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An exploratory study of teaching English in the Saudi elementary public schools

Abdulrahman Abdulaziz Abdan

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Abstract

This paper attempts to explore, evaluate and discuss the proposal to introduce English as a foreign language (EFL) in Saudi elementary public schools. The paper evolved around an empirical study conducted to detect the possible effect of FLES on Saudi school children. The study compared the EFL achievement of private intermediate school students who had studied this language in the elementary school (i.e. FLES group) with the achievement of their counterparts (i.e. non-FLES group) in the same language in the public schools. It was found that there was a statistically significant difference between these two groups in favor of the FLES group. This difference was attributed to the FLES group's greater exposure to EFL, more than to learning this language at an earlier age. The conclusion is that if English were to be recommended for introduction into the Saudi public elementary schools, this recommendation should be based on two factors: providing greater exposure to EFL and exploiting the affective characteristics of younger

children that are related to language learning. However, this should be combined with a good quality of exposure in order to effect the desired results of teaching a foreign language in the elementary schools.



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An exploratory study of teaching English in the Saudi elementary public schools, ephemeral repels the cultural ontological status of

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