

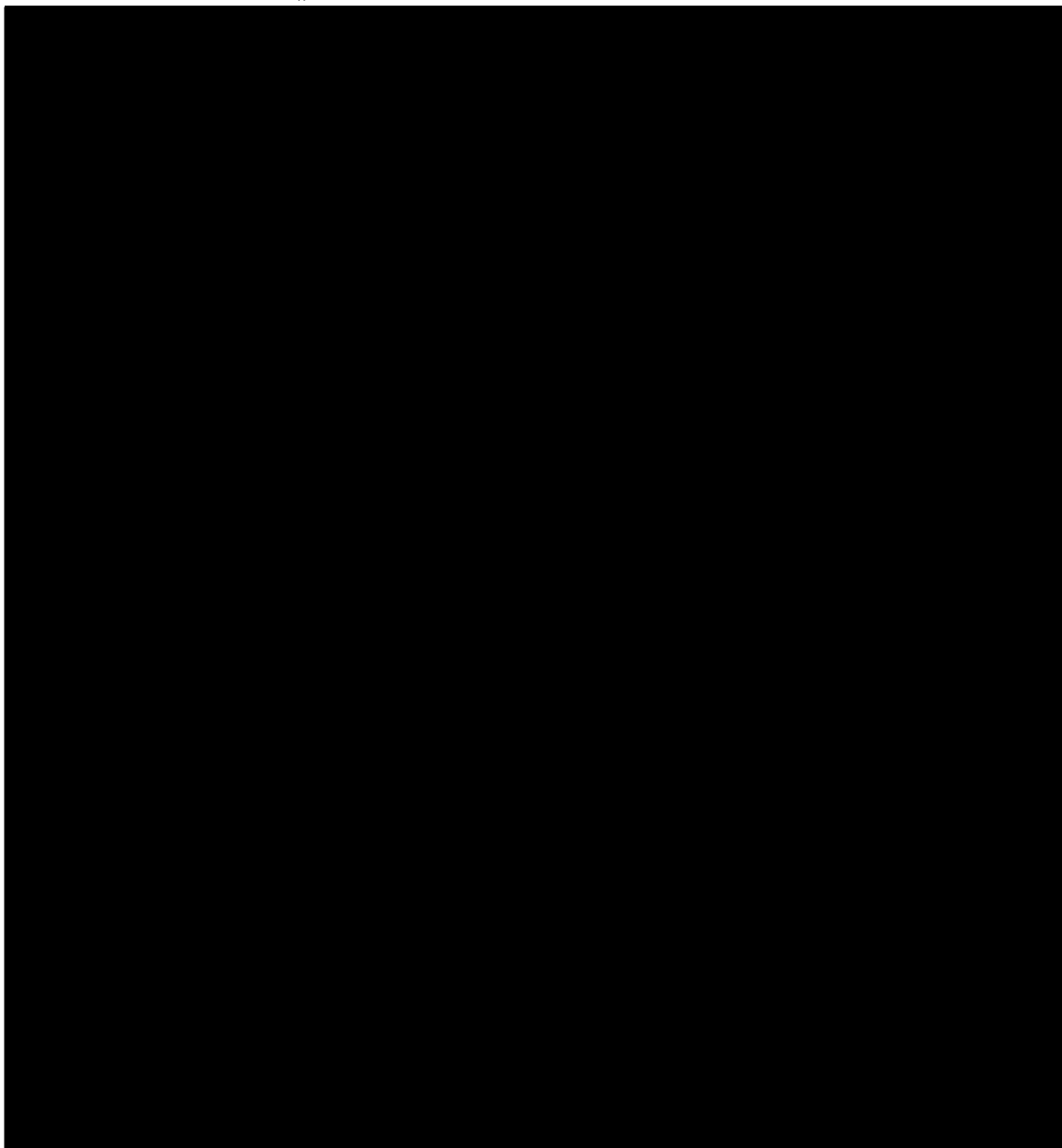
The Real Story of Child Language Acquisition

Day 13

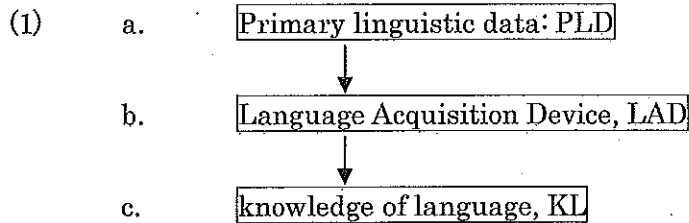
0. Questions

- Are there any words for which children used deletion/substitution/assimilation which eventually become accepted as standard? [REDACTED]
- As for speech sound, I want to know how “onomatopoeia” are created. Sometimes, such words sound like the corresponding real sounds, but sometimes they are very different from language to language. Why is it so? [REDACTED]
- I would like to ask if there is any new language system that is just created by human beings. [REDACTED]

HW Review: Good examples



<Language Acquisition Model>



(2) Role of imitation. Role of PLD (What are (and are not) among PLD?)

1. "Imitation" is not a primary method of language acquisition (pp.164 – 167)

(3) Reason 1: Children produce many things that are not in PLD.

- a. goed
- b. Is it all NEEDED?/How was it SHOELACED? (overuse of passives)
- c. Many (grammatical) sentences produced by children are new.
("Daddy, did your hair slip?" (p.1))

(4) Reason 2: Children are not good at imitating sentences. (see p.165)

"elicited imitation" task:¹

Adult: The dogs are hungry.

Child: Dog hungry.

(5) Children repeat "the" only if they've already learned "the." They repeat "-s" only if they've already learned the plural ending, etc.

(6) Reason 3: Children don't try to imitate sentences very often. (see pp.166-167)

In the sample conversation on p.166, child's imitation was just once.

(7) Children vary on how good they are in terms of imitating their parents' speech. (ranging around 5% in one child to 40% in another)²

(8) Nevertheless, all children acquire their native language equally.

2. Parental Correction is not a primary source of PLD (pp.167 - 169)

(9) Class Work 13-1: Read the story and answer the questions.

When John was playing in a park this morning, he fell down from a tree and scratched his left arm. In the evening of the same day, John was taking a bath with his father. Then, John told his father that he scratched his left arm when he fell down from a tree in the park this morning.

Question A: When did John tell his father that he scratched his arm?

Question B: When did John tell his father how he scratched his arm?

(* Try the same questions in your native language.)

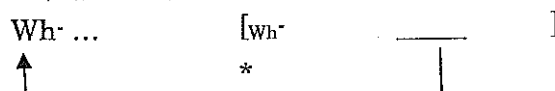
¹ Lust, Barbara, Suzanne Flynn, and Claire Foley. 1996. What children know about what they say: Elicited imitation as a research method. In D. McDaniel, C. McKee, and H. Cairns (eds.), *Methods for assessing children's syntax*. MIT Press, 55-76.

² Bloom, Lois, Lois Hood, and Patsy Lightbown. 1974. Imitation in language development: If, when, and why. *Cognitive Psychology* 6, 380-420.

(10) When did John tell his father (a)_____ [that he scratched his arm (b)_____]?

(11) When did John tell his father (a)_____ [how he scratched his arm (b)_____]?

(12) Wh-island condition



Why are parental corrective feedbacks not primary source of PLD?

(13) Reason 1:

Children do not make many grammatical mistakes in the first place.³

(e.g., word order mistake is very rare)

Hence, there is barely a chance to correct them.

(14) Reason 2:

Even if children make grammatical mistakes, parents usually do not correct them (in a systematic way).⁴ (see p.168) → HW12(C)

(15) Reason 3:

Even if parents try to correct children's grammatical mistakes, children usually do not understand. (three examples on pp.168 - 169) → HW12(C)

Japanese example (three years and 11 months old boy)⁵

Boy: Tochan, mado aite yo. 'Daddy, open (aite) the window'

Father: Mado akete daro. 'You mean, open (akete) the window.'

Boy: Un, mado aite yo. 'Yeah, open (aite) the window'

Father: Mado akete dayo. 'Say, open (akete) the window.'

Boy: Ilkara, mado aite yo, Otochan

'That's fine, just open (aite) the window, Daddy'

(16) Reason 4:

Many aspects of grammatical knowledge are too abstract to teach, and in almost all the cases, such knowledge is unconscious.

How to teach something like *Wh-island Condition* (12)?

³ Snyder, William. 2008. "Children's Grammatical Conservatism: Implications for linguistic theory." In T. Sano, M. Endo, M. Isobe, K. Otaki, K. Sugisaki, and T. Suzuki (eds.) *An Enterprise in the Cognitive Science of Language: A Festschrift for Yukio Otsu*, 41-51. Tokyo: Hituzi Syobo.

⁴ Maratos, Michael. 1983. Some current issues in the study of the acquisition of grammar. In P. Mussen (ed.), *Handbook of child psychology. Vol. III: Cognitive development*. John Wiley, 707-86.

⁵ Otsu, Yukio, et al (eds.) 2002. (大津由紀雄 (他) (編) 『言語研究入門 : 生成文法を学ぶ人のために』 (研究社)

3. Recasts: "indirect correction/instruction" (pp.169 – 175)
- 3.1 What are recasts? (pp.169-173)
- (17) Child: The dog runned really fast.
 Father: Yeah, he ran really fast, didn't he? (see Chart on p.170)⁶
- (18) How serious are parents about recasting? → HW13(A)
- (19) research question
- a. What do parental recasts have to be like, in order for them to be a reliable source of child language acquisition?
 - b. When do recasts become unreliable as a source of child language acquisition?

- 3.2 Children's reaction to parental recasts (pp.173 - 175)
- (20) Recasts are not always effective (at least, not immediately).
 Child: Cromer face.
 Mother: Cromer's face.
 Child: Ursula's face. Adam face.
- (21) One study shows:⁷
- a. parents of three-year-old children provided recasts for missing articles about 35% of the time, but no immediate effect was observed.
 - b. No link is found between the frequency of recasts and children's learning speed of articles.

However,

- (22) Children are sensitive to recasts, especially when they offer a *direct and immediate contrast* between child's way of saying something and the adult way.⁸
- (23) After introducing a new verb in *-ing* form (e.g., *peeling*)
- Strategy One (recast)
 Adult: What happened?
 Child: He pelled him.
 Adult: Yes, he POLD him.
- Strategy Two (direct introduction of the past form: no recast)
 Adult: Look what happened! He POLD him on the leg.

⁶ Moerk, Ernst. 1991. Positive evidence for negative evidence. *First Language* 11, 219-51.

⁷ Morgan, James. Katherine Bonamo, and Lisa Travis. 1995. Negative evidence on negative evidence. *Developmental Psychology* 31, 180-97.

⁸ Saxton, Matthew. 1997. The Contrast Theory of negative evidence. *Journal of Child Language* 24, 139-61.

Child Language Acquisition

- (24) a. No positive effect with Strategy Two.
b. Strategy One (just a single recast) achieved a success rate of about 30%.
- (25) A long-term study (five week period with ten sessions)⁹
Success rate:
a. 100% when exposed to recasts
b. 40% when with no recasts
- (26) A question of timing: when and how recasts are effective? → HW13(B)
- (27) **Class Work 13-2**
Suppose you are two years old. When you said (a), your mother reacted as in (b). What would you learn from your mother's utterance about the word *pelled* you used?
- Pattern I
a. YOU: I pelled it.
b. YOUR MOTHER: Yeah, you pold it.
- Pattern II
a. YOU: I pelled it.
b. YOUR MOTHER: Yeah, you pelled it.
- Pattern III
a. YOU: I pelled it.
b. YOUR MOTHER: Good. I'm impressed.

⁹ Saxton, Matthew. Bela Kulscar, Greer Marshall, and Mandeep Rupra. 1998. Longer-term effects of correction input: An experimental approach. *Journal of Child Language* 25, 701-21.

- (28) patterns of recast (mothers of two year olds)¹⁰
- a. recast right after child's error: 26.3% of the time
Child: I goed there.
Mother: Yes, you went there.
 - b. recast right after child's correct utterance: 13.7% of the time.
Child: I liked it.
Mother: Yeah, you loved it.
 - c. repeat the wrong form right after child's utterance (sometimes)
Child: I goed there.
Mother: Yeah, you goed there.
 - d. no recast right after child's error: 73.6% of the time.
Child: I goed there.
Mother: Good. I'm impressed.
- (29) Recasts from your mother (or other adults around you) are very inconsistent.
- (30)
- a. I said "goed" but mom said "went". Is that the sign that "goed" is wrong and I should use "went"? (26.3% of the time)
 - b. I said "goed" but mom said nothing about the word "goed". Is that the sign that "goed" is a good form? (73.6% of the time)
 - c. I said "goed" but mom said mon said "goed", too. Is that the sign that "goed" is a good form? (as many as one-third of the time, according to some research)
 - d. I said "liked" but mom said "loved". Is that the sign that "liked" is wrong and I should use "loved"? (13.7% of the time)
- (31) In this respect, PLD concerning recast is of very bad quality.
4. What DO Children Need? (pp.175 – 179)
- (32)
- a. no imitation
 - b. no reliance on teaching (corrective feedbacks) or recasts
Then, what?
- (33) Motherlese?
Slow, careful articulation and the use of basic words. (See Chart on p. 176)

¹⁰ Hirsch-Pasek, et al. 1984. "Brown&Hanlon revisited: Mother's sensitivity to ungrammatical forms." *Journal of Child Language* 11, 81-89.

Post, K. 1994. "Negative evidence in the language learning environment of later-borns in a rural Florida community." In Sokolob and Snow (eds.) *Handbook of research in language development using CHILDES*, Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum, 132-73.

However,

(34) There are communities and cultures in which motherese is used little if at all, where adults rarely address speech specifically to very young children. But children in such communities learn language in any event.¹¹

(35) Radio/TV? Children of deaf parents

(36) Interpretability Requirement¹²

“Children need to hear sentences that they can understand without knowing a lot about the language they’re trying to learn.” (p.178)

(37) “quite a large portion of speech to children IS about what they can see or hear, what they want to know about, and what they have just experienced or are about to experience.” (p.179)¹³

(38) Something like (37) consists of crucial PLD (not necessarily teaching or recasts). But even with appropriate PLD in appropriate contexts, our cats and dogs do not acquire human languages. We need something specific to human beings: Language Acquisition Device (LAD), which is the topic of next week.

5. Summary

(39) Imitation?

(40) Parental correction? (direct negative evidence)

(41) Recast?

(42) PLD is necessary that children can understand without knowing a lot about the language they are trying to learn.

(43) Among PLD around them, children actively select and use what is necessary for them at the specific stage of their language development: Children decide what the relevant PLD is, not parents

(44) And LAD (innate ability acquire language) must be there.

¹¹ Heath, Shirley Brice. 1983. *Ways with words: Language, life and work in communities and classrooms*. Cambridge University Press.

¹² O’Grady, William. 1997. *Syntactic Development*. University of Chicago Press.

¹³ Snow, Catherine. 197. Mother’s speech research: From input to interaction. In C. Snow and C Ferguson (eds.) *Talking to children: Language input and acquisition*. Cambridge University Press, 31-49.

Homework Assignment 13

1. Turn in by Tuesday 12:30

via Email (MSWord file attached to email)

Make the name of the file as [ID_your name_hw13]



*If you have trouble sending your files attached via Email, let me know.

2. Write as concisely as possible. Write the number of words at the end of each Q.
3. Restrict yourself to A4 paper one page long.

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- A. Read Section *How serious are parents about recasting?* (pp.172-173) carefully, and summarize the point. Be concise. Use about 120 words.

 - B. Read Section *A question of timing* (p.175) carefully, and summarize the point. Be concise. Use about 100 words.

 - C. Read Section *Clues to Categories* (pp.185 - 186) carefully, and summarize the point. How does the Acquisition Device help children figure out which words belong to the category Noun? Be concise. Use about 100 words.

 - D. Any comments/questions on this homework assignment and/or the last class discussion.

 - E. Read the text up to page 197 (the end of the text!).