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Instructor's Manual and Test Bank

For

Language Development: An Introduction

Tenth Edition

Robert E. Owens, Jr., *College of Saint Rose*

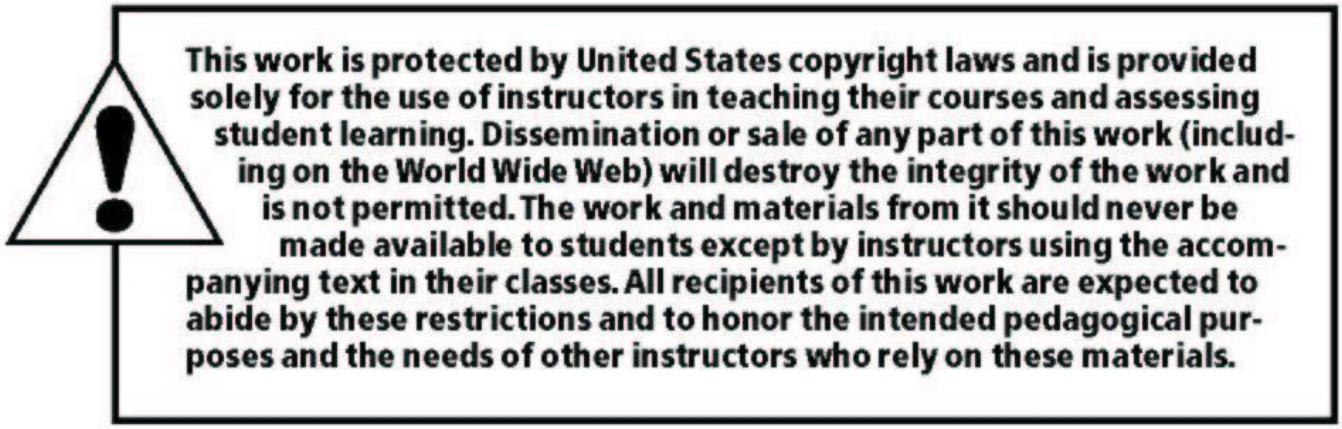
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Access Complete Test Bank for Language Development 10th Owens

Table of Contents

Instructor's Manual

CHAPTER 1: THE TERRITORY **1**

INTRODUCTION **1**

SPEECH, LANGUAGE, AND COMMUNICATION **1**

SPEECH 1
LANGUAGE 1
COMMUNICATION 2

PROPERTIES OF LANGUAGE **3**

LANGUAGE IS A SOCIAL TOOL 3
LANGUAGE IS A RULE-GOVERNED SYSTEM 4
LANGUAGE IS GENERATIVE 4
OTHER PROPERTIES 4

COMPONENTS OF LANGUAGE **4**

SYNTAX 5
MORPHOLOGY 5
PHONOLOGY 5
SEMANTICS 6
PRAGMATICS 6
RELATIONSHIP OF LANGUAGE COMPONENTS 7

DIALECTS **7**

A CHANGING DEMOGRAPHIC 7
BILINGUALISM 7
DIALECTAL DIFFERENCES 8
RELATED FACTORS 8
AMERICAN ENGLISH DIALECTS 8

CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES **9**

PRINT RESOURCES **10**

AUDIOVISUAL AND ONLINE **10**

CHAPTER 2: DESCRIBING LANGUAGE **12**

LINGUISTIC THEORY **12**

NATURE VERSUS NURTURE 12
GENERATIVE APPROACH 12
INTERACTIONALIST APPROACH 13

LEARNING THEORY **14**

BEHAVIORAL LEARNING THEORY 14
COGNITIVIST LEARNING THEORY 14
SOCIAL COGNITIVIST LEARNING THEORY 16

LANGUAGE RESEARCH AND ANALYSIS **17**

ISSUES IN THE STUDY OF CHILD LANGUAGE 17

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Access Complete Test Bank for Language Development 10th Owens

COLLECTION PROCEDURES 19
CROSS-LANGUAGE STUDIES 19
CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES 19
PRINT RESOURCES 20
AUDIOVISUAL AND ONLINE 20
CHAPTER 3: NEUROLOGICAL BASES OF SPEECH AND LANGUAGE 22
INTRODUCTION 22
CENTRAL NERVOUS SYSTEM 22
NEURONS 22
COMPONENTS 22
BRAIN FUNCTIONS 23
HEMISPHERIC ASYMMETRY 24
BRAIN MATURATION 24
LANGUAGE PROCESSING 24
LANGUAGE COMPREHENSION 25
LANGUAGE PRODUCTION 26
MODELS OF LINGUISTIC PROCESSING 26
INFORMATION PROCESSING 26
OTHER PROCESSING 28
THE ROLE OF EXECUTIVE FUNCTION 29
CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES 29
PRINT RESOURCES 30
AUDIOVISUAL AND ONLINE 30
CHAPTER 4: COGNITIVE, PERCEPTUAL, AND MOTOR BASES OF EARLY LANGUAGE AND SPEECH 31
INTRODUCTION 31
NEUROLOGICAL DEVELOPMENT 31
NEURON GROWTH 31
ANATOMICAL SPECIALIZATION IN YOUR CORTEX 31
TURNING ON AND GETTING ORGANIZED 32
EARLY COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT 33
SENSATION 33
PERCEPTION 33
MOTOR CONTROL 33
COGNITION 34
LEARNING 35
COGNITION AND COMMUNICATION DEVELOPMENT 36
SPEECH 36
LANGUAGE 39
ROLE OF THE CAREGIVER 40
CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES 41
PRINT RESOURCES 41

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Access Complete Test Bank for Language Development 10th Owens

AUDIOVISUAL AND ONLINE **41**
CHAPTER 5: THE SOCIAL AND COMMUNICATIVE BASES OF EARLY LANGUAGE AND SPEECH **43**
INTRODUCTION **43**
DEVELOPMENT OF COMMUNICATION: A CHRONOLOGY **43**
THE NEWBORN 43
SOCIALIZATION AND EARLY COMMUNICATION: AGE BIRTH TO 6 MONTHS 44
DEVELOPMENT OF INTENTIONALITY: AGE 7 TO 12 MONTHS 45
MATERNAL COMMUNICATION BEHAVIORS **47**
INFANT-ELICITED SOCIAL BEHAVIOR 48
CULTURAL, SOCIOECONOMIC, AND GENDER DIFFERENCES 49
INTERACTIONS BETWEEN INFANT AND CAREGIVER **50**
JOINT REFERENCE 50
JOINT ACTION 51
TURN-TAKING 52
PROTOCONVERSATIONS 53
SITUATIONAL VARIATIONS 53
CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES **53**
PRINT RESOURCES **54**
AUDIOVISUAL AND ONLINE **54**
CHAPTER 6: LANGUAGE-LEARNING AND TEACHING PROCESSES AND YOUNG CHILDREN **55**
COMPREHENSION, PRODUCTION, AND COGNITIVE GROWTH **55**
COGNITION AND LANGUAGE 55
LESS IS MORE 56
CHILD LEARNING STRATEGIES **57**
TODDLER LANGUAGE-LEARNING STRATEGIES 57
PRESCHOOL LANGUAGE-LEARNING STRATEGIES 58
CHILDREN'S PROCESSES OF LANGUAGE ACQUISITION 60
ADULT CONVERSATIONAL TEACHING TECHNIQUES **61**
ADULT SPEECH TO TODDLERS 61
ADULT CONVERSATIONS WITH PRESCHOOLERS 64
IMPORTANCE OF PLAY **65**
DEVELOPMENT OF PLAY AND LANGUAGE 65
VARIATION ON A THEME **67**
INDIVIDUAL CHILD DIFFERENCES 67
CULTURAL AND SOCIAL DIFFERENCES 67
CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES **69**
PRINT RESOURCES **69**
AUDIOVISUAL AND ONLINE **70**
CHAPTER 7: FIRST WORDS AND WORD COMBINATIONS IN TODDLER TALK **71**
INTRODUCTION **71**

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Access Complete Test Bank for Language Development 10th Owens

SINGLE WORD UTTERANCES **72**
PRAGMATICS 72
INITIAL LEXICONS 74
MEANING OF SINGLE-WORD UTTERANCES 76
EARLY MULTIWORD COMBINATIONS **77**
TRANSITION: EARLY WORD COMBINATIONS 77
MULTI-WORD UTTERANCES 77
PHONOLOGICAL LEARNING **78**
AUDITORY MAPS 78
ARTICULATORY MAPS 79
SINGLE WORD UTTERANCE PATTERNS 80
PHONOLOGICAL PROCESSES 80
LEARNING UNITS AND EXTENSION 80
INDIVIDUAL DIFFERENCES **81**
CONCLUSION 81
CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES **82**
PRINT RESOURCES **82**
AUDIOVISUAL AND ONLINE **83**
CHAPTER 8: PRESCHOOL PRAGMATIC AND SEMANTIC DEVELOPMENT **84**
PRESCHOOL DEVELOPMENT **84**
PRAGMATIC DEVELOPMENT 84
SEMANTIC DEVELOPMENT **91**
RELATIONAL TERMS 91
CONCLUSION 92
SEMANTIC AND PRAGMATIC INFLUENCE ON SYNTACTIC DEVELOPMENT **93**
SEMANTICS 93
PRAGMATICS 93
LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT DIFFERENCES AND DELAYS **93**
LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT DIFFERENCES 93
SIMULTANEOUS ACQUISITION 94
LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT DELAYS 95
CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES **96**
PRINT RESOURCES **96**
AUDIOVISUAL AND ONLINE **97**
CHAPTER 9: PRESCHOOL DEVELOPMENT OF LANGUAGE FORM **98**
SYNTACTIC AND MORPHOLOGIC DEVELOPMENT **98**
THE SEMANTIC-SYNTACTIC CONNECTION 98
LANGUAGE INPUT 98
PATTERNS IN PRESCHOOL LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT 99
BOUND MORPHEMES **99**

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Access Complete Test Bank for Language Development 10th Owens

PROGRESSIVE –ING 99
REGULAR PLURAL –S 99
POSSESSIVE –'S OR S' 99
REGULAR PAST –ED 99
REGULAR THIRD PERSON SINGULAR –S 100
NOUN AND ADJECTIVE SUFFIXES 100
DETERMINANTS OF ACQUISITION ORDER 100

PHRASE DEVELOPMENT 100

NOUN PHRASE DEVELOPMENT 100
VERB PHRASE DEVELOPMENT 101
PREPOSITIONAL PHRASE DEVELOPMENT 103
INFINITIVE PHRASE DEVELOPMENT 103
GERUND PHRASE DEVELOPMENT 103

SENTENCE DEVELOPMENT 103

DECLARATIVE SENTENCE FORM 103
INTERROGATIVE SENTENCE FORM 104
IMPERATIVE SENTENCE FORM 104
NEGATIVE SENTENCE FORM 105
SUBORDINATE CLAUSE DEVELOPMENT 105
COMPOUND SENTENCE DEVELOPMENT 106
SUMMARY 106

PHONEMIC AND PHONOLOGIC DEVELOPMENT 106

SPEECH-SOUND ACQUISITION 107
PHONOLOGIC PROCESSES 107

CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES 108

PRINT RESOURCES 109

AUDIOVISUAL AND ONLINE 109

CHAPTER 10: EARLY SCHOOL-AGE LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT 110

INTRODUCTION 110

THE EARLY SCHOOL-AGE CHILD 110

PRAGMATIC DEVELOPMENT 111

NARRATIVES 111
CONVERSATIONAL ABILITIES 113
SUMMARY 114

SEMANTIC DEVELOPMENT 114

VOCABULARY GROWTH 114
CONCEPTUAL CHANGE 114
RELATED COGNITIVE PROCESSING 114
FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE 115

SYNTACTIC AND MORPHOLOGIC DEVELOPMENT 115

MORPHOLOGIC DEVELOPMENT 115
NOUN- AND VERB-PHRASE DEVELOPMENT 116
SENTENCE TYPES 116
SUMMARY 117

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Access Complete Test Bank for Language Development 10th Owens

PHONOLOGIC DEVELOPMENT **118**
MORPHOPHONEMIC DEVELOPMENT 118
SPEECH PRODUCTION 118
SUMMARY 118
METALINGUISTIC ABILITIES **118**
LANGUAGE DIFFERENCE **118**
CODE SWITCHING DEVELOPMENT 119
AFRICAN AMERICAN ENGLISH SPEAKERS AND SOCIETY 119
CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES **119**
PRINT RESOURCES **119**
AUDIOVISUAL AND ONLINE **120**
CHAPTER 11: SCHOOL-AGE LITERACY DEVELOPMENT **121**
INTRODUCTION **121**
THE PROCESS OF READING **121**
PHONOLOGICAL AWARENESS 121
BOTTOM-UP AND TOP-DOWN PROCESSING 122
READING FLUENCY 122
COMPREHENSION 123
READING DEVELOPMENT **123**
EMERGING READING 123
MATURE READING 124
THE PROCESS OF WRITING **125**
ORTHOGRAPHIC KNOWLEDGE 125
SPELLING 125
WRITING DEVELOPMENT **126**
EMERGING WRITING 126
MATURE WRITING 126
SPELLING DEVELOPMENT 126
TEXT GENERATION AND EXECUTIVE FUNCTION 126
CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES **127**
PRINT RESOURCES **127**
AUDIOVISUAL AND ONLINE **128**
CHAPTER 12: ADOLESCENT AND ADULT LANGUAGE **129**
INTRODUCTION **129**
PRAGMATICS **129**
NARRATIVES 129
SPEAKING STYLES 129
CONVERSATIONAL ABILITIES 130
GENDER DIFFERENCES 130
SEMANTICS **131**

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Access Complete Test Bank for Language Development 10th Owens

SYNTAX AND MORPHOLOGY **132**
NOUN PHRASES 132
VERB PHRASES 132
CONJUNCTS AND DISJUNCTS 133
PHONOLOGY **133**
ACOUSTIC-PERCEPTUAL KNOWLEDGE 133
ARTICULATION KNOWLEDGE 133
SOCIAL-INDEXICAL KNOWLEDGE 133
LITERACY **134**
BILINGUALISM **134**
CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES **134**
PRINT RESOURCES **135**
AUDIOVISUAL AND ONLINE **135**

Test Bank

CHAPTER 1 THE TERRITORY **136**
1.1 MULTIPLE CHOICE QUESTIONS 136
1.2 TRUE/FALSE QUESTIONS 139
1.3 SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS 139
1.4 ESSAY QUESTIONS 140
CHAPTER 2 DESCRIBING LANGUAGE **141**
2.1 MULTIPLE CHOICE QUESTIONS 141
2.2 TRUE/FALSE QUESTIONS 144
2.3 SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS 144
2.4 ESSAY QUESTIONS 145
CHAPTER 3 NEUROLOGICAL BASES OF SPEECH AND LANGUAGE **146**
3.1 MULTIPLE CHOICE QUESTIONS 146
3.2 TRUE/FALSE QUESTIONS 148
3.3 SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS 149
3.4 ESSAY QUESTIONS 150
4.2 TRUE/FALSE QUESTIONS 153
4.3 SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS 154
4.4 ESSAY QUESTIONS 155
CHAPTER 5 THE SOCIAL AND COMMUNICATIVE BASES OF EARLY LANGUAGE AND SPEECH **156**
5.1 MULTIPLE CHOICE QUESTIONS 156
5.2 TRUE/FALSE QUESTIONS 159
5.3 SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS 159
5.4 ESSAY QUESTIONS 160
CHAPTER 6 LANGUAGE-LEARNING AND TEACHING PROCESSES AND YOUNG CHILDREN **161**
6.1 MULTIPLE CHOICE QUESTIONS 161

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Access Complete Test Bank for Language Development 10th Owens

6.2 True/False Questions 164
6.3 Short Answer Questions 164
6.4 Essay Questions 165

CHAPTER 7 FIRST WORDS AND WORD COMBINATIONS IN TODDLER TALK 166

7.1 Multiple Choice Questions 166
7.2 True/False Questions 168
7.3 Short Answer Questions 169
7.4 Essay Questions 170

CHAPTER 8 PRESCHOOL PRAGMATIC AND SEMANTIC DEVELOPMENT 171

8.1 Multiple Choice Questions 171
8.2 True/False Questions 173
8.3 Short Answer Questions 174
8.4 Essay Questions 175

CHAPTER 9 PRESCHOOL DEVELOPMENT OF LANGUAGE FORM 176

9.1 Multiple Choice Questions 176
9.2 True/False Questions 179
9.3 Short Answer Questions 179
9.4 Essay Questions 180

CHAPTER 10 EARLY SCHOOL-AGE LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT 181

10.1 Multiple Choice Questions 181
10.2 True/False Questions 184
10.3 Short Answer Questions 184
10.4 Essay Questions 185

CHAPTER 11 SCHOOL-AGE LITERACY DEVELOPMENT 186

11.1 Multiple Choice Questions 186
11.2 True/False Questions 189
11.3 Short Answer Questions 189
11.4 Essay Questions 190

CHAPTER 12 ADOLESCENT AND ADULT LANGUAGE 191

12.1 Multiple Choice Questions 191
12.2 True/False Questions 193
12.3 Short Answer Questions 194
12.4 Essay Questions 195

TEST BANK ANSWER KEY 196

CHAPTER 1 196

1.1 Multiple Choice Answers: 196
1.2 True/False Answers: 196
1.3 Short Answers: 197
1.4 Essay Answers: 197

CHAPTER 2 198

2.1 Multiple Choice Answers: 198
2.2 True/False Answers: 198
2.3 Short Answers: 199
2.4 Essay Answers: 199

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Access Complete Test Bank for Language Development 10th Owens

CHAPTER 3 ..... **200**

3.1 MULTIPLE CHOICE ANSWERS: 200
3.2 TRUE/FALSE ANSWERS: 200
3.3 SHORT ANSWERS: 201
3.4 ESSAY ANSWERS: 201

CHAPTER 4 ..... **202**

4.1 MULTIPLE CHOICE ANSWERS: 202
4.2 TRUE/FALSE ANSWERS: 202
4.3 SHORT ANSWERS: 203
4.4 ESSAY ANSWERS: 203

CHAPTER 5 ..... **204**

5.1 MULTIPLE CHOICE ANSWERS: 204
5.2 TRUE/FALSE ANSWERS: 204
5.3 SHORT ANSWERS: 205
5.4 ESSAY ANSWERS: 205

CHAPTER 6 ..... **206**

6.1 MULTIPLE CHOICE ANSWERS: 206
6.2 TRUE/FALSE ANSWERS: 206
6.3 SHORT ANSWERS: 207
6.4 ESSAY ANSWERS: 207

CHAPTER 7 ..... **208**

7.1 MULTIPLE CHOICE ANSWERS: 208
7.2 TRUE/FALSE ANSWERS: 208
7.3 SHORT ANSWERS: 209
7.4 ESSAY ANSWERS: 209

CHAPTER 8 ..... **210**

8.1 MULTIPLE CHOICE ANSWERS: 210
8.2 TRUE/FALSE ANSWERS: 210
8.3 SHORT ANSWERS: 211
8.4 ESSAY ANSWERS: 211

CHAPTER 9 ..... **212**

9.1 MULTIPLE CHOICE ANSWERS: 212
9.2 TRUE/FALSE ANSWERS: 212
9.3 SHORT ANSWERS: 213
9.4 ESSAY ANSWERS: 213

CHAPTER 10 ..... **214**

10.1 MULTIPLE CHOICE QUESTIONS: 214
10.2 TRUE/FALSE ANSWERS: 214
10.3 SHORT ANSWERS: 215
10.4 ESSAY ANSWERS: 215

CHAPTER 11 ..... **216**

11.1 MULTIPLE CHOICE QUESTIONS: 216
11.2 TRUE/FALSE ANSWERS: 216
11.3 SHORT ANSWERS: 217
11.4 ESSAY ANSWERS: 217

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Access Complete Test Bank for Language Development 10th Owens

CHAPTER 12 218
12.1 MULTIPLE CHOICE ANSWERS: 218
12.2 TRUE/FALSE ANSWERS: 218
12.3 SHORT ANSWERS: 219
12.4 ESSAY ANSWERS: 219

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Chapter 1: The Territory

When this chapter is completed, students should understand:

- The differences between speech, language, and communication.
- The difference between nonlinguistic, paralinguistic, and metalinguistic aspects of communication.
- The main properties of language.
- The five components of language and their descriptions.
- The definition of a dialect and its relation to its parent language.
- The major factors that determine the development of unique dialects.
- The following terms: antonym, bilingual, bound morpheme, code-switching, communication, communicative competence, deficit approach, dialect, free morpheme, language, linguistic competence, linguistic performance, morpheme, morphology, nonlinguistic cues, paralinguistic codes, phoneme, phonology, pragmatics, register, selection restrictions, semantic features, semantics, sociolinguistic approach, speech, suprasegmental devices, style shifting, synonym, syntax, vernacular, word knowledge, world knowledge.

Introduction

- *Linguists* determine the language rules that people use to communicate.
- Children deduce the rules of their native language.
- *Psycholinguistics* is the study of how people acquire and process language.
- *Sociolinguistics* is the study of language, cultural, and situational influences.
- Language is the premier achievement of humans.
- Language is incredibly complex, yet 4-year-olds can decipher much of American English, and have well-developed speech, language, and communication skills.
- Language acquisition generally occurs without formal instruction.

Speech, Language, and Communication

SPEECH

- Speech is a verbal means of communication; it requires precise neuromuscular coordination.
- Spoken languages have specific sounds, or phonemes, and characteristic sound combinations.
- Other components of speech include voice quality, intonation, and rate.
- Non-speech behaviors (gestures, facial expressions, and body posture) carry up to 60% of the information in face-to-face communication.
- Children experiment with the vocal mechanism and sound production in the first year of life.
- The sounds eventually reflect the language of the child's environment.

LANGUAGE

- **Language** is a socially shared code or system for representing concepts through the use of arbitrary symbols and rule-governed combinations of those symbols.
- **Dialects** are subcategories of the parent language that use similar but not identical rules.

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- Interactions between languages naturally occur in bilingual communities.
- Languages evolve, grow, and change, and those that do grow become obsolete.
- When a language is not frequently used or taught to children, it often dies out.
- The increased use of English language is due to the desire to have one universally understood language.
- English is a Germanic variation of a family of Indo-European languages such as Italian, Greek, Russian, Hindi, Urdu, Persian, and ancient Sanskrit.
- Languages grow as culture changes.
- English has the largest number of words (about 700,000), and adds about six words per day.
- Speech is not essential to language.
- American Sign Language (ASL) does not mirror the English language structure; is has its own rules for the order of symbol combinations.
- Approximately 50 unique sign languages are used worldwide.
- American Speech-Language and Hearing Association's (ASHA) definition of language is comprehensive (see text).
- Languages exist because users have agreed on the symbols and rules; as demonstrated through language usage.
- Users possess the ability to agree to change the rules and/or borrow words from another language.
- Nearly one billion people speak English as a second language; mostly in Asia.
- These speakers are making English their own, modifying it with the addition of their own words and incorporating their own intonational and structural patterns.
- The "Englishes" of the future may be hybrids or even new languages that may not be mutually understood by users from different cultures.
- The socially shared code of a language allows the listener and speaker/ writer and/or reader of the same language to exchange information.
- Most of the meaning in language is contained in the way symbols are combined.
- The rules for combinations give language an order and allow for prediction as well as creativity.

COMMUNICATION

- **Communication** is the process of exchanging information and ideas, needs, and desires between two or more individuals.
- It involves encoding, transmitting, and decoding the intended message.
- It requires a sender and a receiver who are aware of the needs of the other to ensure effective communication.
- The degree to which a speaker is successful in communicating is called **communicative competence.**
- A competent communicator is able to conceive, formulate, modulate, and issue messages and to perceive the degree to which intended meanings are successfully conveyed.
- Human communication is a complex, systematic, collaborative, context-bound tool for social action.

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- Communication is collaborative because two or more partners actively coordinate construction of the dialogue as they try to understand each other.
- Communication occurs within a specific cultural context that influences the interpretation of linguistic units and speaker behaviors.
- The context is variable in terms of the physical setting, partners, and topics.
- Speech and language are only a portion of communication; other aspects include paralinguistics, nonlinguistic information, and metalinguistics.
- **Paralinguistic codes**, including intonation, stress or emphasis, speed or rate of delivery, and pause or hesitation, are superimposed on speech to signal attitude or emotion.
- *Intonation,* the use of pitch, is complex and used to signal mood, whether the utterance is a statement or a question, emphasis, asides, emotions, importance, and status of the speaker.
- Stress is used for emphasis and further conveys the speaker's attitude.
- Rate varies with the speaker's excitement, familiarity with content, and perceived comprehension of the listener.
- Pauses may be used to emphasize or replace a message.
- Pitch, rhythm, and pauses may be used to mark divisions between phrases and clauses.
- Pitch combined with duration and loudness is used to give prominence.
- Paralinguistic mechanisms are called **suprasegmental devices** because they can change the form and meaning of a sentence by acting across segments of a sentence.
- **Nonlinguistic cues** include gestures, body posture, facial expression, eye contact, head and body movement, and physical distance or proxemics.
- Nonlinguistic cues vary with culture.
- **Metalinguistic skills** refer to an individual's skill to talk about language, analyze it, think about it, judge it, and see it as an entity separate from its content.
- Language can be ambiguous, meaning that each partner in a conversation must monitor the other partner's linguistic cues and the paralinguistic and non-linguistic signals accompanying them.
- Communication likely began in a gestural form and later resulting in vocal communication.
- Chimpanzees (our ancestors) do not have shared intentionality, necessary for cooperative communication.
- The unique vocal tract of humans makes consonant-like sounds possible.
- In comparison to other primates, humans have more vertical teeth, more intricately muscled lips, a relatively smaller mouth, a greater closure of the oral cavity from the nasal, and a lower larynx.
- Humans possess a highly specialized brain compared to their overall size.
- It is the rules of language that enable humans to communicate precise messages; sounds can be combined, recombined, broken down, and combined another way to convey different meanings.
- Grammar arose to express complex relationships.

Properties of Language

LANGUAGE IS A SOCIAL TOOL

- Language is the code for transmission between people.

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- Language is a social interactive tool that is both rule-governed and generative, or creative.
- Language reflects the collective thinking of its culture and influences such thinking.
- Communication is the purpose of language.

LANGUAGE IS A RULE-GOVERNED SYSTEM

- The relationship between meaning and symbols is arbitrary, but their arrangement is not.
- A language user's underlying knowledge about language rules is called **linguistic competence.**
- Linguistic knowledge in actual usage is **linguistic performance.**
- Reasons for the discrepancy between competence and performance include long-term (ethnic background, SES, region of the country, intellectual disability, or autism spectrum disorder) or short-term constraints (physical state changes and situational variations).
- Even though much of what is said is ungrammatical, native speakers have little difficulty decoding messages.
- Comprehension is influenced by intent, context, shared meanings, and linguistic complexity.
- Children learn language rules slowly through decoding the language spoken by others and attempting to encode their own thoughts; formal rules are learned later in school.

LANGUAGE IS GENERATIVE

- Language is productive and creative.
- Knowledge of the rules allows speakers to generate meaningful utterances.
- This creativity occurs because words can refer to more than one thing, these things can be called by more than one name, and words can be combined in a variety of ways.
- The possibilities for creating new sentences are virtually endless.
- Children learn rules that govern word combinations rather than learning all combinations.

OTHER PROPERTIES

- Human language is *reflexive,* meaning we can use language to reflect on language.
- *Displacement* is the ability to communicate beyond the immediate context.
- The symbols used in a language are *arbitrary,* a suggested relationship between the sounds and the physical object/action in reference.

Components of Language

- Language can be divided into three major components: form, content, and use.
- Form includes syntax, morphology, and phonology.
- Syntax refers to word order and their relationships.
- Morphology refers to words and word beginnings and/or endings
- Phonology refers to the sound units and sequences.
- Content includes semantics.
- Use includes pragmatics.

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SYNTAX

- The form or structure of a sentence is governed by the rules of syntax.
- Syntax specifies word, phrase, and clause order; sentence organization; and the relationships between words, word classes, and other sentence elements.
- It specifies which word combinations are acceptable and which are not.
- Sentences are organized according to their function.
- Each sentence must contain a noun phrase and a verb phrase.
- In a given phrase, word classes may be deleted or added; as long as the noun and verb remain, a sentence is possible.
- It is sometimes difficult to follow prescribed language rules, most often in writing.
- Languages can be divided into those with free word order and those with word-order rules.

MORPHOLOGY

- Morphology is concerned with the internal organization of words.
- Words consist of one or more smaller units called morphemes.
- A morpheme is the smallest grammatical unit and is indivisible.
- Most words in English consist of one or two morphemes.
- Free morphemes are independent and can stand alone (e.g., toy, big, happy).
- Bound morphemes are grammatical markers that cannot stand alone (e.g., -s, -est, -ly).
- Derivational morphemes include both prefixes and suffixes; they change whole classes of words.
- Inflectional morphemes are suffixes only; they change the state or increase the precision of the free morpheme.
- Languages differ in their relative dependence on syntactic and morphological components.

PHONOLOGY

- **Phonology** is concerned with the rules governing the structure, distribution, and sequencing of speech sounds and the shape of syllables.
- A phoneme is the smallest linguistic unit of sound that can signal a difference in meaning.
- Allophones differ slightly, but not enough to sound like a different phoneme.
- Phonemes are classified by acoustic properties, manner, and place of production.
- English has approximately 43 phonemes.
- Humans can make approximately 600 possible sounds.
- Phonological rules govern the distribution and sequencing of phonemes within a language.
- Distributional rules describe which sounds can be employed in various positions in words.
- Sequencing rules determine which sounds may appear in combination and also address the sound modifications made when two phonemes appear next to each other.

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SEMANTICS

- **Semantics** governs the meaning or content of words and word combinations.
- **World knowledge** is an individual's autobiographical and experiential understanding and memory of particular events.
- **Word knowledge** forms each person's mental dictionary or thesaurus.
- With more experience, knowledge becomes less dependent on events.
- Generalized concepts form the base for semantic or word knowledge.
- Concepts in world knowledge may eventually be formed without first-hand experience.
- We share definitions with others as we converse.
- Concept development results in increased validity, status, and accessibility.
- *Accessibility* relates to the ease of retrieval from memory and use of the concept.
- The more one knows about a word and the more it is used to communicate, the easier it is to access.
- **Semantic features** are aspects of the meaning that characterize the word.
- **Selection restrictions** are based on features and prohibit certain word combinations.
- Words have an objective denotative meaning and a connotative meaning of subjective features.
- Language users acquire new features, delete old ones, and reorganize.
- Relationships between symbols are more important than definitions.
- Words with almost identical features are **synonyms.**
- **Antonyms** differ only in the opposite value of a single important feature.
- Knowledge of semantic features allows a rich vocabulary of alternative words and meanings.
- Sentence meanings are more important than individual word meanings.
- Mature language users generally recall the overall sentence meaning better than the form.

PRAGMATICS

- **Pragmatics** is the study of language in context and concentrates on language as a communication tool that is used to achieve social ends.
- Pragmatics consists of: communication intentions and recognized ways of carrying them out, conversational rules or principles, and types of discourse and their construction.
- Successful pragmatics requires understanding of the culture and of individuals.
- Speech must involve the appropriate persons and circumstances, be complete and correctly executed by all participants, and contain the appropriate intentions of all participants.
- Not all speech performs an act.
- Pragmatic rules govern sequential organization and coherence of conversations, repair of errors, role, and intentions.
- Conversation is governed by the "cooperation principle."
- The four maxims of the "cooperation principle are quantity, quality, relation, and manner.
- Quantity refers to the informativeness of each participant's contribution.

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- Quality is governed by truthfulness and based on sufficient evidence.
- Relation states that a contribution should be relevant to the topic of conversation.
- Manner means that each participant should be reasonably direct and avoid vagueness ambiguity, and wordiness.
- Three general categories of pragmatic rules concern selection of the appropriate linguistic form, use of language forms consistent with assumed rules, and use of ritualized forms.
- Speech may be *direct* or *indirect*, reflected in the syntactic form.
- Speech may also be *literal*, *nonliteral*, or both.
- Roles of the communication partners often influence the choice of vocabulary and language form.
- Predictable forms ease social interactions and individual participation.

RELATIONSHIP OF LANGUAGE COMPONENTS

- *Emergentists* stress the similarity and causal relationship between meanings and syntax, suggesting that grammar grows out of semantics.
- In the functionalist model, pragmatics is the organizing principle of language.
- Context determines the language user's communication options; language relies heavily on context.
- The need to communicate exists prior to the selection of content and form.

Dialects

- The U.S. is becoming an increasingly pluralistic society in which cultural and ethno-racial groups contribute to the whole but retain their essential character.

A CHANGING DEMOGRAPHIC

- The population of people of color in the U.S. is projected to increase to 63 million by 2030.
- The white, non-Latino population will increase at a slower rate.
- In the last 20 years, 80% of legal immigrants have come from Asia and Latin America.
- Approximately 40% of all recent legal immigrants are Asian.
- Asian and Asian Americans represent the fastest growing segment of the U.S. population.
- Approximately 40% of all recent legal immigrants are Latino.
- There are approximately 80,000 legal black immigrants per year.
- The number of illegal immigrants is estimated between 5 and 15 million with a growth of approximately 500,000 per year.
- Internal migration is significant for African Americans and Native Americans.
- Native Americans speak over 200 different languages.
- Birth rates differ across groups and contribute to the changing demographics.

BILINGUALISM

- In many bilingual communities, speakers develop new varieties of communication that incorporate both languages.
- The prevalence of bilingualism reflects cultural mixing within a nation.

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- True bilingualism requires equal proficiency in two languages; this is rare.
- It is also possible to be semi-proficient in both.
- Bilingual children who learn both home languages simultaneously are able to become proficient in both languages by preschool age but then may shift dominance; sometimes losing the ability to be bilingual by teen/adult years.

DIALECTAL DIFFERENCES

- Dialects are not monolithic; variations and exceptions do exist.
- A dialect is a language-rule system used by a group of people that varies from an ideal language standard.
- Although people may live in the same region, they may not "sound" exactly the same; these are examples of **dialectal differences**
- Each dialect shares a common set of grammatical rules with the "standard language," and dialects of a language are theoretically mutually intelligible to all speakers of that language.
- No dialect is better than any other, nor should a dialect be considered deviant or inferior.
- Society places relative values on each dialect.
- In the **deficit approach** to dialects, each dialect has a different relative status, with those closer to the idealized standard considered to be better.
- In the **sociolinguistic approach,** each dialect is an equally valid rule system; each is related to the others and to the ideal standard.

RELATED FACTORS

- Several factors are related to dialectal differences: geography, SES, race and ethnicity, situation or context, peer-group influence, and first- or second-hand learning.
- As a child matures, he or she learns the dialect of the region.
- Some regions of the U.S. are more prone to word invention or novel use than others.
- In general, people from lower socio-economic groups use more restricted linguistic systems.
- Racial and ethnic minorities can become isolated and a particular dialectal variation may evolve.
- Situationally influenced language variations are called **registers.**
- A causal, informal, or intimate register is called a **vernacular**.
- The variation from formal to informal styles or the reverse is called **style shifting**.
- Peer groups have their own lexicons and idioms not understood by society as a whole.
- Speakers can **code switch** from one language to another.

AMERICAN ENGLISH DIALECTS

- Standard American English (SAE) is an idealized version of American English.
- There are at least 10 regional dialects in the U.S.
- Each geographic region has a dialect marked by distinct sound patterns, words and idioms, and syntactic and prosodic systems.
- Major racial and ethnic dialects in the U.S. are African American English, Spanish-influenced or Latino English, and Asian English.

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African American English

- AAE is the linguistic system used by working-class African Americans within.
- It shares many characteristics of Southern and working-class dialects.
- White speakers who live or work with speakers of AAE may use some of its features.
- There are variations of AAE that its speakers use for certain situations.
- Individual differences are related to age, location, income, occupation, and education.
- Linguistic differences between AAE and SAE are minimal.
- The dialect is mostly marked by intonational patterns, speaking rate, and distinctive lexicon.

Latino English

- Some Hispanics speak Spanish, and others are **bilingual,** speaking both Spanish and English.
- Various Hispanic groups have different dialectal differences.
- The dialect of American English spoken in the surrounding community also has an effect.
- These dialects are collectively called *Latino English* (LE).

Asian English

- *Asian English* (AE) enables us to discuss various dialects of Asian Americans as a group.
- Mandarin Chinese has had the most influence on the evolution of other Asian languages.
- Each language has various dialects and features.
- The English of Asian language speakers has certain characteristics in common, such as the omission of final consonants.
- Most Asian languages, except for Korean, have open or vowel-final syllables.

Classroom Activities

1. Allow students to arrange themselves into groups of four. Ask them to have a conversation about any topic they wish, but they cannot use typical prosody (will sound robot-like, with equal emphasis and no frequency variation), gesture, or facial expression. Ask students to share their reflections.

2. Have students write a sentence that they have never written or said before. Nonsense sentences are best. Collect the sentences and read them aloud to the class as a demonstration of the generative quality of language.

3. Have student volunteers “act out” objects/actions (similar to charades) within some predetermined category while their peers try to guess what they are – students may not use spoken word. Sounds, gestures, and body language may be used in order to demonstrate the importance of the nonlinguistic aspects of communication.

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4. Have students enact skits in which people do not communicate effectively. Discuss the breakdown, why it occurred, what speech, language, or communication was used to cause the confusion. How could it be corrected to enable better understanding for the communication partners?

Print Resources

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- Language: A Crash Coarse Psychology. Retrieved from: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s9shPouRWCs
- International Dialects of English Archive. Retrieved from: http://web.ku.edu/~idea/
- Mapping How Americans Talk Soda vs. Pop vs. Coke. Retrieved from: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4HLYe31MBrg

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Chapter 2: Describing Language

When students have completed this chapter, students should understand:

- The relationship of Generative or Nativist theories and Constructionist theories.
- The differences between the 3 main learning theories.
- The goals and issues of language research and analysis.
- The value of cross-language studies.
- The following terms: accommodation, adaptation, assimilation, child-directed speech (CDS), constructionist approach, generative approach, emergentism, generative approach, menal map, nativist approach, scheme.

Linguistic Theory

- Interest in language development represents a part of a larger concern for human development.
- Studying language development can help us understand our own behavior.
- Language-development studies examine the relationship between language and thought.
- Individuals who study language include linguists, psycholinguists, sociolinguists, behavioral psychologists, and speech-language pathologists.
- Linguists describe language symbols and state the rules that structure language.
- Psycholinguists are interested in the psychological processes and constructs underlying language.
- Sociolinguists study language rules and use as a function of role, SES, and context.
- Behavioral psychologists emphasize the behavioral context of language.
- Speech-Language Pathologists (SLPs) concentrate on disordered communication; the cause, extent, and remediation.
- Four theoretical approaches regarding language and communication include behavioral, syntactic, semantic-cognitive, and sociolinguistic.
- A new approach, Emergentism, answers some concerns expressed about the initial four.

NATURE VERSUS NURTURE

- The debate focuses on whether some aspect of development of language occurs because it is an inherent human quality or whether language develops from exposure and learning from the environment.
- The two primary approaches related to nature and nurture are generative/nativist and constructionist/empiricist.

GENERATIVE APPROACH

- The **Generative** or **Nativist approach** assumes that children acquire language because they are born with innate rules or principles related to structures of human languages.
- Generativists assume it is impossible for children to gain linguistic knowledge from the environment because input is limited, full of errors, and incomplete information.
- Beginning in the late 1950s, Noam Chomsky and other theorists attempted to identify universal syntactic rules.
- The language acquisition device (LAD) is the theoretical home of the language rules.

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- Nativists believe that language develops as a result of two systems: universal and language specific.
- In 1973, Roger Brown determined that none of the models successfully explained language development in children; there was no evidence that children used, or even needed, adult-like linguistic categories and rules to acquire language.
- Linguists concluded that no formal grammar adequately accounted for the acquisition process for all languages.
- Theorists then suggested a semantic-cognitive basis for language development.
- The Semantic Revolution stated that the semantic-syntactic relations apparent in children's early language correspond closely to categories of infant and toddler sensory-motor cognition.
- However, this failed to explain those that fit none or several categories.
- Theorists found it difficult to explain how children moved from semantic-based rules to syntactic rules.
- Some theorists began to advocate to return towards concepts revolving around adult syntactic models.
- Theorists reasserted that all human beings possess the same basic linguistic competence, in the form of universal grammatical rules all throughout their lives.
- Theorists believe that acquisition of language includes two components; acquiring all the words, idioms, and constructions of a language and linking the core structures of the particular language being learned to the universal language.
- Theoretical downfalls of the Generative Approach include, overlooking the impact language a child hears on a regular basis on language development, does not account for the routine, multi word expressions, and idioms are not a part of core grammar.

INTERACTIONALIST APPROACH

- The interactionalist approach emphasizes the influence of a combination of biological and environmental processes on language learning.
- The two Interactionalist approaches, **Constructionist** or **Empiricist** both suggest that children learn linguistic knowledge from their environment.
- To learn language, children rely on general cognitive mechanisms.
- An assumption is that linguistic constructions are learned from the input.
- Children are considered contributing members in the learning process.
- A parent's adapted way of speaking to a child is termed **child-directed speech** (CDS).
- **Emergentism** views language as a structure arising from existing interacting patterns in the human brain, and that "something" did not necessarily evolve for language and language alone.
- In 1957, Behaviorist, B.F. Skinner published *Verbal Behavior*, in which he assumed that learning language was similar to learning any other behavior.
- Sociolinguists argued that language acquisition follows a model of child-caregiver give-and-take in which the child learns to understand the rules of dialogue, not syntax or semantics.
- The Constructionist approach is a usage-based approach that views language as composed of constructions or symbol units that combine form and meaning through the use of morphemes, words, idioms, and sentence frames.

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- The most conclusive theory revolves around the concepts that language structure emerges from language use.
- When children are exposed to similar constructions and forms, they begin to see regularities in the input and begin to use some word-specific constructions.
- Children construct abstractions through two general cognitive processes: intention reading and pattern finding.
- Intention-reading refers to a child's attempts to understand the communicative significance of an utterance.
- Pattern-finding refers to the strategy by which they create the more abstract dimensions.
- Theoretical weakness: if typical learning is based on the individual input a child receives, how does one account for the similarities of language learning and use across children?

Learning Theory

- Neither generative or interactionalist theoretical approaches clearly explains the mechanics of learning language.
- Learning theories are conceptual models that attempt to describe how knowledge is acquired, processed, and retained when we "learn."
- Disagreements occur because many factors – cognitive, emotional, and environmental – play a role in how we understand the world and how that understanding changes as a result of learning.
- The three major learning theories include: Behavioral, Cognitivist, and Social Constructivist.

BEHAVIORAL LEARNING THEORY

- Behaviorism stems from the work of psychologist B.F. Skinner.
- Behaviorism focuses on observable behaviors, such as combining two words, doggie and bark to produce "Doggie bark."
- Behaviorists believe that learning occurs when new behaviors arise or there are changes in current behaviors due to the association of stimuli and responses; in other words, a behavior is influenced by what comes both before and after that behavior.
- Consequences that follow the behavior and increase it in some way, reinforce the behavior (i.e., responses that are reinforcing, entice the child to be more likely to say "Doggie" again when she sees her next dog.
- In his 1957 book, Verbal Behavior, Skinner proposed that parents model language for a child who, in turn, imitates the model, and is then reinforced by the parents for correct imitations.
- Complex syntax is learned, Skinner theorized, by the child learning to string words together in a manner such that each word elicits the next. In other words, each word serves as a stimulus for the next.
- Theoretical weakness: Most criticism of Skinner's ideas about language learning came from Noam Chomsky, who found it to be too simplistic. Chomsky argued that parents do not provide good models, children do not just imitate, and parents do not regularly reinforce the child's behavior.

COGNITIVIST LEARNING THEORY

- Cognitivist theory is concerned with the thought process behind the behaviors of language and changes in behavior are indicative of that thought process.

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- Learning occurs through internal processing of incoming information
- Cognitive processing is governed by an internal process rather than by external circumstances.
- Psychologist Jean Piaget, suggested that cognitivism assumes that the learner plays an active role in trying to understand and process information
- Cognitivists make two assumptions;
- memory is an active and organized processor and,
- prior knowledge plays an important role in learning.
- Similarities and patterns of syntax begin to form in the child's brain based on the frequency with which they occur.
- Through learning, a child attains new insights or changes old ones and reorganizes experiences stored in the brain.
- Cognitive Constructivism focuses on learners constructing knowledge by themselves; this relates to Piaget's notion of internal schemes or concepts and the ways in which learners modify or replace those schemes based on new information.
- *Learning* occurs as the learner adjusts his or her mental model to accommodate new experiences.
- *Change* results from the interaction of both old and new information.
- Information Processing Theory attempts to explain how the brain deals with information, uses that information to enhance future learning, and calls upon the information for recall.
- Information Processing is believed to be a four-step operation overseen by the brain's executive system that includes:

    (1) attending to stimuli

    (2) discriminating new information

    (3) organization and storage

    (4) memory

Jean Piaget and Adaptation

- Jean Piaget was a Swiss biologist turned psychologist who spent a lifetime studying children and child development in the early to mid-20th century.
- According to Piaget, adaptation explains individual learning.
- Adaptation occurs as a result of two related processes: assimilation and accommodation.
- Cognitive change is observed as the result of adaptation and organization, two complementary processes, adaptation and organization.
- Adaptation is the function or tendency of all organisms to change in response to the environment.
- Organization is the tendency to systematize or organize processes into systems.
- Schemes are organized patterns of reaction to stimuli that are used for processing incoming sensory information.
- An event is perceived in a certain way and organized or categorized according to common characteristics; this is an active process involving interpretation and classification.
- A scheme or concept is a mental representation that underlies the ability to categorize, or "chunk," information for storage and retrieval.

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- An individual's response to a given stimulus is based on his or her schemes and ability to respond.
- As an organism develops, its conceptual system changes.
- Stimulation is coming from both the stimulus and the representation. These representations provide an infant with an expectation of the properties of objects, events, and people in the environment.
- Cognitive development is a qualitative change in the process of thought, therefore, individuals
- organize and store material in qualitatively different ways.
- Change occurs through a child's active involvement with the environment as mediated by a mature language user who interprets and facilitates interaction for a child.
- *Assimilation* is the use of existing schemes to incorporate external stimuli.
- An attempt to deal with stimuli in terms of present cognitive structures, assimilation is the way an organism continually integrates new perceptual matter into existing patterns.
- Not all stimuli fit into available schemes, however, and mental structures must be adapted to accommodate these stimuli.
- *Accommodation* is a transformational process in response to external stimuli that do not fit into any available scheme and, therefore, cannot be assimilated.
- Once an organism has accommodated its schemes to the external stimulus, the new information is assimilated, or incorporated, into the new or modified scheme.
- *Equilibrium* is a state of cognitive balance, or harmony, between incoming stimuli and the organism's cognitive schemes.
- According to Piaget, reaching equilibrium is the driving force behind cognitive and other biological changes.
- Readjusting categories is a form of learning based on environmental input.
- Theoretical weakness: Piagetian and Cognitivist notions of learning don't necessarily negate anything said in the Generative Linguistic theoretical approach, the cognitivist approach is not a strong fit for the Interactionalist approach, and cognitivist theories do not offer an explanation for the role of social learning of the social tool called language.

SOCIAL COGNITIVIST LEARNING THEORY

- Social constructivism is a theory in which knowledge is constructed within social contexts through interactions with a knowledge individual(s).
- People construct their individual understanding and knowledge, through experience and reflection on those experiences.
- The social aspect of communication is essential for the exposure to language that children need.
- The cognitivist learning theory is comprised of two concepts:

  (1) Experiences are used by the learner to create a model of the social world and the way that it functions.

  (2) Language is the most essential system with which to construct that reality (Leeds-Hurwitz, 2009).
- Social constructivism is strongly Lev Vygotsky, Soviet era Russian psychologist.
- According to Vygotsky's work (1978), in the process of sharing individual perspectives, learners construct meaning or understanding together.

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Lev Vygotky and Social Learning Theory

- In contrast to Jean Piaget, Vygotsky theorized that social learning precedes development.
- It is believed that parents and caregivers use speech and language in context to interact with the child; in return, the adult's language provides a model.
- Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) suggests that the easiest things for a child to learn are those closest or proximal to what he already knows.
- Through the assistance of a more capable individual, such as a parent, that a child learns skills beyond his or her actual developmental or maturational level.
- Vygotsky suggested individual and cultural learning although they are not the same nor are their processes of discovery similar.

Language Research and Analysis

- Four goals of child language research include: confirming general linguistic principles, discovering language development principles, clarifying the relationship of language to developments in other areas, such as cognition, and providing a theoretical description of language development.
- The purpose and theoretical perspectives of the research influence the data-collection procedure.
- The researcher's theories influence the language features studied and the overall study design.
- Considerations that influence data collection: method, population and language sample size and variability, naturalness and representativeness, data collection, and data analysis.

Issues in the Study of Child Language

METHOD OF DATA COLLECTION

- Speech perception studies are interested in speech discrimination of children, especially infants, and the ways these abilities aid language learning.
- Advances in technology aid researchers in isolating, reproducing, and combining sounds.
- Online or real-time research pairs responses with brain-imaging techniques.
- Subjects respond to stimuli by looking, pointing, acting out, or following directions in response to a spoken or written stimulus.
- Expressive language studies can be structured and experimental or open-ended and observational.
- Expressive language-development data are collected in two ways: spontaneous conversational sampling/natural observation and structured testing/experimental manipulation.
- Formal elicitation tasks demonstrate more advanced child language than conversational sampling.
- Experimental factors can have unexpected consequences.
- Testing and experimental tasks do not necessarily reflect a child's natural performance.
- Noncompliance with testing may not mean lack of comprehension or lack of knowledge.
- Language processing is not a single unitary operation.
- *Offline tasks* measure only the endpoints of several linguistic processes.
- Offline tasks may tell us what children know, but not how children process or access language.

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- *Online tasks* attempt to measure operations at various points during processing and describe individual and integrative components.
- Testing and experimental data may be accurate but limited.
- Naturalistic studies, such as language samples, may yield very unique data.
- Certain linguistic elements may not be exhibited even when they are in a child's repertoire.
- A single conversational sample is inadequate to demonstrate a child's communication abilities.
- Sampling techniques can be unstructured, open-ended situations or more structured, restrictive ones in which the researcher controls or manipulate variables.
- It is best practice to use a combination of collection procedures.

SAMPLE SIZE AND VARIABILITY

- The researcher must consider the sample of children from whom data are collected and the sample of language data, size of sample, and variability.
- The sample should be large enough to allow for individual differences and enable group conclusions to be drawn.
- When a researcher follows a few children for a n extended period of time, it is called a *longitudinal study*, but it is deemed inappropriate to administer a one-time-only test to the same limited number of children.
- Other considerations, such as subject attrition, influence the number of children studied.
- The sample should accurately reflect the diversity of the population.
- Other important variables include size of family, birth order, presence of one or both parents in the home, presence of natural parents in the home, and amount of schooling.
- Some variables, such as SES, may be difficult to determine, although parental education and employment seem to be important contributing factors.
- Language development research has primarily focused on middle-class preschoolers learning English.
- Grouping children by age and matching them in studies may be inappropriate.
- Reliable age-independent measures, such as level of cognitive development, may be a better gauge of real developmental differences and may allow more appropriate comparisons.

NATURALNESS AND REPRESENTATIVENESS OF THE DATA

- Conversational samples are most natural if participants are free to move about and if sample collection does not interfere.
- A representative sample should include as many of the child's everyday experiences as possible.
- One issue is *observer paradox* the concept that the absence of an observer may result in uninterpretable data, but the presence of an observer may influence the language obtained.
- A second problem is a child's physical and emotional state at the time of collection.
- A third problem relates to the context in which the sample is collected.
- The most representative sample should be elicited in the home for preschoolers and in the home or classroom for older children, with a parent, sibling, or teacher as the partner.

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- Language samples should be representative in two ways: the population sample from which the language is collected should be representative of the total population and each child's language sample should be representative of his or her typical language performance.

COLLECTION PROCEDURES

- Examples include diary accounts, checklists, and parental reports, and observation.
- Video recording is better than audio alone because the researcher can observe nonlinguistics.
- Written transcription is the least desirable method for microanalysis.
- Language samples should be transcribed soon after collection, and caregivers familiar with the child's language should be asked if the sample is typical of the child's performance.
- Studies should ensure intratranscriber reliability.
- The use of more than one transcriber reduces the possibility of errors if the transcribers compare their transcriptions and resolve their differences in a consistent manner.

ANALYSIS PROCEDURES

- In general, quantitative measures are inadequate for describing language development in detail.
- Qualitative research methods occur within natural contexts to describe and interpret communication.
- It is difficult to determine when children actually know or have mastered a language feature.
- Usually, mastery can be based on children using a feature in 90% of the obligatory locations or on 90% of the children using the feature consistently.
- Measures are complicated by the complexity of language and the time needed for mastery.

Cross-Language Studies

- Cross-language studies are usually designed to investigate universality, linguistic specificity, relative difficulty, or acquisitional principles.
- Studies of universality attempt to determine which aspects of language appear in all languages.
- Studies of linguistic specificity attempt to determine whether development is the result of universal cognitive development or unique linguistic knowledge.
- Relative difficulty studies look for language development differences that may be explained by the ease or difficulty of learning structures and forms in different languages.
- Acquisitional principles studies attempt to find underlying language-learning strategies.
- Methods of collecting cross-linguistic data include gathering a range of studies completed in different languages or using a similar design across subjects from different language groups.
- The second method yields more definitive data but takes much more time and effort.

CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

1. Host a discussion regarding the difference between nature and nurture. Divide students into 2 larger groups and host a debate to support "nature" or "nurture."Develop an example of a poorly

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designed child language study. Divide students into groups and ask them to generate a list of problems with the study's design and how they can be improved.

2. Pretend to organize a study of child language. Play devil's advocate as students propose sampling procedures.

3. Have students provide examples of utterances made by young children and analyze them. Try to have other students provide alternative interpretations for the same utterance based on different contexts.

4. Discuss the reasons for communicating. Give students direct reinforcement by commenting on their speech, language, or communication while they provide responses to the prior question. Help them see that conversation is inherently reinforcing.

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***Language Development: An Introduction, 10e* (Owens)**
Chapter 2 Describing Language

2.1 Multiple Choice Questions

1) Which type of language scientist is most interested in linguistic or cultural context?
A) sociolinguist
B) speech-language pathologist
C) linguist
D) behavioral psychologist
Answer: A

2) Which of the following theories of language development is the newest?
A) semantic/cognitive
B) sociolinguistic
C) emergentism
D) behaviorist
Answer: C

3) According to the sociolinguistic model, the motivation for language use and acquisition is
A) direct reinforcement.
B) effective communication.
C) fear of punishment.
D) the semantic rules.
Answer: B

4) All of the following are stages of early communicative functions, EXCEPT
A) extralocutionary.
B) illocutionary.
C) perlocutionary.
D) locutionary.
Answer: A

5) Off-line test tasks can tell us
A) what children know.
B) how children process language.
C) how children access language.
D) both B and C.
Answer: A

6) In general, preschool children will perform better during language testing/sampling with
A) a peer.
B) the researcher.
C) their classroom teacher.
D) both B and C.
Answer: C

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7) A language sample should fulfill the twin requirements of
A) truthfulness and faithfulness.
B) structure and experimentation.
C) naturalness and representativeness.
D) being theoretical and analytical.
Answer: C

8) A representative sample
A) contains the child's typical language performance.
B) requires a very restricted context.
C) can be best obtained in one situation rather than several.
D) is best obtained in a test situation.
E) none of the above
Answer: A

9) Cross-language studies attempt to investigate
A) universality.
B) acquisitional principles.
C) linguistic specificity.
D) relative difficulty.
E) all of the above.
Answer: A

10) Numerical scores, such as MLU are
A) inadequate for describing language development in detail.
B) the main method for diagnosing a language disorder.
C) the most valuable measure of language performance.
D) none of the above.
Answer: A

11) Norms for MLU
A) are the same for each language.
B) are different for each language.
C) change from year to year.
D) are different for boys and girls.
Answer: B

12) Determining whether a child has mastered a language feature
A) is very difficult.
B) depends on whether he has been explicitly taught.
C) can be determined based on one language sample.
D) can be determined with certainty through standardized tests.
Answer: A

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13) Which type of researchers are interested in the psychological processes and constructs underlying language?
A) psycholinguists
B) psychologists
C) speech scientists
D) speech-language pathologists
Answer: A

14) _____ stated that the semantic-syntactic relations apparent in children's early language correspond closely to categories of infant and toddler sensory-motor cognition.
A) Skinner's *Verbal Behavior*
B) Semantic Revolution
C) The generative approach
D) none of the above
Answer: B

15) Children use which of the following general cognitive processes to understand the communicative significance of utterances and create more abstract dimensions?
A) intention-reading
B) pattern-finding
C) A and B
D) none of the above
Answer: C

16) Which of the following are considerations that influence data collection?
A) method
B) population and language sample size and variability
C) naturalness and representativeness
D) all of the above
Answer: D

17) It may be appropriate to follow a few children for a period of time, called a _____ study, but inappropriate to administer a one-time-only test to the same limited number of children.
A) observational
B) treatment
C) longitudinal
D) none of the above
Answer: C

18) Grouping children by age and matching them in studies
A) is the best method to conduct a study of language development.
B) may be inappropriate.
C) is not possible.
D) none of the above
Answer: B

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19) Ways of collecting data include:
A) diary accounts.
B) checklists.
C) parental reports.
D) all of the above.
Answer: D

20) Cross-language studies are usually designed to investigate:
A) universality.
B) linguistic specificity.
C) relative difficulty.
D) acquisitional principles.
E) all of the above.
Answer: E

2.2 True/False Questions

1) The language that young children hear is regular and grammatical.
Answer: FALSE

2) An assumption of the semantic approach is that content or meaning precede language form.
Answer: TRUE

3) In the emergentist theory, outcomes may arise that are not obvious or predictable based on input.
Answer: TRUE

4) Emergentists believe that the LAD is innate.
Answer: FALSE

5) Language data are usually collected in two ways: structured testing and experimental manipulation.
Answer: FALSE

6) It is simple to collect and analyze a child's language.
Answer: FALSE

7) If a preschool child answers incorrectly, it is a good indication that the child doesn't have adequate comprehension or knowledge.
Answer: FALSE

8) A language sample should always contain at least 100 utterances.
Answer: FALSE

9) The sample population should reflect the racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic characteristics of the overall target population.
Answer: TRUE

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10) The most thorough, efficient, and accurate method for collecting data is written transcription.
Answer: FALSE

2.3 Short Answer Questions

1) In early two-word utterances, meaning is signaled by _____.
Answer: word-order

2) Cognitive precursors to language develop in the _____ year of life.
Answer: first

3) The unit of language that includes the form, content, and use of an utterance is the _____.
Answer: speech act

4) Two routines that seem to be particularly important for early communication are _____ and _____.
Answer: joint action, joint reference

5) The type of memory children use to hold information for a short time while the brain processes information is known as _____.
Answer: working memory

6) In language research, the _____ and researcher's _____ will influence the type of data-collection procedure used.
Answer: purpose, theoretical predisposition

7) Formal elicitation tasks tend to produce _____ child language than conversational sampling.
Answer: more advanced

8) Theoretically, the most representative language sample for an older child should be elicited in _____ with _____ as conversational partner(s).
Answer: home or school, a parent or sibling or teacher

9) A parent's adapted way of speaking to a child is termed _____.
Answer: child directed speech (CDS)

10) _____ attempt to measure operations at various points during processing and describe individual and integrative components.
Answer: On-line tasks

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2.4 Essay Questions

1) Discuss the limitations of each of the theoretical positions presented and explain the ways in which each subsequent theory attempted to address these limitations.
Answer: Page Ref: 38-44

2) A behavioral notion of language development can be considered weak because it is dependent upon the inadequate language modeling of the adults within the infant's environment. Yet, it is these very adults that the sociolinguistic model credits with early language development. What happened to our knowledge of caregiver behavior in the intervening thirty years?
Answer: Page Ref: 38-44

3) Explain the limitations inherent in each of the methods of collecting child language data.
Answer: Page Ref: 51-52

4) Describe a study question that would be most appropriately answered using spontaneous conversational language sampling. Explain why. Then describe a study question that would be most appropriately answered using structured testing. Explain why.
Answer: Page Ref : 45-48

5) Explain the observer's paradox and provide specific examples of how it would affect data collection. What are some ways to lessen the impact of this principle?
Answer: Page Ref : 50

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