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M.A. THESIS IN LINGUISTICS

A LINGUISTIC STUDY ON EXCLUDING  
FORMAL INSTRUCTION IN SECOND  
LANGUAGE FROM FIRST TWO GRADES  
IN SCHOOL

A STUDY BASED ON TWO SCHOOLS IN KANDY  
DISTRICT

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## ABSTRACT

Aim of this study was to examine whether formal instruction in second language in grade one and two could have a positive effect on students' proficiency level in grade three. Data were gathered mainly through a grammaticality judgment test which was administered to two sets of students from two different schools representing grade three. Marks were graphically presented and analyzed and subsequently compared and contrasted. Contrastive analysis of the test marks revealed that students from the schools where they received formal instruction in English from grade one did far better than their counterparts who did not receive instruction in second language in a formal manner. Test results supported the hypothesis tested in this study. Meanwhile data were also gathered by means of interviews, direct observation and printed materials. Theory of Behaviorism and theory of Universal Grammar were used as benchmarks in this study to test the hypothesis. Behaviorism suggests the significance of language rich environment. At the same time Universal grammar maintains that age is a crucial factor in language learning. Therefore the study suggests earlier commencement of second language instruction in formal manner from grade one provides rich language input while making a better use of potential language learning capabilities of young child. Accordingly it is recommended that formal instruction in Sri Lankan government should commence at grade one.

Key words: Second language, formal Instruction, behaviorism, innatists, age, environment