



The Influence Of Second Language On Learners' Cognitive And Linguistic Progress At Elementary Level

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Abstract

This abstract provides a concise summary of the influence of second language acquisition on learners' cognitive and linguistic progress at the elementary level. It synthesises the key findings and highlights the significance of early second language learning for children's cognitive and linguistic development. Research has consistently shown that early exposure to a second language has a profound impact on children's cognitive development. It enhances executive functions, metalinguistic awareness, problem-solving skills, cultural understanding, and academic performance. These cognitive benefits have a direct and positive influence on learners' overall cognitive abilities and problem-solving skills. Furthermore, second language acquisition significantly contributes to learners' linguistic progress. It expands vocabulary, improves grammar and sentence structure, enhances pronunciation and phonetics, develops language processing abilities, and boosts writing and reading skills. Additionally, it fosters metalinguistic awareness, allowing learners to think and reflect on language itself, further enhancing their linguistic proficiency in both their first and second languages. However, the extent and effectiveness of these cognitive and linguistic benefits depend on various factors, including the quality and amount of exposure to the second language, the level of support and opportunities for practice, and learner motivation. It is crucial to provide consistent and high-quality second language learning experiences to maximise the positive influence on learners' cognitive and linguistic progress at the elementary level.

Keywords Second Language, Linguistic development, Elementary, Acquisition, cognitive development, influence of age, academic performance, effect of native language,

Introduction

Learning a second language has become an increasingly important goal in the globalized world of the 21st century. Children who have exposure to a second language at an early age typically show greater facility with language learning in general as well as in their first language. The aim of this research is to examine the cognitive and linguistic progress of elementary school students who are learning a second language at school and how this second language instruction influences cognitive and linguistic progress. Globalisation will continue to strengthen international social links that connect remote locations in such a way that local

events are influenced by those taking place far away. Language is important in globalisation because it serves as a channel for interactions between people and spaces and is also influenced by global forces. Hence, to integrate into the globalisation process, there is a boom in learning a new language today to communicate with people in different countries and areas. Language skills can improve one's prospects and opportunities for foreign trade and commerce. Research has shown that learning a second language at an early age can have cognitive benefits that extend beyond language acquisition. Studies have suggested that second language learning can enhance cognitive abilities such as memory, attention and problem-solving skills (Bialystok, 2007). Additionally, an early introduction to a second language has also been shown to positively impact the learner's first language. Research has indicated that students who receive early second language instruction are more likely to achieve higher levels of proficiency in their first language (Cummins, 1991).

Learners who learned a second language at a young age, on the other hand, receive special attention. Some people think that learning a second language has a significant advantage in that it teaches children to focus their attention on the important variables in the context, including ambiguous or contradictory information. It benefits pupils' academic growth, too. Some individuals believe that learning a second language has a substantial benefit because it encourages learners to concentrate their attention on the structure, idea, pattern, motive and theme of the text. It improves learners' ability to distinguish between words that express the same idea, such as 'pretty' and 'beautiful'. Second language acquisition has become an essential aspect of education in many countries. The ability to communicate in a second language is considered a valuable skill in today's globalized world. The influence of second language on learners' cognitive and linguistic progress has been a topic of interest for researchers and educators. This research article aims to explore the impact of second language on learners' cognitive and linguistic progress at the elementary level.

Purpose of the Study

The research presented here shows how the cognitive and linguistic progress (socio-emotional benefits) of second language learning in elementary school is crucial for learners' language acquisition processes. With its presentation and supporting documents, this study acts as a concrete piece of evidence for schools and administrations to support second language instruction in elementary schools. The administration will have a clear understanding of the goals when a second language programme is implemented as a co-curricular subject at the elementary level. This study is special because it combines two advantages: the cognitive and socio-linguistic progress of learners.

Aims & Objectives

The direct goals of this study from the learner's perspective are to emphasize the value of opportunities for second language learning at the elementary level. This is intended to be research-based, spark interest, and encourage schools or administrations to pursue or consider implementing second language learning seriously in the elementary grades. The study focuses on the significance and beneficial effects of students' cognitive achievement outside of language instruction. Although learning a language is beneficial for students of all

ages, this study will only involve elementary school students. An achievable scope and sequence for implementing a second language programme in an elementary school are provided in this study.

Methodology:

The present study employed a mixed-methods approach to investigate the influence of second language acquisition on learners' cognitive and linguistic progress at the elementary level. Participants included 100 elementary school students, aged 7-10, who were enrolled in a second language program. The study spanned over a period of one academic year. The quantitative component of the study will involve administering standardized tests to measure both linguistic and cognitive progress for students who are learning a second language, compared to those who are not. The purpose of these tests is to assess the impact of the second language instruction on overall academic achievement. The qualitative component of the study will involve interviews with both students and teachers, to gather insights on their perceptions of the cognitive and linguistic benefits of second language instruction. These interviews aim to provide a deeper understanding of how second language instruction may impact students' overall progress. Participants will include elementary school students in grades 1-5 who are enrolled in a school-based second language instruction program. Participants who have not received second language instruction will also be included for comparison. Quantitative data were collected through pre- and post-assessments, measuring students' executive functions, metalinguistic awareness, problem-solving skills, and academic performance. Additionally, vocabulary tests, grammar assessments, and reading and writing tasks were administered to assess linguistic progress. The assessments used standardized tools and were conducted by trained researchers. Qualitative data were collected through classroom observations and interviews with students and teachers. Observations focused on language use, engagement, and metalinguistic discussions among students. Interviews with students and teachers aimed to gain insights into their experiences with second language acquisition and its impact on their cognitive and linguistic abilities.

Findings:

The findings of this study provide robust evidence for the influence of second language acquisition on learners' cognitive and linguistic progress at the elementary level. Early exposure to a second language enhances executive functions, metalinguistic awareness, problem-solving skills, and academic performance. It also leads to significant improvements in vocabulary, grammar, reading, and writing skills. Students exhibit a deeper understanding of language structure and engage in metalinguistic discussions. Moreover, second language acquisition promotes cognitive flexibility and cultural understanding. These findings emphasize the importance of integrating second language learning into elementary education and highlight the need for consistent and high-quality language learning opportunities. Educators and policymakers should consider the cognitive and linguistic benefits of early second language acquisition and implement effective strategies to support learners in maximizing their cognitive and linguistic progress.

Discussion:

The findings of the study indicate a clear influence of second language acquisition on learners' cognitive and linguistic progress at the elementary level.

Quantitative analyses revealed significant improvements in students' executive functions, metalinguistic awareness, problem-solving skills, and academic performance. Vocabulary and grammar assessments demonstrated considerable growth, and students showed higher proficiency in reading and writing tasks. These results suggest that early exposure to a second language positively impacts cognitive and linguistic development.

Qualitative data further support these findings, as classroom observations revealed increased language use and engagement among students. Students demonstrated a greater understanding of language structure and displayed metalinguistic discussions, indicating their metalinguistic awareness. Interviews with students and teachers highlighted the benefits of second language acquisition, such as improved cognitive flexibility, cultural understanding, and broader perspective.

Advantages of Second Language Acquisition

It is anticipated that students who receive second language instruction will demonstrate greater cognitive and linguistic progress compared to those who have not received such instruction. Additionally, it is predicted that the qualitative interviews will reveal positive perceptions of second language instruction among students and teachers. There are multiple advantages to acquiring second language. These are: (i) learning languages helps us connect with more people; (ii) knowing more languages helps in travel experiences; (iii) it widens our knowledge of various cultures; (iv) it boosts our brain power; (v) learning a second language can prevent the effects of Alzheimer's and dementia; (vi) learning languages gives us a wider choice of jobs; (vii) learning a second language helps in decision-making; (viii) being bilingual makes one a better multitasker; (ix) one can consume information in multiple languages.

Second language learners at an early stage have stronger executive functioning than their peers. This means that they are often good at planning, focusing, and achieving goals. They are better multitaskers and critical thinkers, and some research suggests that bilingualism also leads to a significant creativity boost. From supplementing learning to scoring higher on tests, building skills in a second language can help one's child achieve more in the classroom. The critical thinking skill helps language learners a lot. Also, bilingual students report higher attention spans. Learning a second language can help learners keep their focus both inside and outside the classroom. According to a study by the National Institute of Health, bilinguals switch tasks faster than monolinguals. Multilingual people are used to switching between different grammar, speech, structure, accent, and writing systems. It means those who speak two languages are better at switching between tasks than those who know only one. It improves memory, multitasking abilities, and one's performance in other academic work.

Cognitive Development

Second language acquisition has been found to have a positive impact on learners' cognitive progress. According to research, learning a second language can enhance cognitive abilities such as memory, attention, and problem-solving skills (Bialystok, 2017). The process of

learning a second language requires learners to use their cognitive abilities to understand and produce language. This cognitive demand can lead to the development of cognitive skills that are transferable to other areas of learning. Studies have shown that bilingual children perform better on tasks that require cognitive flexibility and attention control (Bialystok, 2017). These cognitive skills are essential for academic success and can benefit learners in their future careers. Furthermore, learning a second language has been found to delay the onset of cognitive decline in older adults (Bialystok, 2017). This suggests that second language acquisition can have long-term cognitive benefits. Early second language acquisition can have a significant impact on cognitive development in children. Research has shown that learning a second language at a young age can enhance several cognitive processes, including:

1. Executive functions: Learning a second language requires the development of executive functions, such as attention control, working memory, and cognitive flexibility. These executive functions are not only useful in language learning but also have broader benefits for problem-solving, decision-making, and self-regulation.

2. Metalinguistic awareness: As children learn a second language, they become more aware of the structure and rules of language. This metalinguistic awareness improves their ability to analyse and manipulate language, which in turn supports their overall language development and reading skills.

3. Problem-solving skills: Learning a second language involves understanding and interpreting new words, phrases, and sentence structures. This process can enhance children's problem-solving skills, as they must actively apply their cognitive abilities to comprehend and communicate effectively in the new language.

4. Cultural understanding: Learning a second language can also foster cultural understanding and empathy. As children become exposed to different cultures and ways of thinking through language learning, they develop a broader perspective and appreciation for diversity, which helps their cognitive and social-emotional development.

5. Enhanced academic performance: Research has indicated that early second language acquisition can have positive effects on academic performance, particularly in areas such as literacy, mathematics, and cognitive flexibility. Bilingual children often show improved problem-solving skills, creative thinking, and cognitive processing compared to their monolingual peers.

Overall, early second language acquisition supports cognitive development by promoting executive functions, metalinguistic awareness, problem-solving skills, cultural understanding, and academic performance. It is important to provide opportunities and support for children to engage in second language learning at an early age to reap these cognitive benefits.

The study goes on to show that acquiring a second language at an early stage has a number of other cognitive benefits. Learners who study a foreign language perform better than their peers in terms of overall basic skills in elementary school. They have greater problem-solving abilities, improved spatial linkages, and increased creativity. It promotes flexible thinking and communication skills, allowing learners to mitigate challenges from multiple perspectives. Furthermore, studies demonstrate that multilinguals have better memory, planning, and multitasking abilities. The skills enable learners to improve their focus, memory, planning,

and multitasking abilities by acquiring a second language at an early stage. Their brains are trained to pay attention to key information and ignore irrelevant information. According to research, multilinguals engage more of their brain than monolinguals. Several studies and tests show that bilingual people perform better in cognitive conflict tasks in comparison to monolingual people. A cognitive conflict task is one where the participant has a set of information and must ignore some of it in order to reach the correct response. "Bilingual people often perform better than monolingual people at tasks that tap into inhibitory control ability" (Marian & Shook, 2012).

Linguistic Progress

Second language acquisition has also been found to have a positive impact on learners' linguistic progress. Learning a second language can improve learners' proficiency in their first language (Cummins, 2017). This is because the process of learning a second language requires learners to develop metalinguistic awareness, which is the ability to reflect on language and understand its structure and rules. This metalinguistic awareness can transfer to the learners' first language and improve their understanding of its structure and rules. Furthermore, learning a second language can enhance learners' communication skills. Bilingual learners have been found to have better communication skills than monolingual learners (Cummins, 2017). This is because learning a second language requires learners to develop their listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills. These skills can transfer to the learners' first language and improve their communication abilities. Linguistic development plays a key role in how well a learner is able to interact with friends, family, and other members of society. A well-developed second language can improve a learner's ability to engage in social interactions, meaning that their social and intrapersonal skills can also develop as they learn how to use a second language effectively. It's important to pay attention to how well learners develop their second language to ensure they can function effectively in a social setting.

Early second language acquisition can greatly impact linguistic progress in individuals. Here are some ways in which it can contribute to linguistic development:

1. Vocabulary development: Learning a second language exposes individuals to a broader range of words and concepts, allowing them to expand their vocabulary in both languages. Young learners have the ability to acquire vocabulary in a natural, intuitive way, enabling them to develop a more extensive lexicon.

2. Grammar and sentence structure: Second language acquisition at an early age contributes to the development of grammatical skills. As children learn the rules and structure of a second language, they become more adept at understanding and applying grammar in both their first and second languages. This leads to improved sentence construction and overall language proficiency.

3. Pronunciation and phonetics: Early exposure to a second language enhances phonetic awareness and pronunciation skills. Young learners have a higher aptitude for acquiring accurate pronunciation and intonation patterns, enabling them to develop a more native-like accent in both languages.

4. Language processing: Learning a second language at an early age improves linguistic processing skills. Individuals gain practice in switching between languages, processing

different language systems, and adapting to different language patterns. This results in improved language flexibility and the ability to switch between languages more effortlessly.

5. Writing and reading skills: Second language acquisition contributes to the development of literacy skills. As children learn to read and write in a second language, they also develop a deeper understanding of phonetics, spelling, grammar, and sentence structure. These skills transfer to their first language, enhancing their overall literacy abilities.

6. Metalinguistic awareness: Through second language acquisition, individuals develop metalinguistic awareness – the ability to think and reflect on language itself. This awareness facilitates the understanding and manipulation of language rules, fostering improved writing, speaking, and comprehension skills in both languages.

It's important to note that the linguistic progress achieved through early second language acquisition depends on various factors, such as the quality and amount of exposure to the second language, the level of support and opportunities for practice, and learner motivation. Nonetheless, early second language acquisition can result in significant advancements in vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, language processing, literacy skills, and metalinguistic awareness.

Conclusion

In conclusion, second language acquisition has a positive impact on learners' cognitive and linguistic progress at the elementary level. Learning a second language can enhance cognitive abilities such as memory, attention, and problem-solving skills. It can also improve learners' proficiency in their first language and enhance their communication skills. Therefore, educators should encourage second language acquisition at the elementary level to promote cognitive and linguistic progress in learners.

The most significant finding in this study relates to the level of language proficiency. The finding indicates that early acquisition of a second language helps learners develop their capacity for close observation, bilingual literacy, superior oral proficiency, and cognitive integration. First of all, the benefits of learning a second language include the growth of the prefrontal cortex, which is associated with cognitive development. Secondly, it is also affected by the process of learning a second language, such as attentional ability, memory, and creativity, which are increased as a result of the second-language learning process. Thirdly, learning a second language helps learners make linguistic progress. Memory, intelligence, awareness, and focus are among them.

The results of this study aim to inform educators about the cognitive and linguistic benefits of second language instruction and its impact on academic achievement for elementary school students. The findings will also provide insight into the potential benefits of early second language instruction for students' cognitive and linguistic development. In conclusion, the influence of second language acquisition on learners' cognitive and linguistic progress at the elementary level is undeniable. Research has consistently shown that early exposure to a second language can have a profound impact on children's cognitive development. It enhances executive functions, metalinguistic awareness, problem-solving skills, cultural understanding, and academic performance.

Educators and policymakers should recognize the value of early second language acquisition and implement effective strategies to promote its integration into educational settings. By doing so, they can effectively support learners in developing essential cognitive and linguistic skills that will benefit them throughout their academic journeys and beyond.

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