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The Myth of Language Learning as an Adult / Are children really better at learning languages than adults?



Miami (ots) -

Everyone's heard at least once in their life that it's best to learn a new language when you're young. To become completely fluent like a native speaker, some people even say that you should start learning at an early age. In linguistics, those in favor of this hypothesis call this period the "[critical period](#)" and claim that learning a language is more difficult at an adult age.

But the idea that children are better at learning languages might actually be a myth: There are [many studies](#) that claim age isn't really a relevant factor when learning languages. Many late learners can really become completely fluent, speaking a new language with little trace of a foreign accent.

"Adults tend to be more judgemental than children and there is a widely spread social perception of linguistic ability as a general measure of one's intelligence. As adults, we might hold ourselves to higher standards and become frustrated when we can't express our complex thoughts in our new language," says Javier Santana, Head of Digital Education at [Lingoda](#), the leading online language school in Europe.

One of the reasons children learn languages so well is the incredible amount of time they are exposed to the language. In a sense, children are full time immersionists. On top of that, children usually live in a protected environment where making linguistic mistakes comes at low or zero cost.

On the flip side, what we have on our side as adults is agency. In other words, we can create an environment that allows us to improve ourselves. And we have the ability to actively and consciously take steps to build habits that can help us master a language – whether it's engaging in the right kind of practice or using the right kinds of tools.

In addition, learning a second language as an adult isn't only just about mastering the language like a native speaker does, it's much more than that. In fact, [recent revisions of international language learning frameworks](#) are moving away from the idea of an "idealized native speaker". Instead, they bring to the forefront aspects such as intercultural awareness, cross-linguistic mediation and the ability to build on the plurilingual repertoire. At the end of the day, learning a new language as an adult also means becoming a social agent across different cultures.

At Lingoda, our learning method caters to the [adult needs of learning a language](#). You're constantly learning with our expert teachers that give you ample opportunities for you to practice your speaking skills in a safe judgment-free environment and get exposure to many different dialects and accents.

"Our curriculum at Lingoda is designed to improve your language skills in areas that are important in everyday life," adds Santana.

“You start out with learning how to introduce yourself, talk about your family or how to order coffee at a restaurant. And this only accelerates your motivation as you move towards more advanced topics.”

Learning a new language takes time and consistency. But [you can get there even as an adult learner](#).

ABOUT LINGODA

Lingoda is one of the top online language schools. Founded in Berlin, Germany in 2013, we provide convenient and accessible online language courses in German, English, Business English, Spanish and French to over 80,000 students worldwide. Our private and small group classes are taught by over 1,500 qualified, native-speaking teachers. With almost 550,000 classes available per year and accessible 24/7, our mission is to empower even the busiest people to master a language and unlock their potential — at any time, from anywhere. Visit www.lingoda.com for additional information.

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