

According to this theory, children are born with an innate ability or "language faculty" that allows them. 1

to learn any language they are exposed to. Learning-Based Theories: These theories, such as those proposed by B.F. Skinner and Jean Piaget, emphasize the role of environmental interaction and learning in language development. Skinner's behaviorist theory suggests that children acquire language through imitation, reinforcement, and conditioning. Piaget, on the other hand, highlighted the cognitive development of children, proposing that language acquisition is intertwined with broader cognitive development. Social Interactionist Theory: Lev Vygotsky's social interactionist theory places emphasis on the role of social interaction in language acquisition. According to this theory, children learn language through interactions with caregivers and other individuals. The process is seen as a socially driven phenomenon, where communication and social feedback are essential for language development. 2.

Stages of Language Acquisition Language acquisition unfolds in a predictable sequence of stages, with each stage building upon the previous one. The main stages include: Pre-linguistic Stage (0–12 months): During the first year, babies begin by cooing and babbling, producing sounds that resemble speech. This stage is characterized by pre-linguistic communication, including crying, cooing, and babbling, which help babies practice vocalization. They are also learning the phonetic sounds of their native language(s) during this stage. One-Word (Holophrastic) Stage (12–18 months): At around 12 months, children begin using single words (holophrases) to express entire thoughts. For example, they might say "milk" to indicate they want milk. Two-Word Stage (18–24 months): By the age of 18 months, children begin stringing two words together, forming simple sentences such as "want cookie" or "big truck." This stage demonstrates the growing ability to combine words and start using basic grammar. Early Multi-word Stage (2–3 years): As children's vocabulary increases, they begin to form more complex sentences. This stage marks the beginning of grammatical development, with children learning to use word order and tense markers. Later Multi-word Stage (3+ years): During this period, children expand their sentence structures, using more advanced grammatical elements, such as plurals, possessives, and prepositions. Their speech becomes more fluent, and they start to engage in longer conversations. 3. Speech Acquisition Speech acquisition is the process by which children learn to produce the sounds of their language. This process starts with the development of basic vocalizations and progresses to the mastery of speech sounds (phonemes). Cooing (around 6–8 weeks): Babies begin making cooing sounds, which are characterized by vowel-like sounds. This is the first stage of vocalization and helps babies practice controlling their vocal cords. Babbling (around 4–6 months): Babbling is the production of repetitive consonant-vowel combinations, such as "ba-ba" or "da-da." Theories of Language Acquisition Several theories attempt to explain how language is acquired, with notable contributions from linguists and psychologists