

David Singleton

Older Adults, Second Language, Language Learning and Bilingualism

This paper will begin with a brief general summary of our state of knowledge and ignorance regarding age and language learning, including mention of the controversy surrounding the Critical Period Hypothesis. It will then go on to discuss the question of the acquisition of additional languages by older adult learners. The conditions for such learning will be contextualized, on the one hand, in reference to such negative factors as the decline of the acuity of the senses and, on the other, in reference to more promising indications, such as those that show that some aspects of learning, given an active mind, continue until death. It will also discuss the cognitive benefits of bilingualism in the elderly. The final part of the paper will address the matter of the teaching of additional languages to learners in late middle age and in the "third age" - what planners and teachers need to be attentive to and the areas in which they can expect late language learners to excel.

References

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David Singleton is an Emeritus Fellow of Trinity College Dublin, and Professor at the University of Pannonia and at the State University of Applied Sciences, Konin. His two hundred publications focus mainly on cross-linguistic influence, the lexicon, the age factor in language acquisition and multilingualism. He is the co-author of *Key Topics in Second Language Acquisition* and co-editor of the Multilingual Matters SLA book series.

Ten important recent publications

- "Multilingual lexical operations: keeping it all together ... and apart", in *Third language acquisition in adulthood*, eds, Cabrelli Amaro, J., Flynn, S., Rothman, J., Amsterdam, John Benjamins, 2012, 95-114. [D. Singleton]
- Linguistic and cultural acquisition in a migrant community*, Bristol, Multilingual Matters Ltd., 2013, 182 pp. [D. Singleton, V. Regan & E. Debaene]
- Key Topics in Second Language Acquisition*, Bristol, Multilingual Matters Ltd., 2014, xiii + 149 pp. [V. Cook & D. Singleton]
- "Much more than age", *Applied Linguistics* 35 (4), 2014, 441-462. [C. Kinsella & D. Singleton]
- "Apt to change: The problematic of language awareness and language aptitude in age-related research", *Studies in Second Language Learning and Teaching* 4 (3), 2014, 557-571. [D. Singleton]

- "Cross-lexical interaction and the structure of the mental lexicon", in *New perspectives on transfer in second language learning*, eds. Yu L. and Odlin, T., Bristol: Multilingual Matters, 2015, 51-62. [D. Singleton]
- "Affect trumps age: A person-in-context relational view of age and motivation in SLA", *Second Language Research* 32 (3), 311-345. [S.E. Pfenninger & D. Singleton]
- "Age of onset, socio-affect and cross-linguistic influence: a long-term classroom study", *Vigo International Journal of Applied Linguistics (VIAL)* 13, 2016, 147–180. [S.E. Pfenninger & D. Singleton]
- "CPH theory, early classroom instruction and age-related issues that are separable from age", in *Classroom-oriented research: reconciling theory and practice*, ed. Pawlak, M., Berlin: Springer, 2016, 231-242. [D. Singleton]
- "A critical reaction from second language acquisition research", in *The Cambridge handbook of linguistic multicompetence*, eds. V. Cook & Li Wei, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016, 502-520. [D. Singleton]