

HERITAGE LANGUAGES & LANGUAGE TEACHING POLICY

Applying what you know:

Who are heritage speakers?

What do heritage speakers of a language have in common with monolingual speakers of the language?

What do heritage speakers of a language have in common with L2s (those who study the language as a foreign language)?

For discussion:

What are the challenges heritage speakers face in trying to (re-)learn their language?

What are the challenges for teachers/universities? How can these challenges be addressed?

Discuss among yourselves and later with the whole section: There's a big debate in the literature on whether heritage speakers should be considered "native" speakers of their heritage language. What do you think, and why?

ASL DEBATES IN THE MEDIA (2 short articles)

Applying what you know:

What would you say to convince someone that ASL is not just pantomimed English?

Explain one parallel between sign language acquisition and spoken language acquisition in children.

Sign language is visual, so how is it that it has morphology?

For discussion:

What arguments does the Alexander Graham Bell Association give against teaching children sign language?

What topics in sign language and in language acquisition does this debate engage with?

Discuss among yourselves and later with the whole section: Based on what you have learned in Ling 83 so far and on what you read in the articles, which side of the debate do you fall on? Why?

THE BENEFITS OF BILINGUALISM

Applying what you know:

There are different kinds of bilingualism (or different kinds of bilinguals). Name at least two and discuss their defining characteristics.

1)

2)

Who is considered a “native” speaker of a language? Discuss how this might be relevant to your answer above.

For discussion:

What are the benefits of bilingualism as discussed in the article?

Why did people used to think bilingualism was detrimental to a child’s development? How do you think this perception may have arisen?

Discuss amongst yourselves and then with the rest of section: What is the attitude regarding multilingualism here at Harvard? In your community? What factors play into this?

WHY LEARNING A SECOND LANGUAGE MIGHT BE DIFFICULT (2 short articles)

Applying what you know:

How is the nature of the input different between adult second language learning and child first language acquisition?

What is the difference in the outcomes between adult second language learning and child first language acquisition?

Describe how children learn (or unlearn) sounds in a language.

For discussion:

According to the articles, what are possible factors that make learning a language difficult?

What are differences between people or between languages that might influence the difficulty of learning another language?

Discuss amongst yourselves and then with the rest of section: Some researchers hypothesize that adult second language learners do not have access to UG when they learn the second language. What do you think that means? Is this supported by either of the articles?