



Benefits of Early Second Language Acquisition

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ABSTRACT

Second language acquisition is the study how second languages are learned and the factors that influence the process. Exposing your child to a second language acquisition while young allows him or her to optimize his or her learning potential, helping to shape the brain at its most flexible stage. Young children are uniquely suited to learning a second language. Learning a second language at a young age is cognitively as easy as learning a first language. This paper examines some benefits of early second language acquisition.

Key Words: early age, second language acquisition

1. Introduction

For years it was thought that teaching foreign languages to children as young as three was futile. Research findings indicate quite the opposite. There are incredible psychological benefits of learning another language. These benefits extend way beyond being able to order a cup of tea abroad. Longitudinal studies by Harvard University confirm that learning additional languages increases critical thinking skills, creativity and flexibility of the mind in young children. Pupils who learn a foreign language outscore their non-foreign language learning peers in verbal and maths standardized tests, indicating that learning additional language is a cognitive activity not just a linguistic one. The brain, like any muscle, functions better with exercise. Learning a language involves memorizing rules and vocabulary, which helps strengthen that mental muscle.

Simply, the younger the learner, the better they are at mimicking new sounds and adopting pronunciation. The brain is open to new sounds and patterns in preadolescence. At this age, young children have time to learn through play-like activities. Language lessons can be informal and children's minds are not yet cluttered with facts to be stored and tested. Before children become self-conscious they can try out their newly acquired languages without fear of embarrassment. Children who grow up learning about languages develop empathy for others and a curiosity for different cultures and ideas; prepared to take their place in a global society. Furthermore, in later years, career opportunities increase for those with additional languages to offer.

Although people can learn languages at any age, some studies

suggest that children who learn a language before adolescence are more likely than older learners to attain native-like pronunciation (Harley, 1986; Patkowski, 1990). A number of researchers have found that children have an innate ability to acquire the rules of any language, and that this ability diminishes by adulthood (Curtiss, 1995; Johnson and Newport, 1989). Older language students should take heart, however, in the results of other studies that report that although young children acquire pronunciation easily, they are not particularly efficient learners of vocabulary or other aspects of language structure (Genesee, 1978; Swain and Lapkin, 1989). Of course, the more years devoted to learning a language and the more opportunities available to use it in everyday situations, the greater the proficiency achieved (Curtain, 1997).

2. Literature Review

a. Advantages of early second language acquisition

1) Cognitive development

While some parents worry that starting their toddler on a second language will interfere with developing English skills, the opposite is actually true. Children can differentiate between two languages within the first weeks of life. "Learning another language actually enhances a child's overall verbal development," says Roberta Michnick Golinkoff Ph.D., author of *How Babies Talk*.

The research goes on to show a number of additional cognitive benefits to learning a second language at an early age.

Children who study foreign language show higher cognitive performance in overall basic skills in elementary school. According to the College Entrance Examination Board, they go on to score higher on SATs. Children who learn a foreign language at a young age also exhibit better problem-solving skills, enhanced spatial relations, and heightened creativity. Learning a second language early on encourages flexible thinking and communication skills, helping children consider issues from more than one perspective.

Additionally, research shows that multilinguals have enhanced memory, planning, and multi-tasking skills. When learning multiple languages young, the brain is trained to attend to salient information and to disregard non-pertinent information, a skill that later supports better focus, memory, planning and multitasking abilities. Research shows that multilinguals use more of their brains than monolinguals and outperform monolinguals on creativity tests.

Some research suggests that students who receive second language instruction are more creative and better at solving complex problems than those who do not (Bamford and Mizokawa, 1991). Other studies suggest that persons with full proficiency in more than one language (bilinguals) outperform similar monolingual persons on both verbal and nonverbal tests of

intelligence, which raises the question of whether ability in more than one language enables individuals to achieve greater intellectual flexibility (Bruck, Lambert, and Tucker, 1974; Hakuta, 1986;

2) Linguistic benefit

Young language learners can acquire native-like fluency as easily as they learned to walk, in contrast to an adult language learner. Where adult learners have to work through an established first-language system, studying explicit grammar rules and practicing rote drills, the young learner learns naturally, absorbing the sounds, structures, intonation patterns and rules of a second language intuitively, as they did their mother tongue. The young brain is inherently flexible, uniquely hard-wired to acquire language naturally.

Older learners lose the ability to hear and reproduce new sounds by age 8-12, according to experts, resulting in a permanent foreign-sounding accent in any language. Younger learners benefit from flexible ear and speech muscles that can still hear the critical differences between the sounds of a second language, as well as reproduce them with native-like quality.

3) Personal benefit

An obvious advantage of knowing more than one language is having expanded access to people and resources. Individuals

who speak and read more than one language have the ability to communicate with more people, read more literature, and benefit more fully from travel to other countries. Introducing students to alternative ways of expressing themselves and to different cultures gives greater depth to their understanding of human experience by fostering an appreciation for the customs and achievements of people beyond their own communities. Ultimately, knowing a second language can also give people a competitive advantage in the work force by opening up additional job opportunities (Villano, 1996).

4) Academic benefit

Parents and educators sometimes express concern that learning a second language will have a detrimental effect on students' reading and verbal abilities in English. However, several studies suggest the opposite. For example, a recent study of the reading ability of 134 four- and five-year-old children found that bilingual children understood better than monolingual children the general symbolic representation of print (Bialystok, 1997). Another study analyzed achievement test data of students in Fairfax County, Virginia, who had participated for five years in immersion—the most intensive type of foreign language program. The study concluded that those students scored as well as or better than all comparison

groups on achievement tests and that they remained high academic achievers throughout their schooling (Thomas, Collier, and Abbott, 1993). Finally, a study conducted in Louisiana in the 1980s showed that regardless of race, sex, or academic level, students who received daily instruction in a foreign language (taught as a separate subject rather than through immersion) outperformed those who did not receive such instruction on the third-, fourth-, and fifth-grade language arts sections of Louisiana's Basic Skills Tests (Rafferty, 1986). Numerous other studies have also shown a positive relationship between foreign language study and English language arts achievement (Barik and Swain, 1975; Genesee, 1987; Swain, 1981). All of these results suggest that second language study helps enhance English and other academic skills.

Some studies have found that students who learn foreign languages score statistically higher on standardized college entrance exams than those who do not. For example, the College Entrance Examination Board reported that students who had averaged four or more years of foreign language study scored higher on the verbal section of the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) than those who had studied four or more years of any other subject (College Entrance Examination Board, 1992; Cooper, 1987). These findings, which were

consistent with College Board profiles for previous years (College Entrance Examination Board, 1982; Solomon, 1984) and with the work of Eddy (1981), suggest that studying a second language for a number of years may contribute to higher SAT scores. (1)

5) Societal benefit

Bilingualism and multilingualism have many benefits to society. Americans who are fluent in more than one language can enhance America's economic competitiveness abroad, maintain its political and security interests, and work to promote an understanding of cultural diversity within the United States. For example, international trade specialists, overseas media correspondents, diplomats, airline employees, and national security personnel need to be familiar with other languages and cultures to do their jobs well. Teachers, healthcare providers, customer service representatives, and law enforcement personnel also serve their constituencies more effectively when they can reach across languages and cultures. Developing the language abilities of the students now in school will improve the effectiveness of the work force later.

b. How to teach children second language acquisition

1) Natural Situation

A natural situation for second language learning is one where the second language is experienced in a situation that is similar to that in which the native language is learned. That is language is experienced dealing with the objects, situations and events of everyday life. The paradigm case would be that of a young child going to live in another country and learning that country's language, not by explicit teaching, but by interacting with play mates. For example, an English-speaking 5 year old from New York goes to Tokyo with her parents. Through playing with Japanese children, she soon learns Japanese. In fact, she learns the language in less than a year, which is not uncommon for children this age, and her speech is indistinguishable from that of native speakers. She is soon translating for her parents when they go shopping or speaking for them on telephone (Stenberg, 2001: 178)

From example below it can be concluded that the young child is often readily accepted by other children and even adults. For young children language is not as essential to social interaction. So called parallel play is common among young children. They can be content just to sit in each other's company speaking only occasionally and playing on their own. ., for example

Before children begin to school, parents can begin to facilitate

second language learning. Children can learn elements of a second language from a babysitter, a nanny, a family member, or a friend. They learn the language by imitating. It means that the child copies and repeats aloud the words which he or she hears. Through imitation, children learn how to pronounce sounds and words and they seem to enjoy imitating the sounds which they hear (Masur, 1995).

2) Classroom situation

Children can also attend a multilingual preschool or a preschool with a language program. If a child has a number of positive experiences with another language, he or she can become quite receptive to learning other languages.

Throughout the school years, parents can show their children that the ability to speak a second language is valued by encouraging an interest in other languages and cultures. Parents can show their respect for other cultures and ways of speaking by inviting people who speak other languages into their homes and by attending cultural events featuring music, dance, or food from other countries. They can also provide their children with books, videos, and similar materials in other languages, and they can send their children to foreign language camps.

To supplement language classes, parents of older children might also wish to explore the possibility of enrolling them in international exchange programs. Students normally live abroad with a

host family, which provides them with a safe and sheltered environment where they can practice their language skills. These experiences offer valuable opportunities to complement second language study with firsthand exploration of a different culture.

Parents who are interested in enrolling their children in elementary school foreign language programs should first inquire about existing programs in the school district. If the neighborhood school does not offer foreign language instruction, it is possible that immersion programs or language-focused schools exist elsewhere in the school district. Enrollment information will be available at individual schools or at district administrative offices. If there are no foreign language schools or programs offered in the school district, then private language classes may be the only option. Although second language classes are not always readily available, many resources exist to help parents and educators establish a program in their school or school district.

3. Method of The Research

This research is a qualitative research. Qualitative research is aimed at gaining a deep understanding of a specific organization or event, rather than a surface description of a large sample of a population. It aims to provide an explicit rendering of the structure, order, and broad patterns found among a group of participants. It is also called ethnomethodology or field research. It generates data about human groups in social settings.

The population of the research is all the English lectures at English Department of Education and Teacher Training Faculty in State Islamic University of Sultan Syarif Kasim Riau. The Total population 31 Lecturers. The sample of the research is taken by using purposive sampling. Purposive sampling is choosing specific people within the population to use for a particular study or research project. Purposive sampling (also known as judgment, selective or subjective sampling) is a sampling technique in which researcher relies on his or her own judgment when choosing members of population to participate in the study. Purposive sampling starts with a purpose in mind and the sample is thus selected to include people of interest and exclude those who do not suit the purpose. The researcher took the sample by classifying into the person who has children under five years old. They are fifteen lecturers who have the children under five years

old. But only one lecturer who had successfully taught her children by using English in daily speaking.

In collecting the data, the researcher used observation and interview. The first is observation. Marshall and Rossman (1989) define observation as "the systematic description of events, behaviors, and artifacts in the social setting chosen for study" (p.79). Observations enable the researcher to describe existing situations using the five senses, providing a "written photograph" of the situation under study (Erlando, Harris, Skipper & Allen, 1993). The second is interview. An interview is a conversation where questions are asked and answers are given. In common

parlance, the word "interview" refers to a one-on-one conversation with one person acting in the role of the interviewer and the other in the role of the interviewee. The interviewer asks questions, the interviewee responds, with participants taking turns talking. Interviews usually involve a transfer of information from interviewee to interviewer, which is usually the primary purpose of the interview, although information transfers can happen in both directions simultaneously. The researcher used unstructured interview According to (May K, 1991). It does not reflect any preconceived theories or ideas and are performed with little or no organisation. Such an interview may simply start with an opening question such as 'Can you tell me about your experience of visiting the dentist?' and will then progress based, primarily, upon the initial response. Unstructured interviews are usually very time-consuming (often lasting several hours) and can be difficult to manage, and to participate in, as the lack of predetermined interview questions provides little guidance on what to talk about (which many participants find confusing and unhelpful). Their use is, therefore, generally only considered where significant 'depth' is required, or where virtually nothing is known about the subject area (or a different perspective of a known subject area is required).

4. Result and Discussion

The participant of this research was Raufan Muazzam Hisyam. He is the son of Riri Fauzana, S.Pd., M.Sc and Rizqi Abadi, S. Ikom. He was born on March 5 2013. Now he is 3,5 years old. Her mother Riri Fauzana was the lecturer in English Department at State Islamic

University of Sultan Syarif Kasim Riau. Based on the interviewed with her mother, there are three conclusion about why Raufan can use English in his daily communication.

1. Her mother started to teach Raufan by using English at 9 months. It means that he started using English at early age. When kids are still babies, their mind is being constructed and structured every day in order to understand the stimulus that they get from the world around them. Experts say that children who learn a language before their teenage years are more likely than older learners to achieve native-like pronunciation. Furthermore, research has found that kids have an innate ability to acquire the rules of any language – an ability that disappears by adulthood. Although children's minds are known for being "like a sponge" which absorbs everything, it is recommended to give them enough time to acquire and fully understand one language before introducing another one. Otherwise, they might go through a confused time in which they won't actually know how to express themselves. Anyhow, it is an obvious fact that the more years committed to learning a language and the more use of it made, the greater the proficiency that will be achieved.
2. Raufan was taught by using audiovisual. Her mother usually play English song for children such as; twinkle-twinkle little star, johny-johny yes papa, old mc donald farm and etc. Besides that Raufan usually watched Baby vision channel. Base on the theory, children learn best by observing and copying the behaviors

of adults. It is therefore evident that learning is more effective when sensory experiences are stimulated. These include pictures, slides, radios, videos and other audiovisual tools. According to the Webster dictionary, audio-visual aids is defined as 'training or educational materials directed at both the senses of hearing and the sense of sight, films, recordings, photographs, etc. used in classroom instructions, library collections or the likes'. The concept of audiovisual aids is not new and can be traced back to seventeenth century when John Amos Comenius (1592-1670), a Bohemian educator, introduced pictures as teaching aids in his book *Orbis Sensualium Pictus* ("picture of the Sensual World") that was illustrated with 150 drawings of everyday life (Aggarwal, 2009). Similarly, Jean Rousseau (1712-1788) and JH Pestalozzi (1756-1827) advocated the use of visual and play materials in teaching (Akram, S.; Sufiana; Malik, 2012). More recently, audiovisual aids were also widely used during and after World War II by the armed service. The successful use of picture and other visual aids in U.S armed forces during World War II proved the effectiveness of instructional tools (. There are various types of audiovisual materials ranging from filmstrips, microforms, slides, projected opaque materials, tape recording and flashcards. In the current digital world, audiovisual aids have grown exponentially with several multimedia such as educational DVDs, PowerPoint, television educational series, youtube, and other online materials. The goal of audio-visual aids is to enhance

teacher's ability to present the lesson in simple, effective and easy to understand for the students. Audiovisual material make learning more permanent since students use more than one sense. It is important to create awareness for the state and federal ministry of education as policy makers in secondary schools of the need to inculcate audiovisual resource as main teaching pedagogy in curricula. The outcome is to promote the audiovisual material in secondary schools because they lack the resource to produce them. The visual instruction makes abstract ideas more concrete to the learners. This is to provide a basis for schools to understand the important roles in encouraging and supporting the use of audiovisual resource. In addition, studies have shown that there is significant difference between the use and non-use of audiovisual material in teaching and learning (Ode, 2014)

3. Raufan also taught by using game such as flash card. Her mother showed him the card that is content of the words for daily living for example read, eat, sleep, drink and etc.

Games help the teacher to create contexts in which the language is useful and meaningful. Even though games are often associated with fun, we should not lose sight of their pedagogical value, particularly in foreign language teaching and learning. Games are effective as they create motivation, lower students' stress, and give language learners the opportunity for real communication. According to (J. Haldfield, 1999) "a game is an activity with rules, a goal and an element of fun.... Games

should be regarded as an integral part of the language syllabus". This definition highly evaluates the importance of games in teaching. It shows that games serve not only as an 'amusing activity', but also as a technique to carry out many pedagogical tasks. Classifying games into categories can be difficult because categories often overlap. (J. Hadfield,199) proposes two ways of classifying language games. First, language games are divided into two types: linguistic and communicative games. Linguistic games focus on accuracy, such as supplying the correct antonym. Communicative games presuppose successful exchange of information and ideas. J. Hadfield also offers to classify language games into many more categories: sorting, ordering, or arranging, information gap games, guessing, search games, matching games, labeling, exchanging games; board, role play games. According to (W. Lee, 1991), games can be classified into ten categories: structure games which provide experience of the use of particular patterns of syntax in communication; vocabulary games in which the learners' attention is focused mainly on words; spelling, pronunciation games; number games; listen-and-do games; games and writing; miming and role play; discussion games.

There are some of the common advantages of using games in foreign language teaching and learning.

a) Games promote learners' interaction. Interaction comprises the nature of classroom pedagogy

and classroom behavior. Pair or group work is one of the main ways to increase cooperation. Many games can be played in pairs or in small groups, thereby providing an opportunity to develop their interpersonal skills such as the skill of disagreeing politely or the skill of asking for help. In the classroom learners will definitely participate in the activities. Therefore, in groups or in pairs, they are more willing to ask questions, communicate and discuss topics with their partners and think creatively about how to use foreign language to achieve their goals. The competition in the games gives students a natural opportunity to work together and communicate with each other a lot.

b) Games improve learners' language acquisition. Thanks to the motivation and interaction created by games, students can acquire knowledge faster and more effectively than by other means. Games can stimulate and encourage students to participate in the activity since they naturally want to win. Apart from having fun, students are learning. They acquire a new language. Students begin to realize that they have to use the language if they want others to understand what they are saying. Furthermore, games can lower anxiety. In the easy, relaxed atmosphere which is created by using games, students remember things faster and better. The meaning of the language students listen to, read, speak and write in will be more vividly experienced

in a game and, therefore, they will better remember the language they learn.

- c) Games increase learners' achievement. Games can involve all the basic language skills, i.e., listening, speaking, reading, and writing, and a number of skills are often involved in the same game. Games can motivate learners, promote learners' interaction, and improve learners' acquisition. As a result, games can increase learners' achievement, which means that learners' test results, ability of communication, knowledge of vocabulary, or other language skills can improve. C. Riedle, emphasizes the advantage of games in improving learners' achievements: "We are teaching a new generation of students, which requires unconventional teaching strategies to be put into practice in the classroom. And when schools use games, student benefits speak for themselves – a greater desire to learn and higher test scores.

In brief, games prove to be a useful tool in language teaching. Games not only motivate learners and create a friendly atmosphere, they are aimed at developing all language skills. Consequently, games can motivate, promote learners' interaction, improve their acquisition and increase their achievement.

5. Conclusion

If parents are thinking about teaching your children a foreign language, find out more about what considerations you should keep in mind. Learning a foreign and new language involves an obvious amount of effort for anyone, either a child or an adult, but the younger you are the easier it is. When considering teaching children a foreign language, it is important to think about the benefits that knowing and gaining this skill might bring to your kids in the future. At a career-wise level, professionals able to communicate in a second or third language are always more desirable since they can embrace additional responsibilities and job opportunities. In this sense, parents may want to think about languages that could be more useful to know in the future. At a personal level, the more languages a person speaks, the better access he or she will have to different people and resources from other countries and cultures. Additionally, it helps children to better understand other cultures, expressions and styles of communication. This can encourage children to appreciate how big the world is and will open their mind greatly – which is always a good thing. Finally, children that are advanced or fluent in a foreign language will feel especially satisfied when practicing it abroad. Discovering that they are able to communicate with foreign people will boost their self esteem, autonomy and confidence.

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