

Podcast Questions: Learning a second language.

1. In the beginning the host plays a family video. Whose family is it?

It is a Kwong family video.

2. What holiday are they celebrating in the home video?

They are celebrating Easter.

3. What two languages do the Kwong family speak?

They speak English and Chinese.

4. What is Emily Kwong trying to do?

She is trying to learn Mandarin Chinese.

5. What is Sarah Phillips' job?

She is a neurolinguist.

6. What fields is bilingualism studied?

It is studied in linguistics, psychology, and cognitive neuroscience.

7. What is another name for “baby bilingual”?

Another name for that is “developing bilingual”.

8. What is the critical period hypothesis?

It's an old theory that says that you can only become fluent in another language when you are young.

9. What happens if baby zebra finches are separated from their parents for too long.

They can't produce the same songs when they are adults.

10. Do scientists agree or disagree with the critical period hypothesis? Why?

They disagree with it because after puberty your brain continues to build neurological connections.

11. Why is it harder to learn a new language when you are older?

Because adults have already developed certain habits and habits are hard to break.

12. What factors besides your age affect language learning?

Educational exposure and the chance to practice in a community.

13. What big advantage do children have when learning a language?

Pronunciation is a lot easier for children.

14. Do the speakers think native pronunciation is important? Why?

No, they say it is not important, because the way you speak is part of your experiences and your personality. It's more important to be understood.

Extra Questions:

1. Would you like to learn another language besides English?
2. The author says that native pronunciation is not important. Do you agree or disagree? Why?
3. Emily Kwong is Asian-American and doesn't speak Chinese. Do you think she should or is it OK not to speak your heritage language?
4. Are you working hard to learn a new language? In what ways?