Piaget Theory Of Speech Development Essay, Research Paper

Piaget theory of Speech Development

There are two classical theories of Speech development. The one that I will focus on is Piaget’s theory of Speech development. Jean Piaget, a Swiss, educated, mollusk biologist lived from 1896 to 1980. He hypothesized that learning is a physical, biological function of dealing with successfully with the environment. This is the basis for his theory. Looking at Piaget’s theory of Speech development in more detail we find that he based it on two biological tendencies. The two tendencies are organization, and adaptation. Organization as Piaget saw it said that humans are designed to organize their observations and experiences into coherent sets of meanings. This organization of observation makes the thinking process more efficient. If a person can put the things they observe in some sort of order the easier it is to remember and apply their observations. If we did not organize our observations and experiences we would have little bits of information floating around in our brains with no connection between them. Adaptation is according to Piaget’s theory is the tendency to adjust to the environment.

Adaptation is a process by which we create matches between our original observations and new ones that might not exactly fit together. Our original observations and conceptions are called our schemas. To adapt to new observations and experiences into our schemas we use one of two techniques. We can assimilate that information by putting it together with old schemas or conceptions. If the observations don’t fit nicely into our existing schemas we use the second of the adaptation techniques. We accommodate or change our schema to fit our observation. Piaget never said that our schemas had to be right or wrong. Our schemas are based on our own observations and experiences. We adapt to things because we are driven by the urge to have things “fit together” or to be in what Piaget calls equilibrium. As we use our adaptation and organization we constantly get things to fit together. There are other biological functions that also help in Speech development. Normal growth of a person helps a person to adapt and perceive things better.

Social interaction is also a biotic factor in Speech development. Humans use other humans to check their own schemas with others. We learn to use others thought relationships to help them fit their schemas together better. Piaget used the two biological tendencies and other biological functions of humans to come up with four stages of Speech development. Piaget said that each developing human must go through each stage in order. The first stage is the sensory-motor stage. The approximate age of the humans in this stage is birth to 2 years. Piaget says that children learn through manipulating concrete materials. Halfway through this stage the child has the ability to know that when an object leaves their view they don’t cease to exist they still are part of the physical world. This is the concept of object permanence. It also allows the child to hold a concept in their mind.

The Second stage of Piaget’s Speech development is the pre-operational stage. This stage occurs from 2 – 7 years of age and in it children master many symbols and concrete concepts. In this stage the child is also very egocentric. They have a hard time looking at more than one characteristic of the object their experiencing. In the third stage called the concrete-operational stage, children age 7- 11 start to think logically, learn about the law of conservation, and serial ordering. Conservation is the concept that matter is always the same despite the change in shape of an object. Serial ordering is being able to recognize that things can be put in order.

The forth and final stage is the formal-operational stage. From age 12 to adult, learners are able to think abstractly about real objects. They also use reasoning and logic to think abstractly about those objects. In this highest of the stage of development learners start to use complex language forms such as metaphors and the like. There are some weak points of Piaget’s theory. The first is that Piaget underestimated children’s capabilities. Most children mover through the first two stages much faster than Piaget said they would. On the other hand the last two stages Piaget overestimated the abilities of humans to master the stage. We must realize that because of the other biological factors each child will go through each stage in their own time, so at a given age not all children are at the same Speech stage. To apply Piaget’s theory in the classroom, we should remember the student’s developmental level and gear our teaching toward that.