

**SECOND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION – THEORY AND PRACTICE**  
**(based on teaching Bulgarian as a foreign language in Slavonic context)**  
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ABSTRACT

This study presents the issues related to second language acquisition and it focuses on the acquisition of Bulgarian as a second (foreign) language by Slavs, mostly Czech speakers. It concentrates on interdisciplinary scientific field that points out the processes accompanying the studying of each next language after the first, the mother tongue. The work originated as an endeavor for the issue of second language acquisition to emerge from the shadow of English language, and it focuses on a specific field of study, namely the acquisition of Bulgarian language by Slavs, i.e. it strives to find both the universalities and the specifics of a Slavic language acquisition by Slavs, to point out what's typical for the Slavic language family, to draw the attention to the specifics of the Slavic discourse. In the study the issues of second language acquisition are inextricably linked to the issues of bilingualism and a series of psycholinguistic issues in general, with the aim to understand how people learn a language, how they use it to communicate, and how the structure of the human brain manages the processing of linguistic information. To this purpose, the work also presents a series of terms used in this scientific field, their definitions, classifications, etc., largely from English-language and Slavic literature.

This study is separated into two parts – a theoretical one and a practical one. In the theoretical part the author presents the key concepts used in the field of second language acquisition, the differences in their definitions and their acceptance. Then various theories about second language acquisition as one of the fundamental empirical problems of modern psycholinguistics are presented. The study also focuses on the history of studies of the role of the first language in relation to second language acquisition. Then it presents the influence of the first language on the acquisition and afterwards on the use of the second language which can be positive, negative, or even zero. Negative influence is manifested at all language levels though the so-called negative transfer or interference – these are the errors occurring as a result of the influence of the first language on the second, and having the characteristics of the first. The author pays a special attention to the issues related to mutual linguistic influences and genetic proximity of languages through the prism of their acquisition; to the phenomena of linguistic error and error analysis that are inextricably linked to the “second language acquisition” scientific area. Second language acquisition results in the state of bilingualism and multilingualism, that's why definitions of the most frequently discussed types of bilingualism are presented (and also discussion on the numerous understandings and definitions of the concept of bilingualism); in relation to bilingualism and multilingualism it also looks at the phenomenon of code switching.

In the second part the author pays attention to selected Bulgarian linguistic phenomena (from the phonetic, morphological, syntactic and lexical level of the language) and their realization in the speech production of foreigners in the process of learning Bulgarian. The study aims to define and describe some basic characteristics of Bulgarian as a foreign language, through the prism of the error theory. This longitudinal study identifies and formulates the most characteristic and specific aspects of Bulgarian grammar in the context of the above-mentioned difficulties, with an emphasis on errors occurring due to interference influences. It does not focus on the cognitive processes of learning Bulgarian as a second language, but on the general mechanisms and problems occurring in all Slavic students. That is why the author looks at linguistic errors not mainly from the perspective of psycholinguistics, but rather from linguistic and linguistic-didactic perspective.

The results of the study provide an opportunity for creating a taxonomy of errors and, from the perspective of methodology, indicate the aspects, which require special attention in the process of teaching Bulgarian as a second language.