

Abstract:

Diploma thesis deals with the question of how the so-called critical period (sensitive period) in language acquisition is conceptualized in the literature.

The thesis attempts to summarize the current views on the so-called critical period and compare them with Lenneberg's form of the theory (Lenneberg 1967). It also examines the arguments that have been used to support and oppose the existence of the critical period (e.g. the issue of the innateness and modularity of language, language deprivation), identifies the thematic areas in which the notion of a critical period is applied (e.g., first language acquisition, second language acquisition, bilingualism, language acquisition in deaf people), and seeks to capture the specifics of the theory in each of these areas. The selected topic area, the critical period in the second language context, is treated in more detail.

Keywords: critical period, language acquisition, L1, L2