

# GESTALT LANGUAGE PROCESSING

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The purpose of this article is to provide a general overview of a current theory of language development. Please review article listed at the bottom.

## WHAT IS THAT?

**Gestalt** = multi-word "chunk"

**Delayed echolalia** = words that are repeated after significant time delay (e.g. movie line, song verse, familiar phrase)

**Gestalt language processing** = a style of language development that moves from whole, memorized phrases to single words/combinations then to sentences

- "Large-to-small" way to learn language
- Seen more often in neurodiverse populations

**Analytic language processing** = a style of language development that moves from single words gradually to sentences

- "Small-to-large" way to learn language
- Most common form of language development

However, this is not all-or-nothing. People can exhibit a combination of both styles of development.

### ANALYTIC



### GESTALT



Credit: The Informed SLP

[www.theinformedslp.com/review/let-s-give-them-something-to-gestalt-about](http://www.theinformedslp.com/review/let-s-give-them-something-to-gestalt-about)

## Gestalt

Memorized phrases

"I love you, you love me"

Mixing phrases

"I love Dad, Dad love me"

Single words & word combinations

"love dad"

Self-generated sentences & grammar

"I love my dad"

## Analytic

Single words

"Dad"

Word combinations

"love Dad"

Self-generated sentences & grammar

"I love my dad"

## TIPS

- Memorized phrases/gestalts/delayed echolalia serve many communicative functions
  - For example, "Do you want to build a snowman?" may mean "I want to go out to play" or "Can we watch Frozen?", etc.
- Seek to understand what might be the underlying communicative purpose
- Validate and honor communication at all language processing stages
- Avoid lots of questions or prompts. Instead, make comments during activities and play. This invites spontaneous communication
  - For example, "Wow, that tower is so tall!"



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