

Learning foreign language at an early age as a great advantage on the next stage of it's aquisition

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Specificity of foreign language as an academic discipline is defined apart from the fact that it is different from native language acquisition. Foreign language is a discipline which considerably differs from other academic disciplines by a number of characteristics. Essential characteristic of language is that it is a form of existence of consciousness. It is possible to generalize and hand on social and historical experience of mankind through language [1, 2].

Learning a second language at an early age is possible and of great advantage for a child. All children have the cerebral capacity to learn a second language in the first years of life.

Bilingual children are in contact with a second language from an early age and develop both languages at the same time. When reaching an adult age a child which was educated bilingually has the capacity to dominate both languages. But not only bilingual children can take advantages from the early learning of a second language. Children who do not have a real tie with a foreign language can also take advantage of learning a second language [5]. When people immerse themselves in a language through play and exploration like children do, they can learn a language quickly and easily. So the more we become child-like in language learning, the easier it is. Children which grow up in a well-rounded environment learn at least 2,000 basic words by the time they are four years old. Simply observing how babies learn to talk proves that they are natural learners.

Preschool Years Are Vital Years

"During this period and especially the first three years of life, the foundations for thinking, language, vision, attitudes, aptitudes, and other characteristics are laid down," says R. Kotulak [6]. Consequently, it would be a waste not to use a child's natural ability for learning during his or her most vital years, when learning a second language is as easy as learning the first. Since 50 percent of the ability to learn is developed in the first years of life and another 30 percent by the age of eight, early childhood development programs have the opportunity to encourage early learning and development. However it does not mean that 50 to 80 percent of person's intelligence, wisdom, or knowledge is formed during early childhood. It simply means that during the first few years of life, children form their main learning pathways in the brain [6]. There are six main pathways to the brain. They include learning by sight, sound, taste, touch, smell, and doing. Everything that an individual learns later in life will grow from the information gained during these early years.

Teaching foreign language in the early age stages is useful for every child irrespective of their abilities, because it makes:

- indisputable favourable influence on development of child's psychic functions: his memory, thinking process, attention, perception, imagination;
- stimulative influence on general abilities of child's speech.

According to J. Piaget children pass the same stages of cognitive development but with different speed [4]. Periods of a fast progress might alternate with a period when success is less visible. Parents, tutor or kindergartner must know periods of cognitive, emotional, physical, social development and speech development for more effective planning of the process of teaching foreign language. It is also important to be sensible to the level of speech development in native language. Cognitive development is connected with general intellectual development. Concepts that were acquired in native language might be transferred to the foreign language understanding.

If to take into account period when a child is sensitive to perception and reproduction of speech it is easier to evolve and conserve facility of vocal apparatus for the next development of speech's ability [3].

Here are some ways of teaching children a second language:

1. Learn by doing. Play grocery store, make a snack, or take a walk. While you are interacting with the children during these activities, speak a second or third language.

2. Reinforce with pictures and sounds. Say the sounds of the language that accompany a picture in a playful way. For example, "A is for apple".

3. Learning should be funny. The more fun makes learning of a language, the more a child will want to stay with it. Learning while playing is the best way to learn because it creates emotional attachments, and emotion is the door to learning.

4. Learning in a relaxed but challenging state. Never stress a child.

5. Learning with music and rhythm. Music is one of the ways to use the whole brain. Do you still remember the songs you learned in early childhood? Most people do because lyrics combined with music are easier to learn.

6. Learning with lots of movement—use the body and the mind together. The brain and the body are combined. We know that we learn more when we move as we learn. Encourage children to dance and move with the rhythm when learning a second or third language [5].

Why the early age was chosen? First of all it is characterized as a sensitive period of child's psyche. Secondly learning foreign language at this period gives a big practical effect in quality's improvement on the next stages of it's acquisition.

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