Lecture

- Dr. Harold Johnson/Professor – Michigan State University

- Theoretical Approaches to Language Acquisition
  - Bohannon & Bonvillian, in Gleason (1997). Theoretical approaches to language acquisition. In Gleason, J.B. (Ed.). The development of language,(4th ed., pp. 259-316), Needham Heights, MA: Allyn Bacon.
  - Key questions to keep in mind re. this information:
    - "Why do infants/toddlers develop language?"
    - "What are the critical contexts and behavior that appear to foster that development?"
    - "How do I use this information to guide my language assessment and intervention work with d/hh students?"

...language development

- quick overview of language development process:
    - reflexive to patterned
    - signal to symbol
    - context (physical & interpersonal) bound to context free
    - nonverbal to nonverbal + verbal
    - simple to complex
    - short to extended
    - child like to adult like

...language development

- as we review this chapter and discuss the impact of deafness upon language development, please keep in mind the following critical points:
  - we are still learning how language develops
  - while there is a staggering amount of information available concerning language, language development, assessment and intervention, when it comes "right down to it", your beliefs of why and how language develops will dictate how you work to understand and enhance the language of d/hh students.

...language development

- three main theoretical perspectives:
  - Behavioral
  - Linguistic
  - Interactionist
- these perspectives differ in relation to their positions regarding:
  - which elements of should be focused upon:
    - structural vs. functional, i.e., form vs. function
  - how emerging language abilities should be measured:
    - competence vs. performance, i.e., understanding vs. use
  - the essential context that fosters language development:

Behavioral Perspective

- Behavioral Perspective
  - focus upon observable and measurable aspects of language behavior
  - search for environmental stimuli that can serve to produce target language behaviors
  - believes that language learning essentially occurs through "shaping" (i.e., stimulus, response, reinforcement...successive approximations) of the environment upon the child

... Behavioral Perspective

- essentially consider child language to be an immature form for adult language

- language assessment concentrates upon determining where, within the developmental sequence, a student's behavior is/should be....then, focus upon the resulting structures vs. functions of language (i.e., phonology, morphology & syntax vs. semantics & pragmatics)

... Behavioral Perspective

- language intervention concentrates upon breaking up the target language goal into their 'parts'.....training students to successively produce, first easy, then increasingly complex components of those parts....via use of extrinsic reward systems....until mastery is achieved and the students begins to spontaneously use the targeted language within the environment.
  - ??? ease of teaching
  - ??? amount of available teaching materials
  - ??? effect of teaching upon student's language behavior

... Linguistic Perspective

- Linguistic Perspective
  - focus upon the structures of language (i.e., phonology, morphology, syntax & semantics) and the rules that govern their use
  - consider the environment to be so strewn with errors as to make it impossible for the infant/child learn language from environmental cues....therefore language acquisition must be an innately driven process, as enabled by "language acquisition devices" (i.e., LADs)
  - these LADs occur as a natural process of the brain's maturation

... Linguistic Perspective

- LADs, in combination with the child's use of a "hypothesis testing" strategy, serve to enable the language acquisition process

- language assessment concentrates upon determining which rules of language use, i.e., phonology, morphology, syntax and semantics, the student does/does not display

- "couching" the resulting information in relation to the ideas/acts that the child wanted to convey (deep structure) and the resulting language forms they used to represent the intended message (surface structure)

...Linguistic Perspective

- language intervention concentrates upon students learning and then consistently using the rules that govern correct (i.e., adult) speech, words, word order and word meaning, i.e., a "metalinguistic" level knowledge of language
  - ??? ease of teaching
  - ??? amount of available teaching materials
  - ??? effect of teaching upon student's language behavior

Interactionist Perspective

- ## Interactionist Perspective
  - represents a "mid ground" between the Behavioralist and the Linguistic perspective of language development
    - believes that the environment has an impact upon the child and that the child has an impact upon the environment....resulting "interaction" serves to facilitate language development
    - believes that while language certainly has rule governed "forms," it is communicative functions and contextual requirements that govern the use of t hose forms (i.e., function dictates form)

... Interactionist Perspective

- believes that caregivers play an extremely important role in language development via their use of:
  - a) specialized registers (i.e., "mothereses" or "child directed speech")
    - follow child's perceived topical interest within the immediate context...focus upon the "here-and-now"
    - exaggerated use of face, gestures and voice
    - short, simple, slower, <u>comprehensible</u>, redundant, error free phrases and sentences
    - frequent use of questions
    - limited lexicon....focus upon content vs. function words
    - allow increased amount of time for child's response

(Schirmer, 2000)

... Interactionist Perspective

- ...believe that...:
  - b) the caregiver's use of scaffolding serves to:
    - consistently responding to child's reflexive to signal to symbolic behaviors
    - rephrasing (vs. correcting) those behaviors into a more "adult-like" context (i.e., a conversational exchange) and form (i.e., pronunciation, word selection and word order...just above/a bit "better" than the child's)
    - both modeling for and <u>expecting</u> the child to produce a more "adult-like" form of that behavior....with a particular emphasis upon using "social routines" (e.g., "...say Bye Bye") and games (e.g., "peek-a-boo")

... Interactionist Perspective

- ...believe that...:
  - c) infants/children play an active and critical part in the language development process through their:
    - active exploration and interest in their environment
    - use of a "hypothesis testing" strategy, e.g., "I wonder if I do this, if this will happen" = later crying with the expectation that Mom/Dad will come
    - need/desire to get what they want/need via becoming increasingly effective/efficient in controlling the behavior of those around them.....this is done by perceiving, understanding and using increasingly precise approximations of their caregivers/peers communicative behavior

... Interactionist Perspective

- language assessments concentrates upon determining:
  - the communication problems the student displays
  - why those problems are occurring, e.g., interactional context, disabling condition, learning pattern, etc.
  - what alternative, contextually acceptable and developmentally communicative/linguistic behaviors the student could use to resolve the communicative problems

... Interactionist Perspective

- language intervention concentrates upon:
  - modifying the environment (i.e., both physical and interpersonal) to give the student both the opportunity and reason to use an "alternative" communicative/linguistic behavior
  - providing the student with sufficient interactional experiences with their peers and caregivers so that the "alternative" behavior can be modeled, reinforced, successively used and <u>appropriately</u> rewarded.
    - ??? ease of teaching
    - ??? amount of available teaching materials
    - ??? effect of teaching upon student's language behavior