

Early Childhood and Language development- A study of Theoretical Aspects

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Abstract: Communication with others is facilitated by language. Speech and linguistic comprehension vary significantly from one another. All kinds of expression—verbal, written, visual, gestural, and facial—are considered to be part of language. While speech is a spoken language, it is thought to be the most essential and frequently used method of communication. As toddlers get older, their language skills get better. Since these changes will affect how children learn, parents should always pay attention to them. This can be achieved by setting a positive example, encouraging kids to study, and other strategies. Parents should constantly work to increase their children's potential in order for them to grow optimally as they are heavily accountable for the success of their learning.

Present paper tries to study the theoretical aspects of childhood and language development. Advantage of language learning at early age and various theories of language development like nativism, behaviourism and cognitivism are briefly explained.

Keywords: *Communication, Language, Nativism, Behaviourism, Cognitivism.*

Introduction: The capacity to interact with others is language. The comprehension of words and speech vary significantly from one another. Verbal development always follows a child's physical development. Parents should always be aware of their children's growth because it greatly affects how they learn. Giving a positive model can help inspire kids to learn in this way. Children's learning achievement is primarily the responsibility of parents, who should always work to help them reach their full potential.

Language serves the purpose of allowing people to interact with one another. The comprehension of words and speech vary significantly from one another. Nativism, cognitivism, and behaviourism are just a few of the ideas that have questioned how language develops. Prelingual, Early Lingual, and Development Periods are the three phases that make up the evolution of language. The most wonderful time for parents is when their early lingual infant begins to utter their first word. Health, intellect, societal status, household structure, peer connections, and personality are some of the variables that influence language development.

Objectives of the paper: Author set the following objectives while writing this paper-

- To study the advantage of language learning at early age.
- To study the theoretical background of language development.

Methodology: The author used descriptive method of study.

Discussion:

Advantage of Language Learning at Early age: The following are the benefits of language learning of early childhood:

Brain and cognitive development: There are numerous theories that second language acquisition is closely related to brain development, particularly in the early stages. It is significantly influenced by the prefrontal cortex in the brain. In particular, the prefrontal cortex's growth is correlated with cognitive development, which is essential for learning language and other skills. This skill develops through a series of clearly defined phases and milestones, in accordance with Piaget, in a predictable pattern. Between the ages of 2 and 7, the child passes through a first stage of rudimentary sensory-motor integration and primitive symbolization before entering a representational stage of extended verbal symbolism. The language we hear from others gradually becomes more complex and regulated as external feedback. The child gains the capacity to put off pleasure. Language and behaviour become more organised, less dependent on outside cues, and more creative between the ages of 7 and 11. Enter athletics, erector sets, diversions, and problem-solving. These two stages in the Stage Theory demonstrate how the growth of cognition enhances language acquisition and other skills.

Extra capacity for management: Additionally, linguistic acquisition may have an impact on cognitive growth. It also has an impact on how well children's frontal lobes regulate their focus. Children's everyday learning experiences, which include language acquisition, have an impact on how their brain and neurological processes grow. Children encounter a variety of linguistic and sociolinguistic situations as they learn new terms, all of which call for some kind of conflict resolution. For instance, children may need to decide whether the words "I" and "eye"

imply the same thing. According to theories of bilingual cognitive development, the duality of these conflicting contexts, which is typical of bilingual language acquisition (e.g., increasing the number of potential homophones), and the special requirement to selectively attend to one language while suppressing the other, may change bilinguals' attentional control mechanisms. Attentional regulation is the capacity to consciously direct attention to one thing or another. When given photographs with comparable initial sounds, such as "card" and "cart," as opposed to "card" and "lion," subjects in a normal word-image matching test, for instance, take longer to select a picture. Attention control is the capacity to consciously concentrate and change one's concentration. When given photographs with comparable initial sounds, such as "card" and "cart," as opposed to "card" and "lion," subjects in a normal word-image matching test, for instance, take longer to select a picture. Throughout this practice, there is verbal interference that compels participants to disregard the opposing distraction. It's crucial to note that both cross-language and intra linguistic distractions can affect how well bilingual participants execute on this exercise. These results support not only the general hypothesis that bilinguals' languages are commonly co-active but also the attention difficulties of language comprehension. Such continuous co-activation of bilinguals' two languages is thought to be the cause of the greater demand for attentional regulation across various situations of bilingual language usage, from word recognition to discourse. As a consequence, theories of bilingual development suggest that early bilingual exposure during times of fast brain development may lead to early-emerging and lifelong changes in children's attentional control skills.

Other Brain Abilities: Learning a second language can help kids better their recall, creativity, and other cognitive skills in addition to their capacity for attentional control. Children can distinguish between two distinct languages within the first few weeks of life, unlike situations where primary and second languages are mixed. According to Roberta Michnick Golinkoff, author of *How Babies Talk*, learning a second language improves a child's speech growth generally. The research goes on to demonstrate that learning a second language early has a variety of other brain advantages. The general basic abilities of elementary school students who learn a foreign language are superior to those of their classmates. According to the College Entrance Test Board, they go on to achieve better SAT scores. Early exposure to a second language improves spatial reasoning, problem-solving skills, and ingenuity in young learners. Early exposure to a second language fosters flexible thinking and speaking abilities, enabling children to address problems from various angles. Furthermore, research shows that multilinguals are more adept at multitasking, organising, and remembering. The ability to concentrate, remember, plan, and multitask are all enhanced when a kid learns multiple languages because the brain is trained to focus on important information and ignore unimportant information. In measures of creativity, multilinguals score better than monolinguals and use more of their minds than monolinguals.

Educational advancement: Early second language acquisition has the added benefit of promoting scholastic growth in children. For instance, a recent study of the reading skills of 134 four and five-year-old children found that bilingual children were better able to understand the wide figurative depiction of text than monolingual children. In a different research, children in Fairfax County, Virginia, who had completed the most intensive type of foreign language school for five years, immersion, were tested on their achievement. According to the study's findings, those students consistently beat all comparison groups on achievement tests and displayed good scholastic performance throughout their education. Third, fourth, and fifth-grade language arts sections of the Louisiana Basic Skills tests revealed that students who received daily instruction in a foreign language (taught as a separate subject rather than through immersion) performed better than those who did not, regardless of race, gender, or academic level. All of these findings imply that learning a second language improves scholastic proficiency in both English and other primary languages. Studies have shown that pupils who learn foreign languages generally outperform those who do not on standardized college entrance exams.

Theoretical Aspects of Language Learning:

Nativism: A person is born with an instrument to learn a language (the Language Acquisition Device, or LAD), according to Chomsky (1974), and must develop his own methods of using the language. People are naturally able to identify grammar categories for particular languages, such as phonology, vocabulary, and semantic, when they are learning the language. The nativist claims that because the language was so complicated and difficult, it was impossible to acquire it quickly through impersonation or copying. This present, which has been naturally designed to define the elements that might be of a grammar, is an instrument. When it comes to language comprehension, the LAD is thought of as a natural area of the brain that has nothing to do with other cognitive functions. Nativists think that children's development and mental maturity have an impact on their ability to communicate. Language acquisition and cognitive growth are divided by nativists. The reality that children pick up languages from their environments and have the capacity to alter their language if their environments change, however, was criticised in relation to this.

Behaviouristic: The capacity of children to talk and comprehend words is said by behaviourists to be acquired through environmental stimulation. As passive receivers of external influences, children play no active part in the process of verbal behaviour development. The behaviourist not only fails to acknowledge the child's active participation in the language learning process, but also fails to acknowledge the child's growth. The duration of training offered by the surroundings is a major factor in the process of language growth. The S-R (Stimulus - Response) connection concept and an imitation mechanism are what actually allow for communication. Children born without any talent were discovered by behaviourists. As a result, the surroundings must be conditioned, imitation must take place, and encouragement must be provided. A specialist examined language development from the perspective of stimulus-response, which saw thinking as an internal process of language beginning to form from encounters in the world. The other study examined how language develops from the perspective of social learning theory. Others countered that children learn best by doing, imitating, or simulating a model, which implied that they had not gotten any positive feedback from others.

Cognitivism: As a consequence of experience and reasoning, thought, which is a prerequisite for speaking, continues to evolve over time and occurs at every level of growth, according to Jean Piaget. Early language development and a wide range of children's activities, sights, and events, as well as touch, hear, see, feel, and scent, all have a significant impact on a child's overall development. According to Vygotsky, a child's cognitive and linguistic growth is closely correlated with their environment, including their communities and society. For activities that are challenging for toddlers to comprehend, Vygotsky coined the term Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD = Zone of Proximal Development). ZPD has a lower threshold for the amount of the issue that can be resolved by kids alone and a higher bar for the amount of additional duty that kids can take with adults' assistance.

Conclusion: The benefits of acquiring a second language include the relationship between the prefrontal brain and cognitive language, which can help with second language education.

Second, the process of learning a second language also has an impact on cognitive growth, including focus, recollection, and creativity, all of which improve as the process of learning a second language progresses. Thirdly, acquiring a second language helps children advance academically and outperform other pupils in their period. The early acquisition of a second language, however, has drawbacks. First of all, the adage "the sooner to acquire a second language, the better" is untrue. Children ought to take advantage of the chance to acquire even and early mastery of a second language in order to gain an inherent advantage. With the assistance of parents and qualified instructors, the responsibilities and the education can be managed properly. As children develop into bilingual adults, it is important to respect the native tongue and the second language equally. Children should start learning a foreign language as soon as feasible not only because of the advantage they naturally have but also because of the advantages that learning a second language provides.

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