

Required Writing Assignment

Please choose to answer only one of the following questions for your writing assignment. In your answer, please provide an opening statement, three arguments in support of your opening statement (opinion), three pieces of empirical research (i.e., studies) as support for your arguments, and a closing statement. You may use any empirical, rigorous scientific research as support however, do not use anecdotal evidence, or unpublished work. **You should use journal articles that report original data/studies as evidence.** If you do not know what this means or what kinds of papers to look for then you must ask me or your TA. Do not use textbooks, websites, chapters of edited books, review papers or meta-analyses as evidence. Please be sure to provide references for your empirical support (APA-format; with reference list and paper citations in text).

Option 1: In your opinion and based on scientific evidence, do you think scientific evidence supports a formalist view or a functionalist view on the relation between language and communication? That is, do you think that the need to communicate and/or the act of communication plays a role in the development of language form (i.e., syntax; morphology)?

What, if any, properties of children's early communicative experience support their development of communicative skills and their development of language? How important is early communicative experience to later language development? Some argue that communication and early communicative experience is the primary driver or force behind later language development. That is, some theories explain language development as motivated by the urge to communicate. Others argue for a more moderate position saying that communicative interaction contributes to language development but is not the sole reason or purpose for language development. Both of these positions would be akin to the functionalist view of the relation between communication and language, that is, language is a system shaped and/or supported by the communicative functions it serves. Still, others argue for the formalist view of the relation between communication and language, that is, the structure and development of language has nothing to do with its communicative role. **In your answer to the proposed question, you will want to consider whether you think there is evidence to link early communicative skill to later language development. You may want to consider research by Jean Berko-Gleason, Anne Fernald, Susan Goldin-Meadow, Michael Tomasello, Erika Hoff, Catherine Snow, Noam Chomsky and Steven Pinker.**

- or -

Option 2: In your opinion and based on scientific evidence, what mechanisms/biases/experiences/assumptions do you believe are important for a typical infant's/children's (0-5 years) lexical development (first/native language only)?

What mechanisms support infants' ability to learn the meanings of words? Some argue that that infants use word-learning assumptions, like mutual exclusivity (e.g., Ellen Markman), the whole-object assumption (e.g., Ellen Markman and Sandra Waxman) or the shape bias (e.g., Linda Smith). Others argue that children use the syntax of a sentence to guide word meaning (Syntactic Bootstrapping Hypothesis; e.g., Leticia Naigles, and Roger Brown). Some place a particular importance on pragmatic principles for word learning, such as understanding the communicative intentions of the speaker (e.g., Dare Baldwin and Amanda Woodward). Finally, there are some theories of word learning that suggest that all of these mechanisms have a role, but that some are more important to the beginning word learner, while others are used by only children who have

some words already in their lexicon (e.g., Emergentist Coalition Model; Kathryn Hirsh-Pasek and Roberta Golinkoff). **You may want to consider research discussed in the section of your textbook called “The Process of Word Learning” (pp153-163, 5th Edition)**

Paper Format

Please format your paper into 5 separate paragraphs – an opening statement, three paragraphs for your three arguments and accompanying description of empirical evidence and a closing statement.

- Opening Statement = should include a restatement of the question posed to you in the assignment, your opinion (clearly stated), and a description of the three arguments you will use to support your opinion. For each of three arguments, I suggest a one-sentence summary of the specific findings from the study you will review below in each argument paragraph. Thus, you will have three sentences, each summarizing specific findings (arguments) in support of your opinion.
- First Argument = you should start this paragraph with your first argument in support of your opinion. Again, I suggest a one-sentence summary of the specific findings from the study you are about to review in this paragraph. This argument should be the very first sentence of the paragraph. The bulk of the paragraph will then be used to describe research in support of this argument. You should describe at least one empirical study in support of your first argument in some detail. In your description of the study, please include the following information: (1) a description of the question the authors were examining; (2) a description of who and how many participants were used; (3) a description of the stimuli and/or assessments used to gather information on participants; (4) a description of the procedure used to gather this data; (5) the type of data collected (provide information about independent and dependent variables); (6) a summary of specific results of study; (7) a statement of how these specific findings provide support for your opinion.
- Second Argument = you should start this paragraph with your second argument in support of your opinion. Again, I suggest a one-sentence summary of the specific findings from the study you are about to review in this paragraph. This argument should be the very first sentence of the paragraph. The bulk of the paragraph will then be used to describe research in support of this argument. You should describe at least one empirical study in support of your first argument in some detail. In your description of the study, please include the following information: (1) a description of the question the authors were examining; (2) a description of who and how many participants were used; (3) a description of the stimuli and/or assessments used to gather information on participants; (4) a description of the procedure used to gather this data; (5) the type of data collected (provide information about independent and dependent variables); (6) a summary of specific results of study; (7) a statement of how these specific findings provide support for your opinion.
- Third Argument = you should start this paragraph with your third argument in support of your opinion. Again, I suggest a one-sentence summary of the specific findings from the study you are about to review in this paragraph. This argument should be the very first sentence of the paragraph. The bulk of the paragraph will then be used to describe research in support of this argument. You should describe at least one empirical study in support of your first argument in some detail. In your description of the study, please include the following

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information: (1) a description of the question the authors were examining; (2) a description of who and how many participants were used; (3) a description of the stimuli and/or assessments used to gather information on participants; (4) a description of the procedure used to gather this data; (5) the type of data collected (provide information about independent and dependent variables); (6) a summary of specific results of study; (7) a statement of how these specific findings provide support for your opinion.

- Closing Statement = should include a restatement of the question posed to you in the assignment, your opinion (clearly stated), and a description of the three arguments you will use to support your opinion. For each of three arguments, I suggest a one-sentence summary of the specific findings from the study you will review below in each argument paragraph. Thus, you will have three sentences, each summarizing specific findings (arguments) in support of your opinion.

Note: All assignments must be typed double-spaced, 12-point Times (or Times New Roman) font. There are no minimum or maximum page limits; but please be sure to review the grading rubric. All assignments will be run through Turnitin Software and I will examine Turnitin results carefully for issues with plagiarism. Any assignment returning a similarity score of 20% or higher will be carefully examined for plagiarism.

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Dr. Shannon Pruden

Name:

Assignment:

DETAILED GRADING RUBRIC	POINTS
OPENING STATEMENT	
Restatement of Question Posed (2 points)	
Clear Statement of Opinion (2 points)	
Summary of Argument 1 Provided (2 points)	
Summary of Argument 2 Provided (2 points)	
Summary of Argument 3 Provided (2 points)	
Arguments Summarized <i>Specific Findings/Based On Evidence</i> (2 points)	
FIRST ARGUMENT PARAGRAPH	
First Sentence Summarizes Argument (2 points)	
Argument Summarized <i>Specific Findings/Based On Evidence</i> (2 points)	
Empirical Journal Article Reporting Original Data Used (2 points)	
Description of Article's Research Question Summarized (2 points)	
Description of Participants Summarized (2 point)	
Description of Stimuli/Assessments Summarized (2 points)	
Description of Procedure Used to Gather Data Summarized (2 points)	
Description of Independent, Dependent Variables (2 points)	
Summary of Specific Study Results Provided (2 points)	
Statement of How Specific Findings Provide Support for Opinion (2 points)	
SECOND ARGUMENT PARAGRAPH	
First Sentence Summarizes Argument (2 points)	
Argument Summarized <i>Specific Findings/Based On Evidence</i> (2 points)	
Empirical Journal Article Reporting Original Data Used (2 points)	
Description of Article's Research Question Summarized (2 points)	
Description of Participants Summarized (2 point)	
Description of Stimuli/Assessments Summarized (2 points)	
Description of Procedure Used to Gather Data Summarized (2 points)	
Description of Independent, Dependent Variables (2 points)	
Summary of Specific Study Results Provided (2 points)	
Statement of How Specific Findings Provide Support for Opinion (2 points)	
THIRD ARGUMENT PARAGRAPH	
First Sentence Summarizes Argument (2 points)	
Argument Summarized <i>Specific Findings/Based On Evidence</i> (2 points)	
Empirical Journal Article Reporting Original Data Used (2 points)	
Description of Article's Research Question Summarized (2 points)	
Description of Participants Summarized (2 point)	
Description of Stimuli/Assessments Summarized (2 points)	
Description of Procedure Used to Gather Data Summarized (2 points)	
Description of Independent, Dependent Variables (2 points)	
Summary of Specific Study Results Provided (2 points)	
Statement of How Specific Findings Provide Support for Opinion (2 points)	

CLOSING STATEMENT
Restatement of Question Posed (2 points)
Clear Statement of Opinion (2 points)
Summary of Argument 1 Provided (2 points)
Summary of Argument 2 Provided (2 points)
Summary of Argument 3 Provided (2 points)
Arguments Summarized <i>Specific Findings/Based On Evidence</i> (2 points)
GRAMMAR/PAPER CONSTRUCTION
Followed 5-Paragraph Format (2 points)
No/Few Spelling Errors (2 points)
No/Few Run-On Sentences (2 points)
Cited Author/Year In Text (2 points)
Included Reference Page (2 points)
CONVINCING
Argument 1 was Convincing (2 points)
Argument 2 was Convincing (2 points)
Argument 3 was Convincing (2 points)
TOTAL SCORE (OUT OF 100)