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Galimova Shokhsanam Khabibulla qizi <i>THE IMPORTANCE OF EDUCATION IN TEACHING GEOMETRIC CONSTRUCTIONS.</i>	722
Berikbaeva Nurgul Adilbay qizi <i>USE OF KARAKALPAK FOLKLORE IN EDUCATION OF PUPILS IN THE SPIRIT OF PATRIOTISM</i>	728
Alimov Quwanishbay Tursinbekovich Tangirbergenova Zaripa Djumabaevna <i>DEMOCRATIC SOCIETY IN UZBEKISTAN</i>	732
Maderimov Maqsudbek Komiljonovich <i>NIYONAL SARIQLIKNI KECHISH XUSUSIYATLARI</i>	736
Khayotbek Ergashkhonov <i>HOW WATER POLO CAN BUILD CONFIDENCE AND TEAMWORK IN YOUTH</i>	741
Qoraboyev Azizbek Hamidjon o'g'li <i>PSIXOLOGIK XIZMAT FAOLIYATINI TASHKIL ETISHDAGI DOLZAB MUAMOLAR VA ULARNING ZAMONAVIY YECHIMLARI</i>	745
Gafurova D.T <i>SATIRE AS A MEANS OF UNDERSTANDING TOTALITARIAN REALITY</i>	750
Kobilova Aziza Baxriddinovna Nematova Sitorabonu <i>COMPARATIVE STUDIES BETWEEN LANGUAGE LEARNING AND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION</i>	755
Musaeva L.J., Akbarova D.S., Mirakhmedova K.G. <i>ANALYSIS OF THE EFFICACY AND SAFETY OF DIRECT ANTICOAGULANTS IN PATIENTS WITH ATRIAL FIBRILLATION AND CHRONIC OBSTRUCTIVE PULMONARY DISEASE</i>	763
Mukhitdinova Nazira Batirkhanovna <i>THE ENDURING LEGACY OF AUSTEN'S ART STYLE</i>	768
Yulchiyev Farruh Fozilovich <i>KIKBOKSINGDA TEXNIK – TAKTIK MAHORATNI RIVOJLANTIRISH</i>	773
Rajabov Makhmadiyor Bakhtiyorovich <i>METHODOLOGY FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF GRAPHIC TRAINING OF SCHOOLCHILDREN IN THE MSEXCEL PROGRAM</i>	779
Dilmurodova Shahlo Sherzod qizi <i>TRANSFORMING EDUCATION : HOW AI IS REVOLUTIONIZING STUDYING</i>	786
Turayev Makhmud Mukhamedovich <i>THE CHARACTERISTICS AND PEDAGOGICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF ACTION GAMES IN PREPARING THE YOUNG GENERATION FOR LIFE</i>	790
Amonov Rasul Chorshambi ugli Ja'abaev Timur Baxadir uli <i>MILK PRODUCTION COEFFICIENT OF COWS OF POLISH, GERMAN, AND DENISH BREEDING AND THE AMOUNT OF FEED CONSUMED BY COWS FOR MILK PRODUCTION</i>	794
Xolmo'minova Bahora Abdusalolovna	800

COMPARATIVE STUDIES BETWEEN LANGUAGE LEARNING AND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

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Annotation

Language learning and language acquisition are two diverse concepts that assist in mastering a language. Although most people propose that these processes exhibit substantial similarities, a closer examination reveals distinct differences. This article discusses the contrasts between these two ideas.

Keywords

Language, learning, acquisition, conscious, unconscious, process, ability, grammatical rule, knowledge, communicate.

Globalization has significantly impacted our way of life, driving the necessity to become bilingual, primarily to enhance job prospects, facilitate migration, and pursue educational opportunities in an increasingly interconnected world. For this reason, a large proportion of people are gaining knowledge of a language consciously or unconsciously.

Language learning is a process that occurs in formal places and situations consciously by learning grammatical rules, and words and analyzing the language.

We can use the phrase "language learning" to gain knowledge consciously about grammar, being cognizant of them, and being able to talk about them. Simply, learning is "being informed about" a language, which is recognized as the term "grammar" or "rules". Some synonyms also involve formal knowledge or clear mastery of the language. [1, 10]

Any process of learning can be regarded as a transformation in human behavior, whether it pertains to mastering the skill of riding a bicycle or acquiring a new language. The inherent necessity to interact with others serves as a compelling and tangible manifestation of the behavioral change that accompanies the process of language acquisition. The linguist Bloomfield, who was also a behaviorist, explained this process in the context of language. Furthermore, language learning is

the shape of response and stimulus. Bloomfield suggests that a stimulus 'S' from the external world gets a response in the form of an action, e.g. If a person is famished and sees food, this will be a stimulus "S". Then If the person grabs the food and consumes it, this will be a response " R". If a person says that" I am famished and I would like to eat that food", this is a speech " R" to the " S". Also, people can use the verbal stimulus for another person who may respond to this action. But they are equally a form of behavior. Like other kinds of behavior, verbal behavior also follows a pattern of stimulus and response leading to habit formation through repetition and reinforcement. [2,74-76]

Language learning is the process that begins in our childhood and continues during our lifetime. Students can learn some languages to share their ideas, feelings, thoughts or to explore new words and get to know new friends.

Language enables students to play an active role in various communities of learners within, and beyond the classroom. While students communicate, represent, and write they also listen, read and observe movies, films, and others' experiences. Critical and creative thinking, as well as the process of learning a new language, emerge when learners engage in reflective reasoning, generate innovative ideas, and analyze and synthesize existing information. Moreover, language acquisition significantly contributes to the development of metacognitive abilities, enabling individuals to comprehend their thought processes, critically assess them, and establish effective learning strategies. Additionally, language not only equips students with the ability to maximize their use of educational materials and cultivate independent thinking in the learning process but also plays a crucial role in fostering strategic approaches and communicative skills essential for academic environments and everyday interactions.

The study of English language arts allows learners to appreciate the language and understand the language, and if the learner is aware of these 6 arts of language learning which are listening, speaking, reading, writing, viewing and representing, they can use the language competently, and confidently.

Speaking and listening

Spoken language serves as the cornerstone of literacy, allowing individuals to express their thoughts, emotions, experiences, and viewpoints while also fostering self-awareness and understanding of others. It preserves a community's narratives, cultural values, and traditions. Through listening and speaking, students engage with ideas, grasp complex concepts, and structure their knowledge and experiences. Oral communication plays a great role in learning, problem-solving, and goal achievement. To become thoughtful, lifelong learners, students at all grade levels must cultivate fluency and confidence in their spoken language skills.

Providing diverse opportunities for informal and formal verbal expression enhances their ability to communicate effectively across various contexts.

Writing and reading

Reading and writing serve as powerful tools for communication and learning, allowing students to expand their language proficiency, deepen their self-awareness, and enhance their understanding of others. Engaging in reading grants access to diverse perspectives, ideas, and experiences, fostering intellectual growth and personal fulfillment. Through effective reading strategies, students interpret various texts—ranging from short stories to full-length fiction and nonfiction—critically and thoughtfully. Writing, on the other hand, enables students to explore and refine their ideas while effectively conveying them to others. By employing strong writing techniques, they gain confidence in generating, developing, and revising their thoughts with increasing precision and skills.

Representing and viewing

The ability to view and represent information is essential in today's world, helping students inquire how images and language convey ideas, values, and beliefs. Viewing is an active process that involves engaging with and interpreting visual media, including television, advertisements, films, diagrams, symbols, photographs, videos, drama, drawings, sculptures, and paintings. Through viewing, students gather information and gain insight into different perspectives and experiences. Many of the cognitive skills used in reading—such as previewing, predicting, and inferring—are also applied to visual comprehension. Representing, on the other hand, allows students to express ideas and information creatively through various mediums, including video presentations, posters, diagrams, charts, symbols, visual arts, drama, mime, and models. [3,4-5]

Acquisition is a natural process which is automatically related to the brain and cognitive ability. It can occur without knowing any grammatical rule or lexical resource, with only cognitive grasp and the natural manner of a human being.

Noam Chomsky who is an American linguist, philosopher, cognitive scientist and regarded as the “father of modern linguistics” gave a clear explanation for the term “acquisition”. He suggests that Human beings have an inborn capacity to acquire a language and their brains are ready for language.

This is called the Language Acquisition Device (LAD).

It works at a subconscious level and includes knowledge about the nature and structure of human language, which may be universal. With its help, the learner makes a hypothesis about language and tests it with the input s/he receives. Chomsky named it capability, which is the inner knowledge of rules, and

distinguishes it from performance, which is the actual use of this knowledge in speech or writing. These ideas about language acquisition came to be called mentalism, as opposed to language learning as external behavior which the behaviorists had emphasized. Some of the important aspects of language acquisition are that it takes place over a period of time in which the language develops not through imitation but through an internal process of rule-making by the learner. This is shown through the deviations that we find in the language of children. If child language learning were a form of imitation, the child's language would be the same as the adults. But this is not so. It means that the child is following an internal pathway in acquiring the language. Moreover, these deviations are systematic. We can view them as a part of the acquisition process. [2,77]

Researchers like Janet Werker, Patricia Kuhl, and others used new strategies to find out how sensitive babies are to speech sounds. Not only this, the most noteworthy part of this work, is infants cut off making a distinction between non-phonemic sounds around them.

For example, by the time they are a year old, babies who will become speakers of Arabic stop reacting to the difference between 'pa' and 'ba' which is not phonemic in Arabic. Babies who are grown up with two different languages around them continue to retort these comparisons for a longer term. One important finding is that it is not enough for babies to hear language sounds from electronic devices. To learn- or retain- the capacity to differ from sounds, they need to make conversation with a human speaker.

In the 1960s, several researchers paid attention to how children acquire grammatical morphemes in English. One of the most popular studies was done by Roger Brown and his colleagues and students. During a longitudinal study of the learning of the language of Adam, Eva, and Sarah, they determined that 14 grammatical structures were acquired as the same as each other. Brown and his colleagues found that a child who had mastered the grammatical morphemes at the bottom of the list had also mastered those at the top, but the reverse was not true. Thus, there was evidence for a 'developmental sequence' or order of acquisition. Brown's long-term study was convinced by a cross-sectional study around 21 children. In 1997, Jill and Peter de Villers discovered that children who had acquired the morphemes late Adam, Eve, and Sarah were also proficient in mastering the language earlier. The children acquired the language at different ages like Adam, Eve, and Sarah, but their order of acquisition was similar.

There are many theories that have been proven as to why these grammar rules are acquired in the observed order. Researchers have learned the frequency with

which the morphemes occur in parents' speech, the illustrated cognitive complicity of the meanings by morpheme, and barriers to pronouncing and realizing them. In the end, there has been no simple satisfactory explanation for the sequence, and most researchers agree that the order is determined by an interaction among several different factors. [4, 3-5]

Most of us have already known about first language acquisition, but what about a second one?

SLA (Second language acquisition) as a field investigates the human capacity to learn languages once the first language – in the exemplification of monolingual children or the first language- in the exemplification of children who are two (or more) or only one language users- has been consolidated.

Typically, the process of acquiring an additional language occurs later in life, whether during late childhood, adolescence, or adulthood. However, some individuals begin learning a second language at a very young age – sometimes as early as three or four – by which point they have already developed most of the fundamental aspects of their first language. In discussions of second language acquisition (SLA), various terms are used to describe one's native language and any additional languages learned, often requiring clarification. SLA researchers commonly use "mother tongue," "first language," or "L1" as a general reference to the language (or languages, in the case of bilingual or multilingual acquisition) that a child learns naturally from parents, siblings, and caregivers during early developmental years – roughly from the womb to around four years old. Conversely, terms like "additional language," "second language," or "L2" refer to any language acquired after the L1. However, real-life language acquisition is often far more complex. For instance, when young children are exposed to multiple languages, it can be difficult to determine whether they are learning them simultaneously (as bilingual or multilingual) or sequentially (as an L2). Moreover, the term "L2" is not strictly limited to a second language but can also refer to a third, fourth, or even tenth language learned later in life. [5,5]

Diversity between Language learning and Language Acquisition

There are some differences that we can observe:

1. Formal and informal settings.

Foreign language learning usually takes place in schools where the target language is not the medium of communication – so, for example, when an American child learns German at school or a French adult takes a course in English with the British Council in Paris. In *second language acquisition*, the target language is learned in the community where this language is spoken – for example, when a

Spanish computer consultant has to learn Mandarin Chinese in Beijing, or when an English girl goes to Florence to learn Italian. [6,66]

2. Conscious and Subconscious process.

As we mentioned above learning happens consciously, but Acquisition is an unconscious process that we won't be able to analyze language itself. However, people are unaware of structural studies of the language, they are good at speaking, listening, reading, and writing. The reason why they know how to use the language in both social and personal life. On the other hand, Language learners study every aspect of the language one by one which they need.

3. Aptitude for language.

One of the most crucial factors in language acquisition is language aptitude. It can contribute to some degree to the success of learning a second language. It is not easy to define what language aptitude is exactly, but it is an undisputed fact that some people are better, quicker, and more successful at learning a second language than others. [6,69]

4. Error perspectives.

During engaging in a language mistakes are always seen as errors and it will be corrected according to the rules. But for acquiring the language it is a natural part of acquiring.

In summary, these two concepts differ from each other with such kind of qualities as process, awareness, errors, focus, and outcomes. Acquisition mostly focuses on communication while Language learning is concerned with several rules, forms and structures. By the way of enhancing your knowledge about these ideas, you can improve your degree and master the language.

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