The above graph shows the optimal age to learn a new language, due to brain plasticity. No researcher calls this into question.

Patricia Kuhl is a world-renowned researcher who studies how babies learn language (what happens in their brains). Literally, babies carefully listen to the sounds around them and “compile statistics” to determine the sounds that they need to communicate. This means that the most frequently occurring sounds are selected as being useful, and the less frequent ones are abandoned. Hence we can see the importance of exposing our learners to the sounds of French in order to support and facilitate their learning.

Until the age of about six or seven years old, children are linguistic geniuses. Later, as shown on the graph, their ability to learn a second language steadily declines. This, in addition to other things, explains why children who become bilingual at an early age have virtually no accent. And this is also why adults who learn a second language usually retain an accent.

We encourage you to watch the video online. It is possible to activate subtitles in French, as well as in other languages, and also to read the text of this presentation in the language of your choice (by selecting the “Interactive Transcript” function).

Resource on Bilingual Language Development (Annie Bourret), FPFCB