The paper reviewed and explored basically the pre-operational stage of development among children and its relationship with language development as well as other language developing factors including the brain, the environment. Attention was also paid to curriculum and teaching strategies that are adopted within the Ghana education system to help preschool children (under the preoperational stage) develop sufficient language skills.
The Pre-Operational Stage (2 – 7 years)

Characterized by actions and logical thinking hence the caption ‘operation’ by the Swiss psychologist. Preschoolers, toddlers and the actual early childhood starts within these age ranges. Language development is paramount in this stage of the child’s development as well as memory, imagination and symbolic developments. Child vocabulary increases from about 200 to 2,000 or more words depending on the individual child’s development abilities and needs; the environment as a paramount determinant. Learning language and rules concurrently, children yet are deficient in the adaptation capabilities to language logical relationships and evidently manipulation of information mentally becomes a challenge (Piaget, 1929, 1951; Piaget and Cook, 1952; Piaget, and Inhelder, 1956; Piaget, 1972, 1990).

The Pre-operational stage of the Piagetian cognitive development theory is remarkably characterized by irreversible thinking. Children within the age ranges as indicated; 2-7 years cannot reason logically reversibly especially when dealing with operations. For instance, a pre-operational child when asked 2+1 can easily give the answer as 3, but when may not be able logically understand 1+2. In addition, pre-operational children irrespective of environment and speed of development often record high egocentrism; the feeling that any other person thinks or should think equally as him (the child). That is, preschoolers under this stage are very self-centered and do not think or see the world in the view point of others (Piaget, 1929, 1951; Piaget and Cook, 1952; Piaget, and Inhelder, 1956; Piaget, 1972, 1990).
Composed of two hemispheres; right and left, the language function is located in the left hemisphere which is responsible for supervising the right side of the body whereas the right hemisphere supervises the left side of the body. Remarkedly, the left hemisphere dominates language development, rhythmic, perception, mathematical reasoning and temporal-order judgmental development. On the other hand, the right hemisphere is responsible for the development of pattern-matching face recognition and spatial orientation (Ahlsén, 2006; Deason and Marsolek, 2005).

Primarily, the left hemisphere breeds major brain components and devices that promote language learning and development from infancy. They include the Wernicke and Broca’s areas which were discovered in the 19th century and tremendously influenced development language studies among humans. Located in the language gauge of the brain, the left hemisphere, the two areas have consistently stood for language debates since their discoveries by the German and the French men in 1864 and 1876 respectively (Gazzaniga, et al., 2002; Springer and Deutsch, 1993; Ahlsén, 2006; Deason and Marsolek, 2005).

The Broca’s area is located in the frontal temporal lobe unlike the Wernicke’s which is found in the parietal temporal lobe of the left hemisphere (the language hub of the brain). These are sued as language devices which of course start to development three weeks from conception through birth to adulthood. Not only are the two areas in the hemisphere important but can also be categorized as the podium on which language is developed as the Broca’s area controls syntax while the Wernicke’s area controls semantic development of language among humans (Gazzaniga, et al., 2002; Springer and Deutsch, 1993; Ahlsén, 2006; Deason and Marsolek, 2005).
Following crying and other sensorimotor signals of children conveying and communicating meaning to parents between age 0 and 2 years of most children begin speaking at the latter aspect of the mentioned cycle, parents’ recast on children’s pronunciations, and conversation is a necessary language skills development tool within the family (Kyle, 2014; Dockrell, et al., 2004). Interactions where parents repeat what children say and pronounce can be categorized recast. Kyle, (2014) argued more language stimulating environment promote rapid development of language skills among children, an adult with enough oral language competence would have enough impact on the language development of children while a less stimulating hinder children’s language development process.

Before normal developing children enter preschool, they have by virtue of family attachment have developed some level of language competence according to the Piagetian Cognitive Development theory. At age 4 which when children by policy enter kindergarten in the Ghana education system, children have already conquered a reasonable context of mother’s tongue. Children can be observed responding to teachers and peers in their mothers’ tongues due their perceptual ways of thinking (egocentrism).

Ghana is a multi-ethnic national country of which due to the cultural diversity, language remains constantly different from one ethnic group to the other even within the same community. As such language development especially, the English Language is hard knot to crack because although children master their mother’s tongue, they cannot still express themselves in English at the tender ages of 3/4 years.
References


