Announcements

- No Class on MONDAY 2/19
Today

- Stages of acquisition
  - Order
  - Characteristics

Readings: 9.4 - 9.6
Innateness

- Language acquisition is a biologically-controlled behavior
  - Has a critical period
  - Has a regular sequence of ‘milestones’ during development
Stages of acquisition

- All (normal) children go through same stages of acquisition in same order
- Age at which they reach each stage and the rate of progression through the stages can vary greatly
Stages of acquisition

- **Crying** (0-1 month)
  - cries, burps, grunts
- **Cooing** (2-3 months)
  - vowel-like, *coo/goo*, gurgling
- **Vocal play** (3-6 months)
  - raspberries, squeals, yells
- **Social Precursors for language**
Baby’s vocal tract  Adult vocal tract
Babbling

- Babbling (6-12 months):
  - CV monosyllables: (e.g., ma, pa, da, di)
  - Canonical babbling: repeated CVCV... (e.g., mamama, papapa, dididi)
  - Variegated babbling: different CV syllables (e.g., badigu, potaki, tamami)
  - Jargon babbling: meaningless word-like units w/ intonation
Functions of babbling

- Provides motor practice
- Stimulates adult-infant interactions
- Decoding of language into phonological units
  - Sign-learning children’s babbling has a unique signature
Is babbling linguistic or biological?

- All babies babble same sounds up to 6-10 mos., then focus on native sounds
- Hearing children of deaf parents babble
- Deaf babies orally babble until ~6 mos., then only ‘babble’ with hands
Babies open their mouths...
- wider on right than on left when *babbling*
- wider on left than on right when *smiling*
- equally on both sides when making other sounds

[http://www.sciencemag.org/cgi/content/full/297/5586/1515/DC1](http://www.sciencemag.org/cgi/content/full/297/5586/1515/DC1)
One-word stage

- 1 - 1 1/2 years:
  - Lexicon < 50 words (avg. ~ 15)
  - At first, words for people, objects and things (*mommy, doggie, bottle*)
  - Later, verbs and other useful words (*go, mine, no*), and **holophrases** (one-word phrases, e.g., *gimme, whassat, allgone*)
  - Simplified phonology (but rule-governed)
Two-word stage

1 1/2 - 2 years:
- Lexicon > 50 words
- 2-word combinations indicate semantic rather than syntactic relations, e.g.,
  - Noun + verb (*baby sleep*)
  - Verb + object (*kick ball*)
  - Noun + preposition (*baby up*)
  - Possessor + possession (*Mommy book*)
- No inflections
Telegraphic stage

- 2+ years:
  - Can combine *more than* 2 words
  - Speech contains primarily *content* words with no *function* morphemes
  - Syntactically organized
Word inflections

- 2+ years:
  - Progressive -ing (eating)
  - Plural –s (blankets)
  - Possessive –s (baby’s bottle)
  - 3rd person singular –s (Daddy walks)
  - Past tense (Mommy walked)
  - Negatives