In Preparation

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Psychobiological Aspects of Reading

Other Titles of Interest

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Language and Language Disorders in Childhood

L. A. HERSOV, M. BERGER and D. SHAFFER
Aggression and Antisocial Behaviour in Childhood and Adolescence

J. H. KAHN and J. P. NURSTEN
Unwillingly to School, 3rd Edition

C. H. KEMPE and A. WHITE FRANKLIN
The Abused Child in the Family and in the Community

M. MORRIS
Saying and Meaning in Puerto Rico

T. TAYLOR
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A Related Journal

LANGUAGE & COMMUNICATION
An Interdisciplinary Journal

Editor: ROY HARRIS, University of Oxford

The primary aim of this new journal is to fill the need for a publicational forum devoted to the discussion of topics and issues in communication which are of interdisciplinary significance. It will publish contributions from researchers in all fields relevant to the study of verbal and non-verbal communication.

Emphasis will be placed on the implications of current research for establishing common theoretical frameworks within which findings from different areas of study may be accommodated and interrelated.

By focusing attention on the many ways in which language is integrated with other forms of interactional behaviour it is intended to explore ways of developing a science of communications which is not restricted by existing disciplinary boundaries.

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General Editor's Preface

One of many anecdotes circulated about the distinguished American physiologist, Anton J. Carlson, relates to his custom of confronting fledgling scientists, after the first presentation of their research, with the question: "Why did you do it?" This is a sensible question to ask regarding any new project, including the introduction of a new series of Monographs on Psychobiology and Learning.

Psychobiology represents an integrated holistic approach to learning, behavior, and physical, mental, and emotional health. Psychobiology is based on a unitary concept of mind-brain and nature-nurture interrelationship. It rests on the assumption that the central nervous system represents the physico-chemical basis of learning, emotion, and behavior. As figuratively expressed by Ralph W. Gerard, one of America's outstanding neurophysiologists, "For every crooked thought, there must be a crooked molecule." Similarly, the various configurations of molecules in a living organism, and especially in humans, are, in turn, influenced by a variety of physico-chemical, as well as psychosocial stimuli, thus justifying the Bard of Avon's expression: "We are such stuff as dreams are made of."

In the light of the foregoing, the object of this series of Monographs on Psychobiology and Learning will be:

1. to incorporate into learning theory and practice, principles and methods derived from recent remarkable developments in psychobiology and studies on mechanisms of psychobiologic integration of perceptual, behavioral, and physiologic functions;

2. to elucidate the relationship of recent discoveries regarding the right-left structural and functional asymmetries in the brain to rational-verbal and intuitive-nonverbal types of learning and communication and the problems of creativity, esthetics, and ethics;

3. to clarify the interactions between genetics and psychosocial, cultural, and emotional factors in the differential abilities of students to learn various concepts and skills and to develop independent functioning abilities and wholesome social interactions;

4. to elucidate the effects of stress and anxiety (in students and teachers) on learning, social communication, and adaptive behavior;

5. to bring to the attention of teachers and students, studies on the development of adaptive coping mechanisms in meeting stressful situations and improving learning skills.

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Samuel A. Corson
Preface

This volume represents a broad and comprehensive effort to consider the processes involved in the development of communicative skills in the young child, in particular as these unfold during the child's participation in social interactions in a variety of everyday, educational situations. For a fuller understanding of these processes, through which the child learns the vast array of communicative skills necessary to function effectively in social contexts, it is necessary to consider the broad range of situations in which the communicative exchanges are embedded--school, home, community, etc. The chapters in this book reflect a wide range of interests and the authors represent a diverse set of disciplines. They are linked together by an underlying theme—the social genesis of communication and its inextricable interrelationship (ties) with the contexts in which it develops.

Some of the chapters in this volume are based on papers presented and discussed at an invited interdisciplinary conference on social interaction and language development held at The Ohio State University in May 1976. The conference was conducted under the auspices and with the financial support of the following units: The Graduate School, College of Education, College of Humanities, Department of Linguistics, and the Department of Early and Middle Childhood Education. The participants in the conference were Drs. Louise Cherry, Jean Berko Gleason, Dell Hymes, Vera John-Steiner, Elinor Keenan, Deborah Keller-Cohen, Mary Ritchie Key, Elliot G. Mishler, and Roger Shuy. Dean Hymes and Dr. Shuy were the keynote speakers. In addition, the following nine Ohio State University faculty members participated as discussion leaders or chairpersons: Virgina Allen, Sharon Fox, Olga Garnica, Martha King, Maia Mertz, Gay Pinnell, Victor Rentel, Kevin Ryan, and Johanna de Stefano.

We owe thanks to many who helped to make the conference and this book possible. We are, of course, indebted to the various authorities of The Ohio State University for generously supporting the conference. We thank Mary Kühner for her original efforts in arousing interest in holding a co-sponsored conference on this topic, to Ilse Lehiste for her early support of the idea, and to the many colleagues and students who gave their time and encouragement without which the conference could not have taken place. We thank the conference participants for their fine presentations and all the authors who contributed papers to the volume. We acknowledge with pleasure the assistance and advice given to us by the series editor, Dr. Samuel Corson, and the publishers.

We are also grateful to Marlene Payha and Barbara Fincher for performing the many secretarial tasks that were thrust upon them as a result of the conference and subsequent manuscript preparation. We are especially indebted to Linda Weiss whose accurate and efficient work in typing the manuscripts in final form made the task of preparing the volume manageable. Our thanks
also to Nancy Ensign who assisted in checking the manuscript and to David Borker who assisted in the final stages of preparing the indexes. Without their efforts this book would not have been possible.

Olga K. Garnica
Martha L. King

Columbus, Ohio
May 1978
Introduction

There has been a slow but steady, ever growing trend in the last half decade for some linguists and some educators to come together to explore how children learn and use language to communicate in a set of social settings, what could be termed educational contexts—both formal and informal. This is a critical undertaking for both sides. It is an important venture for educational researchers and teachers whose need is to understand the educational setting and convert this understanding into a form that can be acted upon directly. It is an equally important venture for the linguist, especially the developmental psycholinguist, who seeks to understand how language functions for the child in his/her social world and also sees the need to make such research efforts relevant to the urgent social problems that surround us.

Past associations between these two fields have a long standing but often rocky history filled all too often with false promises, unrealistic demands and a certain amount of pettiness and distrust from both sides. The papers in this book are written from the shared broad perspective that language is to be viewed within the dynamics of the wider social context in which it is embedded, that it not only created and shaped by the situation but shares in creating the context itself. The focus is on the social interaction that takes place between child and adult (or another child). This interaction occurs in a variety of situations—home and other informal teaching contexts to the formal classroom.

The papers in this volume cover many facets of language use, but throughout there is a general theme of understanding how social goals are achieved in educational situations through the use of communicative skills. This theme is addressed from many perspectives. Some of the papers identify pervasive global problems in the communicative process. Others present an analysis of relevant and essential information accumulated in some aspect of linguistics. Still other present detailed micro-analyses of very specific interactional protocols. Traditional views on some issues, such as those related to sex differences and those dealing with egocentric speech, are reconsidered. Many current practices in education, e.g., those regarding traditional methods of assessing language skills, are questioned. In all, many challenges to current research methodologies and actual practices are presented.

The first paper by Dell Hymes sets the scene for those to follow by painting a vivid picture of human discrimination and prejudice which touches every child involved in the education process in our country, a result he links to language ignorance. He admonishes linguists for failing to give more attention to the needs of society and calls for educators to become more aware of the critical role of language in all kinds of learning situations. From a somewhat different perspective, Roger Shuy sketches some of the contributions of linguistics to education and delineates some of the problems
involved in reaching greater cooperation between linguists and educators. He stresses that a greater understanding of language functions in the learning process is dependent upon studying language within that learning context. In many instances, however, linguists have difficulty getting access to such environments, partly because teachers are often wary of the potential value of this research for them and partly because professional relationships between the researcher and the teacher have not always been adequately established. Other factors, such as the complexity of the entire formal education complex and the increasing concern of the public, especially parents, about the use of children as objects of investigation have served to limit investigations.

Despite these problems and restrictions, the papers that follow show that considerable work is currently underway and that the problems and issues addressed by such research have important implications for the education of children. There are six major issues or themes which are addressed by the authors:

1. The interplay of environmental versus biological factors in the acquisition of communicative skills.
2. The role of sex as a variable in the acquisition and use of communicative skills.
3. The importance of considering the notion of both communicative competence and interactional competence and the different approaches available to study.
4. The problems and effects of the bilingual experience on the child's communicative abilities.
5. The effect of informal versus variously structured formal educational experiences on the child's communicative output.
6. The need to consider the expressive aspects of communication in conjunction with studying the referential aspects of children's communication.

In the discussion that follows no attempt is made to comprehensively examine these broadly defined areas of concern. Many of these issues have been discussed to one degree or another in the Hymes and Shuy articles, in previous articles by these authors, and by others. In any case, a full and detailed discussion of each would take up considerably more space than is available here.

ENVIRONMENTAL VERSUS BIOLOGICAL FACTORS

The nature versus nurture controversy seems to be with us as much as ever, albeit in a different form. The current general consensus among psychologists, linguists, etc., seems to be that both biological and social factors are present as forces in the developmental process and that they interact to produce adult behavior. The difficulty lies in the identification of factors belonging to one or the other category and in the problem of how to characterize this interaction. These difficulties and the futility of approaching development from the interactionist perspective is discussed very effectively and in great detail by M. P. M. Richards in "Interaction and the concept of development: the biological and social revisited" (in M. Lewis and L. A. Rosenblum, eds., Interaction, Conversation and the Development of Language, 1977). The issue of the role of biological versus social factors is raised in the articles by Gleason, Key and Cherry. In
the Gleason and Key articles the issue is discussed in terms of its relevance to discussions of the ontogeny of sex differences in language (and to some extent non-language related) behaviors. Cherry advocates what she terms a comprehensive model, called the sociocognitive approach to communicative development, which calls for the integration of various factors contributing to the developmental process.

SEX DIFFERENCES AND COMMUNICATIVE SKILLS

The study of sex differences and the development of communicative skills is again currently receiving widespread attention both in terms of studies pointing to the differing usage patterns exhibited by the sexes and others indicating the differential linguistic treatment of males and females in a wide range of educational situations—home, nursery school, grade school, etc. As mentioned above, the articles by Gleason and Key discuss sex differences in this realm, mostly from a theoretical perspective which includes (in both papers) a summary of existing research. The de Blauw et al and Garnica papers address the issue of sex differences and communicative behavior in the early years of a child's life, infancy and the toddler period. The role of the mother/caregiver is emphasized.

COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE AND INTERACTIONAL COMPETENCE

It has been clear to many for a number of years now that to understand the processes involved in the child's learning of communicative skills it is necessary to expand the idea of competence beyond Noam Chomsky's rather limited vision of what is involved in this process (as what he termed linguistic competence) to include factors related to language use. The notion of communicative competence, first proposed by Dell Hymes, and of interactional competence, proposed by Aaron Cicourel, provide a broader view of what the child must learn in the developmental process. The meaning of the term communicative competence is discussed in the paper by Dell Hymes. The two terms together are also presented in the paper by Janet Black. Some fundamental questions arise out of these two notions: What new avenues of research are most appropriate and necessary for study? What new methodological and procedural approaches must be developed to go along with these new theoretical constructs? The papers by Keller-Cohen and Gracey, Mishler, Cherry, Garnica, Shields, Bokus and Shugar, and Borman explore various aspects of these questions. Although they focus on different research topics, different social contexts (home, school, etc.), and different interactive dyads (adult-child, child-child) they all ultimately rely heavily on the micro-analysis of conversational interaction sequences to establish what rules are in effect if we look beyond linguistic competence to characterize the abilities that must be learned to function satisfactorily in everyday face-to-face interactions.

BILINGUALISM AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF COMMUNICATIVE SKILLS

The ever growing recognition that this nation is not a homogeneous monolingual state has begun to have a powerful impact on public policy and formal education in the United States. The details and consequences of this fact are detailed in Hymes and receive further attention in subsequent sections of this introduction. Some of the major questions associated with
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This issue addresses the effect of simultaneous membership in several distinct speech communities on the learning and display of communicative skills in a variety of educational situations. What strategies are used by bilingual/bicultural children in learning such skills? Are these strategies alike or different when compared to children from a more homogeneous linguistic background? The paper by John-Steiner et al., Osterreich and John-Steiner, and Keller-Cohen and Gracey address such issues in school-aged children (John-Steiner, et al., Osterreich and John-Steiner) and preschool children (Keller-Cohen and Gracey). The former studies investigate children who form one of the major bilingual groups in the country—the Native Americans; the latter deals with children learning to be bilingual by incorporating English into their language repertoire. All three studies have as much to contribute to our general understanding of the process of learning to communicate as they do to our general understanding of bilingual functioning.

The Formal versus Informal Educational Process

Every young child begins the process of learning communicative skills in an informal educational context, that of the home and the neighborhood. By the same token, virtually every child at some point enters a formal educational system of some sort, be it a traditionally oriented classroom or an open classroom situation, which then parallels the continuing informal education that the child receives. Researchers who have studied the school situation all seem to agree that the transition to the formal learning situation puts a formidable demand on the young child to learn new social rules of behavior, to find new ways of using his/her already developed communicative skills and to learn new ones appropriate to the new social environment. The child's adjustment to the formal learning (school) context and the differential effect of different types of learning environments on children with differing informal education backgrounds is discussed in the papers by Shultz and Borman. The paper by Green and Wallat addresses another issue closely related to this one—the problem of how to go about segmenting the seemingly continuous stream of behavior that constitutes the classroom experience into discernable units so that it may become possible to identify the social rules (and appropriate language use rules) that the child must learn in order to function effectively in the classroom.

Expressive versus Referential Aspects of Communication

One of the most pervasive trends in the study of the development of communicative skills is the almost exclusive attention paid to the referential use of language to the exclusion of the expressive function. If this trend were somewhat reversed we might be surprised to find that our current views on the process through which children achieve social goals through the exercising of communicative skills might undergo extensive revision. This point is touched upon in the Hymes article, more so than elsewhere, and it is an important point indeed. Focus on the expressive function of communicative behavior is one of the interesting features of the Vera John-Steiner et al. paper on children's imagery. It deserves more attention by researchers.

The need to continue along such lines of research is great for American communities throughout the United States. Never before has the need to understand the development of communicative skills in educational contexts been so crucial. Today the traditional focus of formal education has been
challenged as inappropriate for large segments of the pupil population—children from a great variety of minority speech communities that exist in our culture. Children of the poor, minority racial and ethnic groups have in the past been segregated in ghetto schools, subjected to inferior and often demeaning instruction, and all too easily allowed to drop out of school. Recent interpretations of the Constitution by The Supreme Court have determined that such past practices must be eliminated. The courts have mandated that all children in the United States have the right to a truly educationally sound learning environment in which they can have equal opportunity to learn and maintain dignity and self-respect. It is all too unfortunate that it is by court order and not by mandate of the majority that such changes are ordered. Change imposed from outside unfortunately results in little or no truly effective change at all.

In the 19th century the children of immigrants were expected to learn English and associated customs of established Americans. Today the situation has changed. Ethnic groups throughout the country insist on maintaining their own identity, their own language and customs. At the same time, they insist that their children learn in school those concepts and skills that are necessary for social and economic advancement and power. All too often children of widely varying speech communities are found inside the same classroom, a classroom with a single teacher. There is little evidence that either judges or educators understand the complex nature of the social setting that is created. And this situation is now found not only on the east and west coasts where it receives the most publicity, but throughout the land—in the rural heartland and in the cities. Often the urgency of the demand to achieve educational equality brings about simplistic solutions from schools, for example, the introduction of a rigid skills-centered curriculum, which restricts rather than enhances the development of the kind of environment in which individuals from different experience background could coexist in harmony. To quote H. L. Mencken, "For every complex problem there is a simple solution, and it is wrong." So it is in this case. There are no simple solutions, but there is a complex problem, a complex problem that needs to be researched through cooperative efforts from a wide variety of perspectives by individuals sensitive to and aware of the issues involved. The papers in this volume represent a step in this direction. May there be many more.

Olga K. Garnica
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