

Candidate Interest #1

Language Loss in Adults and Children

There is a phenomenon where after a certain period of time, the procedural memory/knowledge of languages that are not practiced regularly begins to degrade. This includes facets of the language that ranges from vocabulary to basic grammar rules, and can happen to any language that an individual has learned, whether it be their native tongue or their 4th language.

To my understanding, very little attention has specifically been brought to the differences of the degradation of this knowledge between children and adults. In addition, if the language that is degrading was learned during the peak time of language acquisition in children, how does that the process of unlearning the language, if at all?

Does the knowledge of the language degrade differently if the language was learned during childhood? Do children have different degradation of language knowledge than adults do?