

569819	NOVES TENDÈNCIES EN L'APRENTATGE DE LENGÜES Advances in Second Language Acquisition [5 ECTS – OBL.]	Carme Muñoz
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Course Description

The issue of individual differences and the degree to which they determine both the process and the product of second language acquisition has been the object of changing interest in the field of second language acquisition.

Special attention will be paid in this course to the age variable, given its theoretical interest (i.e. the existence or not of biological or maturational restrictions on language learning) and the clear practical implications for the design of language teaching programmes (i.e. at what age / level should a second / third language be introduced in the curriculum?) and for the classroom (i.e. what methodologies are more appropriate for different age groups). Cognitive variables will be dealt with in the second part of the course. Special attention will be paid to language learning aptitude, given the current emphasis on research in this area (i.e. what is the role of working memory in L2 learning?), and its implications for language teaching programmes as well.

Syllabus

1. Individual differences. General introduction
2. The age factor in SLA
 - 2.1. The Critical Period Hypothesis in first language acquisition
 - 2.2 The Maturation Hypothesis in second language acquisition
 - 2.3. Talented learners
 - 2.4. Maturation constraints and aptitude
 - 2.5. The age factor in foreign language acquisition
 - 2.6. State of the art
3. Language aptitude in SLA
 - 3.1. Measuring language learning aptitude
 - 3.2. Aptitude and age
 - 3.3. Aptitude and first language skills
 - 3.4. Aptitude and phonological memory
 - 3.5. Cognitive effects of bilingualism and language exposure
 - 3.6. Aptitude and L1 attrition

Methodology

The course will combine presentations by the teacher as well as presentations by students of assigned readings in a seminar format. All students will be required to prepare the readings in advance and contribute to the debate in class.

Assessment

Assessment will be based on a class mark, a series of tasks, and a final written assignment.

Bibliography*

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- Students will be given a detailed list of references at the beginning of the course.