

Age and Second Language Acquisition: A Case Study from Maldives

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Abstract : The age a child to be exposed to a second language is a controversial issue in communities such as the Maldives where English is taught as a second language. It has been observed that different stakeholders have different viewpoints towards the issue. Some believe that the earlier children are exposed to a second language, the better they learn, while others disagree with the notion. Hence, this case study investigates whether children learn a second language better when they are exposed at an earlier age or not. The spoken and written data collected confirm that earlier exposure helps in mastering the sound pattern and speaking fluency with more native-like accent, while a later age is better for learning more abstract and concrete aspects such as grammar and syntactic rules.

Keywords : age, fluency, second language acquisition, development of language skills

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