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A case study on YouTube's role in early Second Language Acquisition (SLA)

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ABSTRACT

Children's language acquisition has long been a focus of interest among researchers and has developed into a cross-disciplinary field of research. This study aims to investigate the influence of YouTube on 10-year-old children's second language acquisition at the word, phrase, clause, and sentence levels. Using qualitative research methods, this study is a case study conducted by interviewing a research subject. Interviews were recorded and transcribed. The results indicate that continuous exposure to English-language YouTube content significantly contributes to the subject's second language acquisition. The subject was able to understand questions and produce coherent and meaningful utterances, although some minor grammatical errors were still found. At the syntactic level, he had mastered basic English structures and was able to form simple to complex sentences without language mixing. These findings indicate that YouTube can serve as an effective source of linguistic input to support natural second language acquisition in children. This study emphasizes the important role of digital media as an alternative linguistic environment in the process of second language acquisition during childhood.

Keywords: psycholinguistics; second language acquisition; YouTube.

INTRODUCTION

Early infancy is a critical time in a person's life for language acquisition and development. Researchers have long been interested in how children learn languages (Guo, 2022). Children's language acquisition has progressively evolved into a multidisciplinary area of study in recent years, involving sociology, psychology, pedagogy, physiology, and other fields. Children's language (CL) has been examined by psychologists, experts, linguists, clinicians, and educators over the past few decades in an effort to understand it through a variety of theoretical and experimental methods. Numerous topics, including children's language development, language acquisition, and language impediments, have been the focus of research. Other topics that have garnered a lot of attention include the distinctions between adult second language learning and first language acquisition, as well as whether or not specific phases of language development are universal (Lust, 2006).

Second language acquisition is a complex and dynamic process that begins in early childhood and continues throughout life (Al-Harbi, 2020). This process involves the acquisition of linguistic knowledge and skills, including vocabulary, grammar, and syntax, as well as the ability to use language for communication and social interaction. The process of language acquisition is influenced by various factors, including biological, cognitive, social, and environmental factors. Language acquisition in early childhood focuses on understanding the mechanisms

and processes involved in language development, as well as the factors that influence language acquisition (Anshary & Perangin-Angin, 2024). During the 1950s and 1960s, the field of second language acquisition (SLA) gained traction due to groundbreaking studies that aimed to determine if the brain experiences specific developmental periods that are particularly responsive to linguistic input (Dey et al., 2024). Research in this area focuses on determining if there is a specific period in a person's life when the brain is more capable of learning English. Most experts in Second Language Acquisition (SLA) agree that learners can greatly benefit from this critical period, especially in mastering the phonological aspects of the target language. However, there is still ongoing academic debate about the significance of this critical period. It is recognized that this critical period exists. Nonetheless, scholars continue to debate the exact duration that defines the critical period (Dey et al., 2024).

Children's language typically develops as they age, starting with the production of their first words. Language acquisition begins with their mother tongue, which they generally master fluently by the age of three through interactions with their parents. Parents serve as the primary source of language development, and children learn words and communication skills primarily from them (Pehala et al., 2023). A person's mother tongue is the language someone speaks at home. Compared to the term "first language," the use of the word "mother tongue" is more ideological. It is by refraining from using terminology that is more neutral. "The persistence of the monolingual paradigm and its homologous logic" can be explained by the use of the mother tongue. It is still possible to use one's native tongue to communicate more successfully (Murtadho, 2022). As stated by Sekerina et al., (2007) that children listen to adult speech, read the communicative intent contained in the speech, divide the communicative intent into component parts, and store the speech and components that are understood are the basic processes of language learning. Research indicates that younger individuals often have an advantage when it comes to learning a second language. This advantage is largely due to the adaptability and flexibility of children's brains, which makes it easier for them to acquire language skills compared to adults. Because children’s brains are still developing, they tend to be more open to absorbing new information, including languages. Furthermore, children are usually less anxious about making mistakes, which encourages them to practice speaking without fear of embarrassment. However, studies have identified a critical period for language acquisition. Once this period ends, it becomes more challenging for individuals to learn a second language effectively. This critical phase is generally thought to end around age 12, although some experts believe it may extend to age 18. After this phase, the brain's capacity for learning languages decreases, making it more difficult to achieve native-like proficiency in another language (Dey et al., 2024). Therefore, children who have strong literacy skills in their mother tongue are often better equipped to learn a new language effectively (Purba, 2018).

Nowadays, parents and adults are not the only factors who influence children's language acquisition, but technology also plays a role. Because technology has advanced rapidly, children have greater access to language learning (Davidson et al., 2014), for example through social media. In recent years, social media has continued to transform and update individuals' daily lives, in terms of knowledge exchange, information delivery, communication, and visual culture

(Rieger & Klimmt, 2018). The YouTube app offers a variety of engaging audio-visual content that can be enjoyed by both adults and children. They tend to be more interested in listening to songs and watching videos. They can also watch and replay these videos repeatedly. By listening and replaying the stories or songs they watch, children acquire a broad vocabulary and an understanding of related concepts (Handayani et al., 2021).

Meanwhile, YouTube frequently features English-speaking gamers, one of whom is Minecraft. While playing, players typically speak their native language. This is what Dewantara, a child subject in this study, frequently watches. He has been watching these shows since he was six years old. Meanwhile, globalization and technological advances have positioned English as the language of international communication, making English proficiency increasingly viewed as a valuable asset for education (Erk & Ručević, 2021).

Based on the description above, the research problem formulation is how does the YouTube application affect second language acquisition on children's language development at the word, phrase, clause, and sentence levels? The purpose of this study is to investigate the influence of English acquisition from game vlogger shows through YouTube media on children's language development at the word, phrase, clause, and sentence levels.

Psycholinguistics

In order to better comprehend human language, psycholinguistics combines linguistics and psychology. Psycholinguistics inherited experimental methods and a wealth of information about memory, perception, learning, attention, and problem-solving processes from psychology. It also produced insights about the nature of human language, thorough explanations of grammatical forms, and extensive descriptions of particular languages. All levels of language structure and usage, including phonology, auditory phonetics, articulatory phonetics, morphology, semantics, lexicon, syntax, and pragmatics, are affected by these psychological reality questions. All linguistic constructs—rules, grammar, paradigms, trees, segments, words, and morphemes—are covered by them (MacWhinney, 2001). Therefore, psycholinguistics can generally be described as the exploration of the connection between the mind and language. It investigates the mental processes that take place in the brain during the production and comprehension of language. Psycholinguistics primarily addresses three key areas: language production, language perception, and language acquisition. Language production pertains to the mechanisms involved in creating and conveying meaning through language. Language perception involves the processes necessary for interpreting and comprehending both written and spoken forms of language. Language acquisition deals with the processes through which someone learns a native or a second language. Numerous theories in psycholinguistics have been developed to explain these three areas, and they have proven to be quite beneficial in the realm of language instruction. Some specialists utilize these theories as foundational concepts when creating methods for teaching languages. This is referred to as the psycholinguistic approach. The psycholinguistic approach posits that language and thought are interconnected yet entirely separate phenomena. Learning is perceived as a cognitive process that occurs within the individual before extending to a social context. As a study of the intersection between psychology

and language, psycholinguistics is applied in language teaching. It aids in examining the psychological factors that might influence language learning. Psycholinguistics emphasizes the practical use of language and communication. It is essential to choose various methods that facilitate students' understanding of a language effectively. Thus, the psycholinguistic approach considers language and thought as interconnected yet entirely separate phenomena. Within this approach, a person's internal cognitive processes are triggered to enable access to the comprehensible input necessary for progressing in the acquisition of a second language (L2) (Purba, 2018).

Second Language Acquisition

Second language acquisition (SLA) is the study of individuals and groups who acquire a language after learning their first language as children, and it also refers to the process of learning that language. This additional language is called a second language, although it can actually be the third, fourth, or tenth language being learned. This language is also commonly called the target language (TL), which refers to any language that is the goal or objective of learning (Saville-Troike, 2012). The scope of SLA includes informal L2 learning that takes place in naturalistic contexts, formal L2 learning that takes place in classrooms, and L2 learning that involves a mixture of these settings and settings (Krashen, 1981; Saville-Troike, 2012). For example, informal learning occurs when a Japanese child is brought to America and learns English while playing and attending school with native English-speaking children without specific language instruction, or when a Guatemalan adult immigrant in Canada learns English through interactions with native English speakers or with coworkers who speak English as a second language. Formal learning occurs when a high school student in England takes a French class, an undergraduate student in Russia takes an Arabic course, or a lawyer in Colombia takes an evening English class. A combination of formal and informal learning occurs when an American student takes a Mandarin class in Taipei or Beijing while also using Mandarin outside of class for social interactions.

To put it another way, learning a first language differs from learning a second. Learning a second or third language after a youngster has mastered their first is known as second language acquisition. However, children learn a second language when they are exposed to speakers of that language and receive official instruction in it. Because their surroundings speak a second language, they grow accustomed to it. They receive instruction and information on how to acquire a second language (Gleason & Ratner, 1993). Furthermore, early SLA beginning is a requirement for reaching high levels of L2 competence, and successful L2 development has historically been linked to age. However, opposing opinions have emerged in recent years, along with the catchphrase "the earlier the better," such as "the older the better" and "the younger the better in some respects," and/or qualitative distinctions between early and later language acquisition (Erk & Ručević, 2021). Contextual influences include the larger community, language policy, the educational system, and the official, non-formal, and informal possibilities for second language acquisition that are available both inside and outside of the family setting, regardless of the learner's age and personal circumstances. Collentine & Freed (2004) distinguish three fundamental SLA contexts: the home context, where the new language is learned as a foreign

language; the immersion context, characterized by immersion in the language of the environment; and the study-abroad context, which is temporary compared to the immersion context, but usually takes place in a foreign language setting. To understand the role of age in SLA, it is important to distinguish between the foreign language context, in which the foreign language is acquired. Early exposure to a foreign language has long-term positive effects in the target language environment (Lambelet & Berthele, 2015; Muñoz, 2014). In other words, innate abilities must be exploited at a very early age to achieve the native speaker's foreign language proficiency (Erk & Ručević, 2021).

Meanwhile, the development of children as digital natives today is inseparable from the role of technology. The term "digital native" first emerged in 2001, marking the beginning of the millennium, when Marc Prensky identified radical changes in children. These generational changes are inevitable and absolutely require various adaptations, especially in parenting and education. "Digital natives," "digital naive," "born digital," and "tech/net savvy" are various terms referring to children born and growing up alongside technology. Therefore, many of the behaviors children develop are the result of intense interaction with technology (devices) and digital media, such as the internet, video shows, games, and other digital content (Sessiani et al., 2025). When children encounter English words in everyday activities, such as watching television, listening to music, playing games, or browsing social media, they are exposed to English, and the intensity of this exposure can influence their language acquisition (Jahrani & Listia, 2023). The more frequently the language is heard or seen, the more effective the learning and acquisition process will be (Denhovska et al., 2016).

YouTube is a highly engaging social media platform that contributes to global education. It is increasingly used by educators to teach English. It also offers quick and enjoyable access to language- and culture-based videos and instruction from around the world (Alhamami, 2013). In the meantime, vocabulary knowledge is a crucial component of reading comprehension and language acquisition success for all students, since words are the basis of language. Systematic vocabulary instruction—directed vocabulary instruction combined with conversations and opportunities to learn words in context—as well as incidental exposure involving multimodal interactions to establish connections between word form and meaning are two ways that learners acquire vocabulary. Over the last ten years, experts have discovered that technology can improve students' vocabulary and reading comprehension (Chowdhury et al., 2024).

Cultivation theory is a perspective that explains how media like YouTube and its inherent messages can influence children's behavior and learning. This idea states that spending more time on YouTube or other screen media can result in two forms of learning: first-order learning outcomes based on the concrete features of the material, and second-order learning outcomes based on implicit information (Gerbner et al., 2001).

Speech Production

The process by which a person creates a language is the focus of psycholinguistics. Scovel's notion (1998) about language production is analogous to the synthetic talent-demanding activity of an imaginary chef, selecting the right ingredients, weighing them carefully, and then stirring them into a creative new

dish. One of Levelt's most important psycholinguistic models for speech production, which includes phases like conception, formulation, articulation, and self-monitoring, is employed by Scovel (1998).

- Conceptualization

This phase is crucial in speech production due to the fact that it is the phase from which ideas originate, the process of transforming what has been visually perceived into words or lemmas, as the name suggests (Levelt et al., 1999). Because conceptualization is a process that occurs in a person's mind, it seems difficult to recognize what is happening in a person's mind. Consequently, the discourse or circumstance model and the recipient model are two indications that help identify or comprehend the conceptualization stage (Vahlevi et al., 2020). The goal of the receiver model is to conceptualize words via visually displayed objects. In the meantime, they will be conceptualized by the discourse or situation model according to the context of the visually displayed object.

- Formulation

Once someone has conceptualized their thoughts or feelings, the next stage of speech production is formulation. This formulation process is essential for every word that flows from a person's lips. Fluency plays a crucial role during this stage, aiding in the comprehension of the speech process, even if the words appear to simply flow out effortlessly. Levelt et al., (1999) explains that the formulation stage is focused on constructing appropriate sentences through grammatical coding after grasping the intended message the speaker wishes to convey. During this stage, grammatical coding serves as the indicator for formulating the speaker's message (Roelofs & Ferreira, 2022).

- Articulation

The third stage is referred to as articulation. Before articulating their ideas as speech, people first conceptualize their ideas and formulate them into the message they wish to express. The process of creating sounds to differentiate each word or phrase a speaker intends to utter is known as the articulation stage (Levelt et al., 1999). This stage involves the body's articulation system, such as the mouth, larynx or voice box, lungs, and lips, working together simultaneously (Scovel, 1998). Additionally, processing words from a computer program to a printer is similar to this stage of voice production. However, some words could not be pronounced correctly if the printer isn't working properly. Speech will be articulated correctly when the brain's conceptualization and formulation processes are functioning appropriately. Errors in articulation point to a problem, either in the formulation or conceptualization stages.

Sentence production and understanding share a number of commonalities. The words in each person's lexicon have a major role in controlling syntactic organization in both tasks. The exercises determine grammatical structure using the same techniques. The most significant distinction is that a person has total control over the message they want to convey while forming sentences. Conversely, when it comes to comprehension, one has no control and must adopt the viewpoints of others. Meanwhile, sentence formation involves at least four processes (Levelt, cited in MacWhinney, 2001). The first process is message construction. This process takes goals and intentions and then builds a chain of ideas to be articulated. The lexical access process then transforms these ideas into word form. The third process uses positional patterns to organize words into phrases and clauses. While

the fourth process activates a series of verbal gestures through articulatory planning. As in comprehension, these four stages occur in parallel. Even before an individual has completed the construction of the underlying message for a complete sentence, he begins the process of articulating the utterance. Sometimes a person realizes mid-speech that he has forgotten what he would like to utter or do not recognize how to say it. This interlocking, incremental, and interleaved quality of speech production is what gives rise to the errors, pauses, and disfluencies that are frequently detected in one's own and others' speech (MacWhinney, 2001).

- Self-Monitoring

Self-monitoring differs from conceptualization and formulation by offering concrete evidence of what occurs when an individual produces a spoken utterance (Scovel, 1998). This stage focuses on assessing whether the spoken message includes errors, disfluencies, or other issues (Levelt et al., 1999). Two indicators for identifying how self-monitoring works are by observing the actual utterance and/or the beginning of articulation (Roelofs & Ferreira, 2022). When someone chooses the incorrect starting during the conceptualization stage and is unhappy with their statement, they often withdraw and start over. However, as demonstrated in the aforementioned example, when people are content with the conceptualization but make mistakes throughout the formulation and articulation (Scovel, 1998).

English Syntax

Syntax deals with the arrangement of words into larger units such as phrases, clauses, and sentences (Ahunaya et al., 2025; Todd, 1987). Syntax plays a crucial role in organizing sentence structure so that messages can be conveyed clearly and unambiguously. A good understanding of syntax helps non-native speakers grasp the basic rules of English, such as the use of subjects, predicates, objects, and adverbs. Syntax is a branch of linguistics that discusses grammar and matters related to grammar (Raihana et al., 2024). The scope of syntax includes elements such as phrases, clauses, and sentences (Pradestania et al., 2022). English has basic sentence patterns such as Subject-Verb-Object (SVO), which serve as the basis for constructing simple sentences. In addition, structural variations such as compound and complex sentences, which involve the use of conjunctions, subordinate clauses, and prepositional phrases, demonstrate the flexibility and richness of English syntax. Understanding these structures is crucial, as misplacement of sentence elements can lead to ambiguity or misinterpretation. Therefore, mastering syntactic structures not only helps students construct grammatically correct sentences but also improves the clarity and effectiveness of communication in various contexts, both academic and professional (Raihana et al., 2024).

Several previous studies have discussed the influence of YouTube use on children's second language acquisition, such as the study conducted by Handayani et al., (2021). The study aimed to reveal the influence of YouTube Kids on second language acquisition in five-year-old children. By examining the contribution of Ania and Elsia's shows since they were three years old, the researchers used a qualitative method in the form of a case study. From this study, YouTube Kids significantly influences second language acquisition, both in terms of cognition, vocabulary, and pronunciation. Further research was conducted by (Farahsani et al.,

2020). Using the interview method, the researchers interviewed 21 respondents, namely parents of preschool students.

There were four questions to be answered, and the answers were described based on the respondents' opinions. The results showed that children can start learning English through YouTube by watching English songs. Their interest in watching is followed by imitation of words, singing styles, and also singing styles. Parents become guides to improve children's English learning process after watching YouTube. The third study was conducted by (Dewi, 2021). She investigated the effect of watching YouTube on social media on a five-year-old girl's second language acquisition. The study used a qualitative method with descriptive explanations. The results revealed that the participants' second language ability in English was evident from their understanding of films and videos that had been watched repeatedly. Second language proficiency was also evident from their abilities to name objects around them such as fruits and animals and their ability to construct simple sentences in English.

METHOD

This study employs a qualitative method using a case study approach, which is effective for gaining an in-depth understanding of significant issues, events, or phenomena in a natural, real-life context (Crowe et al., 2011). The subject of this study is a 10-year-old boy who started from the age of 6, has frequently watched gaming videos on YouTube. These videos feature native English-speaking vloggers playing Minecraft. Dewantara, the respondent's name, is a native Indonesian speaker, both of his parents also speak Indonesian as their first language. At the age of 6, Dewantara spoke Indonesian while interacting with his friends, however in the long run, the more he watched those videos, the more he began to use English to interact with his friends. Currently, Dewantara is 10 years old.

The questions addressed were about his favorite YouTube channels to trigger him to tell freely and enthusiastically. They were administered in a casual setting in which priorly the researcher asked for permission to have small talk regarding his preferences in certain contents. The researcher collected data in words, phrases, clauses, and sentences from interviews with the respondent. She also recorded the interviews as the respondent answered questions in English. The data analysis technique used after obtaining the interview recordings involved transcribing the results and determining the units of analysis, such as analyzing words, phrases, clauses, and sentences spoken by the respondent. The results were then interpreted and conclusions drawn.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

As described in the previous section, data collection was conducted through interviews with the respondent. The researcher created seven questions in English related to Dewantara's activities regarding YouTube shows he enjoyed. These questions and answers are presented in the following table.

Table 1. Results of the Interview

Number	Questions	Answers	Types of Sentences
1	Do you like watching YouTube?	I personally like watch YouTube **because** it's entertaining and educational features that you can learn.	Complex Sentence
2	Do you have any favorite YouTube channels or vloggers?	Yeah, I like the Goofy Gang, it has multiple members.	Simple Sentence
3	What kinds of YouTube channels do you like to watch?	I like gaming and reaction channels **because** it's so entertaining and to see the reaction on their face, and also gaming. You can see the games.	Complex Sentence
4	Why do you like them?	**Because** it's interesting and also watching gaming videos, it's just fun, and also reaction, it's funny to see their face shocked.	Compound-Complex Sentence
5	Do you understand what they are talking about?	Yes. **Because** we learn English and also by watching videos, by watching English videos, you're learning English, too, by using subtitles, to translate to Indonesian.	Complex Sentence
6	Have you felt confused about what they are talking about?	Me, personally no. It's like.. It feels like you already know **what** it means, eventhough like you cannot translate all of it completely, **but** you know what it means.	Simple Sentence; Compound-Complex Sentence
7	Why do you watch western vloggers instead of the local ones?	The western vloggers, I like English, the Indonesian ones, sometimes I watch, **but** I watch less **because** it's kind of boring.	Compound-Complex Sentence

Based on the interview results, respondents' ability to use phrases, clauses, and sentences demonstrates quite good communicative competence, especially in conveying meaning verbally, although there are still structural inaccuracies. At the word level, the respondent could differentiate parts of speech well. He recognized when he should use adjectives, as in … *it's entertaining and educational features that you can learn* or the use of adverb as in *even though like you cannot translate all of it completely*. This means that he understood functions of each word class in sentences. In addition, at the phrase level, respondents are able to use various types of phrases, such as noun phrases (gaming and reaction channels, the western vloggers), verb phrases or gerunds (watching gaming videos, using subtitles), and prepositional phrases (by watching videos, to translate into Indonesian). These phrases function effectively as fillers for descriptions of manner, purpose, and object, although the choice of grammatical form is not always correct.

Meanwhile, in the use of clauses, respondents demonstrated the ability to construct more than one clause in a single utterance. Main clauses were generally structured in a simple pattern (subject-predicate), while subordinate clauses were used to express causal relationships, concessions, and objectives, characterized by the use of markers such as because, even though, and the to-infinitive construction.

Furthermore, respondents were also able to use simple relative clauses, for example in the form that you can learn, which demonstrated an initial understanding of the expansion of meaning in sentences. However, the relationships between clauses were sometimes not consistently marked, resulting in a structure that was less syntactically neat.

Then, at the sentence level, respondents not only used simple sentences, but also predominantly produced complex sentences and, in some cases, compound-complex sentences. This indicates the ability to link main ideas with reasons, explanations, or arguments. Simple sentences tended to appear in short answers or affirmations of attitudes, while complex sentences were used when respondents explained preferences and experiences in more detail. Overall, despite grammatical errors and structural irregularities, respondents were able to organize phrases, clauses, and sentences functionally so that the intended message could still be clearly understood.

Discussion

Based on the interview results, the researcher found several things as a result of watching YouTube on children's second language acquisition. First, respondents were able to understand all the questions asked by the researcher. This finding is in accordance with what was stated by Gleason & Ratner (1993) that second language acquisition can occur because children are around people who speak a second language. They are accustomed to using a second language because the environment around them uses it. In this case, although both of the respondent's parents always spoke Indonesian to him, but because of the intensity of exposure to English too often through YouTube media, the respondent not only understood English at the word and phrase levels, but was able to understand the sentences asked. This can be seen from the respondents' answers—there is harmony between the questions and answers. In addition, the respondents' ability to answer the researcher's questions indicates the existence of a formulation stage which is the result of conceptualization and formulation of utterances. This is in line with what was stated by (Levelt et al., 1999) that the formulation stage focuses on forming appropriate sentences through grammatical coding after understanding the type of message the speaker wants to convey. In this stage, the indicator for formulating the speaker's message is through grammatical coding.

The second finding, at the English syntax level, the sentences produced by respondents still contain minor grammatical inaccuracies, such as in sentence (1) *I personally like watching YouTube because it's entertaining and educational features that you can learn and sentence* (3) *I like gaming and reaction channels because it's so entertaining and to see the reaction on their face, and also gaming. You can see the games.* The word 'watch' in sentence (3) and 'to see' in sentence (5) should be changed to 'watching' and 'seeing'. Overall, sentences (1) to (7) show a good understanding of the respondents regarding English sentence construction. Respondents do not mix between Indonesian and English so there are no obstacles in pronouncing words, forming phrases, clauses, and sentences. Respondents are able to create simple, compound, and compound sentences. This finding also supports previous research conducted by Dewi (2021), Farahsani et al., (2020), and Handayani et al. (2021) which revealed the influence of YouTube on children's second language acquisition. Furthermore, regarding grammar, respondents were

able to apply the concept of subject-verb agreement in English correctly. Subject-verb agreement is the use of singular verbs for singular subjects, and plural verbs for plural subjects, as in sentence (6) *It feels like you already know what it means*. The respondent correctly added the ending -s to the verbs feels and means because he understood that the subject used was *it*.

The third finding, referring to the third concept in sentence production proposed by Levelt et al., (1999) that after someone conceptualizes their thoughts and formulates them as a message to be conveyed, they will articulate it as speech. At this stage, when conceptualization and formulation in the brain work well, then articulation will also articulate speech well. In relation to the respondent's sentence production, the way he articulated his second language was done smoothly. This means there is good synchronization or formulation in the brain to produce structured and fluent speech. There were no long pauses when the respondent answered the questions. This finding is in line with what was stated by Hu (2016) that the process of learning a second language is greatly influenced by age, because the brain is more malleable and open to new linguistic patterns. The language environment also plays an important role when language learners begin to acquire a foreign language. Young or early learners have great potential to acquire a second language quickly, efficiently, and proficiently because childhood is considered the best period for second language learning. Childhood is also considered a golden age for learning a second language. Therefore, younger learners often have a natural talent for language acquisition (Chen et al., 2022; Gualtieri & Finn, 2022).

The absence of mixed language use among the respondents indicates excellent foreign language skills. They were able to understand and respond appropriately to all questions, despite minor grammatical errors. This demonstrates the uniqueness of a child's language acquisition, considering the environment and the people around them use Indonesian in everyday conversation. This indicates that intensive exposure to English-language media such as YouTube can shape the language system, enabling the respondents to use this language skill consistently. In other words, YouTube plays a significant role in the natural acquisition of a second language, even though the second language is not actively used by those around them.

Additionally, the context in which a person acquires a second language can influence their capacity to learn it. For instance, people who are surrounded by a community where the second language is spoken often find it easier to master and achieve fluency than those who only encounter it in a classroom environment. Nevertheless, there is a specific timeframe when acquiring a language is most effective, which might not be applicable to every aspect of language learning. For example, the capacity to develop a new accent might decrease after the critical period, but the ability to learn new vocabulary and grammatical rules could continue into adulthood (Dey et al., 2024).

CONCLUSION

This study shows that intensive exposure to English-language YouTube content, particularly video game vloggers like Minecraft, has a significant impact on a child’s second language acquisition. Analysis of the respondent's speech revealed that he was able to understand English questions and produce meaningful

answers, although some minor grammatical inaccuracies were still present. These findings confirm that consistent linguistic input from digital media can naturally shape second language acquisition, even when the first language remains dominant in the family environment.

At the syntactic level, the respondent demonstrated mastery of basic English structures, including the ability to form phrases, clauses, and simple, compound, compound-complex sentences, and even function of parts of speech in sentences. Furthermore, the application of subject-verb agreement in most sentences demonstrated a successful grammatical formulation process. Being consistent with Levelt's theory, the respondent was able to fluently navigate the stages of conceptualization, formulation, and articulation, demonstrated by fluent speech without long pauses and without language mixing.

The findings of this study support previous studies that suggest that YouTube contents such as gaming vlogs can be important sources of linguistic input in children's second language acquisition. The age of respondents at initial exposure (6 years) also plays a role in accelerating language acquisition, in line with the view that childhood is the most sensitive period to new linguistic stimuli. Overall, this study concludes that YouTube functions as an effective medium that not only enriches vocabulary but also helps develop syntactic structures and fluency in children's English speech production. Future research could examine the influence of media other than YouTube on children's second language acquisition and compare the SLA among different ages.

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