Lecture4

* Language acquisition
Language acquisition is fascinating (e.g. L1 acquisition)

Dichotic listening experiment
In this kind of experiment, participants
are presented auditory stimuli over headphones, with differe
inputs to each ear. For instance, the syllable ba might be played into the right ear, while at the same exact time da is played to the left ear. The participant‘s task is to report what was heard. On average, stimuli presented to the right ear are reported with greater accuracy than the stimuli presented to the left ear

Right ear advantage for language, why?
This is known as the right-ear advantage for language. It occurs because a linguistic signal presented to the right ear arrives in the left hemisphere for decoding by a more direct route than does a signal presented to the left ear. From the left ear, the signal must travel first to the right hemisphere, then across the corpus callosum to the left hemisphere (Kimura 1961, 1973). Thus, information presented to the right ear is decoded by the left hemisphere earlier than the information presented to the left ear

Language acquisition
Language acquisition is not possible without:
A) a biologically based predisposition (readiness) to acquire language
B) experience with language in the environment

A biological predisposition for language
This is called the nativist model of language acquisition .’
All biologically based systems require ‗environmental input‘. (eyes, muscles)
No input ? no acquisition

But input without ‗something‘ to process it is not sufficient for acquisition
- Language acquisition device (LAD) Chomsky (1965). p.99- 100
- Acquisition strategies. p.101

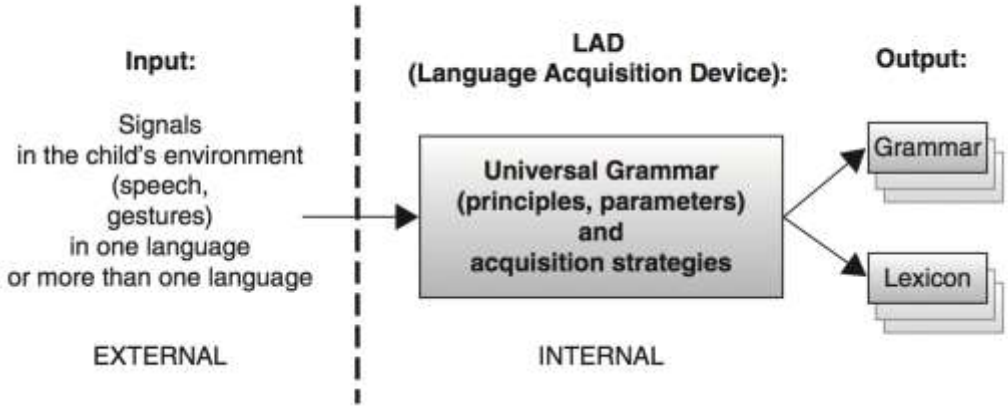

Figure 4.1 Schematic diagram of the relationship between external stimuli and internal knowledge in language acquisition. Input from the environment activates internal processes that lead to the acquisition of a grammar and a lexicon, which are the output of the process of acquisition. If the input provides experience in more than one language, a grammar and lexicon will develop for each language.

Acquisition strategies determine what will be the most salient and easily acquired aspects of language (e.g.. sensitivity to regularities). p. 101

Characteristics of the language in the environment
The primary purpose of the child‘s linguistic environment is to provide information about the language the child is acquiring (i.e. positive evidence). p.102
Who are the providers of positive evidence?

Should we ‘teach’ children language?
USA vs. some Brazilian tribes (linguistic exogamy) -unlike endogamy -
Some children are rarely talked to
Children end up acquiring language

1-We don‘t need to teachǁ children language. p.1032
2-Care givers need to provide linguistic input to their children
3-Information must be conveyed in an interactive setting
4-Rewarding for imitation, altering the way of speaking & error correction are not necessary to guarantee language acquisition

(1) Child: Want other one spoon, Daddy.
Adult: You mean, you want the other spoon.
Child: Yes, I want other one spoon, please, Daddy.
Adult: Can you say "the other spoon"?
Child: Other … one … spoon
Adult: Say "other."
Child: Other.
Adult: Say "spoon."
Child: Spoon.
Adult: Other … spoon.
Child: Other … spoon. Now can I have other one spoon?

Children mostly hear ‗positive evidence' or input and rarely hear ‗negative evidence' or ungrammatical language. p. 105

E.g. word order is acquired at 14 months

(before 2-word sentences = before receiving any feedback on it)

Lecture5

Developmental stages
Universal milestones. p.106

Pre-birth to 12 months

Pre-birth sensitivity to language. p.107
Hearing begins to develop around 18 weeks of gestation. (4 months)
By the third trimester, the fetus responds to auditory stimulation.
weeks old fetuses have a preference for their own mothers' voice over that
38. (8.8 months of a stranger)

After birth, children recognize their mother language as distinct from other languages. p.

1st six months
Coos, gurgles. p.109

Second six months
Babbling (e.g. single syllables -CV). p.109
The consonant is usually a stop sound. Vowel is /a
The vocalisations have sentence-like intonation. p.1106

months 12-24

First word -12-18 months (one-word-stage). p.110
This is also called a 'holophrastic period' (e.g. milk - I want milk - the cat is drinking milk..etc)
Underextension vs. overextension. p.111 (e.g. flower X rose vs. dog= cat)

When the child's vocabulary reaches about 50 words, the child starts putting words together and s/he starts learning new words quickly. p.111
6 year old children roughly know 8000-14000 words.
Average of 4-8 new words everyday.

Preschool years
Children show knowledge of L1 word-order. p116
Sentences start to lengthen.
Mean length of utterances (MLU). (free & bound morphemes in a language sample/ the number of utterances. p.117

There is high correlation between MLU and age

~~**Hanna (23 month old girl)**~~

(3) No Hannah mess.
No Daddy mess.
Where go, Mom?
Mom, talk phone.
Mommy like it.
Want juice.
More cracker.
Daddy push in swing.
Go subby [subway].

1-No bound morphemes or tense markers on verbs or plural markers
2-No subjects

Third year
Sentences gradually lengthen, bound morphemes and function words emerge.
Morphemes emerge gradually in a similar order
(e.g. -ing present progressive - Kitty sleeping)
Past tense mistakes (e.g. _goed' indicate overgeneralization).

At age 3

Complex sentences are produced (with variation). p.122

I want Mommy do it.

I see you sit down.

Watch me draw circles.

Children begin producing relative clauses spontaneously around the age of 3-4. p.123

In general, there is a considerable period between the time a child first uses a form and consistent use of it (e.g. past tense). p.124

At around 5-6, language becomes more systematic

7,8&9 year olds start to use derivational morphemes(e.g. -ness, -ful and -ment). p124-125

Discourse ability & metalinguistic awareness develop as children grow older. p. 126-128