



First Language Acquisition

Acquisition

The process of language acquisition has some basic requirements:

1- (1-3 yrs) A child requires interaction with other language users.

2- cultural transmission: Language is not inherited, it is acquired on a particular language-using environment.

3- physical capability of sending and receiving signals in a language (hearing..)

Input

The typical behavior of older children and adult in the home environment who provide language samples that helps infants in their language acquisition.

- Different from adult to adult conversation

Caregiver Speech



The simplified speech style adopted by someone who spends a lot of time interacting with a young child.

Features:

Frequent use of questions- exaggerated intonation- extra loudness- slower tempo with longer pauses.

Forms:

Simplifies words (nana – tummy) forms with repeated simple sounds and syllabuses for things in the child's environment (choo-choo, kii-kii)

Caregiver Speech



- A type of conversation structure that seems to assign an interactive role to the young child before he or she becomes a speaking participant.
- Simple sentence structure and a lot of repetition.

The Speech of those regularly interacting with very young children changes as the child begins using more and more language .

The acquisition schedule

Language acquisition schedule has the same basis as the biologically determined development of motor skills (sitting up, crawling, standing, walking, using the hands and many other physical activities.

- This schedule is related to the maturation of the infant's brain.

Cooing

- **During the first few months of life :**

Producing sequences of vowel-like sounds-high

vowels [i] and [u].

- **4 months:**

sounds similar to velar consonants [k] & [g]

- **5 months:**

distinguish between [a] and [i] and the syllables [ba] and [ga], so their perception skills are good.

Babbling

- 6-8 months:

Different vowels and consonants ba-ba-ba and ga-ga- ga

- 9-10 months:

- Intonation patterns and combination of ba-ba-ba-da-da.
- Nasal sounds also appear ma-ma-ma

- 10-11 months:

- Use of vocalization to express emotions
- Complex syllable combination (ma-da-ga- ba)

The one-word stage

- 12-18 months.
- Characterized by Single terms are uttered for everyday objects 'milk', 'cookie', 'cat' .
- Holophrastic : a single form functioning as a phrase or sentence.
- Produce utterance such as 'Sara bed' but not yet capable of producing a phrase.

The two-word stage

- 18-20 months:

Vocabulary moves beyond 50 words

- 2 years old:

- children produce utterances 'baby chair', 'mommy eat'
- Interpretation depends on context .
- Adults behave as if communication is taking place. (feedback).

Telegraphic Speech

Between 2 years & a half:

- They produce multiple-word speech.
- The number of words changes
- The variation in word forms begin to appear.
- Developing sentence building capacity. E.g. 'this shoe all wet', 'cat drink milk', 'daddy go bye-bye'
- Grammatical inflections begin to appear
- Simple prepositions are used (in, on).

By 2 years & a half:

- Vocabulary is expands rapidly.
- The child initiates more talk.

By three:

Vocabulary continues to grow.

Better pronunciation.

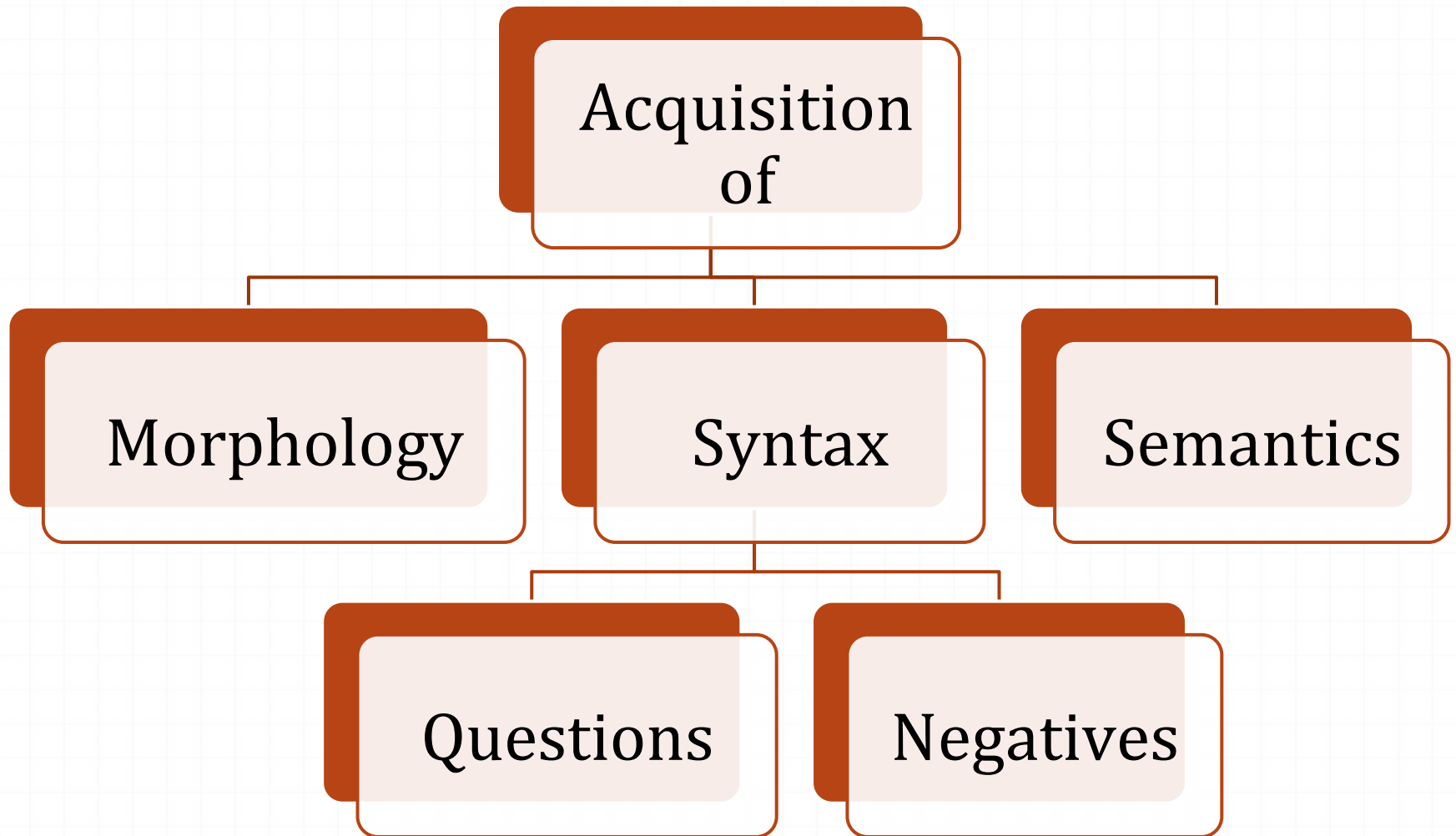
The acquisition Process

- 0 The child is **NOT** being **taught** the language.
- 0 The child's linguistic production appears to be mostly through **trying out** constructions.
- 0 The child does **NOT** acquire the language through a process of **imitating** adult speech.
- 0 Adults " corrections " are NOT very effective.. The child will continue to use **personally constructed** forms.

Example

- CHILD: my teacher holded the baby rabbit and we patted them
- MOTHER: did you say your teacher held the baby rabbit?
- CHILD: yes. she holded the baby rabbit and we patted them
- MOTHER: Did you say she held them tightly? CHILD: no, she holded them loosely

Acquisition Process



Developing Morphology

0 By 2-and-a-half years old:

Use of some inflectional morphemes to indicate the grammatical function of nouns and verbs.

1- The first inflection to appear is -ing

(mommy reading book)

2-After it comes the -s for plural (boys- cats)

Overgeneralization:

the child applies -s to words like 'foots' 'mans' and later 'feets' 'mens'

3-The use of possessive 's' appears 'mommy's bag'

4- After that, forms of verb to be appear 'is' and 'are'.

5- Went and came appear simultaneously with forms such as was

6- Then, The appearance of -ed inflection would appear in the child's speech.

- Also The -ed inflection would be **overgeneralized** as in 'goed' or holded' .

7-Finally -s marker for 3rd person singular present tense appears with full verbs first then with auxiliaries (does-has)

Developing syntax

- A child was asked to say **the owl who eats candy runs fast** and she said **the owl eat candy and he run fast.**

- **Two** syntactic structures appear:

* Forming questions

* Forming negatives

They appear through **three** stages:

Stage 1 = 18-26 months

Stage 2 = 22-30 months

Stage 3 = 22-40 months

Forming questions

1- Stage 1= has two procedures:

- a. Add a WH-form to the beginning of the expression
- b. Utter the expression with a rise in intonation towards the end.

E.g. Where kitty? Doggie?

2- Stage 2= more complex expressions.

E.g. What book name? You want eat?

3- Stage 3= movement of the auxiliary in questions becomes evident

I can have....can I have ?

Forming negatives

1- **Stage 1** = Putting **not and no** at the beginning

E.g. not teddy bear, no sit here

2- **Stage 2** = **Don't and can't** appear but still use no and not before VERBS

E.g. he no bite you, I don't want it .

3- **Stage 3** = **didn't and won't** appear

e.g. I didn't caught it, she won't go

Developing Semantics

During the two-word stage children use their limited vocabulary to refer to a large number of unrelated objects.

Overextension: overextend the meaning of a word on the basis of similarities of shape, sound, and size.

e.g. use ball to refer to an apple, and egg, a grape and a ball. (p.180)

This is followed by a gradual process of narrowing down as more words are learned .

Antonymous relations are acquired late (after the age of 5)
(e.g. p.180)

The distinction between more/less, before/after, buy/sell
seem to be later acquisition.

By the age of five, the child has completed most of the language acquisition process.

If first language acquisition was so straightforward and automatic, why is learning a second language so difficult?

[http://aaalmohammadi.kau.edu.sa/Files/0006268/
files/16240_13First%20Language
%20AcquisitionSP08.pdf](http://aaalmohammadi.kau.edu.sa/Files/0006268/files/16240_13First%20Language%20AcquisitionSP08.pdf)