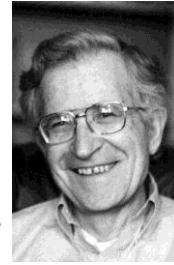
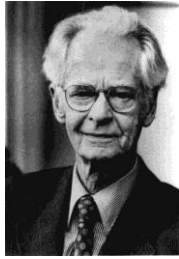


How Do Children Acquire Language?



Skinner vs. Chomsky

B.F. Skinner (Behavioral Psychology)

“Give me a child and I will shape him into anything.”

- Language acquisition is nothing more than association, imitation, and reinforcement.
- Learning a language operates on the same principles that a rat will use to learn a maze or to learn to press a button.
- Children learn grammar through reinforcement. Correct grammar is positively reinforced so it is repeated; incorrect grammar is negatively reinforced so it is not used again.
- To understand how language is acquired, you have to be able to observe it
- Grammar and sentence structure are learned through positive and negative reinforcement
- All language, include innermost thoughts, is a behavior that is learned like any other skill
- children must be taught all aspects of language
- Children learn the rules of their native language by imitating what they hear in their environment

Noam Chomsky (Linguist)

“Children develop language because they’re pre-programmed to do this”.

- A child learns language too quickly for the process to be dependent on only straight-forward learning
- Language is too complex to be learned one sentence at a time
- It’s not true that children only learn language from what they hear and experience, because a lot of kids say things they have never heard before.
- Language is one of the key characteristics that separates humans from all other animals.
- Humans are born with the instinct or "innate facility" for acquiring language
- There is no way that a child can obtain a language from only it's teachers (i.e. parents) and environment
- No one had to specifically teach you the grammar of your native language; when you began speaking as an infant, you automatically produced utterances that were grammatical in your native language.
- A great deal of creativity occurs in child grammatical utterances. This creativity is very important.
- “Language is a process of free creation.”