

we know the difference between grammatical and non-grammatical sentences, even if they are meaningless.

- **Weaknesses:**
- Although children cannot learn through imitation alone, this doesn't prove existence of LAD
- Can only apply to acquisition of syntax and semantics, not pragmatics (social meanings)
- Ignores role of parents and caretaker language
- **Kuhl: Caretaker language** – statistical properties of speech picked up through exposure to ambient language. Caretaker speech is slower, short simple words and sentences that are higher pitched and repetitions of essential information. Uses proto-conversation between caretaker and infant words, gestures, sounds etc.
- **Weaknesses:**
- Children sometimes make up own grammar rules e.g. "I runned" so it cannot be their only way.
- Will sometimes mimic swearing.
- **Lennenberg – critical period hypothesis:**
- Language can be limited if not exposed to solid interaction up to the ages 5/6.
- Girls deprived of childhood human interaction – could not acquire language.
- **Skinner: imitation theory –**
- Nature vs. nurture.
- Child copies language of adults around them
- Human behaviour could be controlled much in same way as animals.
- Receptive language before expressive language – child's ability to understand language develops faster than ability to speak
- Believed that children learn words by associating sounds with different objects, actions and events
- **Weaknesses:**
- Infinite number of sentences in a language. Not all can be learned through imitation. Doesn't explain the way children over-generalise rules e.g. simple past tense of irregular verbs
- **Piaget: Cognition theory –**
- Child needs to have idea of concept before they can talk about it e.g. size, comparisons.
- Children were born with basic action schemes e.g. sucking and grasping
- Differentiates from self (ego-centric) and objects
- **Weakness:** tests were too complex for 3 year olds to understand. Underestimated child's ability to learn language.

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