

Language Acquisition Part I



What Develops
& When?

What is language?

- ◆ Creative

What is language?

- ◆ Creative
- ◆ Structured



The bee landed.

~~Bee the landed.~~

What is language?

- ◆ Creative
- ◆ Structured
- ◆ Referential

Shoes



What is language?

- ◆ Creative
- ◆ Structured
- ◆ Referential
- ◆ Interpersonal

What is language?

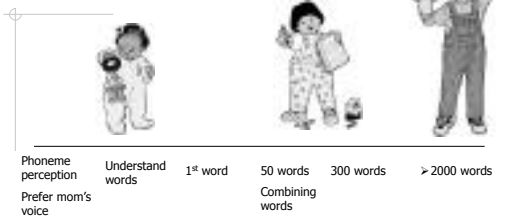
- ◆ Creative
- ◆ Structured
- ◆ Referential
- ◆ Interpersonal
- ◆ Species-Specific
 - Universal



Units of Language

- ◆ Phonemes
- ◆ Morphemes
- ◆ Semantics
- ◆ Syntax
- ◆ Pragmatics

Language Milestones



Outline

- ◆ Theories of language acquisition
- ◆ Prelinguistic communication
- ◆ Early word learning
- ◆ Grammar

Theories of Language Acquisition


- ◆ Learning Theory
- ◆ Nativist Theory
- ◆ Interactionist Theory

Learning Theory

- ◆ Product of the environment
 - Association
 - Selective Reinforcement
 - Imitation
 - ◆ abstract modeling

Learning Theory

- ◆ Product of the environment
 - Association
 - Conditioning
 - Imitation




- Language is not special.

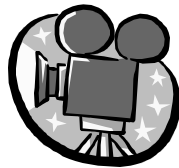
Nativist Theory

- ◆ Innate language learning mechanism.
- ◆ Chomsky's LAD
 - Language Acquisition Device

Nativist Theory

- ◆ Innate language learning mechanism.
 - ◆ Chomsky's LAD
 - Language Acquisition Device
-  ◆ Language acquisition can't be explained by learning alone.

Film: Born to Talk



- ◆ Pinker
- ◆ Things to think about:
 - Nature vs nurture
 - Preview of children's grammar

Interactionist Account

- ◆ "Bridge"
- ◆ Cognitive capacities and social environment interact.



Precursors to language

- ◆ Prefer mom's voice
- ◆ Phonemic perception
- ◆ Distinguish native language
- ◆ Prefer "motherese"

Motherese

- ◆ High pitch
- ◆ Exaggerated
- ◆ Repetition
- ◆ Universal

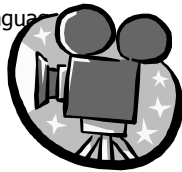
Prelinguistic Communication

- ◆ Crying
- ◆ Cooing
 - 1-2 months
- ◆ Babbling
 - 6 months



Film: Talkin' Babies

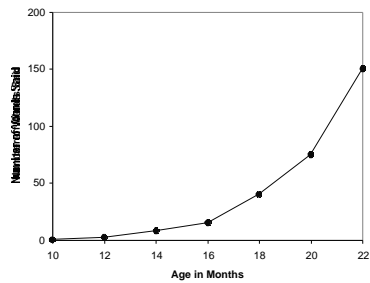
- ◆ Petito
- ◆ Things to think about
 - Babbling and language development
 - Auditory versus visual language
 - Nature and nurture



What's so amazing about word learning?

- 1 year- 1 word
- 2 years- 300 words
- 3 years- 1000 words
- 4 years- 5000 words
- 5 years- 10000 words
- 18 years- 60000 words

Vocabulary Spurt



Based on Nelson (1973)

Learning the first words

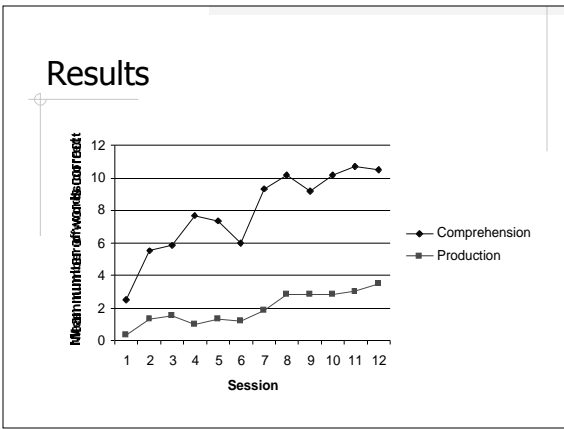
- ◆ Production: 10-12 months
- ◆ Comprehension: 8-10 months
- ◆ Variety!

Methodology

- ◆ Train infants on the names of 12 unfamiliar objects for 3 months.
- ◆ Test children's comprehension & production weekly.

Testing

- ◆ Comprehension
- ◆ Production



Gesture

- ◆ Baby Signs
 - Acredolo & Goodwyn (1996)
 - 8 months!

Flower



Gesture

◆ Baby Signs

- Acredolo & Goodwyn (1996)
- 8 months!
- Advantages:
 - ◆ Larger vocabulary
 - ◆ Increased communication
 - ◆ Decreased frustration

Common Early English Words

| | |
|--------|--------|
| Juice | Shoes |
| Milk | Ball |
| Cookie | Blocks |
| Water | Car |
| Dog | Clock |
| Cat | Bottle |
| Duck | Toast |

Noun Advantage?


- ◆ Easier for children to learn nouns?

Noun Advantage?

- ◆ Easier for children to learn nouns?
- ◆ Nouns are not as predominant in early Mandarin vocabularies

Noun Advantage?

- ◆ Easier for children to learn nouns?
- ◆ Nouns are not as predominant in early Mandarin vocabularies

 ■ Effect of input
