Key ideas from *Acquiring the human language: playing the language game*

Language is not taught:
- When did the boy say he hurt himself?
- When did the boy say how he hurt himself?

Imitation cannot explain the acquisition of language.

Children learn to form very complex sentences:
- What do you think Cookie Monster eats? (Sammy, age 3 1/2)

Children understand word order (syntax) from a very young age (even when they can’t yet produce it).

Learning word meanings takes time.
We sometimes see evidence of several successive approximations before the child gets it right:

“Nunu”

Children are biased learners:
- Whole object assumption
- Mutual exclusivity principle (flimmick vs. spud)

Children’s errors:
- “drived”
- “geeses”
- “foots”

Children don’t make errors like:
- “What did you eat eggs and?”

They do sometimes produce errors like:
- “What do you think what’s in here?”
even though adults don’t say things like this (in English).