Mt Kenya University

DEPARTMENT OF EARLY CHILDHOOD STUDIES

COURSE CODE: BEC126

COURSE TITLE: Language development in early childhood

Instructional Material for BEd. ECS Distance Learning

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BEC 126: LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT IN EARLY CHILDHOOD

COURSE OBJECTIVES

1. Define language in its many forms
2. Highlight the importance of language
3. Describe the objectives of teaching language to young children.
4. Highlight the key aspects and characteristics of human language
5. Discuss the theories of language development
6. Review stages in human language development
7. Discuss the nature and importance of children's literature

COURSE CONTENT

Definition of Language, importance of language, objectives of teaching language to young children, Characteristics of Human Language, Brain Development and Language Acquisition, Theories of Language Development, Stages in Language Development, Standard Language and Dialects, Language and Intellectual Development, Factors Affecting Language and Literacy Development, The Role of Literature in Early Childhood Language Development.

LESSON ONE
IMPORTANCE OF LANGUAGE

Introduction

Objectives

By the end of the lesson students should be able to:

- Describe the importance of language
- Discuss what language is
- Highlight the objectives of teaching language to young children

What is Language?

- Language can be defined as verbal, physical, biologically innate, and a basic form of communication.
- Behaviourists often define language as a learned behaviour involving a stimulus and a response.(Ormrod,1995)
- Often times they will refer to language as verbal behaviour, which is language that includes gestures and body movements as well as spoken word. (Pierce,& Eplin,1999)

Language may refer either to the specifically human capacity for acquiring and using complex systems of communication, or to a specific instance of such a system of complex communication. The scientific study of language in any of its senses is called linguistics.

When we define language we have to be careful not to exclude symbols, gestures, or motions. This is because if we exclude these from our definition, we will be denying the language of the deaf community.

All human languages share basic characteristics, some of which are organizational rules and infinite generativity.
Infinite Generativity is the ability to produce an infinite number of sentences using a limited set of rules and words.

Importance of Language

Language is the most important aspect in the life of all beings.
We use language to:

- express inner thoughts and emotions
- make sense of complex and abstract thought
- learn to communicate with others
- fulfill our wants and needs and
- establish rules and maintain our culture.

Language is obviously a vital tool. Not only is it a means of communicating thoughts and ideas, but it forges friendships, cultural ties, and economic relationships.

Throughout history, many have reflected on the importance of language. For instance, the scholar Benjamin Whorf has noted that language shapes thoughts and emotions, determining one’s perception of reality.

John Stuart Mill said that "Language is the light of the mind."

For the linguist Edward Sapir, language is not only a vehicle for the expression of thoughts, perceptions, sentiments, and values characteristic of a community; it also represents a fundamental expression of social identity. Sapir said: "the mere fact of a common speech serves as a peculiar potent symbol of the social solidarity of those who speak the language." In short, language retention helps maintain feelings of cultural kinship.

Here in Kenya, we are blessed with one official language and one national language that make us flourish in a multicultural and "forgiving society". Not only do we all have the opportunity to learn about other cultures; we instill the values of tolerance and respect in our children.

Language, of course, is knowledge, and in our world today knowledge is one of the key factors in competitiveness. Brains and knowledge are what create the prosperity and growth we tend to take for granted. In an advanced industrial society in an increasingly interdependent world, the knowledge of other languages becomes indispensable. Just think of how the advent of the Internet has changed our lives. For the last few years, millions of people across the world, who share common interests, are able to communicate with each other and exchange ideas. Not only are they able to do this due to the various technological advances, but also because they share a common language.

There is, of course, no denying that the knowledge of the English language is one of the most important tools available to our children. It is one of the international languages, a tool of communication between countries, cultural

groups, various companies and organizations, communities and friends.

Objectives of Teaching Language to Young Children

- *To polish children's inborn abilities to acquire language and activate their linguistic abilities*

Children are born with a natural ability acquire language (Chomsky 1972). In the human brain there is a Language Acquisition Device (LAD) that aids language learning. However, that language facility is only activated by exposure to a given language. This is evidenced by studies which shows at those children who are deprived of language through isolation do not acquire any language.

Behaviourists argue that language emanates from observation and information. This means that there must be a language model if a child is to acquire language. The child must interact within a given linguistic environment for him to acquire a given language. Exposure to stories, newstelling, poems, songs, riddles and tongue twisters among other interactive processes can help in activating their linguistic abilities.

- *To expose children to the written word and different levels of language*

It is through the caregiver that a child is exposed to literacy (reading and writing). This is through the caregiver's behaviour in the presence of and for the benefit of the child. Children are provided with reading and writing

material to use freely or under the guidance of the teacher or other caregivers. The teacher chooses what type of written material is appropriate for each child. Children are taught how to identify and read pictures, sounds, words and eventually sentences. They are taught how to construct meaningful sentences in speech. They are then taught how to write and read, letters, words, sentences and finally a whole text

- *To enable children to express themselves*

Children need to be taught language so that they can express themselves. Language is used to communicate thoughts, feelings, emotions and needs. While other animals communicate, they do not have a language facility. It is the use of language in human beings that makes them unique. The child, being a member of the human race, uses the same channel to communicate ideas, fears, joys, attitudes and needs. He can ask for food, milk, tea, sweets, bread, and so on because he has a language through which to make requests. In the classroom situation, the child can use language to ask for permission to go out, or to be given writing material point out that the teacher is smart and so on.

- *To Widen Children's General Knowledge*

Language broadens a child's general knowledge. He uses language to learn all manner of things in his environment. Children need to be taught language so that they can interact with and thus benefit from the environment they live in. They are able to learn from, understand and consequently control their

environment. They learn about people, ants, animals, and other things by manipulating what is around them id through asking questions to clarify and confirm what they may ready know from past experience. Nature corners within an ECDE classroom could help to achieve this objective. The teacher can put in ace new material for the children to explore in addition to what they are already familiar with. Such materials can be models, potted plants, real objects like seeds or fruits among others. The more they grapple with these materials, the wider their knowledge becomes.

- *To improve children's language skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing skills*

Teaching young children language improves their listening, speaking, reading and writing skills. Children need to be trained to pay attention what they hear. This can be done by exposing them to various sounds and training them to discriminate different sounds. For example, they need to know the difference between sound /p/ and /b/ so that they can see the difference in the words 'pin' and 'bin'. Their listening skills can improved through exposure to musical instruments, songs, stories, tongue twisters, people's voices, animal sounds, the wind, rain, toys, etc. is the caregiver's role to train children to remember these sounds.

The children are also taught how to speak appropriately. They learn how to articulate specific sounds, where to place stress in words and sentences, how to use tone to produce given meanings and also how to keep to the rhythm of

that language. For example, a child in an ECDE class should be exposed to the intonation used in asking a question, as is different from that of making a statement. They need to know the rules of speaking such as turn-taking, use of polite words like ‘please’ and ‘am sorry’, so that they can interact freely and thus benefit from their caregivers. The fact that communication is dependent on how well children produce what they say cannot be over emphasised. Once children are able to speak fluently, their creativity in singing, reciting poetry, public speaking and writing is realized.

Learning activities

1. Define what language is.
2. Explain why language is importance.
3. Highlight the objectives of teaching language to young children.

LESSON TWO

ROLE OF LANGUAGE IN COMMUNICATION

Lesson Objectives

By the end of the lesson the students should be able to:

- Describe the role of language in communication
- Highlight the types of human communication
- Explore the modes of language acquisition

Introduction

Language is a subtle and complex instrument used to communicate an incredible number of different things, but for our purposes here we can reduce the universe of communication to four basic categories: information, direction, emotion, and ceremony. The first two are often treated together because they express cognitive meaning while the latter two commonly express emotional meaning.

Communication of information

The communication of information may be the most frequently thought-of use of language, but it probably isn't as dominant as most believe. The basic

means of conveying information is through statements or propositions (a proposition is any declaration that asserts some matter of fact, as opposed to an opinion or value) — the building blocks of arguments. Some of the "information" here might not be true because not all arguments are valid; however, for the purposes of studying logic, information being conveyed in a statement may be either false or true.

The informative content of a statement may be direct or indirect. Most statements in arguments will probably be direct — something basic like "all men are mortal." Indirect information may also be communicated if you read between the lines. Poetry, for example, conveys information indirectly through techniques such as metaphors.

Communicating Direction

Communicating direction occurs when we use language to cause or prevent an action. The simplest examples would be when we yell "Stop!" or "Come here!" Unlike the communication of information, commands can't be true or false. On the other hand, the reasons for giving command may be true or false and hence be amenable to logical critique.

Communicate Feelings and Emotions

Language may be used to communicate feelings and emotions. Such expressions may or may not be intended to evoke reactions in others, but when emotional language occurs in an argument the purpose is to evoke similar feelings in others in order to sway them to agreeing with the

argument’s conclusion(s).

Ceremonial use of Language

The ceremonial use of language is used to communicate emotional meaning, however, that isn’t entirely accurate. The problem with ceremonial language is that it can involve all three other categories at some level and can be very difficult to interpret properly. A priest using ritual phrases may be communicating information about the religious ritual, invoking predicted emotional reactions in religious adherents, and directing them to begin the next stage of the ritual — all at once and with the same half dozen words. Ceremonial language cannot be understood literally, but neither can the literal meanings be ignored.

Other Roles of Language

Expressing Ideas and Desires

Ideas and desires are thoughts in the mind, which when translated through verbal and non-verbal means to a listener results in an expression expecting a response from the receivers. Caregivers and teachers should encourage children to participate in activities that promote expression of ideas and desires

Expression of feelings

Feelings are properties of experiences which are either physical emotional. Physical feelings are like hunger and pain, while emotions feelings like joy, sorrow, sadness, hatred or love. Children can express their feelings to others

and understand how others feel. If a child is hurt and he or she starts crying, other children may feel sorry for him or may pity him or her. From these feelings (pity or being sorry) children seek to reassure their friend (expression of feeling).

Expressing needs

Needs are necessities. To a child, these may include wants in everyday life which can be in form of proposals, requests or demands. Needs may also be primary or secondary. Children will always want their needs to be met. Children's expression of needs enhances their interpersonal and intrapersonal interaction. Examples of children's needs include toileting, feeding, playing, sleeping and clothing.

Expressing Appreciation

Appreciation is a positive response to a good situation or action. It is showing recognition of the value of something. Children, like every other human being, like being appreciated when they do something good either at home, school or in the environment. They also appreciate others when they do good to them. Children express their appreciation in various ways which, if not guided, can lead to indiscipline.

Types of Human Communication

Most animals communicate with each other in some way. Dogs bark at those they perceive as a threat in order to communicate their hostility and in some cases the threat that they will attack if provoked; bees have a pouch in which they carry the scent of their hive so as to identify themselves as members of the community. However, it is only in humans that communication breaks off into different types of communication: verbal and non-verbal, and formal and informal.

Verbal communication

This is communication using words, and in some cases written characters. There are subcategories for verbal communication, depending on who is at the receiving end of the communication. The main division is between interpersonal communication, in which one person speaks directly to another person, and public or group speaking, in which one person speaks to a large group.

The intention of the person speaking breaks it down into the following:

- to persuade,
- to inform, and
- to entertain their audiences.

Non-verbal communication

this is the type that is more similar to what the dogs and bees mentioned

above do. Non-verbal communication includes all the information we convey to others, whether consciously or subconsciously, without actually using any words. Probably the most ubiquitous example of non verbal communication is that of facial expressions. For example, when a person rolls their eyes at someone, they are expressing skepticism about what the speaker said. They are not using any words to convey this message, but using their understanding of the non-verbal cues they can send that message without using words.

Another instance of non-verbal communication is clothing: people use clothing in order to send messages about themselves. For example going to a job interview we usually wear decently in order to convey the idea that he is a very professional person.

Formal communication

It is more strongly associated with large and small group speaking. It is more rule bound, and is more centered on the speaker getting some kind of result. For example, speaking to a board room full of business executives in order to convince them to accept a marketing strategy is an example of formal communication.

Informal communication

It is associated with interpersonal communication. While it is still rule bound by the social norms of the those communicating, there is much more room for the speaker to be free in what he or she says. Informal communication is also much less tied to specific ends: in many cases, it

takes place simply for the speaker to express what they think and feel about anything in particular, and the speaking is undertaken as an end it itself. It is a much more emotionally involved form of communication.

Modes of language acquisition

- Interaction with other language users
- Circumstances and situation
- Listening
- Imitation
- observation
- Learning activities

Learning activities

1. Describe the role of language in communication.
2. Differentiate between verbal and non verbal communication.
3. Highlight the modes of language acquisition.
4. Discuss the factors that influence language acquisition.

LESSON THREE

CHARACTERISTICS OF HUMAN LANGUAGE

Objectives

By the end the lesson the students should be able to:

- Describe the characteristics of human language
- Describe the features of human language
- Compare human language and animal communication
- Describe Halliday's functions of language

characteristics of human languages

i. *Language is a social tool.* Language must be learned. The relationship between the sounds of a language and their meaning is arbitrary and dual language has rules. Language allows humans to be creative.

ii. Language is not essential for communication. Communication is the purpose of language. Language enables us to communicate ideas and desires to other people within our own culture, with people from other cultures and with ancient cultures.

iii. Language is learned. Animal communication is innate. Human babies must hear and speak a language in order to learn it.

iv. Sounds and meaning. Human language is arbitrary. There is no connection between the sound and the message. Animal language is not arbitrary. An animal's message and the sound cannot be separated.

v. Sounds and meaning. Human language has duality. Human sounds have basic sounds. English: /k/, /m/, /p/, /a/, etc. English basic sounds can be combined to create many other different sounds Cat, mat, pat, etc.

vi. Language rules. All languages have rules that guide how the parts of languages can be combined. Animal sounds can be combined in almost any order and they will still have the same meaning.

vii. Sound rules. Combinations of sounds/s/, /p/ and /r/ can be combined to form spray, spread and spring/f/, /l/ and /b/ cannot be combined.

viii. Grammar rules. Word order. Take the words: ate, I and lunch: I ate lunch: ate I lunch: lunch ate I.

ix. Language rules and meaning. Knowledge of language rules lets us change the meaning of our messages. English word order is SVO Dog bites man. Man bites dog.

x. Creativity Humans can talk about topics that are displaced. Time now the past the future. Place things that can be seen when talking things that cannot be seen things that are abstract.

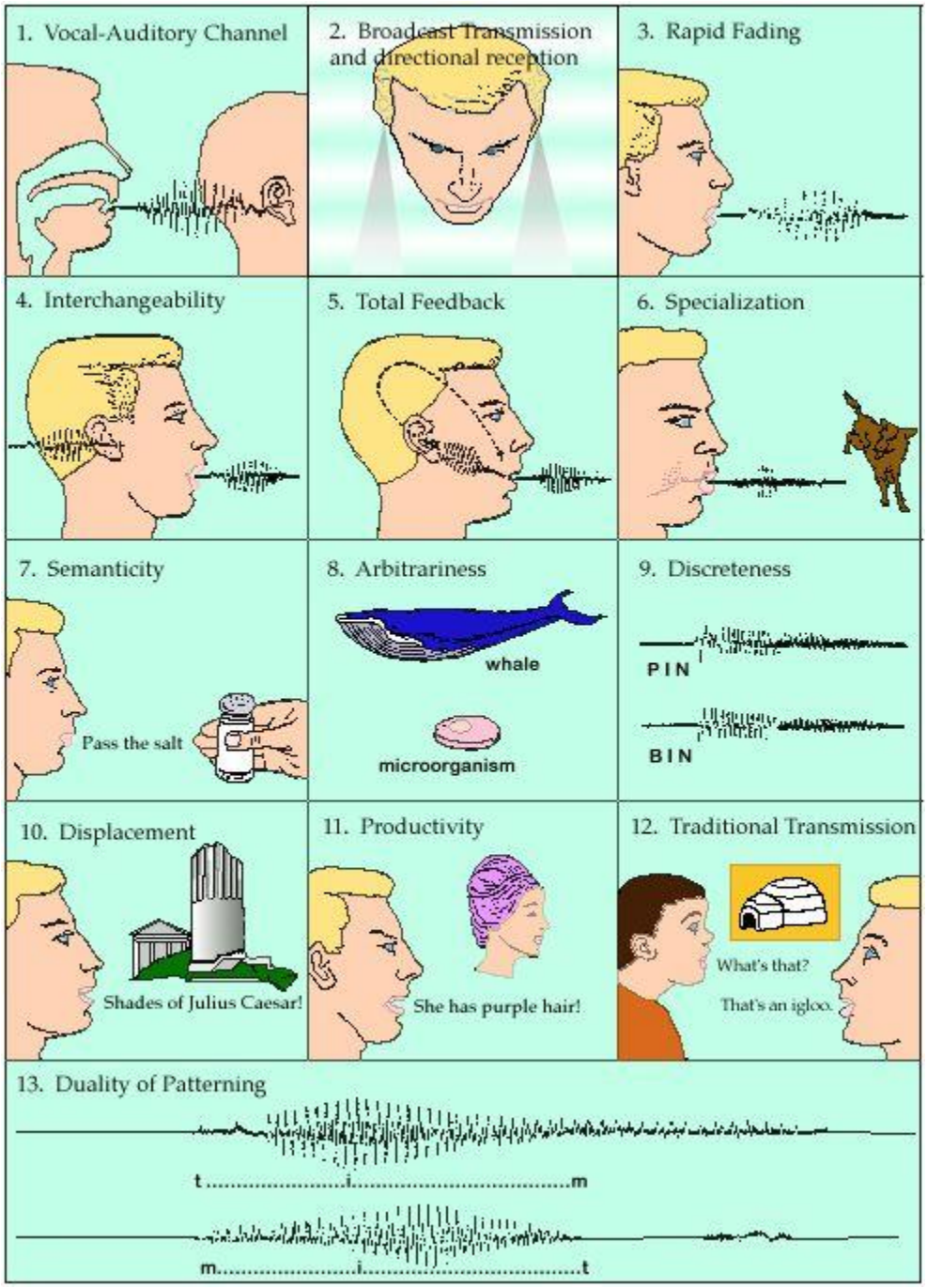
xi. Infinite variety of messages. Possibilities for creating new sentences are almost endless. Purple hippos danced gracefully under the bright moonlight. Humans create novel sentences every day without being aware of any effort.

xii. Reasons for variety. Humans can create an infinite number of messages because words can refer to more than one thing. Things can be called by more than one name. Words can be combined in a variety of ways.

The Features of Human Language

Hockett isolated 13 features that characterize human language and which distinguish it from other communication systems.

The following diagram graphically represents each of the thirteen features. Each feature is numbered and listed below the diagram, along with a more developed discussion of the feature.



(adapted from Hockett, Charles. 1960. *The Origin of Speech*.)

1. **Vocal-auditory channel** -- This means that the standard human language occurs as a vocal (making sounds with the mouth) type of communication which is perceived by hearing it. There are obvious exceptions: writing and sign

language are examples of communication in the manual-visual channel. However, the vast majority of human languages occur in the vocal-auditory channel as their basic mode of expression.

2. **Broadcast transmission and directional reception** -- This means that the human language signal is sent out in all directions, while it is perceived in a limited direction. For spoken language, the sound perpetuates as a waveform that expands from the point of origin (the mouth) in all directions. This is why a person can stand in the middle of a room and be heard by everyone (assuming they are speaking loudly enough).

3. **Rapid fading (transitoriness)** -- This means that the human language signal does not persist over time. Speech waveforms fade rapidly and cannot be heard after they fade. This is why it is not possible to simply say "hello" and have someone hear it hours later.

4. **Interchangeability** -- This means that the speaker can both receive and broadcast the same signal. This is distinctive from some animal communications such as that of the stickle fish. The stickle fish make auditory signals based on gender (basically, the males say "I'm a boy" and the females say "I'm a girl"). However, male fish cannot say "I'm a girl," although they can perceive it. Thus, stickle fish signals are not interchangeable.

5. **Total feedback** -- this means that the speaker can hear himself speak and can monitor his language performance as he goes. This differs from some other simple communication systems, such as traffic signals. Traffic signs are not normally capable of monitor their own functions (a red light can't tell when the bulb is burned out, i.e.).

6. **Specialization** -- This means that the organs used for producing speech are specially adapted to that task. The human lips, tongue, throat, etc. have been specialized into speech apparatus instead of being merely the eating apparatus they are in many other animals. Dogs, for example, are not physically capable of all of the speech sounds that humans produce, because they lack the necessary specialized organs.

7. **Semanticity** -- This means that specific signals can be matched with specific meanings. This is a fundamental aspect of all communication systems. For example, in French, the word *sel* means a white, crystalline substance consisting of sodium and chlorine atoms. The same substance is matched with the English word *salt*. Anyone speaker of these languages will recognize that the signal *sel* or salt refers to the substance sodium chloride.

8. **Arbitrariness** -- This means that there is no necessary connection between the form of the signal and the thing being referred to. For example, something as large as a whale can be referred to by a very short word. Similarly, there is no reason that a four-legged domestic canine should be called a *dog* and not a *chien* or a *perro* or an *anjing* (all words for 'dog' in other languages).

9. **Discreteness** -- This means that the basic units of speech (such as sounds) can be categorized as belonging to distinct categories. There is no gradual, continuous shading from one sound to another in the linguistics system, although there may be a continuum in the real physical world. Thus speakers will perceive a sound as **either** a [p] **or** a [b], but not as blend, even if physically it falls somewhere between the two sounds.

10. **Displacement** -- This means that the speaker can talk about things which are not present, either spatially or temporally. For example, human language allows speakers to talk about the past and the future, as well as the present. Speakers can also talk about things that are physically distant (such as other countries, the moon, etc.).

11. **Productivity** -- This means that human languages allow speakers to create novel, never-before-heard utterances that others can understand. For example, the sentence "The little lavender men who live in my socks drawer told me that Elvis will come back from Mars on the 10th to do a benefit concert for unemployed Pekingese dogs" is a novel and never-before-heard sentence (at least, I hope it is!), but any fluent speaker of English would be able to understand it (and realize that the speaker was not completely sane, in all probability).

12. **Traditional Transmission** -- This means that human language is not something inborn. Although humans are probably born with an ability to do language, they must learn, or acquire, their native language from other speakers. This is different from many animal communication systems where the animal is born knowing their entire system, e.g. bees are born knowing how to dance and some birds are born knowing their species of bird-songs (this is not true of all birds).

13. **Duality of patterning** -- This means that the discrete parts of a language can be recombined in a systematic way to create new forms. This idea is similar to Productivity (Feature 11). However, Productivity refers to the ability to generate novel meanings, while Duality of patterning refers to the ability to recombine small units in different orders.

Halliday's Functions

Halliday (1975) identifies seven functions that language has for children in their early years. Children are motivated to acquire language because it serves certain purposes or functions for them. The first four functions help the child to satisfy physical, emotional and social needs. Halliday calls them instrumental, regulatory, interactional, and personal functions.

- **Instrumental**: This is when the child uses language to express their needs (e.g.'Want juice')
- **Regulatory**: This is where language is used to tell others what to do (e.g. 'Go away')
- **Interactional**: Here language is used to make contact with others and form relationships (e.g 'Love you, mummy')
- **Personal**: This is the use of language to express feelings, opinions and individual identity (e.g 'Me good girl')

The next three functions are heuristic, imaginative, and representational, all helping the child to come to terms with his or her environment.

- **Heuristic**: This is when language is used to gain knowledge about the environment (e.g. 'What the tractor doing?')
- **Imaginative**: Here language is used to tell stories and jokes, and to create an imaginary environment.
- **Representational**: The use of language to convey facts and information.

Comparison of Human Language and Animal Communication

Similarity: Both human language and animal communication are composed of signs (forms with meaning).

Six Key Differences:

1. Animal: The signs of animal systems are inborn.

Human: The capacity to be creative with signs is inborn,

but the signs (words) themselves are acquired culturally.

2. Animal: Communication is set responses to stimuli (indexes).

Human: Not limited to use as an index.

3. Animal: Each sign has one and only one function; each meaning can be expressed only in one way

Human: Signs often have multiple functions; one meaning can be expresses in many ways

4. Animal: Not naturally used in novel way

Human: Creative, can be adapted to new situations

5. Animal: Closed inventory of signs; only a set number of different messages can be sent

Human: Open ended. Grammar (rules of syntax) allows a virtually unlimited number of messages to be constructed

6. Animal: Change extremely slowly, with the speed of genetic evolution.

   Human: Change rapidly as a cultural phenomenon.

Learning activities

1. Describe the characteristics of human language
2. Describe the features of human language
3. Compare human language and animal communication
4. Discuss Halliday's functions of language and give two examples for each.

CHAPTER FOUR

COMPONENTS OF LANGUAGE

Objectives

By the end the lesson the students should be able to:

- Describe the components of language.
- Discuss the relevance of these components to language learning.

Introduction

Reading would not exist without the human capacity for language. Linguists have identified five basic components (phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics, and pragmatics) found across languages. Language acquisition progresses across these components with increasing quantity (e.g., sounds, words, and sentence length) and gradual refinement, and understanding of the subtler and more complex points of usage (e.g., using “taught” rather than “teached”).

Phonology: Sounds

The study of speech structure within a language, including both the patterns of basic speech units and the accepted rules of pronunciation, is known as phonology. The smallest units of sound that make up a language are called *phonemes.* For example, the word “that” contains three phonemes the “th” represents one

phoneme /th/, the “a” maps to the short a sound /ă/, and the “t” to its basic sound /t/.

Morphology: Word Structure

Moving to the next level of language, we find the study of the smallest units of meaning, *morphemes.* Morphemes include base words, such as “hat,” “dog,” or “love,” as well as affixes, such as “un-,” “re-,” the plural “s” or “es,” and the past tense “ed.” Knowledge of the morphology of our language is critical to vocabulary development and reflects the smallest building blocks for comprehension.

Syntax: Sentence Structure

The study of how individual words and their most basic meaningful units are combined to create sentences is known as syntax. As words are grouped together when we communicate, we must follow the rules of grammar for our language, in other words, its syntax. It is the knowledge of syntax that allows us to recognize that the following two sentences, while containing different word order and levels of complexity, have the same meaning.

- The boy hit the ball.
- The ball was hit by the boy.

Syntax also allows us to accept “I went to the store” as a meaningful (grammatical) sentence while “To store went I” would not be acceptable English.

Semantics: Meaning

Not only does the grammatical structure of our language provide the needed clues for understanding, we also have a wealth of figurative language and rich description that adds color and nuance to our communication. *Semantics* refers to the ways in which a language conveys meaning. It is our understanding of semantics that allows us to recognize that someone who is “green with envy” has not changed hue, or that “having cold feet” has less to do with the appendage at the end of our legs and more to do with our anxiety about a new experience. Because semantics moves beyond the literal meaning of words and is culture-dependent, this is among the most difficult aspects of language for individuals who are not native speakers and even those who speak the same language but come from different cultures and convey meaning using words in unique ways. Anyone who has attempted to converse with a teenager in his own vernacular can appreciate the importance of sharing a semantic base for communicating clearly.

Pragmatics: Cultural Context

“Pragmatics’ refers to the ways the members of the speech community achieve their goals using language.” The way we speak to our parents is not the same as the way we interact with a sibling, for example. The language used in a formal speech may bear little resemblance to what we would hear at a lunch with five friends. The conversational style of day-to-day interactions is quite different from the language used even when reading a storybook to a toddler. Knowing the difference and when to use which style is the essence of pragmatics.

Note: Facility with language is critical to social interactions. Our ability to effectively communicate with others through spoken and written language is considered one of the ultimate goals of our educational system, with reading receiving much-needed emphasis. “Reading is essential to success in our society. The ability to read is highly valued and important for social and economic advancement.”[i] In the following section the components identified by experts as critical to developing reading skills are reviewed.

Activities

- Giving relevant examples describe the components of language .
- Discuss the relevance of these components to language learning.

LESSON FIVE

STAGES IN LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

Lesson Objectives

By the end of this lesson students should be able to:

- Describe the stages of language development in children

Content

Most parents can hardly wait for their baby to say its first word. This usually happens between nine months and a year. From about two years, the child should be able to use simple phrases, and by three he should be able to use full sentences. By four, he should be fully able to talk, although he may still make grammatical errors. By five, he should have acquired basic language.

Stages of Language Development

Language acquisition takes place in six consecutive stages:

i. **The Prelinguistic/Pre-speech Stage:**

During the first year of life the child is in a pre speech stage. Developmental aspects related to speech would include the development of gestures, making adequate eye contact, sound repartee between infant and caregiver, cooing, babbling and crying. Examples of such pre speech sounds would be *dadadada, mamamama* and *waaaah*.

During pre-speech stage infants learn to pay attention to speech, to intonation and the rhythm of speech long before they begin to speak.

Infants respond to speech more keenly than to other sounds. Speech elicits greater electrical activity in the left side of the 2 month old infant's brain than do other sounds. Experiment with microphone and nipple showed that infants suck more vigorously if the action triggers a human voice as opposed to music or other sounds.

Child learn to recognize the distinctive sounds, the phonemes of the language they hear from birth long before they are able to pronounce them. Infants can distinguish between /p/ and /b/ at three or four months (in an experiment with /ba/ played vs. /pa/, a two month infant showed awareness of the change). But children do not learn how to use these sounds until much later-- around the second year or later--as shown by the experiment with /pok/ and /bok/. The same is true for rising vs. falling intonation, which only becomes systematically funtional much later.

ii. The Holophrase or One-Word Sentence:

Some infants may utter their first word as early as nine months. A child usually reaches this phase between the age of 10 and 13 months. Although the child tends to utter a single word at a time, its meaning is also supplemented by the context in which it takes place, as well as by non-verbal cues. An example of such a one-word sentence would be a child leaning over the edge of his cot and pointing to his bottle while laughing and saying "botty" in a commanding way. An adult in the situation could well interpret the child's holophrase as meaning, "Give me my bottle immediately (so that I can throw it over the edge of the cot again and you

can pick it up)". Another example would be "Dada", which could mean "Daddy, please come to me."

iii. The Two-Word Sentence:

By 18 months the child reaches this stage. His or her "sentences" now usually comprise a noun or a verb plus a modifier. This enables the child to formulate a sentence which may be either declarative, negative, imperative or interrogative. Examples of such "sentences" are:

"Doggy big" (declarative)
"Where ball" (interrogative)
"Not egg" (negative)
"More sugar!" (imperative)

Once again, if the two-word sentence is supported by the situation as well as by non-verbal communication, it could have quite a complex meaning.

Children tend to perceive more phonemic contrasts than they are able to produce themselves.

The first 50 words tend to be names of important persons, greetings, foods, highlights of the daily routine such as baths, ability to change their environment- *give, take, go, up, down, open*.

The meaning of words may not correspond to that of adult language:

overextension-- dog may mean any four legged creature. apple may mean any round object. bird may mean any flying object. Child can still distinguish between the differences, simply hasn't learned that they are linguistically meaningful. Dissimilarities linguistically redundant.

two patterns in child word learning--

referential-- names of objects.

expressive-- personal desires and social interactions: bye-bye, hi, good,

This is a continuum. Child's place on this continuum partly due to parent's style: naming vs. pointing.

The extra-linguistic context provides much of the speech info. Rising and falling intonation may or may not be used to distinguish questions from statements at the one-word stage. Words left out if the contexts makes them obvious. At this stage, utterances show no internal grammatical structure (much like the sentence yes in adult speech, which can't be broken down into subject, predicate, etc.)

iv. Multiple-Word Sentences:

The child reaches this stage between the age of two and two and a half. Grammatical morphemes in the form of prefixes or suffices are used when changing meanings or tenses. Furthermore, the child can now form sentences with a subject and a predicate. Using the examples which were listed in the previous stage, the sentences could now be the following:

"Doggy is big"

"Where is ball?"

"That is not egg"

"I want more sugar"

"I catched it"

"I falling"

Ironically, in the last two examples the linguistic errors are clear indications that the underlying grammatical principle was understood. The child's sentences are still telegraphic although they may be quite long. An example of such a multiple-word sentence is: "People mustn't walk street – people must walk pavement." This specific sentence was used by a very bright 18-month-old child, which implies that these language developmental levels can be reached at an earlier age or at a later age than was indicated above. The extent and quality of the mediated language experience which the child receives are therefore of the utmost importance.

v. More Complex Grammatical Structures:

Children reach this stage roughly between two and half and three years of age. They use more intricate and complex grammatical structures, elements are added (conjunction), embedded and permuted within sentences and prepositions are used. Wood gives the following examples in this regard:

"Read it, my book" (Conjunction)

"Where is Daddy?" (Embedding)

"I can't play" (Permutation)

"Take me to the shop" (uses preposition of place)

vi. Adult-Like Language Structures:

The five to six-year-old child reaches this developmental level. Complex structural distinctions can now be made, such as by using the concepts "ask/tell" and "promise" and changing the word order in the sentence accordingly. Examples are:

"Ask her what time it is."
"He promised to help her."

Learning activity

1. Name and d in early childhood describe the stages of language development.
2. How would you as a teacher enhance language development in each stage?
3. Describe two examples of over extension and overextension that are common among children.

LESSON SIX

BRAIN DEVELOPMENT AND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

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THEORIES OF LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

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Major Theories of Language Development

Several theories exist to explain language development in children.

Theories of language development fall into one of two camps: empiricist or nativist. Empiricists believe language is a learned behavior. Nativists, on the other hand, believe we are born with some innate language ability. Empirical researchers focus on learning theories to understand how children acquire language skills, while nativists look for biological components responsible for the universal rules underlying all of the languages spoken by people.

1. Vygotsky

- For Lev Vygotsky---a Russian psychology researcher who began developing his empirical theories of cognitive development after the Russian Revolution in the early 20th century---children learn by solving problems with the help of other people, such as parents and siblings. Language develops as a tool for helping them solve problems more effectively. They learn the skill by practicing or modeling the language behaviors they hear being used around them. In his theory,

language development is closely tied to social behavior, putting him in the empiricist camp.

Sociocultural theory (Vygotsky)

Vygotsky's sociocultural theory is possibly the theory given the most credence at present. Vygotsky believed the child's culture and their interactions with others is significant in their overall development – especially in relation to cognitive development.

In particular, Vygotsky views a child's interactions with adults and more able peers as key to their overall development. He believed that a child would internalise dialogues with others and use this information to guide actions and acquisition of new skills on later occasions. From Vygotsky's perspective learning is dependent on support from adults.

Key to Vygotsky's theory are the notions of private speech, scaffolding and the zone of proximal development. Key ideas

- the child is viewed as an active seeker of knowledge;
- the child and environment interact together enabling cognitive development in a culturally adaptive way;
- the mind is perceived to be socially constructed;
- the child is born with basic attentional, perceptual and memory capacities;
- development occurs as a direct result of contact with the environment;
- child as self communicator – leads to higher order thinking;
- language and thought develop independently, but eventually merge and interact.

Private speech

Vygotsky believed that in order to learn children must speak to themselves in a self guiding and directing way- initially aloud and later internally. He believed that as children develop and become more competent in a particular area, they begin to internalise this speech and gradually decrease its use. Vygotsky believed that private speech is the foundation for all higher order thinking processes.

Just as we see children talking themselves through learning tasks on a daily basis, we too use forms of private speech in our daily lives. How many times have you spoken these words aloud "Now where did I put the car keys"…., "Now I must remember to….." Vygotsky believed that children's use of such talk in daily learning tasks was particularly significant in working with difficult concepts and in teaching children with disabilities.

Zone of proximal development

If you recall from our earlier discussion, it was stated that Vygotsky's sociocultural theory discusses cognitive development as dependent on interaction with adults. Key to this social

interaction is the notion of the Zone of Proximal Development. The zone of proximal development refers to the tasks a child is unable to complete alone, but is able to complete with the assistance of an adult. That is the teacher pitches a learning experience for a specific child at a level just beyond his/her current level of performance. In doing this, the child and the teacher engage in cooperative dialogues to enhance learning that the child is able to recall privately when completing a similar task/activity independently. Therefore the child takes in the discussion of the task/activity and uses it as private speech on later occasions.

Scaffolding

Vygotsky's notion of scaffolding directly relates to his notions of Private Speech and the Zone of Proximal Development. In order for a child to learn new concepts or skills the teacher must provide scaffolds for the learning experience. These scaffolds refer to the changes in social support over the teaching of a concept. Scaffolding is directly linked to the personal needs of the individual. Like scaffolding on a building, supports are withdrawn as individual competence develops. Scaffolding may include physical presence and prompts along with more specific metacognitive strategies.

Educational implications

- Child as an active participant in the learning process.
- Importance of individual difference.
- Assist children in discovery.
- Teachers should guide learning through explanation, demonstration and verbal prompts.
- Tailor lessons to each child's zone of proximal development.
- Early childhood – promote teacher/child and child/child interactions.
- Promote fantasy play.
- Within the learning environment focus on literacy activities.
- Use prompts, reminders, increase independence, give information, use cooperative learning and reciprocal teaching strategies.

Skinner

- B. F. Skinner, an American psychologist best known for his work in behaviorism, proposed behaviorism as the basis for language development in a book published in 1957. The core of behaviorism is learning through reinforcement. The reinforcement takes different forms. For example, if a parent says to the child,

"Can you say mommy?" and the child responds accordingly, the parent provides positive reinforcement. If the child uses language to make demands, such as asking for a cookie, and the demand is granted, the child receives positive reinforcement for using language. This approach places Skinner in the empiricist camp of language development.

Piaget

- According to empiricist Jean Piaget, a Swiss psychologist known for studying how knowledge develops in children and in adults during the first half of the 20th century, language development is connected to a child's cognitive development. As the child moves through the different stages of cognitive development---sensorimotor, pre-operational, concrete operational and formal operational---his language skills change, too. For example, during the pre-operational stage, children can grasp the existence of things even when they cannot see those things. Likewise, they can use language to think about those non-present things.

B : - Piaget

A rather more serious figure in the field of developmental psychology is the Swiss philosopher and psychologist, Jean Piaget. Piaget was originally interested in the philosophical question of epistemology - how do we know what we know? - and decided that metaphysical argument needed to be **grounded in a scientific understanding of how children's knowledge of the world develops**. He began by studying his own children.

Piaget starts from the premise that human beings, like all other biological organisms, are **active** in their relationships with the world. Knowledge of the world is connected to actions in the world - thus he says -

To know an object or a happening is to make use of it by assimilation into an action schema.

Human beings know the world in selective ways - if a stimulus cannot be incorporated into an action schema, it will remain outside the domain of knowledge.

The construction of knowledge by the child, then, is an active process. At the beginning, the action is purely physical - then, through a process of **internalisation,** the actions become mental. Ideas are not given in the perceptive features of the brain, or encoded in language - that is, ideas are **neither thoroughly mentalistic nor cultural** - but are arrived at through **the child's physical interaction with the world.**

Piaget is centrally concerned with the development of such categories as space, time, number, causality and so on - the Kantian categories of knowledge. He sees this as going through four[(1)] (sometimes three) stages

a) Sensorimotor Stage

From birth to eighteen months/two years

Up to 7/9 months, the child concentrates on her own body, and then enters a second sub period in which space and objects within space are recognized under the rubric of 'practical intelligence'. At the end of the period, the child has learnt to distinguish between objects and subjects, and has grasped the idea of a causal relationship.

Initial exploration of the world through perception is followed up by **active exploration**, using hands and arms. The child learns to '**make interesting events last'** - a rattle, at first set off accidentally, becomes the object of intentional activity. Through this, the child comes to value repetition as a strategy within the world.

At the end of the stage, the child is also capable of symbolic representation - mental activity is now possible.

b) Period of representational thought

18 months/2 years to 6 years

The advent of representation leads to a knowledge explosion. One example is the rapid growth of language - but in Piaget's scheme of knowledge, language is not all-important - it is seen as a **socially derived conventional system,** and subsidiary to thought.

During this period, children are said to achieve 'semilogics' - that is, their thinking appears to get stuck half-way. For example, the child confuses '**longer than'** with '**goes further than**' - this Piaget derives from his results on experiments in the conservation of matter.

A child is asked to ascertain whether, when liquid is poured from one container into another, there is more of it, the same amount, or less. Up until the end of this period, the child is likely to say that if the liquid is poured from a short fat container into a long thin one, then there is more of it. On the other hand, if the liquid is poured from a long thin container into a short fat one, she will say that there is less of it. Similarly, a piece of plasticine is conceived of as changing in mass as it changes in form.

c) Concrete operations

6 - 11 years

At this stage, the child acquires rules that allow them to make deductive inferences. They also emerge from their initial egoism - in this, Piaget appears to agree with Freud - and recognize the other's point of view. Thus, the child at this stage will be able to appreciate that a view seen from one angle will not look the same when seen from another angle.

Deductive inferences allow the child to conserve weight, volume, length and so on. These inferences are reversible - that is, the idea that what has been taken away can be put back, and what has been added can be subtracted.

d) Formal Operations

At this stage, the child becomes capable of applying operations to operations - second order constructions. It is now that the child is capable of reasoning through an operation rather than solving the problem by trial and error. - that is, the child is capable of **constructing hypotheses and then of testing them.** Essentially, it is only at this stage that the individual becomes capable of fully scientific thought.

Piaget's work gave a basis for almost all subsequent investigation of developmental processes, and one cannot overestimate its importance. Nevertheless, there are a number of criticisms that can be made of it. in the light of subsequent research. Thus, Michael Rutter[(2)] makes the following comments :

1. The idea of the child as an active agent in learning is still accepted today.

Children do explore their environments, do prefer novel stimuli to familiar ones, and do take an experimental attitude towards the world. Animal studies also back this up - animals that are allowed to explore an environment actively learn far more about it than do those who perceive it passively. Indeed, rhesus monkeys reared under conditions in which little movement is possible appear to be less intelligent than their genetic peers who are reared in environments in which they can move about and play:

2. The idea that development is achieved through a series of discrete stages, at each of which overall cognition functions according to a specific structure is misleading.

In fact, it has been found that children are quite capable at being at stage four on certain tasks, while remaining at stage three on others.

3. Many of Piaget's findings on questions such as conservation appear to be as much **artefacts of his experimental method** as they are measures of the real abilities of children.

It has been found that, if the question is put otherwise, and if there is a clear explanation of what the experimenter expects of the child, the tasks can often be carried out quite successfully by children who, according to the stage theory, should not be able to do so.

As a corollary, we can present experiments in such a way that adults fail them. Success is often a question of context - Brazilian street-vendors are capable of doing maths in their everyday transactions that they cannot do when the same problems are presented in schoolbook style.

4. special training can lead to the development of particular skills.

- children who are very good at chess develop advanced memory skills, and Australian aborigine children who have spent their lives navigating the vast spaces of the desert have superior spatial reasoning.

Piaget ignores both individual and cultural differences, assuming that there is a unique path to development that is followed by all human beings.

Chomsky

- Noam Chomsky, an American linguist and cognitive scientist, believes children are born with innate knowledge of the rules governing language. This makes him a nativist. His research during the late 20th century also suggests that the rules are universal among the known human languages. For example, Japanese and English seem very different, but both languages include verbs and in both languages verbs take an object. The difference is where the object of the verb is placed in the sentence. According to Chomsky, the reason children learn language so quickly is because they already know its rules.

Vygotsky

Piaget's insistence upon the autonomy of the child in the construction of knowledge is salutary - and reminds us of Chomsky. **Piaget's idea of the good parent is one who does not interfere in the child's free exploration of the world**. However, not all psychologists go along with this - one who did not is L Vygotsky.

Vygotsky agreed with Piaget that the concepts used by children to order the world are not the same as those of the adult. However, whereas Piaget saw the child as developing through her own activities, Vygotsky insisted that the child functioned in a world in which she was surrounded by adults who would comment and help her in her tasks. The child's knowledge is **socially constructed** in interaction with significant adults, whose remarks validate the knowledge for the child.

This means that in order to understand a child's knowledge we must also analyse her social interactions. (We will do well to remember that Vygotsky, who died in 1934, worked in Soviet Russia - his theory is explicitly Marxist). Thus he says :

*Child logic develops only along with the growth of the child's social speech and whole experience ... **it is through others that we develop into ourselves** and ... this is true not only with regard to the individual but with regard to the history of every function ... Any higher mental function was external because it was social at some point before becoming an internal, truly mental functioning.*[(3)] *(My emphasis)*

The context provided by the adult is one in which the child can act is though she already possesses the competence of an adult, even though this is not in fact the case. At first, the child needs considerable help from the adult, and the adult indeed provides almost all the cognition necessary for completion of the task. However, as the child becomes more familiar with the situation, so the adult may begin to take a back seat.

Learning can be seen as **a process of apprenticeship**. As the child becomes more competent, it acquires not only the skills relevant to a specific activity, but also the **meta-skills necessary to embark upon new learning,** so that by the time she reaches adolescence, she has become largely autonomous when faced with new skills and new material to learn.

Specific cultures have their own ways of learning, and their own underlying organizational models - which Bruner refers to as '**cultural amplifiers**' - cognitive tools such as the Arabic number system or the electronic calculating machine.

Of course, one cultural amplifier may in fact be in conflict with another - literal interpretation of the Book of Genesis may prevent someone from understanding Darwinian theory[(4)]

In Vygotsky's schema, language is far more important than it is in Piaget's - it is through conversations with adults that the child progresses, and it is her need to communicate with and to understand adults that presses the child to seek for the adult meanings of things that are said. Vygotsky wrote :

... it turns out that social interaction necessarily presupposes generalisation and the development of word meaning ...

The child approaches adulthood through the deeper understanding of words and of language. This goes with Vygotsky's concept of **'mediation'.** Animals may experience the world directly - human beings do not, but grasp the world through the use of **psychological 'tools' or 'signs' that** change the relationship between world and social member. Among these tools are counting systems, writing and diagrams, maps and, of course, language. We approach the world differently, and we approach each other differently because we have language - which both **represents reality and acts upon it.** Speech, therefore becomes primary

(The child) plans how to solve the problem through speech and then carries out the prepared solution through overt activity. Direct manipulation is replaced by a complex psychological process through which inner motivations and intentions, postponed in time, stimulate their own development and realisation.[(5)]

If we watch very young children, we will see their relationship to language passes through a number of stages. At first, until about 2 years old, the child does not possess language, but uses vocal activity as a means of social contact and emotional expression. Then the child uses language with simplified forms, which are not directly linked to problem solving. In the third stage, language becomes a problem-solving tool - we may hear children talking to themselves as they try to accomplish a task, just as they may use their fingers for counting upon. Finally, this

form of conversation - talking to oneself, appears to go away - in fact, it has become internalised - it is what we call 'thought'.

Piaget had referred to this early form of speech - where the child talks to herself - as **egotistical,** implying that the child is unable to use speech to interact with others. For Vygotsky, this speech is **social** - it is a way of using a tool that has been learnt from others.

A central concept in Vygotsky's model is the '**zone of proximal development** :

The zone of proximal development ... is the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers.[(6)]

There are, then, at least two developmental levels

- one, which is the one usually measured by psychologists interested in intelligence and cognition, is the ability of the child to solve tasks set by an adult, but which the child tackles on her own.

The second is what the child can do with help from the adult. This second measure demonstrates the skills which the child has not yet mastered, but which she is working on now.

The teacher needs to know both of these measures, because, on the one hand, there is little point in teaching below the first measure, and on the other, there is little point in teaching beyond the second. Vygotsky says '*the only "good learning" is that which is **slightly in advance of development**'* and which '*awakens and rouses to life those functions which are in a stage of maturing, which lie in the zone of proximal development*."

Bruner

- Jerome Bruner, a nativist and American cognitive psychologist, believed language development comes easier to most children because of a combination of innate biological "endowments" and social encouragement. Bruner's research on the subject began in the 1960s. Bruner notes that even children who cannot distinguish between their thoughts and things attempt to use language, suggesting they are born with an inclination towards communication. The role of encouragement is to provide necessary support as the child develops linguistically.

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STANDARD LANGUAGE AND DIALECTS

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Language skills and

FACTORS AFFECTING LANGUAGE AND LITERACY DEVELOPMENT

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Factors Affecting Child Speech and Language Development

The following is a list of general factors compiled by Ms. Magan Chen based on actual clinical practice helping children in their speech and language development.

1. Inadequate stimulation (talking and playing with the child).

2. Delayed general development ('global developmental delay'), physical development ('motor skills'), cognitive development etc.

3. Specific difficulty with language learning. Not very interested in language, prefers other modalities e.g. physical activities.

4. Poor control and/or co-ordination of the speech muscles: lips, tongue etc.

5. Medical problems.

6. Inadequate awareness of communication, lacks "communication intent".

7. Reduced hearing e.g. ear infection, fluid in ear, impacted earwax etc.

8. Changes in child's environment e.g. moving.

9. Exposure to too many languages for the child.

10. Inadequate opportunity for speech e.g. the child everyone talks for, the "babied" child, has a more dominant sibling etc.

11. Emotional factors e.g. behavioural problems, anxiety, pressure to perform etc.

12. Short attention span.

13. Family history of speech and language delays or difficulties.

Factors That Influence Language Development

Language development is different for every child. There are many factors that influence language development in each child. While many argue that language development is a matter of nature versus nurture, there are definite factors that influence the development of language. Social, cognitive processes, linguistic, as well as perceptual and conceptual skills are factors that directly influence language development in children. Whether these factors are controlled by parents or nature, they are a serious factor in the development of your child's language.

1. Social

- A child's social environment directly affects his language development. Interaction with your child is crucial in developing social and language skills. According to the Literacy Encyclopedia, "The verbal environment influences language learning. From ages one to three, children from highly verbal 'professional' families heard nearly three times as many words per week as children from low verbal 'welfare' families." It is imperative to not only speak to your child but also maintain conversation when your child is around. In addition to income, television also affects language development. When the social environment of the home is centered around watching television, language and verbal expressions, "talking" decrease.

Cognitive Processes

- The way your child processes language cognitively affects the way her own language develops. How often your child hears you speak affects her cognitive processes in learning language. Children who are exposed to an unusually high proportion of examples of a language form learn at a faster rate than those who are not.

Linguistic

- Your child's linguistic ability directly influences his language development. In formulating his own vocabulary, it is not uncommon for your child to associate a new word with a current object he does not have a label (or word) to associate with it. It is also common that verb endings, such as --ing, infer a meaning to your toddler. It is common that your child will infer that this "meaning" is related to an activity, such as swimming, playing or running, rather than a completed stage or state, such as push off.

Conceptual and Perceptual

- Conceptually speaking language skills are related to word knowledge. If your child has difficulty recalling a word, it is likely that she will know less about the object itself. In perceptual terms, your child's auditory perceptual skill's at 6 to 12

months is a predictor of their vocabulary size and syntactic complexity at 23 months.

Influences on Language Development

Which factors influence language development?

Language development is never a static process, it is rather a process that is forever evolving. One can compare this to the physical development of a child, in the first three years the developments are incredibly rapid. The speed of these developments are influenced by internal and external factors which play as well a crucial role in the language development of a child.

Internal factors can be of the following nature:

A motivation to speak well: a child can sense when it must articulate its needs and will always try till success is guaranteed. When a child feels that he is able to obtain his wishes even without correct speech, it then creates a lower level of motivation to perfect his speech.

Illness that affect language development: A child can experience hearing problems, speech impediments or can have stuttering problems resulting from illnesses or damage to the inner ear. Other illnesses which can influence the language development in a child are Dyslexia, Aphasia or Alexia (reading disability).

External Factors can be of the following nature:

Language Level of the Parents and Teachers: There is a strong correlation between the language level of the parent and that of the child. If the parents use an elevated speech pattern this will positively influence the development level of the child to an above average level. The same goes for a child in an environment where illiteracy prevails.

Motivation of the Parent and/or Teacher to increase greater proficiency in the language: It is important for the parent and/or teacher to convey the meaning of language to the child as a learning tool, a key to greater comprehension of the world at large, and that one can also have fun with language.

Internal and external factors play a even greater role in a bilingual or multilingual environment, especially for language development which differs from the host country.

The following factors take on greater meaning with children brought up bilingually or raised in a multilingual environment:

- Consistency with the use of one language per parent. For example, the father always speaks German, the mother always Spanish.
- Acceptance of the social environment allowing the child to speak in another language, even if not the host language.
- Acceptance of transitional phases of the child's environment, for example, the start at Kindergarten, Primary School or the advancement towards High School.

There are also external factors which permit the weaker language to emerge later as the stronger one when one undertakes a move to the country in which the language is spoken either through familial ties or work or the enrollment of the child at an international school.

Yet one must not forget though that judging the language level of the child is only a momentary survey. It is better to have the end goal in mind which allows the child to develop his potential to the full extent of his abilities by providing him the environment conducive to that goal.

Activities for Teaching Language Skills to Children

Language skills are vital for success in school and life.

Language skills incorporate listening, speaking, reading and writing. Children begin learning language skills from birth and continue well into adulthood. Nearly any activity can teach young children language skills as they are still learning basics like what objects are called and how to respond to questions. So merely talking to your child as you walk through the grocery store or asking her about what she is playing can improve language skills. As children become ready to move into reading and writing skills, however, more targeted activities are necessary.

1. Read Aloud

- One of the most important activities for developing language skills in children is reading aloud to them. Through listening to a skilled reader, they learn the common characteristics of spoken and written language, the conventions of print (reading left to right, for example), story sequence and reading comprehension skills. Make the experience interactive by asking questions as you read, encouraging children to comment on the story and asking them to tell you what they think is happening in the story based on the pictures.

Support Imaginary Play

- Children use speaking and listening skills when they participate in imaginary play. They also hone prereading skills like expanding their vocabulary and making up their own stories. Support imaginary play by providing materials that enrich the story and widen vocabulary, such as adding a stethoscope when

children are playing doctor or creating menus when they are playing restaurant. Children can also improve their language skills when they create puppet shows of familiar stories or act out nursery rhymes and songs.

Phonological Awareness

- Phonological awareness is the ability to distinguish and manipulate the sounds in words. For example, a child who has good phonological awareness will know that /b/ is the first sound in "bat," that "rat" rhymes with "bat" and that "bat" has three sounds in it. Phonological awareness skills are vital for reading and writing. Develop phonological awareness skills by playing word games with your child. Try the rhyming game, where children come up with rhymes for a word you suggest and then vice versa. The words can be nonsense. Playing "I Spy" can also include phonological awareness. For example, you can say, "I spy with my little eye something that starts with the /h/ sound". Click-n-Kids, Starfall and PBS Kids all have online games that support phonological awareness.

Interactive Writing

- Interactive writing encourages language skills by allowing children to learn the thought process behind writing and to practice the associations between letters and sounds. Start be just writing down the words of a child; ask her to describe a picture or have him share his favorite part of a field trip. Make sure the child watches as you write and that you read the words back to her. Next the child can begin dictating stories and other ideas while you record them on paper. Soon you will be able to ask for suggestions from the child, such as having them tell you what the first sound in a word is or how to make a certain letter. Finally, you can take turns writing with the child. If you want to write his story, for example, you could do most of the writing and he could fill in by writing a word he knows each time it comes up in the story. As she learns more words, she could write more and words in the story while also "helping" you spell the other words. Eventually, he will be ready to write on his own.

LESSON NINE

THE ROLE OF LITERATURE IN EARLY CHILDHOOD LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

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Speech Disorder

What is childhood apraxia of speech?

Childhood apraxia of speech (CAS) is a ***motor speech disorder***. Children with CAS have problems saying sounds, syllables, and words. This is not because of muscle weakness or paralysis. The brain has problems planning to move the body parts (e.g., lips, jaw, tongue) needed for speech. The child knows what he or she wants to say, but his/her brain has difficulty coordinating the muscle movements necessary to say those words.

Signs or symptoms of childhood apraxia of speech

Not all children with CAS are the same. All of the signs and symptoms listed below may not be present in every child.

A Very Young Child

- Does not coo or babble as an infant
- First words are late, and they may be missing sounds
- Only a few different consonant and vowel sounds
- Problems combining sounds; may show long pauses between sounds
- Simplifies words by replacing difficult sounds with easier ones or by deleting difficult sounds (although all children do this, the child with apraxia of speech does so more often)
- May have problems eating

An Older Child

- Makes inconsistent sound errors that are not the result of immaturity
- Can understand language much better than he or she can talk
- Has difficulty imitating speech, but imitated speech is more clear than spontaneous speech
- May appear to be groping when attempting to produce sounds or to coordinate the lips, tongue, and jaw for purposeful movement
- Has more difficulty saying longer words or phrases clearly than shorter ones
- Appears to have more difficulty when he or she is anxious
- Is hard to understand, especially for an unfamiliar listener
- Sounds choppy, monotonous, or stresses the wrong syllable or word

Potential Other Problems

- Delayed language development
- Other expressive language problems like word order confusions and word recall
- Difficulties with fine motor movement/coordination
- Over sensitive (hypersensitive) or under sensitive (hyposensitive) in their mouths (e.g., may not like toothbrushing or crunchy foods, may not be able to identify an object in their mouth through touch)
- Children with CAS or other speech problems may have problems when learning to read, spell, and write

Treatments for children with apraxia of speech

Research shows the children with CAS have more success when they receive frequent (3-5 times per week) and intensive treatment. Children seen alone for

treatment tend to do better than children seen in groups. As the child improves, they may need treatment less often, and group therapy may be a better alternative.

The focus of intervention for CAS is on improving the planning, sequencing, and coordination of muscle movements for speech production. Isolated exercises designed to "strengthen" the oral muscles will not help with speech. CAS is a disorder of speech coordination, not strength.

To improve speech, the child must practice speech. However, getting feedback from a number of senses, such as tactile "touch" cues and visual cues (e.g., watching him/herself in the mirror) as well as auditory feedback, is often helpful. With this multi-sensory feedback, the child can more readily repeat syllables, words, sentences and longer utterances to improve muscle coordination and sequencing for speech.

Some clients may be taught to use sign language or an augmentative and alternative communication system (e.g., a portable computer that writes and/or produces speech) if the apraxia makes speaking very difficult. Once speech production is improved, the need for these systems may lessen, but they can be used to support speech or move the child more quickly to higher levels of language complexity.

Practice at home is very important. Families will often be given assignments to help the child progress and allow the child to use new strategies outside of the treatment room, and to assure optimal progress in therapy.

One of the most important things for the family to remember is that treatment of apraxia of speech takes time and commitment. Children with CAS need a supportive environment that helps them feel successful with communication. For

children who also receive other services, such as physical or occupational therapy, families and professionals need to schedule services in a way that does not make the child too tired and unable to make the best use of therapy time.

What is dysarthria?

Dysarthria is a **motor speech disorder**. The muscles of the mouth, face, and respiratory system may become weak, move slowly, or not move at all after a stroke or other brain injury. The type and severity of dysarthria depend on which area of the nervous system is affected.

Some causes of dysarthria include stroke, head injury, cerebral palsy, and muscular dystrophy. Both children and adults can have dysarthria.

What are some signs or symptoms of dysarthria?

A person with dysarthria may experience any of the following symptoms, depending on the extent and location of damage to the nervous system:

- "Slurred" speech
- Speaking softly or barely able to whisper
- Slow rate of speech
- Rapid rate of speech with a "mumbling" quality
- Limited tongue, lip, and jaw movement
- Abnormal intonation (rhythm) when speaking
- Changes in vocal quality ("nasal" speech or sounding "stuffy")
- Hoarseness
- Breathiness

- Drooling or poor control of saliva
- Chewing and swallowing difficulty

What treatment is available for people with dysarthria?

Treatment depends on the cause, type, and severity of the symptoms.

Possible Goals of Treatment

- Slowing the rate of speech
- Improving the breath support so the person can speak more loudly
- Strengthening muscles
- Increasing mouth, tongue, and lip movement
- Improving articulation so that speech is more clear
- Teaching caregivers, family members, and teachers strategies to better communicate with the person with dysarthria
- In severe cases, learning to use alternative means of communication (e.g., simple gestures, alphabet boards, or electronic or computer-based equipment)

What can I do to communicate better with a person with dysarthria?

It is important for both the person with dysarthria and the people he or she communicates with to work together to improve interactions. Here are some tips for both speaker and listener.

Tips for the Person with Dysarthria

- Introduce your topic with a single word or short phrase before beginning to speak in more complete sentences

- Check with the listeners to make sure that they understand you
- Speak slowly and loudly; pause frequently
- Try to limit conversations when you feel tired, when your speech will be harder to understand
- If you become frustrated, try to use other methods, such as pointing or gesturing, to get your message across, or take a rest and try again later

Children may need additional help to remember to use these strategies.

Tips for the Listener

- Reduce distractions and background noise
- Pay attention to the speaker
- Watch the person as he or she talks
- Let the speaker know when you have difficulty understanding him or her
- Repeat only the part of the message that you understood so that the speaker does not have to repeat the entire message
- If you still don't understand the message, ask yes/no questions or have the speaker write his or her message to you

Orofacial Myofunctional Disorders (OMD)

What are orofacial myofunctional disorders (OMD)?

With OMD, the tongue moves forward in an exaggerated way during speech and/or swallowing. The tongue may lie too far forward during rest or may protrude between the upper and lower teeth during speech and swallowing, and at rest.

What are some signs or symptoms of OMD?

Although a "tongue thrust" swallow is normal in infancy, it usually decreases and disappears as a child grows. If the tongue thrust continues, a child may look, speak, and swallow differently than other children of the same age. Older children may become self-conscious about their appearance.

What effect does OMD have on speech?

Some children produce sounds incorrectly as a result of OMD. OMD most often causes sounds like /s/,/z/, "sh", "zh", "ch" and "j" to sound differently. For example, the child may say "thumb" instead of "some" if they produce an /s/ like a "th". Also, the sounds /t/, /d/, /n/, and /l/ may be produced incorrectly because of weak tongue tip muscles. Sometimes speech may not be affected at all.

What treatment is available for individuals with OMD?

A speech-language pathologist (SLP) with experience and training in the treatment of OMD will evaluate and treat the following:

- open-mouth posture
- speech sound errors
- swallowing disorders

Treatment techniques to help both speech and swallowing problems caused by OMD may include the following:

- increasing awareness of mouth and facial muscles
- increasing awareness of mouth and tongue postures
- improving muscle strength and coordination
- improving speech sound productions
- improving swallowing patterns

Speech Sound Disorders: Articulation and Phonological Processes

What are speech sound disorders?

Most children make some mistakes as they learn to say new words. A speech sound disorder occurs when mistakes continue past a certain age. Every sound has a different range of ages when the child should make the sound correctly. ***Speech sound disorders*** include problems with ***articulation*** (making sounds) and ***phonological processes*** (sound patterns).

Can adults have speech sound disorders?

Adults can also have speech sound disorders. Some adults continue to have problems from childhood, while others may develop speech problems after a stroke or head injury.

Signs of an articulation disorder

An ***articulation disorder*** involves problems making sounds. Sounds can be substituted, left off, added or changed. These errors may make it hard for people to understand you.

Young children often make speech errors. For instance, many young children sound like they are making a "w" sound for an "r" sound (e.g., "wabbit" for "rabbit") or may leave sounds out of words, such as "nana" for "banana." The child may have an articulation disorder if these errors continue past the expected age.

Not all sound substitutions and omissions are speech errors. Instead, they may be related to a feature of a dialect or accent. For example, some people in the Eastern province may use a "d" sound for a "th" sound (e.g., "dis" for "this"). Others in the central province may replace “r” with “l”. This is not a speech sound disorder, but rather one of the phonological features of AAVE.

Signs of a phonological disorder?

A ***phonological process disorder*** involves patterns of sound errors. For example, substituting all sounds made in the back of the mouth like "k" and "g" for those in the front of the mouth like "t" and "d" (e.g., saying "tup" for "cup" or "das" for "gas").

Another rule of speech is that some words start with two consonants, such as broken or spoon. When children don't follow this rule and say only one of the sounds ("boken" for broken or "poon" for spoon), it is more difficult for the listener to understand the child. While it is common for young children learning speech to leave one of the sounds out of the word, it is not expected as a child gets older. If a child continues to demonstrate such cluster reduction, he or she may have a phonological process disorder.

What treatments are available for people with speech sound disorders?

SLPs provide treatment to improve articulation of individual sounds or reduce errors in production of sound patterns.

Articulation treatment may involve demonstrating how to produce the sound correctly, learning to recognize which sounds are correct and incorrect, and practicing sounds in different words. Phonological process treatment may involve teaching the rules of speech to individuals to help them say words correctly.

Stuttering

What is stuttering?

Stuttering affects the fluency of speech. It begins during childhood and, in some cases, lasts throughout life. The disorder is characterized by disruptions in the production of speech sounds, also called "disfluencies." Most people produce brief disfluencies from time to time. For instance, some words are repeated and others are preceded by "um" or "uh." Disfluencies are not necessarily a problem; however, they can impede communication when a person produces too many of them.

In most cases, stuttering has an impact on at least some daily activities. The specific activities that a person finds challenging to perform vary across individuals. For some people, communication difficulties only happen during specific activities, for example, talking on the telephone or talking before large groups. For most others, however, communication difficulties occur across a number of activities at home, school, or work. Some people may limit their participation in certain activities. Such "participation restrictions" often occur

because the person is concerned about how others might react to disfluent speech. Other people may try to hide their disfluent speech from others by rearranging the words in their sentence (**circumlocution**), pretending to forget what they wanted to say, or declining to speak. Other people may find that they are excluded from participating in certain activities because of stuttering. Clearly, the impact of stuttering on daily life can be affected by how the person and others react to the disorder.

Signs and symptoms of stuttering

Stuttered speech often includes **repetitions** of words or parts of words, as well as **prolongations** of speech sounds. These disfluencies occur more often in persons who stutter than they do in the general population.

Some people who stutter appear very tense or "out of breath" when talking. Speech may become completely stopped or **blocked**. Blocked is when the mouth is positioned to say a sound, sometimes for several seconds, with little or no sound forthcoming. After some effort, the person may complete the word. Interjections such as "um" or "like" can occur, as well, particularly when they contain repeated ("u- um- um") or prolonged ("uuuum") speech sounds or when they are used intentionally to delay the initiation of a word the speaker expects to "get stuck on."

Some examples of stuttering include:

- " *W- W- W-* Where are you going?" (Part-word repetition)
- " *SSSS* ave me a seat." (Sound prolongation)
- "I'll meet you - *um um you know like* - around six o'clock." (A series of interjections: he produces several interjections until he is able to say the word "around" smoothly.)

What treatments are available for stuttering?

Most treatment programs for people who stutter are "behavioral." They are designed to teach the person specific skills or behaviors that lead to improved oral communication. For example,

- Teach people who stutter to control and/or monitor the rate at which they speak.
- They may learn to start saying words in a slightly slower and less physically tense manner.
- They may also learn to control or monitor their breathing.

When learning to control speech rate, people often begin by practicing smooth, fluent speech at rates that are much slower than typical speech, using short phrases and sentences. "Follow-up" or "maintenance" sessions are often necessary after completion of formal intervention to prevent relapse.

What can I do to communicate better with people who stutter?

Often, people are unsure about how to respond when talking to people who stutter. This uncertainty can cause listeners to do things like look away during moments of stuttering, interrupt the person, fill in words, or simply not talk to people who stutter. None of these reactions is particularly helpful, though. In general, people who stutter want to be treated just like anybody else. They are very aware that their speech is different and that it takes them longer to say things. Unfortunately, though, this sometimes leads the person to feel pressure to speak quickly. Under such conditions, people who stutter often have even more difficultly saying what they want to say in a smooth, timely manner. Therefore, listeners who appear impatient or annoyed may actually make it harder for people who stutter to speak.

When talking with people who stutter, the best thing to do is give them the time they need to say what they want to say. Try not to finish sentences or fill in words for them. Doing so only increases the person's sense of time pressure. Also, suggestions like "slow down," "relax," or "take a deep breath" can make the person feel even more uncomfortable because these comments suggest that stuttering should be simple to overcome, but it's not!

Of course, different people who stutter will have different ways of handling their speaking difficulties. Some will be comfortable talking about it with you, while others will not. In general, however, it can be quite helpful to simply ask the person what would be the most helpful way to respond to his or her stuttering. You might say something like, "I noticed that you stutter. Can you tell me how you prefer for people to respond when you stutter?" Often, people will appreciate your interest. You certainly don't want to talk down to them or treat them differently just because they stutter. However, you can still try to find a matter-of-fact, supportive way to let them know that you are interested in *what* they are saying, rather than *how* they're saying it. This can go a long way toward reducing awkwardness, uncertainty, or tension in the situation and make it easier for both parties to communicate effectively.

Voice Disorders

We have all experienced problems with our voices, times when the voice is hoarse or when sound will not come out at all! Colds, allergies, bronchitis, exposure to irritants such as ammonia, or cheering for your favorite sports team can result in a loss of voice. Learn more about different types of voice disorders.

Cognitivist Theories of Development

A : Recap:- Freud

One fundamental instinct - the sex drive

Children pass through three basic stages

- the oral stage .

- the anal stage

- the genital stage

Ultimately, all individuals have to work through the Oedipus complex, with its attendant Castration Complex.

Objections - because Freudism explains everything, it explains nothing.

- recent work on memory does not bear out the Freudian model of repression.

- leaves aside genetic sources of character differences - autism.

- does not situate the family firmly within a specific social context.