

Language acquisition and critical period

[Linguistics, Language Acquisition](#)



Name: Lecturer: Course: Date: Language Acquisition and Critical Period

Question One Chomsky's language acquisition device involves a hypothetical brain module designed to give an account of a child's progress to acquire a particular language. The concept behind this device revolves around the child mental instinct capacity, hence allowing the child to acquire and produce the language (Birdsong, 32).

This device fits into Chomsky's innateness hypothesis of language acquisition through the premise that humans are born with an innate facility or instinct to acquire language. Chomsky's innateness hypothesis of language acquisition maintains that children would be unable to acquire language if they lacked innate grammar knowledge. Question Two Chomsky's critical period hypothesis refers to the explanation behind language acquisition and linguistics over the aspect of acquiring language and its biological link to age. This hypothesis claims that there is an ideal time for acquiring a language in an environment that supports linguistics. Attempting to do so after this period proves a much more daunting task. In this regard, Chomsky stated that the first life years are the most crucial for acquiring a first language (Singleton and Ryan, 52).

If acquiring a language does not happen at this stage, then the individual shall never be able to command the language fully. Question Three Genie was discovered in 1970 in California by a social worker following her mother's decision to seek out services. In the process, it came to the social worker's knowledge that the 13-year-old girl had spent most if not all of her life confined in a room and tied to a chair.

The case of Genie's inability to acquire a language within the critical period lies with the environment she was exposed. According to Chomsky's critical period hypothesis, acquiring a language at the critical period requires an environment that supports linguistics. Contrary to this necessity, Genie was exposed in an environment where she was not able to learn forming words or combining words into sentences.

When she was released from her bondage, her brain was not able to comprehend normal language (Birdsong, 74). Question Four When discovered, Genie had extremely weak gross motor skills. She was unable to stand upright or straighten fully her legs and arms. In general, her fine motor skills were similar to that of a three-year-old, ten years younger than she was.

She had poor physical and visual simulation and was unable to focus her eyesight on objects more than three meters away. Additionally, her characteristic 'bunny posture' demonstrated her inability of integrating tactile and visual information. Question Five The forbidden experiment involved causing harm to the subject purposely with a view of creating a feral child.

Victor became a model for this experiment because he satisfied its conditions. These conditions required attempting to teach someone who had missed on the critical language development and learning stages (Singleton and Ryan, 102). Question Six After training measures were administered, Genie did exhibit language development in the long term. Initially, she was only able to communicate in words not exceeding twenty. These included '

father' ' mother', several colors and the phrases " no more" and " stop it". Even though she progressed, it was not major and eventually only managed to learn about 200 words in the long term. Question Seven Indeed, both Genie and Victor benefited from the research endeavors. Judging by their previous states, both Genie and Victor were in no condition or mental state to speak or conduct themselves in normal human behavior.

Ethically speaking, it is necessary and the best interests of people to develop to optimum human function. Hence, ethically, it was the duty of parties involved to try to teach of both Genie and Victor basic human social necessities. Even though not fully successful, the research did prove beneficial.

Works Cited Birdsong, David. Language Acquisition and the Critical Period Hypothesis. Mahwah, N. J: Erlbaum, 2008. Print. Singleton, D M, and Lisa Ryan. Language Acquisition: The Age Factor. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters, 2004.

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