

# The Effects Of Teaching English To Primary School Pupils And How That Helps To Improve Their Academic Achievement In The Intermediate School

I certify that all material in this proposal, which is not my own work, has been identified and that no material has previously been submitted and approved for the award of a degree by this or any other University.

( سمسومه )

ID: -----

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## **Abstract: -**

In the year 2012, the ministry of education in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia made a change in the process of teaching English language to the students. It has implemented a project to introduce teaching English from as early as the fourth grade of primary school instead of starting from the first year of intermediate school. This study aims to look at the effects of this project and if this change has an impact on the academic achievement of the students in the intermediate school. The study will approach 40 English language teachers to participate in order to provide their opinions about the effects of introducing teaching English language at an earlier stage in the students' language learning and on the factors that affect such initiative. They will feed in by responding to set of questions that are formulated into questionnaires. The teachers will also give their observations on the level of comprehension of English of students who started learning English at fourth grade compared to the students who had first studied the language in the intermediate school. The study will take place in different intermediate schools in the city Riyadh.

## **Introduction: -**

English is an essential language to nowadays daily life at all social, academic, and practical working levels. It is the global language of science, technology as well as networking and global human communications. Therefore, the importance of the English has implied the necessity to learn it and acquire competency in the spoken and the written language. This has created challenges for the educational institution to develop strategies that ensure teaching the language in an effective way to achieve their goals. One of the challenges is the timing of introducing the language to younger learners and the effect of this on their acceptance and acquires to the language. This is in particular argued for many countries where the English is neither an official language nor a popular language in daily communication among people whose their mother tong is not the English. However, some researchers investigated the appropriateness of when to start learning a foreign language such as English. And they suggested that the earlier is always a better, yet they debated on how early a person and specifically as a child should start.

Nevertheless, some have argued that the acquisition of a foreign language is not influenced by the age factor and that other factors like maturity and learning strategies have a major influencing effect on the learner's language acquisitions.

In a study done by applied linguistics research group, the researchers suggested that the maturity of learner's cognition plays a significant role in foreign language acquisition. According to their findings, younger learners showed better approaches and enthusiasm towards learning. However, the older learners with more developed learning strategies, advanced more rapidly in language acquisition<sup>1</sup>.

Therefore, defining the appropriate age to start learning a foreign language is a crucial for language education specialists. Some have suggested that beginning at a younger age at five years would be better considering the opportunity for students to learn the language gradually over a longer period. Consequently, they gain a better understanding and experience that develops over time. Others have suggested that waiting until 11 years and older is more beneficial than starting at five as older pupils begin to be more responsible from 11 years onwards and their perception is more mature to process learning activities, hence language acquisition will be easier for this age group. This study will explore the perception of the English teachers about the project of introducing English language into the education system at an earlier stage of school levels. In addition, the teachers will be asked about their perception on the student acceptance to this movement<sup>2</sup>.

### **Literature review:**

It is very important to choose the right time in which students should start learning a new language as the timing is a very helpful tool for students in their learning process. Moreover, the right age to start teaching foreign language has been always a cause of a lot of debate among linguistic scientists.

Chavez (2006) asserts that the best time to start learning a foreign language varies from individual to individual and with circumstances. He also said that " If you learn

a second or third language when you are young, and particularly before puberty, and you learn it from native speakers, you will learn to speak it naturally, with their own accent "3

Therefore, kids who start learning earlier have bigger opportunity to gain language than those who started later. The best example for this is a kid who has parents who do not share the same native language, he speaks both languages fluently, and this is related to the early acquisition of the language. On the opposite, students who started learning in the late age face troubles keeping new information of the new language, and they do not seem connected to the language mentally or emotionally. Therefore, their abilities to express their thoughts and themselves are clearly weak and fragile.

In this point, there is a consensus that there is a period in an individual's life that is called the critical period. It is the period in a person's life that begins from 5 years old until the puberty. According to the Critical Period Hypothesis, the first few years of life constitute the time during which language develops readily and after which language acquisition is much more difficult and ultimately less successful. (Siegler, 2006)<sup>4</sup> Therefore, the earlier the language learning process begins, the easier the student's academic achievement improves. However, it is debated that not only age that contributes most to a higher level of achievement as other factors such as cognitive ability and maturity, teaching modalities, and the duration of exposure to learning activities are all believed to influence the foreign language acquisition.

### **Significance of research: -**

English has become a necessity for each learner all over the world, and every country tries hard to upgrade the quality of English for every learner. Thus, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia move towards this aim by making some changes of language teaching and that made researchers thirst for the result of these changes, and that is what this study stands for.

## **Research question: -**

This study is trying to find an answer for the major question that is:

Are there any changes between starting learning English at the fourth grade of primary school and learning it at the first grade of the intermediate school? If yes, what are the factors affecting the changes and how they affect the students' linguistic achievement?

## **Research methodology:**

40 English language female teachers will participate in this study, and they will feed in by filling questionnaires to be used for data collection. Measure and detect the changes noticed on students and their academic achievement of language. The questionnaire's questions are of two groups. Questions that test the ideas and perception of the acceptance by introducing teaching English to primary school pupils and the overall benefits and effects compared with the ones observed in intermediate school students. The other group of question will look at the factors and the experience of teachers and their observation of the process of the project to look at the opportunities, strength, weaknesses, and limitations, at the center of this analysis will be the focus on measuring the impact of this project on the learning development of the students. This questionnaire will be applied to teachers in different intermediate schools in Riyadh.

## **Ethical considerations: -**

Before establishing interviews with participants, I will consent them and explain the aims and objectives of the study and emphasize that it is totally their decision to participate in the study and their views will not affect them in any form.

## **Limitations of the study: -**

One major obstacle to conducting this study is to coordinate a common time slot during which teachers in the same school can be accessed to run the interview successively.

## **Expected results: -**

The main expected results are around the factors that could affect the progress of the 2012 project and how the new experience could expose key elements to be considered in English language education.

## **References:**

1. María del Pilar García Mayo and María Luisa García Lecumberri MULTILINGUAL MATTERS (2003). *SECOND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION 4*. 4th ed. Clevedon: British Library Cataloguing in Publication. 89-91. Sieglar, Robert (2006). *"How Children Develop, Exploring Child Develop Student Media Tool Kit & Scientific American Reader to Accompany How Children Develop."* New York: Worth Publishers.
2. Shoebottom, P. (2014). *The best age to learn a new language*. [online] Esl.fis.edu. Available at: <http://esl.fis.edu/parents/advice/myth2.htm>
3. Chavez, J. (2007). *"When is the Best Time to Learn a Foreign Language?"*. [Online] Ezine Articles. <http://ezinearticles.com/?When-is-the-Best-Time-to-Learn-a-Foreign-Language?&id=496701>
4. Singleton, D. (1989). *"Language acquisition: The age factor."* Clevedon, UK: Multilingual Matters.

## **Appendix:**

A sample of the research data collection tools is attached in this proposal, which is in the form of a questionnaire with general questions to group the ideas on the acceptance and the effect of the 2012 project and early learning of English. In addition, another structured questionnaire containing questions for more details on the perceptions of the teachers on the factors that contribute to the success or face the project will be applied to this study.

## **Samples of questionnaire 1:**

- 1- There is a real change in the academic achievement in English language among the students who learn English in the fourth grade?
  - a- Agree
  - b- Disagree
  - c- Totally agree
  - d- Totally disagree
- 2- Students who learned English earlier can use English easier.
  - a- Agree
  - b- Disagree
  - c- Totally agree
  - d- Totally disagree
- 3- Students who learned English earlier tend to love language more.
  - a- Agree
  - b- Disagree
  - c- Totally agree
  - d- Totally disagree
- 4- The language skills are higher among students who learn English earlier.
  - a- Agree
  - b- Disagree
  - c- Totally agree
  - d- Totally disagree
- 5- Teachers have fewer problems with those students who learn English earlier.
  - a- Agree
  - b- Disagree
  - c- Totally agree
  - d- Totally disagree
- 6- Intermediate school teachers have a bigger chance giving students new information in the language when the students are already ready before the intermediate grade.
  - a- Agree
  - b- Disagree
  - c- Totally agree
  - d- Totally disagree
- 7- The quality of English of the students after graduation became better when they learned English earlier.
  - a- Agree
  - b- Disagree
  - c- Totally agree
  - d- Totally disagree
- 8- It is a successful step made by the Ministry of education in the Kingdom to teach English earlier.
  - a- Agree
  - b- Disagree
  - c- Totally agree
  - d- Totally disagree



9- According to the Critical Period Hypothesis, the first few years of life constitute the time during which language develops readily and after which language acquisition is much more difficult and ultimately less successful.

a- Agree

c- Totally agree

b- Disagree

d- Totally disagree

10- Students become able to learn themselves to improve their skills if they have learned English earlier.

a- Agree

c- Totally agree

b- Disagree

d- Totally disagree