A Historical Consideration of Neurological,
Psychological, and Pedagogical Ideas on Language Learning.

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Abstract

The 19th century understanding of first language acquisition was underpinned by diary observations collected by parents. This process was viewed as primary based on imitation of the mother’s input (e.g. Darwin 1877). Many language teachers in the 19th century had invoked ideas about how children learn their mother tongue to inform formal language teaching practice. The notion of age of exposure to a second language was also present in educational debates throughout the century. Observations of children learning additional languages in a multilingual setting was a unique driver for Prendergast’s (1864) pedagogical approach to adult foreign language learning. At the same time, clinical observations of acquired disorders of language in individuals who spoke more than one language (e.g. Ribot, 1881, Pitres, 1895) were viewed as selective impairments of memory rather than expression. These 19th century perspectives on language learning and loss are contrasted with present day formulations of maturational trajectory, knowledge of language and other cognitive processes, and the role of working memory.
Suggested Readings

for Marjorie Lorch’s Master Seminar "A Historical Consideration of Neurological, Psychological, and Pedagogical Ideas on Language Learning” on 2/26/2015

Some primary sources:

Will be mailed to seminar registrants.

Brown does not own this book nor is there an electronic open access copy available on the internet. As a substitute I suggest: Paradis, M. A neurolinguistic theory of bilingualism, J. Benjamins 2004 which the Brown library has both in print and electronic form.

Prendergast, T. (1864). *The Mastery of Languages; or, the art of speaking foreign tongues idiomatically*. London.
This is freely available in electronic form from archive.org The link is: https://archive.org/details/masterylanguage02prengoog

This book is also freely available in electronic form from archive.org The link is: https://archive.org/details/diseasesmemorya01ribogoog

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