



## PRESERVATION OF MOTHER TONGUE AND STRATEGIES FOR ACQUIRING A NEW LANGUAGE

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**Abstract:** This article explores the sociolinguistic and pedagogical aspects of preserving the mother tongue while acquiring a new language, particularly in multilingual and immigrant contexts. It examines strategies that individuals and communities employ to maintain native language proficiency alongside learning a new language. The paper highlights the role of family, educational institutions, digital media, and peer interactions in balancing bilingualism. It also discusses the cognitive, cultural, and social implications of these strategies.

**Keywords:** mother tongue, language preservation, language acquisition, bilingualism, multilingualism, sociolinguistics, language strategies

### **Introduction**

In the era of globalization and migration, the need to learn new languages has increased dramatically. At the same time, preserving one's mother tongue remains crucial for cultural identity, intergenerational communication, and social cohesion. For many immigrants, expatriates, and bilingual families, balancing mother tongue maintenance with the acquisition of a new language is a critical challenge. Linguists, educators, and sociologists have increasingly emphasized the importance of strategies that enable individuals to develop proficiency in a new language without losing their native linguistic competence.

Mother tongue preservation is essential for emotional expression, cognitive development, and cultural continuity, while new language acquisition is vital for social integration, education, and career advancement. This dual focus creates a dynamic interplay between linguistic, cultural, and social factors that influence language practices in families, schools, and communities.

### **Main Body**

The mother tongue serves as the foundation for individual identity, cultural heritage, and cognitive development. Studies have shown that strong mother tongue



proficiency enhances literacy skills, supports learning additional languages, and strengthens memory and problem-solving abilities (Cummins, 2000).

Families play a central role in mother tongue preservation. Daily use of the native language at home, storytelling, participation in cultural rituals, and engagement with traditional literature foster linguistic continuity. For instance, bilingual families often establish routines such as “mother tongue time” at home, encouraging children to use the native language in specific contexts while gradually introducing the second language.

Communities and cultural organizations also contribute to preserving native languages through events, language courses, and cultural celebrations. For example, immigrant communities frequently organize weekend language schools, traditional music or drama groups, and literature clubs that emphasize native language use.

Learning a new language requires a structured approach, integrating formal education, informal practice, and immersive experiences. Common strategies include:

1. **Formal Education:** Schools and universities offer language classes with curricula designed to teach grammar, vocabulary, reading, and writing skills. Bilingual education programs provide an environment where students can learn a new language while continuing instruction in their mother tongue.
2. **Immersive Exposure:** Living in a community where the new language is dominant accelerates acquisition. Immersion allows learners to develop listening and speaking skills through everyday interactions, such as shopping, working, or attending social events.
3. **Digital and Media Resources:** Online platforms, educational apps, videos, and social media provide interactive opportunities for practicing a new language. Learners can watch tutorials, engage in virtual discussions, and participate in online communities that use the target language.
4. **Peer Interaction:** Peer groups and friendships are significant motivators for language learning. Youth often adopt expressions, slang, and idioms from friends, facilitating natural acquisition. Code-switching—alternating between the mother tongue and the new language—is a common phenomenon that allows learners to communicate effectively while gradually improving proficiency in the new language.



Maintaining native language skills while acquiring a new language requires conscious strategies. These include:

1. **Structured Bilingual Practices:** Using both languages systematically in different domains (home, school, social interactions) helps maintain fluency. For instance, parents may speak the mother tongue at home and encourage the new language in public or educational contexts.
2. **Translanguaging Techniques:** Transferring knowledge between languages, such as translating texts, comparing grammar, and discussing concepts in both languages, reinforces cognitive and linguistic skills (García, 2009).
3. **Cultural Integration:** Participating in cultural activities tied to the mother tongue ensures that language is connected to identity and traditions. Simultaneously, engaging with media, arts, and social activities in the new language enhances motivation and exposure.
4. **Technological Support:** Language learning apps, bilingual dictionaries, online forums, and multimedia content allow learners to practice both languages. For example, students can read news in both languages, watch films with subtitles, or participate in bilingual social networks.
5. **Community Engagement:** Regular interaction with speakers of both languages strengthens practical skills. Immigrant communities often establish social clubs, religious gatherings, and extracurricular activities to facilitate bilingual communication.

Bilingualism resulting from mother tongue preservation and new language acquisition has multiple benefits. Cognitive advantages include improved executive function, problem-solving, and creativity. Socially, bilingual individuals can navigate diverse cultural environments, participate in multiple communities, and develop a flexible identity.

Cultural implications are equally important. Preserving the mother tongue fosters pride, self-confidence, and cultural continuity. Conversely, acquiring a new language enables access to broader opportunities in education, employment, and social integration. Effective strategies balance these dimensions, ensuring both languages are valued and actively used.

Moreover, research indicates that individuals who actively maintain their mother tongue while learning a new language experience fewer identity conflicts and stronger



psychological well-being (Bialystok, 2011). They also demonstrate enhanced intercultural competence, enabling them to act as cultural mediators between communities.

### **Conclusion**

Preserving the mother tongue while acquiring a new language is a multifaceted process that involves cognitive, social, and cultural dimensions. Successful strategies include family practices, structured bilingual education, peer interaction, digital media engagement, and community participation. These strategies enable learners to develop proficiency in the new language without compromising their native language competence, ultimately fostering bilingualism, cognitive development, cultural continuity, and social integration.

In the contemporary globalized world, the ability to balance mother tongue preservation with new language acquisition is essential not only for individual success but also for maintaining cultural diversity and fostering inclusive, multilingual societies. English-language media, including films, music, and video games, has a significant influence on the language habits of youth. Exposure to pop culture through English media introduces new vocabulary, idiomatic expressions, and pragmatic language use. Social media influencers, online communities, and streaming platforms popularize English phrases, memes, and communication styles, which youth adopt into daily conversations.

This process creates a dynamic sociolinguistic environment where English interacts with native languages, generating hybrid forms, slang, and localized expressions. Such hybrid forms contribute to both linguistic innovation and identity construction among youth.

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