

Central Points

- 1) language is **hard** like perception is hard
- 2) language is **acquired**
- 3) language is **learned**
- 4) Humans are predisposed to learn language
- 5) Animals are not

Phonemes – the units of sound

Morphemes – the unit of meaning

A perceptual problem (remember subjective contours?)

Semantics - meaning

Syntax – structure

Generativity

A perceptual problem: Remember Necker cubes

An exercise for the reader: Oil seals

A capacity limit: Remember 7 +/- 2

What is learned?

Stages:

- I. Pre-linguistic
- II. One-word stage (12-18 mo)
- III. Two-word (telegraphic speech) (2 yrs)
- IV. More than two words

What is being learned: The standard view: Instances and rules.

Pinker, S. (1994). The Language Instinct. New York: William Morrow and Co.

The less-standard view? Seidenberg, M. S., 275, 1599-1604 (1997). Language acquisition and use: Learning and applying probabilistic constraints. *Science*, 275, 1599-1604.

nativist and empiricist accounts of language

critical period.

Can Thorndike's Law of Effect and Skinner's schedules of reinforcement explain language?

Chomsky, N. (1959). A review of Skinner's *Verbal Behavior*. *Language*, 35, 26-58.

On to animals....maybe