

Language Development



Babies and Infants



- 4 mos.
 - Discriminate between some sounds and can babble
 - <http://youtu.be/7RqUTJAfy48>
- 6 mos.
 - Responds to name, other human voices
 - Responds appropriately to pleasant or angry tones
- 1 yr.
 - Uses one or more words with intent – no, mom, dad, up, etc.
 - Understands simple instructions
 - Understands inflection
 - http://youtu.be/_NZMJBMUHU8

Toddlers



- **1 1/2 yrs.**
 - Vocabulary of 5-20 words
 - Echoalia develops
 - ✦ Repeating a sound over and over
- **2 yrs.**
 - Vocabulary of 150-300 words
 - Begins to use 1-3 word sentences (mean is 1.2)
 - Begins to use pronouns
 - 2/3 of words can be understood by a stranger
 - Can name a number of objects common to his or her surroundings
 - ✦ Chair, dog, siblings
 - <http://youtu.be/UrRKLHq25UA>

Children



- 3 yrs.
 - Vocabulary of 1000 words
 - 90% of words can be understood by a stranger
 - Uses pronouns (I, you, me) and prepositions (in, on, under)
 - http://youtu.be/gd3JTyQBQ_E

- 5 yrs.
 - Knows all letters, can count up to 10
 - Understands simple time concepts
 - ✦ Yesterday, today, tomorrow, morning, afternoon, tonight
 - Can use compound, complex sentences
 - <http://youtu.be/svE6ff9hBQI>

Two Theories



- We hear language all the time, from everyone around us
- How do we figure out the rules?
 - David ate the nachos.
Noun verb object.
 - Grammar rules
- Do we listen to others and figure it out or do we have a special language center in the brain?

Nativist Theory – Noam Chomsky



- **Just hearing language is not enough.**
 - We learn language despite incomplete info from our environment
- **Some aspects of people are innate (inside all of us)**
 - Not all knowledge is gained from the senses
 - We have a structure in our minds as soon as we are born
 - We understand cause and effect, we avoid high places and hot objects
- **People have a LAD (Language Acquisition Device)**
 - Something you're born with – the structure to learn
 - Instinctual – we don't get direct instruction in language

Empiricist Theory



- Knowledge comes from sensory input we experience
 - Emphasize evidence and scientific method
- Tabula Rasa
 - We start off as “blank slates”
 - Parents and caregivers adopt Child Directed Speech (CDS)
- Social-Interactionist Theory
 - We learn language as well as our caregivers interact with us.
 - The process of hearing and trying to speak back is how we learn

Nativism vs. Empiricism



- Which theory sounds right to you?

References



- Child Development Institute. (2013). http://childdevelopmentinfo.com/child-development/language_development.shtml