

A Child's Development in Brief

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Abstract

This paper provides a brief development of a child from 4.5 months to 34 months. The discussion is limited in discussing two significant elements in a child's development: cognition and language. The subject is the writer's daughter and data is taken from observation. A child's development is a fascinating phenomenon. They have an innate capacity for language. As teachers or caretakers, it is our responsibility to develop children's full potentials. One of the ways is through scaffolding. How a child learns and develop their first language (L1) can be seen as a mirror to how children and even adult learn and develop their second language (L2). The theories can influence teachers in applying techniques in the classroom.

Key words: brief development, cognition, language

According to theory, there are four important factors that teachers or caretakers need to consider in a child's development. The four significant elements are: cognition, social/emotional, physical and language. In this essay, I will limit the discussion of cognition and language. The subject is the writer's daughter and observation will be conducted as a method of obtaining data.

Noam Chomsky, Jean Piaget and Vygotsky are experts concerned with children's cognitive development. Chomsky postulated language acquisition device, known as LAD.

LAD is the capacity to acquire first language. Chomsky claimed that every normal human being was born with LAD, some innate capacity for language. The LAD includes some knowledge about the nature and structure of human language. The LAD was offered as an explanation of why children develop competence in their first language in a relatively short time merely by being exposed to it. According to Chomsky, LAD makes it possible for children to attend to the language that the adults around them speak, make hypotheses about how it works and conclude an appropriate grammar. To prove Chomsky's theory, I would like to relate what I observed concerning Naia's very first word. At the age of 4.5 months, she was able to produce the word *mama* without ever being taught. A child at the age of 4 months produces sounds identical to consonants and vocals. This sound is called cooing. Later at six months, a child's cooing develops into babbling. Babbling starts with consonants and vocals. The first consonant sounds that a child makes are bilabial /p/, /m/, /b/ and the vocal is /a/. With this, there is a structure of CV (consonant-vocal). This explains why a child anywhere in the world around this age may utter sounds: papapa, mamama, bababab. Although Naia was 4.5 months, she was already babbling. There was no evidence that the word *mama* was being referred to naia as mother. It is a possibility that she was only practising her articulation. The fact that she was able to utter the word *mama* (I was referred to as *Ibu* at home) without being taught is evidence of Chomsky's theory on LAD. From here we can see that learning a language is something that a child cannot avoid.