Review Questions:
Introduction to language acquisition

1. **Terms/concepts to know**: grammar, prescriptive grammar, descriptive grammar, language pathology, language pedagogy, explicit correction, recast, motherese, fatherese, diary studies, CHILDES, MLU, MacArthur-Bates CDIs, Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test, act-out tasks, pointing tasks, grammaticality judgment tasks, elicited production, repetition/imitation elicitation, syntactic priming, computational modeling, domain-specific knowledge, domain-general knowledge, Universal Grammar, poverty of the stimulus, induction problems, linguistic nativist, non-linguistic nativist, empiricism, nativism, generativist, constructionist

2. What are some practical applications to studying how typically-developing children acquire their native language?

3. What is one reason why children can't learn to understand and produce full sentences in their language just by imitating sentences they hear? Does it seem like children try to imitate sentences they hear word-for-word in real life?

4. What is one reason why it's unlikely we get taught everything we know about language? (Hint: What kinds of things might be difficult to teach, and why might they be difficult to teach?)

5. Which grammar – descriptive or prescriptive - do language scientists generally care about? What are some examples of prescriptive rules? What are some examples of descriptive rules?

6. What is one reason why children probably don't learn everything they know about language by being explicitly corrected by their parents? (Hint: What errors are parents more likely to explicitly correct?)

7. How is a recast different from explicit correction? Why are recasts not necessarily a reliable source of correct language use? Is there any evidence that recasts are helpful nonetheless?

8. What are some properties that often are true of motherese that might make it easier for children to learn from? (Hint: What is the prosody like? Think about how surprising the pitch changes are, or if there's a distinctive timbre. What do the topics tend to be? Does it involve more or fewer errors than adult-directed speech? How does it relate to children's attention? Is it repetitious? Is it instructive? Is it attuned to the level of linguistic knowledge the child has?)

9. How does fatherese differ from motherese, according to the VanDam et al. (2015) study? Why might this be helpful for children? (Hint: Think about what happens when children encounter people whose voices they haven't heard before.)

10. What evidence is there that motherese is helpful for language acquisition? Is it necessary for language acquisition? (Hint: Are there cultures where children receive little or no motherese? How do these children fare?)

11. What evidence is there that words children overhear are not as useful for learning as words that are specifically directed to children (usually in the form of motherese) until children are preschool age? Why might this be?

12. Why is it important to do language acquisition research across different cultures?

13. What kind of information does the CHILDES database contain? Why would it be useful for language acquisition research?

14. Give one example of a measure of a child's language comprehension abilities, and give one example of a measure of a child's language production abilities.

15. Which task, an act-out task or a pointing task, is likely to be more cognitively demanding for the child? (Hint: Which requires less conscious effort?)

16. Why is computational cognitive modeling a useful research method? What does it usually test?

17. What is the poverty of the stimulus? What is an induction problem? How does it relate to the idea of "impoverished" input and poverty of the stimulus? (Hint: What is the child trying to do from the data available?) Does it seem to occur often in language acquisition? What is an example of poverty of the stimulus?

18. What does it mean for children to show constrained generalization? When children show constrained generalization in the face of poverty of the stimulus, what does that indicate in terms of how children solve language acquisition? Does this align with any particular theoretical viewpoint? (Hint: Think about the difference between nativists and empiricists.)

19. What's an example of innate knowledge that's domain-specific? What about innate knowledge that's domain-general?

20. Does statistical learning seem to be a domain-specific or domain-general ability for children? How do we know?

21. How do linguistic nativists differ from non-linguistic nativists? Hint: Does a nativist necessarily have to believe in innate domain-specific knowledge?) What are other names for these types of nativists? How do both of these nativists differ from empiricists? Does anyone *not* believe that children learn from the input? Does anyone *not* believe that children can use domain-general learning abilities?