

The Din in the Head hypothesis: Comments on de Bot (2008)

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The Din in the Head, first noted by Barber (1980), is an involuntary mental rehearsal of a language that occurs after we have had extensive comprehensible input in that language.

I present here three comments on de Bot's discussion of the Din in his recent article in the Modern Language Journal (de Bot, 2008):

de Bot gives me credit for coming up with a "catchy title" for my 1983 paper. I used Barber's original way of describing the phenomenon, which is quoted by de Bot: "the linguist in me was noticing a rising din of Russian in my head" (p. 172). Barber deserves the credit, not me.

de Bot states that the "Din in the Head" hypothesis relates to the idea of a "critical stage that turns receptive knowledge into productive knowledge." The Din in the Head hypothesis claims that the din is the result of stimulation of the language acquisition device, a sign that language acquisition is taking place (Krashen, 1983). I noted that the Din experience correlates with less reluctance to speak the language, but did not make any hypothesis about a sudden "critical stage" that leads to a "sudden and massive restructuring" as de Bot claims (p. 173).

de Bot states that there is no research providing evidence for his interpretation of the din. There certainly is published research confirming that the predictions made in Krashen (1983) are correct: Bedford, 1985; de Guerrero, 1987, McQuillan, 1996, McQuillan and Rodrigo, 1995; Parr and Krashen, 1986; Sevilla, 1996.

References

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