**Stages of Child Language Acquisition**

It is difficult to describe clear cut stages in language learning. The criteria which are commonly used are arbitrary.

1. **Pre-speech:** much go before the child utters his/her first word. Vocalization, crying, cooing, and miscellaneous non-differentiated sounds of the first months are most significant in that they help to exercise the maturing speech apparatus and make the infant learn through appropriate reinforcement. For example, crying brings relief from hanger or pain. Infants learn to pay attention to speech intonation and rhythm before they begin to speak.
2. **Babbling Stage (6-**8 months): cooing of the first months develops gradually into a phonetically diversified type of random vocalization called babbling with both vowels and consonants. Babbling is unlearned since it can be observed even in deaf infants. At this stage, we notice the beginnings of language comprehension. In the latter part of babbling period, there are the first evidences of understanding and recognition of certain symbolic gestures, intonation, words, and phrase structures. Differences in language development depend upon the amount and variety of child’s linguistic experience.
3. **Holophrastic Stage: one word stage, one morpheme, or one unit stage (9-18 months).**

The child may utter the first word as early as 9 months usually ‘mama’ and ‘dada’. Words are often simplified like boo for book, ba for bottle.

A single word is used to refer to an entire context. The word shoe could mean:

* Mama has a nice shoe.
* Give me my shoe.
* I want to wear my red shoe when we go for a walk.

The first fifty words tend to be the names of important persons, greetings, and food. They highlight the daily routine and ability to change their environment like give, go, up, down, open.

Incorrect pronunciation is systematic at this stage. They also use overextension; for example, a dog may mean any four legged creature, apple means any round object, bird for any flying object.

At this stage, we notice the beginning of symbolic communication; this is the period when a single word indicates a multiplicity of words.

1. **Two-word Stage (18-24 months):** at this stage, children begin to combine 2 words together. For example, dada gone, cat eat, in car, mommy hat, doggy bark, hit doggy, Kan water = Kan is drinking water or give me water.
2. **Telegraphic Stage or Early Multi-word Stage** (24-30 months)

Children speak in sentences of several words but their grammar is far from complete; they use telegraphic structure rather than grammatical morphemes. Their utterances are more than two words and appear to be sentence like. They are not randomly strange but reveal the child’s comprehension of sentence formation.

Eg: Mary play ball or Mommy laught me.

1. **Later Multi word Stage (30 months and more)**

At this stage, grammatical and functional structures emerge. The rest of grammar acquisition is idiosyncratic. Some children repeat more others create more. Some produce great number of words before beginning to combine them into sentences, others begin to make sentences immediately.

By 6, the child’s grammar approximates that of adults. The average child has mastered nearly all the phonemic distinctions of his language, and all the common grammatical forms and constructions. However, vocabulary learning continues until the adult life.