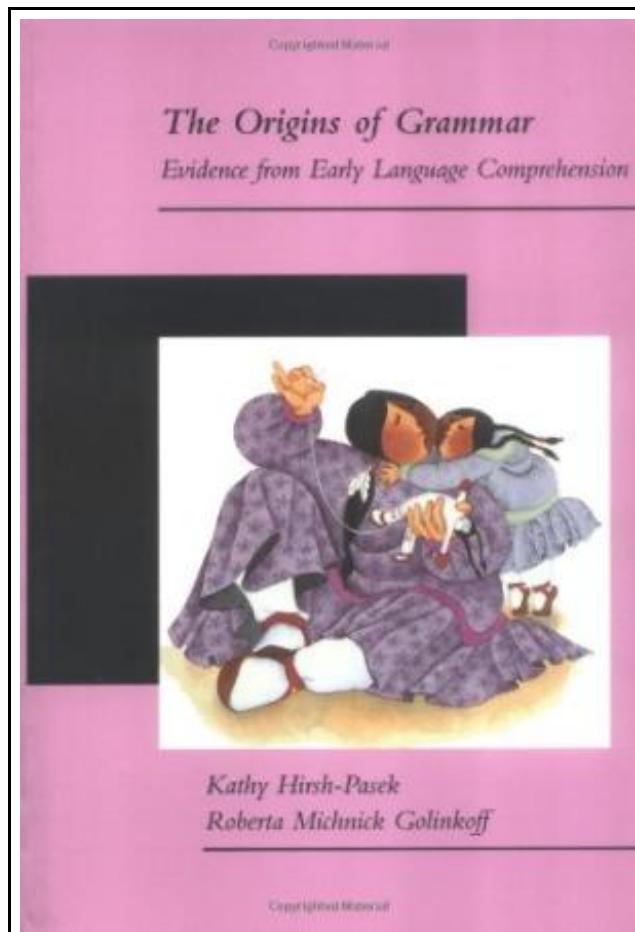


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MIT Press Ltd, United States, 1999. Paperback. Book Condition: New. New edition. 226 x 151 mm. Language: English . Brand New Book. How do children achieve adult grammatical competence? How do they induce syntactical rules from the bewildering linguistic input that surrounds them? The major debates in language acquisition theory today focus not on whether there are some sensitivities to syntactic information but rather which sensitivities are available to children and how they might be translated into the organizing principles that get syntactic learning off the ground. The Origins of Grammar presents a synthesis of work done by the authors, who have pioneered one of the most important methodological advances in language learning in the past decade: the intermodal preferential looking paradigm, which can be used to assess lexical and syntactic knowledge in children as young as 13 months. In addition to drawing together their groundbreaking empirical work, the authors use these results to describe a theory of language learning that emphasizes the role of multiple cues and forces in development. They show how infants shift their reliance on different aspects of the linguistic input, moving from a bias to attend to prosodic information to a reliance on semantic information, and finally to a reliance on the syntax itself. Viewing language acquisition as the product of a biased learner who takes advantage of the information available from a variety of sources in his or her environment, The Origins of Grammar provides a new way of thinking about the process of language comprehension. The analysis borrows insights from theories about the development of mental models, models of early cognitive development and systems theory, and is presented in a way that will be accessible to cognitive and developmental psychologists.



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