

# Linguistics - Lesson 4 - 2022/11/08

Innateness - continuation

Unconscious - The knowledge is without actual awareness of grammaticality.

## Process of language acquisition

What about language acquisition, supports the innateness hypothesis?

### 1. Quick and efficient

At a very early age, every child (besides for pathological cases) masters the complex systems of language, without and before school.

The base of language is acquired quickly and efficiently.

### 2. Spontaneous -> immune to external interference.

The process happens unplanned. Cannot be completely controlled or fully manipulated.

When there are attempts to interfere, children often reject corrections and continue as they understood on their own.

Eventually grammar fixes itself, but that would happen regardless by age 5-6.

McNeil (1964)

Dialogue between a child and their mother.

"Nobody doesn't like me"

"No, Say - Nobody likes me"

"Nobody doesn't like me"

... seven times

"Listen carefully - say nobody likes me"

"Oh, nobody doesn't likes me"

The child took something from the mother's correction, but not the main point

### 3. Critical period

Exposure must happen before a certain age, or they will acquire no mother tongue

### 4. Poverty of the stimuli

Exposure on its own is not sufficient to complete the process of acquisition.

#### 1. Input is **Degenerate** - partial, consists of errors

Despite this, children fill in and create structures that they did not see before.

Children can filter the errors and build a grammar despite hearing incomplete sentences, mispronunciation and more.

#### 2. No teaching -

#### 3. No negative evidence

Some errors are *not* made by children, even though they are not forbidden to make them.

He<sub>1</sub> thinks John<sub>2</sub> is smart

He  $\neq$  John

This error is not performed by children

John thinks John is smart

#### 5. Identical stages

Children speaking different grammars, go through the same stages of acquisition

Null subject

I ate an apple

□ axalti tapuax

\*□ ate an apple

J'ai mange' la pomme - I have eaten the apple

\*ai mange' la pomme

□ ho mangiato la mela - □ have eaten the apple

Children around the age of two, drop the subject regardless of which language they are learning.

These five features of language acquisition are supposed to support the innateness hypothesis.