

Language Development in Early Childhood Education, 5e (Otto)
Chapter 2 Theoretical Perspectives and Contexts of Language Development

2.1 Multiple Choice Questions

1) A language-specific mechanism that enables children to learn language through innate knowledge of language structure is known as

- A) the LASS.
- B) the LAD.
- C) a communication loop.
- D) child-directed speech.

Answer: B

2) The cognitive developmental perspective is based on the work of

- A) Cambourne.
- B) Pinker.
- C) Piaget.
- D) Chomsky.

Answer: C

3) The theoretical perspective that emphasizes the role of nurture and considers learning to occur based on the stimuli, responses, and reinforcements that occur in the environment is

- A) nativist.
- B) behaviorist.
- C) cognitive developmentalist.
- D) sociocultural.

Answer: B

4) Which of the following theoretical perspectives represents a hybrid approach to recognizing the interaction of nature and nurture in the language acquisition process?

- A) nativist
- B) cognitive developmentalist
- C) behaviorist
- D) interactive-emergentist

Answer: D

5) The brain is divided vertically into two sections called

- A) lateralization.
- B) hemispheres.
- C) dendrites.
- D) myelin sheath.

Answer: B

6) The cerebellum

A) is the outer layer of the cerebrum.

B) is a layer of fat cells that encase the axons.

C) is located in lower back area of the brain; associated with movement and coordination.

D) connects the spinal cord with parts of the body.

Answer: C

7) The brain and the spinal cord compose the

A) central nervous system.

B) peripheral nervous system.

C) speech mechanism.

D) synapse.

Answer: A

8) The area of interconnection between the axon terminal of one cell body and the dendrites of another cell body is called the

A) myelin sheath.

B) axon.

C) parietal lobe.

D) synapse.

Answer: D

9) The cerebral cortex is associated with

A) movement and coordination.

B) perception, thinking, and language.

C) transmitting signals to the speech mechanism.

D) the pharyngeal cavity.

Answer: B

10) Nerve cells in the brain are referred to as

A) dendrites.

B) axons.

C) synapses.

D) neurons.

Answer: D

11) The myelin sheath

A) is part of the peripheral nervous system.

B) connects dendrites to the synapses.

C) is a layer of fat cells that encases the axons.

D) is the outer layer of the cerebrum.

Answer: C

12) When an adult speaker simplifies the learning stimulus or task to encourage language interaction with a child, it is referred to as

- A) mediation.
- B) lateralization.
- C) a communication loop.
- D) receptive language.

Answer: A

13) Which of the following is a characteristic of child-directed speech?

- A) fast tempo
- B) short, well-formed utterances
- C) lower pitch
- D) even, monotone intonation

Answer: B

14) Which of the following interaction patterns is the adult using when she supports a child's speech by recognizing his linguistic capabilities and assisting him in building a conversation?

- A) mediation
- B) verbal mapping
- C) linguistic scaffolding
- D) repetition

Answer: C

15) Compared to home settings, conversations in classrooms

- A) are more tailored to the individual child.
- B) have more 'turns' or communication loops.
- C) have a longer 'wait time' for responding.
- D) have fewer 'turns' or communication loops.

Answer: D

2.2 Essay Questions

1) What are two implications of the cognitive developmental perspective for early childhood classrooms?

Answer: The cognitive developmental perspective encourages teachers to pay close attention to a child's stage of cognitive development and use that knowledge to plan learning activities.

2) Describe an implication of the nativist perspective for early childhood classrooms.

Answer: The nativist perspective encourages teachers to use a curriculum that will provide extensive opportunities for children to explore language and engage in hypothesis testing of their developing knowledge of language.

3) Describe an implication of the sociocultural perspective for early childhood classrooms.

Answer: The sociocultural perspective encourages teachers to focus on providing many social interactions in which oral and written language are used. In providing these opportunities, the focus would also be on creating a positive emotional context for this communication, providing motivation for continued attempts to communicate with others.

4) Describe two environmental agents that are associated with negative effects on early brain cell growth and development.

Answer: During prenatal and postnatal development, environmental agents, such as malnutrition and exposure to toxins can negatively impact brain cell growth and development.

5) How have studies of brain damage among children and adults contributed to an understanding of the role of the brain in language development and processing?

Answer: Studies of children and adults who have experienced brain damage have identified specific areas of the brain associated with language competencies. For example, Broca's research found that the loss of speech production appeared to be the result of damage to the lower area of the left frontal lobe of the cerebrum. Additional research has further documented the localization of language functions in the brain.

6) What is the role of eye contact and shared reference in a child's acquisition of language?

Answer: Eye contact and shared reference is a basic interaction pattern through which we begin communicating with children. Through eye contact and shared reference, objects and events are contemplated and become topics of conversation. When eye contact and shared reference are not established, communication often breaks down or is not even initiated as there is no clear common focus.

7) Identify one of the characteristics of child-directed speech and explain how this feature enhances language development.

Answer: One of the characteristics of child-directed speech that serves to enhance language development is that utterances have a higher pitch, and intonation is more exaggerated. Speech that has a higher pitch and more exaggerated intonation would hold children's attention more and enhance perception of speech sounds due to the wide variety of intonation.