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DEVELOPING ENGLISH LANGUAGE SKILLS AND SPEAKING ABILITIES IN PRESCHOOL CHILDREN THROUGH EVERYDAY HOME ACTIVITIES

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Abstract

Early childhood is an important period for language development. Introducing English to children aged two to five through everyday home activities can create meaningful opportunities to develop vocabulary, listening comprehension, and early speaking abilities. However, one of the main challenges is that many parents may not have sufficient English proficiency to support their children's language learning. In the modern digital era, this limitation can be addressed through accessible online resources, including YouTube videos, language-learning platforms, digital dictionaries, songs, and educational applications. Parents can learn simple English expressions themselves and gradually use them with their children during familiar daily routines. This approach creates a shared learning environment in which both children and parents have opportunities to develop their English language skills. This article examines the theoretical foundations of home-based English learning, discusses the role of parental involvement and digital resources, and proposes practical activities that can be integrated into everyday family life. It also considers the limitations of digital learning and emphasises the importance of accurate language models, meaningful interaction, and age-appropriate activities.

Keywords: early childhood education, English language learning, preschool children, speaking skills, home-based learning, parental involvement, digital learning, everyday routines.

1. Introduction

Learning a foreign language has become increasingly important in contemporary society. English is widely used in education, international communication, technology, science, and professional life. As a result, many parents are interested in introducing English to their children before they begin formal schooling. Early exposure may help children become familiar with English sounds, vocabulary, and simple expressions, especially when learning takes place in a supportive and enjoyable environment.

Children between the ages of two and five experience significant changes in their communication abilities. During this period, they gradually learn to understand instructions, name familiar objects, express needs, respond to questions, and participate in short conversations. Their language development is influenced by their experiences, interactions, interests, and opportunities to communicate with adults.

Traditional language instruction is not always appropriate for very young children. Long explanations, memorisation of extensive vocabulary lists, and formal grammar exercises may be difficult for them. Instead, children can encounter English through activities that already form part of their daily lives, such as washing their hands, getting dressed, eating breakfast, playing with toys, tidying their rooms, and reading picture books.

These familiar situations provide opportunities to connect English words with visible objects, physical actions, and real purposes. For example, when a parent says, “Wash your hands,” while helping a child wash their hands, the child can understand the expression through the immediate situation. Repeated exposure to the same phrase may gradually make it more familiar.

Nevertheless, an important question arises: What happens when parents themselves do not know English? In many families, parents may understand the importance of early language learning but lack the confidence or knowledge required to teach English directly. This situation should not automatically prevent them from participating in their children’s learning.

Overcoming this challenge requires a modern approach. If parents do not know the language, they can easily use YouTube or various language-learning platforms. Through the process of learning and teaching simultaneously, not only do young children learn the words and expressions used in everyday English communication, but parents also acquire these language skills.

This was the main purpose of this article: to teach the practical aspects of language to preschool-aged children without placing them under any pressure. This approach aims to ensure that when children reach school age, they can acquire theoretical knowledge at school while also being able to use the language in practice without difficulty.

The article has three objectives:

To explain the theoretical and pedagogical foundations of introducing English through everyday home activities.

To identify practical strategies that parents can use regardless of their initial English proficiency.

To examine how digital learning resources may support both children’s early English development and parents’ own speaking skills.

The guiding research question is: How can everyday home activities, supported by digital resources and parental participation, create opportunities for developing English language skills and speaking abilities in children aged two to five?

2. Conceptual Background

2.1. Early language development

Early childhood is a period of rapid development in communication, attention, memory, and social interaction. Children gradually learn to connect sounds with meanings, recognise familiar expressions, and use language to communicate their needs and experiences.

However, children do not develop language at identical rates. Their abilities depend on individual characteristics, previous exposure, family circumstances, and opportunities for interaction. Some children may begin using individual English words, while others may initially demonstrate understanding through gestures, facial expressions, or actions.

For this reason, early English learning should not be evaluated only by the number of words a child can pronounce. Understanding a familiar instruction, responding appropriately, attempting to repeat a phrase, and communicating a simple need can also be meaningful signs of engagement.

The ages of two to five include different developmental stages. Younger children may benefit from short expressions, gestures, songs, and the naming of familiar objects. Older preschool children may gradually participate in simple question-and-answer exchanges, describe pictures, and use short sentences.

For example, a two- or three-year-old may respond to "Where is your teddy bear?" by pointing towards the toy. A four- or five-year-old may be able to answer, "It is on the bed." Both responses can represent meaningful participation at different levels.

2.2. The importance of the home environment

The home environment offers frequent opportunities for language exposure because familiar activities are repeated every day. Unlike formal lessons, these interactions do not necessarily require a separate classroom, expensive materials, or a fixed timetable.

A parent preparing breakfast can introduce words such as bread, milk, cup, and spoon. During dressing, the parent can use shirt, trousers, shoes, and socks. When putting toys away, the family can practise expressions such as "Pick up the toy," "Put it in the box," and "Let's tidy up."

The main advantage is that language is connected to a meaningful situation. Children can see the object or action while hearing the corresponding word or expression. This contextual support may help them understand what the language means.

Home-based language learning should not, however, become a source of pressure. Children need opportunities to explore, play, listen, and communicate without feeling that every interaction is a test. English should complement ordinary family communication rather than replace affection, play, or the family's home language.

2.3. Speaking skills in early childhood

Speaking is an important aspect of language development, but it requires more than memorising individual words. Children gradually learn to pronounce words, combine them into phrases, respond to questions, and use language for different communicative purposes.

In the early stages, speaking opportunities may be very simple. A child might say "Water," "More, please," "My shoes," or "I want milk." These expressions can gradually develop into longer sentences as the child gains familiarity and confidence.

Parents can encourage early speaking by modelling short expressions and allowing children time to respond. For instance, while offering a banana, a parent might ask, "Do you want a banana?" The child may respond with a gesture, a single word, or a complete sentence, depending on their abilities.

It is important not to force children to speak English before they are ready. Understanding may develop before independent speaking, and a child's willingness to communicate is more important than producing a perfect sentence.

3. Review of Relevant Literature

3.1. Home literacy and language development

Research on the home literacy environment has examined how shared reading, storytelling, conversation, and parental involvement relate to children's language development.

Dong and Chow (2022) conducted a meta-analysis examining the relationship between the home literacy environment and English-as-a-second-language acquisition. Their review provides evidence that home literacy activities can be relevant to language learning, although the studies included different age groups and learning contexts.

Mustonen, Torppa, and Stolt (2024) investigated parental linguistic support in the home environment and its relationship with language development among preschool-aged children. Their findings highlight the relevance of activities such as reading, storytelling, and singing. However, their research concerned children's language development in Finnish and should not be interpreted as direct proof that the same activities produce identical results in English as a foreign language.

Wee and colleagues (2023) reviewed the home literacy environment of preschool children, considering different factors that contribute to learning at home. Such research supports the broader view that children's language experiences are shaped not only by educational materials but also by the interactions and activities available within the family.

Together, these studies provide a theoretical foundation for considering the home as an important environment for language-related experiences.

3.2. Home-based English learning

Research has also examined activities specifically designed to introduce English to children at home.

Srimalee (2025) investigated home-based English language activities involving 26 Thai preschool children and their parents. The programme included video-based learning, vocabulary practice, picture cards, and reading with parents. The study reported improvements in receptive English vocabulary after the programme.

This research is particularly relevant because it considers families in which parents have limited English proficiency. It suggests that structured learning activities can be organised with parental participation even when parents do not have advanced English skills.

However, receptive vocabulary and spontaneous speaking are different outcomes. A child may recognise the meaning of a word without being able to use it independently in conversation. Therefore, further research is needed to determine how home-based activities influence children's ability to produce spoken English in everyday situations.

The present article builds on this area of research by considering how English can be integrated into ordinary routines, with digital resources serving as additional support for parents.

3.3. Digital resources and parental participation

Digital technology has expanded access to language-learning materials. Parents can find English songs, short educational videos, pronunciation examples, visual dictionaries, and structured lessons through online platforms.

These resources may be especially useful for parents who did not study English at school or who have forgotten much of what they previously learned. Instead of needing to master the language before helping their children, parents can begin with a small number of useful expressions and gradually expand their knowledge.

Nevertheless, digital resources should be selected carefully. Not every online video provides accurate pronunciation, age-appropriate content, or reliable language instruction. Parents should check the quality of the material before using it with their children.

3.4. The Importance of Practical and Pressure-Free English Learning in the Uzbek Context

In the Uzbek context, the relationship between theoretical language instruction and practical communication deserves further attention, particularly in early childhood education. When children primarily encounter English through vocabulary memorization, grammar explanations, and written exercises, they may have limited opportunities to use the language in everyday communication. Home-based activities can complement formal instruction by allowing children to experience English naturally before and during their school years.

Parents can introduce English through familiar daily routines, including mealtimes, dressing, playing, and preparing for school. Rather than organizing formal lessons, they can use simple expressions in meaningful situations and encourage children to respond at their own pace. Such an approach should avoid excessive pressure, forced repetition, or criticism of mistakes. Instead, children should be given opportunities to explore the language through enjoyable interactions.

Early, positive experiences with English may help children develop familiarity with the language and a more positive attitude towards learning. Consequently, when they begin formal English lessons at school, they may feel more comfortable participating in classroom activities and using familiar expressions. However, these potential benefits should not be assumed to occur automatically. Further research involving Uzbek families is needed to examine how everyday home-based English activities relate to children’s speaking development, motivation, and engagement in school.

3.5. Research on Teaching English to Preschool Children in Uzbekistan

Research published in Uzbekistan has also discussed age-appropriate approaches to teaching English to preschool children. G‘aniyeva (2022) examined the use of didactic games in preschool English education, while Ergasheva (2025) discussed play-based learning, songs and rhymes, storytelling, visual aids, and physical activities. Kadirova (2025) reviewed approaches including play-based learning, Total Physical Response, storytelling, and multimedia materials, and highlighted the relevance of family support and interactive activities. Similarly, Sagdullayeva and Majidova discussed the use of pictures, everyday vocabulary, and learning activities connected to children's experiences. These approaches are relevant to the present article because familiar objects, daily routines, songs, and games can provide practical contexts for introducing English at home. However, the cited publications do not, on the available evidence, establish that these activities independently improve preschool children's spontaneous English-speaking abilities in the home environment. Further research is therefore needed to examine how parents, including those with limited English proficiency, can incorporate such activities into everyday family life.

4. Methodology

4.1. Research design

This article adopts a narrative literature-review approach combined with the development of a practical pedagogical framework. It discusses relevant research on home language environments, parental support, early English learning, and digital resources.

The article does not report a new experiment or an original empirical study. No participants were recruited, and no original numerical results were collected. Instead, the purpose is to synthesise relevant ideas and propose activities that can be used and evaluated in future research.

4.2. Scope of the discussion

The discussion focuses on children aged two to five and considers three connected areas:

English exposure through everyday home activities.

Parental participation, including parents with limited English proficiency.

Digital resources that support parents' learning and children's language experiences.

The practical framework includes familiar household routines, sample English expressions, possible child responses, and suggestions for adapting activities to different developmental stages.

4.3. Practical framework

The proposed framework follows five principles.

First, activities should be connected to familiar situations. Second, language should be short and appropriate for the child's age. Third, adults should demonstrate the meaning of expressions through actions and objects. Fourth, children should be given opportunities to respond without pressure. Finally, parents should be encouraged to learn and practise expressions before using them when necessary.

This approach is intended to be flexible and accessible to families with different levels of English proficiency and access to technology.

5. Developing English Through Everyday Home Activities

5.1	Morning routines	Good morning! Wake up! Wash your face. Brush your teeth. Where are your shoes?	Show the action while saying it. Don't translate everything: pick 2–3 expressions and use them every day.
5.2	Washing hands & hygiene	Turn on the tap. Wash your hands. Use soap. Dry your hands. Are your hands clean?	Do each action while speaking. If unsure, check meaning and pronunciation with a reliable video first.

5.3	Mealtimes	This is a spoon. Do you want some water? Would you like an apple? I am hungry. I am thirsty.	Offer simple choices: "An apple or a banana?" Pointing is fine at first. Important: Never withhold food or water to make a child speak English.
5.4	Playing with toys	Let's play! Give me the ball. The car is red. The doll is sleeping. It is my turn.	Let the child lead and choose toys. Comment instead of constantly asking questions: "A tall tower!"
5.5	Tidying up	Pick up the toys. Put the blocks in the box. Let's clean up. Well done!	Sort items by colour, size or type: "Put the red blocks here." Repeat the same phrases regularly.
5.6	Books, songs & stories	Look! A cat. The cat is sleeping. What animal is it?	Point to pictures and name them. Songs with actions link words to movement. Use audiobooks or videos if you're not confident reading.

Main idea: Teach English little by little through daily routines, by showing, repeating and keeping it natural, not as a formal lesson.

6. What If Parents Do Not Know English?

6.1. The challenge of limited parental English proficiency

One of the practical challenges in early foreign-language education is the assumption that parents must already speak English well to support their children's learning.

In reality, many parents may have little experience with English or may feel uncomfortable speaking it because they are afraid of making mistakes. Others may understand written English but struggle with pronunciation or spontaneous conversation.

If early English learning depends entirely on the parents' existing language proficiency, children in these families may have fewer opportunities to encounter English at home.

However, limited English proficiency does not necessarily mean that parents cannot participate. Parents can begin by learning a few expressions that are relevant to the child's daily life and gradually increase the range of language they use.

The essential requirement is not advanced fluency but a willingness to learn, appropriate learning materials, and consistent opportunities for meaningful interaction.

6.2. Learning together through digital platforms

In the modern digital era, parents have access to numerous resources that can support their own English learning. YouTube, online dictionaries, pronunciation tools, educational websites, and

language-learning applications can help them learn the vocabulary and expressions needed for everyday routines.

For example, a parent who wants to teach a child English during breakfast can first search for basic English expressions related to food and mealtimes. The parent can listen to the pronunciation, check the meaning, and practise several short sentences before using them with the child.

Similarly, a parent preparing to teach vocabulary about washing hands can search for an age-appropriate video, identify useful expressions, and practise them before the activity begins.

This process can be organised into four simple stages:

- Stage 1: Find the language. The parent selects a reliable resource related to a familiar home activity.
- Stage 2: Learn and check. The parent checks the meaning and pronunciation of a small number of expressions.
- Stage 3: Practise together. The parent uses the expressions while performing the actual activity with the child.
- Stage 4: Repeat and expand. The parent and child revisit the same expressions in later routines and gradually introduce new ones.

For instance, the parent may first learn “Wash your hands,” “Use soap,” and “Dry your hands.” Once these expressions become familiar, the family may introduce “Are your hands clean?” or “Let’s wash our hands before eating.”

This method allows parents to develop their own knowledge while creating opportunities for their children to encounter English in a meaningful context.

6.3. Benefits for parents’ own speaking skills

An important feature of this approach is that its potential benefits are not limited to children.

When parents repeatedly learn and use simple English expressions, they have opportunities to practise pronunciation, recall vocabulary, construct short sentences, and become more comfortable speaking aloud.

For example, a parent may initially learn the expression “Put on your shoes” from a video. After using it several times with the child, the expression may become easier to remember and produce without looking at a screen.

Gradually, the parent can expand from isolated instructions to simple questions and responses, such as:

“What would you like to eat?”

“Do you want some water?”

“Where is your toy?”

“Would you like to play?”

“What colour is your shirt?”

As parents become more familiar with these expressions, they may gain confidence in using English in other everyday situations as well.

This does not mean that brief home practice will automatically produce fluency. Parents may still need structured learning, feedback, and additional practice to improve their overall English proficiency.

Nevertheless, routine-based learning can provide a practical starting point for those who want to improve alongside their children.

6.4. Parents as learning partners rather than formal teachers

The proposed approach views parents as learning partners rather than expecting them to act as professional English teachers.

A parent does not need to explain grammar rules or prepare formal lessons. Instead, the parent can learn a few expressions, use them in familiar situations, and respond positively to the child's attempts to communicate.

For example, a parent who is learning English with a child might say, "This is a cup," while pointing to a cup. If the child repeats "cup," the parent can respond encouragingly. If the child says the word incorrectly, the parent can model the correct pronunciation naturally.

Parents should also feel comfortable using their home language when necessary. Uzbek, for example, can be used to explain meanings or maintain clear communication. English can be added gradually without making the child feel that their first language is less valuable.

The main principle is shared learning. Parents and children can make progress together, and mistakes can be treated as a normal part of learning rather than a reason to stop practising.

6.5. Responsible use of digital resources

Although digital platforms can support learning, they should not replace interaction between parents and children.

A child who watches English videos for long periods without communicating with an adult may have limited opportunities to practise using language for real purposes. Passive exposure alone should not be assumed to develop speaking skills.

Parents should select short, age-appropriate materials, check the accuracy of the language, and use screen content as a starting point for face-to-face activities.

For example, after watching a short video about animals, a parent can use toy animals or picture cards to practise "It is a cat," "The dog is big," and "Where is the bird?"

This approach connects digital content with physical objects, conversation, and play. It also gives parents a chance to practise the language themselves.

7. Discussion

The proposed framework connects research on home language environments and parental support with practical strategies for introducing English into everyday routines. Its central idea is that ordinary family activities can create meaningful contexts for children to encounter English repeatedly.

Activities such as dressing, eating, washing, playing, and tidying up can be adapted to include a small number of useful expressions. Because these routines occur regularly, they provide opportunities for repetition without requiring families to organise a formal lesson every day.

An additional contribution of the framework is its emphasis on parents who have limited English proficiency. Rather than treating the parent's lack of English as an unavoidable barrier, the approach

recognises that parents can use digital resources to develop the language they need for everyday interaction.

This creates a shared learning process. Children can become familiar with English words and expressions, while parents can practise pronunciation, recall vocabulary, and develop confidence in producing simple sentences. Both generations may benefit from the same learning activity, although the nature and extent of those benefits may differ.

Digital resources can make this approach more accessible by allowing parents to learn at their own pace. A parent can replay a pronunciation model, check the meaning of an unfamiliar word, and practise a phrase before using it with the child. Such flexibility may be particularly helpful for adults who cannot attend formal language courses.

Nevertheless, several limitations must be acknowledged. First, the accuracy of online materials varies. Parents should use reliable educational sources and verify unfamiliar expressions rather than assuming that every online video provides an appropriate model.

Second, children's exposure to English does not guarantee that they will begin speaking independently. Some children may initially understand familiar phrases without producing them. Others may prefer gestures, single words, or their home language. These responses should be treated as part of a gradual process rather than evidence of failure.

Third, parents have different amounts of time, confidence, and access to digital technology. A practical approach must therefore remain flexible and should not place unrealistic expectations on families. Even a few carefully selected expressions used naturally during daily routines may provide opportunities for learning.

Fourth, this article proposes a theoretical and practical framework rather than reporting an experimental intervention. Its recommendations are informed by relevant literature, but their effectiveness for developing spontaneous English speaking among children aged two to five requires direct empirical investigation.

Future studies could examine whether routine-based activities supported by digital resources influence children's vocabulary, comprehension, and spoken production. They could also investigate whether participating parents report changes in their own confidence, vocabulary knowledge, or willingness to communicate in English.

8. Practical Recommendations for Parents

Based on the proposed framework, the following recommendations may help families introduce English into daily life.

1. Begin with familiar routines. Parents should choose an activity that already happens every day, such as breakfast, dressing, or playing.

2. Learn a small number of expressions first. Three to five short expressions may be easier to remember and use than a long vocabulary list.

3. Use reliable digital resources. Parents can listen to pronunciation examples and check unfamiliar words before introducing them to children.

4. Practise before and during the activity. Parents may first rehearse an expression and then use it naturally while performing the corresponding action.

5. Encourage communication without pressure. Children should be allowed to respond with gestures, individual words, or short sentences according to their abilities.

6. Repeat familiar expressions. Repetition across several days may help make language more recognisable and easier to recall.

7. Connect videos with real-life activities. After watching a short educational video, parents can practise the same vocabulary through toys, pictures, household objects, or conversation.

8. Value the home language. Parents should continue communicating naturally in Uzbek or another family language while introducing English gradually.

9. Learn together. Parents can acknowledge that they are learning too. This can create a positive environment in which curiosity and effort are more important than perfection.

10. Keep activities short and enjoyable. The aim is to make English part of ordinary family life rather than turning every routine into a demanding lesson.

9. Limitations and Directions for Future Research

Although the proposed framework offers practical ideas, it has limitations.

First, it is based on a narrative review and does not provide original experimental evidence. Consequently, it cannot establish that the proposed activities will produce measurable improvements in speaking skills.

Second, the framework covers a broad age range. Children aged two and five may have substantially different communication abilities, so activities must be adapted to developmental needs and individual interests.

Third, families differ in their access to technology, availability of time, and prior experience with English. These differences may influence how easily the approach can be implemented.

Fourth, digital resources vary in quality, and parents may need guidance in selecting accurate and appropriate materials.

Future research could address these limitations by conducting small-scale studies involving families with different levels of English proficiency. Researchers could compare routine-based activities with and without digital support, examine children's use of familiar expressions over time, and explore changes in parents' confidence and spoken language.

Such studies should distinguish between receptive vocabulary, prompted repetition, and spontaneous speaking. They should also consider children's enjoyment, willingness to participate, and use of their home language.

Research involving young children should follow appropriate ethical procedures, including parental consent, protection of children's privacy, and age-appropriate participation.

10. Conclusion

This article has examined the potential of everyday home activities to support the development of English language skills and early speaking abilities among preschool children aged two to five. Drawing on relevant literature and a proposed pedagogical framework, the discussion highlights the importance of meaningful language exposure, parental involvement, and the integration of English into familiar family routines. Activities such as dressing, mealtimes, personal hygiene, playing, tidying up,

and shared picture-book reading can provide natural contexts in which children encounter and gradually become familiar with English vocabulary and expressions.

A key argument of this article is that parents' limited English proficiency should not necessarily be regarded as a barrier to children's early language learning. With the support of accessible digital resources, including educational videos, online dictionaries, pronunciation tools, and language-learning applications, parents can acquire basic expressions and incorporate them into everyday interactions. This approach positions parents not only as facilitators of their children's language development but also as active learners who can improve their own vocabulary, pronunciation, and confidence in spoken English. Thus, home-based English learning may create opportunities for shared linguistic development within the family.

The proposed framework also emphasises that successful early language experiences depend on more than exposure to digital content. Meaningful interaction, repeated use of familiar expressions, age-appropriate activities, and positive parental encouragement are essential considerations. Furthermore, children should be allowed to develop at their own pace, without being pressured to produce English before they are ready. Maintaining the value of the family's first language while gradually introducing English can help create an inclusive and supportive multilingual learning environment.

Within the Uzbek educational context, integrating practical English expressions into everyday family communication may offer a complementary approach to formal language instruction, which can sometimes place greater emphasis on theoretical knowledge than on spontaneous communication. Early opportunities to encounter and use English in meaningful situations may help children become more familiar with the language before entering formal schooling. Nevertheless, these potential benefits should be regarded as hypotheses requiring further investigation rather than established outcomes.

Since this article presents a narrative literature review and a proposed pedagogical framework rather than an empirical intervention, it cannot establish a direct causal relationship between home-based activities and improvements in children's speaking abilities or parents' English proficiency. Future empirical research involving Uzbek families could investigate how routine-based English activities, supported by digital resources, influence children's receptive vocabulary, comprehension, prompted language production, and spontaneous speaking. It could also examine changes in parental confidence, language-learning engagement, and the practical challenges families encounter when implementing this approach.

In conclusion, everyday home activities represent a potentially accessible and flexible means of creating meaningful opportunities for early English language learning. By combining parental participation, carefully selected digital resources, and pressure-free communication, families may establish a supportive environment in which both children and parents can develop their English language skills. The central implication is that early English learning need not be limited to formal educational settings or families in which parents already speak English fluently; it can also become a shared learning experience embedded in ordinary family life. Further empirical investigation is necessary to determine the effectiveness of this approach and its applicability to diverse family and educational contexts.

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