

The effect of age on different aspects of English

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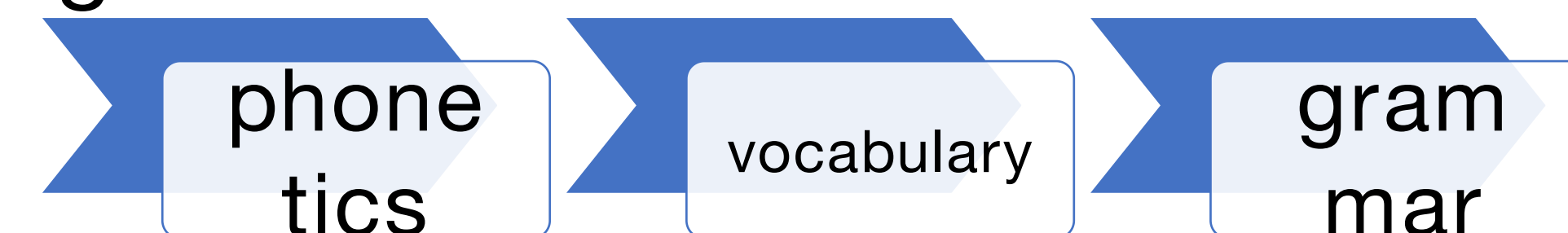


Introduction

The influence of age on foreign language learning has been the focus of many linguists. Some linguists have put forward the theory of "language critical period hypothesis". According to the theory, language can only be learned at a certain stage. With the onset of puberty language plasticity is gradually lost. And it's because of this physiological change that language learning becomes more difficult as you get older. Just as there is a critical period for mother tongue, there is a critical period for foreign language learning. But this time I will only briefly introduce the critical period, and my focus will be on the different effects of age on different aspects of foreign language learning.

Methods

The study was divided into three types, with students of different ages as subjects. Analyze the pronunciation, vocabulary and grammar.



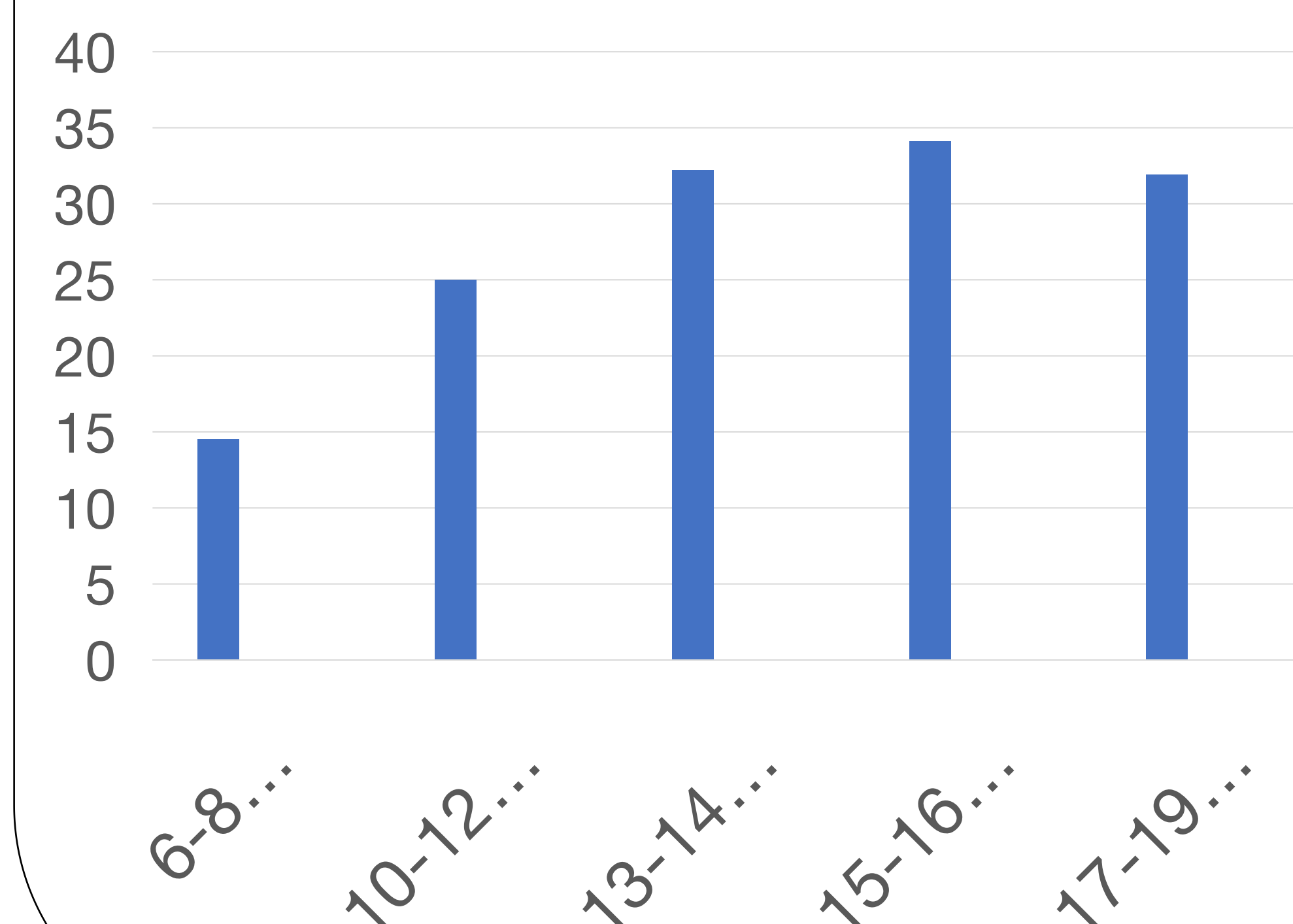
- Sixty American immigrants were surveyed by Oyama. The immigrants ranged in age from 5 to 20 years and lived for 5 to 18 years.
- I conducted a survey and analysis on the spoken vocabulary of 34 students in the lower grades of a children's English class in a city, including 16 children aged 7-8 in the first group and 18 children aged 9-10 in the second group.
- I divided children over six years old to adults 19 years old into five groups. After two months of study, I gave them a grammar test, which involved word order, the usage of nouns and articles, and subject-verb agreement.

Results

In the first survey, Oyama found that age at immigration had a strong effect on English proficiency, while years of residence in the United States had little effect on English proficiency. Younger immigrants are more likely to be native speakers than older

immigrants
In the aspect of spoken dialogue: in the first group, four people learned better, while in the second group, ten people learned very well. For word dictation, take dictation of regular sets of words. Sixty percent of 9- 10 year-olds got all the words right, and the rest got almost all the words right. Five of the children aged 7-8 were correct, while the others had difficulty

remembering words.
The third set of results is shown in the table below. Out of 40, children aged between 13 and 19 do best, and children under 12 do worse the younger they are.



Conclusion

In natural language environments, such as immigrants, there is a clear advantage in learning a foreign language at a younger age. But when it comes to classroom learning, foreign language learners with some experience have an advantage because they understand better. Adults have the advantage in grammar learning and writing, because children and adults have different learning motives for learning English. Children learn English out of curiosity and at the request of their parents.

Adults are more motivated to learn English and have a clear learning purpose. Some people learn English in order to go abroad or find a good job, some people learn English in order to further their studies or do scientific research, in order to achieve their goals, they can overcome all kinds of difficulties, it is not easy to give up halfway.

- References
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