

The important factors in raising a bilingual child

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Baker believes the most important factor in raising a bilingual child is to give them a positive, joyful experience of language development. In this way, they can realize the value of both languages and cherish their cultures.

In order to achieve this experience, encouragement is important, which determines the child's attitude and motivation towards bilingual learning. In the use of language, parents should continue to encourage and praise their children, which will provide them with a friendly and positive language environment. Minority languages need more encouragement. But encouragement alone is not enough. Parents are like gardeners. The language gardener also needs to plan, to prepare the soil, to water, fertilize and sometimes weed.

Children's language ability and talent are not important factors in second language learning, but subjective factors such as children's interest, attitude and motivation in language have a greater impact on learning. And these factors can be cultivated and influenced in the home environment. Parents' encouragement, family members' attitude towards language, the quality and quantity of language children can interact with from the people around them, family situation and education, and the types of language input, all of these are aspects that family influences children's second language learning. In general, the language environment provided by the family is the most important factor affecting children's second language learning.

According to my experience, current Chinese second language learning is in a Non-macro language environment. Most children learn English in formal class and it is hard for children to become a fluent bilingual in non-natural target language environment.

In China, most learners live in a sub-language environment; children learn a second language mainly in formal class. The second language, English, is learned in China more as a tool than as an everyday language of communication, so it is difficult for children to have an environment in which they use a second language extensively. The influence of family on second language learning lies more in material conditions and spiritual encouragement, while classroom has greater influence on second language learning.

Age also plays a role in second language learning, but it is more about the focus of learning and both children and adolescents can succeed in second language learning. Children have a high ability in imitation. When they heard a new word or sentence, there is a silent period for a few seconds. After that, they can almost pronounce the word or sentence clearly. It shows that they just remember the sentences technically. When in real language environment, they may not use it correctly.

Most middle school students have a better memory. They can read simple texts also and can understand the basic syntax fast. Most of them cannot use what they just learned in class

or just do not understand it. Besides, there is a general pronunciation problem like most of them cannot pronounce /ai/ & /au/ correctly.

in China, even if we could say that everyone eventually achieves certain level of language learning, every person has their own traits. Children can learn better in second language mainly in pronunciation while older learners are better in learning syntax and grammar. But they cannot speak to others or use it as they use their mother tongue. That is to say, learners in China can acquire the rules of second language.

It cannot be denied that the earlier children begin to learn a second language the better foundation they can gain in this language. But it cannot be said that they can use this language fluently and become bilinguals which mean the person who use or able to use two languages, especially with equal or nearly equal fluency.

The influencing factors of children's second language acquisition include internal and external aspects. Among them, the external influencing factors are mainly the age at the beginning of learning, language input and family socioeconomic status. External factors are also dominant factors, which play an important and direct role in children's second language acquisition. This report aims to provide enlightenment for Chinese children's English acquisition and teaching by analyzing the internal influence mechanism between external factors and children's language acquisition.

Age

An important aspect of second language acquisition research is age. Generally speaking, children are more successful in learning foreign languages than adults, and children have advantages in second language acquisition. (Bailystock, 1997) Various empirical studies have shown that the speed of learning and the final level of children are related to age, and the younger the children are, the more likely they are to acquire the pronunciation level and fluency of native English speakers in the future. In terms of theoretical research, the critical period hypothesis based on mother tongue acquisition has been cited in the field of second language acquisition, and various empirical studies have supported or questioned the existence of the critical period in language acquisition. The academic circles have different views on the age factor. Chinese parents are also cautious about when their children should learn English, but in order to "ensure that their children do not lose at the starting line", they tend to imitate others, making English learning at a younger age. Obviously, this English fever is largely based on the critical period hypothesis of language acquisition.

(1) Influence on speech acquisition. Age has a great influence on phonological learning, especially for native-like phonological learning. Studies have shown that the earlier you learn a second language, the closer your pronunciation will be to that of your native speaker. Phonological learning has a critical period. In his experiments, Long found that children who began to learn a second language before the age of 6 had basically the same pronunciation as native speakers. Children who start learning between the ages of 6 and 12 are likely to have a foreign accent; After the age of 12, almost all learners have an accent. The older you start learning, the more pronounced your accent becomes. It can be seen that

phonetic learning is the earliest achievement in the process of language acquisition.

(2) Influence on grammar acquisition. Johnson & Newport (1989) is the most representative study on the critical period of second language morphological syntactic acquisition. The results show that age is a decisive factor in the development of the grammatical ability of the subjects, that is, the grammatical judgment ability of the subjects who immigrated to the United States before puberty is stronger, and is negatively correlated with their age when they arrived in the United States.

(3) Influence on vocabulary acquisition. The age of vocabulary acquisition refers to the age at which a word is exposed to and understood in spoken or written form. The research of Silverberg&Sammuel (2004) shows that the overall vocabulary knowledge is less affected by age. Armon et al. found that words learned in childhood can still show processing advantages in a range of tasks even in adulthood.

Cognitive ability generally develops to a higher level in adolescence, when individual imitation ability and memory are strong, and abstract thinking also begins to develop. Learners can view things objectively and purposefully conduct language input and output, instead of centering on themselves. Therefore, excluding other external factors, learners' ability and age are almost positively correlated. In the learning stage, it can be found from the knowledge acceptance degree of students of different grades that the complexity and effectiveness of students' learning strategies will improve with the increase of age.

Learners of specific age adapt to and benefit from specific teaching methods, and different teaching methods achieve different teaching objectives. At present, there is no foreign language teaching method suitable for all kinds of situations, so it is particularly important for teachers to understand students' personality characteristics, learning ability and interest.

Language Input Environment

Comprehensible in-put is an important cause of second language acquisition according to many studies, the most famous of which are Krashen and Long. Krashen (1981, 1985, 1989) proposed the "input hypothesis". The main points are as follows

- 2) Comprehensible input is necessary but not sufficient for second language acquisition;
- 3) Input is made easy to understand by means of simplified contextual and out-of-language prompts.
- 4) Output (i.e., conversation) is a result of learning, not a cause, and learner output does not promote direct learning.

Long(1991) agreed with Krashen's claim of point 3, but he emphasized the role of interaction in linguistic input, arguing that input with interaction is more important than input without interaction.

Therefore, the linguistic environment is very important for comprehensible input, and we should use a variety of materials and a variety of ways of presentation and interaction to present a diverse, free and relaxed linguistic environment. Let children get positive and happy feedback in language learning. At the same time, we should strengthen language interaction, talk with children on an equal basis, encourage them to use the vocabulary and sentence patterns learned in class in their daily lives, gently

point out their mistakes, so as to ensure children's enthusiasm and initiative.

At present, there are still some shortcomings in English classroom in China, such as the difference of students' English foundation, the neglect of students' emotional factors, the insufficient amount of extra-curricular language input and the single form of assessment. Due to the different starting points of students' learning, it is difficult for teachers to classify students' language levels scientifically. Moreover, due to the large number of students in Class in China, teachers cannot take individual differences into account, which makes it difficult for students to obtain comprehensible input. In addition, the limited classroom time, insufficient language input outside the classroom and the single evaluation form based on scores have ignored students' communicative competence.

The Conditions of the Family

There is one statistic that stands out in research on children's language ability. It is about the gap between family social status and economic conditions. Almost all of the benefits of parent-child interaction increase with the parents' education level and earning power. Since there are so many differences in the quantity and quality of parent-child interaction, it is no wonder that children from different backgrounds follow such different paths in language learning. Parents who are highly educated have more profound language concepts and are better able to make the best guidance and long-term plan for their children's language learning.

Brustall's (1975) research on French second language learning of British primary and secondary school students found that students with better family economic status and higher educational level tend to have better academic performance in French. At the same time, a family with a better cultural and educational background can also provide a better language environment for students in the same school, which has a potential and positive impact on their second language learning. The better the family conditions are, the more children are inclined to succeed in second language learning and realize their ideal self in second language.

Family economic status and parents' education level determine the material base of the children's family. The stable material foundation can provide more opportunities for children's language acquisition, so it is another important factor affecting children's language acquisition. On the one hand, families with a good material foundation can create a good language learning environment for their children, and on the other hand, they can send their children to counseling institutions with strong teachers or target language countries, so that children can continue to receive pure language input in life. Although language concept plays an important role in foreign language learning, it is easy to be ignored. The concept of language refers to a series of evaluations and attitudes of individuals or groups who use language towards a certain language, such as their cognition, emotion and appreciation of beauty. The formation of language concept is influenced by social culture, social psychology and context. The social and economic status of family affects the concept of language to a certain extent and is the embodiment of society in language. Chinese people's concept of language emphasizes written language rather than spoken language and emphasizes intense memory. In the early stage of Chinese children's mother tongue acquisition, recitation is still the main means widely adopted, although children cannot understand its characters and meanings. However, western countries attach

more importance to "speaking art" and try their best to guide the development of children's communicative ability. Therefore, the concept of language is an important factor affecting the effect of children's foreign language teaching, and the difference of family economic status also brings about different concept of language.

The economic and social status of the family has many influences on children's second language learning. Parents from higher-class families pay more attention to their children's language learning, have more open awareness of language learning, and are more motivated to let their children master more languages. At the same time, families with higher economic status pay more attention to the use of multiple languages, consciously communicate with their children in the second language, increase the quality and quantity of children's language exposure, and provide children with an efficient language input environment.

Summary

Children's second language acquisition is not the result of one or other factors, but a process of interaction between internal and external factors, that is, the factors affecting second language acquisition are complicated, and the success or failure of second language acquisition is not determined by one factor, but by the joint action of all factors. Therefore, while recognizing the importance of children's second language learning, parents should also improve their own language literacy; rationally choose the age at which children begin to learn English, fully considering individual differences. On this basis, teachers should create a language learning and teaching environment to provide and input real and rich target language.

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