

ACQUISITION OF EXPRESSIVE SKILLS OF COLOURS AND POST-POSITIONAL LABELS OF SINHALA SPEAKING CHILDREN

T.K. Bandaranayake

*Department of Disability Studies, Faculty of Medicine, University of Kelaniya,
Sri Lanka
b.thilini@yahoo.com*

The study “Acquisition of expressive skills of colours & post-positional labels of Sinhala speaking children (First language acquisition study: Typical development 4 ½ - 5 ½ years)” was carried out to check whether there is an influence of age and gender to acquire colours and postpositional labels and to ensure whether there is an order of emergence for colours and postpositions in Sinhala. Knowledge of the 10 colours (*kalu, sudu, ratu, nil, kaha, tæmbli, ro:sæ, dam, dumburu, kolæ*) and 5 postpositions (*udæ, jaʃæ, issæraha, piʃipassæ, ætulæ*) were checked during the study among the children in the age range of 4 ½ to 5 ½ years by utilizing assessment tools which were culturally and age appropriate specifically to check the knowledge on colours and postpositions. Exploratory, cross sectional, quantitative research was carried out with purposive sampling of 48 typically developing children. Three age groups were used in the study, 16 children from each age groups- 4;6, 5;0 and 5;6 years, with the gender ratio of 1:1, acquiring Sinhala as their first language and attending pre-school/ school. The data was analyzed using a chi-square test and by using the percentage analysis criterion by Barbara Dodd (2003). By the age of 5 ½, children had mastered their expressive skills on 9 colours apart from purple. They could name the basic set of colours correctly and constantly by the age of 5 ½ years. Nevertheless, the children were still developing their knowledge on postpositional labels. There was a gender difference for “Red” where more females distinguished the colour than males. Yet no statistical gender difference was obtained for postpositional labels. Order of emergence for colours follows a similar pattern to the Berlin and Kay hierarchy (1969), and there was a specific order of emergence for expressive skills of postpositions in Sinhala speaking children.