



CHALLENGES AND SOLUTIONS IN LANGUAGE ACQUISITION AT THE PRIMARY EDUCATION LEVEL

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Abstract

Language learning in primary education is essential for children's academic and social development. However, many young learners face common difficulties in learning vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, and communication. These problems can be linked to factors such as lack of exposure, low motivation, limited home support, and large class sizes. This article discusses the main challenges faced by primary school students when learning a language and suggests modern, evidence-based teaching solutions. The paper highlights strategies like task-based learning, storytelling, scaffolding, and integrated skill instruction that help improve communicative competence and learner confidence.

Keywords: Language acquisition, primary education, early learners, language challenges, teaching solutions, task-based learning.

Introduction

Learning a language at the primary level is a foundation for all future learning. Children aged 6 to 12 are in a key stage of cognitive and linguistic development. Language skills help them understand content, express thoughts, and connect with others. However, teaching a second or foreign language to young children comes with many challenges. Teachers often notice that students struggle to use new vocabulary, make correct sentences, or speak with confidence. Some children do not receive enough language support at home. In other cases, schools may have large classes or a mix of learners with different first languages. This article explores the main challenges in early language learning and offers modern solutions to help teachers improve outcomes [Nation & Macalister, 2010].



Methods

To prepare this article, I reviewed 35 recent academic sources published between 2020 and 2024. The materials were chosen from journals related to language education and primary teaching. Studies were selected if they focused on children aged 6–12 and reported on language learning problems or solutions. The data were grouped under two categories:

1. Challenges: areas where students commonly face difficulties.
2. Solutions: methods and strategies that help improve language skills.

I compared and summarized the results to show which teaching methods are most effective in primary school classrooms [Akdoğan, 2023].

Results

The most common difficulties in primary language acquisition include:

- Vocabulary: Many students learn basic words but struggle to use them in sentences. Vocabulary learning requires repetition and context, which is often missing in traditional classrooms [Johnson, 2023].
- Speaking confidence: Learners may understand words but hesitate to speak. They often lack confidence or practice in real-life speaking situations.
- Grammar: Young learners often mix sentence structures or struggle with verb forms. Without clear explanations and practice, grammar rules can seem difficult and boring [Hyland, 2004].
- Motivation: Some students do not see the purpose of learning a new language. If lessons are not fun or meaningful, they lose interest quickly.
- Parental support: In many families, parents do not speak the language being taught. This makes it hard for children to practice outside the classroom.
- Class size and diversity: Teachers often deal with many students who are at different language levels. It becomes difficult to give enough attention and personalized feedback.

Solutions. To overcome these problems, several methods have shown strong results in language teaching for young learners:

1. Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT): In this method, students learn by doing real tasks, such as making posters, planning a party, or interviewing



classmates. These activities focus on communication rather than grammar drills. TBLT improves speaking fluency and motivates learners because tasks are fun and meaningful [Johnson, 2023].

2. Storytelling and Role Play: Using stories helps children learn vocabulary and sentence structures in context. Story-based lessons encourage imagination, emotion, and memory. Role-playing scenes from stories or daily life improves listening, speaking, and interaction skills [Akdoğan, 2023].

3. Visual and Kinesthetic Support: Young learners benefit from visuals (pictures, flashcards, videos) and movement-based tasks (TPR – Total Physical Response). These methods help make input more understandable and learning more active.

4. Scaffolding and Step-by-Step Learning: Effective teachers break tasks into smaller steps and provide support at each stage. Examples include giving sentence starters, model dialogues, or group writing tasks before independent work. This helps students feel safe and successful [Gibbons, 2015].

5. Integration of Skills: Rather than teaching reading, writing, speaking, and listening separately, teachers combine them in one theme. For example, a unit on animals might include reading a story, watching a video, describing pets, and writing a fact sheet.

6. Encouraging Peer Work and Collaboration: Working in pairs or groups helps learners build confidence and learn from each other. Group projects, interviews, and games create a positive environment for practicing language naturally.

Discussion

The results show that language learning at the primary level is complex but manageable with the right strategies. One key idea is that language should be taught through use, not only rules. Children need real reasons to listen, speak, read, and write. Methods like TBLT and storytelling provide such opportunities. Also, teachers must support learners emotionally. Many children are afraid of making mistakes. A friendly, open classroom makes a big difference. Visual tools, movement, and group work create variety and make lessons more engaging [Gibbons, 2015]. However, schools must also invest in teacher training. Some teachers still use old methods that focus too much on grammar memorization. Instead, they need training in interactive, learner-centered techniques.



Conclusion

Primary students face several common challenges in language learning, including limited vocabulary, grammar confusion, and lack of speaking confidence. These challenges can be reduced with teaching methods that are practical, engaging, and learner-focused. Strategies like task-based learning, storytelling, peer collaboration, and visual support help make learning more effective and enjoyable. When teachers plan lessons that integrate different skills and give students a chance to use language in real situations, learners develop better fluency, understanding, and confidence.

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