

## **6. Language Development**







**6.1 Vocalization and  
Sound**

**6.2 Language and  
Thought**

**6.3 Development of  
Syntax**

## **6.4 Semantic Development**

## **6.5 Pragmatics**

## **6.6 Environmental, Cultural, and Genetic Influences**

## **6.7 Bilingualism**

# **6.1 Vocalization and Sound**







# Infant sounds

- **Cooing vowels, then add consonant**
- **4-6 months all possible language sounds**
- **Werker: phonemic discrimination by 12 mo.**
- **Recognizes/makes sounds for native language**



# **Infant sounds**

- **Holophrasic speech 12-13 mo. (single words or partial words with several intentions)**
- **Using partial words in later years indicates difficulty with phonology (sequencing sounds)**

# Theories of speech

- **Behaviorist: rewards for speech approximations**
- **Nativist: Language Acquisition Device (LAD)**
- **Specific brain areas adapted for language**
- **Social cognitive: imitation**



## **6.2 Language and Thought**







# Chicken or egg?

- **Language or thought first?**
- **Can you think an object or idea without a word for it?**
- **Evidence on both sides of argument**

# Chicken or egg?

- **Piaget: schemata build as language develops**
- **Vygotsky: self-talk → thinking**



## **6.3 Development of Syntax**







# Creating sentences

- **Toddler's 2-word telegraphic speech**
- **Example: “More juice”**
- **Preschoolers speak in whole sentences**

# Creating sentences

- **Overregularization:  
apply rule instead of  
exception**
- **Example: “We goed to a  
movie.”**

## **6.4 Semantic Development**







# Word meanings

- **Carey: young vocabulary explosion uses “fast mapping” – associating new word with old schema**
- **Or do children just guess at word meaning, refine later?**
- **Young children literal, can't understand metaphor or figures of speech**

## **6.5 Pragmatics**











# **Usage defined by context**

- **Speech altered by where you are or who is listening**
- **Example: Use different words or phrases at home and at school**
- **Example: Switching between ethnic and “standard” speech**

## **6.6 Environmental, Cultural, and Genetic Influences**











# Language and culture

- **American: many first words  
nouns (names of things)**
- **Chinese: many first words  
verbs (actions and  
relationships)**
- **Whorf: linguistic relativity**
- **Culture and environment  
shape perception and  
language**

## **6.7 Bilingualism**







# Bilingual children

- **Best to learn 2<sup>nd</sup> language in early childhood (sensitive period)**
- **Learning two languages simultaneously might cause temporary delays**
- **Research: more brain activity than monolingual children**