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RECEPTION TO FOLLOW

AFFECTIVE PROCESSING AND GESTURES:

An Embodied Approach
to 'Age Effects' in L2 Acquisition

What does it mean to be target-like in a second language (L2)?

Can one become target-like as an adult or are there limits to brain plasticity?

Focusing on phonology and morphosyntax, research on 'age effects' in L2 acquisition has placed the 'critical period' for target-like mastery of the L2 somewhere between early childhood and puberty. A recent line of inquiry has expanded this research to 'thinking for speaking in L2' and suggested that the age of acquisition also influences the process of cognitive restructuring, where L2 speakers shift patterns of selective attention, restructure organization of lexical and morphosyntactic categories, and adopt new ways of categorizing phenomena and segmenting events in order to be target-like in L2. Now we are witnessing an even newer development, an emergence of an embodied approach that focuses on affective processing and gestures and asks whether there are limits to language embodiment in the L2. The purpose of this talk is to provide an overview of these cutting-edge developments in the field of applied linguistics and to generate a discussion about their viability, relevance, and potential implications for language teaching.