

**STAGES OF SECOND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION IN CHILDREN**

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Abstract: *In today's increasingly globalized world, learning a second language has become more than just an academic skill—it is a gateway to broader communication and cultural understanding. Children, in particular, have a natural ability to acquire languages more quickly and intuitively than adults. However, second language acquisition in children follows several unique stages, each with its own characteristics and challenges. This article explores the stages of second language acquisition in children, highlighting the key features of each phase, the obstacles learners may encounter, and effective teaching strategies to support their language development.*

Key words: *Second language acquisition, first language, second language, language learning, language development.*

Аннотация: *В современном мире, который становится все более глобализированным, изучение второго языка стало чем—то большим, чем просто академический навык - это путь к более широкому общению и культурному взаимопониманию. Дети, в частности, обладают естественной способностью усваивать языки быстрее и интуитивно, чем взрослые. Однако овладение вторым языком у детей проходит несколько уникальных этапов, каждый из которых имеет свои особенности и трудности. В этой статье рассматриваются этапы овладения вторым языком у детей, выделяются ключевые особенности каждого этапа, препятствия, с которыми могут столкнуться учащиеся, и эффективные стратегии обучения для поддержки их языкового развития.*



Ключевые слова: *Овладение вторым языком, первый язык, неродной язык, изучение языка, развитие языка.*

Annotatsiya: *Bugungi globallashuv davrida chet tillarini o'zlashtirish, ayniqsa, bolalikda boshlanishi ta'limda muhim masalaga aylangan. Bolalar tilni kattalarga nisbatan tezroq va tabiiyroq tarzda o'zlashtiradilar. Shu bilan birga, ikkinchi tilni egallashda turli bosqichlar mavjud bo'lib, ularning har biri muayyan xususiyatlarga ega. Ushbu maqolada bolalarda ikkinchi tilni o'zlashtirish bosqichlari, ularning mohiyati hamda samarali o'qitish yo'llari haqida so'z yuritiladi.*

Kalit so'zlar: *Ikkinchi tilni o'zlashtirish, ona tili, ikkinchi til, til o'rganish, til rivojlanishi.*

Stages of Second Language Acquisition in Children

In today's era of globalization, the need to learn a second language has become increasingly important. Language acquired during childhood tends to be more deeply rooted in the brain, and language competence becomes stronger. In linguistics, this process is referred to as **Second Language Acquisition (SLA)**. Children tend to learn languages more naturally and with fewer obstacles than adults. However, this process involves several stages, each with its own features and challenges. This article explores the stages of second language acquisition in children, highlights the key characteristics of each stage, and suggests effective teaching strategies.

First and Second Language Acquisition: Key Differences

Linguists distinguish between the **first language (L1)** and the **second language (L2)**. A first language is the child's native tongue, acquired naturally through daily communication. A second language, on the other hand, is learned later—often for educational, social, or cultural purposes. The age factor plays a significant role in L2 acquisition; the younger the learner, the easier it is to acquire the language.

The Stages of Second Language Acquisition

Researchers typically divide children's second language learning process into **five main stages**:

1. **Pre-production (Silent Period)** At this stage, the child listens and tries to understand the language but does not yet speak. They rely heavily on gestures, facial



expressions, and context to comprehend meaning. This is often called the "silent period."

2. **Early Production** The child starts producing simple words and phrases. Vocabulary is still limited (about 1,000 words), and grammar errors are common, but the child begins to respond verbally.

3. **Speech Emergence** Verbal skills improve. The child can form simple sentences and answer basic questions. Communication becomes more active.

4. **Intermediate Fluency** The child constructs more complex sentences, expresses thoughts clearly, and makes fewer grammar mistakes. Vocabulary increases significantly.

5. **Advanced Fluency** At this stage, the child speaks fluently and naturally, often at a level close to native speakers. Language skills are strong enough for academic and social use.

Challenges at Each Stage and How to Overcome Them

Each stage brings its own challenges:

- Limited vocabulary
- Incorrect pronunciation
- Grammar mistakes
- Fear of speaking (social anxiety)

To overcome these issues, children need constant encouragement, interactive teaching methods, games, visuals, and engaging language activities. Creating a stress-free learning environment is key.

The Role of Environment and Teaching Methodologies

The success of second language acquisition is highly influenced by the **learning environment**. Effective acquisition is supported by:

- Parental involvement
- Supportive and friendly classroom setting
- Proper teaching approaches
- Use of multimedia and educational technology



Play-based learning and consistent exposure to the target language greatly enhance the learning process.

Children learn languages most effectively when they are engaged and interested. Understanding the stages of second language acquisition allows educators and parents to provide the right support at the right time. When each phase is carefully addressed with appropriate methods, children can develop strong language proficiency. Teachers are encouraged to apply individualized, student-centered strategies to ensure optimal results.

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