

Language

Psychology

The main theories of language acquisition, and the evidence for each.

Nativist — Chomsky

- Innate language acquisition device
- Universal grammar underlying all languages
- Poverty of the stimulus argument
- Critical period for acquisition
- Errors are rule-based, not imitated

Learning & interactionist

- Skinner: reinforcement and imitation
- Statistical learning from input
- Child-directed speech scaffolds it
- Social interaction is necessary
- Connectionist models learn without innate rules

THE DIFFERENCE THAT MATTERS

Over-regularisation — 'goed', 'foots' — is the key evidence for rules: children produce forms they have never heard.

The critical period is supported by cases of extreme deprivation and by second-language accent data.