***Learning vs. Growth*, by H. Diessel**

Dilemma:

1. Is the manner in which infants acquire language attributable to “universal grammar” in their mind, or to the nature of human cognition?
2. Is language capacity, incl. grammar capacity, innate or is the nature of learning innate?

Diessel: Our knowledge and learning of grammar is due to **innate faculties** of **human intellect**

vs. grammatical development in our minds can be explained by the theory of UNIVERSAL GRAMMAR:

Children determine what fits into their mother language when correlating input with innate grammar, and move from general /innate grammar that has all possible options and patterns included to specific options of a specific language (that may have e.g. 3 tenses, gender etc.)

L. development is an automatic process that happens TO the child (the grammar “wakes up”)

GIVEN: Language **functions are localized** in specific brain areas –

but, how does this localization happen? >

is it determined at the level of being human, or **developed gradually**? >

do localized brain functions emerge as a consequence of processing specific type of data?!

GIVEN: 8 months-old infants segment complex strings of nonsense syllables into word-like components because of the computational/statistical nature of their “learning”, i.e., they take account of statistical distribution of the syllables

WHY?

1. social interaction is highly significant and L/grammar can’t be acquired without that
2. infants can build up rules and patterns only if frequently exposed to relevant data (mother language)
3. L. acquisition is based in learning that involves in a gradual development of grammar

CONCLUSION: children develop representations of their grammar (i.e., grammar categories such as number, tense, etc.) by analyzing and systematizing the **input data**