**ماستر الأدب المغربي وجدلية الإبداع والنقد.**

**Innateness Theory**

Noam Chomsky's innateness or nativist theory proposes that children have an inborn or innate faculty for language acquisition that is biologically determined. According to Goodluck (1991), nativists view language as a fundamental part of the human genome, as a trait that makes humans human, and its acquisition is a natural part of maturation.[[5]](https://en.wikiversity.org/wiki/Psycholinguistics/Theories_and_Models_of_Language_Acquisition#cite_note-Language_Aquisition-5) It seems that the human species has evolved a brain whose neural circuits contain linguistic information at birth and this natural predisposition to learn language is triggered by hearing speech. The child's brain is then able to interpret what she or he hears according to the underlying principles or structures it already contains (Linden, 2007).[[6]](https://en.wikiversity.org/wiki/Psycholinguistics/Theories_and_Models_of_Language_Acquisition#cite_note-Basic_Theories_of_Language_Acquisition-6) Chomsky has determined that being biologically prepared to acquire language regardless of setting is due to the child's *language acquisition device* (**LAD**), which is used as a mechanism for working out the rules of language. Chomsky believed that all human languages share common principles, such as all languages have verbs and nouns, and it was the child's task to establish how the specific language she or he hears expresses these underlying principles. For example, the LAD already contains the concept of verb tense and so by listening to word forms such as "worked" or "played". The child will then form a hypothesis that the past tense of verbs are formed by adding the sound /d/,/t/ or /id/ to the base form. Yang (2006) also believes that children also initially possess, then subsequently develop, an innate understanding or hypothesis about grammar regardless of where they are raised.[[7]](https://en.wikiversity.org/wiki/Psycholinguistics/Theories_and_Models_of_Language_Acquisition#cite_note-The_Infinite_Gift-7) According to Chomsky, infants acquire grammar because it is a universal property of language, an inborn development, and has coined these fundamental grammatical ideas that all humans have as *universal grammar* (**UG**). Children under the age of three usually don't speak in full sentences and instead say things like "want cookie" but yet you would still not hear them say things like "want my" or "I cookie" because statements like this would break the syntactic structure of the phrase, a component of universal grammar. Another argument of the nativist or innate theory is that there is a critical period for language acquisition, which is a time frame during which environmental exposure is needed to stimulate an innate trait. Linguist Eric Lenneberg in 1964 postulated that the critical period of language acquisition ends around the age of 12 years. He believed that if no language was learned before then, it could never be learned in a normal and functional sense. It was termed the critical period hypothesis and since then there has been a few case examples of individuals being subject to such circumstances such as the girl known as Genie who was imposed to an abusive environment, which didn't allow her to develop language skills.