

First Language Acquisition and Steps of Learning Mother Tongue

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Annotation-First language acquisition refers to the way children learn their native language. Second language acquisition refers to the learning of another language or languages besides the native language. It happened spontaneously o children while their parents are talking. Children learn mother tongue by hearing and because of this they can grasp mother tongue. They may listen only this language during the day. The phase of learning first language looks really simple however, it has also different kind of stages that can be learn.

Key words- first language, mother tongue, grasp, achieve, steps, vocabulary, imitation, words, representation, second language, phonology, children.

1. Introduction

Language acquisition is the process by which humans acquire the capacity to perceive and comprehend [language](#) (in other words, gain the ability to be aware of language and to understand it), as well as to produce and use [words](#) and [sentences](#) to communicate.

Language acquisition involves structures, rules and representation. The capacity to successfully use language requires one to acquire a range of tools including [phonology](#), [morphology](#), [syntax](#), [semantics](#), and an extensive [vocabulary](#). Language can be vocalized as in speech, or manual as in [sign](#). Human language capacity is represented in the brain. Even though human language capacity is finite, one can say and understand an infinite number of sentences, which is based on a syntactic principle called [recursion](#). Evidence suggests that every individual has three recursive mechanisms that allow sentences to go indeterminately. These three mechanisms are: *relativization*, *complementation* and *coordination*.¹ There are two main guiding principles in first-language acquisition: [speech perception](#) always precedes [speech production](#), and the gradually evolving system by which a child learns a language is built up one step at a time, beginning with the distinction between individual [phonemes](#).² Language acquisition usually refers to **first-language acquisition**, which studies infants' acquisition of their [native language](#), whether that be spoken language or signed language as a result of [prelingual deafness](#), though it can also refer to **bilingual first language acquisition** (BFLA), which refers to an infant's simultaneous acquisition of two native languages.³ This is distinguished from [second-language acquisition](#), which deals with the acquisition (in both [children](#) and adults) of additional languages. In addition to speech, reading and writing a language with an entirely different script compounds the complexities of true foreign language [literacy](#). Language acquisition is one of the quintessential human traits.⁴

2. Main part

For children learning their native language, linguistic competence develops in stages, from babbling to one word to two word, then telegraphic speech. Babbling is now considered the earliest form of language acquisition because infants will produce sounds based on what language input they receive. One word sentences (holophrastic speech) are generally monosyllabic in

¹ Lightfoot, David (2010). "Language acquisition and language change". Wiley Interdisciplinary Reviews: Cognitive Science. 1 (5): 677– 684. [doi:10.1002/wcs.39](https://doi.org/10.1002/wcs.39). ISSN 1939-5078. PMID 26271652.

² Fry, Dennis (1977). *Homo loquens, Man as a talking animal*. Cambridge University Press. pp. 107– 108. ISBN 978-0-521-29239-9.

³ Bergman, C. (1976). 'Interference vs. independent development in infant bilingualism'. In: Bilingualism in the bicentennial and beyond. Ed. by G. Keller, R. Teschner, and S. Viera. New York: Bilingual Press/Editorial Bilingüe, pp. 86-96. Genesee, F. (1989).

⁴ Lightfoot, David (2010). "Language acquisition and language change". Wiley Interdisciplinary Reviews: Cognitive Science. 1 (5): 677– 684. [doi:10.1002/wcs.39](https://doi.org/10.1002/wcs.39). ISSN 1939-5078. PMID 26271652.f\

consonant-vowel clusters. During two word stage, there are no syntactic or morphological markers, no inflections for plural or past tense, and pronouns are rare, but the intonation contour extends over the whole utterance. The three theories of language acquisition: imitation, reinforcement and analogy, do not explain very well how children acquire language. Imitation does not work because children produce sentences never heard before, such as "cat stand up table." Even when they try to imitate adult speech, children cannot generate the same sentences because of their limited grammar. And children who are unable to speak still learn and understand the language, so that when they overcome their speech impairment they immediately begin speaking the language. Reinforcement also does not work because it actually seldomly occurs and when it does, the reinforcement is correcting pronunciation or truthfulness, and not grammar. A sentence such as "apples are purple" would be corrected more often because it is not true, as compared to a sentence such as "apples is red" regardless of the grammar. Analogy also cannot explain language acquisition. Analogy involves the formation of sentences or phrases by using other sentences as samples. If a child hears the sentence, "I painted a red barn," he can say, by analogy, "I painted a blue barn." Yet if he hears the sentence, "I painted a barn red," he cannot say "I saw a barn red." The analogy did not work this time, and this is not a sentence of English.

For children, acquiring a language is an effortless achievement that occurs:

- Without explicit teaching,
- On the basis of positive evidence (i.e., what they hear),
- Under varying circumstances, and in a limited amount of time,
- In identical ways across different languages.

Children achieve linguistic milestones in parallel fashion, regardless of the specific language they are exposed to. For example, at about 6-8 months, all children start to babble that is, to produce repetitive syllables like *bababa*. At about 10-12 months they speak their first words, and between 20 and 24 months they begin to put words together. It has been shown that children between 2 and 3 years speaking a wide variety of languages use infinitive verbs in main clauses or omit sentential subjects although the language they are exposed to may not have this option. Across languages young children also over-regularize the past tense or other tenses of [irregular verbs](#). Interestingly, similarities in language acquisition are observed not only across spoken languages, but also between spoken and signed languages."⁵

Typical Speech Timetable for English-Speaking Child

- Week 0 - Crying
- Week 6 - Cooing (goo-goo)
- Week 6 - Babbling (ma-ma)
- Week 8 - Intonation patterns
- Week 12: Single words
- Week 18 - Two-word utterances
- Year 2: Word endings
- Year 2½: Negatives
- Year 2¼: [Questions](#)
- Year 5: Complex constructions
- Year 10: Mature speech patterns⁶

Conclusion

All in all, most of the scientists can suggest different kind of theories and steps of grasping mother tongue. It can give us thinking critically and compare problems and solutions. Although they have some similarities, there are also differences from

⁵ (María Teresa Guasti, *Language Acquisition: The Growth of Grammar*. MIT Press, 2002)

⁶ (Jean Aitchison, *The Language Web: The Power and Problem of Words*. Cambridge University Press, 1997)

each other. Dr Suzuki has called his teaching method the **Mother-Tongue Approach**, inspired by the fact that children so effectively learn to speak their native tongue. Prompted and encouraged by the mother's love and the family environment, the child responds and develops this most difficult of skills, that of intelligible speech. Children are different and will hence learn at different paces. Therefore, it should be tried not to rush them and there should have a clear plan of how you will teach the language and take it step by step.

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