LANGUAGE ACQUISITION THE CONTINUING DEVELOPMENT FROM NINE TO TEN YEARS

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Little information on language acquisition beyond nine years of age is available Carol Chomsky is the prime researcher investigating the language of children from nine to ten Initially C Chomsky found " that active syntactic acquisition is taking place up to the age of nine and perhaps even beyond" (1969, p 121) In a later study (1972) she noted continuing language development from nine to ten years on structures with "promise," "ask," "and," and "although " Thus we now have evidence that some linguistic development continues beyond nine The existing problem is the extent of growth or changes taking place after nine years

The investigator studying children's advanced language development searches for methods to discover if language acquisition is still an ongoing process Carol Chomsky speculated that certain structures would be difficult and she investigated those in depth Another method might be to study grammatical modifications or speech errors

Fromkin (1973) stated

> By carefully studying speech errors we can get a view of the discrete elements of language and can see the grammatical rules at work We also can look into the mental dictionary and get some notion of the complexity of the specifications of words and how the dictionary is organized Throughout history men have speculated, theorized and conjectured about the nature of human language Speech errors provide good data for testing some of these theories (p 117)

Investigation of the linguistic modifications[1] occurring in the language of normal nine year old children was the purpose of this paper Throughout a six month period of time I collected samples of modifications occurring in the spontaneous speech of my nine year old daughter and continuously elicited linguistic judgments from her Using the data collected from the long range study of the primary subject (Subject 1), a method of eliciting responses was designed in order to determine application of this data to language development of other nine year old children

Five subjects were used to elicit responses and judgments All subjects were female, were in the age range of 9 2 - 9 11 years, were superior students, and were from middle class families

The method used to obtain the reported data, was designed as a direct method of eliciting linguistic responses and judgments The first part included the description of a situation, "Suppose that today you are writing a letter Yesterday, you did the same thing," followed by "You might say

1 Yesterday I wrote a letter
2 Yesterday I writ a letter
3 Yesterday I writted a letter

What would you say?" Thus, in this situation two or three sample sentences that included the child language sentences of the primary subject or other subjects and grammatical variations of the same sentence were given in immediate succession followed by an intervening question Each child's elicited response to this stimulation was recorded as "oral performance "

The second step was designed to elicit judgments from the child as to what "she would usually say" and to what she thought the "examiner would usually say " The child was read each sentence alone and asked to state whether she or the tester (or both of them) would use this construction These results were recorded under "grammatical judgments" in the following tables

In order to elicit information on the semantic modifications presented by Subject 1, another method was employed Each of the children was given the word or phrase within a sentence such as, "In Utah we have extinct volcanoes " Each child was then asked to use the word or phrase in a sentence of her own For instance, "Can you use 'extinct volcanoes' in a sentence of your own?" Finally, each child was asked to explain the meaning with the request, "Tell me what that means "

The children's elicited responses exemplified both syntactic and semantic modifications Syntactic modifications are presented first

Table 1 indicates the children's responses to the "got" transformation The speech samples collected indicated the "primary subject" said spontaneously sentences such as, "Clooney, you gots to get clean " She also reported that the fourth grade music teacher was having a difficult time teaching a song because the children kept singing, "He gots the whole world in his hands "

Table 1

Children's Elicited Responses
to Got Transformation

Subject	Oral Performance	Grammatical Judgments	
		Child	Adult
Subject 1	"She gots that record "	"She gots the record "	"She has that record "
Subject 2	"She has that record "	"She got that record "	"She has that record "
Subject 3	"She gots that record "	"She got/gots that record "	"She has that record "
Subject 4	"She gots that record "	"She gots/has that record "	"She has that record "
Subject 5	"She gots that record "	"She gots that record "	"She gots that record "

Results of Table 1 in this paper indicate that the use of the third person singular, present tense marker attached to got is prevalent in the language of these nine year olds Four out of five of the children tested used "gots" in their elicited speech All of the children indicated that got or gots was a part of their child grammar but only one of the children thought that an adult would use this construction

Table 2 indicates the children's responses to the irregular past tense formation Among the irregular past tense modifications of the "primary subject" were "I spinned the spinner off," and "We would change if we understanded it " She frequently and consistently used, "I felled asleep," and "writ " (See Table 2, next page)

Table 2 of this paper shows that all of the nine year olds tested were still using modifications of the irregular past tense on at least two of the verbs tested Four of the five subjects are modifying irregular past tense by using the regular "ed" and by using the irregular form plus "ed" in addition to using the correct irregular past tense

Table 2

Children's Elicited Responses to Irregular Past Tense Formation

Subject	Oral Performance	Grammatical Judgments	
		Child	Adult
Subject 1	"I writ a letter "	"I writ a letter "	"I wrote a letter "
	"I understanded my teacher "	"I understanded/ understood my teacher "	"I understood my teacher "
	"Last night I felled asleep "	"Last night I felled asleep "	"Last night I fell asleep "
	"My friend fell all the way to school "	"My friend fell "	"My friend fell all the way "
Subject 2	"I wrote a letter "	"I wrote a letter "	"I wrote a letter "
	"I understood my teacher "	"I understood my teacher "	"I understood my teacher "
	"I felled asleep "	"I felled/ fell asleep "	"I fell asleep "
	"I fell down "	"I fell down "	"I fell down "
Subject 3	"I writted a letter "	"I wrote/ writted a letter "	"I wrote a letter "
	"I understanded my teacher "	"I understood/ understanded my teacher "	"I understood my teacher "
	"I felled asleep "	"I felled asleep "	"I felled asleep "
	"I fell down "	"I fell down "	"I fell down "

Table 2 continued

Table 2

(continued)

Subject	Oral Performance	Grammatical Judgments	
		Child	Adult
Subject 4	"I wrote a letter "	"I wrote a letter "	"I wrote a letter "
	"I understanded my teacher "	"I understanded my teacher "	"I understanded my teacher "
	"I felled asleep "	"I felled asleep "	"I felled asleep "
	"I fell down the stairs "	"I fell down the stairs "	"I fell down the stairs "
Subject 5	"I writted a letter "	"I writted a letter "	"I writted a letter "
	"I understanded my teacher "	"I understanded my teacher "	"I understanded my teacher "
	"Last night I felled asleep "	"Last night I felled asleep "	"Last night I felled asleep "
	"I fell down "	"I fell down "	"I fell down "

McNeill (1970) gives a possible explanation for the "discrepancy" between the studies indicating early acquisition of irregular past tense (Menyuk, 1969, Lee, 1974) and this study McNeill stated that " each irregular verb is a case unto itself, no rule covers more than a few words and in many cases no more than one word " (p 85) McNeill stated that the reason children form the irregular past tense of some verbs correctly, but others incorrectly is that some verbs are used more often in adult speech than others and the child has a better chance of picking up the correct irregular past tense of these verbs McNeill stated that frequency of adult use explains the early appearance of such correct irregular verbs

However, another explanation should be considered The rate of acquisition may be more involved with child language than adult language For instance, one might speculate that the irregular past tense verbs (ate, saw) that Lee chose are concepts and consequently words children tend to use early (i e , eat, see), thereby discov-

ering the irregular past tense (ate, saw) sooner Likewise, write is something children do later and talk about later, consequently, less time has elapsed to discover the irregular past tense Observing these nine year old's correct use of "fell" in "fell down" as opposed to the consistent use of "falled asleep," one can certainly not propose that children fall down before they sleep However, the concreteness and immediate awareness of falling down is apparent beside the abstract, considerably after the fact term, and almost idiomatic use of falling asleep Thus, one may easily speculate that children would use the past tense "fell down" long before "fell asleep " Consequently, the use of the correct irregular past tense may depend on the time the child had to experiment with the use in his own language

Table 3 indicates the children's responses to the formation of the have + irregular V + en The primary subject said, "I have eaten a cracker and I have dranken one glass of milk," "You should have told me I had to cut and I wouldn't have putten away the scissors," and "We had saw those a few weeks ago " Table 3 indicates that children at this age level are still having difficulties with have + irregular V + en These children were able to use the correct regular form of "eat" + en with have, although four out of five of the children used the incorrect form for the irregular verb "drink" + en with have Three of the five children demonstrated the regular rule in "have putten " Four of the five children used had + saw

Table 3

Children's Elicited Responses to Have + Irregular V + en

Subject	Oral Performance	Grammatical Judgments Child	Adult
Subject 1	"I have dranken milk and eaten cookies "	"I have dranken/ drunk milk and eaten cookies "	"I have drunk milk and eaten cookies "
	"I've putten the keys away "	"I've putten/put the keys away "	"I put the keys away "
	"I had saw that movie twice "	"I've seen/I had saw that movie twice "	"I've seen that movie twice "

Table 3 continued

Table 3

(continued)

Subject	Oral Performance	Grammatical Judgments Child	Adult
Subject 2	"I've eaten cookies and I've dranken milk "	"I've eaten cookies and I've dranken milk "	"I've eaten cookies and I've dranken milk "
	"I put the food away "	"I put the food away "	"I put the food away "
	"I've seen that movie twice "	"I had saw/ seen that movie twice "	"I've seen that movie twice "
Subject 3	"I have eaten cookies and I have dranken milk "	"I have eaten cookies and I have dranken milk "	"I have eaten cookies and I have dranken milk "
	"I've putten the food away "	"I've put/putten the food away "	"I've put the food away "
	"I had saw that movie "	"I had saw that movie "	"I had saw that movie "
Subject 4	"I have eaten cookies and I have drunk milk "	"I have eaten cookies and I have drunk milk "	"I have eaten cookies and I have drunk milk "
	"I put away the food "	"I put away the food "	"I put away the food "
	"I had saw that movie twice "	"I had saw that movie twice "	"I've seen that movie twice "
Subject 5	"I have dranken milk and I have eaten cookies "	"I have dranken milk and I have eaten cookies "	"I have dranken milk and I have eaten cookies "
	"I have putten away the food "	"I have putten away the food "	"I have putten away the food "
	"I had saw the movie twice "	"I had saw the movie twice "	"I had saw the movie twice "

Table 4 indicates the children's responses to the use of "double negation " The speech samples collected indicated the "primary subject" said spontaneously, "You can't say nothing wrong," and "I don't have no homework "

Table 4

Children's Elicited Responses to Double Negatives

Subject	Oral Performance	Grammatical Judgments Child	Adult
Subject 1	"I don't have any homework "*	"I don't have any/no homework "	"I don't have any homework "
Subject 2	"I don't have any homework "	"I don't have any homework "	"I don't have any homework "
Subject 3	"I don't have no homework "	"I don't have any/no homework "	"I don't have any homework "
Subject 4	"I don't have any homework "**	"I don't have any homework "**	"I don't have any homework "*
Subject 5	"I don't have no homework "	"I don't have no homework "	"I don't have no homework "

*Subject 1 spontaneously said, "I don't have no homework "
**Subject 4 spontaneously said, "We don't have no more school "

Table 4 indicates that four out of five of these nine year old children used double negation in their spontaneous speech, although most children (four out of five) knew that this form was not one that the adult speaker uses

Table 5 indicates the children's responses to agreement of subject - "do " The speech samples collected indicated the "primary subject" said spontaneously, "It don't have worms " Four out of the five children used the construction "it don't" rather than "it doesn't" in oral performance spontaneously or elicited Three out of five judged it grammatical for child language, although all children knew that the adult speaker used "it doesn't " (See Table 5, next page)

Table 5

Children's Elicited Responses to Subject - "Do" Agreement

Subject	Oral Performance	Grammatical Judgments Child	Adult
Subject 1	"It doesn't lead "	"It don't/doesn't have lead "	"It doesn't have lead "
Subject 2	"It doesn't taste good "	"It doesn't taste good "	"It doesn't taste good "
Subject 3	"It doesn't taste good "'	"It doesn't taste good "	"It doesn't taste good "
Subject 4	"It doesn't have lead "	"It don't/doesn't have lead "	"It doesn't have lead "
Subject 5	"It don't have lead "	"It don't/doesn't have lead "	"It doesn't have lead "

Subject 1 spontaneously said, "It don't have worms "
''Subject 3 spontaneously said, "It don't matter "

Menyuk (1969) had reported that children from nursery school through first grade were correctly using the "do" modal plus a negative contraction, with third person pronouns as in "He doesn't " While no evidence was found in nine year old's spontaneous speech of modifications with he or she as subject, when the third person singular indefinite pronoun "it" was the subject, the do + negative failed to agree in number

Table 6 indicates the children's responses to the formation of irregular plurals The speech samples collected indicated the "primary subject" said spontaneously, "Come off it peoples " Another child said, "I traded my peoples for a pair " Table 6 shows that modifications of irregular plurals are still being used by some children at this age level Four out of five of the children are using "deers" for the plural of "deer," two children use "peoples," one child says "tooths " The child at this age seems to have learned the irregular plurals to some nouns, yet not to others The obvious comparison to the stage of verb acquisition is the use of the regular "s" inflectional marker, even to the irregular plural form It seems apparent that children at the 9-10 year level are still modifying some irregular plural forms (See Table 6, next page)

Table 6

Children's Elicited Responses to the Irregular Plural

Subject	Oral Performance	Grammatical Judgments Child	Adult
Subject 1	"I have two deers "	"I have two deers "	"I have two deers "
	"I have lots of people "*	"I have lots of people "*	"I have lots of people "*
	"I have lost two teeth "	"I have lost two teeth "	"I have lost two teeth "
Subject 2	"I have two deers "	"I have two deers "	"I have two deers "
	"I lost two teeth "	"I lost two teeth "	"I lost two teeth "
	"I have two people "	"I have two people "	"I have two people "
Subject 3	"I have two deers "	"I have two deers "	"I have two deers "
	"I lost two teeth "	"I lost two teeth "	"I lost two teeth "
	"I have two peoples "	"I have two peoples "	"I have two peoples "
Subject 4	"I have two deer "	"I have two deer "	"I have two deer "
	"I have two teeth "	"I have two teeth "	"I have two teeth "
	"I have two people "	"I have two people "	"I have two people "
Subject 5	"I have two deers "	"I have two deers "	"I have two deers "
	"I have two tooths "	"I have two tooths "	"I have two tooths "
	"I have two people "	"I have two people "	"I have two people "

*Subject 1 spontaneously said, "Come off it peoples "

Table 7 indicates the children's responses to the use of irregular comparatives The speech samples collected indicated the "primary subject" said spontaneously, "That's badder manners " When she was corrected by a friend, she said, "No, it's bad, badder, baddest "

Table 7

Children's Elicited Responses to the Irregular Comparative

Subject	Oral Performance	Grammatical Judgments Child	Adult
Subject 1	"My dog is better than yours "'	"My dog is better than yours "	"My dog is better than yours "
	"My dog is badder than yours "	"My dog is badder/worse than yours "	"My dog is worse than yours "
Subject 2	"My dog is better than yours "	"My dog is better than yours "	"My dog is better than yours "
	"My dog is worse than yours "	"My dog is worse than yours "	"My dog is worse than yours "
Subject 3	"My dog is gooder than yours "	"My dog is gooder than yours "	"My dog is gooder than yours "
	"My dog is badder than yours "	"My dog is badder than yours "	"My dog is badder than yours "
Subject 4	"My dog is better than yours "	"My dog is better than yours "	"My dog is better than yours "
	"My dog is badder than yours "	"My dog is badder/ worse than yours "	"My dog is worse than yours "
Subject 5	"My dog is gooder than yours "	"My dog is gooder than yours "	"My dog is gooder than yours "
	"My dog is badder than yours "	"My dog is badder than yours "	"My dog is badder than yours "
Subject 1 said spontaneously, "Are the gooder people with you?"			

Results of Table 7 indicate that three out of five of the nine year old children tested were modifying the irregular comparatives Apparently before nine years children learn the regular comparative endings Then they learn some irregular comparatives, three subjects were using "better " However, irregular comparatives are still modified by using the regular marker, and obviously late candidates are "gooder" and "badder "

Table 8 indicates the children's responses to the use of subject pronouns in a conjoined sentence with deletions The speech samples collected indicated the "primary subject" said spontaneously such sentences as "Me and Cindy will stand you guys," and "Me and Jill are friends " The relationship of reciprocity expressed in the second sentence may require additional knowledge of deletions beyond the simple redudant VP deletion in the initial sentence However, since subject pronouns were modified in both, we elicited the seemingly more complex of the two sentences

Table 8

Children's Elicited Responses to Subject Pronoun in Conjoined Sentence

Subject	Oral Performance	Grammatical Judgments Child	Adult
Subject 1	"Me and Jane are friends "	"Me and Jane/ Jane and I are friends "	"Jane and I are friends "
Subject 2	"Me and Jane are friends "	"Me and Jane/ Jane and me are friends "	"Jane and I are friends "
Subject 3	"Me and Jane are friends "	"Me and Jane/ Jane and me are friends "	"Jane and I are friends "
Subject 4	"Jane and I are friends "	"Jane and I are friends "	"Jane and I are friends "
Subject 5	"Me and Jane are friends "	"Me and Jane/ Jane and me are friends "	"Jane and I are friends "

All of the children in this study were able to recognize that the adult speaker used the form "Jane and I," although four out of

five of the children reported that they used either the form "me and Jane" or "Jane and me " This finding is consistent with earlier studies indicating that pronouns in conjoined sentences with deletions are among the structures not mastered by eight years (Willbrand, 1973)

Table 9 indicates the children's responses to the use of conjoining three underlying sentences When the suggestion was made to that the "primary subject" write 'we've been swimming, hiking, and fishing' on a postcard, she responded, "It doesn't make sense, I'll say, 'we have been swimming and hiking and we have been fishing too '"

Table 9

Children's Elicited Responses to Conjoining Three Constituent Sentences

Subject	Oral Performance	Grammatical Judgments Child	Adult
Subject 1	"We went fishing, hiking and swimming "'	"We went fishing, hiking and swimming "'	"We went fishing, hiking and swimming "
Subject 2	"We went fishing, hiking and swimming "	"We went fishing, hiking and swimming,"	"We went fishing, hiking and swimming "
Subject 3	"We went fishing, hiking, and we went swimming too "	"We went fishing, hiking, and we went swimming too "	"We went fishing, hiking, and we went swimming too "
Subject 4	"We went fishing, hiking, and we went swimming too "	"We went fishing, hiking, and we went swimming too "	"We went fishing, hiking, and we went swimming too "
Subject 5	"We went fishing, hiking and we went swimming "	"We went fishing, hiking and we went swimming "	"We went fishing, hiking and we went swimming "

'Subject 1 used "We have been swimming and hiking and we have been fishing too" in spontaneous samples taken four months previously

This interesting structure seemed to be one that was observed during the time of acquisition in the "primary subject " At the time of testing, Subject 1 told the tester that she "used to use" the construction without deletion, but since then she had learned "where to place the commas " This observation on the part of the subject was certainly supported by the data The three other subjects conjoin three sentences without deletions in the third constituent sentence An earlier study (Willbrand, 1973) indicated the NP + M + A deletion in conjoining two constituent sentences is acquired by six years This study seems to support the finding that children can delete in two constituent sentences, but further indicates that the third constituent sentence complicates the issue

Table 10 indicates the children's use of words in a syntactically incorrect category The "primary subject" said, "The pancakes are getting disliking "

Table 10

Children's Elicited Responses to "Disliking"

Subject	Oral Performance	Explanation of Meaning
Subject 1	"The pancakes are getting disliking "	"I don't like them any more "
Subject 2	(wouldn't use this)	Knows that it means that "someone doesn't like something "
Subject 3	"My mother is getting disliking "	Means, "my mother is mad at me "
Subject 4	"I am disliking that friend "	Means, "I don't like her as much as I did yesterday "
Subject 5	"I am disliking that dog "	Means, "I'm mad at that dog "

Table 10 indicates two of the five children used "disliking" as a predicate adjective, two children used "disliking" appropriately as a transitive verb The one child who said she would not use "disliking" still had a meaning for it, and reported that she had heard the word before

The semantic modifications of the "primary subject" indicated that some of the children's semantic errors may be missed by adults in normal conversation with the child, while other modifications are apparent Concerning the development of semantics, both Menyuk (1971) and Chomsky (1969) noted that children are sometimes able to use a word or phrase syntactically correct in their grammar, although their semantic interpretation may differ from the adult's interpretation Chomsky stated that the children " do not, as they see it fail to understand our sentences They understand them, but they understand them wrongly " (p 2)

Table 11 indicates the subjects responses to beyond as "time " The sentence, "you go to college beyond high school" was used by the investigator in conversation with the "primary subject " The child's response was "What do you mean?" Therefore, we decided to see if other nine year olds knew what was meant

Table 11

Children's Elicited Responses to "Beyond" ("You go to college beyond high school ")

Subject	Oral Performance	Explanation of Meaning
Subject 1	"You go beyond high school "	"That means before But that can't be right I don't know "
	"I know what is beyond the door "	"That means away, on the other side of the door "
Subject 2	"I go beyond the store to get to my house "	"This means I walk past the store on my way home "
Subject 3	"If I put one piece of candy behind the other one, this one is beyond this one "	"This means the candy beyond is behind the other candy "
Subject 4	"Sometimes high school is beyond college "	"This means some people go to college before or after high school, but not during "
Subject 5	Wouldn't use this but said she understood it	"Means that college is further up the street (on the hill) and high school is below it "

In Table 11, three of the children interpreted "beyond" in terms of distance, rather than time, although the sample given by the investigator expressed a time relationship One of the children (Subject 4) realized that this usage of "beyond" expressed time, but she was unable to define if beyond meant "before" or "after " The "primary subject" probably best exemplified both stages (See Subject 1, Table 11) She interpreted the investigator's sentence as time but when she related it to "before" the confusion resulting in understanding before and realizing that could not be correct interpretation, resulted in failure to semantically interpret the sentence When she used her own sentence she correctly used and interpreted beyond as distance Thus, it seems that nine year old children correctly understand the use of beyond as distance but are merely beginning to grasp another semantic interpretation, that of time

This limited semantic interpretation may be demonstrated by the children's sentences However, other limited semantic interpretations are not apparent in examination of children's sentences

Some syntactically correct sentences one would probably assume the children understood The "extinct volcano" problem presented itself when the examiner said to two nine year olds, "the map shows that we will pass some extinct volcanoes " Subject 1 responded, "I didn't know there were extinct volcanoes in Utah " Another child said, "Where are the extinct volcanoes?" In constant investigation, the researcher inquired, "What are extinct volcanoes?" Subject 1 responded, "They keep going off," and the other child (not reported on the table) responded, "They are dead But that isn't right because they aren't lying down "

The subjects responses to extinct volcanoes are noted in Table 12 (See Table 12, next page) Although all of the children studied were able to use "extinct volcanoes" in a syntactically correct sentence, none of the children were able to correctly define an extinct volcano Three of the children indicated a limited concept of extinct as being absent or being out of sight

Another example of a syntactically correct sentence that is semantically ambiguous because child language has a different interpretation is a sentence like the one used by the "primary subject," "I can get the ball back three out of four times " The investigator discovered the semantic misinterpretation of this sentence by accident The adult was surprised that a beginning tennis play was so proficient and responded, "That's really good,"

Table 12

Children's Elicited Responses to "Extinct Volcanoes"
("There are extinct volcanoes in Utah ")

Subject	Oral Performance	Explanation of Meaning
Subject 1	"I didn't know there were extinct volcanoes in Utah "	"They keep shooting off "
Subject 2	"I haven't seen an extinct volcano "	"Things that don't exist There are some volcanoes, but not many "
Subject 3	"In America there are extinct volcanoes "	"Extinct could be used to mean a person doesn't exist A person could be extinct from earth, but I don't know about a volcano "
Subject 4	"Some volcanoes are extinct and some are not "	"You can see some volcanoes, but you can't see others Maybe they're too far away "
Subject 5	"That book shows an extinct volcano "	"I don't know what it means like a big volcano?"

whereby the child said, "What do you think I mean? I mean I can do it about once Three from four is one, you know "

Observation of Table 13 indicates none of these nine year olds, except possibly Subject 3, understood the phrase, "four out of five " Being superior fourth grade students the mathematical ability of these children was far beyond this, thus a plausible conclusion is that the sentence is not understood semantically All of these children may not use the phrase in their oral language, because we did not even elicit the phrase from four of the subjects This may have been only a phrase the "primary subject" would use, although she did not understand it either However, in another situation one of the other subjects used a similar sentence when she said, "I wear two in one day I get two for one " In response to the investigator's question she explained that she meant, "I wear my blue slacks for two days " Thus, she did not understand her

original sentences either

Table 13

Children's Elicited Responses to "Four out of Five"
("I hit the ball over the net four out of five times ")

Subject	Oral Performance	Explanation of Meaning
Subject 1	"I hit it four out of five times "	"That's one Subtract four from five and that's one "
Subject 2	"You hit the ball most of the time and you hardly miss it?"	"This means you might hit the ball a lot one day "
Subject 3	"I hit four or five balls "	"This means I can hit the ball sometimes four times and sometimes five times "
Subject 4	"You hit the ball over the net "	"This means one day you hit the ball four or five times "
Subject 5	didn't know	"This means you're playing tennis "

Table 14 demonstrates how the children were using a commonly understood word in adult language, with an entirely unique semantic interpretation The sentence, "My voice is horny" was taken from a spontaneous sentence used by the "primary subject " The original assumption was that this unique interpretation of horny would be peculiar to the language of Subject 1 Three other children used the word in a sentence describing a voice Perhaps the initial sentence indicated to them they should do this However, two of the children indicated they clearly understood she meant hoarse One child got the sex identification and one child just gave up
(See Table 14, next page)

Table 15 indicates the children's usage and meaning for a word which is a combination or blending of two semantically correct words, while the resulting word is semantically ambiguous at least to the adult The "primary subject" said spontaneously, "She was hillarical " It is interesting to note the child was describing a woman in a television program continuously discussed in the process of the production as hysterical

Table 14

Children's Elicited Responses to "Horny"
("My voice is horny ")

Subject	Oral Performance	Explanation of Meaning
Subject 1	"My voice is horny "	"It means it sounds horny It sounds like a fog horn on a ship "
Subject 2	"Amy's voice is horny "	"This means that she sounds hoarse "
Subject 3	"When I have a cold my voice is horny "	"I could say that it was clogged up to mean the same thing "
Subject 4	wouldn't use this	doesn't know what it means
Subject 5	"Brian's voice is horny "	"This means that Brian has a sexy voice to turn you on "

Table 15

Children's Responses to "Hillarical"
("She was hillarical ")

Subject	Oral Performance	Explanation of Meaning
Subject 1	"She was hillarical "	"She was funny She laughed and then she cried "
Subject 2	"The clown was hillarical "	"Funny, like hysterical, but funnier "
Subject 3	"The movie is hillarical "	"The movie made me laugh until I was sick and hysterical "
Subject 4	"Not much in school is hillarical "	"Kind of funny, but you can't laugh because you're in school "
Subject 5	"The dog is hillarical "	"The dog does funny tricks which are hillarical "

Another example of word blending occurred in the language of an eleven year old friend who said, "We have to memborize the whole poem " Fromkin (1973) stated that adults will often combine two words into one which is semantically incorrect Such as "shrig shouffle" for "shrimp and egg souffle " Fromkin also reported that Lewis Carroll has found this phenomenon (he called it portmanteau words) when the speaker wished to convey a meaning and he had a choice of two "good" words He mentioned the blending of blisters and splinters into "splisters "

The author of this paper found this "phenomenon" in the language of children Although when questioned about the "meaning" of the "blended" word all of the children insisted that it was one word, not two and that it was correct The meaning indicated by all the children was funny, using the meaning of hillarious and one of the meanings of hysterical The children are using the word in its syntactically correct position

The final semantic modification noted was the use of a unique or coined word Table 16 indicates the use and understanding by the children of a "coined" word found in the "primary subject's" spontaneous speech The "primary subject" said, "She talks real soothy "

Table 16

Children's Elicited Responses to "Soothy"
("She talks real soothy ")

Subject	Oral Performance	Explanation of Meaning
Subject 1	"She talks real soothy "	"She says things like 'heyman,' 'far out '"
Subject 2	"Sometimes I talk soothy "	"This means I talk like this to make my friend feel better "
Subject 3	wouldn't say this	doesn't know what it means
Subject 4	"My cat purrs real soothy "	"Means my cat purrs loud and good "
Subject 5	wouldn't say this	doesn't know what it means

Menyuk (1971) found that young children create entirely unique words, for example, "He is a bugiebooer," but she reported these

inventions sharply declined after the pre-school period Examination of this data indicates that children of age nine and perhaps older still use words which are individually unique This table also indicates that at least two of the four children did indicate that they would use it but gave a meaning for the word that seemed to indicate "soothing " The meaning of coined words probably remains exclusive to the inventor unless he should bother to explain them

The results of this study have indicated several general conclusions Obviously there is evidence of continuing syntactic and semantic development beyond nine years The modifications studied present a variety of viable linguistic candidates for advanced acquisition

These subjects were efficient informants Their judgment of what a child would say was consistent with what they used in elicited performance In the 29 correct syntactic responses all judgments on grammaticality agreed, and out of 52 modified syntactic performances the children agreed 46 times in the judgment that a child would use such a modified structure However, these children demonstrated a competence that exceeded both the elicited oral performance and judgments of child grammar For half of the modified sentences (26 of 52) the subjects indicated that the adult would differ and chose the grammatical sentence for the adult Thus, "through the eyes of a child" we see that child language is different from adult language

Another type of consistency in the responses of the children was apparent The long range sample collected from one subject was confirmed by other children These nine year old children demonstrated similar linguistic modifications Although individual variation was obvious and the rate of acquisition may vary, the general agreement of these subjects on the syntactic and semantic modifications indicated a similarity in language development of children from nine to ten years

Language acquisition is an active and ongoing process in children from nine to ten years Further investigations of the continuing linguistic development of older children seem warranted

NOTES

[1] Fromkin has used the term "speech errors" in studying adult language Although this paper is reporting a similar type of spontaneous language performance in children, the author of this paper assumes the position that, insofar as child language is concerned, these responses should not be regarded as "errors " In the study of children's language more appropriate terms seem to be "linguistic modifications" or "syntactic and semantic performance and/or competence appearing in child language "

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