

Chapter 1 : 80 Amazing Advantages and Benefits of Language Learning

Are you struggling to pick up a second language (or a third, or a fourth)? Here's some advice for learning languages from a guy who speaks nine. Let this master guide you through the easy and fun way to learn any language.

A Case for Emphasizing Secondary Language Education in the United States In an increasingly globalized world, where technology is increasingly making communication faster and more efficient, it becomes even more pressing for citizens to be competent in other languages. Yet the United States remains the only industrialized country that allows students to graduate from high school without credits in a foreign language. By the time most students begin a second language in middle school at the age of 14, it is often too late for them to become truly proficient in another language. On top of that, only 10 states require some type of second language credits to graduate from high school whereas in many European countries children begin to learn a second language from years old, or in some cases 3 years old. I believe there needs to be an incorporation of a stronger foreign language program in the United States education system because learning a second language is and will continue to become increasingly important in our connected world. In total, the United States would benefit from emphasizing learning foreign language through economic and job possibilities, creating cosmopolitan citizens, and providing cognitive and personal benefits to the individual. In our globalized world, it has become even more essential in the job market to know another language. Companies and businesses have a natural desire to expand their existing networks. Having fluency in another language gives an edge on any resume by showing employers potential to converse with an entirely different group of people. Employers would be more apt to send a prospective employee abroad if he or she shows proficiency in another language. An experience abroad has the ability to enhance careers, often leading to promotions and valuable skills dealing with foreign customers. Traveling to another country for a job not only allows for tremendous opportunities for oneself, but also allows a company to broaden its network. Yet businesses are not the only types of employment where learning another language would be beneficial. Educators will often have students from many different language backgrounds, scientists will need to converse with others in their field from different countries, and those in the entertainment industry can open up their career aspects tenfold if they can effectively learn a second language. Moreover, learning a second language allows students to explore and better understand another culture. The overwhelming access to networks of communities all over the world is cut short without a background in the language of the culture itself. Learning a foreign language allows us to better understand a culture by providing a way to interact with locals and break the initial language barrier that holds two people back from fully engaging with each other. The benefits of having more culturally aware students are numerous, and the effects are immeasurable. Learning a second language allows cross-cultural communication, and opens the door to an entire network of people that a person might not have had contact with before. It is important to have cosmopolitan citizens, especially in the United States, in order to create a true melting pot society. When traveling to foreign countries, knowing or attempting to learn the local language shows a respect towards another culture. In addition to the benefits economically and culturally, there is an apt amount of research showing the exponential cognitive and personal benefits of learning another language. Within the standardized test culture, it was found that Elementary students who studied a foreign language scored higher on tests in reading, math, and language arts. This fact alone should motivate proponents of No Child Left Behind, and similar test enthusiasts, to further fund secondary languages in earlier years of education. Furthermore, people who have learned a foreign language show greater cognitive development in mental flexibility, creativity, problem-solving, conceptualizing, and reasoning Cognitive Benefits of Learning a Second Language. Requiring students to learn a second language at an earlier age will allow many of these skills, skills that are often neglected, to be emphasized in our education system. In my experience, learning a second language requires an entirely different way of learning that fosters creativity in the classroom. For example, learning a second language involves activities such as writing short stories, talking with classmates, watching movies from another culture, and interacting in games. Learning a second language can be done through many different avenues as

opposed to math, which must be done in procedures, working out a problem. This freedom to learn in a variety of ways creates an environment in a classroom that teaches multiple ways of learning and skills. Once a language is acquired, many personal benefits become clear. In comparison to monolinguals, foreign language learners have been shown to have sharper memories and better listening skills. The Benefits of Second Language Study Overall, learning an additional language can significantly improve cognitive abilities and bring added personal benefits. All of the research and data points to the continued benefits of learning a second language, which I have seen personally reinforced in my experience with other languages. During my time there, I saw the numerous examples of the advantages of knowing a second language. A couple of the students at the camp knew multiple languages, and it was much easier for them to pick up English. Their previous knowledge of a variety of languages showed in their abilities to understand new grammar concepts and vocabulary as they were much more used to these cognitive processes. Reflecting on these differences, it was evident that knowing another language provided advantages in further learning. Additionally, I help tutor English language learners at Penn State University to help with their conversational fluency, along with their grammar concepts. One of the many things I have found while working with these international students, is that many of them find it easier to immerse themselves and learn more about the culture in the United States with a better understanding of English. One of the graduate students I work with has found that learning and improving her English has made her more confident in speaking to students here. It has allowed her to branch out and become immersed in the culture. It becomes even more clear to me the benefits of a second language when considering the influence learning a second language has had on me. I began learning Spanish during middle school, which was noticeably a disadvantage seeing how much easier it would have been to acquire the language at a younger age. Regardless, Spanish has come to offer me a whole new array of possibilities for the future. When working for a local restaurant, I was noticeably better at my job than other waiters because I could communicate with my Spanish-speaking co-workers. My effectiveness as waitress and co-worker was increased, and eventually led to my pay raise. I am currently able to travel to Costa Rica to teach English, in part because of my fluency in another language. In such an interconnected world, it can only be a disadvantage not to learn a second language. In the aspect of employment, a second language allows for new opportunities, experiences, and an edge when applying for jobs. Additionally, a second language allows for citizens to become more culturally aware, reaping benefits in terms of more cosmopolitan citizenship. Moreover, learning a second language can benefit a person in various cognitive aspects and improve one's life. In total, I believe that learning a second language should be more emphasized in the United States education system. Benefits of Learning a Second Language. Cleanr theme by WPSHoppe.

Chapter 2 : Why should I learn a language?

Learning a Second Language Learning a language is a complex, time-intensive task that requires dedication, persistence, and hard work. If you're reading this, then you probably already know that.

Questions requiring more than a sentence response Advanced Fluency The student has a near-native level of speech. You also want to begin asking students at this stage questions that require a phrase or short sentence. Speech Emergence students should be asked to answer questions that require a short-sentence response. It is OK to sometimes ask these students questions requiring a multiple-sentence response, but it is not OK to ask them questions requiring a pointing or one-word response. How about Intermediate and Advanced Fluency students? It is OK to ask them questions that require a lot of verbal output, but it is not OK to ask them questions requiring minimal verbal output. You can use tiered questions to include all ELLs in whole-class activities or one on one to check comprehension or content learning. Classroom Example To improve her ability to ask tiered questions, a 1st grade teacher asks the school ESL teacher to demonstrate the strategy in her class during a discussion of *The Three Little Pigs*. For each stage of second language acquisition, the ESL teacher asks the following types of tiered questions: Ask questions that students can answer by pointing at pictures in the book "Show me the wolf," "Where is the house? Ask questions that students can answer with one or two words "Did the brick house fall down? Ask "why" and "how" questions that students can answer with short sentences "Explain why the third pig built his house out of bricks. Ask "What would happen if â€" and "Why do you think â€" questions "What would happen if the pigs outsmarted the wolf? Ask students to retell the story, including main plot elements but leaving out unnecessary details. After reading the lesson, match the sample student responses at the end to their respective stages of second language acquisition. You may be asked to share your responses with the larger group. In fact, in more than half of their interactions, students did not produce any oral language; when they did, they engaged in simple recall. You may ask yourself, "How can I possibly ask a Preproduction or Early Production student a high-level question if the most that student can do is point or give a one-word response? For some reason, many people think that students in the initial stages of acquisition can only answer low-level questions and that those in the advanced stages are more likely to answer high-level questions. However, this is not the case. English language learners at all stages of acquisition should be asked questions at all levels of thinking. We want to challenge their thinking and speaking abilities. Bring out one premade game board and set of cards for each table or small group see Appendix 9. How would you engage students across all stages of second language acquisition at all levels of thinking? Place the activity cards on the most suitable space on the game board. No part of this publicationâ€"including the drawings, graphs, illustrations, or chapters, except for brief quotations in critical reviews or articlesâ€"may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopy, recording, or any information storage and retrieval system, without permission from ASCD. Requesting Permission For photocopy, electronic and online access, and republication requests, go to the Copyright Clearance Center. Enter the book title within the "Get Permission" search field. To translate this book, contact permissions ascd. Learn more about our permissions policy and submit your request online.

Chapter 3 : Why learn a second language? | Parenting

"Motivation is a key part of learning a language," says Davidson. "The more time that you spend during the day speaking your second language, the better at it you're going to be."

Learning a Second Language: Weighing Pros and Cons 4. Students picked French or Spanish, made flashcards, spent hours memorizing verb conjugations and eventually said "bonjour" to the life of a "fluent" speaker. But for the next generation of students, language classes may soon be just an anecdote of the past, like walking uphill to school—both ways. Download Article According to a recent study by the Center for Applied Linguistics, the landscape of second languages in modern schools is changing. Since , nearly 10 percent of public elementary schools dropped their language programs in response to budget cuts. So what is a parent to do? Should you make language a priority in your school choice, or allow language instruction to go the way of the dodo? Here are some things to consider when deciding whether or not your kid should become bilingual.

The Pros Two languages are better than one. It may sound backward, but learning a second language can give your child a firmer grasp on his first. Formulating foreign phrases requires the use of grammar skills, which allow him to better understand the rules of his native tongue. That double reinforcement leads to solid language and reading comprehension skills that can result in better grades across the board. Standardized exams have taken center stage in most American schools. Lucky for second language learners, two significant by-products of bilingualism are better cognitive skills and longer attention spans. Those skills combined contribute to great testing. A study by The College Board found that students with at least 4 years of a second language scored roughly points higher in all three sections of the SAT. According to a poll, 97 percent of dating agencies asked applicants if they spoke a second language. These people-experts know that speaking a second language makes you look more worldly, intelligent and affable than English-only speakers. That social leg-up opens doors and opportunities that might otherwise be closed.

The Cons Tutoring is expensive. According to a study by University of Pennsylvania economists, the pay bump for learning a second language is small. The most common languages, Spanish and French, only earn speakers a 1 to 2 percent bump above grade. School years yield a higher return. For each year of extra schooling you give them, their pay check will increase 8 to 12 percent. Even those who speak German, Mandarin or Arabic—the most in demand languages—only earn about 4 percent above average. The older you are, the harder it is. However, that failure to retain foreign words may not be our fault; we may have missed our window of opportunity to learn languages easily. Schools like Language Stars capitalize on this window and are able to teach children a new language simply through immersion. But according to Lancry and other experts, this window closes around age 7. After that, even years of tutoring may not make a language stick. The closer he gets to college, the busier his schedule gets. Adding language tutoring a few times a week can swamp your child and bring his overall performance down. Learning a second language can give your kid a boost at school and in his social life, but when it comes to college applications and future earnings, he can be just as successful with one language as with two. Weighing the costs and benefits can help you decide if your child will reap the rewards by saying "hola" to life in another language.

Chapter 4 : Benefits of Learning a Second Language

In my experience, learning a second language requires an entirely different way of learning that fosters creativity in the classroom. For example, learning a second language involves activities such as writing short stories, talking with classmates, watching movies from another culture, and interacting in games.

Why learn a second language? In a world in which the benefits of learning a second language have never been greater, the way languages are taught is changing to meet the growing need. And not to the parents and students who understand the competitive advantage that knowledge of another language and culture provides. This pressure to teach students to communicate in a second language has drastically changed methods of instruction in the best language programs. In most states, language class is an elective not required for graduation. Language teachers are in short supply nationwide. How language programs have changed Historically, language classes were taken only by college-bound students, and many took the minimum of two years that colleges required. They learned to conjugate verbs in Spanish, French or German, and most graduated from high school with just enough knowledge to pass written tests but not enough to carry on a conversation. That is starting to change, as the need for fluency in more languages has increased, as technology has made more tools available to teach them and as researchers gain new insights into how children learn. Students with below-average test scores have often been excluded from language study. But research about the way language is learned contradicts that view. Michael Bacon coordinates language immersion programs for public schools in Portland, Ore. Portland has a nationally recognized program in Japanese, as well as programs in Spanish and Chinese, with one beginning in the fall in Russian. Police officers, teachers, nurses, business owners and many others will find language skills useful, whether they want to sell products overseas or work in U. Research supports the practices of many European nations: Children learn a second language more easily when they are young. As a result, language immersion programs have increased in elementary schools. In these classes, children learn the content of subjects such as math or science in the second language. Learning a second language has been correlated with improved reading ability in sixth-graders, to improved scores on the ACT and SAT, and academic success in college for high school students. Students who take classical languages, like Latin and Greek, benefit, too. Rachel Gordon, a sophomore at Barnard College, started taking Latin as a high school freshman after taking Spanish in middle school. Gordon says she took Latin because she heard it was one of the best courses offered at her high school, Berkeley High School in California. American Sign Language, which is taught at many community colleges, is a visual, rather than written language that may be a good option. Students with strong listening and speaking skills may find that Spanish with its predictable sound system is an option. For more information about language learning and learning disabilities, check LDOnline. What colleges require Many colleges require two years of a second language. But as the College Board notes, taking more language shows that a student is willing to go beyond the basics so they may prefer more. If your student is interested in studying abroad while in college, he should research these programs as part of his college search. How to evaluate a language class A visitor to a high-quality language class is likely to see students working in pairs or small groups, using the target language. They might be asked to take turns composing a phone message they would leave if they were going to be late to meet a Spanish friend. The point is to give kids a lot of time speaking the language and using it for real-life purposes. The communication is more student-directed with lessons drawn from the Internet or real-life experience. The teacher speaks very little English in class. Veteran teacher Stemler asks students to make up skits to illustrate knowledge of the parts of the body, uses puppets in warm-up exercises to get students talking, teaches a rap to remember the months of the year and asks her more advanced students to interview native Spanish-speaking students at the school. Her most advanced students do day care for Spanish-speaking so they can attend meetings at the local middle school. I correct, but I correct by repeating back in the correct form. For example, many nations use the hour clock to tell time, rather than the hour clock commonly used in the United States. Incorporating this into a discussion about telling time gives students cultural information, as well as speaking practice. Better to ask students to talk or write about a real situation

or a character in a story, educators say. Students learn a second language best through context, research has shown. Seeing posters, newspapers or magazines in the second language; talking about the food; and listening to the music of a particular culture gives them that context. Video clips of native speakers can familiarize students with the gestures and other nonverbal communication clues commonly used in a particular culture. Resources beyond the classroom It takes a creative teacher to break through teen-age inhibitions, particularly for students who are getting their first experience trying out a new language. Currently a consultant, he sees himself as a revolutionary who wants to redesign the learning process. He says teachers have to be willing to expand their horizons, to capitalize on the enthusiasm of the kids. And parents may need to push them to do so. If you want to work at 12 p. The bottom line Still not sure how to tell if your child is really learning to communicate in his language class? Patrick recommends you visit the classroom and try this: But other districts are eliminating language programs to boost funding for subjects targeted by high-stakes tests.

Second-language acquisition (SLA), second-language learning, or L2 (language 2) acquisition, is the process by which people learn a second language. Second-language acquisition is also the scientific discipline devoted to studying that process.

Share via Email Kara Morgan-Short using electrophysiology to examine the inner workings of the brain during language learning. This is what Swedish scientists discovered when they used brain scans to monitor what happens when someone learns a second language. The study is part of a growing body of research using brain imaging technologies to better understand the cognitive benefits of language learning. Tools like magnetic resonance imaging MRI and electrophysiology, among others, can now tell us not only whether we need knee surgery or have irregularities with our heartbeat, but reveal what is happening in our brains when we hear, understand and produce second languages. The Swedish MRI study showed that learning a foreign language has a visible effect on the brain. Young adult military recruits with a flair for languages learned Arabic, Russian or Dari intensively, while a control group of medical and cognitive science students also studied hard, but not at languages. MRI scans showed specific parts of the brains of the language students developed in size whereas the brain structures of the control group remained unchanged. Equally interesting was that learners whose brains grew in the hippocampus and areas of the cerebral cortex related to language learning had better language skills than other learners for whom the motor region of the cerebral cortex developed more. In other words, the areas of the brain that grew were linked to how easy the learners found languages, and brain development varied according to performance. As the researchers noted, while it is not completely clear what changes after three months of intensive language study mean for the long term, brain growth sounds promising. Looking at functional MRI brain scans can also tell us what parts of the brain are active during a specific learning task. Instead, a single sound unit known as a phoneme represents both sounds. What can be done? How can we learn these distinctions? When the sounds were modified and extended by the software, participants were more easily able to hear the difference between the sounds. This sort of research might eventually lead to advances in the use of technology for second-language learning. For example, using ultrasound machines like the ones used to show expectant parents the features and movements of their babies in the womb, researchers in articulatory phonetics have been able to explain to language learners how to make sounds by showing them visual images of how their tongue, lips, and jaw should move with their airstream mechanisms and the rise and fall of the soft palate to make these sounds. Ian Wilson, a researcher working in Japan, has produced some early reports of studies of these technologies that are encouraging. Kara Morgan-Short, a professor at the University of Illinois at Chicago, uses electrophysiology to examine the inner workings of the brain. She and her colleagues taught second-language learners to speak an artificial language – a miniature language constructed by linguists to test claims about language learnability in a controlled way. In their experiment, one group of volunteers learned through explanations of the rules of the language, while a second group learned by being immersed in the language, similar to how we all learn our native languages. While all of their participants learned, it was the immersed learners whose brain processes were most like those of native speakers. Interestingly, up to six months later, when they could not have received any more exposure to the language at home because the language was artificial, these learners still performed well on tests, and their brain processes had become even more native-like. In a follow-up study, Morgan-Short and her colleagues showed that the learners who demonstrated particular talents at picking up sequences and patterns learned grammar particularly well through immersion. However we learn, this recent brain-based research provides good news. We know that people who speak more than one language fluently have better memories and are more cognitively creative and mentally flexible than monolinguals. Even more encouraging is that bilingual benefits still hold for those of us who do not learn our second languages as children.

Chapter 6 : Learning a foreign language: five most common mistakes - Telegraph

There is a correlation between second language learning and increased linguistic awareness. There is a correlation between language learning and students' ability to hypothesize in science. Language learning can benefit all students.

I even used to make excuses for myself, before I learned my first new language, Spanish. What about good reasons to start learning a new language? I know hundreds, and hear new ones every day! Why learn another language? Speaking a second language will

1. Open Up a World of Job Opportunities Learning a second language opens up a ton of career opportunities. There are lots of other ways that speaking two or more languages can improve your employment prospects. The world is changing fast. That can be you. Even in small, local companies, chances are that the ability to speak a second language will set you apart from other applicants. Give Your Brain a Boost Speaking a second language each day really can keep the doctor away! Study after study has demonstrated the cognitive benefits of learning another language, no matter how old you are. Memory improvement, longer attention span, and a reduced risk of age-related cognitive decline, are just a few of the known positive effects of speaking two or more languages. Has this ever happened to you? You visit a food stall at a local market while on holiday or even in your own city , where the employees are chatting away together in their native language. You order something, in English, interrupting their fun conversation. Or what about this? You have a friend from another country who you enjoy hanging out with, but you only speak to each other in English. And then they mention one day about this other group of friends, who speak their native language, that they meet up with all the time. Want the bigger picture? You need to get off that bus and examine it from the outside. I strongly believe that language and culture are intimately linked. This makes you interesting. People will approach you. But everything changes when you use the local language. The reasoning is simple: In other words, I develop language hacks. Ever wanted to try dancing? How great would it be to shed your inhibitions and just go for it! Humans are emotional creatures. Everyone is guilty of making decisions too hastily and too emotionally. And when you think about your decisions in a foreign language, that emotional bias tends to go away and you end up choosing the more logical outcome. Live long, and prosper! Enjoy Works of Art in their Original Language Bollywood films, manga, telenovelas, Swah rap " the world is full of non-English works of creative art. No More Paying the Sticker Price Tired of overpaying for gifts and souvenirs at markets when you go on holiday? Discover You Can Do It! Too old, not enough time, wrong genes. None of them hold water. Whatever doubts you have, you really can learn another language. You could even hold your first conversation just seven days from now. So What are You Waiting For? Everyone has their own unique reasons for wanting to learn another language. But while the reasons may be different, they can all be put into action in the same way: Benny believes the best approach to language learning is to speak from day one.

Learning a second language can have a positive effect on the brain, even if it is taken up in adulthood, a University of Edinburgh study suggests. Researchers found that reading, verbal fluency.

Order of acquisition In the s, several studies investigated the order in which learners acquired different grammatical structures. Furthermore, it showed that the order was the same for adults and children, and that it did not even change if the learner had language lessons. This supported the idea that there were factors other than language transfer involved in learning second languages, and was a strong confirmation of the concept of interlanguage. However, the studies did not find that the orders were exactly the same. Although there were remarkable similarities in the order in which all learners learned second-language grammar, there were still some differences among individuals and among learners with different first languages. It is also difficult to tell when exactly a grammatical structure has been learned, as learners may use structures correctly in some situations but not in others. Thus it is more accurate to speak of sequences of acquisition, in which specific grammatical features in a language are acquired before or after certain others but the overall order of acquisition is less rigid. For example, if neither feature B nor feature D can be acquired until feature A has been acquired and if feature C cannot be acquired until feature B has been acquired but if the acquisition of feature D does not require the possession of feature B or, therefore, of feature C, then both acquisition order A, B, C, D and acquisition order A, D, B, C are possible. Variability[edit] Although second-language acquisition proceeds in discrete sequences, it does not progress from one step of a sequence to the next in an orderly fashion. However, most variation is systemic variation, variation that depends on the context of utterances the learner makes. Language transfer One important difference between first-language acquisition and second-language acquisition is that the process of second-language acquisition is influenced by languages that the learner already knows. This influence is known as language transfer. If this happens, the acquisition of more complicated language forms may be delayed in favor of simpler language forms that resemble those of the language the learner is familiar with. Stephen Krashen took a very strong position on the importance of input, asserting that comprehensible input is all that is necessary for second-language acquisition. Further evidence for input comes from studies on reading: He claims that such sequencing, as found in language classrooms where lessons involve practicing a "structure of the day", is not necessary, and may even be harmful. For example, students enrolled in French- language immersion programs in Canada still produced non-native-like grammar when they spoke, even though they had years of meaning-focused lessons and their listening skills were statistically native-level. The modifications to speech arising from interactions like this help make input more comprehensible, provide feedback to the learner, and push learners to modify their speech. This area of research is based in the more general area of cognitive science, and uses many concepts and models used in more general cognitive theories of learning. As such, cognitive theories view second-language acquisition as a special case of more general learning mechanisms in the brain. This puts them in direct contrast with linguistic theories, which posit that language acquisition uses a unique process different from other types of learning. In the first stage, learners retain certain features of the language input in short-term memory. This retained input is known as intake. Then, learners convert some of this intake into second-language knowledge, which is stored in long-term memory. Finally, learners use this second-language knowledge to produce spoken output. In the early days of second-language acquisition research on interlanguage was seen as the basic representation of second-language knowledge; however, more recent research has taken a number of different approaches in characterizing the mental representation of language knowledge. Micro-processes include attention; [52] working memory; [53] integration and restructuring. Restructuring is the process by which learners change their interlanguage systems; [54] and monitoring is the conscious attending of learners to their own language output. Of these three, planning effects on fluency has had the most research attention. Their effect on second-language acquisition is unclear, with some researchers claiming they help it, and others claiming the opposite. For example, a learner may use more polite language when talking to someone of higher social status, but more informal language when talking with friends.

Immersion programs are educational programs where children are instructed in an L2 language. The goal of these programs is to develop a high level of proficiency in both the L1 and L2 languages. Students in immersion programs have been shown to have greater levels of proficiency in their second language than students who receive second language education only as a subject in school. Also, students who join immersion programs earlier generally have greater second-language proficiency than their peers who join later. However, students who join later have been shown to gain native-like proficiency. Grammatical skills and the ability to have precise vocabulary are particular areas of struggle. It is argued that immersion is necessary, but not sufficient for the development of native-like proficiency in a second language. A smaller social distance is likely to encourage learners to acquire the second language, as their investment in the learning process is greater. Conversely, a greater social distance discourages attempts to acquire the target language. Females have been found to have higher motivation and more positive attitudes than males for second-language acquisition. However, females are also more likely to present higher levels of anxiety, which may inhibit their ability to efficiently learn a new language. Factors, such as integrativeness and attitudes towards the learning situation drive motivation. The outcome of positive motivation is not only linguistic, but non-linguistic, such that the learner has met the desired goal. It was originally developed by Lev Vygotsky and his followers. The ZPD notion states that social interaction with more advanced target language users allows one to learn language at a higher level than if they were to learn language independently. According to Ellis, "It is important to recognize They differ from cognitive approaches and sociocultural approaches in that they consider language knowledge to be unique and distinct from any other type of knowledge. They are found empirically, by surveying different languages and deducing which aspects of them could be universal; these aspects are then checked against other languages to verify the findings. The interlanguages of second-language learners have been shown to obey typological universals, and some researchers have suggested that typological universals may constrain interlanguage development. It focuses on describing the linguistic competence of an individual. He believed that children not only acquire language by learning descriptive rules of grammar; he claimed that children creatively play and form words as they learn language, creating meaning of these words, as opposed to the mechanism of memorizing language. For example, L2-users often display knowledge about their L2 that they have not been exposed to. This unsourced knowledge suggests the existence of a universal grammar. Individual variation in second-language acquisition There is considerable variation in the rate at which people learn second languages, and in the language level that they ultimately reach. Some learners learn quickly and reach a near-native level of competence, but others learn slowly and get stuck at relatively early stages of acquisition, despite living in the country where the language is spoken for several years. The reason for this disparity was first addressed with the study of language learning aptitude in the s, and later with the good language learner studies in the s. The relationship between age and the ability to learn languages has also been a subject of long-standing debate. Age[edit] The issue of age was first addressed with the critical period hypothesis. However, the exact age marking the end of the critical period is debated, and ranges from age 6 to 13, with many arguing that it is around the onset of puberty. However, in general, adult learners of a second-language rarely achieve the native-like fluency that children display, despite often progressing faster in the initial stages. This has led to speculation that age is indirectly related to other, more central factors that affect language learning. Children who acquire two languages from birth are called simultaneous bilinguals. In these cases, both languages are spoken to the children by their parents or caregivers and they grow up knowing the two languages. These children generally reach linguistic milestones at the same time as their monolingual peers. One argument for this is that simultaneous bilinguals develop more distinct representations of their languages, especially with regards to phonological and semantic levels of processing. Conversely, learning a language later in life would lead to more similar semantic representations. Once surpassed, older learners often display clear language deficiencies compared to child learners. This has been attributed to having a solid grasp on the first language or mother tongue they were first immersed into. Having this cognitive ability already developed can aid the process of learning a second language since there is a better understanding of how language works. The exact language deficiencies that occur past a certain age are not unanimously agreed upon. Some believe that only pronunciation is affected, while others believe other

abilities are affected as well. However, some differences that are generally agreed upon include older learners having a noticeable accent, a smaller vocabulary, and making several linguistic errors. One explanation for this difference in proficiency between older learners and younger learners involves Universal Grammar. Universal Grammar is a debated theory that suggests that people have innate knowledge of universal linguistic principles that is present from birth. Even with less advantageous nonbiological influences, many child learners attain a greater level of proficiency than adult learners with more advantageous nonbiological influences. Strategies have been found to be of critical importance, so much so that strategic competence has been suggested as a major component of communicative competence. Learning strategies are techniques used to improve learning, such as mnemonics or using a dictionary. If learning strategies and communicative strategies are used properly language acquisition is successful. Some points to keep in mind while learning an additional language are: Anxiety in language-learning situations has been almost unanimously shown to be detrimental to successful learning. Anxiety interferes with the mental processing of language because the demands of anxiety-related thoughts create competition for mental resources. This results in less available storage and energy for tasks required for language processing. A related factor, personality, has also received attention. There has been discussion about the effects of extravert and introvert personalities. Extraverted qualities may help learners seek out opportunities and people to assist with L2 learning, whereas introverts may find it more difficult to seek out such opportunities for interaction. Further, while extraversion might be beneficial through its encouragement of learning autonomously, it may also present challenges as learners may find reflective and time-management skills to be difficult. Social attitudes such as gender roles and community views toward language learning have also proven critical. Language learning can be severely hampered by cultural attitudes, with a frequently cited example being the difficulty of Navajo children in learning English [citation needed]. Also, the motivation of the individual learner is of vital importance to the success of language learning. Motivation is influenced by goal salience, valence, and self-efficacy. Further, a supportive learning environment facilitates motivation through the increase in self-confidence and autonomy.

Second-language attrition Attrition is the loss of proficiency in a language caused by a lack of exposure to or use of a language. One way it does this is by using L1 as a tool to navigate the periods of change associated with acquisition and attrition. However, according to the regression hypothesis, the stages of attrition occur in reverse order of acquisition. With acquisition, receptive skills develop first, and then productive skills, and with attrition, productive skills are lost first, and then receptive skills. However, if a child has established a high level of proficiency, it may take him or her several years to lose the language. Proficiency level seems to play the largest role in the extent of attrition. For very proficient individuals, there is a period of time where very little, if any, attrition is observed.

Chapter 8 : What happens in the brain when you learn a language? | Education | The Guardian

Learning a second language has been proven to delay the onset of dementia. To find your future husband/wife (from Rico Suave) Learning a new language and culture increases the size of your selection pool.

By Contributor One strives to learn a foreign language for a variety of reasons. A teacher in a multilingual school has to have the ability to reach out to students of different cultures. Migrants lessen the impact of adjustment if they have made an effort to learn the language of their new country in advance. Learning a foreign language enables bridging of social barriers. A person gets to enjoy social and economic benefits, as well as the mental benefits of learning a foreign language. Here are some reasons why you should learn a foreign language. A foreign language is a whole new system with distinct rules, etymology, and meaning, which are just a few of the complexities of a language. Learning a new one puts the brain to task by recognizing this new language structure. As the brain works out meaning and makes full use of this new arsenal to express ideas, it sharpens skills on reading, negotiating, and problem-solving. Multi-tasking is stressful to those who are not skilled at it. People who are multilingual are proficient at slipping from one tongue to another, one language system to another totally different language mechanics. This is a very distracting and demanding work, not only for the tongue and language faculties, but especially for the brain. People who have developed this are highly proficient multi-taskers and commit very minimal error when juggling various activities. The studies were conducted with other variables such as gender, overall health, educational level, and economic status, but there were no significant results that contributed to the mentioned diseases as significantly as the number of languages spoken. The more the brain is used, the better its functions work. Learning a new language structure entails familiarizing with vocabulary and rules, and applying these memorized information into communication. This strengthens memory because the brain has built its ability to associate information with mnemonics and retains information better. Hence multilingual people have brains that are more exercised and quick to recall names, directions, shopping lists. A study conducted in Spain showed that polyglots, or multilingual people, have alert and keen minds. They easily spot anything that is irrelevant or deceptive. The study was conducted comparing multilingual and monolingual subjects; and the former notably had the edge. The discipline that they developed in studying an unknown subject has molded them to become more perceptive. Thus, they learn to be critical-thinkers. The decision-making ability becomes an easier process for multilingual people. Aside from the rules and vocabulary that go with learning a foreign language, there are nuances and vernacular expressions that a student of language frequently judges for appropriateness and hidden meanings. Decision-making becomes more prudent and discriminating. A student of foreign language is exposed to a whole new language structure and makes him more conscious of vocabulary, grammar, conjugation, idioms, sentence construction, comprehension and conversing. Learning this new mechanics is usually done juxtaposed with English, or the first language. Hence, students become more aware of English and develop a good ear for listening to the subtle gradations of each language. But with the new language on the other side, a student finds it important to look at English with more interest. Because the brain is made to operate differently, it develops a variety of cognitive skills. Studies show that the benefits of learning a new language included higher scores on standardized exams in math, reading comprehension, and vocabulary by multilingual students compared to the scores of monolingual students. Continued immersion was known to increase IQ and develop innovativeness in students. Since a language is a doorway to a particular culture, learning a new language enables a person to have a broader understanding of that race or culture. Opening up to a culture allows you to be more flexible and appreciative of other ways of doing and looking at things. As a result, if you are multilingual, you have the advantage of seeing the world from different vantage points. With universal unemployment problems, a multilingual ability is definitely a competitive edge over others. And these are just bonuses to the evident ability to communicate in several languages and cross cultural barriers. Self-confidence is a natural consequence after summing all benefits of learning a new language. By simply mastering one skill, the other faculties are developed. It is an interesting outcome, not at all something that you list as your expected result

when you embark to learn a new language. But trying to understand a language and the heritage that goes with it will put you in a position of self-discovery. It makes you come to terms with how you view the world and other cultures, and have more appreciation of your own. In the end, you come to terms with yourself, too. The cognitive and mental benefits of learning a foreign language are instantly apparent. But it also brings a host of social, cultural and personal benefits. It is best introduced at the earliest age possible. But learning it at a much later age is still very much worth it. Delaying dementia and related diseases is good enough reason to learn a new language today.

Chapter 9 : Second-language acquisition - Wikipedia

A person's second language or L2 is a language that is not the native language of the speaker, but that is used in the locale of that person. In contrast, a foreign language is a language that is learned in an area where that language has no presence or is not commonly spoken by the community as a whole.

The benefits of learning a second language by Jennifer Smith Learning a new language takes time and dedication. Once you do, being fluent in a second language offers numerous benefits and opportunities. Learning a second language is exciting and beneficial at all ages. Although it has been proven that it is easier for children to learn a second language, it is certainly never too late to learn, and the benefits definitely reward the effort and dedication. Here are the top benefits of learning a second language: Companies who plan to expand into overseas market are constantly looking for bilingual staff, who of which are well-paid and receive excellent benefits, as they will ultimately give the company a huge competitive advantage. By learning a second language, you will be indispensable at your place of work as you can easily bridge the cultural gap between the two countries, and those with the ability to speak a second language are more likely to find a job. Brain health Medical studies has shown the positive effects learning a second language has on the brain. Studies showed that learning a second language significantly delayed the onset of many brain related diseases such as Alzheimer and dementia, compared to those who can only speak their native tongue. Travel and leisure Learning a new language opens up a world of new opportunities. If you choose to learn a commonly spoken language, such as Spanish, French or German, you can travel practically anywhere in the world and not have trouble with translations. You can confidently go about your business and in another country and speak freely to locals and other travellers. You will have a much better experience as you can effectively communicate with much more people, which will ultimately open up your mind and put things into different perspectives regarding the different cultures of the world. Improved first language As we go about our everyday lives, we rarely give a second thought to our own grammatical structure and vocabulary. However, when learning a new language, many people find they have a greater understanding of their first language. Learning a second language focuses your attention on the grammatical rules constructions of that language. This experience gives people a new insight into their own language and ultimately leads to them improving their mother tongue, which will improve their everyday lives. Improved understanding of the world Learning a new language gives you a greater global understanding of the world we live in. Even by learning a few phrases, never mind a whole language, you will access many fascinating cultures around the world and understand the differences between the two countries. You will have access to a whole new array of film, music and literature, and a greater understanding of the history and culture of the nation and ultimately a better understanding of the way the world works, including politics and security. Experience new cultures The world is a cauldron of rich and interesting cultures. Learning a new language allows you to access many different cultures across the world. You will have the chance to see fascinating new things from a new perspective, which not many people can, and connect with the new people all over the world. Different culture has its own music, style, history, literature and many more interesting things which you will be able to enjoy and understand. You will be able to connect through books, TV, the internet and converse with a whole countries worth of people, ultimately broadening your horizons, interests and views. A whole new world will be open to you. Achievement Learning a new language is a an achievement anyone can be proud of and is extremely satisfying. Once the hard work and effort has paid off, you will experience the many benefits associated with learning a new language and you will have a new found confidence. Learning a new language will open up our world in ways a monoglot a monoglot would never have the chance of experiencing. Your mind will be constantly be engaged and you will gain an insight into many different cultures. Learning a second language also makes it easier to learn a third, which will certainly broaden your horizons. What do you think of this blog? Can you think of anymore benefits of learning a second language? If so, please leave your comments below. Written by Jennifer Smith on behalf of Kwintessential , the translation specialists. More information about how to improve brain function.