

**MA Psychology Independent Study**  
**PSYC 5220 Research in Human Development**

**The Effect of Environment on Bilingual Children's**  
**Vocabulary Skills, Morphological Awareness**  
**and Reading Ability**

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## ABSTRACT

This study aims to compare the vocabulary skills, morphological awareness and reading ability of the 2 languages of “*bilingual*” children and the “*second language learners*” (*L2 learners*). The 2 groups of children both learn English at school but differ in home language environment. The bilingual children were taken cared by foreign domestic helper and the L2 learners were taken cared by Chinese parents. 164 children, with 82 bilinguals and 82 “L2 learners”, were included in the study. The children were assessed in Chinese morphological awareness, Chinese and English vocabulary knowledge, and Chinese and English reading ability.

Results show that children who were taken cared by Chinese parents were better in Chinese morphological awareness and had better Chinese reading ability. While, the bilingual children who were taken cared by foreign domestic helper were better in English vocabulary knowledge.

Although the L2 learners were taken cared by Chinese parents, their parents provide reading opportunities to the children, which facilitate the children’s English reading ability. Therefore the L2 learners had better English reading ability than children who were taken cared by foreign domestic helpers.