Critical Period For Language Acquisition

A Time to Speak - Thomas Scovel 1988


Studentsarbeit aus dem Jahr 2013 im Fachbereich Englisch - Pädagogik, Didaktik, Sprachwissenschaft, Note: 3.0, Universität zu Köln, Sprache: Deutsch: Abstract: This paper wants to research into the question of the existence of a Critical Period Hypothesis (CPH) in Second Language Acquisition (SLA). Further, since this theory was already introduced in the early 60’s, I will have a closer look at the modifications of the CPH, i.e. the Sensitive Period Hypothesis (SPH). By the help of taking some of the findings from different studies into account, I will try to answer the underlying question.

The Cambridge Handbook of Biolinguistics - Cedric Boecks 2013-02-14

Biolinguistics involves the study of language from a broad perspective that embraces natural sciences, helping us better to understand the fundamentals of the faculty of language. This Handbook offers the most comprehensive state-of-the-field survey of the subject available. A team of prominent scholars working in a variety of disciplines is brought together to examine language development, language evolution and neuroscience, as well as providing overviews of the conceptual landscape of the field. The Handbook includes work at the forefront of contemporary research devoted to the evidence for a language instinct, the critical period hypothesis, grammatical maturation, bilingualism, the relationship between mind and brain and the role of natural selection in language evolution. It will be welcomed by graduate students and researchers in a wide range of disciplines, including linguistics, evolutionary biology and cognitive science.

Problems in Second Language Acquisition - Michael H. Long 2017-09-25

Second language acquisition has an identity problem. It is a young field struggling to emerge from the parent fields of education and applied linguistics. In his new book, Problems in Second Language Acquisition, Mike Long proposes a way to help second language development acquire a systematic and coherent focus using the philosophy of science as the lens. The volume is neatly organized into three parts—research, practice, and assessment. This structure allows a focus on areas of SLA of interest to many in the field.


The contributions to this collection assess the progress of cognitive science. The questions addressed include: What have we learned or not learned about language, brain, and cognition? Where are we now? Where have we failed? Where have we succeeded?

Language Acquisition - David Michael Singleton 2004-01-01

The authors examine the evidence relative to the idea that there is an age factor in first & second language acquisition & goes on to explore the various explanations that have been advanced to account for such evidence. Finally, it looks at educational ramifications of the age question.

Language Development and Age - Julia Herschensohn 2012-07-19

This book was first published in 2007. The anecdotal view of language acquisition is that children learn language with apparent ease, no instruction and in very little time, while adults find learning a new language to be cognitively challenging, labour intensive and time-consuming. In this book Herschensohn examines whether early childhood is a critical period for language acquisition after which individuals cannot learn a language as native speakers. She argues that a first language is largely susceptible to age constraints, showing major deficits past the age of twelve. Second-language acquisition also shows age effects, but with a range of individual differences. The competence of expert adult learners, the unequal achievements of child learners of second languages, and the lack of consistent evidence for a maturational cut-off, all cast doubt on a critical period for second-language acquisition.


Seminar paper from the year 2013 in the subject English - Pedagogy, Didactics, Literature Studies, grade: 1,3, University of Kassel (Anglistik), course: Englische Fachdidaktik, language: English, abstract: Second language acquisition, in particular English, is nowadays more important than ever before. As a consequence, it is of great importance to improve second language education at school. In order to do this, learner factors as for instance age, motivation or aptitude have to be considered more closely. The present research paper considers the question if second language learning can be affected by age, particularly if there is a critical period that can affect the learning success in a negative way. The common sense that children are the most successful language learners will be examined and compared to contrary opinions. In a last step, the results will be used to draw conclusions for second language instruction.

The Critical Period for Language Acquisition - Catherine E. Snow 1978

The Age Factor in Second Language Acquisition - David Michael Singleton 1995-01-01

This book takes a hard look at some of the assumptions that are customarily made concerning the role of age in second language acquisition. The evidence and arguments the contributors present run counter to the notion that an early start in second language learning is of itself neither absolutely sufficient nor necessary for the attainment of native-like mastery of a second language. Another theme of the book is a doubt that there is a particular stage of maturity beyond which language learning is no longer fully possible. In short, the book presents a challenge to those who take it as given that second language learning is inevitably different in its essential nature from language acquisition in the childhood years and that second language knowledge acquired beyond the critical period is in all circumstances and in all respects doomed to fossilize at a non-native-like level.

The Critical Period Hypothesis Supported by Genie's Case - Anne Fuchs 2007-10

Seminar paper from the year 2002 in the subject English Language and Literature Studies - Linguistics, grade: 1,3, Ruhr-University of Bochum, 9 entries in the bibliography, language: English, abstract: In 1967 Eric Heinz Lenneberg established his groundbreaking work "Biological Foundations of Language" in which he tries to push the biological view on language forward. One important point that is discussed is "language in the context of growth and maturation". The Critical Period Hypothesis (CPH) is the essence of this considerations. Lenneberg tries to find evidence for his theory in the study of retarded, aphasic or deaf children and in neurological studies. But at this time the most striking proof for the CPH, Genie, was still imprisoned in a small room in her parents home. Three years after Lenneberg published his work on the CPH, 131/2 years-old Genie was recovered by an eligibility worker and her case rapidly aroused the interest of neurologists, psychologists and linguists. Susan Curtiss, a graduate student of the UCLA Linguistic Department got the possibility to work with Genie for the years to come. Her work Genie - A Psycholinguistic Study of a Modern-Day 'Wild Child' compiles her experiences on working with Genie added
by a detailed case history. What Susan Curtiss found out about Genie’s linguistic development seems to be the evidence for the existence of a critical phase for first language acquisition. This paper gives a brief definition of Lenneberg’s Critical Period Hypothesis, summarizes the case history and the data of Genie’s linguistic development and, according to Susan Curtiss, relates Genie’s case directly to the CPH. Over and above that, it tries to explain, why Genie developed a certain amount of language and with this proved the ‘strong’ version of Lenneberg’s hypothesis as wrong.


The Critical Period and Second Language Acquisition - Thu Hoang Tran 2009

Learning a second or foreign language is a long and time-consuming process, and not all language learners may be able to achieve a very high level of proficiency in the target language. It is even rarer to find second or foreign language learners who can use the target language as well as native speakers of the language. Researchers in the field of second language acquisition (SLA) have long been concerned with the factors that prevent learners from attaining such a successful level of language learning. Among various factors that have been empirically investigated, age has seemed to figure prominently in the literature. The critical period hypothesis (CPH) has been proposed to explicate the reason why adult language learners are unable to achieve native-like proficiency. This paper aims at providing a brief overview of the CPH. First, the origin of the CPH is pointed out. Second, studies that support the CPH and those that attempt to falsify the CPH are discussed respectively. It is argued that although it is hard for adult learners to attain native-like proficiency in another language, it may still be possible. Moreover, the importance of finding out if the CPH is true or not may not be as important as trying to help learners to use the language more effectively. It is concluded that helping learners to communicate effectively in the target language is more logically and realistic than trying to help them to emulate native speakers of the target language.

The Critical Period Hypothesis - Sabine Starzer 2013-11-25

Seminar paper from the year 2013 in the subject English Language and Literature Studies - Linguistics, grade: 2, University of Vienna (Anglistik), course: Proseminar Linguistik, language: English, abstract: When it comes to learning a language, there seems to be a certain period in which a child must acquire the basic competences in order to be able to understand and use language. This window of opportunity is also called ‘critical period’ and has been the subject of much research over the last decades. Especially for future language teachers, the question about the existence of such a critical period for second language acquisition as well arises. This paper examines the actual research on critical period for second language acquisition and sheds light on the on-going academic discussion. The paper proceeds as follows: section 2 provides a short description of the Critical Period Hypothesis and sheds light on biological and neurological aspects of language learning. In section 3 recent findings of research according to critical periods in second language acquisition are presented and discussed. Section 4 contains a list with personal characteristics and strategies having emerged out of different studies. These characteristics might help second language learners to gain more success in their goal to reach the status of native speakers. This of course can also be useful for language teachers who want to support their learners. Section 5 provides a short conclusion.

Biological Foundations of Language - Eric H. Lenneberg 1967-01-15

"The study of language is pertinent to many fields of inquiry. It is relevant to psychology, anthropology, philosophy, and medicine. It encroaches upon the humanities, as well as upon the social and natural sciences. We may pursue investigations that concentrate on what man has done with or to specific languages; or we may regard language as a natural phenomenon- an aspect of his biological nature, to be studied in the same manner as, for instance, his anatomy. Which of these approaches is to be chosen is entirely a matter of personal curiosity. This book is concerned with the biological aspects of language." --