

# Language and Thought

**A Party Political Broadcast  
on behalf of the  
TODDLER PARTY**

Its all about communication!!!

# Language

- Our spoken written or gestured words and the way we combine them to communicate meaning.



Believe it or not, this communication is a form of language!!!

# Phonemes



How many phonemes does platypus have?

- In a spoken language, the smallest distinctive sound unit.
- B, a, and t
- Chat has three phonemes, ch, a, and t.

# Morphemes

- In a language, the **smallest unit that carries meaning.**
- Can be a word or part of a word (prefix or suffix).



# Grammar

Capitalize the beginning  
of a sentence



- A system of rules in a language that enables us to communicate and understand others.

# Semantics

- *The set of rules by which we derive meaning in a language.*
- Adding **ed** at the end of words means past tense.



The Chinese languages do not have expansive semantic rules. They usually have totally different symbols for different tenses.

# Syntax

- The rules for combining words into grammatically sensible sentences.
- In English, adjectives come before nouns, but not in Spanish!!



Is this the White  
House of the House  
White?

# Language development

- How many words do you think you know now?

Probably around 80,000.

After age 1 you average about 13 words a day.

# Language Development

- Babbling Stage: starting at 3-4 months, the infant makes spontaneous sounds. Not limited to the phonemes of the infant's household language.
- One-word stage: 1-2 years old, uses one word to communicate big meanings.
- Two word stage: at age 2, uses two words to communicate meanings- called telegraphic speech.

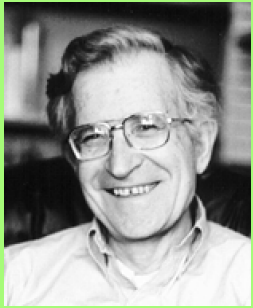
How do we explain language  
development?

# Skinner

- Skinner thought that we can explain language development through *social learning theory* (which is?).



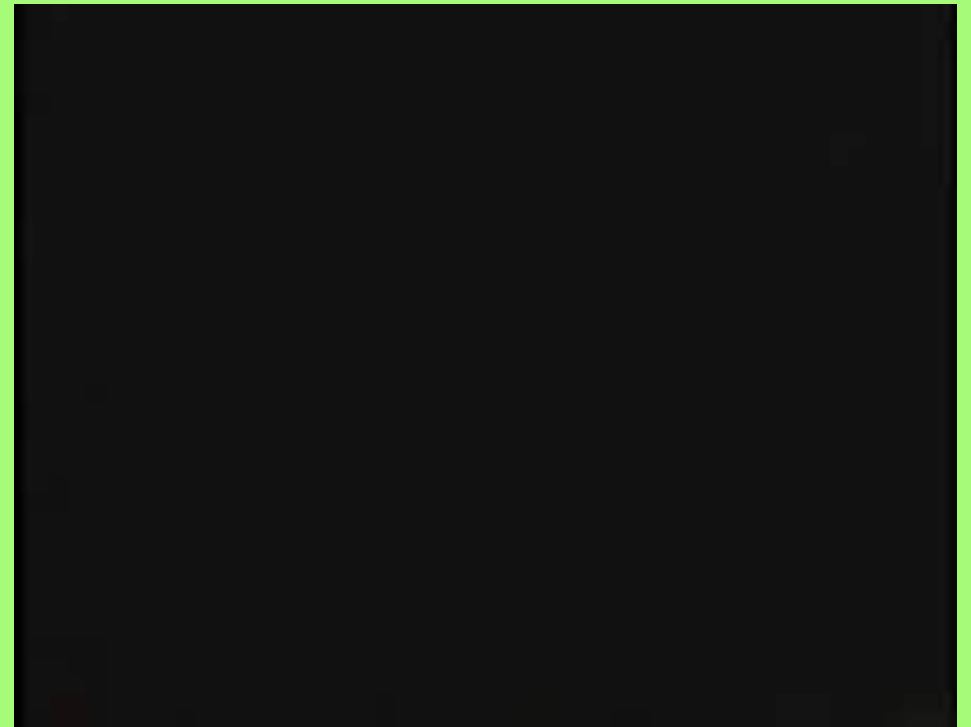
The young boy imitates his dad, then gets a reward.



# Chomsky

## Inborn Universal Grammar

- We acquire language too quickly for it to be learned.
- *We have this “learning box” inside our heads that enable us to learn any human language.*



**Chomsky's View of Language Development**

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3gU-B0-DCKI>

Does language influence  
our thinking?

# Whorf's Linguistic Relativity

- The idea that language determines the way we think (not vice versa).
- The Hopi tribe has no past tense in their language, so Whorf says they rarely think of the past.



Do people that speak more than one language think differently depending on their language at that time?

# Thinking without Language

- We can think in words.
- But more often we think in mental pictures.

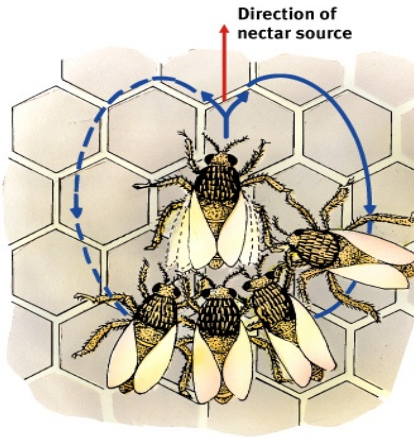
In 1977, Reggie Jackson hit 3 HR's against the Dodgers. He has stated that before each at bat, he visualizes crushing a home run. Do you think visualization helps?



# Do Animals think?



# Honeybees seem to communicate



<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-7ijl-g4jHg>

**Bee Dance (Waggle Dance)**

# Apes and Signing



**"Koko-Love"**



**"Baby"**



**"Gorilla"**



**"Good"**

