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Theories Of Language Acquisition

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ABSTRACT

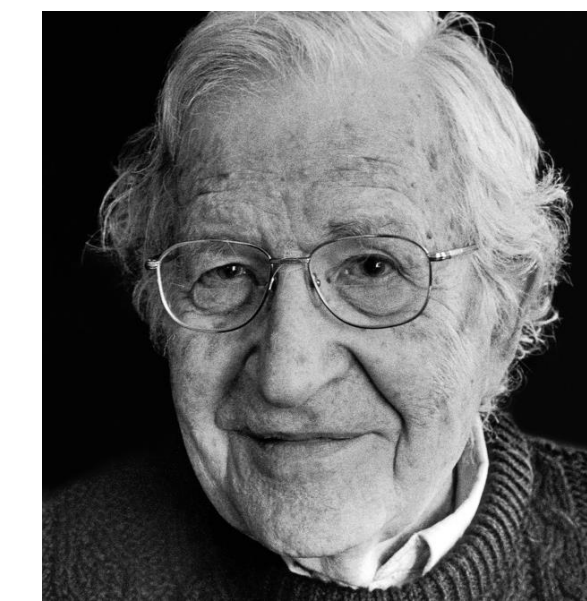
Language acquisition has been discussed for many years; several theories were proposed. In this occasion we will discuss Social Interactionist view by Lev Vygotsky and Nativism view by Noam Chomsky.

INTRODUCTION

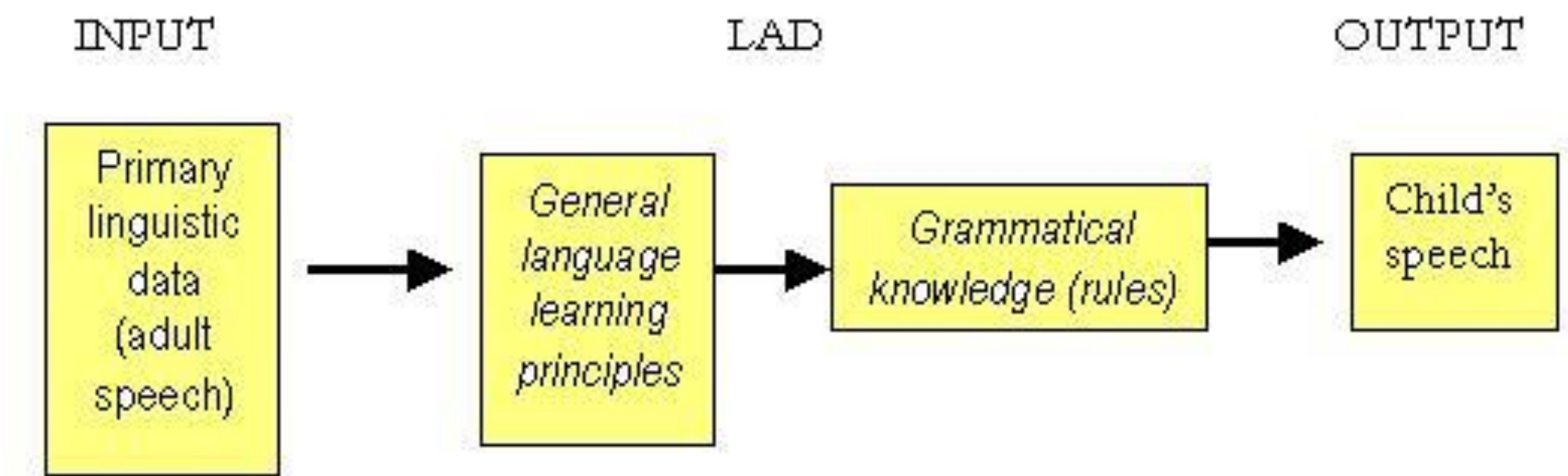
To understand the acquisition and development of language many researches have investigated the nature and elements of language capacity. (Stanborough, R. 2019, June 14) In 1957 Noam Chomsky published his book “Syntactic Structures” and on it, he presented the idea that all humans are born with an innate understanding of how language works. On the other hand, “Vygotsky believed that language develops from social interactions, for communication purposes” McLeod, S. A. (2007).

DISCUSSION

According to Chomsky's Nativism Theory, all humans are born with an innate ability to decode language. The Universal Grammar consists on understanding the rules of our native language in our minds and with time and development we can create our sentences thanks to this Language Acquisition Device inside our brains. On the contrary, Vygotsky's Social Interactionist theory describes language as a process of learning that comes from our interactions with the outside world and that is our desire to communicate with others that enable us to accomplish communication (McLeod, S. A. 2007). Vygotsky had a more sociocultural and educational view, however, is interesting how he contributed to language acquisition theory through his diagram of Zone of Proximal Development. (Yetman, D., March 24, 2020)



Noam Chomsky
Pardo, P. & Muniz, M. (2016)



Mercado, K. (2014)



Lev Vygotsky
Cherry, K. (2020)



Yetman, D. (2020)

Chomsky's Nativism Theory	Vygotsky's Social Interactionist Theory
Language ability is innate in humans. (Chomsky, N. 1960)	Language is a social phenomenon. (Hoff. E., 2014)
Language Acquisition Device (LAD) is a set of learning language tools.	Language is a learned process.
There is the Universal Grammar (UG) in which all human languages are build.	Social interaction is relevant to language acquisition and cognitive abilities

CONCLUSION

We can agree that these two theories exposed valid arguments to explain how human language is acquired; however, the Nativism Theory is more accurate on the explanation about how it is possible that we are able to structure a large and wide variety of sentences. The universal grammar principle completes the empty space that the social interactionist theory leaves us. Social factor is an important piece to language acquisition, but it cannot explain the complexity of language's syntaxis.

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