

Chapter 6

Piaget's Cognitive-Developmental Theory

- 1st stage- **sensorimotor stage**: spans the first two years of life. Piaget believed that infants and toddlers “think” with their eyes, ears, hands, and other sensorimotor equipment. They cannot yet carry out many activities inside their heads
 - **Schemes**: specific psychological structures—organized ways of making sense of experience— change with age.
 - **Ex**: at 6 months, Timmy dropped objects in a fairly rigid way, simply by letting go of a rattle or teething ring and watching with interest. By 18 months, his “dropping scheme” had become more deliberate and creative—tossing objects down the stairs or bounced off other walls. Instead of acting on objects, he will show evidence of thinking before he acts (transition from sensorimotor to preoperational)
 - **Adaptation**: involves building schemes through direct interaction with the environment
 - **Assimilation**: we use our current schemes to interpret the external world
 - Ex: when Timmy dropped objects, he was assimilating them all into his sensorimotor “dropping scheme”.
 - **Accommodation**: we create new schemes or adjust old ones after noticing that our current ways of thinking do not capture the environment completely
 - Ex: when Timmy dropped objects in different ways, he modified his dropping scheme to take account of the varied properties of objects
 - **Organization**: a process that takes place internally, apart from direct contact with the environment. Once children form new schemes, they rearrange them, linking them with other schemes to create a strongly interconnected cognitive system
 - Ex: Tilly will relate “dropping” to “throwing” and to his developing understanding of “nearness” and “farness”.
- The Sensorimotor Substages
 1. **Reflective schemes** (birth-1 month): newborn reflexes
 2. **Primary circular reactions** (1-4 months): simple motor habits centered around the infants own body
 3. **Secondary circular reactions** (4-8 months): actions aimed at repeating interesting effects in the surrounding world; imitation of familiar behaviors
 4. **Coordination of secondary circular reactions** (8-12 months): intentional, or goal-directed behavior; ability to find a hidden object, anticipation of events, and imitation of behaviors

- **A-not-B search error:** if they reach several times for an object at a first hiding place (A), then see it moved to a second (B), they still search for it in the first hiding place (A).
- 5. **Tertiary circular reactions** (12-18 months): exploration of the properties of objects by acting on them in novel ways; ability to search in several locations for a hidden object
- 6. **Mental representation** (18 months-2 years): internal depictions of objects and events, as indicated by sudden solutions to problems; ability to find an object that has been moved while out of sight; deferred imitation; and make-believe play
 - **Mental representations:** internal depictions of information that the mind can manipulate.
 - *Images:* mental pictures of objects, people, and spaces
 - *Concepts:* categories in which similar objects or events are grouped together
 - **Deferred imitation:** the ability to remember and copy the behavior of models who are not present
- **Circular reaction:** provides a special means of adapting their first schemes. It involves stumbling onto a new experience caused by the baby's own motor activity. The reaction is "circular" because as the infant tries to repeat the event again and again, a sensorimotor response that originally occurred by chance becomes strengthened into a new scheme.
 - Ex: at 2 months accidentally smacking your lips and finding the new sound intriguing. After a few days of repeating the new sound she became quiet an expert at smacking her lips

Information-Processing System

- **Sensory register:** first place information enters, where sights and sounds are represented directly and stored briefly
 - Ex: by attending to some information more carefully than to other information, you increase the chances that it will transfer to the next step of the information-processing system
- **Working or short-term memory:** in the second part of the mind, we actively apply mental strategies as we "work" on a limited amount of information
 - Ex: if you are studying this book effectively, you are taking notes, repeating information to yourself, or grouping pieces of information together.
- **Long-term memory:** the third and largest storage area our permanent knowledge base
- **Recognition:** noticing when a stimulus is identical or similar to one previously experienced
- **Recall:** remembering something without perceptual support
 - Ex: to recall, you must generate a mental image of the past experience

- **Zone of proximal development:** refers to a range of tasks that the child cannot yet handle alone but can do with the help of more skilled partners

Language Development

- **The Behaviorist Perspective**
 - B.F. Skinner proposed that language, like any other behavior, is acquired through operant conditioning. As the baby makes sounds, parents reinforce those that are most like words with smiles, hugs, and speech in return
- **The Nativist Perspective**
 - Noam Chomsky proposed a nativist account that regards the young child's amazing language skills as a uniquely human accomplishment, etched into the structure of the brain.
 - Focusing on grammar, Chomsky reasoned that the rules for sentence organization are much too complex to be directly taught to or discovered by even a cognitively adept young child.
 - Rather, all children have a **language acquisition device (LAD)**—an innate system that contains a universal grammar, or set of rules common to all languages. It enables children, no matter which language they hear, to understand and speak in a rule-oriented fashion as soon as they pick up enough words.
- **Cooing:** around 2 months, babies begin to make vowel-like noises
- **Babbling:** around 6 months, infants repeat consonant-vowel combinations, often in long strings, such as “babababa”

Chapter 7

Erikson's Theory of Infant and Toddler Personality

- **Basic Trust versus Mistrust**
 - When the *balance of care* is sympathetic and loving, the psychological conflict of the first year—**basic trust versus mistrust**—is resolved on the positive side
 - As a result, he feels confident about venturing out and exploring it, and he emerges from this stage well-prepared for the challenges of toddlerhood
- **Autonomy versus Shame and Doubt**
 - The conflict of toddlerhood, **autonomy versus shame and doubt**, is resolved favorably when parents provide young children with suitable guidance and reasonable choices
 - A self-confident, secure 2 year old has parents who do not criticize or attack him when he fails at new skills; using the toilet, eating with a spoon, or putting away toys
 - Basic trust and autonomy grow out of warm, sensitive parenting and reasonable expectations for impulse control starting in the second year