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Mouths of Babes; Discovering the Units of Sound; Starting With the Word; Learning That Words Are Made of Parts; Combining Words Into Sentences; Elaborating Sentences; In Sum; 2. How Do Children Learn Language?; Theoretical Accounts of Language-Learning; Behaviorist Accounts; Nativist Accounts; Social/Cognitive Accounts; Connectionist Accounts

Studying Language-Learning by Manipulating EnvironmentsThe Resilient and Fragile Properties of Language; 3. Language-Learning Across the Globe; Children Learn the Particulars of Their Language; When Children Change the Input They Receive; Privileged Meanings; Privileged Forms; Taking Cross-Linguistic Universals to Another Level; 4. Language-Learning by Hand; First Signs; The Parts of Signs; Morphology of Stems; Inflectional Morphology; Combining Signs Into Sentences; Relating Signs to the World or to Other Signs; 5. Does More or Less Input Matter?

Children Receive Special Input in All CulturesThe Natural Variation in Language Input That Children Receive Within a Culture; Enriching the Input to Children; Degrading the Input to Children; Where Are We?; Part II: Language Development without a Language Model; 6. Background on Deafness and Language-Learning; Learning Spoken Language; Learning Sign Language; The Deaf Children We Studied; Hearing Abilities and Oral Language Skills; Manual Language Skills; Our Procedures; 7. How Do We Begin?; Identifying a Gesture; Segmenting Strings of Gestures; Assigning Meaning to Gestures; 8. Words

Pointing GesturesThe Objects Points Refer To; The Roles Points Assume in Gesture Sentences; The Capacity Points Have to Refer to the Non-Present; Iconic Gestures; Modulating Gestures; Summary: Gestures That Function as Words in a Linguistic System; 9. The Parts of Words; A Limited Number of Forms; Each Form Has a Consistent Meaning; Form-Meaning Pairings Combine Freely With Each Other; The Parts Grow Out of Wholes; Summary: A Simple Morphology; 10. Combining Words Into Simple Sentences; The Meanings Simple Sentences Convey; Underlying Predicate Frames Organize the Sentence

Marking Semantic Roles in the SentenceMarking Roles by Producing Them at a Particular Rate in a Sentence: Syntax; Marking Roles by Placing Them in a Particular Position in a Sentence: Syntax; Marking Roles by Inflecting the Verb in a Sentence: Inflectional Morphology; Summary: A Simple Syntax; 11. Making Complex Sentences out of Simple Ones: Recursion; The Meanings Complex Sentences Convey; Combining Underlying Predicate Frames; Marking Redundant or Shared Elements in the Surface of a Sentence; Summary of Recursion; 12. Building a System; An Utterance Grows in Size and Scope
The Utterance Grows Not Only in Size but Also in Organization: Nouns, Verbs, and Adjectives

Sommario/riassunto

Imagine a child who has never seen or heard any language at all. Would such a child be able to invent a language on her own? Despite what one might guess, the children described in this book make it clear that the answer to this question is 'yes'. The children are congenitally deaf and cannot learn the spoken language that surrounds them. In addition, they have not yet been exposed to sign language, either by their hearing parents or their oral schools. Nevertheless, the children use their hands to communicate - they gesture - and those gestures take on many of the forms and functions of langu
