

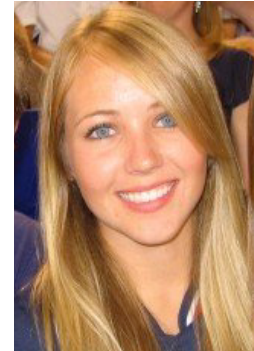
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How Does Learning English as a 2nd Language Differ from Learning it as a 1st Language?

The purpose of this longitudinal study is to assess the process through which native Spanish-speaking preschoolers acquire English as a second language. Native Spanish speaking children (11 total), with an initial mean age of 3;7 years and limited to no comprehension of the English language were recruited for the study. The participant's initial language level was assessed through the use of the Peabody picture vocabulary test in Spanish and English. A comparison group of monolingual English-speaking preschoolers (five participants to date) was included to compare the differences between learning English as a second language versus learning it as your first and only language. To match the Spanish participants initial English vocabulary level, these native English-speaking children were younger in chronological age, with a mean age of 2;5 years. Our results thus far suggest that the native Spanish-speaking children develop English vocabulary rather slow in comparisons to the younger native English-speakers. On average the comparison group scored 8 months higher than the expected scores for their chronological age on English vocabulary. Conversely the Spanish participants scored below or almost 2 years behind, their age expected value. Along with the rate of acquisition, there are also marked differences in the types of words the groups are learning early on in their development of the English language.



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