

# Theories of language learning: human growth and development



## Language Learning and Number February 11, 2006 Theories of Language Learning: Human Growth and Development

There are several theories on learning and child development. What is a Theory of Language Learning (1999) defines the theory of language learning as " an account of the psycholinguistic and cognitive processes involved in learning a language and of the conditions that need to be met in order for these processes to take place." School readiness has been influenced by these theories. This writing aims to evaluate infant language, the hybrid theory and will discuss three other theories, which include:

Theory One: Infants are taught

Theory Two: Infants teach themselves

Theory Three: Social Pragmatic and Social Impulses

Jean Piaget has been said to have revolutionized the study of child language and thought. He believed that a child's mind is not a small version of an adult's mind. He studied the child's mind, which he believed is evolutionary and grows and develops as the child grows and develops.

Vygotsky (n. d.) quotes Piaget (1932) in his statements, " Directed thought is conscious, i. e., it pursues aims that are present in the mind of the thinker. It is intelligent, i. e., it is adapted to reality and strives to influence it. It is susceptible of truth and of error ... and it can be communicated

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through language. Autistic thought is subconscious, i. e., the goals it pursues and the problems it sets itself are not present in consciousness. It is not adapted to external reality but creates for itself a reality of imagination or dreams. It tends, not to establish truths, but to gratify wishes and remains strictly individual and incommunicable as such by means of language, since <https://assignbuster.com/theories-of-language-learning-human-growth-and-development/>

it operates primarily in images and must, in order to be communicated, resort to roundabout methods, evoking, by means of symbols and of myths, the feelings that guide it."

Theory One suggest that infants and children are taught, or should solely be taught, in order to learn. This is the traditional way of learning. The teacher teachers while passive students/learners repeat the information that the teacher has relayed. Students do not play an active part in the learning process.

Theory Two suggests that infants and children teach themselves. Dr. Maria Montessori, the first female physician in Italy, believes that children teach themselves and designed a " prepared environment" where children can do so. Basically, she revolutionized this theory. Montessori developmentally-appropriate activities and schools are currently available around the world. Children teach themselves by going at their own pace and using all five senses. It is suggested that learning at this pace and with this style leads to self motivation, concentration, a desire to learn, and self discipline.

Theory Three involves social pragmatic skills and social impulses. This means that the child is able to communicate appropriately and effectively in a reasonable amount of time. Vicker (n. d.) defines pragmatics, " If one has good pragmatic skills, he or she is able to communicate an appropriate message in an effective manner within a reasonable time frame in a real life situation. Pragmatics is like a cake. The cake is the whole or gestalt that represents the combination of many

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ingredients. No one ingredient is representative of the edible item, that we call a " cake." In a somewhat related fashion, as one continues the cake <https://assignbuster.com/theories-of-language-learning-human-growth-and-development/>

analogy, no singular standardized test of ingredients can effectively capture the essence of the whole or gestalt called " pragmatics." In order to communicate an appropriate message in a given situation, many ingredients have to mesh in an instantaneous fashion."

The Hybrid Theory suggests that genetic traits and environmental factors come together and infants and children learn via many vehicles and avenues and not just in one way. Inherited traits, individual differences (and learning styles), developmentally-fixed mechanisms, environment, activities, and stimulations all contribute to an infant's language learning.

In conclusion, I believe the Hybrid Theory is the best one of all the three and that this is actually how infants learn language. One cannot pinpoint one single factor to a child's learning abilities. One cannot credit nor discredit a single element to learning. All factors come into play to make up an infant; an individual. All individual parts come together to make a whole. The Hybrid Theory of language learning seems to be the closest to factual and reality as not one thing can be excluded and not one single factor can be directed to the causes of language learning. An infant's genetics, background, environment, nurture or lack of, activities, resources, stimulation or lack of, and all other factors that can be listed if one had the time does come into play as the infant learns. The infant will learn traditionally as he/she gains information passively and then relays the information back to the teacher whether it be a parent, another adult, or an actual teacher per se. The infant will learn on his/her own. Both ways of learning do happen. Therefore, the Hybrid Theory seems to be the most accurate regarding language learning.

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