

DEVELOPMENTAL PSYCHOLOGIST

Winter 1999

DIV7/APA

Table of Contents

Presidential Address, APA 1999
by Katherine Nelson 1

Awards and Call for Nominations 11

Announcements 13

New Books 14

Division 7 Awards/Call for Nominations 14

DIVISION 7 PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS, APA, 1999

Making Sense: Language and Thought in Development
Katherine Nelson, CUNY, NY

Presidential addresses tend either to review the history of a field, or to summarize where the addressee's research has brought him or her, or to do both. I shrink from taking on the task of summarizing the intellectual history of language and thought; and in viewing my own research progress I see loops and byways rather than a straight line. Although I have a sense that it has arrived at a place different from where it started, it still seems very open-ended and unfinished. Therefore, what I want to do here is to retrace a few of the byways labeled "language and thought" and hope to end with some predictions about where the road will lead others who may be like-minded into the next century, which is where we are all headed, like it or not.

First, a word about the title: "Making Sense." As I noted in a 1985 book

with that title (Nelson, 1985), the phrase has a double meaning (at least). With regard to development, it refers to how children understand the world of experience, but also to how they build a system of language meanings. Thus it bridges the duality of language and thought in development, a duality that I want to trace here in part.

There are two main parts to the paper:

- ! What enables the emergence of language in the child?
- ! What does language enable for the child?

And an interlude between:

- ! What can studies of human evolution tell us about these

developmental questions? Along the way I will be addressing obliquely or directly two of the most provocative issues in the areas of language and thought: the Wittgensteinian question of meaning and use, and the Whorfian question of how language affects thought.

Part I What lies behind - enables - the emergence of language, and in the present case, the emergence of words?

In studies of child language, which in their contemporary form reach back 40 years, this question and its answer are at the heart of most theories. To review differences among these would be inordinately time-consuming and contentious. Rather, I want to emphasize that this question has also, and has been from the beginning, the instigator of much

empirical research

in pursuit of the question: where does language come from in the life of the child? What social and cognitive capacities make it possible? In the 1970's, in the infancy of child language studies, one answer from the Piagetian side favored object permanence and means-ends achievements of the sensori-motor period but only weak and inconsistent empirical relations were found in support of this proposal.

Cognitive psychology as represented in the Center for Cognitive Studies at Harvard, under Jerome Bruner, Roger Brown, and George Miller suggested that the answer would lie in what cognitive skills are specifically **necessary** foundations for language acquisition. Roger Brown's (1958) analysis implied that in order to learn words and grammatical categories children must be able to form concepts and categories, a general cognitive skill necessary as well to many other cognitive achievements, and the focus of much of the contemporary work in cognitive psychology at that time.

However, at this point in our intellectual history - later 60's and early 70's -all three major developmental theories - Piagetian, Vygotskian, and learning/behaviorists - seemed to agree that infants and very young children could **not** form or use real, that is classical, logically constructed, concepts or categories. It became a major part of my goal in studying children's first words (1973) to determine what sorts of concepts and categories might be revealed in early language, if not the adult kind.

On the basis of both observation and experiments with 18 children studied longitudinally over their second year, I concluded that these children were not forming concepts of objects on the basis of the logical combination of perceptual features or attributes, as in the classic learning theory, but on the

basis of what things did, that is, on the function of things **from the child's point of view**. As Jean Mandler (2000) has put it in a recent reconceptualization of this idea, based on new and compelling data, children's early concepts of objects are based on the object's role or place in events. The general idea is that toward the end of the first year infants are engaged in exploring objects in their world, taking part in social events that incorporate objects, and forming mental conceptions based on their observations and explorations.

This was the essence of the Functional Core Concept hypothesis (Nelson, 1974), suggesting that the child's concept began with a relational function (the core) established from the child's notion of what can be done with things and what things can do, followed by a process of focusing on identificational features that are used to generalize to new instances. See Kemler-Nelson (1999) for a report of recent work with toddlers and older children related to this line of work on the functional basis of concepts and naming. An important part of this thesis was the gradual building up of such a concept over experience with instances of an object-kind, for example, balls, in different contexts and activities, such as rolling a ball, or seeing a ball on the playground, from a first unique instance to a generalized set that shared both functions and form. This hypothesis embedded four key conceptions that emerged from the study of children in their natural settings:

- ! The child's cognitive structures reflect her interests and goals in interaction with the social and physical world.
- ! Forming concepts and words are developmental processes
- ! The child's interest and attention are focused on action in events
- ! The child's independently

formed concepts must come to align with words as they are used in the language of the community.

These assumptions are worth examining more closely as they relate to controversies and methods that have arisen in subsequent years.

1. Start from the child's interest.

This principle was based on research findings that children **select** from among words presented by adults in conversational/instructive contexts. The children I studied varied enormously in the words that appeared in their first vocabularies, and these variations could be related easily to the child's life activities and interests, as well as to their interactions with mothers. A mother might draw attention to a picture many times without effect on the child's acquisition of the word, while the child easily acquired a name for something that had drawn spontaneous interest. Three inferences follow:

(a) Strong effects of the child's interests imply a process of **collaborative construction** of concepts and words rather than either direct instruction by adults or independent acquisition by children. This position is now quite common among many developmental theorists. It was documented in my 1973 monograph in terms of patterns of interaction among mothers and their language learning children that either facilitated or seemed to retard the process. Facilitative dyads were those whose interactions seemed "in tune" with a similar focus in activities and word using patterns, for example, focus on objects or social behaviors.

(b) It further implies the importance of the specific experiential/phenomenological basis for **individual differences** in vocabulary and language acquisition more generally. The aspects of experience, including especially social

experience, that are salient and important in the child's life will become part of the child's incipient "meaning" system. Because children and their social contexts vary, their language acquisition patterns will vary.

(c) Commonality among children in the words learned was also observed, and it tended to be in the kinds of things given names, such as animals, foods, family members, events, games, etc. rather than in the specifics of particular objects. It appears that such commonality emerges from the specific phenomenal perspective of infancy, in terms of the child's small stature, limited skills, novelty of experience, and similar routines, among other aspects.

The commonalities found in this early study and observed by many others - particularly the dominance of nouns, usually object names - have been the foundation for much subsequent research and theorizing up to the present. However, the focus on variability has dropped by the wayside. Both are important if we are to understand the processes of acquisition in children of all cultures and social contexts.

2. That word acquisition, and concept formation, are **developmental processes** argues against the assumption that words and their meanings are in general abstracted from single encounters; rather the claim is that they are abstracted **over time** from *use in different contexts*.

In contrast, much of the recent research has focused on the striking fact that 2-year-olds can acquire a novel word for a novel object on a single experimental trial and generalize that word to other examples of similar shape. This is variously called the "shape bias" (Smith, 1999) or the "object scope" and "extendability" principles

(Golinkoff, Hirsh-Pasek & Hollich, 1999). Both these authors have pointed out that these principles and biases **emerge** from developmental processes based on experience with word learning during the second year. These principles then enable the child to make good guesses about what a word might refer to in context, and how it might generalize to other similar objects. What is neglected in this line of work is that names of objects constitute but one word-learning task that children must master, and it is the easiest one, because isolated objects' are easily identified in terms of shape and boundedness, as Dedre Gentner has pointed out; and shape usually is a good index of the category membership of basic level object categories, as Rosch (1976) noted in her seminal work on categories in the 1970's.

The more difficult problem for both theorists and children is to account for all the other words that children learn, beginning at the very outset of learning between 12 and 20 months, and to account for the individual differences in styles of vocabulary content and function that have been found repeatedly across many studies. I would emphasize here that, contrary to common reports, it has not been shown that the majority of children learn mostly object names in their first vocabularies, or that object names constitute the majority of words learned by children at the outset of language or during any other period. **Nouns** constitute the largest category in all English speakers' vocabularies, adults as well as children's. But not all nouns are names of objects, where objects are "things you can pick up or bump into" (Macnamara, 1982).

To investigate whether the nouns learned by children just beginning to talk were all object names, my students and I (Nelson, Hampson & Kessler Shaw, 1993) analyzed a

common vocabulary checklist and the words learned by 45 children of 20 months. We identified nouns belonging to ontological categories different from basic level object categories, calling these **Xbloccs** ("not basic level object category" terms). We also used transcripts from play and snack sessions to identify contexts of use of these words from which children presumably extract both the sound and some meaning, or at least use. Examples of these word types are shown in

Table 1. Our conclusion from this and other studies: There is no specific linguistic constraint on the child's acquisition of words that dictates a focus on either object names or nouns in early vocabularies. This still leaves open the problem of how the child manages to acquire the meanings of these words.

3. Children focus on action in events: This proposition that emerged from my early language study led eventually to the idea of event representations as the basic structures by which children make sense of the world, and to the hypothesis that children were using their event knowledge to support action in the world as well as to form categories and acquire relevant language. What is of interest to the present themes is the way that words are embedded in events, and the way that the structure of events and their mental representations enables the child to extract concepts and categories at different levels therefrom. Consider the bath routine that takes place day after day with the same people, place, and things involved. Martin Barrett (1986) showed in a close analysis of his son's learning and using the word "duck" how this was first used solely within the familiar bath context of playing with a toy duck, and was gradually extended to other instances of toy ducks and then to real ducks to which his attention was directed.

We have also hypothesized the existence of “slot-filler categories”, that is, categories of objects that fill the action-object slot in a script format such as foods that can be eaten in different contexts, for example, lunch or snack. Eventually these event-based categories are brought together into larger conventional categories, as these are represented in the language of taxonomies, but they remain somewhat separated in subjective category organization by older children and even adults, as has been shown in a number of studies by Lucariello and others (Lucariello, Kyratzis & Nelson, 1992; Nelson, 1996).

4. Aligning concepts with words.

The child's concepts and categories based in experienced events must be aligned with words as they are conventionally used. In an important study, Tomasello (1992) analyzed his daughter's acquisition and use of verbs in her second year and concluded that these were learned in application to specific event structures, and their uses were restricted to these action contexts and grammatical structures, leading him to propose a “verb island” hypothesis for early verb argument structures.

Kessler Shaw (1999) has just completed a study of children's use of the terms “know” and “think” in mother-child “language games” (taking the construct from Wittgenstein's discussion of meaning and use), showing in a way analogous to Tomasello's that children tend to take up one or a few contexted uses of a term prior to extending it more widely to its conventional uses, in this case extending from directing the interaction to use for mental states.

Consider for a moment how Wittgenstein's concepts of rules of use may apply to the language learning child (Wittgenstein, 1953):

! **Words take their meanings from the *Language Games* in which they occur. The rules of the game provide criteria to specify when the word is and is not appropriate to use.**

! **Learning a language involves learning the rules of language games. Wittgenstein used the concept of language games in many different ways, but one of the ways was in regard to the situation of the word learning child with an adult tutor. This is the principle that Kessler Shaw's analysis of think and know employed.**

! **Perhaps most important for the present consideration is the following oft-quoted maxim: To learn a language is to enter a way of life. This will be the theme of our second section.**

As the research referred to and many other studies have implied, the acquisition of words in restricted activity and discourse contexts requires a further process of aligning these context-derived uses with the conventional meanings and structures of the language being learned. Elena Levy and I proposed that this process could be conceptualized as a **general theory of word learning** with as many as 7 steps between the initial taking up of the word in familiar contexts resulting in “**use without meaning**” to the eventual construction of **meaning from use** of what we can call “**full, adult, conventional meaning**”. From this perspective, as stated previously, object terms are a special, and especially simple, case of the derivation of meaning from context.

In summary of this section, meanings are social constructions of the language using community, and learning word meanings is a collaborative process, dependent both on the child's interests and experience and on the adult's social interactive and language practices. Because it is social does not mean that it is a directive from parent to child, but rather that social contexts and conventional meanings are the sources on which the child draws. The child must still construct her own concepts of what is being referred to or talked about but the conventional meanings emerge from experience with the uses by knowledgeable others.

Interlude

This general theoretical position is in accord with some others represented in recently published books, notably MacWhinney's (1999) edited volume on *The Emergence of Language* and Tomasello's (1998) collection *The New Psychology of Language*, both published over the past year.

Another strand of convergence comes from studies of the evolution of language and cognition in the human species. Here we find on the one hand, Pinker (1990), Bickerton (1990), and some others favoring the evolution of a language-module over millions of years; and on the other side, Deacon (1997), Donald, Noble and Davidson (1996) and others supporting the emergence of symbolic behavior with associated representational capacities and cultures late in the evolution of *Homo sapiens* in its physical characteristics emerging only with modern humans at around 35,000 years before the present. Both groups see language as special and specifically human, but the former see it as a specially evolved brain module independent of general cognition and communication, whereas the latter see it as a specialization of these

capacities found in previous species, and one with far ranging impact on the nature of human cognition and culture, not independent of either. There are disagreements among this latter group, on what comes first, for example representation or social communicative symbols, but they all emphasize continuity with primate communicative and cognitive systems as well as discontinuity that symbolic/narrative/linguistic systems made possible. Indeed they emphasize that language produced the extraordinarily complex cultural systems that we live in today. Whether they believe that symbols create socially shared concepts or that concepts are basic to symbols that become socially shared, and indeed exactly what symbols are and how they differ from other signs, the essential story in so far as it relates to developmental issues is the same.

In recent writing (Nelson, 1996) I have attempted to show how the evolutionary story may bear on the developmental story, without falling into the trap of recapitulation. For the most part I have relied on Merlin Donald's theory of the **hybrid mind**, with successive potentials for representation opening up over successive eras and species leading to modern humans. The most dramatic effect on cognition in this series comes from the transition to language with the evolution of our species, dramatic effects that most evolutionary theorists who study the evidence from archeology and anthropology tend to agree on. This takes us to the next topic: What does language, once acquired, enable for the child today that was not possible prior to language? The proposal here is that the effects in childhood are just as dramatic as they were in evolution. To paraphrase the philosopher Daniel Dennett (oral communication July 1997): **Language turns brains into minds.**

Language effects on cognition in development

1. *What does language do for the child?* How does the acquisition of language affect cognition, thought, everyday or formal, communication, psychological and social understanding, experience of the world, and so on?

To evaluate the question as to what difference language makes to cognition we need to ask several further questions: What is cognition like prior to language? What is it like with language in place? What do we mean when we say language in place? How do we know that any effects we identify are those of language rather than something else? One answer to the first question is that prior to language cognition is the establishing and following of scripts and schemas of everyday life, extracting concepts therefrom, and working variations on them in play, as suggested here with respect to event knowledge. In contrast to this view, many developmentalists see preverbal thought in another way, in terms of features of pre-linguistic behavior that reveal cognitive processes and mechanisms analogous to thinking with, through, or in language. To some extent I believe this position is taken in reaction to the picture Piaget painted, leading to the contrary conviction that infants couldn't **just** be sensori-motor creatures, but must be smarter than that. Indeed, much of my own earlier research was undertaken to make the point that infants had to be cognitively better equipped than Piaget said they were in order to learn language. However, some more recent work proposes built-in constraints and principles which again make it seem that babies are not exactly smarter, they are just equipped with fail-safe algorithms.

My own conviction is that thought

without language is quite different: tied to the dynamic concrete present ongoing activity, highly dependent on the physical and social context and on experiential routines. I won't defend this view specifically here, but take it as an assumption behind what I present next. In this view infants and young children are smarter than Piaget is believed to give them credit for, but they are not smart in the adult way. In what way are they smart? Consider this: they learn to interact adaptively in a world of language and literacy users without either of these effective tools of thought and knowledge. It behooves us to study how they can do this. I have provided some clues in terms of event knowledge and the building of concepts and categories from that knowledge base, but there is surely much more to learn about this and about the success of children who are not verbal at all or are barely verbal in negotiating the social and physical world.. Rather than seeing children as miniature adults, with the implication that adult cognition is independent of language, we need to recognize that adult cognition is different: it is language laden.

2. *How then does thought with language differ from infant cognition?* Consider first what the initial acquisition of words may do for the child, over the second and into the third year, as the child moves from infancy into toddlerhood. Of course it makes possible a new level of communication. Typically brief conversational exchanges begin toward the middle of the second year, but extending topics beyond brief two turn exchanges is usually not common until age 3 to 4. Thus the early effects on communication are quite limited mostly to pragmatic concerns. How might language affect the beginning language learner's cognitive process? What do words do for the child?

Stabilize: I am proposing here that words serve to stabilize aspects of dynamic experience that are otherwise fleeting and evanescent. Learning and using the word “dog” for example, may bring control over the concept or image of the dog that in real life is too mobile to bring into sustained focus. In this sense, words perform functions similar to pictures or to the toy replicas that children engage with. These are all symbolic forms that enable manipulable control over the symbolized entity. Words, thus, represent in a stable way aspects of the world that are not themselves static but dynamic. Because they are stable they can be called on mentally to reflect upon and manipulate as the real world thing or event cannot be. Further, words can refer to entities that are not easily pictured, and that if they are played out, are played out temporally. For example, events like lunch or “going to the doctor” may take on a stable constellation through reference in words, and, as we have seen, children learn such words in their very early vocabularies. Children, of course, are extremely reliant on stable predictable routines. Language provides some of the needed stability and may actually take over from the stability relied on in familiar events as language becomes more competent in the fourth and fifth years.

Generality: By this I mean that words apply to general categories, but more than this: they apply to the categories that are general across people who use the language and over time. If a child makes up a word for a favorite toy or other entity, and if the family adopts the word it takes on a general communicative function that is not idiosyncratic to the child. This brings the child’s categories into the social scheme. Inevitably words as they are used hone the child’s

concepts to the language being learned; the child’s individual concepts become thereby socially shared concepts. Although the pre-linguistic infant does form general, even global concepts as Mandler and McDonough (1993) have shown, these are not the concepts aligned with the words of the language. When the child’s concepts are honed to uses of related words they take on a new kind of generality, generality across kinds and across speakers.

Extension: Related to the previous point is the fact that by using language the child enters into a social/cultural world that extends beyond her own experience and beyond the family into the society at large. The words she learns and uses are used in the same conventional ways by all others who share the same cultural/linguistic world. The child’s use of words are constrained by the uses of these others; but by the same token, they take her into a “**social network of minds**”. As Esther Goody (1997) put it: “once a lexicon has been established a speaker hears the same word as does his listener [which] may [be] the crucial factor in escaping from the private worlds of thought into the shared social world of spoken language” (1997, p. 391). But reciprocally, the child can begin to express her own individuality in this shared world by expressing her ideas and feelings in conventionally understood language.

3. To answer the second part of the question about the ways in which thought with language differs from infant cognition when language is in place, we need first to answer the third. *What do we mean by language in place?* Students of child language have generally agreed that when children are using most of the grammatical mechanisms of complex sentences at somewhere between 3 and 4 years they have the rudiments of language, although there are great

variations in the age at which this milestone is reached. This kind of grammatical competence can be measured by standardized tests. It is associated generally with an increased ability to engage in extended conversation with adults on a sustained topic, and to attend to explanations given in verbal form (what else) and especially to engage in narrativising with others, through stories, and personal episodic accounts. As the child enters the preschooler years she gains practice with using language and learning it better. Even when the child is using “language as we know it” there is still more to be learned **of** language as well as **in** language.

The effects of words take the child beyond her own conceptions into conceptions that are at least partially shared with others. The move into narrative, description, and explanation made possible by the attainment of the 4 year old level of competence goes beyond this. The effects of this level are truly profound, as the evolutionists are claiming with respect to the emergence of language in the human species. What are these effects?

What could the claim that “language turns brains into minds” mean? Consider a quote from Dennett commenting on the nature of human intelligence:

“The advent of language was ...[a] boon for human beings, a technology that created a whole new class of objects-to-contemplate, verbally embodied surrogates that could be reviewed in any order at any pace. And this opened up a new dimension of self-improvement - all one had to do was to learn to savour one’s own mistakes... [other primates] never dispute over attributions, and ask for the grounds for each others’ conclusions. No wonder their comprehension is so limited. Ours would be, too, if we had to generate it all on our own.” (Dennett, 1994, p. 177-178)

Here Dennett is making three claims, similar to the claims about what words do, language creates new objects of contemplation that the individual may use in thinking, thus modifying behavior to solve problems. These surrogates may include abstractions that have no counterpart in the observable physical world, but play a part in folk and formal theorizing about the world; and they may be entirely imaginary, thereby opening up a world of fantasy. In addition, he is stressing the advantage of language as a social tool of thought, where explanations and theories can be challenged and tested. Finally, he implies that these advantages enlarge our knowledge because we do not have to do it all on our own; we can learn from others.

I agree with Dennett that these are profound differences, not only for humans with respect to other primates, but for children with respect to their former infant selves. I also believe that these differences are

greatly underestimated in current developmental theories. There is a tendency among professionals as well as parents to take what children say as simply expressing what they already “know” or “think.” But even when children have acquired considerable facility with language, at around 3½ to 4½ years of age, they do not always mean what they seem to say, as the studies of word meaning summarized earlier imply, by emphasizing the acquisition of meaning from use, based initially on a stage of use without meaning. Of course, children might be simply expressing their ideas although their ideas are not what we think they are because their knowledge of semantics is underdeveloped. This certainly is an important caution to all of us who are attempting to interpret the child’s mind through her language.

But the question that claims such as Dennett’s raises is “Does language have a special role to play that makes a difference to the child’s functioning equivalent to that made to homo sapiens functioning over the evolutionary time scale?” What effects might we look for that are at least in part a function of language competence? On the basis of Dennett’s claims we can postulate an increase in individual cognitive power through contemplation of “verbal surrogates” in absence of any objective counterparts. Additionally, we can acknowledge the profound impact of knowledge about realities beyond the child’s personal experience imparted through conversations with adults and peers. And, as Piaget suggested, improvement in one’s own understanding through exchanging thoughts with others. These may not be the only effects one could look for; but they suggest places to look.

Where should we look? In the first instance it seems logical to examine the various accomplishments of the 4

and 5 year old compared to the 2 or 3 year old: There are striking advances and the emergence of new concepts and new competencies, as well as some telling temporary weaknesses during the preschool years. Among the areas where these are found are the following that have been studied in recent years: Memory, self, false belief (theory of mind), planning, suggestibility, source knowledge, differentiation of minds. Not everyone would agree with the construction that I would put on the changes in these areas, nor would all agree that developments in these systems share a common influence in newly achieved language facility. But there is considerable convincing research for most of these areas that, taken together, something profound is changing over these years. As conceded previously, the related verbal and nonverbal accomplishments do not necessarily mean that linguistic skills are changing anything but the child’s ability to express thoughts. They might just be enabling the child to express things she already knows and to engage with others in story telling, and so on.

4. Thus we need a way of addressing the fourth question definitively: *How do we know that any effects we identify are those of language rather than something else?* In the areas referred to, I believe there is strong evidence that achievements in the preschool years are related to achievements in language. In part this is found in correlations with language skills over and above age. Additionally, the lag for many of these advances between the usual achievement of general language competence at about age 3½ or 4 and the achievement of competence in false belief understanding, self concept, understanding other minds, understanding source knowledge, decrease in suggestibility, and so on at 4 ½ to 6 years suggests that it is the use of language in its more

narrative and explanatory modes that takes the child beyond the private world Goody refers to and into the shared world of the social network of minds.

The evidence at this point is most convincing with respect to memory skills and development. Use of language in memory tasks improves recall even at very young ages as Bauer's work has shown. The onset of autobiographical memory (the offset of infantile amnesia) coincides with the age of achievement of narrative language skill, and experience with parental discussions of past events in elaborated or narrative form is associated with children's improved memory for such events (Fivush, 1994) and with their formulation of memories as narratives (Tessler & Nelson, 1994). These relations appear to hold cross-culturally (Mullen & Yi, 1995). Moreover, the establishment of autobiographical memory must have important effects on self concept, as a self with a past and a future is a very different self from a self attuned only to the present. As research over the past century has shown, childhood memories typically increase from a very few at about age 3 to a trickle from the preschool years before becoming common during the school years, suggesting that the impact on the self-narrative gathers strength slowly. This accords with the suggestion that there is a lag after the attainment of general language competence during which experience with language in conversational contexts has an increasing influence.

How does language in conversational contexts influence the child's thought? There are many examples from the memory research showing how mothers may scaffold the child's fragments of memory to build a narrative that then becomes the child's own, and even some examples of the child's appropriating someone else's narrative and repeating it as her own (Miller, Potts,

Fung, Hoogstra & Mintz, 1990). This process, and that of suggestibility and confusions about the source of knowledge, are symptoms in my view of the confusions that may occur when the child first becomes able to understand a narrative in oral form as a representation of an experience.

Because prior to language all experience is private, others experiences may initially be conflated with one's own. They may need to be differentiated from one's self experience. Even more dramatic, the child who is becoming aware of internal experience through the use of language to mark it, may not distinguish her own mind from that of others. This is illustrated in the following excerpt of a mother-child conversation from Kessler Shaw's study of the acquisition of *know* and *think*. The child here is 42 months of age.

K: You know something?

M: What?

(Pause)

K: Let me think

(Pause)

K: What's her name again?

M: What?

K: What's her name again?

M: Who?

K: That girl

M: Who?

K: Don't you remember her?

K: You've seen her before

M: No

K: Yes

M: Where is she?

K: I don't know

M: Oh

K: I don't know her name

K: Somebody has a rocket

K: That can turn into a big rocket

M: Yeah?

K: (nods)

M: Who is this person?

K: I don't know her

M: Where'd you meet her?

K: At our house!

M: At our house?

M: Somebody with a rocket came to our house?

K: Uh huh

M: Was I home for this?

K: (shakes head)

M: No

M: So how would I know who this is?

This excerpt indicates both how children can use words such as *think*, *know* and *remember* without having a good grasp on how these words relate to differentiated minds, that is, states of knowledge and belief that differ between closely related persons. The child clearly believes that her mother, who does know the child in question, should know what girl she is referring to. This dilemma goes beyond the lack of a grasp of the source of knowledge to imply a lack of a sense that one's own knowledge state may not be shared by others. This clearly bears on the evidence from theory of mind studies in a rather dramatic way, and it suggests that many such conversations may be needed before these mental state issues are clarified for the child.

Concluding

What I have sketched in this section may appear to be little more than theoretical commitments. Certainly the evidence thus far is not sufficient to clinch the argument. Whereas language may be a very important source of knowledge and shared concepts, it may not be the only important influence on cognitive development during the preschool years. Frye and Zelazo and their colleagues (Frye, Zelazo & Palfai, 1995) have made a strong case for executive function, and Perner's theory of metarepresentation is also a strong contender for an explanation in terms of basic mechanisms (Perner, 1991). Although I believe that language may be intricately associated with both of these, their relation, essentially that of mechanism and content, remains unexplored. Moreover, the developmental exploration of this

relation in my view is the only way to satisfactorily study the hoary Whorfian question of how language affects thought.

Thus, as promised at the outset, I believe that there is much more to be investigated, and much more to be discovered about the drama of the preschool years and the contributions that language in use makes to it. More generally, I believe that we need to put language and thought back together in order to understand their interdependencies in human life. And we need to recognize the implications of the fact that human thought is language laden. We then need to trace in some detail just how this state comes about.

Table 1. Noun types (not BLOCs) used by 20-month-olds in a sample of 45 children (Nelson, Hampson & Kessler Shaw, 1993)

Locations: *park, kitchen*

Actions: *kiss, drink*

Superordinate/generic: *toys, animals*

Events: *party, lunch*

Person roles: *doctor, brother*

Natural phenomena: *rain, wind*

Temporal entities: *day, morning*

Parts of objects: *button, wheel*

Material: *wood, play dough*

More than half of the children in the sample learned the following non-BLOC nouns by 20 months: *bath, home, kiss, money, outside, park, toy, walk.*

Section on Child Maltreatment

An invitation is extended to join the Section on Child Maltreatment of Division 37, APA. The Section is the only permanent organization within APA focused on furthering understanding, prevention, and intervention in the area of child maltreatment. The Section fosters the development of maltreatment-related research, practice, and advocacy. Members receive the Section Newsletter and the Section Alert (up-to-date information on funding for research and treatment innovations). To join, mail name, address, phone number, and e-mail address, with a check for \$15 (\$10 students) to: APA Division 37 Section 1, Division Services, 750 First Street NE, Washington, DC 20002-4242. Contact Larissa Niec, (lniec@iname.com) with membership questions.

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APA BLOCK TRAVEL GRANT PROGRAM

The American Psychological Association has applied to the National Science Foundation (NSF) for support to administer a block travel grant program for US participants in the scientific program of the XVII International Congress of Psychology in Stockholm, Sweden, July 23-28, 2000. NSF funding will be used exclusively for scholars working in areas that are central to the NSF mission -- the description, modeling, and development of human mental and perceptual processes, including learning, reasoning, problem solving, concept formation, memory attention, and perception. At least half of the awards will be granted to investigators who are either students or within eight years of receiving their doctoral degree. Although APA has not received final word from NSF on availability of funding, applications are now available from the APA Office of International Affairs, 750 First Street, NE, Washington, DC 20002, (202) 336-6025 (telephone); (202) 218-3599 (fax); international@apa.org (e-mail).

PROJECT SUMMARY NATIONAL RESEARCH COUNCIL/INSTITUTE OF MEDICINE

The Board on Children, Youth, Families and the Forum on Adolescence of the Institute of Medicine and the National Research Council of the National Academy of

Sciences has established a committee that will:

- review and synthesize existing evidence regarding community-level initiatives and interventions designed to promote positive developmental outcomes among youth;
- assess the strengths and limitations of indicators and data sources that are commonly used to characterize youth health, development, and well-being, and to evaluate interventions designed to prevent problems and promote positive developmental outcomes among youth;
- assess the strengths and limitations of methodologies and approaches used to evaluate community-level youth development programs; and
- identify gaps and central questions for the design of a unified conceptual framework and research agenda to promote the healthy development of youth.

To the extent feasible, the committee will identify those training programs with sufficiently strong evidence to suggest that they deserve replication. The committee will also be asked to consider how programs might be replicated in other communities, and issues pertaining to "scale-up."

Committee members include an interdisciplinary group of individuals with expertise in a range of relevant fields, including child and

adolescent development, maternal and child health, sociology, psychology, anthropology, statistics, evaluation research, youth service programs, urban planning, and community development. The new committee on Community-Level Programs for Youth is chaired by Dr. Jacquelynne Eccles.

Awards and Calls for Nominations

The Society for General Psychology Division One of the American Psychological Association

The Society for General Psychology, Division One of the American Psychological Association, announces its Year 2000 award winners who have been recognized for outstanding achievements in General Psychology. This year there are two co-winners for the William James Book Award: Dean Simonton for his book *The Origins of Genius: Darwinian Perspectives on Creativity*, published by Cambridge University Press and Steven Ceci and Maggie Bruck for their book *Crisis in the Courtroom: A Scientific Analysis of Children's Testimony*, published by the American Psychological Association. This award is for a recent book that serves to integrate material across psychological subfields or to provide coherence to the diverse subject matter of psychology.

The Year 2000 winner of the Ernest R. Hilgard Award for a Career Contribution to General Psychology is Philip Zimbardo. And the winners of the George A. Miller Award for an Outstanding Recent Article in General Psychology are K. Geoffrey White and John T. Wixted for their article "Psychophysics of remembering" that appeared in the *Journal of the Experimental Analysis of Behavior* in 1999. In each case the awardees receive a certificate and a cash prize: \$500 for the Hilgard and Miller awards, and \$1000 for the William James Book Award. The winner of the competition to deliver the Year 2000 Arthur W. Staats Lecture for Unifying Psychology is Martin Seligman who will receive an award of \$1000.

For all of these awards, the focus is on the quality of the contribution and the linkages made between the diverse fields of psychological theory and research. The Society for General Psychology encourages the integration of knowledge across the subfields of psychology and the incorporation of contributions from other disciplines. The Society is looking for creative synthesis, the building of novel conceptual approaches, and a reach for new, integrated wholes. A match between the goals of the Society and the nominated work or person will be an important evaluation criterion. The Staats Award has a unification theme, recognizing significant contributions of any kind that go beyond mere efforts at coherence and serve to develop psychology as a unified sciences. The Staats Lecture will deal with how the awardee's work serves to unify psychology.

There are no restrictions on nominees, and self-nominations as well as nominations by others are encouraged for these awards. For the Hilgard Award and the Staats Award, nominators are asked to submit the candidate's name and vitae along with a detailed statement indicating why the nominee is a worthy candidate for the award and supporting letters from others who endorse the nomination.

For the Miller Award, nominations should include: vitae of the author(s), four copies of the article being considered (which can be of any length but must be in print and have a post-1994 publication date), and a statement detailing the strength of the candidate article as an outstanding contribution to General Psychology.

Nominations for the William James Award should include three copies of the book (dated post-1994 and available in print); the vitae of the author(s), and a one-page statement that explains the strengths of the submission as an integrative work and how it meets criteria established by the Society. Text books, analytic reviews, biographies, and examples of applications are generally discouraged.

Winners will be announced at the Fall convention of the American Psychological Association the year of submission. Winners will be expected to give an invited address at the subsequent APA convention and also to provide a copy of the award address for inclusion in the newsletter of the Society.

All nominations and supporting materials for each award must be received on or before March 15, 2000. Nominations and materials for all awards and requests for further information should be directed to General Psychology Awards, c/o C. Alan Boneau, Department of Psychology, George Mason University, Fairfax, VA 22030. Phone: 703-993-4118; Fax: 301-320-2845; E-mail: aboneau@gmu.edu.

The Sylvia Scribner International Award

The Sylvia Scribner Award Committee will award \$250.00 derived from the royalties of the volume of her selected papers published by the Cambridge University Press for the best dissertation or postdoctoral project completed within two years after the doctorate drawing on her research and writing in socio-historical processes and activity theory. Her areas of interest were: community psychology; thinking and cultural systems; literacy, the meeting of mind and society; cognitive development, social and individual thinking at work; and, psychological research as a societal process. The abstract should be submitted by the candidate or the sponsor in triplicate, along with a letter from the dissertation sponsor, or a curriculum vitae for postdoctoral candidates. The award is to be presented at the International Congress of Psychology in Sweden in 2000. All correspondence and abstracts are to be sent to: Aggie Scribner Kapelman, 25 West 81st Street, New York, NY 10024. USA

Education and Training Awards

The Board of Educational Affairs is requesting nominations for the following awards: Distinguished Contributions to Education and Training in Psychology and Distinguished Contributions for Applications of Psychology to Education and Training.

The award for Distinguished Contributions to Education and Training in Psychology recognizes psychologists who have engaged in teaching/training as the primary employment during their career. Psychologists will be selected for this award on the basis of their documented positive influence on the education and training of students, engagement in important research in education and training, development of effective materials for instruction, establishment of workshops, conferences, or networks of communications for education and training, achievement and leadership in administration that facilitates education and training, and activities in professional organizations which promote excellence.

The award for Distinguished Contributions for Applications of Psychology to Education and Training recognizes psychologists for evidence-based applications of psychology to education. In order to be considered for this award, the candidate must demonstrate a contribution to new teaching methods or the solution of learning problems through the use of research findings or evidence-based practices. Particular emphasis will be placed on the use of psychological knowledge to improve learning in educational settings (including pre-kindergarten to 12th grade), and/or in communities.

All nominations must include a letter of nomination citing the award for which the nomination is made, and outlining the contributions of the nominee. All nominations must include:

- ! A letter of nomination
- ! Two letters of support
- ! A curriculum vitae

Send nominations and supporting materials to Shirley Matthews, Education Directorate, APA, 750 First Street, NE Washington, DC 20002-4242. The deadline for receipt of this information is June 1, 2000.

Announcements

APA PUBLIC POLICY OFFICE OFFERS GRADUATE STUDENT INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

The APA Public Policy Internship provides graduate students with an opportunity to gain understanding of how psychological research can inform public policy, and the roles psychologists play in its formulation. APA policy interns work 20 hours per week and are paid \$13.50 per hour. The selected intern works on public interest policy issues (e.g. children, women, HIV/AIDS, disabilities, and/or violence) in the Public Policy Office of APA's Central Office in Washington, D.C. This Office helps to formulate and implement APA positions on major federal policy initiatives in the areas of education, science, and public interest.

Applicants must be doctoral graduate students in psychology or a related field in at least the third year of training. Application materials should be sent by March 15, 2000 to: American Psychological Association, Public Policy Office/ Internship Program, 750 First Street, N.E., Washington, D.C. 20002-4242. Inquiries may be directed to Deborah Cotter at (202) 336-5668 or dcotter@apa.org.

The complete information on the APA Policy Fellowship and Graduate Internship Programs can be found at <http://www.apa.org>.

Edler Abuse and Neglect: In Search of Solutions. This 20 page free brochure was recently produced by APA's Office on Aging. Written for consumers, but useful to anyone who wants to know more about elder abuse, topics covered include: what are the different types of abuse and neglect; why abuse occurs; what can be done to prevent abuse; and where to go for help. Copies may be obtained by contacting: APA Public Interest Directorate, 750 First Street, NE Washington, DC 20002; Telephone: (202) 336-6046; Internet: www.apa.org/pi or E-mail: publicinterest@apa.org.

Narratives In and About Relationships. A special issue of the *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships* will be dedicated to research using narrative methodologies to study interpersonal relationships. The special issue will highlight recent methodological advances in the use of narratives to understand how individuals find relevance in dyadic and group relationships (including family relationships) which in turn may be related to relational well-being. Authors must clearly address the theoretical rationale for using narratives to study relationships as well as provide substantial documentation of their methods. Preference will be given to empirical studies, although theoretical papers may be considered. Manuscripts will be peer-reviewed, consistent with policies of the Journal. Questions regarding the issues may be directed to Barbara Fiese, bhfiese@psych.syr.edu or Harold Grotevant, hgrotevant.che2.che.umn.edu. Submissions are due no later than February 1, 2000. Six copies, prepared in APA style, should be sent to Barbara H. Fiese, Ph.D., 430 Huntington Hall, Department of Psychology, Syracuse University, Syracuse, NY 13244-2340.

New Books

Settersten, Richard A., Jr. (1999). *Lives in Time and Place: The Problems and Promises of Developmental Science*. Amityville, NY: Baywood Publishing Company. (Society and Aging Series, Jon Hendricks, Editor).

Division 7 Awards

**Winner of the 1999 Bronfenbrenner Award
Shep White - Harvard University**

**Winner of the 1999 G. Stanley Hall Award
Marshall Haith - University of Denver**

**Winner of the 1998 Mentor Award
Wendell Jeffrey - Sherman Oaks, CA (retired)**

**Winner of the 1998 Boyd McCandless Award
Angeline Lillard - University of Virginia**

**Winner of the Dissertation Award
Theo Dawson - UC-Berkley**

Call for Nominations for Division 7 Awards

The G. Stanley Hall Award for Distinguished Contribution to Developmental Psychology

The award is given to a single individual (sometimes a research team) who has made distinguished contributions to developmental psychology, including contributions in research, student training, and other scholarly endeavors. Evaluations are based on the scientific merit of the individual's work; the importance of this work for opening up new empirical or theoretical areas for developmental psychology; and the importance of the individual's work in linking developmental psychology with issues confronting the larger society or with other disciplines. Nominations should be sent by January 30, 2000 to Judy DeLoache, Department of Psychology, 603 E. Daniel Street, University of Illinois, Champaign, IL 61820 (e-mail: jdeloach@s.psych.uiuc.edu). Nominations should state the name of the nominee as well as a few sentences on his/her contribution.

The Urie Bronfenbrenner Award for Lifetime Contribution to Developmental Psychology in the Service of Science and Society

The award is for an individual whose work has, over a lifetime career, contributed not only to the science of developmental psychology, but also has worked to the benefit of the applications of developmental psychology to society. The individual's contributions may have been made through advocacy, direct service, influencing public policy or education, public education, or through any other routes that enable scientific developmental psychology to better the condition of children and families. Nominations should state the name of the nominee as well as a paragraph on his or her contributions. Send nominations by January 30, 2000 to Judy DeLoache at the address listed above.

The Boyd McCandless Award

The award is for an individual who is within seven years of completion of the doctoral degree and has made a distinguished theoretical contribution to developmental

psychology, for programmatic research of distinction, or has distinguished himself or herself in the dissemination of scientific developmental psychology. The award is for continued efforts rather than a single outstanding piece of work. The award winner will be invited to address the 2000 meetings of the APA. Nominations should be sent by January 30, 2000 to Linda Acredelo, Department of Psychology, University of California, Davis, Davis, CA 95616 (e-mail: pacredolo@ucdavis.edu).

Dissertation Award in Developmental Psychology

This award is given to a student who completed a dissertation judged to be an outstanding contribution to developmental psychology. The student must have completed his or her dissertation as part of a developmental graduate program, and the dissertation defense should have taken place during the current or prior calendar year preceding the award (at the APA convention). To make the nomination, four copies of a summary of the research of up to 2,000 words is to be submitted. The summary should be accompanied by a letter from the chair of the student's dissertation committee which attests to the student's primary and major contributions to the research, and explains why the dissertation is worthy of an award. Send nominations by January 30, 2000 to Willis Overton, Department of Psychology, 567 Weiss Hall, Temple University, Philadelphia, PA 19122 (e-mail: overton@vmtemple.edu).

The Eleanor Maccoby Book Award in Developmental Psychology

The award is for the author (not editor) of a book in the field of developmental psychology that has been published within the prior five years and that has, or that promises to have, a profound effect on one or more of the areas represented by Division 7 of the American Psychological Association. Nominations should include the author's name and address, the name of the book,

the publication date, the publisher's name and address, and a paragraph about the book's contribution. Self-nominations are permitted. Send nominations by January 30, 2000 to Ellin Scholnick, Department of Psychology, University of Maryland, College Park, MD 20740 (e-mail: ellin_k_scholnick@umail.emd.edu).

The Division 7 Mentor Award in Developmental Psychology

The Executive Committee of Division 7 recently established the Developmental Psychology Mentor Award. This award honors individuals who have contributed to developmental psychology through the education and training of the next generation of research leaders in developmental psychology. Our interest is in recognizing individuals who have had substantial impact on the field of developmental psychology by their mentoring of young scholars. The 1999 inaugural winners were Harold Stevenson, Mary Ainsworth, and Herbert Pick.

Again this year we are inviting developmental psychologists to nominate individuals who have played a major mentoring role in their own careers or in the career of others. Please send your nominations to Mark Greenberg, Chair of the Mentor Award Committee, Fast Track, 146 N. Canal Street, Seattle, WA 98195. Nominations can be sent via e-mail to (mgp@u.washington.edu). The nomination deadline is January 30, 2000.

The award (a plaque and \$500) will be presented at the APA convention in 2000. Part of the recognition will be "Mentor Symposium," which will include a presentation by the award recipient and by several former students, with the details to be planned collaboratively with the 2000 Division 7 Program Chair and the award recipient.

1999 Book Award

Congratulations to Eleanor Maccoby, winner of the 1999 Division 7 Book Award. Dr. Maccoby received the award for her 1998 book, *The two sexes: Growing up apart, coming together* published by USA: Belknap Press/ Harvard University Press. 1998, viii, 376 pp.

CALL FOR NOMINATIONS OF FELLOWS

It is time once more to nominate colleagues for the honor of Fellow of Division 7 of APA. The designation of Fellow in the Division of Developmental Psychology is awarded to those members of the Division who, in the judgment of their peers, have made a distinguished scientific or scholarly contribution to the field of developmental psychology. The contribution will ordinarily take the form of published papers or books documenting the candidate's empirical research, the development of theory or methods, or other scholarly pursuits. Please note that nominees may already be Fellows in other divisions of APA.

All nominees for Fellow must be members of APA Division 7. Any member of Division 7 may nominate someone for Fellow status, and self-nominations are accepted.

Please take a minute to think of colleagues who deserve being nominated as Division 7 Fellows. Send nominations (including nominee's affiliation and addresses-regular and e-mail) to the postal or e-mail address of the chair of the fellows committee below. Again, **all nominations must be received by January 15, 2000.**

Stephen J. Ceci
The H. L. Carr Professor of Developmental Psychology
Department of Human Development
Cornell University
NG25 MVR Hall
Ithaca, NY 14950
E-Mail: sjc9@cornell.edu

THE APA MEDIA REFERRAL SERVICE INVITES YOU TO JOIN

What is the MRS?

The APA Media Referral Service is a computerized data base directing the nation's news media to psychologists with expertise on a wide variety of timely issues. The MRS data base now contains information on nearly 1,300 APA members who have agreed to handle media inquiries.

Why is the MRS important?

In today's competitive climate, the need for clear, accurate information on behavior and mental health has never been greater. The nation's top print and broadcast news organizations have come to depend on the MRS to locate experts for comment and interviews on an array of health and mental health and important behavioral issues. The MRS provides the vital link among APA, the media and the public.

Why consider joining the MRS?

Each day, APA's Public Affairs Office receives from 12 to 15 calls from journalists seeking interviews with leading psychologists on a spectrum of issues: academic achievement, addictive behaviors, aging, depression, changing roles of fatherhood, memory, workplace stress and many others. Staff members review the data base to locate appropriate experts and consider any special needs the journalists might have.

By joining the MRS, you can be part of the effort to make sure that information about the science and profession of psychology is reported accurately by the news media, and that matters of concern to psychology are brought to public attention.

How can you join?

Call or e-mail for an application form. Call Rhea Farberman, Associate Executive Director of Public Communications at (202) 336-5700 or e-mail: public.affair.apa.org.

What resources are available from APA?

APA offers its members who interact with the media (or would like to) several resources to help make that interaction smoother and more productive. They include a brief brochure entitled "Questions and Answers about Dealing with the Media," a more detailed 24-page booklet entitled "How to Work with the Media:

Interview Preparation for the Psychologist" (both available from the Public Affairs Office) and hands-on media training, offered as part of the program of the annual convention each year and often at the annual Division Leadership Conference. All MRS participants are encouraged to make full use of these resources.

The *Developmental Psychologist* is published twice during the academic year by Division 7 (Developmental Psychology) of the American Psychological Association. The deadline for the Fall issue is October 15 and the deadline for Spring issue is March 1. Special convention issues are occasionally published. The Newsletter provides news and information of interest and feature articles that highlight developments in the field. The newsletter also features policy issues affecting

individuals and families, announcements of conferences and program initiatives relating to developmental psychology, and information about funding opportunities for members.

The Newsletter is distributed free to members who join Division 7 of the American Psychological Association. For membership information write to Susanne Denham, Ph.D., APA Division 7 Membership Chair, Department of Psychology, George Mason University, MSN 3F5, 4400 University Drive, Fairfax, VA 22030-4444.

Deadline for Spring 2000 Issue:

March 1, 2000

Editor

Janis E. Jacobs, Ph.D.
Department of Psychology
Pennsylvania State University
436 Moore Building
University Park, PA 16802
e-mail: JEJ6@psu.edu
Phone: 814-865-2507
FAX: 814-863-4631

Address Changes

Send address changes to APA Membership Department, 750 First Street, NE, Washington, DC, 20002-4242, or call APA at 1-800-374-2721.

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Janis Jacobs, Ph.D.
Department of Psychology
The Pennsylvania State University
436 Moore Building
University Park, PA 16802

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