Introduction, name and email address
Information sheets.
Photos for the Information sheets.

Properties of language Acquisition:

**Universality:** all children acquire language
**Uniformity:** all children converge on a similar grammar from different environments
**Rapidity:** children construct a grammar over a short period of time. Linguists have failed to do this over a few hundred years.
**Milestones:** children can differ in stages by as much as a year, though the stages are the same.

Stages of Acquisition:

**Sound System:** up to 13 months, it can vary.
**Lexicon:** 6 months onwards. It needs theory of mind
**Morphology:** That children take so well to this suggests that there is something in the child's brain that takes to morphology.
**Syntax:** words are put together in structure dependent strings.
**Pragmatics:** Speaker's intention, structure narratives, genre and taking part in conversations. Children need to see their language socially.

The Logical Problem: How can a child go from nothing to complete mastery so quickly with little experience.

Acquisition versus learning. We use a different term for what Children do with their first language since it is different to what adults do with a second.

Second language versus First

1. Lack of success: Children always succeed
2. General failure: most adults fail
3. Variation in strategy and success: Children have no strategy while adults use different ones, when strategy same different success levels.
4. Variation in goals: determines success, there is no importance to children
5. Fossilisation: stop learning at certain point, children do not
6. Indeterminate intuitions: not so sure for ungrammaticality judgements.
8. Negative evidence Adults: look for what is not allowed, children do not.
9. Role of affective factors: factors sure as motivation, attitude, personality and socialisation play a part with adult learning but not with children.
We have only studies of children acquiring language in 'normal' circumstances, so it is difficult to determine exactly what is needed to acquire language. Until we see a child develop without something we don’t know if it is necessary or not. E.g. modified speech is not necessary but often used, we view cultures that don’t use it we learn that it is futile.

Explanations:

Nature vrs. Nurture

Nature:
Nativism: Content nativism and non-content nativism

- Content Nativism: The mind has innate knowledge, this explains the speed of acquisition.
- Non-content Nativism: the stages in acquisition are the result of cognitive mechanisms maturing.

Nurture:
Empiricism: knowledge is gained through experience. Not ‘Tabula rasa’ but lined paper, there is a hidden organising property in the brain.

Empiricism has led to connectionism.

The Interactionist view:
- Biological factors + cognitive development + ling environment = Lang Acquisition
- Slowly developing central nervous system + sophisticated brain = predisposition to learn lang.
- This stresses the importance of the input on the developing child. They agree that there is a genetic blueprint also and the studies look at how the two interact.

Prosody: Language is perceived as a sequence of sounds, vowels and consonants. Prosodic features are those features that are added to the sound, such as pitch. They are not optional however, they are obligatory. Intonation, stress, rhythm, voice quality, loudness and tempo.

**Stage development of a child**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>6-10 months:</th>
<th>Babbling, children distinguish the sounds of the target language.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 year:</td>
<td>Holographic period, first words, words combined with gestures.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18 months:</td>
<td>Two word stage, telegraphic stage. From two separate words, with a clear pause between (mommy...cookie), to two word combinations, viewed as mini sentences due to single intonational pattern, (mommy up). Computational bottle neck: child can not produce as much as it can understand. 40 wds a week to vocab.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 years:</td>
<td>Variation is greater here. Mean Length of Utterance (MLU) as stages. <strong>Stage I:</strong> 400 wds, MLU 1.75. Adult wd order followed. No used of A, the, is, on.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-3 years:</td>
<td><strong>Stage II:</strong> MLU 2.25, 900wds. Pronouns, determiners, -ing, -ed used, also Prepositions &lt;in&gt;, and &lt;on&gt; are used. Mono</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stage</td>
<td>MLU</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III</td>
<td>2.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VI</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Relative: the car [which I can afford e]
Subordinate: she said that the earth is flat

MLUm, MLUw, counting morphemes of words. Only useful up to 4.0, then use T-units, terminable units = a main clause and all it dependant clauses.

Universal Grammar and the language faculty.

Innate Behaviours:
1. Emerges before necessary.
2. not result of conscious decision.
3. Not triggered by external events.
4. Teaching and practice have relatively little effect.
5. Sequence of milestones
6. Critical period

Blindness:
Blind children start to talk later but by three have caught up. They have problems with pragmatic aspects of language, this may be due to them not being privy to sighted aspects of a conversation. They have difficulty in lexicon, its said that early on lexicon building is cognitively driven but later it is syntactically driven.

Words and sounds are determined by the environment. Syntax is different.

Care given speech: The Kaluli tribe of New Guinea
Theories of Acquisition

Language not just a list of words, finite space, I have one car, I have two cars...etc. Not just memorisation, rules and components must be learned. Rules are not stated so they cannot be just memorised.

IMITATION THEORY:
Listen to speech and reproduce. Partly true as since meaning of words is arbitrary the words must be used to be acquired. Then reproduce and imitate them. This theory separates the language from the language faculty, not born with a language, acquire what is around them. However, children make errors, *I goed to the shops, *I hitted the ball, *I like the mans. This are not heard through adults. This is partially explained by claiming that children do not reproduce properly due to the complexity of language. But these errors are systematic, common across all children. Also children do not make random errors, using invented morphemes for past etc.

A: He doesn’t want a drink  C: He no want drink
A: That’s the dog’s toy.  C: That dog toy

No: do support, articles, possessive, verb be.

To the child, what it said is grammatical, it has an internal grammar which is different o the adult’s. The imitation theory does not recognize and internal grammar.

The imitation theory also fails to explain how children and adults form new utterances, if they imitate what they hear then they can only reproduce these utterances.

REINFORCEMENT THEORY
When correct forms are made, children are praised and rewarded, this helps child along. This does not explain how children make utterances in the first place. Caregivers do not frequently correct children’s grammatical mistakes. Usually they correct accuracy and truth. When correction of grammatical errors do occur they have little effect:

C: Nobody don’t like me
A: No, say “nobody likes me”
C: Nobody don’t like me
    Repeated 8 times
A: Now listen carefully! Say, “nobody likes me”
C: Oh! Nobody don’t likes me.

MOTHERERESE
Caregiver speech/ motherese/ infant directed speech IDS.
This is given to children so that they language imput in structure and easiler to process, this turns out not to the case.
Features: Slower and of higher pitch, exaggerated intonation, more fluent and grammatically well formed, directed at content not context. Parents expand they children’s sentences but use primarily questions, which are syntactically puzzling, subject aux inversion and wh-movement.
Bare in mind that gibberish is recognised as language if it has intonation. Slower speech will help but doesn't change the speed at which milestones are reached.

*Chicken and egg, if it is needed they who spoke to the first language user.*

**ANALOGY**
Use one rule as a blueprint.

One that works:
I painted the red barn → I painted the blue barn

One that doesn't:
I painted the red barn → I painted the barn red
Last two words are reversible.

I saw the red/blue barn
But:
I saw the barn blue

**Question formation:**
The boy is sleeping → Is the boy sleeping
Move *1st* verb to the front to form question
The boy who is sleeping is dreaming
*Is the boy who sleeping is dreaming*

These mistakes don't happen

**ACTIVE CONSTRUCTION OF A GRAMMAR:**
Children construct their on rules as they go along. Children analyse the language around them and process it, generating rules. They reapply the rules and modify them accordingly, until the system matches that of the adults around them. E.g. past tense _ed is added until irregular forms are met then it is altered.
18 month old: wawa for water and dat for that. These mistakes are systematic and expected. Children are aware that their phonological system is not perfect. In 2½ years it will be perfect.

After a few weeks, babies COO, sequences of vowel sounds. This is prelinguistic, first ling stage is babbling.

**BABBLING**

**When begin?** Begin at six months

**What is babbling?** Long sequences of consonants C and Vowels V.

**Why?**

Done for pleasure, not to get anything.

**Functions:**

1. **practice,** the fine motor movements needed for language are exercised here. Babbling uses sounds not in the target language.
2. **Social reward,** they are encouraged, the first into to social character of language.

Neglected children stop babbling if it is not encouraged.

**Why start to babble? and at same stage?** Unexplained largely, propose that they babble due to some biological maturation occurs, it is genetic, same for all children.

**FIRST WORDS** 12-16 months the concept of a word is acquired. They attempt to learn the 50 most common words it hears. No phonemic contrasts. Ba for bottle and da for daddy. Then Ba and da used for bottle or even daddy. They learn words as units not distinguishing the parts they are made up of. They are perceived as single sounds

**PHONEMES AND PHONOLOGICAL PROCESSES**

Order of acquisition: Nasals, glides, stops, liquids, fricatives.
Labial, velar, Alveolar, palatal

50 is the max for these complex sounds, after this they break up the words into smaller pieces, sounds.

Ma and pa as first sounds. When producing m or p, there is complete closure at the front. a the low back vowel tongue is neutral position.

**What is a phonological process?**

Alterations to the words

Remember that children do this to make their production easier. This is why it appears more complicated at first. Either shorter or easier to articulate.

Children have more phonological processes.

Banana - nana
Bicycle - bayket
Potato - dedo
Word final devoicing, in Russian and German but not in Eng, but used by children acquiring Eng:
Pig – pik
Bird – bit

The phonological process that occur are naturally occurring in other languages, a feature of UG, not just chance or random selection.

Examples of processes:

**Substitution:** Fronting:  g -> d  goat – dot
Gliding: glide replaces liquid:  drip – dwip
Stopping: Fricative become stop:  sea – ti

**Assimilation:** Voicing: paper – baber

**Syllable structure:** Cluster reduction:  Play – pay
Final C deletion:  bike – bi
Reduplication: water – wa – wawa

Two points of note:
1. Processes are universal, same in all children, regardless of target language. Bigger than imitation.
2. Start with more processes and then limit which ones they keep. UG is bigger than what we end up with. Link to L2, not present any more. Not accessible.

Remember that children do this to make their production easier. This is why it appears more complicated at first. Either shorter or easier to articulate.

Children recognise their own mispronunciations, they get upset at correction. They also know more than they can produce. The wabbit and the rabbit.
Second language versus First

1. Lack of success
2. General failure:
3. Variation in strategy and success
4. Variation in goals:
5. Fossilisation:
6. Importance of instruction
7. Negative evidence Adults
8. Role of affective factors
Theories of Acquisition

- IMITATION THEORY
- REINFORCEMENT THEORY
- MOTHERESE
- ANALOGY
- ACTIVE CONSTRUCTION OF A GRAMMAR