

Linguistics and children



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

This assignment will firstly explain the meaning of the following terms, communicative competence and metalinguistic awareness. Observations have shown that children do imitate older peers and adults when speaking as well as signs of creativity from an early age when developing language. Then the second section will evaluate the roles of creativity and imitation in regards to learning spoken English. This assignment will focus on the spoken English of young children. Part 1

Communicative competence - Is a term that refers to the way in which a language user communicates efficiently and successfully depends upon their communicative competence. Linguist Noam Chomsky depicted a variation within the term 'linguistic' which he divided into to competence and performance. The term linguistic performance is associated with incorrectly and/or repeated ungrammatical delivered actual utterances of language in use. Linguistic competence refers to the knowledge of the language system which will enable the speaker to distinguish the utterances that are grammatical in the language from those that are not. Chomsky, 1965 cited in Book3, pg 48)

However linguist Hymes believed speakers need to attain distinctive skills in performance such as what is the socially appropriate turn of phrase to accomplish the desired effect as well as knowing when to speak. With regards to children as well as learning the construction and sounds of particular languages they are actually learning the discourse procedures of their communities. The term also incorporates word meaning, grammar and pronunciations well as applying language aptly, verbally, written and non-verbal cues such as body language. Book3, pg 201)

Metalinguistic awareness - Is a term used to define an individual's ability to reflect on the use of language in with regards to clarifying the transfer of linguistic skills and knowledge across languages. When a language user's metalinguistic awareness develops they start to create new and refined use of metaphors such as the simile " life is like a box of chocolates, you never know what you're going to get" they also begin to realise that statements can have an implied meaning as well as a factual meaning.

They may even start to identify sarcasm along with contrariness which connects with an individual's capability of telling and /or understanding jokes, manipulating language (Kerper, 2009) Part 2 Children can acquire language as a result of imitation however it isn't the initial method into language acquisition due to children demonstrating creative practice of language. (Book 3, pg 27) Infants produce a variety of sounds during the initial year of their life in addition to experimenting with vocal play. Book 3, pg 8)

The rate of development differs between each child, for example it is rare for a child to skip the babbling stage, which usually occurs at the average age of 11months, and another factor that assists speech development is physiological maturation. (Book 3, pg9) Benedict, 1979 cited in Book 3, pg19 researched development of vocabulary of a small group of children (8) during the course of six months. The findings demonstrated children's ability to understand and create words between the ages of 10 months and on average 1 year 9 months.

By the time the child is 11 months and 15 days they are usually attain a comprehension vocabulary of twenty words. The process of attaining words

in production takes longer than it does in comprehension, comprehension can usually occur 4 months before production. With regards to 'imitation' the role of the caregiver (a term used for those individuals who spend the most time interacting with and looking after the child.) (Book 3, pg 11) much research has been done in this area whereby the emphasis is on a pair in this case it involves the child and their main caregiver, this is also known as a term called a dyad.

The findings from this research revealed that the person the child has most direct contact with impart the language surroundings that the child will model. Other linguistic modelling that adults provide is through caregiving schedules, for instances bathing and feeding, these routines provide occasions for conventional interactions concerning language. 'Peek a boo' A customary game that is usually played between infant and caregiver and generally in Western cultures. (Book 3, pg14)

As a rule the adult attempts to grasp the infant's interest by concealing their eyes behind a hand or an object after which a type of discourse occurs, for example the adult might say 'Are you ready?' Then the infant's vocalisations or actions are indicated as a response. This sequence of question -and - reply is continued until the apprehension develops at this point the adult takes their hand away or removes the object and says 'Boo!' (Book 3, pg 15) Trevarthen and Aitken, 2001 cited in Book 3, pg 15 believed this kind of game could be termed 'protoconversations', because it is similar to a conversation.

It requires turn - taking, each person's turn relies on the previous input of the partner, therefore it is contingent, the partners understand the sequence

disclose the same intention. Therefore this kind of interaction initiates ceremonial features of conversations before young children are able to speak but prompt passage to language. A universal observation made regarding the type of dialogue directed to children by adults is that the dialogue differs to that addressed to other adults.

Consequently caregivers amend their dialogue for instance delivery slowed down, intonation is amplified and an elevated pitch may be used. Older children also adapt their dialogue for younger children comparable to adults, this is also evident that older children are emulating adults and implementing this technique to young children. (Book 3, pg15) this dialogue style is referred to as child directed speech (CDS). Clifton Pye, 1986 cited in Book 3, pg 16 observed a community in Central America called Quiche, they spoken one of the native Mayan languages.

The results showed a difference in the way in which Quiche caregivers and Western caregivers adapt their dialogue for young children. Regardless of this cultural difference in caregiver – child interaction, the children in the Quiche community were able to speak fluently in their native language. Shirley Brice Heath's research 1983 cited in Book 3, pg 16 of black working-class English speaking community discovered that adults in this community didn't usually use ' baby talk' when interacting with young children. The ways in which children's grammar develop could also be due to imitation as well.

Descriptive grammar is a term referring to how children organise and structure speech, it doesn't link to the correct ' English' people should use. Investigations into children's grammar showed that a constant procedure is

involved in the attainment of grammar. Crystal, 1995, cited in Book 3, pg 25 acknowledged seven stages ranging from formative years to adolescent. In the early stages of grammatical development children apply brief utterances of two to three words without any grammatical markers; children are usually aged between 18 months to 2 years.

In the next stage of usually 3 years children start to add markers to words such as tense (I played), plural (one cat, two cats). The second stage within Crystal's paradigm is a term called telegraphic speech during this stage, children do not use grammatical markers instead they use verbs, temporal adverbs, adjectives and nouns. The crucial information is apparent because the details and trimmings are removed; this telegraphic quality is stated in children's imitation of adult's speech. Also during the second stage it has been noted that children's speech will likely to be: a more water; baby drink; allgone sticky.

However in this instance it is unlikely that children will have heard adults make these types of utterances which means they can be depicted as unique utterances, and since the meaning will be comprehensible, this utterance can also be viewed as a success. This all goes to illustrate that even at the first stages of language development children are showcasing their creativity. Most adults especially parents have heard their child/ran emulate them using adult expression and even intonation.

With regards to creativity and language development, numerous researches from the theories L. S. Vygotsky (1967) and Jean Piaget (1962) cited in Gillen, 2009 has found that there is a substantial link between play and language learning. Play encourages children's imaginative thought process

through playing with objects that will then eventually lead to a better understanding of their environment.

As the child's ability to create more meaningful representations develop so does the more complex their play becomes. Bloom, 1993, p. 16 cited in Gillen, 2009, p 56. Observed that a 'spurt' in first words was usually due to development in play behaviours. From observations children unconsciously obtain rules about real-life behaviour, and implement what they have observed into their play with a mixture of their own imagination. When children are involved in pretence games with other children it is called sociodramatic play, within this type of play it is suggested that children practice different registers of talk that they observe to fit in with that role.

To conclude it seems as though the interactions typically viewed of caregivers and infants are not essential and general characteristic initial language experience. There was a variance in comprehension and creation of vocabulary. Evidence derived from research of language acquisition is usually carried out from a limited collection of cultural and social backgrounds so the findings of primitive grammatical development in English are from language users of the normal criterion of the language. The section regarding play and language development suggests that creativity and imitation interlock, it appears that both coincide together it appears both weigh evenly in terms of forming spoken English.