### The Six Stages of Second-Language Acquisition

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| **Pre-production** | This is also called "the silent period," when the student takes in the new language but does not speak it. This period often lasts six weeks or longer, depending on the individual. |
| **Early production** | The individual begins to speak using short words and sentences, but the emphasis is still on listening and absorbing the new language. There will be many errors in the early production stage. |
| **Speech Emergent** | Speech becomes more frequent, words and sentences are longer, but the individual still relies heavily on context clues and familiar topics. Vocabulary continues to increase and errors begin to decrease, especially in common or repeated interactions. |
| **Beginning Fluency** | Speech is fairly fluent in social situations with minimal errors. New contexts and academic language are challenging and the individual will struggle to express themselves due to gaps in vocabulary and appropriate phrases. |
| **Intermediate Fluency** | Communicating in the second language is fluent, especially in social language situations. The individual is able to speak almost fluently in new situations or in academic areas, but there will be gaps in vocabulary knowledge and some unknown expressions. There are very few errors, and the individual is able to demonstrate higher order thinking skills in the second language such as offering an opinion or analyzing a problem. |
| **Advanced Fluency** | The individual communicates fluently in all contexts and can maneuver successfully in new contexts and when exposed to new academic information. At this stage, the individual may still have an accent and use idiomatic expressions incorrectly at times, but the individual is essentially fluent and comfortable communicating in the second language. |

How long does it take for a language learner to go through these stages? Just as in any other learning situation, it depends on the individual. One of the major contributors to accelerated second language learning is the strength of first language skills.