

# Speech, language and the developing child



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Language and the Developing Child Roger Brown's stages of language development are a useful tool in knowing just where your child (or your client) lies in respects to their age and ability in the acquisition of language. If we look at the first stage, which is roughly age 12 months to 26 months, we see that this is the peak time that language first develops and grows. Brown's concept of MLU, the mean length of utterance should be at about 1.75 morphemes at this age, with the child knowing roughly 50-60 words, but grows significantly as more words are added to the child's vocabulary. With just sixty known words, children can put together very simple sentences, and with the help of their parents, and the use of motherese, these sentences can grow and become more grammatically correct. Motherese is something that parents do with their children, perhaps not even realizing that they are doing it. They repeat their child, often substituting other words to the sentence, use a higher pitch to their voice, use simple sentences that the child can understand, and use grammatically correct language that their child then embraces and adds to their own vocabulary. This, working in concert with simple words and sentences, creates early conversational skills that the child can then expand upon in order to acquire more knowledge of how to communicate. Using a stage approach may not sit well with some people, for it limits what a child should know at a certain time. Children are pigeon-holed into a stage depending solely on their age, and not necessarily on their ability. If you believe that children should be free to learn at their own pace, then a staged approach isn't for you. On the other hand, stages are clear markers of where a child should be, making it very obvious when a child would need extra help in order to catch up to his peers. Using stages also helps establish a baseline of knowledge, and from that you can work on <https://assignbuster.com/speech-language-and-the-developing-child-essay-samples/>

getting a child up to the level they are chronologically meant to be.

Language Development Theories Out of the theories that explain the acquisition of language, I find that the Social Interactionist Theory is the one that I agree with the most. This theory is a middle ground view mixing nature and nurture and coming up with an ideal for the way we learn our language starting before we can even say a single word. Children communicate with babbling, eye contact, reaching for an item and any other way to get the attention of the caregiver, who then in turn vocalizes the intent and gives the child what she wants. This child now has the basis of language in knowing that a cookie is in fact called a cookie, or a ball is called a ball, until the day when they actually ask for the item by name. Parents and caregivers are a very important part of this theory, as it focuses on how the child and the adult interact with each other, and how the adult in the exchange is responsible for the acquisition of language by the child, whether they realize they are doing it or not. This theory is also a big supporter of motherese, the way in which we as adults give our children the techniques and words they need in order to gain their confidence in becoming social beings themselves. It is a theory that does not stop at a certain time in a child's development, instead, this theory allows interaction between caregiver and child to continue long after the first few words are learned. As the children learn more and more, the caregiver is right there, adding more complex interactions into the mix until the child can communicate as an adult. I think this theory is better than the others in explaining how we learn language because it believes that children are active participants, and affords them the opportunity to not only receive social efforts, but to initiate them as well.

They don't just stand around idly until it is time to learn language; instead <https://assignbuster.com/speech-language-and-the-developing-child-essay-samples/>

they are immersed in it before they are even verbal, learning little things along the way which together will supply them with all they need to know to become experts in their own right.