



**“ZAMONAVIY ILMIY YONDASHUVLAR VA TEXNOLOGIK
TARAQQIYOTNING USTUVOR YO‘NALISHLARI” nomli Respublika
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CHILDREN LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

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Abstract

This paper examines child language acquisition from interdisciplinary perspectives, including psycholinguistics, neurolinguistics, cognitive science, and sociolinguistics. It analyzes biological foundations, cognitive development, social interaction, and language input mechanisms. The study integrates major theoretical contributions by Chomsky, Pinker, Piaget, Vygotsky, Krashen, and Lenneberg, presenting language acquisition as a complex interaction of innate abilities, environmental exposure, and cognitive maturation. Special attention is given to developmental stages, language errors, and the Critical Period Hypothesis, which emphasizes the biological time constraints on language acquisition.

KEYWORDS

Child language acquisition, psycholinguistics, neurolinguistics, Universal Grammar, cognitive development, sociocultural theory, language input, bilingualism, Critical Period Hypothesis, overregularization.

BOLALARDA TILNI EGALLASH

ОСВОЕНИЕ ЯЗЫКА ДЕТЬМИ

Annotatsiya. Ushbu maqolada bolalarda til o‘zlashtirish jarayoni psixolingvistika, neyrolingvistika, kognitiv fanlar va sotsiolingvistika nuqtayi nazaridan kompleks tarzda tahlil qilinadi. Til o‘zlashtirishning biologik asoslari, kognitiv rivojlanish, ijtimoiy muhit va lingvistik input mexanizmlari o‘rganiladi. Chomsky, Pinker, Piaget, Vygotsky, Krashen va Lenneberg nazariyalari asosida til o‘zlashtirish tug‘ma qobiliyatlar, muhit



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ta'siri va miya rivojlanishining o'zaro integratsiyasi sifatida talqin qilinadi. Ayniqsa, Critical Period Hypothesis va bolalar nutqidagi xatolar (overregularization) ilmiy jihatdan tahlil qilinadi.

Kalit so'zlar. Bolalarda til o'zlashtirish, psixolingvistika, neyrolingvistika, universal grammatika, kognitiv rivojlanish, ijtimoiy muhit, til inputi, ikki tillilik, kritik davr gipotezasi, xatolar tahlili.

Аннотация. В данной статье рассматривается процесс овладения языком детьми с точки зрения психолингвистики, нейролингвистики, когнитивной науки и социолингвистики. Анализируются биологические основы, когнитивное развитие, социальное взаимодействие и механизмы языкового ввода. Работа основана на теориях Чомского, Пинкера, Пиаже, Выготского, Крашена и Леннеберга и рассматривает овладение языком как результат взаимодействия врожденных способностей, окружающей среды и когнитивного развития.

КЛЮЧЕВЫЕ СЛОВА. Овладение языком детьми, психолингвистика, нейролингвистика, универсальная грамматика, когнитивное развитие, социальное взаимодействие, языковой ввод, билингвизм, критический период, ошибки в речи.

Child language acquisition is one of the most complex and rapidly developing processes in human cognition. Every healthy child acquires their first language naturally, without formal instruction. This process involves not only memorizing vocabulary but also developing phonological awareness, syntactic structures, semantic interpretation, and pragmatic competence.

Empirical studies show that between the ages of 2 and 5, children master the core grammatical system of their native language. This rapid development suggests that language acquisition is not merely imitation but a deeply structured cognitive process involving biological, psychological, and social mechanisms.



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One of the most influential theories in linguistics is Noam Chomsky’s theory of Universal Grammar. He states:

A child has an innate capacity for language that enables them to construct grammar from limited input.

According to Chomsky, children are born with an innate linguistic system that allows them to acquire grammar rapidly and uniformly. This system is known as Universal Grammar (UG), a set of abstract principles shared by all human languages.

UG suggests that:

language is not fully learned from the environment

the brain contains pre-existing grammatical structure children actively construct linguistic rules from input

Steven Pinker describes language as a biological instinct:
“Language is a complex, specialized skill which develops in the child spontaneously, without conscious instruction.”²

The idea that language is “a complex, specialized skill which develops in the child spontaneously, without conscious instruction” shows that language is not something children learn in a formal or structured way. As Steven Pinker explains, children do not need to be directly taught how to speak in the same way they are taught subjects at school. Instead, language appears naturally as they grow and interact with people around them. Although language is very complex, involving sounds, grammar, and meaning, children manage to learn it quite quickly. This suggests that the ability to learn language is already present in the human brain. In other words, children are born with a natural capacity for language, which develops over time. The word “spontaneously” is important here because it means that children begin to speak without special training. They pick up words and structures simply by hearing others speak. Parents and adults



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usually do not explain grammar rules, but children still learn how to form correct sentences. This shows that much of language learning happens unconsciously.

The phrase “without conscious instruction” also means that children are not actively trying to memorize rules. They are not aware of the learning process itself. Instead, they learn by listening, repeating, and communicating in everyday situations. Over time, they naturally improve their language skills.

Overall, this statement highlights that language development is a natural process. It depends more on interaction and exposure than on formal teaching. This view helps us understand why all children, regardless of culture or background, are able to learn a language in similar ways.

Pinker argues that language is an evolutionary adaptation unique to humans. It develops naturally without formal teaching, similar to other biological systems such as vision or walking. Jean Piaget links language acquisition to cognitive development:

“Language reflects the development of the child’s thinking rather than determines it.”³

Piaget suggests that language emerges as a result of cognitive growth. Children first develop mental representations of the world and then express them linguistically. Lev Vygotsky emphasizes the social nature of language:

“Every function in the child’s cultural development appears first on the social level and later on the individual level.”⁴

Language initially develops through social interaction and is later internalized as inner speech. This process is known as internalization.

A key concept in Vygotsky’s theory is the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), which refers to the gap between what a child can do independently and what they can achieve with guidance from more knowledgeable individuals.



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Children typically pass through universal stages:

Pre-linguistic stage (0–12 months): babbling

One-word stage (12–18 months): single-word expressions

Two-word stage (18–24 months): basic combinations

Telegraphic speech (2–3 years): simplified sentences

Complex speech (3+ years): full grammatical structures

These stages are consistent across languages and cultures, indicating a universal pattern in human language development. In linguistics, children’s mistakes are viewed as evidence of cognitive success rather than failure. A common phenomenon is overregularization, where a child applies a general rule to an exception (e.g., saying “runned” instead of “ran” or “mouses” instead of “mice”). These errors demonstrate that children are not merely imitating adult speech but are actively constructing and testing grammatical rules within their developing mental lexicon.

From a cognitive perspective, such errors indicate that language acquisition is an active rule-building process, where children form hypotheses about linguistic structure and revise them over time based on exposure.

A key theoretical framework in this area is Eric Lenneberg’s Critical Period Hypothesis. Lenneberg proposes that there is a biologically determined time window—typically ending around puberty—during which language acquisition can occur naturally and achieve native-like proficiency. This hypothesis is closely linked to neuroplasticity, the brain’s ability to reorganize itself in response to linguistic input.

Lenneberg suggests that after this critical period, full mastery of grammar becomes significantly more difficult. Evidence supporting this claim comes from studies of so-called feral children and individuals who were exposed to language input only later in



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childhood, including late-exposed deaf individuals. In many cases, despite intensive learning, full syntactic competence was not achieved.

This supports the view that language acquisition is not only cognitive and social but also biologically time-sensitive, depending on early neural flexibility.

Modern neuroscience identifies specific brain regions responsible for language processing:

Broca’s area: speech production

Wernicke’s area: comprehension

Temporal cortex: semantic processing

High neural plasticity in early childhood explains why children acquire languages faster and more efficiently than adults. Research suggests that bilingual children often demonstrate:

enhanced cognitive flexibility

improved executive control

stronger memory performance

These findings indicate that managing multiple linguistic systems strengthens general cognitive abilities.

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These findings indicate that managing multiple linguistic systems strengthens general cognitive abilities. Stephen Krashen’s Input Hypothesis states:

“We acquire language only when we understand messages.”⁵



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Language acquisition depends on comprehensible input that is slightly above the learner’s current level ($i+1$). Exposure, context, and interaction are essential for acquisition. Modern research rejects single-factor explanations and proposes an integrative model including:

- biological predisposition (Chomsky, Lenneberg)
- cognitive development (Piaget)
- social interaction (Vygotsky)
- input exposure (Krashen)
- evolutionary adaptation (Pinker)

These components collectively explain the complexity of language acquisition. Child language acquisition is a multi-layered phenomenon that cannot be explained by a single theoretical perspective. It emerges from the interaction of biological mechanisms, cognitive development, social environment, and linguistic input. Contemporary research therefore views language acquisition as a dynamic system that reflects both innate human capacities and environmental influences.

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