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Biolinguistics: The “third factor” in evolution and variation

Biolinguistics studies language as a biological system and, as such, investigates language in the traditional areas of biology: form/function, development and evolution. The biolinguistic perspective concerns itself with the interplay between what Chomsky has termed the “three factors” in language design: 1) genetic endowment, 2) experience and 3) principles not specific to the faculty of language. We will consider the role of principles such as symmetry, which are non-domain specific and non-species specific, but which can contribute to the variation in biological systems seen in development and evolution.