

# **UNIVERSAL GRAMMAR (UG) AND SECOND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION**

03-Apr-20

# INTRODUCTION

- } How do people learn a language?
- } Do we learn language the way we learn everything?
- } Or is there some special way our brains learn a language?



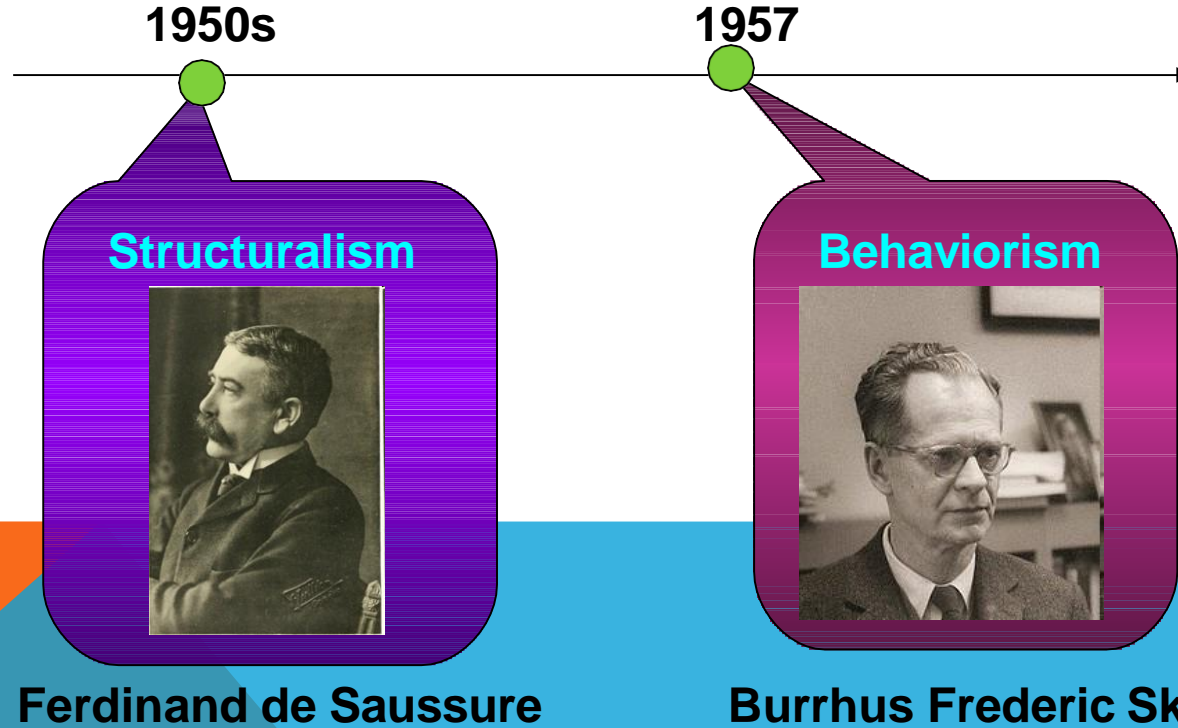
# CONTENTS

**HISTORY**

**UNIVERSAL  
GRAMMAR**

**SECOND  
LANGUAGE  
ACQUISITION**

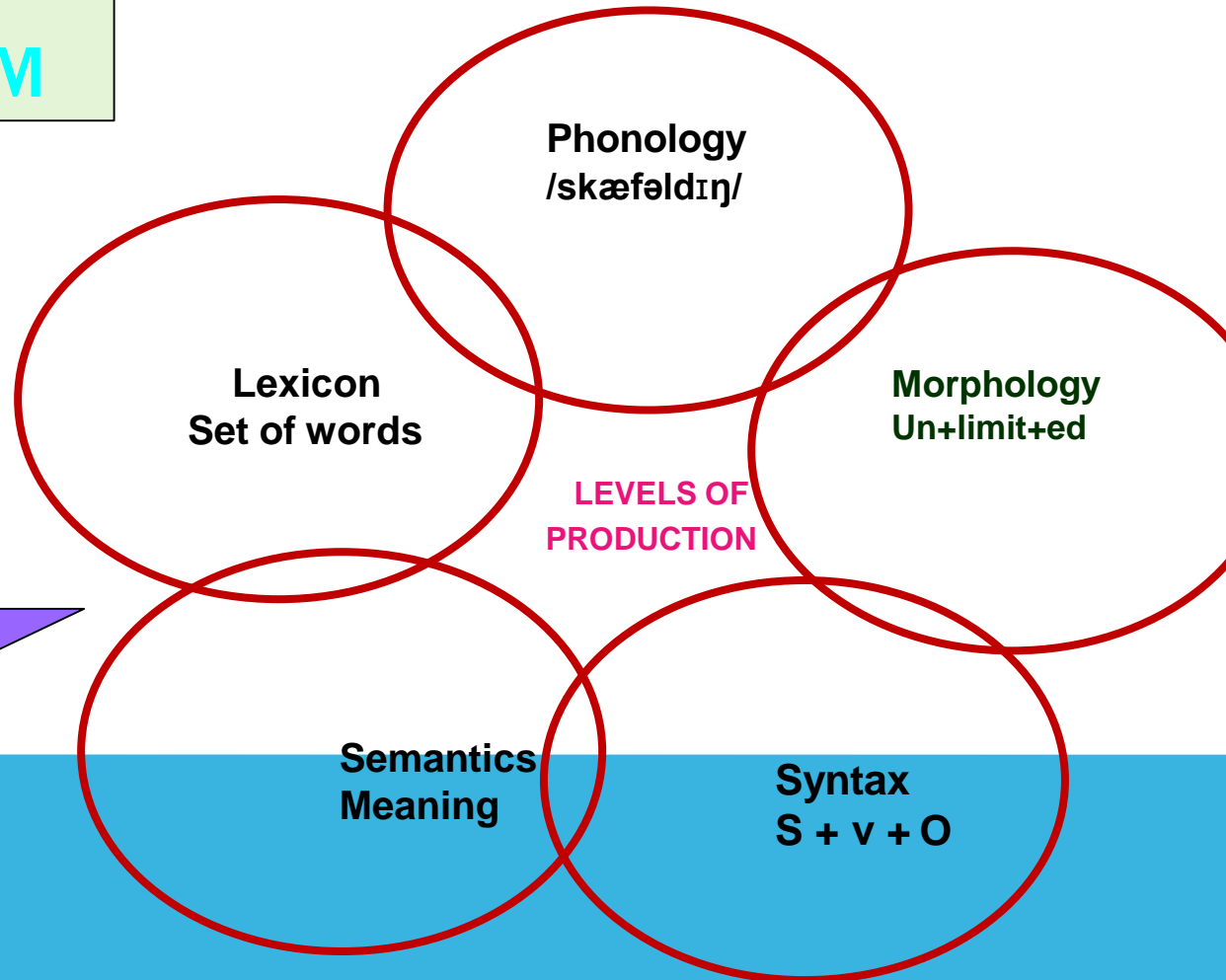
# FORMER THEORIES



# FORMER APPROACHES

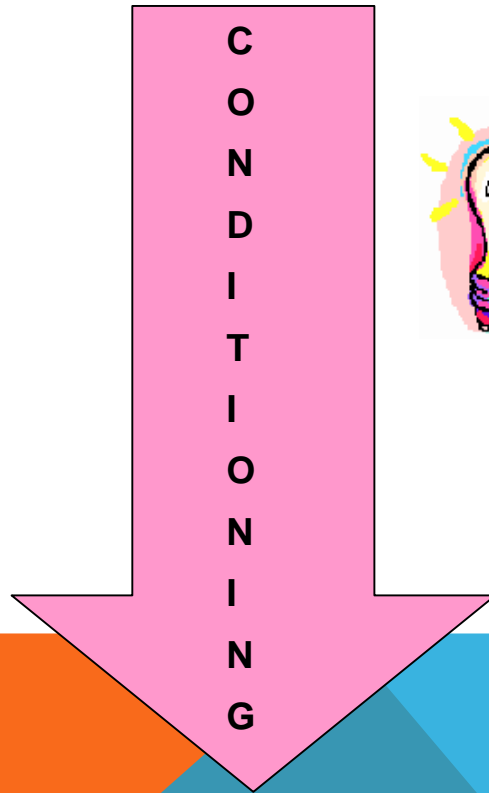
## STRUCTURALISM

DID NOT  
PROVIDE  
ANY FRAMEWORK  
OF HOW LEARNING  
TAKES PLACE.



# FORMER APPROACHES

## BEHAVIORISM



STIMULUS



RESPONSE



REINFORCEMENT



# FORMER APPROACHES

## BEHAVIORISM

} The brain is “blank slate” at birth.



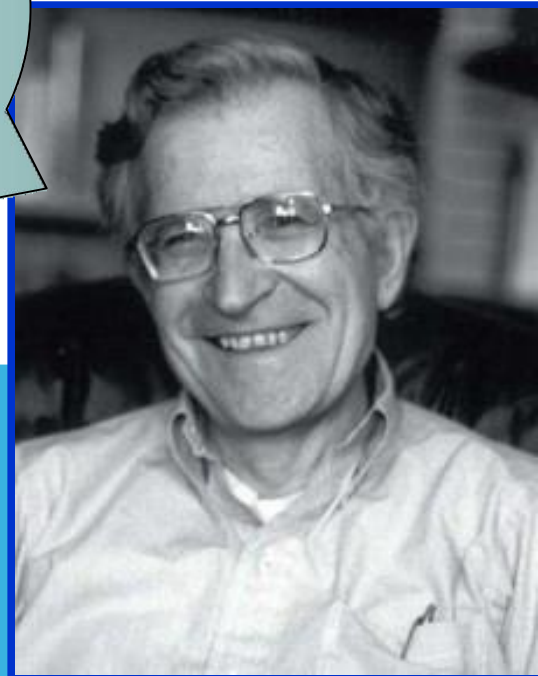
# NOAM CHOMSKY

## UNIVERSAL GRAMMAR

- If children learn language by conditioning and imitation, why do they say things they have never heard before?

- why can adults make completely novel sentences?

1960s





# WHAT IS UNIVERSAL GRAMMAR?

IT IS A THEORY THAT SUGGESTS THAT SOME RULES OF GRAMMAR ARE HARD-WIRED INTO THE BRAIN , AND MANIFEST WITHOUT BEING TAUGHT .



# NOAM CHOMSKY

- } Language acquisition.
- } Nativism (Innate language ability).
- } LAD (Language Acquisition Device).
- } Generative Grammar.



## UNIVERSAL GRAMMAR ARGUMENTS



```
graph TD; A[UNIVERSAL GRAMMAR ARGUMENTS] --- B[1. Poverty of the Stimulus.]; A --- C[2. Constraints and principles cannot be learned.]; A --- D[3. Patterns of development are universal.];
```

**1. Poverty of the Stimulus.**

**2. Constraints and principles cannot be learned.**

**3. Patterns of development are universal.**

# UG ARGUMENTS

## 1. POVERTY OF THE STIMULUS

■

- } Children hear only a **finite** number of sentences.
- } They are able to abstract the rules and principles of the language.
- } They Produce a **infinite** number of possible sentences **without** any formal training.

Ungrammatical  
input



Grammatical acceptable  
output

# UG ARGUMENTS

## 2.CONSTRAINTS AND PRINCIPLES CANNOT BE learned.

- } Children are very young when acquiring L1.
- } They do not have the cognitive ability to understand the principles of grammar as a system.
- } Because of innate capacity of producing correct grammar.



### **3. Patterns of development are universal**

- } Children learn the various aspects of a language in a very similar order.

# UG ARGUMENTS

BROWN(1973).

1. Present Progressive -ing

\* Daddy jump<sup>ing</sup>

2. Plural -s

\* Many book<sup>s</sup>

3. Irregular past forms

\* I run – I <sup>ran</sup>

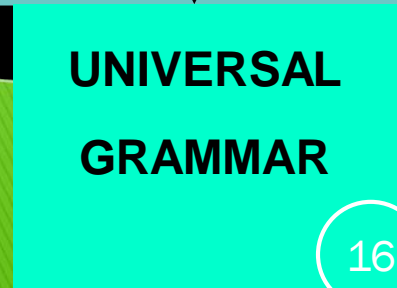
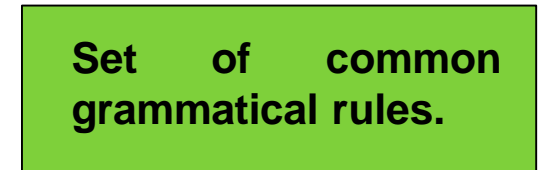
The sequence is quite fixed in order, but not in rate.



All children learn in the same order, but some take longer than others.

# LAD

## LANGUAGE ACQUISITION DEVICE





# GENERATIVE GRAMMAR

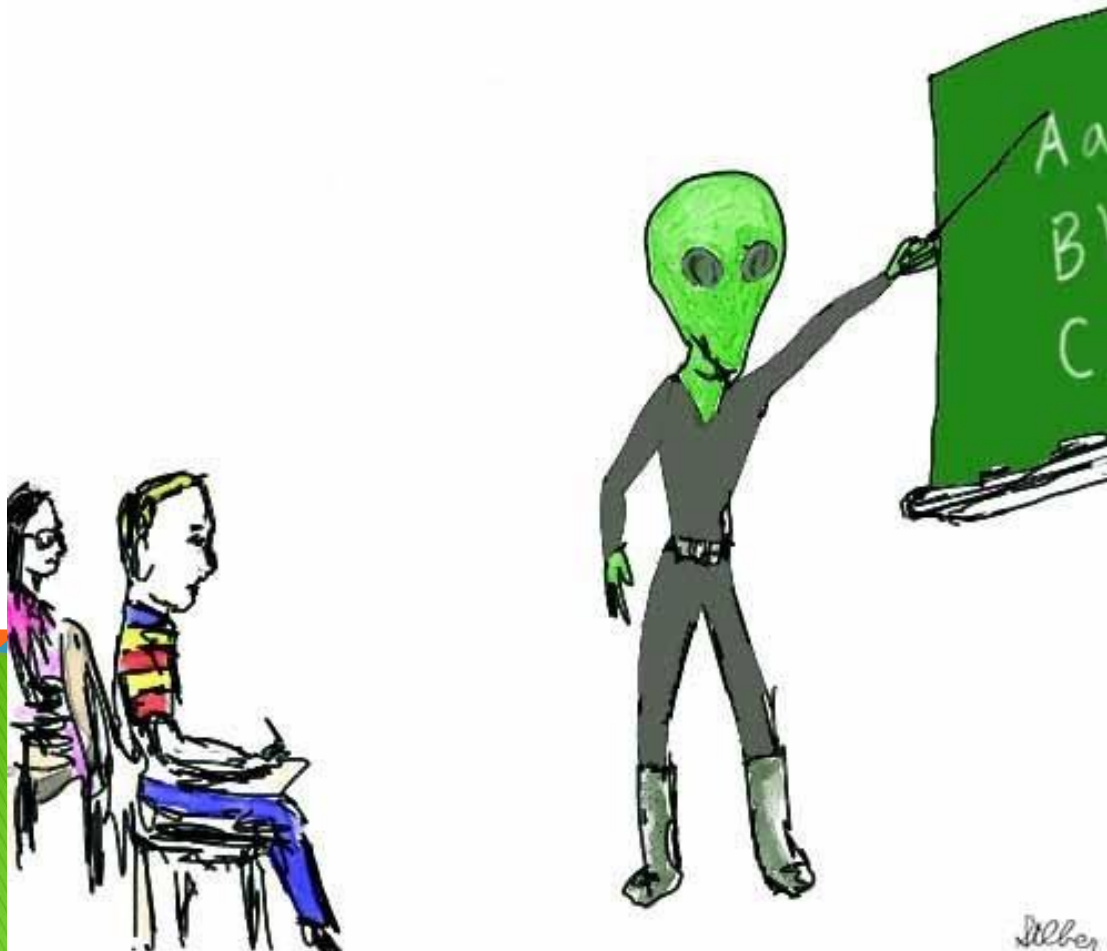
- } Refers to a set of rules that can predict which combinations of words are able to make grammatically correct sentences.

## Example:

- | “That’s how you say it”
- X “How that’s you say it”

# Real Universal Grammar

Linguists believe that children acquire language through the application of innate, universal principles of grammar. This also explains why most extraterrestrials speak colloquial English that is readily comprehensible to American audiences.

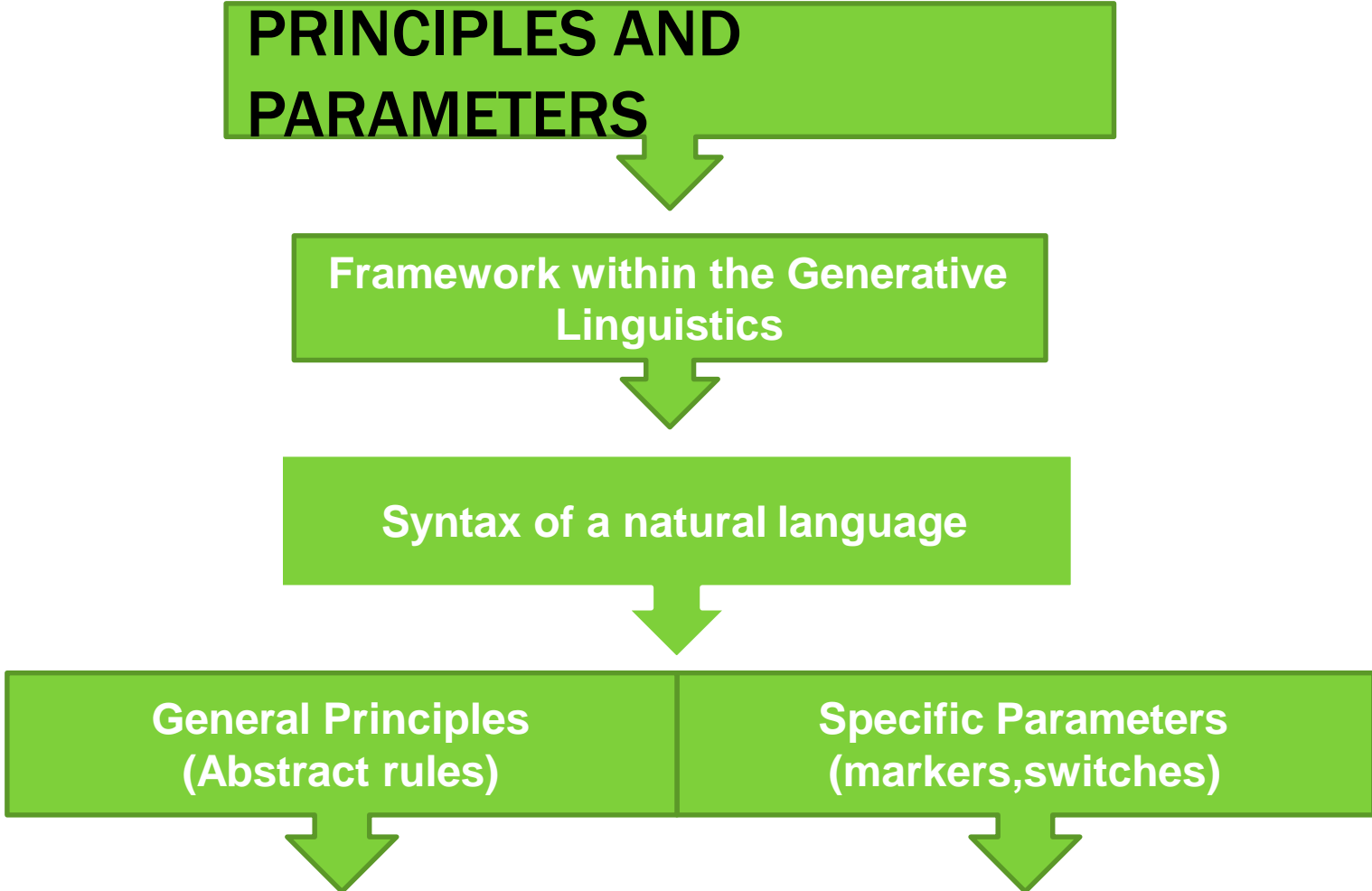


# CHOMSKY ADDED TWO CONCEPTS LATER:

- Principles and parameters
- The minimalist program



# PRINCIPLES AND PARAMETERS



```
graph TD; A[PRINCIPLES AND PARAMETERS] --> B[Framework within the Generative Linguistics]; B --> C[Syntax of a natural language]; C --> D[General Principles (Abstract rules)]; C --> E[Specific Parameters (markers, switches)];
```

Framework within the Generative  
Linguistics

Syntax of a natural language

General Principles  
(Abstract rules)

Specific Parameters  
(markers, switches)

# Principles

WE ALL HAVE A BUILT IN LANGUAGE ACQUISITION DEVICE. (SAME ACROSS LANGUAGES).

PRINCIPLES ARE BUILT IN RULES FOR GRAMMAR.


# LANGUAGES ARE DIFFERENT IN SYNTACTICAL ORDER

Eg. English : The red ball  
Spanish : La pelota roja.

When learning a language the mind  
automatically adjust the already existing  
rules or parameters



FOR EXAMPLE:  
THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN WHETHER A  
LANGUAGE IS  
HEAD-INITIAL OR HEAD FINAL IS REGARDED AS A  
PARAMETER WHICH IS EITHER ON OR OFF FOR  
PARTICULAR LANGUAGES



e.g. English is *head-initial*, whereas  
Japanese is *head-final*

```
graph TD; A[A person's syntactic knowledge can be modelled] --> B[A finite set of fundamental principles that are common to all languages]; A --> C[A finite set of parameters that determine syntactic variability amongst languages];
```

A person's syntactic knowledge can be modelled

A finite set of fundamental **principles** that are common to all languages

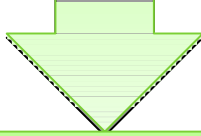
A finite set of **parameters** that determine syntactic variability amongst languages



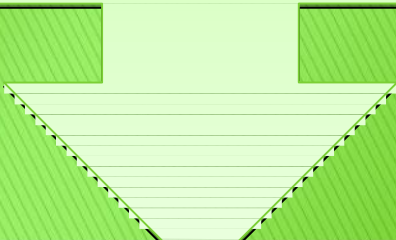
THE GOAL OF LINGUISTICS IS TO IDENTIFY  
ALL OF THE PRINCIPLES AND PARAMETERS  
THAT ARE UNIVERSAL TO HUMAN  
LANGUAGE (CALLED: UNIVERSAL  
GRAMMAR).

# Minimalist Program

The Minimalist Program (MP) is a major line of inquiry that has been developing inside Generative Grammar since the early nineties.

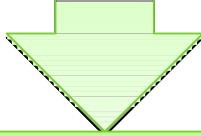


Chomsky presents MP as a program, not as a theory.  
Conceptual framework to guide the developmental  
grammatical theory

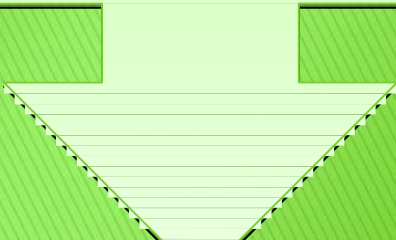


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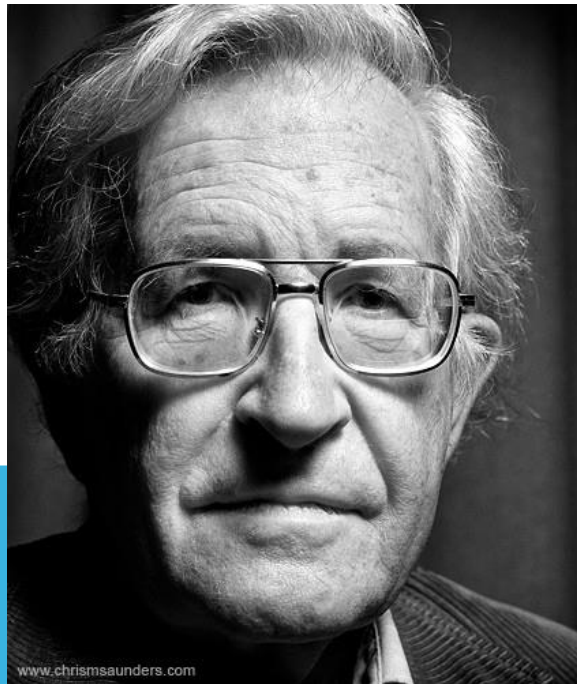


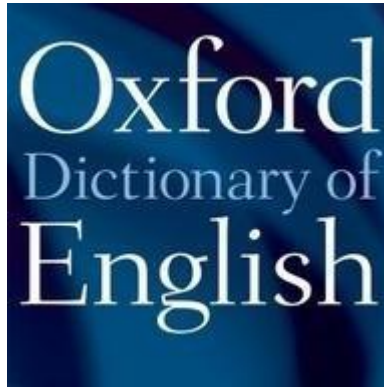
Chomsky presents MP as a program, not as a theory.  
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**For Chomsky there are minimalist questions but the answers can be framed in any theory**  
**Why language has the properties it has?**  
**MP explains the specific view of syntactic grammar**

# Universal Grammar and The Second Language Acquisition





## Process:

a series of actions or steps taken in order to achieve a particular end:

a systematic series of mechanized or chemical operations that are performed in order to produce something:

# Universal Grammar and The Second Language Acquisition

INPUT

BLACK- BOX

OUTPUT

( Language data)

( A grammar of a language)

( Language Acquisition Device)



**The Universal Grammar develop this model  
by establishing:**

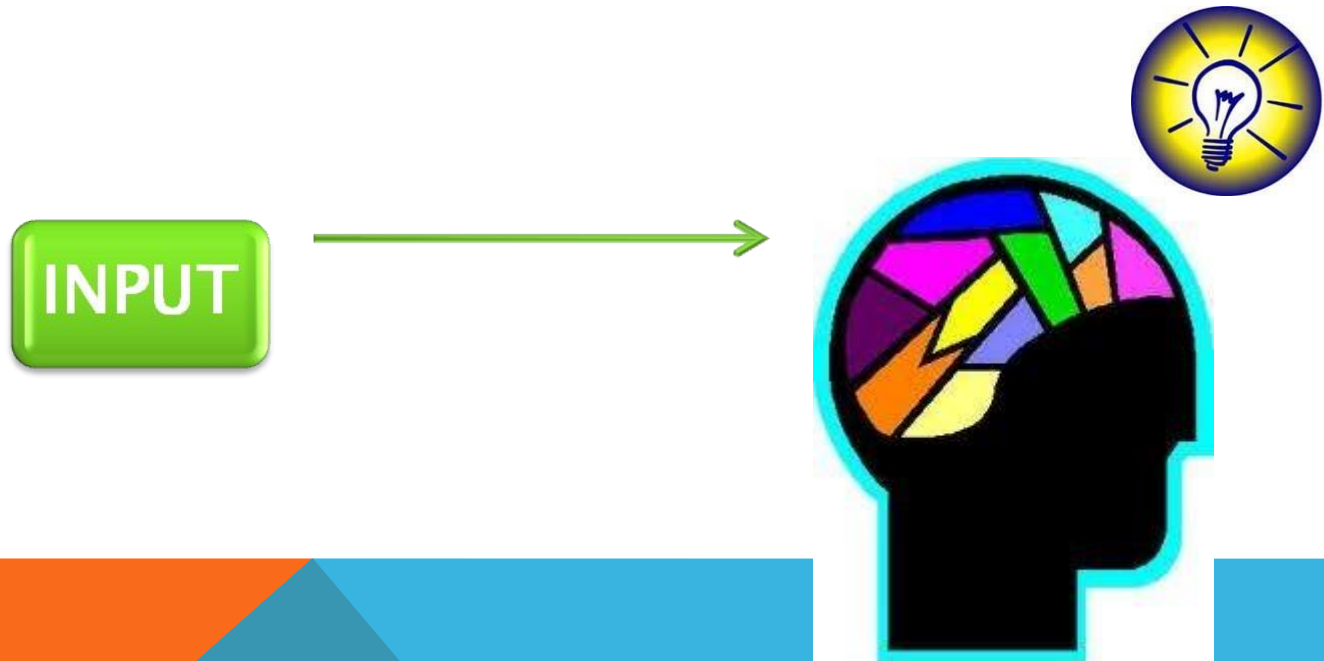
**The Crucial features of the Input.**

**The Contents of the Black-Box.**

**The Properties of the resultant grammar.**



# The Role of Language Input



# Theories of the role of input in SLA

Input Hypothesis (Krashen, 1982, 1985)

'Less is more' (Newport, 1990)

Processability Theory (Pienemann, 1998)

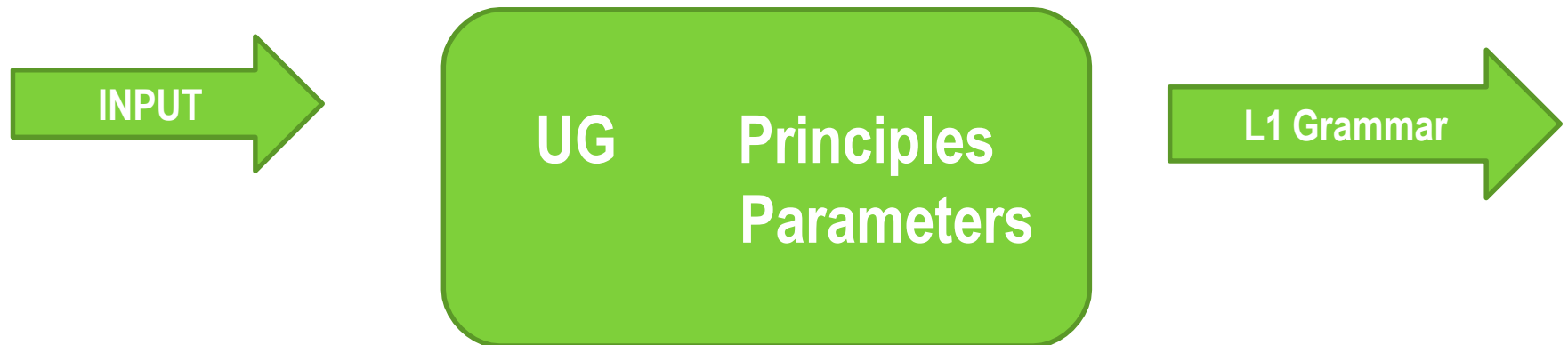
Input Processing (Van Patten and Cadierno, 1993)

Autonomous Induction Theory (Carroll, 2001)

## How do we move from one stage to another?

A necessary condition to move from stage  $i$  to stage  $(i + 1)$  is that acquirer understand input that contains  $(i + 1)$ , where “understand” means that the acquires focused on the meaning and not the form of the message.

# The Contents of the Black-Box.



**STAY SAFE**

03-Apr-20