

An Overview of Language

Normal Language Development

- ◆ Orderly though a lot of individual variation
- ◆ 7 to 8 years adult-like language
- ◆ Important language skills develop into adolescence and beyond

The Prelinguistic Period: The First 12 Months

- ◆ Newborn communication
- ◆ Precursors of language use
- ◆ Basic pragmatic elements of speech
 - Illocution
 - Intention
 - Locution
 - Expression
 - Perlocution
 - Response

The Prelinguistic Period: The First 12 Months (cont'd)

- ◆ Perlocutionary period (0 to 8 months)
 - Caregiver role because infant not intentionally communicative
- ◆ Protoconversations (3 months)
 - Caregiver initiated
 - Followed by greeting behaviours then play dialogue
 - Teach infants basics of conversation
 - Triadic interactions (6 months)

The Prelinguistic Period: The First 12 Months (cont'd)

- ◆ Use of gestures (6 to 12 months)
 - ◆ Proto-declarative
 - Directs visual attention
 - Engages interaction
 - ◆ Proto-imperative
 - Express needs or wants

The Prelinguistic Period: The First 12 Months (cont'd)

- ◆ Illocutionary period (8 to 12 months)
 - Joint attentional activities
 - Follow eye direction
 - Basis for pairing words with objects
- ◆ Locutionary period (12 to 18 months)
 - First words
 - "True language"

Babbling & Other Early Sounds

Stage	Begins	Description
Crying	At birth	Signals of distress
Cooing	At about 1 to 2 months	"Ooo" sounds that occur during social exchanges with caregiver
Babbling	Middle of first year	Strings of consonant-vowel combinations
Patterned Speech	Close of first year	Strings of pseudowords made up of phonemes in native language and that sounds like words

The First Word Period

♦ Phonology

- True word
 - Has recognizable phonetic form
- Great deal of individual variation
 - Pronounce word as single sound rather than combination of individual sounds
 - Changes after 50 words

The First Word Period (cont'd)

♦ Semantic

- Naming explosion
 - Rapid increase in vocabulary
 - ~1½ years
- By 2 years
 - 900 words
- By 6 years
 - 8000 words

What Kinds of Words do Children Learn First?

♦ Nelson (1973)

- Mothers diarized first 50 words learned
- General or specific nominals

Word Category	%
Object words	65
Action words	13
Modifiers	9
Personal/social words	8
Function words	4

♦ Recent studies

- Challenge assumption that object words predominate (BUT)

What Kinds of Words do Children Learn First? (cont'd)

♦ Nouns

- Can act on them
- Conceptually simpler to encode than verbs or adjectives

Errors in Early Word Use

♦ Overextension

- One word for many things
 - Ball = ball, balloon, marble, apple, spherical water tank
 - Moon = moon, lemon slice, circular chrome dial on dishwasher, half a cheerio
- Common and predictable

♦ Underextension

- One word for a very specific thing
 - Car for father's black Volkswagen and truck for any other automobile including mother's white Civic

The First Word Period (cont'd)

- ◆ Holophrase
 - Single word that seems to represent thought or idea
 - "Down" or "Me"
 - Intonation, context, gestures
 - "Down!" vs. "Down?" vs. "Down."
 - Lessons in communicative competence or pragmatics

Holophrases to Simple Sentences: The Telegraphic Period

- ◆ Telegraphic language
 - Two word utterances with content rather than function words
 - Exceptions include *no, you, more, off*
 - Varies depending on intonation, context, accompanying
 - Semantic relations
 - agent + action mommy come; daddy sit
 - action + object drive car; eat grape
 - agent + object mommy sock; baby book
 - entity + location go park; sit chair
 - possessor + possession my teddy; mommy dress
 - entity + attribute box shiny; crayon big
 - demonstrative + entity dat money; dis telephone

Language Learning During the Preschool Period

- ◆ Speech
 - More intelligible
- ◆ Phonology
 - Early and late developing sounds (10 or 11 years)
- ◆ Semantics
 - Spatial > temporal words until ~ 10 years
 - Some spatial prepositions more difficult
 - *In front of*
 - *Next to*
 - Referent?

Language Learning During the Preschool Period (cont'd)

- ◆ Morphological development
 - Irregular forms
 - Correct use (vocabulary words)
 - Incorrect use (learning of general rules)
 - "He runned"
 - "I seed a dog"
 - Plurals, possessives, comparatives, superlatives, noun and adverb derivations, prefixes

Language Learning During the Preschool Period (cont'd)

- ◆ Syntax
 - Complexity indicated by length and structures
 - Multiword utterances
 - subject + verb + object
 - Negatives
 - Questions
 - Yes/No
 - "Wh-" (order of acquisition dependent on understanding of certain concepts)
 - Compound and complex sentences

Language Learning During the Preschool Period (cont'd)

- ◆ Pragmatics
 - Social and creative use of language
 - Competence includes expression of appropriate pragmatic intentions
 - Speech acts (situations or events)
 - Discourse (socially based conversation)
- ◆ Communicative competence goes beyond language structure

Rules of Pragmatics

- ◆ Engage listener
- ◆ Sensitive to listener feedback
- ◆ Adjust language to listener
- ◆ Adjust language to situation
- ◆ Be a good listener
- ◆ Evaluate

Language, Literacy, and Education

- ◆ Early grades
 - Learning to read (and write)
- ◆ Upper grades
 - Reading (and writing) to learn
- ◆ Kindergarten
 - Enter with solid base in auditory-oral language system
 - Competence in listening and speaking relating to later achievement

Language, Literacy, and Education (cont'd)

- ◆ Achieving literacy
 - Reading, writing, listening, speaking
 - Begins at birth
- ◆ Emergent literacy and preliteracy
 - Child's home and family environment
 - E.g., print materials in home
 - Adult-child storybook reading

Language, Literacy, and Education (cont'd)

- ◆ Elementary vs. Secondary School
- ◆ Elementary Grades
 - Kindergarten
 - Readiness grade
 - Introduction to reading and writing
 - Emphasizes relationship between spoken and print
 - Scripts and routines of formal group instruction

Language, Literacy, and Education (cont'd)

- ◆ Elementary Grades (cont'd)
 - First Grade
 - Formal reading and writing instruction
 - Second Grade
 - Independence in reading
 - Third Grade
 - Transition grade
 - Independent reading and cursive writing

Language, Literacy, and Education (cont'd)

- ◆ Elementary Grades (cont'd)
 - Fourth, Fifth, and Sixth Grades
 - Acquiring content area information
- ◆ Secondary Grades
 - Lectures, rotating classes, emphasis on independent learning, emphasis on writing
- ◆ Importance of language for educational achievement