



Knowledge Organiser: Year 11 Psychology; LANGUAGE, THOUGHT AND COMMUNICATION

Piaget's theory

We learn through developing schemas (mental structures).

1

Language depends on thought: Thought and understanding first. Language develops after.

Young children: Can have language without understanding but will not be able to use it effectively.

The development of language: Sensorimotor stage (0-2 years): Children start to speak
Pre-operational stage (2-7 years): Talk about things not present.

Logical thinking: Concrete operational stage (7-11 years): children develop own ideas

EVALUATION

Supporting evidence: The order of children's two-word phrases shows understanding

Language come first: Sapir-Whorf hypothesis challenges Piaget suggesting that sometimes language come first

Schemas: These can't be scientifically measured

Variation in recall of events

3

Native Americans: The Hopi: Hopi don't distinguish past, present and future. This affects the way they think about time

Language affects recall of events: Memory for pictures affected by labels given (Carmichael)

EVALUATION

Limited sample: Only one individual studied from the Hopi

Ambiguous Materials: Carmichael's study not reflective of everyday life because less ambiguity

Variations in recognition of colours

4

Native Americans: The Zuni: Zuni people have only one word for shades of orange and yellow, and in a research study had difficulty distinguishing them

Language affects recall of colour: Berinmo people had difficulty recalling colours as they only have five words for colour

EVALUATION

Difficulties with cross-cultural understanding: Participants from other cultures may misunderstand the task or fail to communicate their answers correctly

Opposite results: Dani people had no problem matching colour despite having only two words for colour

The Sapir-Whorf hypothesis

Not possible to think about something you have now words for.

2

Thinking depends on language: Language comes first, thought afterwards.

Strong version: Language determines thought: If there are no words for an object or idea, then you can't think about it.

Weak version: Language influences thinking: Words help to 'carve up' the world. You can still imagine things with no words for them

Which version is better? Weaker version preferred. We have limited memory for things we have no words for

EVALUATION

Differences are exaggerated: Inuit culture may have only two words for snow not twenty-seven, English has four (Pellum)

Thoughts come before language: If there is lots of snow then this changes the way we perceive the environment

Restricted and elaborate code: Working-class children use restricted language which affects their ability to think, explaining lower intelligence

Von Frisch's bee study

5

AIM: To describe dances of honey bees to understand their communication

METHOD: Put food close to hive (10-20 metres) and far away (up to 300 metres). Observed bees 6000 times over 20 years.

RESULTS:

Round dance: Moving in a circle to show pollen less than 100 metres away.

Waggle dance: Figure of eight shape points direction.

60% of bees went to source at the distance indicated by the dance

CONCLUSION: Sophisticated communication system

EVALUATION

Scientific value: Opened eyes to capabilities of animals

Sounds matters too: Dances performed in silence ignored

Other factors are important: Bees don't respond to waggles dance if they have to fly over water

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Functions of animal communication

6

Survival: Vocal signals – Vervet monkeys communicate danger with an alarm call. Visual signals – Rabbits lift tail, pin ears back and leap forward. Enhances survival of the individual

Reproduction: Peacocks stretch out their feathers like an umbrella to communicate genetic fitness

Territory: Rhinos leave piles of dung to communicate territorial boundaries

Food: Ants leave pheromone trail to communicate food sources

Eye contact

When two people look at each other's eyes at the same time

Regulating flow of conversation: Participants looked away when about to speak and gave prolonged gaze when about to finish

Signalling attraction: People who use eye contact are judged as more attractive

Expressing emotion: Participants judged emotions as more intense if faces looking straight at them

EVALUATION

Real world application: People with autism find eye contact difficult, so we should all be more understanding of those don't use this form of NVC

Use of rating scales: Rating 'attractiveness' can lack objectivity

Artificial studies: Studies of eye contact involve artificial tasks which lack validity

Personal Space

The distance we keep between ourselves and others

Cultural differences: Large cultural differences in preferred distances. Saudi Arabia larger distances than England. May be explained by climate (warmer climate closer to strangers, farther from friends)

Gender differences: Women feel most uncomfortable when personal space invaded from the side, for men it is from the front

Status differences: People with similar status stand closer than those of unequal status

Unrepresentative samples: Experiments use samples of people who may not represent all men or all people within a culture

10

Properties of human communication not present in animal communication

7

Plan ahead and discuss future events: Humans can discuss things that aren't present or haven't happened yet (displacement). Animals are focused on present, e.g. food sources and predators

Creativity: Humans have an open system combining many words together. Animals have closed system using communication for specific events.

Single versus multiple channels: Human language expressed using many channels spoken, written, sign language, social media. Animals tend to communicate with a single channel, e.g. pheromones

Body language

Communication through unspoken movement and gestures

9

Open and closed posture: Closed = Crossing arms/legs, shows disagreement. Open = uncrossed, shows acceptance.

McGinley: Arguments given by person with open posture led to greater opinion change than closed posture

Postural echo: Copying each other's body position. Tanner and Chartrand found participants rated new drink more highly when presented with postural echo

Touch: Includes high fives, slapping etc. Fisher found if librarian touched student on hand when returning library books the librarian was judged more positively

EVALUATION

Real world application: People can use body language to build good relationships

Body language studies lack control: Could be other reasons (EVs) why participants like or dislike confederates

Body language studies are unethical: Lack of informed consent for being in field experiments, lowers trust in psychologists

Personal Space EVALUATION

Real world application: Useful in everyday life such as doctors using knowledge about cultural differences

10

Over Simplistic: Research investigates one factor at a time and not the interaction between them

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