

IASCL - Child Language Bulletin - Vol 20, No 2: November 2000

IN THIS ISSUE

- [From the editor](#)
- [Childes news](#)
- [Research article](#)
- [Interview](#)
- [New programs](#)
- [From Info-Childes](#)
- [Book notices, forthcoming conferences, new journal](#)
- [Report](#)

IASCL HOMEPAGE CONTENTS

<http://iascl-www.uia.ac.be>

- Mission of the IASCL
- IASCL Officers and Executive Committee
- **Child Language Bulletin**
- Publications Committee Chair
- Governing Statute
- Membership directory
- Registration form
- Proceedings of Previous Congresses

FROM THE EDITOR

The **Child Language Bulletin** is the newsletter of the International Association for the Study of Child Language. It is distributed free to all members of IASCL and it is published twice a year.

The Bulletin is available on the IASCL Web page <http://iascl-www.uia.ac.be> and all members of the association will receive an e-mail message each time a new issue of the Bulletin is published. A hard copy of the Bulletin will only be sent to those members who ask for it by sending a message to the editor.

The editor invites all members of IASCL to submit short articles, reports, book reviews and letters for publication in the **Child Language Bulletin**. Conference information and book notices are also welcome. Please send your contributions to the editor by e-mail or by postal mail (including an IBM compatible disk) to:

Jasone Cenoz

Department of English Philology

University of the Basque Country

P.O. Box 2111

01006 Vitoria-Gasteiz, Spain

e-mail: fipceirj@vc.ehu.es

Fax: 34-945-144290

Please feel free to communicate your suggestions concerning the Child Language Bulletin to the editor by electronic or postal mail.

CHILDES NEWS

Subscription and Web Pages

Subscription and unsubscription messages should be sent to: requests@mail.talkbank.org.

To subscribe to the mailing list send the message: *subscribe info-childes*

To subscribe to the digest only, send the message: *subscribe digest info-childes*

To unsubscribe from the mailing list or the digest, send the message: *unsubscribe info-childes*

The Childes Web pages are:

US <https://childes.talkbank.org>

Europe <http://atila-www.uia.ac.be/childes/>

Japan <http://jchat.sccs.chukyo-u.ac.jp/CHILDES/>

New Contributions to the Childes Database

1. The corpus contributed by **Judit Navracsics**, University of Veszprém, Hungary. It contains a longitudinal corpus of a pair of siblings acquiring English and Persian as their first two languages from birth and Hungarian as an early second language. The corpus is *navracsics.zip* and *navracsics.sip*. It is in the */biling* directory, although three languages are involved.
2. The corpus collected by **Andrea Feldman** of the University of Colorado has been added to the CHILDES database. The data in this study come from a longitudinal study of her first child, code-named Steven, from age 0;5 to 2;9. The data are in *feldman.sit* and *feldman.zip* on childes.psy.cmu.edu.
3. A multilingual corpus collected by **Madalena Cruz-Ferreira** is another contribution to the CHILDES database. The transcripts document the parallel acquisition by three children of Portuguese and Swedish, along with later acquisition of English. The corpus can be found in *mcf.sit* and *mcf.zip* in the database.

Other News

1. Leonid Spektor has written a new CLAN program for phonological analysis. The command is MAKEMOD, which stands for “make a new %mod or model phonological tier.” This program uses the CMU Pronouncing Dictionary to automatically insert the adult phonological targets for words. This %mod line can then be analyzed in conjunction with a %pho using the MODREP program.
2. The machine called alaska.psy.cmu.edu has been replaced by loki.psy.cmu.edu. This machine was being used as the server for the CHILDES-BIB, the Japanese bibliography, and streaming audio and video. The links to the bibliography from the CHILDES home page have been fixed, so you don't need to worry about this if you were just relying on those links. Also, streaming audio and video is a very new CLAN/TalkBank facility and only a few people have learned how to use it. However, if you have worked with it, you now need to use <http://loki.psy.cmu.edu> as your URL instead of <http://alaska.psy.cmu.edu>.
3. Thanks to guidance from Paul Boersma, it is now possible to send a sound clip from a CHAT file to the Praat sound analysis program. To do this, you must have a CHAT file with audio segments marked by bullets. You must have Praat installed. You can get Praat from <http://www.fon.hum.uva.nl/praat/>. You must have a brand-new version of CLAN. Praat must be running when you do this. You then place your cursor before the segment you wish to analyse and pull down the Mode menu and select “Send to Praat” Then you analyze the clip in Praat.
4. Ann Peters and Katsura Aoyama have created a fascinating set of illustrations of “fillers” in both pre- and protomorphology. The URL is <https://childes.talkbank.org/html/concepts.html>. Ann's illustrations are provided in CHAT form as taken from the Peters-Wilson Seth transcripts. By clicking on the example, you can directly play and hear the filler examples. They include examples between content words and at the beginnings of short phrases. These files play fine on both Mac with Netscape 4.7 and on Windows with IE5. However, on both machines I have recent versions of QuickTime loaded. If your browser complains that you need a new version of QuickTime, you can download it from <http://www.apple.com/quicktime/download/>

RESEARCH ARTICLE: SIGN LANGUAGE AS A FIRST LANGUAGE

Bepie van den Bogaerde¹

Department of Special Education

Polytech Utrecht, The Netherlands

Introduction

During the last 25 years the study of a sign language as a first language has become the focus of an increasing amount of research (e.g. American Sign Language: Newport and Meier, 1986; British Sign Language: Woll and Kyle, 1989). The data on sign language acquisition as a first language can be of interest to the field of first language acquisition as a whole, in particular because sign languages are perceived and produced in the visual-manual modality, in contrast to spoken languages, which use the auditive-oral modality. The difference in modality can give us more insight into modality specific or language specific aspects of the language acquisition process.

Prelingual deaf children cannot acquire a spoken language in a natural way, mainly because spoken input is only visually accessible to them, and even that not more than 30% (Dodd and Campbell, 1987). Imagine as an adult having to learn a foreign language on the basis of only 30% of the visual information, without having access to the sounds! Everyone would agree that this is impossible, yet it is expected of deaf children, who do not even have a fully developed first language to their disposal (as hearing adults do) and who do not function on the cognitive, social and emotional level that adults do. So we may agree upon the fact that deaf children *cannot acquire* a spoken language in the same way that hearing children do. We can also agree, that prelingual deaf children *can* acquire a sign language in a natural way; there is substantial evidence nowadays that they acquire a sign language as a first language in the same way that hearing children acquire a spoken language (Gallaway and Woll, 1994).

However, in our literate western world, knowledge of at least the written form of the spoken language of a given country is paramount to social functioning. So deaf children *have to* learn the spoken language of their country, in whatever modality that is possible for them (spoken or written), at least if they are to be given the same chances of success in the modern hearing world. By implication, prelingual deaf children must become bilingual, they are to be exposed to a sign language from as early an age on as possible, so that they may acquire that sign language as a first language. Furthermore, they will have to learn the spoken language of their country (spoken if possible, if not then only the written form).

In this article I will discuss some of the linguistic circumstances of deaf children. I will use examples from my dissertation (van den Bogaerde, 2000) to illustrate some of the aspects that I will discuss and conclude with some implications from the results of my study.

Language Background

Only 5-10 % of all children born deaf has deaf parents (Quigley and Paul, 1984). This means that only 5-10% of deaf children has a chance to be raised with a signed language. That is, if their parents know and use sign language, because there are many deaf adults who do not sign (see below) and who would use (a form of) a spoken language even with their deaf children. There are also many deaf parents who raise their children bilingually, both with a spoken and with a sign language (Van den Bogaerde, 2000). In deaf families where a

sign language is used as the family language, deaf and hearing children alike will acquire that sign language along the same paths as hearing children of hearing parents acquire their spoken language.

The majority of prelingually deaf children have hearing parents, who usually do not know sign language, and even may know nothing about deafness at all. These deaf children are usually offered only a spoken language and no sign language. Nowadays many hearing parents, upon hearing that their child is deaf, will straight away be included into family guidance programs and will start, as soon as possible, to follow sign language courses, and will use as much sign language as they know with their child. These deaf children are usually raised bilingually.

The prelingual period is usually considered to be between birth and three years of age – so what about children who become deaf around or after the age of 3;0, but before the language acquisition process has been fully completed? Even though they may have acquired a lot of the spoken language at that age, from the moment of deafness on they do not have full access to that spoken language anymore. There is the danger that they may lose the knowledge of that language. Ideally, they would start to acquire sign language as soon as possible, while at the same time efforts are made to develop their spoken language.

The language background of each individual deaf child may thus vary enormously, and this is reflected in the language skills of the deaf population, which are very heterogeneous. There are thus many factors that influence the (first) language acquisition process of the deaf child. Which input language(s) is/are offered and what access has the child to these languages? At what age did the child become deaf, how long has it been deaf and how has the language situation been since becoming deaf? Moment of onset of deafness, duration of deafness, degree of deafness and input language situation are factors that are extremely important in the ultimate chance of linguistic success for each deaf child.

In the next section I will very briefly describe the language acquisition process of a sign language as a first language.

Sign Language as a First Language

Deaf children of deaf parents are most often raised with a sign language, although not always (Singleton, 1989). Newport and Meier (1986) and Petitto and Marentette (1991) have described how deaf children acquire American Sign Language (ASL) from the input offered to them by their deaf parents.

The deaf children produce *manual movements* from the age of 10 months on (perhaps earlier), and the structure of these movements resemble the structure of vocal babbling in hearing children (even though deaf children also vocalize, they characteristically do not produce rhythmic vocal babbling). Around the first birthday, sometimes a little earlier, the first symbolic single signs are produced. These are usually proto-signs, that can have a different phonological form from the adult sign. Two-sign combinations occur from the age of

approximately 18 months, and three sign utterances and increasingly complex sentences occur also at more or less the same age that they occur in hearing children acquiring a spoken language. There have been many studies on one or two aspects of the phonological or morpho-syntactic development in the sign language of deaf children of deaf parents, mostly in ASL. Although much attention has been paid to the spoken language development of deaf children with a focus on pronunciation and speech therapy, we know little of the language acquisition process itself, except that it is much delayed (e.g. Beers, 2000). Ultimate success is doubtful, if not nearly always less than that of hearing children of hearing parents.

In my study on the acquisition of SLN (Sign Language of the Netherlands) and Dutch by three deaf and three hearing children (1;0 – 3;0) in deaf families we found, that the deaf children were mainly offered SLN and hardly any Dutch. The deaf mothers also use SLN with the hearing children, although not very much. They also offer them Dutch that is sometimes non-standard and sometimes grammatically correct, though always very simple. The main form of communication is simultaneous signing and speech, which at times tends to resemble SLN and at other times resembles spoken Dutch. But within this Simultaneous Communication (SC) there are also utterances that are neither Dutch nor SLN. However, on the basis of the SC input the hearing children are starting to acquire and produce SLN. This means, that even though no 'pure' sign language (SLN) is offered to these hearing children, they are apparently able to distill the grammatical rules for SLN from the mixed input.

These findings are important, especially for the 90% of deaf children who have hearing parents. Upon hearing that their infant is deaf, many hearing parents nowadays decide to learn a sign language to be able to provide the deaf child with a language mode it *can* acquire (in contrast to the spoken mode) With sign language they will be able to communicate with their child. Sign language, like any language, takes some years to acquire, and initially (or always) these parents may mix their speech with signs. This mixed input has been a constant worry for many professionals, who think that children can only acquire a language on the basis of a full language model (Caselli and Volterra, 1990). However, if hearing children of deaf parents can acquire a sign language on the basis of mixed input (Van den Bogaerde 2000), so can deaf children.

Conclusion

All children in the world have the right of a first language in which to communicate with the world around them. Prelingual deaf children cannot acquire a spoken language, and should be offered a sign language as a first language.

Only if deaf children acquire a first language, in their case a sign language, will they be able to learn a second spoken language, be it the spoken or the written form. And only when deaf children master the spoken language of their hearing environment will their chances of equal opportunities in the hearing world improve. Bilingual first language acquisition is thus a 'must' for deaf children.

I thank Esther de Nobel, Jan Nijen Twilhaar and Richard van Royen for their useful comments.

References

- Beers, M. (2000)
Phonological characteristics of the speech of deaf children. In M. Beers; B van den Bogaerde; G. Bol; J. de Jong and C. Rooijmans (eds) *From Sound to Sentence* (pp. 1-11) Groningen: Centre for Language and Cognition.
- Caselli, M. C. & Volterra, V. (1990)
From communication to language in hearing and deaf children. In V. Volterra and C.J. Erting (eds) *From Gesture to Language in Hearing and Deaf Children* (pp. 263-277). New York: Springer Verlag.
- Dodd, B. & Campbell, R. (ed) (1987)
The Psychology of Lip-reading. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Gallaway, C. & Woll, B. (1994)
Interaction and childhood deafness. In C. Gallaway and B.J. Richards (eds) *Input and Interaction in Language Acquisition* (pp. 197-218). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Newport, E. & Meier, R. (1986)
The acquisition of American Sign Language. In D. Slobin (ed) *The Crosslinguistic Study of Language Acquisition* (Vol. 1) (pp. 881-938). Hillsdale NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Petitto, L.A. & Marentette, P.F. (1991)
Babbling in the manual mode: evidence for the ontogeny of language. *Science* 251: 1493-1496.
- Quigley, S. & Paul, P.V. (1984)
Language and Deafness. San Diego: College Hill Press.
- Singleton, J. L. (1989).
Restructuring of Language from Impoverished Input: Evidence for Linguistic Compensation. PhD Dissertation, Urbana, Ill: University of Illinois.
- Van den Bogaerde, B. (2000)
Input and Interaction in Deaf Families. Ph.D. Dissertation University of Amsterdam. Utrecht: LOT.
- Woll, B. & J. Kyle (1989).
Communication and language development in children of deaf parents. In S. von Tetzchner, L.S. Siegel and L. Smith (eds) *The Social and Cognitive Aspects of Normal and Atypical Language Development*. New York: Springer Verlag.

AN INTERVIEW WITH JON MILLER

Annick De Houwer

Jon Miller is Professor of Communicative Disorders at the University of Madison, Wisconsin. His innovative language comprehension and production assessment methods and instruments, such as SALT, are landmarks in the field that are widely used in both clinical and research settings. Dr. Miller has graciously offered to host the next IASCL Congress in Madison.

ANNICK DE HOUWER: *Dr. Miller, your graduate degree is in speech and language pathology. What is it that attracted you to this area of study?*

JON MILLER: As an undergraduate I majored in marine biology. I was interested in animal behavior but found that nobody was really studying that at the time. My interest in animal behavior and its development turned to

an interest in human behavior and in what can go wrong with it. It is through my first job as a speech pathologist that I really became interested in language and the description of its development, which at the time was largely uncharted territory. I was lucky enough to find mentors at my department who were willing to support me in this interest and who encouraged me in my graduate work.

A.D.H.: *In the field of child language research you are, I think, best known for your groundbreaking work in developing instruments to assess children's language development at a time when few such instruments existed. Of these SALT (Systematic Analysis of Language Transcripts) is the best known within the child language community. The novelty of your approach lay in the fact that you used actual language use as a basis for analysis. Why did you think this was important?*

J.M.: At the time that I worked on developing SALT - that would be the early seventies - a lot of description was still needed in order to formulate adequate theories of both normal and disordered language acquisition. There were a number of assessment instruments available at the time, but often these started from assumptions of how children developed language that were not necessarily based on empirical facts. Also these instruments tended to look at just one aspect of language use, such as phonetics or lexical knowledge. I felt that in order to be able to assess children's language you first needed to document their actual language performance as closely as possible, rather than assess things without any observational base. Also the complexity of language functioning meant to me that an instrument was needed through which you could integrate many different levels of language behavior. Working with an actual language sample took care of both the need for adequate description and the need for integration. This might sound obvious today but it surely wasn't at the time.

A.D.H.: *Around the time that you were developing SALT, researchers in Britain (David Crystal, Paul Fletcher and Michael Garman) were also developing a language sample based assessment instrument called LARSP (Language Assessment Remediation and Screening Procedure). How do SALT and LARSP compare with each other?*

J.M.: Well, actually SALT and LARSP are different ways to approach what is essentially the same thing. In LARSP, the goal was to arrive at a linguistically based analysis in which categories were summarized across utterances so you got a linguistic profile of the sorts of structures that a particular child was using. SALT, on the other hand, developed ways to analyze material utterance by utterance, and was largely inspired by Brown's developmental theory with regard to MLU. As it turned out, Robin Chapman and I found on the basis of using SALT that contrary to Brown's findings there is in fact a very strong correlation between age and MLU.

A.D.H.: *Aside from serving the professional and academic community through your research you have also been very active in the annual organisation of conferences in Madison.*

J.M.: That's right. Just in June we had the 21st edition of our Symposium on Research in Child Language Disorders (SRCLD). This annual event is aimed at both the professional and research community. Both established scholars as well as students appear on the program - what counts for me is quality of research rather than status, and with the help of NIH* we've been able to offer a lot of students support to attend the conference. The conference has also grown into an international event, with scholars from many different countries attending.

A.D.H.: *In addition to all the other activities you are engaged in, you are now also committed to organising the next international child language conference on behalf of the IASCL in Madison in July 2002. How do you plan to combine this with the SRCLD meeting that year?*

J.M.: In 2002 we won't be organising a separate SRCLD meeting. The 2002 SRCLD meeting will take place in conjunction with the IASCL meeting. There will be ample space at that meeting to incorporate work on both child language disorders and more typical language development, and I am looking forward to what I'm sure will be a very fruitful and interesting exchange of ideas between researchers working on language acquisition in normally developing children and researchers working on disorders.

A.D.H.: *Organising an international conference with probably more than 500 delegates (at our last meeting there were over 600 participants) is quite an undertaking that requires a lot of preparation. Who will be assisting you with all the work?*

J.M.: I'm happy to say that as far as organizing the program goes I can call on the help of IASCL members who are on the National Advisory Board of the SRCLD and colleagues outside of the United States. After all, the program submissions will cover a very wide range of topics, and we need to make sure that this range can be appropriately covered in the reviewing process. I am also in regular contact with Brian MacWhinney as President of the IASCL in order to consult with him on various matters. For the more local and practical issues there are various staff members at Madison who are helping out, and I have hired a full-time assistant for secretarial and logistic tasks.

A.D.H.: *We've heard there is a brand new conference center in Madison. Can you tell us some more about it?*

J.M.: Yes indeed we've got a very new conference center here. It was designed by Frank Lloyd Wright and is really very beautiful. Also its location is just great - it's right on the lake. The center is not exactly brand new, though, because we've already been using it, and by July 2002 it will be 3 years old. We've got a picture of it on our website so go ahead and have a look at: <http://www.waisman.wisc.edu/srclid/index.htm>.

You'll also find the program of the last SRCLD meeting on it and we'll be developing this website further for the IASCL meeting.

A.D.H.: *On a lighter note - I know there are a number of IASCL members that after a long day of hard work at the conference like to do something of an entirely different nature. Some of us love to dance, for instance. What are some of the after dark entertainment possibilities in Madison? And will you be setting up a social program?*

J.M.: Well Madison has lots of clubs where they play a large variety of different kinds of music, so there's plenty of opportunity to have a fun time at night. We'll also be hosting the conference banquet, of course, which will be part of each delegate's conference package, and we may just add a little surprise event to that...

A.D.H.: *The IASCL is a worldwide organisation with members in over 60 countries. One of its major goals is to stimulate research in child language all over the world, and to organise conferences at which members from all over the world can be present. Will there be financial support for members from economically disadvantaged countries who have a paper accepted at the IASCL 2002 Congress?*

J.M.: Together with IASCL President Brian MacWhinney I'll be applying for a conference grant in order to find funds for the kind of support you mention. Also we'll be building on past experience within the IASCL as regards the grant policy developed for the IASCL meeting in San Sebastian in 1999.

A.D.H.: *Is there anything else you'd like to add about the conference?*

J.M.: I can assure all IASCL members that we're going to work on as good a program as possible. I hope that your readers are already starting to think about their research presentations for the meeting - IASCL 2002 will be a wonderful opportunity for greater contact between scholars working with normally developing and disordered children that I'm sure will be enriching for both. I look forward to an outstanding event with lots of enthusiastic delegates!

A.D.H.: *Thank you so much for the interview, and for your work on behalf of the IASCL.*

J.M.: You're very welcome!

* note: NIH stands for the National Institutes of Health, which is the major funding agency for research on child health and development in the United States

9th IASCL CONFERENCE

MADISON, WISCONSIN

JULY 16-21 2002

CALL FOR PAPERS IN THE NEXT BULLETIN

NEW PROGRAMS

McGill University Graduate Program in Language Acquisition:

The new Language Acquisition Program is a cross-disciplinary option for Ph.D. students that focuses on the scientific exploration of issues related to language acquisition. The perspective is cross-disciplinary, covering diverse acquisition contexts and different kinds of learners. Students in the Language Acquisition Program are introduced to theoretical and methodological issues on language acquisition from the perspectives of cognitive neuroscience, theoretical linguistics, psycholinguistics, education, communication sciences and disorders, and neuropsychology.

Participating faculty members in the program hold appointments in the departments of Communication Sciences and Disorders, Linguistics, Psychology, and Second Language Education. These departments, in turn, are housed in the faculties of Medicine, Arts, Science, and Education, making this program unique in its cross-disciplinary approach. The research interests of participating faculty members encompass language acquisition in pre-school, school-age, and adult learners; oral and sign language acquisition; monolingual, bilingual, and multilingual acquisition; normal and impaired language development; and instructed and naturalistic language learning. Their work encompasses basic as well as applied and clinical issues related to language development.

For further information, contact:

Fred Genesee

genesee@ego.psych.mcgill.ca

www.psych.mcgill.ca/lap.html

New MA in Linguistics and Child Language

This MA program is designed to attract those who have an interest in the development of children's language from birth. It will have a special (but not exclusive) appeal for those with a background in psychology, cognitive science, linguistics, education, modern languages and for professionals in the teaching and therapeutic professions. A distance-learning course is a pre-requisite for those without a linguistic background.

For further information contact:

Isabelle Barriere,

I.Barriere@herts.ac.uk

FROM INFO-CHILDES

This section includes the messages that summarize the recommendations on research equipment. The messages have been taken from info-children: info-children@children.psy.cmu.edu

RESEARCH EQUIPMENT

Date: Mon, 24 Jul 2000

From: Philip Dale

DaleP@health.missouri.edu

I am setting up an observation facility for parent-child interaction, and would appreciate advice concerning good, medium-price equipment, as it's been a few years since I have had to make these decisions. In the past, I've been very pleased with the Panasonic "AG-" series equipment, and wonder if it is still highly regarded. Also, I know there have been many new developments in wireless microphones which can connect to video cameras, and I'd appreciate advice in that regard.

Please reply to me directly at dalep@health.missouri.edu, and I will write up a summary of the information I've received.

Many thanks

Date: Fri, 25 Aug 2000

From: Philip Dale

DaleP@health.missouri.edu

Thanks to everyone who sent information on my request for suggestions and recommendations for equipment for an observational facility. They fall into three groups:

1. The first issue is choosing between analog and digital equipment. I received pithy comments from Amy Sheldon ("do all recording digitally") and Brian Macwhinney ("Time to go all digital"). As I understand it, digital is higher quality, and even more important, permits video editing on your PC, tight integration of video with transcription and coding, and easy incorporation into presentations (e.g., PowerPoint). The equipment seems to run 2-3 times the cost of analog for now.
2. Letty Naigles and Johanna Nicholas reported continuing satisfaction with the Panasonic Proline (AG-series) analog equipment. It's difficult to find much information about specification and pricing on the

web for this series, but specifying “Proline” helps. Letty also recommended a nonlinear video editing computer: “the digital vcrs, etc. were very tempting, and are indeed the new wave of the future-- smaller, better images, and easily editable. And the cost may have gone down considerably in the ensuing time. But I would also encourage you to look into a nonlinear video editing computer, because it will enable you to do fabulously time-detailed coding of your tapes. I use it for coding my preferential-looking tapes (I have an adaptor that can load analog images and digitize them), and the precision can't be beat. They are, of course, also great for making new video footage, should you ever decide you want to do that. My system cost me 17K 2 years ago; I'm not sure whether that is medium-range for you?”

3. With respect to wireless microphones specifically, I received positive recommendations from John Grinstead and Adele Niccio: [Grinstead] “I use a wireless microphone made by Audio-technica (the model is Pro 88W). It was medium priced (a couple hundred dollars) and attaches to a video camera. These things can get “really” pricey. A friend of mine used to use one for discourse analysis that he borrowed from a radio station, which cost \$1500. I, at least, am incapable of discerning a big difference between the quality of the one I have and that one.”
[Niccio] "With regard to wireless microphones, we have had very good luck with Countryman Associates. They make very tiny lavalier microphones (EMW model) with flat frequency responses that work very well for children when you must consider clothing rubbing against the mike, things spilling on them, etc. (<http://www.countryman.com>). We use TELEX ENG-1 transmitters and receiver, with the receiver attached to a video camera (<http://www.telex.com>). The transmitter is in a pouch on a smock worn by the child. We use this equipment for language samples from children age 3 and younger, including infants. The most problems we've had have not been with the equipment per se, but with making students understand the importance of the child's wearing the mike a uniform distance from the mouth.”
4. Johanna Nicholas raised a related question: “I'm also interested to know how people feel about filming through the glass of a one-way mirror vs. mounting a camera in the room vs. some other arrangement.” I've been most satisfied by filming through a one-way mirror provided that you can keep the observation room dark, and the mirror is a large one so that it's possible to move the camera around and follow the child. In-room cameras are distracting for some children, though not all. They also require a video game-like skill at moving the joystick while watching the monitor. Of course with either approach there is the inevitable problem of the child facing away from the camera so that his/her actions are not visible. The only solution for this is to have a second camera mounted on the far side of the room, and be able to switch to it as needed.

Thanks again to all

Date: Mon, 28 Aug 2000

From: Philip Dale

DaleP@health.missouri.edu

My comments about the greater expense of digital video in the previous message were too brief to be helpful, and I want to add some additional information for those who haven't had a chance to look into this new and appealing technology. Although it is true that digital recorders are more expensive than analog (\$800-1400), there can be considerable savings due to the fact that there is no need for the equivalent of the VCR deck itself. Video viewing, editing, and transcribing are done on a PC/Mac, as long as it is a fairly recent computer, with **plenty** of hard drive space, perhaps a gigabyte of free hard drive space for a typical video. For longer term storage of videos, a simple and relatively inexpensive solution is to get a CD-RW drive and save the video on a CD (blank CD-RWs are quite inexpensive, in the range of a dollar or two).

EQUIPMENT: AUDIO RECORDERS

Date: Mon, 16 Oct 2000

From: Fred Genesee

genesee@ego.psych.mcgill.ca

We are planning to do research on the early vocalizations (babbling) of young children and are looking for guidance on audio-recording equipment. We would like high quality recordings that could be analyzed acoustically.

All suggestions are welcome,

Date: Mon, 16 Oct 2000

From: Brian MacWhinney

macw@cmu.edu

Fred,

That's an important topic. The quality of the recordings for things like babbling is not so much a function of the recorder as of the mike, the mike placement (pillows, etc), and the presence of extra noises in the room. There are a couple pages of discussion of this issue in the CHAT manual (<https://chilides.talkbank.org/pdf/chat.pdf>) in

Chapter 18 on recording technique. DAT, minidisk, and high quality cassette all work fine. I'm a little less clear about microphone type and selection. I've used a particular SONY model ECM-909A. But other people may have done a systematic study and found something better. A markedly different approach is to use small condenser mikes that broadcast to receivers. Anyway, all of this is in Chapter 18. I would love to receive critical comments on Chapter 18 from people who have found better techniques. Of course, there is always the sound-proof room approach, but then the child may just decide that they don't like babbling in sound-proof rooms. I wonder if babbling researchers have ever tried that approach. We've been receiving some very high quality babbling recordings now from Brosda and Davis/MacNeilage/Matyear. I wonder if they can give you details on what worked for them. I am happy to collect suggestions and modify Chapter 18 and perhaps add this to HTML web pages.

Date: Tue, 17 Oct 2000

From: Stefanie Brosda

brosda@icp.inpg.fr

I am currently recording babbling data and do confirm what Brian wrote. The surrounding noise can be rendered VERY audibly on the recording even when in the situation you were hardly aware of it (due to some kind of perceptive filtering of ours). A computer in the room you're recording in should be shut down as it is rather imposing on the tape afterwards. Refrigerators are a problem, too, if the child happens to be in the kitchen for daily routines, but its less disturbing than a computer's ventilator (anyway, people generally are not prepared to switch off the fridge for you...). More obvious things like washing machines and open windows have to be avoided, too. This may seem evident to us, but the parents of your babbling babies are not necessarily aware of this things until you tell them.

Personally, I used a DAT recorder in the beginning, then changed for a digital camcorder (CANON MV20i - afterwards I extract the audio track from the video files with adobe premiere). There has not been any quality change between the two devices. The mike I use is a PHILIPS SBC ME600 very small clip mike, frequency range: 50 - 18 000 Hz, impedance: 1000 om., sensitivity: -65 dB, 5 meter cord. Depending of your funding, you might consider to use a cordless mike which I think significantly facilitates things as the cord intervenes with the child moving around, is used as a toy, being sucked on etc. As for the placement you'll need to find a compromise between having the mike as near to the child's mouth as possible but still out of touch and reach (which is in itself not possible...). I found that clipping it on the shoulder or a bit below works fine. Be careful not to clip it to near to the face as the child will be moving around his/her head and be touching the mike with his/her cheeks. This completely plasters the child's output with noise. Same for contact between the mike and clothing.

Brian MacWhinney wrote: "Of course, there is always the sound-proof room approach, but then the child may just decide that they don't like babbling in sound-proof rooms. I wonder if babbling researchers have ever tried that approach."

Well, I did not. And I should not think it works. There are several problems:

- i. unnatural surrounding for both the child AND the mother (if the mother's not at ease, the child won't be either)
- ii. no daily routines possible
- iii. at least "my" mothers/fathers would not have liked to have to come into the lab especially instead of me going to their homes
- iv. organisational problems: I found it sometimes difficult to find the right moment to record the children (what with naps, meals, naps again and other time constraints imposed by the child or the parents) which are not always fully foreseeable. But in order to have the caregiver+child in the sound-proof room at the right moment when the child is good humoured, relaxed and in a chatting mood, you'd need considerable prediction capacities that are difficult to acquire...

Good luck and best wishes,

Date: Tue, 17 Oct 2000

From: Barbara Zurer Pearson

bpearson@comdis.umass.edu

Dear Stefanie and other Infochilides,

I was involved in a large infant babbling project in the 80s and early 90s in Kim Oller and Rebecca Eiler's lab when they were at the University of Miami. Well over 100 babbling infants were followed longitudinally. (The number is probably much greater, but I know personally about over 100.) The decisions about equipment were made a couple of generations ago technologically, so I will not add to the very good suggestions we have already heard here.

However, I want to add to Stefanie Brosda's comments about recording in the home versus the lab. In Kim and Rebecca's projects, recording was done in a soundproof booth at the lab. The babbling studies started at around 3 months of age. Children came to the lab with their parents or caretakers once a month for 3 years,

more often at certain times. (There's a generation of toddlers out there pointing at the University of Miami hospital complex as they drive by, saying "Debra, Debra" --the name of the full-time family coordinator who engendered this extraordinary loyalty.)

Ecological validity was a concern, so they addressed it head-on. Vanessa Lewedag did her Master's thesis comparing infant output in home and lab settings. I have put the reference to the publication that resulted below (which you can find indexed in PsychInfo, as I did).

Vanessa confirmed everyone's suspicion that the children vocalized more at home than they did in the lab during their "appointed 1/2 hour." But they didn't demonstrate any more mature behaviors at home than they did in the lab. I don't remember all the details of the method or the results, just that it encouraged Kim (and then Peter Mundy who took over several of Kim's projects after Kim left Miami) to continue with the sound proof booth, with a mike on a boom. Those of you embarking on projects with this very tricky population might like to consult Vanessa's article in *First Language*:

- Lewedag, V.L.; Oller, D.K.; Lynch, M.P. (1994) Infants' vocalization patterns across home and laboratory environments. *First Language* 14: 49-65.

Good luck, and congratulations on the perserverance that you will surely have to have to do babbling studies!

P.S. I'm reminded by how hard babbling studies are, but how rarely laypeople perceive them as such of the wise crack from my 14-year-old son when I got my first article accepted in the *Journal of Child Language*.

"Gee, mom, *Journal of Child Language*. That's great. Do they print it in crayon?!"

Date: Thu, 19 Oct 2000

From: George D. Allen

alleng@pilot.msu.edu

Brian, et al,

When making audio recordings of infants' and children's vocalizations, it helps to know whether your recordings are intended to be analyzed auditorily or instrumentally (or both). If you are going to do instrumental analysis, then it matters what microphone you use, since many have significant drop-outs in the frequency range of interest. Whatever you are going to use, be sure to calibrate it soon after you obtain it, to be on the safe side.

And **always** record in stereo. If you are going to analyze by ear, the stereo (cocktail party) effect is worth approximately 30 dB of signal-to-noise ratio. It matters less where your two mikes are placed, as long as they're not too close together, since what your ears need is simply two separate sources of the same signal. I always have one mike close to the child and one farther away, with their inputs set to about the same recording level. That way, when the child vocalizes softly, the close one gets a good signal for later analysis, yet when he or she yells, overloading the close one, the far one gets a good signal. And you can always adjust the listening mix by using the balance control on output.

These and other suggestions are in my 1983 paper, "Some tips on tape recording speech/language samples," J Natl Student Sp Lang Hg Assn, Vol 11, No 1, December, 1983, pp 10-17.

Good luck with your recordings.

Date: Thu, 19 Oct 2000

From: Barbara L Davis

babs@mail.utexas.edu

Fred, Brian et al.-

We have collected large samples of infant babbling and early word data since 1992. We used an ATW digital audio recorder (DAT) for both data collection and transcription. Lately we have had good luck with Sony portable DAT's as well. In our studies, infants wore an Audiotechnika ATW 1031 remote microphone clipped to the collar of their clothing so as to maintain a relatively constant mouth to microphone distance (with care to avoid having the microphone brush against clothing). In addition, it was necessary to exercise care to keep it out of range of the infant's hands if possible in order to avoid having them chew on the microphone. We have had good fidelity for both perceptual and instrumental analysis with this set-up.

In our most recent project with Korean-learning infants, we have used a Sony minidisc recorder (MZ-R55) with an Aiwa microphone. A Sony Mini-disc Deck (MDS-JE330) is being used for transcription.

In our studies, no structure is imposed on the normal household routine. The parents are told to follow the normal types of activities they usual pursue with their infants. The observer/data collector is always present and interacts informally with the parent or caregiver. In addition, family members or guests are occasionally present. An attempt is made to keep extraneous noise low (i.e TV sets, dishwashers, music) without interfering with the family routines. The infants go about their normal eating and playing routines wearing the remote mike. It works fine as long as they stay inside the house, but not so well outside.

Hope this is helpful.

BOOK NOTICES

Baker, C. (2000)

A Parents' and Teachers' Guide to Bilingualism (2nd Edition) Clevedon, UK: Multilingual Matters.

<http://www.multilingual-matters.com>

Beers, M.; van den Bogaerde, B.; Bol, G.; de Jong, J. & Rooijmans, C. (eds)

From Sound to Sentence. Groningen: Centre for Language and Cognition.

van den Bogaerde, B. (2000)

Input and Interaction in Deaf Families. Utrecht: LOT.

<http://www.let.uu.nl/LOT/>

Bowerman, M. & Levinson, S. C. (eds) (2000)

Language Acquisition and Conceptual Development. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

<http://www.cambridge.org>

Gleason, Jean Berko (2000)

The Development of Language (5th edition) Needham Heights, MA: Allyn & Bacon's.

<http://vig.abacon.com/catalog/abbooks/0,2371,0205316360,00.html>

Hollebrandse, B. (ed)

New Perspectives on Language Acquisition. University of Massachusetts Occasional Working Papers in Linguistics 22 (UMOP 22).

<http://www.umass.edu/linguist/GLSA/>

Howell, S.C.; Fish, S.A. and Keith-Lucas, T. (2000)

Proceedings of the 24th Annual Boston University Conference on Language Development. Somerville, MA: Cascadilla Press

<http://www.cascadilla.com/buclid.html>

Menn, Lise & Bernstein Ratner, N. (2000)

Methods for Studying Language Production. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

<http://www.erlbaum.com/>

Moerk E. L. (2000)

The Guided Acquisition of First Language Skills. Westport, CT:Ablex.

<http://www.ablexbooks.com>

Neidle, C.; Kegl, J.; MacLaughlin, D.; Bahan, B. & Lee, R.G. (2000)

The Syntax of American Sign Language. Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press.

<http://www.mitpress.mit.edu>

Serra, M., Serrat, E., Sole, R., Bel, A. & Aparici, M., (2000)

La Adquisicion del Lenguaje. Barcelona, Editorial Ariel (Grupo Planeta) ISBN: 84-344-0885-6

<http://www.ariel.es>

fdcpublish@aol.com

Sutton-Spence, R. & Woll, B. (1999)

The Linguistics of British Sign Language: An Introduction. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

<http://www.cambridge.org>

Wei, Li (2000)

The Bilingualism Reader. London: Routledge.

<http://www.routledge.com>

peter.simmons@tandf.co.uk

FORTHCOMING CONFERENCES

2001

23-24 February Austin, Texas (US)

Texas Research Symposium on Language Diversity

Submission deadline: December 1, 2000.

<http://www.utexas.edu/coc/csd/multicultural/network/resource/00Sym.htm>

16-17 March, Mita, Tokyo (Japan)

The Second Tokyo Conference on Psycholinguistics

Submission deadline: November 30, 2000

<http://www.otsu.icl.keio.ac.jp/tcp>

tcpabst@otsu.icl.keio.ac.jp

18-20 April. Bristol (UK)

Third International Symposium on Bilingualism

<http://www.uwe.ac.uk/facults/les/research/bilingual/frames.html>

e-mail: jeanine.treffers-daller@uwe.ac.uk

19-22 April. Minneapolis, MN, (US)

Society for Research in Child Development (SRCD) Biennial Meeting.

<http://www.srkd.org/biennial.html>

31 May-2 June. Berkeley, California (US)

**Jean Piaget Society: Society for the Study of Knowledge and Development
Annual Meeting,**

Submission deadline: 15 December, 2000

www.piaget.org

7-9 June. Madison Wisconsin (US)

22nd Annual Symposium on Research in Child Language Disorders

Submission deadline: January 15, 2001

e-mail: srclld@waisman.wisc.edu.

www.waisman.wisc.edu/srclld/

21-23 June, Montreal (Canada)

The 12th Annual conference on Theoretical and Experimental

Submission deadline: December 22, 2000

<http://www.er.uqam.ca/nobel/tennet>

tennet@uqam.ca

22-27 July Santa Barbara, California (US)

The 7th International Cognitive Linguistics Conference

Submission deadline: November 15, 2000

<http://www.unm.edu/~iclc/>

13-15 September, Leeuwarden-Ljouwert (The Netherlands)

2nd International Conference on Third Language Acquisition and Trilingualism

Submission deadline: January 31, 2001

e-mail: dbeetsma@fa.knaw.nl

http://www.spz.tu-darmstadt.de/projekt_L3/

14-16 September, Palmela (Portugal)

Generative Approaches to Language Acquisition GALA 2001

Submission deadline: February 28, 2001

http://www.fcsh.unl.pt/clunl/gala_index.htm

5-8 December, 2001

Early Lexicon Acquisition (ELA 2001)

Submission deadline (intent) December 1, 2000

Submission deadline (abstracts) March 1, 2001

Sophie.Kern@ish-lyon.cnrs.fr

2002

July 16-21 Madison, Wisconsin (US)

9th IASCL Conference

Monona Terrace Convention Center

Call for papers in the next issue of the Child Language Bulletin

NEW JOURNAL

Parenting: Science and Practice, published by Lawrence Erlbaum Associates

Parenting: Science and Practice is a quarterly international and interdisciplinary peer-reviewed journal that seeks to publish rigorous empirical, methodological, applied, review, theoretical, perspective, and policy pieces relevant to parenting; contributions from the humanities and biological sciences as well as the social sciences are welcome. The journal will also publish notices of books and other publications or media representations relevant to a scientific approach to parenting.

Parenting: Science and Practice strives to promote the exchange of empirical findings, theoretical perspectives, and methodological approaches from all disciplines that help to define and advance theory, research, and practice in parenting, caregiving, and childrearing broadly construed. "Parenting" is interpreted to include biological parents and grandparents, adoptive parents, nonparental caregivers, and others, including infrahuman parents. Articles on parenting itself, antecedents of parenting, parenting effects on parents and on children, the multiple contexts of parenting, and parenting interventions and education are all welcome. The journal is committed to bring parenting to science and science to parenting.

Since language as used by parents and caregivers is such an important part of parenting, researchers in child language that study children's linguistic environments are particularly encouraged to submit their work.

Articles on parenting itself, antecedents of parenting, parenting effects on parents and on children, the multiple contexts of parenting, and parenting interventions and education are all welcome. The journal is committed to bring parenting to science and science to parenting.

Since language as used by parents and caregivers is such an important part of parenting, researchers in child language that study children's linguistic environments are particularly encouraged to submit their work.

Dr. Marc H. Bornstein Editor,

EMAIL: Marc_H_Bornstein@nih.gov

<http://www.parentingscienceandpractice.com/>

REPORT

TURKU SYMPOSIUM ON FIRST LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

Jorma Toivainen

University of Turku,

E-mail: toivaine@utu.fi

The project on Acquisition of Finnic Languages in the institution of Finnish language at the University of Turku organized a symposium on first language acquisition. In two days, 24 papers were presented mainly in English to the audiences of 40 - 50 scientists and students. In his opening talk on "The scenes of the child and the morphemes of the language", Jorma Toivainen (Turku) using Finnish child language materials as a starting point, agreed with the opinion that the so-called grammatical meanings may be associated with "lexical" meanings, especially when speaking about the acquisition of Finnish inflectional morphology. The child begins with endings which include unstressed long vowels, e.g. partitive cases in nouns and 3rd person present verb forms. This is more iconic than grammatical in its nature at first.

The first part of symposium included phonological papers. Matti Leiwo, Jouko Koivisto, Paivi Korhonen, Ulla Richardson and Pirjo Turunen from Jyväskylä discussed Finnish vowel harmony and some unexpected violations of restrictions in data from two year old children. Yumi Han (Paris) then reported on "Convergence of vowel duration between children and their mother: study of four type utterances such as CV, CVC, CVCV, VCV produced by two native Korean children aged 19 month to 24".

The paper presented by Sari Kunnari, Satsuki Nakai and Marilyn Vihman (Bangor) discussed "Cross-linguistic evidence for acquisition of geminates" by children acquiring Finnish and Japanese compared to their earlier data from English and French. Their preliminary findings suggest that Finnish and Japanese infants may have separate targets for singleton and geminate consonants at the end of the single-word period. Tuula Savinainen-

Makkonen (Helsinki) spoke about “Word-initial consonant omissions - a developmental process in children learning Finnish”, and provided evidence from six children from the first ten words onwards.

Pirjo Turunen, Paivi Korhonen and Lea Nieminen (Jyväskylä) discussed the interaction between phonology, morphology and sentence production in Finnish children with strong prosodic constraints at 2;0 and 2;6. Ulla Stroem (Turku) et al. discussed speech perception in noise by 5 - 6 year olds and adults. In all circumstances the adults were better than the children.

Gabrielle Konopczynski and Blagovesta Maneva (Besançon) asked the following question: “Is there regional variation in early first language acquisition?” Their answer was positive, e.g. when speaking about lengthening of final vowel in French and Canadian babies speaking French. Concerning child-directed speech the answer is positive too, as was pointed out by Kirsti Toivainen (Turku): “Dialectal variation in derivation of Finnish baby talk words.” Those derivatives are clearly areal and linguistically old though they seem to be casual. Klaus Laalo (Tampere) reported a case study of diminutives in Finnish child-directed and child speech.

Barbara Höhle and Jürgen Weissenborn show that - despite their late appearance in children's language production - functional elements seem to be among the earliest lexical representations children build. This finding is very well in line with early acquisition of Finnish unstressed functional elements, also in production. Heike Behrens (Max-Planck-Institut, Leipzig) in her paper “The acquisition of argument structure in a usage-based framework” compared German 'gehen' and Dutch 'gaan' as a main verb or an auxiliary in early child language. Structural features seem not to be the most important factor; there is a more representative array of factors responsible in language acquisition.

Semantic categories were treated by some researchers: Russian number by Stella N. Ceytlin (St. Petersburg), possession in English and Finnish by Ari Parikka (Turku Swedish University Aabo Akademi), Swedish past tense by Ulla Veres (Gothenburg) and spatial adverbials in Russian by Victoria Kazakovskaja (St. Petersburg). Sinikka Niemi (Joensuu) reported on “Swedish word-order in normal and specific language impairment children”.

The part of narration was begun by Barbara Bokus (Warsaw), who read a paper on “Inter-mind phenomena in child narrative discourse.” The story teller creates different minds and alternative ways of interpreting the main action. Sophie Gonnand (Lyon) studied “Development of content recall in different narrative texts”, and found significant differences between long- and short-memory recall with children.

Åsa Nordqvist reported “Investigating three-year-olds using direct and indirect speech in two types of activities”, namely “Doll's house play” and “Frog story”, and Florence Belais (Paris) on “A study about organization and temporal structures in two compared child story-tellings.”

Because of time accommodation, the last paper was that of the key note speaker, Ann Peters (Hawai'i): “Analogy and rules in building morphological paradigms.”

Selected papers will be published in a special issue (1/2001) of the journal *Psychology of Language and Communication* (Warsaw).