

DEVELOPING THE BRAIN: TOWARDS LANGUAGE ACQUISITION DURING CHILDHOOD FROM AGE 2 TO 10: A SYSTEMATIC REVIEW

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Abstract: The early age is often recognized as the optimal period to start the acquisition of a foreign language. The optimal period for acquiring linguistic skills is during early life. Studying another language is the most efficient means of breaking beyond the limitations of just one language and culture. Moreover, gaining exposure to a different culture allows individuals to get a much deeper comprehension. Individually possessed. Hence, language acquisition may be seen as a valuable instrument for assimilating into a new culture and community. Learning a language entails acquiring knowledge about a different culture. Adolescent learners have high levels of motivation when it comes to acquiring a second language. The immature brain has remarkable plasticity, enabling it to readily acquire novel information. They possess a strong inclination to explore and understand the world surrounding them. The earlier we begin the greater the duration available for language exposure. The brain of young learners is sometimes referred to as a malleable brain. They have the ability to acquire knowledge without conscious awareness. Adults, in reality, have minds occupied with many concerns, whereas children's minds are focused on their lessons. In this study, we will discuss several benefits of early language acquisition. Studies indicate that the optimal period to teach fresh languages to a young kid is from birth to the age of 10. This review finding explores how children may acquire language more rapidly, have improved retention, and often have near-native pronunciation. Ultimately, this research emphasizes the benefits and drawbacks of acquiring a foreign language throughout infancy

Keywords – Offspring, non-native tongue, early years of life, personal culture, early acquisition of foreign languages

INTRODUCTION

An essential determinant in language acquisition nowadays is the age factor. First and foremost, the majority of research studies indicate that there are several benefits to acquiring a language at a young age. Several studies indicate that children have a greater capacity for language acquisition compared to adults. To approach foreign language learning with a strong commitment, it is crucial to begin at an early stage. Children outperform adults in acquiring English pronunciation. According to a study called "Teaching Infants and Toddlers a Second Language," mentioned in one of the books, it is irrelevant how long immigrants stay in the United States. What matters is that if they arrive at a young age, they will sound like native-born Americans. Furthermore, the research demonstrates that infants possess innate understanding of the grammatical correctness of a statement. It may be said that adults lack this inherent understanding. It is worth noting that young learners possess a remarkable ability to converse fluently in other languages and may adeptly mimic the speech patterns of native speakers. Language serves as a reflection of the authentic cultural norms and values. The theory of the critical period may be discussed here. Lennerberg observed that intrinsic behavior can only be acquired within a certain early developmental period. This time is often referred to as "The Window of Opportunity" or "The Critical Period". He drew a parallel between birds and children, stating that if particular bird species do not hear other birds singing at a young age, they may be unable to replicate the songs they hear later in life. Is there a comparable instance in human history when youngsters may effortlessly learn language throughout their early years?

Little kids may attain native-like fluency with the same ease as they acquired the ability to walk. While adults must navigate a structured approach to learning their first language, which involves studying specific grammatical rules and engaging in repetitive exercises, young children acquire a foreign language effortlessly by absorbing its sounds, structures, intonation patterns, and rules instinctively, just like they did with their own language. The developing brain has innate plasticity, which allows for natural acquisition of language (Ghasemi, Hashemi, 2011, p. 875).

Many specialists think that children who acquire the language before the age of 10 may talk correctly and fluently in the native tongue. Therefore, a youngster has a higher probability of speaking fluently the sooner they get acquainted with a foreign language.

However, acquiring a language aside from one's mother tongue can help one become more socially adept throughout life. One major benefit of learning a foreign language is that one will have more access to employment possibilities and have a deeper knowledge of both other cultures and one's own. The advantages of learning a second language in today's world, raising one's level of economic competitiveness abroad, facilitating international communication, and preserving and managing a nation's political and security interests. Studies have shown that youngsters who acquire languages before reaching puberty have a higher likelihood of speaking a foreign language with perfect pronunciation. Furthermore, a child's exposure to the cultures of various countries broadened his perspectives and gave him the chance to interact with others. We now know that learning a foreign language has a lot of unexpected advantages for kids. Studies have shown that those who possess a foreign language have greater communication skills, enhanced cognitive growth, deeper cultural understanding, and ultimately, more favourable employment prospects.

Morrison, F. J., and Ferreira, F. (1994). Furthermore, when they go to college, all of today's kids will need to be proficient in two languages. According to research, a child's optimal window for learning a new language is from birth until age ten. The young learner will pick up the language more quickly, remember it better, and most of the time pronounce it almost perfectly. A young youngster can learn and comprehend up to five languages, according to recent studies!

A lot of parents think carefully about how to introduce a new language to their child. The multilingual method is better for very young children, according to several specialists. Parents of today understand the value of bilingualism. All parents now need to know is where to go for help in locating entertaining and reasonably priced multilingual items that will introduce their youngster to the target language. Compared to five years ago, the internet has greatly simplified their search. To have a sense of the content and manner of language learning within that specific programme, look for multilingual programmes that provide online samples of their visual or audio products.

DISCUSSION

1.1 CHILDREN'S LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

These instances of language acquisition, cognition, and generation just illustrate a small fraction of the much advancement that occurs from infancy to linguistic

maturation. During this phase, infants explore the fundamental elements included in the sounds or gestures of their language. They acquire knowledge on how these elements are combined to form larger sequences and associate these combinations with specific meanings. These processes occur concurrently, necessitating youngsters to assimilate their abilities while acquiring the ability to decipher the intricacies of communication that include them. Although contemporary computers are presently unable to handle the many levels of complexity involved, young toddlers effortlessly solve language problems, sometimes exceeding their own input even when it misses the anticipated structure. Equally resolute, academics are using several approaches to reveal the processes that underlie language learning. Prior to newborns producing their first verbal expression, their early language acquisition pathways may be assessed by documenting minor reactions to novel sound combinations. Once toddlers start to connect words, investigations using immediate time indicators of language acquisition may uncover how linguistic and nonlinguistic information are combined during the act of listening. Minimal language exposure in natural studies may elucidate the innate language-learning abilities of infants and their impact on language development and evolution. As these procedures and other methods that explore the child's cognitive processes are refined and combined, they will uncover the child's approach to the challenge of acquiring a language.

Children who are given the opportunity to study a foreign language also have the opportunity to get exposure to many cultural aspects such as literature, music, and arts, due to their interaction with different civilizations.

It is recommended to teach a second language to children as if it were their native language, using methods such as songs, games, nursery rhymes, and natural conversation. Learning is almost unattainable without the inclusion of enjoyment. Learning is facilitated when information is presented in an enjoyable or emotionally engaging manner. This is because the brain stem, often known as the reptile brain, governs several involuntary bodily activities, such as respiration (Adžija Sindik 2014, p. 52).

Acquiring a language is a very beneficial endeavour for individuals of all age groups, but youngsters, in particular, stand to benefit the most from this immersive experience. Children are always engaged in the process of exploration and acquiring knowledge.

They are regarded as very proficient language learners. Where should I go? Dr. Curtiss, a Professor of Linguistics, observes that the number of languages infants is exposed to does not seem to affect their ability to acquire them. Regardless of the quantity, children possess a remarkable capacity for language acquisition. They have the capacity to acquire many spoken languages concurrently, if they are exposed to them in a systematic and regular manner. Children possess an inherent ability to acquire and develop this talent. They have the ability to acquire many languages simultaneously. It has a beneficial impact on cognitive development. The benefits may be enumerated as follows:

- Facilitates and augments a child's cognitive growth
- Enhances pupils' cognitive flexibility
- Enhances a kid's comprehension of their mother tongue
- Equips a youngster with the capacity to interact with others they would normally not have the opportunity to engage with this case.

1.1.2 THE OPTIMAL PERIOD FOR ACQUIRING PROFICIENCY IN A FOREIGN LANGUAGE

Nowadays, well-informed educational institutions have a greater understanding. Elementary school curriculum includes the teaching of foreign languages. Young children have a greater capacity for acquiring knowledge compared to older high school pupils. However, according to recent study, for optimal results, it is recommended to start the process at an even earlier stage.

Commence the process of language acquisition in children at the stage when they are beginning to acquire their first language. Infants possess a remarkable capacity for assimilation. In the present-day intricate society, acquiring a foreign language is not an indulgence but rather an essential need. It is now understood that the act of learning a foreign language provides unexpected advantages for youngsters (Bloch & Edwards, 1999). Studies have shown that those who possess proficiency in a foreign language experience enhanced communication skills, greater cognitive development, heightened cultural awareness, and ultimately, increased prospects for employment. In addition, it is expected that all children of today will need to possess fluency in two languages by the time they enter college. Studies indicate that the optimal period to expose a young

kid to different languages is from infancy until the age of 10. The youngster will acquire the language more rapidly, have improved retention, and often exhibit near-native pronunciation. Recent study suggests that children up to the age of 5 have the capacity to acquire and comprehend up to five different languages.

1.2. COMMENCE THE PROCESS OF ACQUIRING A NEW LANGUAGE.

From birth, children start acquiring language skills, since they focus on their parents' voices rather than random sounds or other languages. However, it is not until about the age of 10 that they really grasp the intricacies of language. Truly, our language acquisition is a continuous process that never ceases. This behavior, such as foals walking shortly after being born, does not align with what we often define as 'instinct' in animals.

However, it is at least uncomplicated, isn't it? Indeed, it is evident that children's language acquisition is influenced by the availability of several language options. It has been observed that youngsters, quite frankly, do not acquire a foreign language if they are able to avoid acquiring it.

1.3 FUNDAMENTAL PHASES OF LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

1.3.1 PHASE ONE — ACQUIRING PHONEMES

At birth, infants possess the ability to produce and perceive phonetic elements from all linguistic systems around the globe. There are around 150 phonemes in approximately 6500 languages. Nevertheless, it is worth noting that no language encompasses all 150 sounds. Phonemes refer to the sounds used in a language, and the English language has around 44 of them. Certain languages use a greater number of features, whereas others employ a lesser number. During this developmental phase, infants acquire the ability to distinguish between phonemes that are part of their native language and those that are not. The capacity to identify and generate certain sounds is referred to as "phonemic awareness," which is crucial for youngsters who are acquiring reading skills.

1.3.2 PHASE TWO — ACQUIRING VOCABULARY

At this stage, infants primarily acquire knowledge of how the phonemes in a language combine to convey significance. For instance, kids acquire the knowledge that the

phonetic representations m, ah, m, and ee correspond to the entity that provides them with affection and nourishment - their mother. This is a noteworthy progression since all our spoken communication essentially consists on a continuous flow of auditory signals. In order to comprehend such auditory stimuli, a kid must possess the ability to discern the boundaries between individual words. These are referred to as "word boundaries." Children are not precisely acquiring language, however. Children are acquiring morphemes, which may or may not correspond to whole words. That is really less perplexing than it may seem. A morpheme is a phonetic unit or sequence of phonetic units that has semantic significance, such as the term "mommy". The term "mommy" consists of two morphemes: "mommy" and "s". At this developmental stage, children are able to comprehend that the symbol (s) indicates plurality, or "more than one," and they will understand that when this sound is appended to other words, it conveys the same meaning - "more than one." To accurately record the time-dependent nature of these impacts and to detect individual variations in the learning trajectory, the track L1 changes among people throughout an entire phase of L2 learning. (Brice,K., et al (2015)

1.3.3 PHASE THREE – ACQUIRING SENTENCE STRUCTURE

At this time, youngsters acquire the ability to construct sentences. That implies their ability to arrange words in the appropriate sequence. As an example, individuals acquire the knowledge that in the English language, the correct phrasing is "I want a biscuit" and "I want a chocolate cookie," rather than "Want I a cookie" or "I want cookie chocolate." Children also acquire the ability to distinguish between grammatical accuracy and semantic significance. Noam Chomsky illustrated this distinction with the statement "Colourless green ideas sleep furiously." Children will see that although the phrase is grammatically accurate, it lacks coherence. They are aware that green is a hue and, as such, cannot be devoid of colour. Harrison and Papa (2005). In the subject of Second Language Acquisition, one of the issues that is examined and argued the most often is the impact that age has on the process of learning a second language. Muñoz, C. (2010)

1.4 CHILDREN ACQUIRE LANGUAGES EFFORTLESSLY.

Envision yourself confronted with the subsequent predicament. It is essential to uncover the inherent organization of a complex system including several components, all derived from a limited range of resources. These components may be combined

into an unlimited number of configurations. While just a portion of those options is accurate, the subset itself is almost limitless. In order to effectively communicate, it is essential that you have a comprehensive understanding of the fundamental components of this system. You, on the other hand, are a little kid.

This system represents human language. The fundamental components of language consist of words as units, the tiny set of sounds that make up these words as materials, and the sentences that may be formed by combining these words. Considering the intricate nature of this system, it is unlikely that young individuals would be able to uncover its fundamental framework and use it for communication purposes. However, the majority do this task willingly and effortlessly, often during the first years of their existence. Regarding Acquire knowledge at a young age Young children possess distinct aptitude for acquiring a foreign language. The maturing brain is inherently programmed to absorb language, and this process will never be as instinctive or effortless again. ÇAĞAÇ, F. G. (2018).

1.4.1. CHILDREN ACQUIRE A FOREIGN LANGUAGE INSTINCTIVELY.

Introducing a kid to a foreign language from an early age enables them to maximize their capacity for learning, since it influences the development of their brain at its most adaptable phase. Young children possess distinct aptitude for acquiring a foreign language.

Acquiring a second language throughout early childhood is intellectually comparable to acquiring a native language. Young children may attain native-like fluency with the same ease as they acquired the ability to walk. While adults must navigate a structured approach to learning their first language, which involves studying specific grammatical rules and engaging in repetitive exercises, young children have the innate ability to absorb the phonological structures, intonation patterns, and rules of a foreign language effortlessly, just like they did with their own language. The youthful brain has innate plasticity, being specifically pre-programmed to effortlessly absorb language. ” (Fromkin, et al., 2003, p. 27).

The period of early life is optimal for the learning of language. The ability to acquire a foreign language decreases as one gets older. During the period from infancy until puberty, the brain undergoes a process of natural language acquisition, in which it becomes firmly established in its ability to learn and use language. As a kid reaches

puberty, the process of language acquisition and retention undergoes a transformation, becoming less adaptable.

What is the reason for children's proficiency in language acquisition, whereas adults who are motivated to acquire languages struggle with it? Aside from inherent ability, children possess many formidable advantages:

- They may dedicate almost all of their time to it. Adults see dedicating thirty minutes to studying each day as burdensome.
- They have a high level of motivation. Adults never find themselves in prolonged proximity to someone with whom they must engage in conversation but are unable to do so; conversely, children are unable to get a significant portion of their desires without acquiring the ability to communicate via language(s).

1.4.2 ACQUIRING LINGUISTIC SKILLS THROUGHOUT CHILDHOOD

The crucial educational achievements of language acquisition include two essential components that are vital for students who will need to engage in an ever more linked global society: proficiency in the language and the capacity to effectively communicate with others. Developing an awareness of another group's culture and gaining insight into one's own cultural and language backgrounds by comparing them to a different language and society. Acquiring the ability to effectively communicate in situations where participants have limited shared language resources. Acquiring the ability to connect with others across cultural barriers (Fernandez, 2008, p. 5). "During the stage of racial and cultural development, children typically transition from perceiving race and gender solely in physical terms to understanding them from a social perspective. They start to grasp the sociopolitical factors that shape culture."

Identities are a key means through which people care about and care for what is going on around them. They are important bases from which people create new activities, new worlds, and new ways of being". (Cited in Kim 2003:138) In fact, the relationship between language and identity is very important; theories of the language reflect our identities. The educators need to take this relationship very seriously. We can say that speech, speakers, and social relationships are inseparable. Here related to the issue of child development and identity language patterns as Bonny Norton (1997, p. 410) who stated the following: "In this view, every time language learners speak, they are

not only exchanging information with their interlocutors; they are also constantly organizing and recognizing a sense of who they are and how they relate to the social world. They are, in other words, engaged in identity construction and negotiation". Acquiring proficiency in a language requires substantial effort, even for those with exceptional language learning abilities. Therefore, it is essential to be ready to exert significant effort, maintain a consistent study routine, and sustain high levels of motivation by acknowledging personal achievements in language use and knowledge expansion. Establish consistent weekly objectives for vocabulary acquisition, reading volume, and listening duration. Maintain a log of your activities to monitor your advancement. Nation, P. (2014).

1.5 LEARNING LANGUAGE FROM 2 YEARS TO 10 YEARS

During the developmental stage between 2 and 10 years children engage in the act of imitation. This is a critical phase for them. They will mimic everything indiscriminately, without regard for its moral value. This phase has a significant effect on the formation of a child's character and might potentially affect their social interactions. Parents have a crucial role as role models for their children. For a youngster, mimicking the behaviour of their elders is not only a kind of play. The youngsters acquire knowledge by mimicking. According to Vygotsky (1978), human learning is dependent on social interactions and is a gradual process through which children assimilate the intellectual abilities of individuals in their environment. A crucial aspect of learning is that it stimulates many internal growth mechanisms that can only occur when the kid is actively engaging with others in their surroundings and collaborating with their classmates. Children get a comprehensive understanding of the language they are learning by seeing their parents' authentic grammar use, as well as the unique linguistic advancements they have achieved, all within a unified grammatical framework. Based on the aforementioned notion, it can be stated that children acquire knowledge via the process of emulating a role model.

The language learning model provides a theoretical framework that infants use to systematically acquire the structure of their language. Kindergarten students may enhance their verbal skills via engaging in conversations, which can encourage the participation of others. They have the ability to use language in many ways, such via inquiry, conversation, or vocal expression. The objects around the children will acquire significance when they possess knowledge of their own names, personal

encounters, and the circumstances that enable them to articulate the event. The process of language is conducted in a methodical manner. Between the ages of one and five, children acquire a significant understanding of the intricacies of their mother tongue without the need for explicit instruction. Tomlinson (1985) proposes three reasons: Biological variables, imitation, and conceptual advancement. Tangyong and Sylvia (1988) claim that the children's physical attributes are mentioned in six different concerns. Kindergarteners are quite active, to start. They like physical exercise for its own sake and have strong body control. Second, kindergarteners need regular rest intervals due to their propensity for spurts of activity. They often fail to see the need of slowing down. Third, compared to the muscles controlling the fingers and hands, the children's big muscles are better developed. They could thus be very awkward at doing things like buttoning jackets and tying shoes, or they might be physically incapable of doing them. Fourth, kindergarteners may have poor eye-hand coordination because they have trouble focusing their eyes on little things. Fifth, despite their robust and flexible bodies, the children's brain-protecting bones are skill-soft. Sixth, despite the fact that males are larger than girls, girls outgrow boys in almost every other developmental domain, particularly fine motor abilities. Therefore, it is not surprising if guys have trouble handling little items.

On the other hand, Budiharso, T. (2019) stated that when it comes to educating children in the early stages of their development, norms, etiquette, morals, and other essential parts of communication are quite beneficial. In research on naturalistic language learning, the duration of exposure is considered equivalent to the duration of living in a community where the target language is spoken. This period starts at the time of language acquisition (or immigration) and continues until the time of testing. Due to the superior rate of progress shown by those who start earlier, it has been suggested that comparisons should be made after a sufficiently long time to ensure that the measurement is based on the final achievement rather than the rate of progress (see to Krashen, Long, and Scarcella 1979, Snow 1983). DeKeyser (2000) proposes that a minimum duration of 10 years is required to guarantee final achievement and not the impacts that are being detected. In the early years of life, children acquire knowledge by using their senses to explore and experience their surroundings. A child's sense organs are fully functional at birth. Exception: Visual system development occurs at age five, with increased ocular diameter sharpening perception. Daloiso, M. (2007).

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

The English language should be offered as several courses, including science-related vocabulary and other specialized training courses. Subjects such as science, history, social studies, and biology should be taught in the English language. By using this approach, the proficiency and efficiency in language acquisition are greatly enhanced. Enrolling in a primary school and interacting with children is an optimal method for language acquisition. Acquiring a language throughout the first ten years of life, using the native language, enables impaired kids to autonomously comprehend and express themselves in a foreign language, such as English, without the need for translation, interpretation, or alteration of its original meaning from Persian. This implies that the individual will possess the ability to speak a language fluently, as if it were their natural tongue, without the need for mentally translating from Persian to English. The period of early life is optimal for the learning of language. The ability to acquire a foreign language decreases as one gets older. During the period from infancy until puberty, the brain undergoes natural processes that enable it to learn language in a predetermined manner. During adolescence, the process of language acquisition and storage undergoes a transformation, becoming less adaptable.

According to several experts, acquiring language skills before the age of ten enables youngsters to talk with accuracy and fluency, similar to a native speaker. Consequently, the younger youngsters are exposed to a foreign language, the greater their likelihood of achieving fluency in speaking. On the contrary, acquiring languages other than one's native language may cultivate a lasting skill to effectively communicate with others. Language is an instrument for cultural change. Language may be used to learn about oneself or explore different cultures. Language enables us to explore other cultures and lifestyles, enabling communication with people from across the globe, enriching our lives. Exploring another culture may open our minds to new ideas, traditions, and behaviors. By providing insight into global events, it may help us become knowledgeable and responsible citizens of our country and the globe. Realizing new cultures fosters interaction, collaboration, and mutual gain. Language maintains the history and customs of a people, despite the differing ethnic and cultural norms that cannot be imagined. This firsthand knowledge may lead to cultural understanding.

Based on the discussion above, we can give recommendation as follows:

- Indeed, there are several benefits to the pursuit of learning a foreign language. Acquiring proficiency in a foreign language enhances our personal experiences and
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opens up several possibilities by enabling us to effectively interact and establish connections with others from diverse cultures and ethnicities.

- Undoubtedly, we are now experiencing a period of significant transformation. Currently, the acquisition of foreign language skills has become a crucial aspect of education. Businesses and professions actively recruit individuals who possess fluency in many languages. Employers want their staff to possess intercultural competence.
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