

Title: Strong and weak blind alley developments (BADs) in early childhood as evidence for a superiority of Natural Linguistics over other linguistic models

Based on the papers of Dressler et al. (2020, 2023), strong and weak blind alley developments (BADs) in early childhood serve as evidence for the superiority of the acquisition model of Natural Linguistics. BADs are ephemeral acquisition paths in early childhood that go against children's parental input and against the target structures of the language(s) they acquire. We differentiate between strong and weak BADs: strong BADs have no base at all in the input, weak BADs have some bases in the input, but represent a development against the input, whereas generally child language approaches successively more and more child-directed speech. Since BADs are constantly contradicted by the input, children give them up soon. Our data come from French, German, Greek, Polish, Russian and Ukrainian.

Two strong BADs are produced in a row by a Greek boy in acquiring the Greek subjunctive: for two weeks he lengthens the verbal root vowel, as in Ind. *káni* '(s)he makes* --> Subj. [ká:ni], then for several weeks he invents and uses morphological reduplication (/ka+káni/). However, Modern Greek has neither long vowels nor morphological reduplication. Therefore, no usage/input-based acquisition model can explain such strong BADs, whereas Natural Morphology does via natural strategies of iconicity. Generative nativist models do not provide any parameter for such developments.

A strong syntactic BADs occurs in Polish children's acquisition of negative clauses, e.g. *umiem to ja nie* 'I can't do that' (lit. can do I not) with putting the proclitic preverbal negation *nie* at the end of the clause and stressing it. Both mischanges increase positional and prosodic salience. Both strategies are embedded in Naturalist acquisition theory, but are not current in other models.

An example of a weak BAD is the German conspiracy for producing schwa at the boundary between the two members of a German noun-noun compound. Three children misproduced both a) schwa interfixes instead of another correct interfix and b) at the same time they did not add the necessary *n*-interfix after the final schwa of the first compound member. Although BADs are extreme instances of children's self-organisation in acquisition and therefore occur rarely, they have significant theoretical importance.