

### Teaching Resources for Chapter 1

#### **Links**

- *[advanced]* This free online introductory Linguistics course from MIT was taught by Suzanne Flynn. It provides a detailed introduction to all the basic aspects of Linguistics for any students who want some background information.  
<http://ocw.mit.edu/courses/linguistics-and-philosophy/24-900-introduction-to-linguistics-spring-2005/index.htm>
- *[basic]* Basic milestones of linguistic development from the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA). This site provides information on how language production and comprehension develop from birth to five years.  
<http://www.asha.org/public/speech/development/chart.htm>
- *[intermediate]* Deb Roy's Speechome project. This is the official website for Roy's extensive project to chronicle all the input his son received as well as his son's early linguistic development. The site contains information about the research, including references. It also includes some AV material showing various aspects of the research. (Also see the TED talk of Roy discussing this work listed in the movies section).  
<http://www.media.mit.edu/cogmac/projects/hsp.html>
- *[intermediate]* The CHILDES database. This is the main site for the database, and links to the transcripts, search programs, background information, as well as audio and visual files can be found here. <http://childes.psy.cmu.edu/>

#### **Activities for Students**

- Which theory about language development seems right to you now (before you've read this book)? Write down which theory you favor and why. Once you finish the course, revisit your answer and see if you still agree with it.
- Link to the CHILDES website (the link is above). Read through the transcripts of one of the children. Identify something that the child said that you found surprising or unexpected. What kind of research questions could you answer using data from this site?
- Check out a journal from the library and find an article that focuses on language development. Try to determine the theoretical position of the authors – what do they believe about nativism, continuity, and the learning mechanisms underlying language development? What kind of methods did they use to investigate language in their work?

## Online Movies

Movie Name	Access	Description	Time
Changing Brains: Language	Main page: <a href="http://changingbrains.org/">http://changingbrains.org/</a> Select Watch Online; choose the Language square	Short documentary focusing on early language development. Special emphases are on changes in brain structure, the importance of rich parental input for aiding language development, and positive benefits of bilingualism.	9:13
How Babies Learn Language	<a href="http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mZAuZ--Yeqo">http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mZAuZ--Yeqo</a>	Short documentary from USC featuring the research of Toben Mintz on infants' ability to use vowel harmony for word segmentation. Shows examples of babies in the head-turn preference procedure, Mintz, and a student of Mintz's discussing the research.	9:19
Language and Other Cognitive Systems: What is Special about Language.	<a href="http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2v6XFkSwVys&amp;">http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2v6XFkSwVys&amp;</a>	Lecture from Noam Chomsky about his views on language and what makes it special.	95:59
Language in the Brain, Mouth, and Hands	<a href="http://academicearth.org/lectures/how-do-we-communicate-language">http://academicearth.org/lectures/how-do-we-communicate-language</a>	Yale course lecture from Paul Bloom on the Psychology of Language. Covers basic concepts and has some specific discussion about the importance of language development.	56:30
The Birth of a Word	<a href="http://www.ted.com/talks/deb_roy_the_birth_of_a_word.html">http://www.ted.com/talks/deb_roy_the_birth_of_a_word.html</a>	A TED talk in which Deb Roy talks about his Speechome project.	19:53
Why Do We Talk?	Part 1: <a href="http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PZatrVND0iE">http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PZatrVND0iE</a> Part 2: <a href="http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dsaqD9FVRsM">http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dsaqD9FVRsM</a>	BBC/Horizon documentary on language acquisition, with a general emphasis on speech. Broken down on YouTube in sections: Part 1: Overview; Roy's Speechome project Part 2: The larynx across	Each part, ~9:45

	Part 3: <a href="http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oimnxEj4ns">http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oimnxEj4ns</a> Part 4: <a href="http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UTbI-G42JoY">http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UTbI-G42JoY</a> Part 5: <a href="http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pmsQJfyVrr0">http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pmsQJfyVrr0</a> Part 6: <a href="http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kqs-jKSdj8Y">http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kqs-jKSdj8Y</a>	species; language and brain damage Part 3: language and brain damage, cont.; neuroanatomy of language; newborn speech perception with ERP; language savant Christopher Part 4: Language savant Christopher, cont.; Interview with Chomsky; wild child Oxana, raised by dogs; language (bird song) with no experience in Finches Part 5: Bird song, cont.; genetic components of language – KE family. Part 6: Evolutionary origins of speech; Simon Kirby's experimental work on historical simulations. Conclusions	
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### Sample Test Questions for Chapter 1

- The language is composed of the following components:
  - ➔Phonology, lexical development, syntax and morphology, and communicative competence.
  - Learnability, behaviorism, cognitivism, and connectionism.
  - Baby biographies, normative studies and case studies.
  - Second language acquisition, bilingualism, verbal skills, and language universals.
- A chronological view of child language development demonstrates that children learn language in the following stages:
  - All at once.
  - Syllables sounds, grammar and communicative competence.
  - Phonology, vocabulary, grammar.
  - ➔None of these answers are true.
- Generally, the age when very little is completely missing from the linguistic competence of children, or when language acquisition is completed, is:
  - Two years old.
  - Three years old.
  - ➔Five years old.
  - Ten years old.

4. Language development research primarily focuses on:
  - A. ➔ questions regarding normal language development in most cases
  - B. making sure that children learn to speak correctly.
  - C. facilitated communication strategies for learners who have disabilities
  - D. education and anthropology.
5. Studies of children “without language,” such as Psammeifhus’s study, Goldin-Meadow’s studies of homesigning children, and the “Wild Boy” from Aveyron, provide:
  - A. examples of classic and widespread practices.
  - B. ways to address questions related to the evolutionary and historical origins of language.
  - C. ➔ evidence about the roles of input and the child’s biological capacities in acquiring language.
  - D. a background into society’s efforts to keep some children without language.
6. The biological approach to researching child language acquisition:
  - A. focuses on the relationship of the child’s developmental milestones and language learning mechanisms.
  - B. represents the debate between psychologists and linguists on how the child processes language in the brain.
  - C. ➔ examines how language and language development are related to biological processes.
  - D. explains the fact that language is acquired and is considered the “learnability approach” to research.
7. The social approach to researching child language acquisition:
  - A. recognizes the principle that there is a “Universal Grammar” for all children.
  - B. ➔ is based on examining the social phenomenon supporting children’s language development.
  - C. is based on the view that language development occurs as a domain-general computational process.
  - D. relies on the examining the relationship between the developmental milestones of language and the social-emotional needs of the child.
8. A core tenet of Empiricism is that children:
  - A. learn language in a scientific manner.
  - B. acquire language without direct instruction.
  - C. acquire language quickly.
  - D. ➔ are born with minds like blank slates
9. Noam Chomsky’s “Universal Grammar” argues that :
  - A. the left hemisphere is the brain location for grammar.

- B. ➔ all children are born with innate pre-dispositions that guide them in acquiring their native language
- C. there is no learning component to children's acquisition of language.
- D. all children are born knowing all the language of the world.

10. The connectionist approach to language research:

- A. ➔ attempts to show how grammatical rules can emerge in children's grammars as the result of a complex network of connections .
- B. relies on the use of computer programs to evaluate children's language knowledge.
- C. refers to computer processing systems as a metaphor for how the human brain stores linguistic knowledge.
- D. refers to the study of how the child connects knowledge of words, symbols and language rules for communication.

11. The study of continuity and discontinuity in language development:

- A. refers to the study of children who have delays in achieving language development milestones.
- B. takes into account the relationship of children's input to their output.
- C. focuses on children's vocabulary and the word spurt in its development.
- D. ➔ asks if children's early grammars are qualitatively different from the grammars of adults.

12. The formalist view of language entails:

- A. the view that language is formally learned in a ritualistic manner.
- B. the understanding that language learning is prescribed by cultural rules.
- C. ➔ the view that the human mind has a faculty for language learning that is a computational-representational system.
- D. Studying language in a computer-based methodology.

13. The functionalist view of language states that:

- A. ➔ language is shaped by the communicative functions that it serves.
- B. language is learned in a social context.
- C. children learn to communicate because they have a desire to express thoughts and feelings.
- D. communication functions as a learning tool.

14. CHILDES is an on-line data bank containing:

- A. the results of Roger Brown's early research with Adam, Eve, and Sarah.
- B. ➔ language samples from hundreds of children speaking many different languages.
- C. results of standardized tests on children's language stages.
- D. computational models of child language development.

15. Standardized measures of language development:

- A. are used to evaluate the relationship of language to IQ.
- B. examine the relative language delay of children with language disorders.
- C. get norm-referenced measures for placement in school programs.

D. ➔ All of these answers are true.

16. Research on the field of child language acquisition is published in:

- A. three major journals.
- B. ➔ journals from more than half a dozen different disciplines.
- C. journals designed for linguists only.
- D. None of these answers are true.

1. Choose one major theory of language development (Generativist, Social Interactionist, Usage-based, Connectionist or Behaviorist) and (1) identify one core tenet of this theory, (2) link the theory to its important research goals, and (3) provide one general type of evidence that would support that theory.
2. Compare and contrast the formalist and functionalist views of the relationship between language and communication. Be sure to provide at least one argument in support of each side.
3. Choose one of the methods discussed in the book for researching children's language development and identify (1) the advantages of using that method, (2) the limitations of that method, and (3) the kinds of questions that are best answered by that method.