Utterance - a continuous stretch of speech produced by one participant in a conversation

Syllable - A single unit of pronunciation, containing a single vowel sound, which may form part of all of a word (e.g. rain has one syllable, while sunshine has two).

Phoneme - The smallest unit of sound in speech.

Discourse features:
- Turn-talking (participants talk in turns; sometimes speech overlaps)
- Adjacency pairs (statement : response; the responses can be of any length and can extend to three-part exchanges)
- Holding the conversational floor
- Clashing (people talking over each other)
- Repairing (self-correction; I mean, I wanted to say)
- Topic shift (which reminds me, by the way)

Paralinguistic features (body language, gestures, facial expressions, pauses, vocal expressions such as giggling and sighing, back-channel noises such as mm, oh)

Prosodic features:
- Tone (anger, happiness, boredom)
- Pitch (high or low)
- Volume (loud or quiet)
- Speed (fast or slow)

Features of unscripted language:

- **Back-channelling** (reassuring sounds produced by a listener; yeah, mhm, right)
- **Contraction** (shortening of words by adding an apostrophe; can't, won't, you'll)
- **Deixis** (pointers for temporal and spatial orientation; here, there, this, that)

- Discourse markers (words used for switching from one topic to another; so, right, fine, anyway)
- **Elision** (omission of sounds/syllables; moved -> mov'd; over – o'er)
- **Ellipsis** (omission of words; characterized by the use of three dots in writing, and silence in speaking; Off home now…)
- **False starts** (reformulation of an incorrect statement; I come home/came home very quickly)
- **Fixed expressions/clichés** (In my opinion, as a matter of fact, at the end of the day)
- **Hedges/vague language** (used for implying something; kind of, you know what I mean)
- **Metalanguage** (language about language; used for self-correction; I mean to say, I should have mentioned)
- **Modality** (introduces different opinions/compromises through the use of modal verbs; may, might, could, should)
- **Non-fluency features – fillers** (mmm…), a voiceless pause
- Non-standard English features (unfinished utterances, incorrect use of syntax/grammar)
- **Phatic communication** (polite formulaic greetings; reply not usually expected; What are the odds?)
- **Repetition** (emphasis, prolonging the thinking time)
- **Tag questions** (prompting a response; You're new here, aren't you?)
- **Vague expressions** (sort of, kind of, around; He said he was around forty.)

Stages (milestones)

1 The babbling stage - the first year (6-9 months)
2 The holophrastic stage (one word stage - 12-18 months) -> **two word stage** (18-24 months)
- rapid vocabulary acquisition and basic syntax (primarily nouns followed by verbs and adjectives third)
- "Apple"; "Eat apple"
- Vocabulary acquired consists of:
    - Nouns for objects and people in their environment
    - personal interactions (e.g. 'bye bye', 'thank you', 'no', 'hello'),
    - simple verbs (e.g. 'kiss', 'sit', 'drink', 'walk')
    - general conditions in their environment (e.g. 'hot', 'all', 'gone', 'more')
- **Jean Berko's '/fis/ phenomenon'**
    - Even when children are unable to pronounce a word correctly themselves, they recognise the correct pronunciation when used by adults
    - This is evidence that children's perceptual abilities are often in advance of their productive abilities
    -

3 The telegraphic stage (2-3 years)
- longer utterances; more than 2 elements
- content/lexical words (nouns, adjectives, adverbs, pronouns, main verbs)-
- prepositions (e.g. 'to', 'from', 'under', 'by'), determiners (e.g. 'the', 'a') and inflections/suffixes to show tense and person (e.g. '-ed', '-ing', '-s') are omitted in the early telegraphic stage, but appear over the next year or so
- Mistakes: overextension and underextension

4 Post-telegraphic stage (3-5 years)

- more complex sentences in terms of vocabulary and grammar
- number words; emotions; family terms; colours; contrasting concepts - longer, bigger; connecting words - and, but)
- addition of function words (articles, conjunctions, prepositions)
- affixes (cat -> cats)
- Virtuous errors - over-generalising or over-applying a grammatical rule to an unknown word (run - runned, go - goed/wented)
- distinction between hypernyms (words for categories- animals, furniture) and hyponyms (words within categories - cat, bed)

The Berko wug test

- A famous experiment was carried out by Jean Berko (1958) to show the application of grammatical rules by children.
- Young children were shown a picture of an imaginary creature which Berko called a wug. When they were shown a picture of two of the creatures, children were asked to complete the sentence There are two ___.
- They applied the grammatical principle of adding s for plurals and replied wugs

Phonetic development

- consonant cluster reduction (tuck for truck)
- unstressed syllable deletion (nana for banana)
- assimilation (gog for dog)
- substitution (fink for think)
- reduplication (choo-choo for train)
- addition (horsey for horse)
- final consonant deletion (ca for cat)

Child Directed Speech (CDS)

- motherese, fatherese, carese, baby talk, parentese
- attract and hold the baby's attention
- encourage a child to interact and respond
- help the process of breaking down language into understandable chunks
- make the conversation more predictable by keeping the conversation in the 'here and now' and referring to things the baby can see
- **A conversational recast** is a response to a child's utterance in which the adult repeats some or all of the child's words and adds new information while maintaining the basic meaning expressed by the child

TABLE 10.21   Some features of English caregiver speech
Phonetic
Slow, carefully articulated speech Higher pitch Exaggerated intonation and stress Longer pauses
Lexical and semantic
More restricted vocabulary Concrete reference to the here and now
Syntactic
Few incomplete sentences Short sentences More imperatives and questions
Conversational
More repetitions Few utterances per conversational turn

Caregiver speech could be helpful to children in various ways. For example, exposure to slow, carefully articulated speech may make it easier for children to pick out words and to learn their pronunciation. (Remember that sentences consist of a continuous stream of speech sounds; there are no pauses between words.) Moreover, the acquisition of meaning may be facilitated by the fact that caregiver speech tends to concentrate on the here and now, especially the child's surroundings, activities, and needs. The examples in table 10.22 help illustrate this.

Katherine Nelson
- **Vocabulary -** the first 50 words
  - <u>Naming</u> (labeling objects and people - 'mama', 'toy', 'ball')
  - <u>Action</u> (describing action - 'go', 'give', 'eat')
  - <u>Modifying</u> (used for describing/commenting - 'no', 'nice', 'good')
  - <u>Social</u> (social/personal function - 'bye-bye', 'hi', 'thank you')
- **Children**: referential (naming words) and expressive (social and modifying words)

Mistakes
- **Over-extension** - the word is applied to an incorrect referent.
  - Categorical overextension (most common; hyponym -> hypernym) 'Apple' used for all fruit
  - Analogical overextension (same quality of two different items) 'Cat' used for soft blanket
  - Mismatch overextension (association is based on a physical connection; the least common mistake; unusual/unexpected commonality)
  - 'Doll' used for its house;

- **Under-extension -** a word is used for too few referents. 'Dog' is used for their pet only

Jean Aitchinson
- three-stage model of learning meaning
  - Labelling (learning to name objects, processes and ideas
  - Packaging (testing the limits of terms - over / underextension)

○ Networks (noticing the relationship between categories (fruit > apple > red delicious); understanding opposites and similarities, relationships and contrasts

U-shaped learning

Negation development stages (Ursula Bellugi - 1967):
1) Uses 'no' or 'not' at the beginning or end of the sentence – "No shoes!"
2) Puts 'no' or 'not' inside the sentence –"I no wear shoes!"
3) Attaches negatives to auxiliary verbs - "I won't wear shoes!"
NB the main verb is not always yet in the correct tense

Question development stages (Brown):
1) Only prosodic features (rising intonation) indicate the interrogative mood: 'Daddy come…?'
2) Interrogative pronouns (wh- words, such as when, where, what, how) are used at the start of sentences: 'where baby…?'
3) Syntactic inversion of the auxiliary verb (can, is, did – tense will not always be correct) and the subject of the sentence (e.g. You, Daddy) produce the correct form: Is Daddy gone?

Functions of children's language (Halliday)

Function	Use	Example
instrumental	to fulfil a need	*Juice please*
regulatory	to control others	*Mummy sit*
interactional	to develop relationships	*I love you*
personal	to express opinions, emotions and identity	*I like that one*
representational/ informative	to provide and request information	*What's that?*
heuristic	to discover and explore	*Why is the sky blue?*
imaginative	to pretend, imagine and narrate	*I'm a caterpillar*

Language Acquisition Theories
Nature vs nurture

1. Behaviourism (Skinner)
- Language is acquired by conditioning(good girl; that's a clever boy)
- positive/negative reinforcement

2. Nativism (Chomsky)
- The human brain has an innate ability to learn language – a Language Acquisition Device (LAD) – which allows children to develop language skills.
- Eric Lenneberg (1967)stated that the LAD must be activated at a critical period for native language acquisition to take place.
  - critical period begins at around the age of 2 and ends during puberty

- language must be acquired during the critical period if it is to be acquired at all

3. Social interactionism (Bruner)

- Bruner came up with the idea of the **Language Acquisition Support System (LASS)**, claiming that the LAD needs a LASS to make it work correctly.
- LASS - parents and carers regularly interact with the child and give help in naming while they talk to him or her. This includes caretaker language, singing songs, reading and playing games with the child.

4. Cognitivism (Piaget)

- Cognitivism assumes that children must have an intellectual (or cognitive) understanding of a concept before they can use language associated with it

Piaget's stages:

- **Sensorimotor (0-2 years) -** language used for demands; object permanence developed (they realise that things apart from themselves have an independent existence and so have names).
- **Pre-operational (2-7 years)** a child begins to think symbolically, uses imagination and intuition but not abstract thought; uses syntax and grammar to fill out language.
- **Concrete operational (7-11 years)** a child can use concepts for concrete situations, e.g. time, space, quantity.
- **Formal operational: (11 + years)** a child is able to think theoretically, adolescents are able to understand abstract ideas and the language associated with them.

- **Vygotsky (Sociocultural theory)** - emphasised the social element of learning, considering how the people around the child will support them in their acquisition of language
- **More knowledgeable other (MKO)** - parent/sibling/caretaker who models language for the child (‘scaffolding’), by using the language just outside their understanding **(zone of proximal development - ZPD)**.
- Scaffolding is the active support provided by caregivers/MKOs (eg. modelling)