition," *Frontiers in Psychology* 13 (January 13, 2023), <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2022.1034867>.

17 Dan I Slobin, "Imitation and Grammatical Development in Children," in *Psychological Modeling* (Routledge, 2021), 166–77.

language acquisition develops naturally through continuous interaction and imitation within the family environment.

**Table 4.** Family Environment Factors Influencing Children’s Language Acquisition

<b>Environmental Factor</b>	<b>Observation Result</b>	<b>Influence on Language Development</b>
Parent interaction	Child imitates daily speech	Vocabulary development
Repetition of words	Child remembers familiar expressions	Faster language acquisition
Peer interaction	Child uses new expressions during play	Social communication improvement
Digital media exposure	Child repeats words from videos	Additional vocabulary acquisition
Emotional interaction	Child responds more actively	Increased verbal confidence

*Source: Author analysis*

As presented in Table 4, various environmental factors contribute significantly to children’s language acquisition during early childhood. Among these factors, direct interaction between parents and children appears to have the strongest influence on communication development. Children who frequently hear repeated expressions tend to remember and reproduce words more easily in daily situations. In addition, interaction with peers introduces children to new expressions and communication styles during play activities. Emotional interaction also affects language development because children become more confident when receiving positive responses from adults around them. Although digital media can contribute additional vocabulary, direct communication remains more effective in supporting meaningful language acquisition.<sup>18</sup> Therefore, the combination of verbal stimulation, emotional support, and active interaction becomes essential in developing children’s communication abilities naturally and progressively.

Social interaction within the family environment also helps children understand the practical function of language in everyday communication. Through conversations with parents and siblings, children gradually learn how language is used to ask questions, express emotions, request assistance, or respond to situations.<sup>19</sup> During observation, the child appeared more responsive when adults involved the child directly in simple conversations instead of merely giving instructions. For instance, when parents asked simple questions regarding food, toys, or activities, the child attempted to respond verbally despite using incomplete utterances. This interaction demonstrates that children learn language more effectively when communication occurs interactively rather than passively. Consequently, active participation in daily conversation provides important opportunities for children to practice speech production and strengthen their understanding of communicative language functions.

Peer interaction also contributes positively to children’s language acquisition process. Children who frequently play with friends or siblings often imitate expressions heard during social activities. During play sessions, children are exposed to different speaking patterns, vocabulary,

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18 Mahmoud Sabri Alasal, “The Impact of Digital Media on Foreign Language Acquisition: A Comparative Study,” *E-Learning and Digital Media*, February 27, 2025, <https://doi.org/10.1177/20427530251324830>.

19 Blair Paley and Nastassia J. Hajal, “Conceptualizing Emotion Regulation and Coregulation as Family-Level Phenomena,” *Clinical Child and Family Psychology Review* 25, no. 1 (March 30, 2022): 19–43, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10567-022-00378-4>.

and conversational responses that enrich their communication abilities. Observation results showed that the child occasionally used newly acquired words after interacting with peers in informal settings. In several situations, children also attempted to imitate adult-like conversational structures heard from older children or family members.<sup>20</sup> This phenomenon indicates that social interaction broadens linguistic experience beyond parental communication alone. The wider the child's social exposure, the greater the opportunities for acquiring diverse vocabulary and communication strategies that support overall language development during early childhood.

In modern society, digital media has become another factor influencing children's language acquisition patterns. Many children are exposed to language through cartoons, songs, videos, and educational content accessed through smartphones or television.<sup>21</sup> During observation, the child occasionally repeated words and short expressions heard from frequently watched videos. This exposure demonstrates that digital media can contribute additional vocabulary and introduce children to new linguistic expressions. However, excessive dependence on electronic devices may reduce opportunities for direct verbal interaction with parents and family members. Children who spend too much time passively consuming media content may become less engaged in active conversation. Therefore, digital media should function as a supplementary learning tool rather than replacing interpersonal communication within the family environment.

Parental responses toward children's speech attempts also strongly influence confidence and communication development. Children generally become more motivated to speak when adults respond positively to their utterances, even when pronunciation remains unclear or incomplete. During observation, the child appeared more enthusiastic about communicating when parents reacted attentively and encouraged verbal responses. Positive reinforcement such as smiling, repeating children's words correctly, or answering questions patiently creates a supportive communication atmosphere. This condition helps children feel comfortable experimenting with language and practicing newly acquired vocabulary. Conversely, limited response or lack of interaction may reduce children's motivation to communicate actively. Therefore, supportive parental attitudes play an essential role in strengthening children's confidence and promoting healthy language development during the early acquisition stage.

Overall, the family environment serves as the most influential factor in shaping children's language acquisition during early childhood. Communication intensity, emotional interaction, peer exposure, and digital media collectively contribute to the development of children's vocabulary and speaking abilities. Observational findings indicate that children acquire language more effectively when they are actively involved in direct and meaningful communication with people around them. Although technological media may support vocabulary enrichment, interpersonal interaction remains the most effective source of language stimulation. The combination of consistent verbal exposure, supportive responses, and social interaction enables children to develop communication skills gradually and naturally. Consequently, creating a communicative and supportive family environment becomes essential in fostering optimal language acquisition and healthy linguistic development in children.

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20 Laura Horton and Jenny Singleton, "Acquisition of Turn-Taking in Sign Language Conversations: An Overview of Language Modality and Turn Structure," *Frontiers in Psychology* 13 (August 8, 2022), <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2022.935342>.

21 Sigríður Sigurjónsdóttir and Iris Nowenstein, "Language Acquisition in the Digital Age: L2 English Input Effects on Children's L1 Icelandic," *Second Language Research* 37, no. 4 (October 15, 2021): 697–723, <https://doi.org/10.1177/02676583211005505>.

### CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that child language acquisition develops naturally through continuous interaction within the family and social environment during early childhood. Based on the observational findings, the child aged 2 years and 3 months had begun producing meaningful utterances despite still experiencing phonological simplification and incomplete syntactic structures. Several words were shortened, modified, or simplified according to the child's articulatory abilities, such as the omission or substitution of consonant sounds. In addition, the child had started combining simple words into short expressions to communicate needs, emotions, and responses to surrounding situations. These findings indicate that language acquisition is a gradual developmental process closely related to cognitive growth, communicative experience, and repeated exposure to verbal interaction. The study also reveals that active family communication, including repetition of words, parental responses, emotional interaction, and daily conversations, significantly contributes to vocabulary growth and speaking confidence. Children acquire language more effectively when they are directly involved in meaningful interaction rather than relying solely on passive exposure from digital media or one-way communication sources.

The findings of this study contribute to psycholinguistic discussions concerning the relationship between family interaction and the development of phonological and syntactic abilities in early childhood language acquisition. This research provides empirical evidence showing that children's language development is strongly influenced by the quality and intensity of communication experienced within the family environment. Furthermore, the study highlights the importance of supportive parental responses in encouraging children to experiment with language and gradually improve their communication abilities. The discussion of phonological simplification and the emergence of simple syntactic patterns also enriches understanding of how children naturally construct language during the early stages of development. In addition, this study may provide practical contributions for parents, educators, and early childhood practitioners by emphasizing the importance of consistent verbal stimulation and interactive communication in supporting healthy language development. Nevertheless, this research still has several limitations. The study focused only on one child as the primary data source, making the findings limited in terms of generalization to broader populations. The observational period was relatively short and concentrated mainly on natural communication within the family environment without comparing children from different linguistic or social backgrounds.

Therefore, future research is recommended to involve larger participant groups, longer observation periods, and more diverse social and linguistic contexts in order to produce broader and more comprehensive findings regarding child language acquisition. Further studies may also compare language development among children from bilingual, multilingual, or different socioeconomic backgrounds to examine how environmental variation influences phonological and syntactic acquisition. In addition, future researchers are encouraged to integrate audio or video transcription analysis and more systematic linguistic measurement techniques to strengthen the accuracy of data interpretation. Considering the increasing role of technology in children's daily lives, future studies could also explore the relationship between digital media exposure and children's communication development in greater depth. Overall, this study confirms that language acquisition is not merely a cognitive process but also a social and interactional phenomenon shaped by meaningful communication experiences during early childhood. A supportive and communicative family environment remains one of the most essential foundations for promoting optimal language development and healthy communication skills in children.

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