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УНИВЕРЗИТЕТ У БЕОГРАДУ – ФИЛОЛОШКИ ФАКУЛТЕТ  
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*Vulnerable Languages and Linguistic Varieties in Serbia (VLingS)*



## *The Importance of Mother Tongue Learning*

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# *The Importance of Mother Tongue Learning*

The importance of mother tongue learning cannot be overstated. It is the foundation upon which all other learning is built, and it plays a crucial role in shaping a child's cognitive, social, and emotional development.



## *Cultural Identity and Heritage*

Mother tongue is more than just a means of communication; it is the language of culture and identity. It carries within it the history, traditions, and values of a people, and it provides a sense of belonging and shared experience. Learning in the mother tongue allows children to connect with their heritage and understand the richness and diversity of their cultural background.



### *Shared Stories and Experiences*

Mother tongue helps children understand and appreciate the stories, myths, and folklore of their ancestors, fostering a deeper connection to their cultural roots.

### *Preservation of Language and Culture*

Mother tongue learning contributes to the preservation of languages and cultures, ensuring that these valuable aspects of human heritage are passed down to future generations.

### *Building a Strong Sense of Identity*

Learning in the mother tongue fosters a strong sense of identity and self-esteem, as children become confident and comfortable expressing themselves in their native language.

## *Enhanced Cognitive Development*

Research has consistently shown that mother tongue learning is essential for cognitive development. It helps children develop crucial skills such as language comprehension, critical thinking, memory, and problem-solving. When children are taught in their mother tongue, they are more likely to succeed academically and in life.



### *1 Language Comprehension*

Mother tongue learning strengthens language comprehension, enabling children to understand and interpret complex concepts and ideas.

### *3 Memory and Learning*

Mother tongue learning enhances memory and learning abilities, as children are able to retain information and apply it in different contexts.

### *2 Critical Thinking*

It fosters critical thinking skills by encouraging children to analyze information, draw inferences, and make judgments based on their understanding.

### *4 Problem-Solving*

It promotes problem-solving skills by providing children with the vocabulary and cognitive tools necessary to think creatively and find solutions.

## ***Foundation for Second Language Acquisition***

Mother tongue learning provides a strong foundation for the acquisition of other languages. Children who are fluent in their native language have a better understanding of language structure, grammar, and vocabulary, making it easier for them to learn new languages.



**1**

### ***Cognitive Transfer***

Children can transfer their understanding of language structures from their mother tongue to other languages, making the learning process more efficient and effective.

**2**

### ***Improved Linguistic Awareness***

Mother tongue learning increases linguistic awareness, enabling children to identify patterns and rules in different languages more easily.

**3**

### ***Enhanced Communication Skills***

A strong foundation in the mother tongue enhances communication skills, enabling children to express themselves more effectively and confidently in any language.

# *Improved Academic Performance*

Studies have shown that children who receive education in their mother tongue are more likely to achieve higher academic performance. When children understand the language of instruction, they are better able to engage with the material, participate actively in class, and achieve academic success.

## *Increased Comprehension*

Understanding the language of instruction allows children to grasp complex concepts and ideas more easily, leading to improved comprehension.

## *Enhanced Motivation and Engagement*

Learning in the mother tongue fosters a sense of comfort and familiarity, increasing motivation and engagement in the learning process.

## *Higher Academic Achievement*

Improved comprehension and engagement lead to higher academic achievement, as children are able to perform well in their studies and demonstrate their understanding.

# *Language Policy and Education*

The importance of mother tongue learning has led to a growing recognition of the need for language policies that support and promote its use in education. Governments and educational institutions should prioritize the development of inclusive and equitable language policies that cater to the needs of diverse learners.

**1**

## *Mother Tongue-Based Education*

Mother tongue-based education (MTBE) is a proven approach that uses children's native language as the medium of instruction in the early years of schooling.

**2**

## *Benefits of MTBE*

MTBE has been shown to improve academic performance, cognitive development, and overall well-being of children, especially those from minority language backgrounds.

**3**

## *Implementation Strategies*

Implementation of MTBE requires careful planning, resource allocation, and teacher training to ensure its effectiveness and sustainability.

# *Early Childhood Education*

Early childhood education is a critical period for language development. Children who are exposed to their mother tongue from a young age develop a strong foundation in language and communication skills. This foundation is crucial for their future success in all areas of life.



## *Cognitive Development*

Early exposure to the mother tongue stimulates cognitive development, enhancing language comprehension, memory, and problem-solving skills.



## *Emotional and Social Development*

Communicating in the mother tongue fosters emotional and social development, as children build relationships with peers and adults in a familiar and comfortable language.



## *Literacy Skills*

Early literacy skills, such as reading and writing in the mother tongue, are essential for future academic success and contribute to overall cognitive development.



## *Cultural Appreciation*

Early exposure to the mother tongue fosters cultural appreciation and understanding, allowing children to connect with their heritage and celebrate diversity.



## *Multilingualism and Global Citizenship*

In today's globalized world, multilingualism is increasingly valued. Mother tongue learning not only prepares children for success in their own communities but also equips them to navigate a world where communication and collaboration across cultures is essential.

### Enhanced Cognitive Abilities

Multilingualism is associated with improved cognitive abilities, such as memory, attention, and problem-solving skills.

### Cultural Understanding

Learning multiple languages fosters cultural understanding and appreciation, promoting empathy and tolerance for diverse perspectives.

### Career Opportunities

Multilingualism opens up career opportunities in globalized fields such as business, diplomacy, and international relations.

### Global Citizenship

Mother tongue learning contributes to the development of global citizens who are able to communicate and connect with people from different backgrounds.





## *Conclusion*

The importance of mother tongue learning is undeniable. It is the cornerstone of language acquisition, cognitive development, and cultural identity. It is essential for ensuring that all children have the opportunity to reach their full potential and contribute to a more just and equitable world. By prioritizing mother tongue learning in education, we can create a brighter future for all children.