

Érzékeny periódusok a nyelvtanulásban: Miért kompetensebb a gyermek?

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Abstract: The study of language acquisition in humans is motivated by a debate focused on the role of the critical periods for language. The researches started from the assumption that normal language learning occurs only when the exposure to language begins in the early stages of life, and from the observation that children are better second language learners and reach higher levels of proficiency than adults. The paper summarises the major viewpoints about critical periods, starting from Lennenberg (1978) to the recent theories, like the evolutionary model of the critical periods (Huford, 1991). Most of the researchers working in the field of first and second language acquisition follow Lennenberg's theoretical assumption, claiming that the critical periods last from age two to puberty. Over viewing some of the recent experiments we suggest that there is a decline much earlier than the puberty, concluding that critical periods probably end around age six or seven. Later on we discuss some of the educational and theoretical implications of this supposition in second language learning and bilingualism.

Keywords: critical periods, language acquisition, second language learning, modularity, educational implications, bilingualism.