

# TELEVISION AND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

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23 March 2022

## **Introducción:**

En el presente artículo se muestran las razones por las que la adquisición del lenguaje de los bebés está influida por la televisión, tanto negativamente como positivamente. Los niños más pequeños necesitan mantener conversaciones para aprender un lenguaje de manera más efectiva y rápida. Sin embargo, aunque esto no lo puedan hacer con la televisión, sí que aprenden cierto vocabulario la verla.

En cuanto a aprender una lengua extranjera, ver la televisión en versión original te abre las puertas para aprender este idioma.

## **Abstract:**

This article shows why babies' language acquisition is influenced by television, both negatively and positively. Young children need to have conversations to learn language more effectively and quickly. However, although they cannot do this with television, they do learn some vocabulary by watching it.

In terms of learning a foreign language, watching television in its original version opens the door to learning this language.

## **How do babies learn to talk?**

To learn a language, babies need to hear people talk to each other at first. Once they get used to it, they need to understand the words someone is saying. Namely, they must know the connexion between the object or the thing a word is referring to. That's why seeing signs, facial expressions or someone pointing the thing they are talking about helps toddlers to learn a language (Morrisset, 1994).

But above all, the activity that benefits the most this kind of learning is directed speech.

This statement is proven by several studies that suggest that infant-directed speech promotes infant attention to language and improves social interaction between infants and caregivers. Also, it reports infants about various aspects of their native language by heightening distinctions relative to the speech addressed to adults (Golinkoff et al., 2015).

## **Positive effects of TV for language learning**

As it is said before, kids learn a language by hearing people talk and understanding the meaning of words. This can be done while watching TV.

In addition, Linebarger et al. said: “children learn the specific content featured in programs” (2017).

This is shown in the data of a study from 2005. According to it, at 30 months, kids who watched *Dora the Explorer*, *Blue’s Clues*, *Arthur*, *Clifford*, or *Dragon Tales* had obtained a better vocabulary and expressive language scores than the kids who did not watch TV (Linebarger & Walker, 2005).

Furthermore, there is more evidence that suggests that children can learn a language while watching TV. From age 2, kids are fully attentive to the images that appear on the television since there are many programs made to catch their interest with an educative context. Besides, children can learn word meanings while viewing TV, a device which becomes their new kind of toy and includes verbal routines (Rice, 1983).

### **Negative effects of TV for language learning**

As well as positive effects, there are also negative outcomes of TV for language learning. The principal reason of this is the fact that the television does not establish a conversation with a kid, so there’s a lack of direct speech, the best activity to learn a language.

The absence of this kind of speech is the cause why children who watch television the most tend to learn to speak later than toddlers who do not. (Dewar, 2020)

Moreover, even though there are many suitable TV programs for children, there are also many others that can be harmful:

“Study suggests risks associated with early childhood violent media exposure for long-term mental health in children” (Fitzpatrick et al., 2012)

In addition, television can also produce attention problems in the future if a child watches either violent or non-violent entertainment television before age 3 (Zimmerman & Christakis, 2007). But not only that, “television has the potential to disrupt sleep, and disrupted sleep can interfere with a child’s ability to concentrate and learn” (Dewar, 2020).

### **How does television influence the learning of a foreign language?**

Series, films, and programmes in the original version are a perfect way to develop oral comprehension. The images allow children to understand and enjoy the stories so that they do not feel bored. The results in terms of oral comprehension are remarkable when active listening is carried out.

In addition to acclimatising their hearing and increasing their vocabulary, the children acquire their first grammatical notions naturally and effortlessly.

In the nine best English-speaking countries in the world, television broadcasts programs in their original version (EF EPI, 2021).

"Continuous exposure to multimedia content in English helps people learn English" (Micola et al., 2019)

## **Conclusion:**

To sum up, television affects the acquisition of a language, not only the learning of a native tongue but also of a second language. TV can be helpful, but kids should always watch it with moderation. It's important for adults to maintain a conversation with toddlers, so TV shouldn't take away the time to practice direct speech.

Furthermore, parents need to choose age-appropriate programs for their children and never watch violent scenes with their kids in the room since it can affect their kid's mental health and produce attention problems.

Once you have learned your native language, watching television in its original version makes it easier to acquire a second language because it immerses you in the everyday use of the language rather than the usual methods used to learn it, such as the boring study of grammar.

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