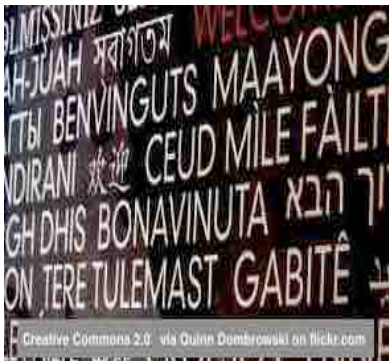


Best to learn a new language before age of 10

4th May, 2018



New research from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) suggests that if people want to achieve native-like proficiency in a new language, they should start learning that language before the age of ten. The

researchers added that children up to the age of 17 or 18 remain adept at learning grammar. There is bad news for those who want to pick up a new language beyond their late teens. The researchers say this is past the "critical period" when language-learning ability starts to decline. Researcher Joshua Hartshorne said: "As far as a child is concerned, it's quite easy to become bilingual....That's when you're best at learning languages. It's not really something that you can make up later."

The research was based on an analysis of results from a 10-minute online grammar quiz. Over 670,000 language learners of all ages participated in the test. Researchers measured the grammatical ability of people who started learning a language at different points in their life. Professor Hartshorne focused on grammar rules that were most likely to confuse a non-native speaker as a gauge of that person's proficiency. MIT researcher Josh Tenenbaum suggested people simply might be too busy to learn a language later in life. He said: "After 17 or 18, you leave home, you work full time, or you become a specialized university student. All of these might impact your learning rate for any language."

Sources: edweek.org / euronews.com / thesun.co.uk

Writing

It's never too late to learn a language. Discuss.

Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

research / achieve / native-like proficiency / language / grammar / critical / bilingual / analysis / online quiz / life / native speaker / too busy / work full time / university

True / False

- The research came from an institute of linguistics. T / F
- The researchers said people aren't adept at learning grammar after 10. T / F
- Language-learning ability declines after we reach late teens. T / F
- Researchers said it's not easy for children to become bilingual. T / F
- Over half-a-million people took an online grammar quiz. T / F
- Quiz questions were designed to confuse non-native speakers. T / F
- A researcher said adults are never too busy to learn a language. T / F
- Leaving home at 18 might affect your language-learning rate. T / F

Synonym Match

(The words in **bold** are from the news article.)

- | | |
|--------------------|----------------|
| 1. achieve | a. diminish |
| 2. adept | b. speed |
| 3. beyond | c. examination |
| 4. critical | d. skilled |
| 5. decline | e. measure |
| 6. analysis | f. affect |
| 7. points | g. attain |
| 8. gauge | h. times |
| 9. impact | i. after |
| 10. rate | j. vital |

Discussion – Student A

- What kind of language learner are you?
- Would life be different if you spoke English fluently?
- What do you think of language lessons in kindergartens?
- What new language would you like to learn?
- What is the best way to learn a language?
- Why is it harder for older people to learn a language?
- What are the benefits of being multilingual?
- How difficult is your language to learn?

BreakingNewsEnglish - The Mini Lesson

Phrase Match

- | | |
|--|------------------------|
| 1. if people want to achieve native- | a. of results |
| 2. remain adept | b. can make up later |
| 3. past the critical | c. in their life |
| 4. As far as a | d. like proficiency |
| 5. It's not really something that you | e. of all ages |
| 6. The research was based on an analysis | f. period |
| 7. Over 670,000 language learners | g. non-native speaker |
| 8. at different points | h. child is concerned |
| 9. most likely to confuse a | i. rate |
| 10. impact your learning | j. at learning grammar |

Discussion – Student B

- What do you think about what you read?
- How happy are you with your level of English?
- How useful are/were your English lessons?
- How important is grammar?
- What is the most important language skill?
- What makes the perfect language lesson?
- What kind of language teacher is the perfect teacher?
- What questions would you like to ask the researchers?

Spelling

- the Massachusetts sIietttnu of Technology
- achieve native-like nipocyfeicr
- remain taped at learning grammar
- past the "iraitlcc period"
- As far as a child is coecdnnre
- it's quite easy to become ugbnliial
- based on an isanyasl of results
- learners of all ages dtraecpiapit
- Researchers aersumed the grammatical ability
- most likely to usfocne a non-native speaker
- as a gguae of that
- All of these might pcatim your learning rate

Answers – Synonym Match

1. g	2. d	3. i	4. j	5. a
6. c	7. h	8. e	9. f	10. b

Role Play

Role A – Speaking to Foreigners

You think speaking to foreigners is the best reason to learn a language. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their reasons. Also, tell the others which is the worst reason of these (and why): watching movies, reading or living overseas.

Role B – Watching Movies

You think watching movies is the best reason to learn a language. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their reasons. Also, tell the others which is the worst reason of these (and why): speaking to foreigners, reading or living overseas.

Role C – Reading

You think reading is the best reason to learn a language. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their reasons. Also, tell the others which is the worst reason of these (and why): watching movies, speaking to foreigners or living overseas.

Role D – To Live Overseas

You think living overseas is the best reason to learn a language. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their reasons. Also, tell the others which is the worst reason of these (and why): watching movies, reading or speaking to foreigners.

Speaking – Language

Rank these with your partner. Put the biggest reasons for learning a language at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- | | |
|--------------------|----------------------------|
| • to pass exams | • speak to foreigners |
| • to read | • job prospects |
| • to live overseas | • intellectual stimulation |
| • as a hobby | • to watch movies |

Answers – True False

a	F	b	F	c	T	d	F	e	T	f	T	g	F	h	T
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Answers to Phrase Match and Spelling are in the text.