IASCL - Child Language Bulletin - Vol 21, No 2: November 2001

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IASCL 2002

Madison, Wisconsin July 16-21, 2002

www.waisman.wisc.edu/srcld/

Joint Conference of the IX International Congress for the Study of Child Language and the Symposium on Research in Child Language Disorders (IASCL/SRCLD)

Held at the **Monona Terrace Community and Convention Center** and hosted by the **University of Wisconsin-Madison**, Madison WI USA

Special Emphasis Topic: Informing Developmental Theory and the Nature of Language Disorders

We continue to accept paper and poster submissions for review. We encourage you to submit your proposal for possible inclusion in this exciting and important meeting on language. Please email your submission as an attached file to srcld@waisman.wisc.edu. Deadline for submissions is **January 15, 2002**. You will be notified via email of the outcome decision by March 15, 2002. If you have any questions, please visit our website at www.waisman.wisc.edu/srcld/ or email srcld@waisman.wisc.edu.

Don't let this exciting and unique opportunity pass you by! Join us and take advantage of the following opportunities:

Plenary sessions: The conference features a keynote general session each morning presented by an internationally recognized researcher in child language. Simultaneous interpretation in French and English is provided. Plenary sessions:

Dorothy Bishop
How models and causal constructs of language disorder can constrain language development theory, future research needs

Paul Fletcher
How alternative perspectives on language development can inform models of language disorder, future research directions

Larry Leonard
The nature of language disorders across languages: cross-linguistic research on Italian, Cantonese, Hebrew and English

Annick de Houwer
Uneven development in bilingual acquisition

Michael Tomasello
Beneath verb islands: a usage-based approach to early syntactic development

Session Topics: Select from a wide variety of symposia, papers and posters which provide the most current research in language development and disorders. Learn through interactive sessions and discussions with leading researchers.

Presentation Topics:
Assessment
Augmentative and Alternative Communication
Bilingualism and Multilingualism
Child-Directed Speech
Cognition and Language
Conversation and Discourse
Cross-Linguistic Comparisons
Genetics and Language Development
Lexicon

Memory

Metalinguistic Awareness

Neurological Development and Language

Phonetics

Phonology

Pragmatics

Prelinguistic Communication

Signed Languages

Speech Perception

Syntax

Registration: The 2002 Registration will take place in two forms. There will be a printable registration form available for mailing in. There will also be online registration available.

Pre-Registration (Payment must be received by May 15, 2001): $60 Student; $150 Non-Student
On-Site Registration: $95 Student; $200 Non-Student

Program fee will include instructional materials, breakfast buffet and refreshment breaks

Accommodation: Blocks of rooms have been reserved at the following locations. Ask for special conference rates when making reservations. Please indicate that you are with SRCLD or the Symposium on Research in Child Language Disorders. It is recommended that room reservations be made before **May 1, 2002**. We are also supplying a list of restaurants within close proximity to the convention center, as well as travel directions and information about the center itself.

Donations: In keeping with past practice of the IASCL, we are requesting donations to support travel for scientists and students participating in the program who are from countries without scientific support. Please send donations, payable to IASCL, to one of the following addresses:

Donations from North America

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NEW CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE CHILDES DATABASE

1. The corpus contributed by **Virginia Yip** (Chinese University of Hong Kong), **Stephen Matthews** (University of Hong Kong) and **Huang Yue-Yuan** (Hong Kong Baptist University). It is a large new longitudinal corpus of data on the bilingual acquisition of English and Cantonese by Virginia Yip and Stephen Matthews' son Timmy (1;05.20-3;06.25). The corpus can be retrieved from https://childes.talkbank.org in the bilingual folder. It is called hongkong.zip and hongkong.sit. Stephen and Virginia have produced three sample audio files that are linked to transcripts. These sample files can be downloaded from https://childes.talkbank.org/audio/HongKong/timmy/. A study based on this corpus is: Yip, V. and S. Matthews. (2000) Syntactic transfer in a bilingual child. *Bilingualism: Language and Cognition* 3, 193-208.
2. A new corpus on the acquisition of Cantonese and English from **Virginia Yip**and **Stephen Matthews** of the Chinese University of Hong Kong and Hong Kong University. It is from Timmy's younger sister Sophie and includes both audio and video linked to transcripts (1;06.00-3;00.09). https://childes.talkbank.org/win/biling,/p>
3. Two new large longitudinal corpora on the acquisition of German. **Susan Powers, Juergen Weissenborn, Wolfgang Klein, Heike Behrens,** and **Max Miller** have all been involved in the collection, transcription, and refinement of these two additional corpora: Simone and Kerstin corpora. Simone was studied from at 1;9 to 4;0 and Kerstin from 1;3 to 3;4. The new corpora can be found in the /germanic/german folder on childes.psy.cmu.edu in the files simone.zip and kerstin.zip.
4. Corpus on the acquisition of a second language by guest workers in Europe. It was collected in the ESF (European Science Foundation) Project directed by **Wolfgang Klein** and **Clive Perdue** in the 1970s. These data were converted to CHAT format over the last ten years by **Marianne Starren, Daan Broeder**, and other researchers at the Max-Planck Institute in Nijmegen. The transcript files are now fully checked and can be downloaded from https://childes.talkbank.org/mac/biling/esf/ (and ... /win/biling/esf/). The files are packaged in terms of combinations of L1 and L2, as in GermSpan for German L2 and Spanish L1. The biographical sketches for the subjects are all packaged together in bios.zip and bios.sit. Although these files are currently on the CHILDES server, they are from adult speakers and will eventually be integrated more properly with the larger TalkBank Project, as well as the new work of the LIDES group (https://childes.talkbank.org/lides/)

5. New corpus of data on children learning Castillian Spanish. The corpus is contributed by **Maria Benedet, Cruz Celis, Maria Carrasco,** and **Catherine Snow**. The principal aim of this corpus is to achieve a descriptive study of the normal development in conversational language skills for children between ages 4 (3;6) and 12 (11;6). The corpora has 81 transcriptions, each based on one-hour audio recordings. Each tape includes a free conversation between one or more children and an adult. The corpus can be found in becacesno.sit and becacesno.zip in the /spanish folder.
6. A new corpus from **Gina Conti-Ramsden, Ludovica Serratrice, Kate Joseph**, and **Rachel Hick**, all from the University of Manchester. This corpus includes longitudinal data across 18 months from four English SLI children ranging from 2;6 to 4;0 at the beginning of the study and from 3;11 and 5;0 at the end of the study. It also includes a completely disambiguated %mor line for all of the utterances in all of the files. This is the first SLI corpus with a full %mor line and could be an excellent source of information on grammatical patterns in SLI.The corpus conti3.sit or conti3.zip is in /clinical on the server.
7. Updating of **Jacqueline van Kampen**'s corpus on the acquisition of Dutch. Earlier, we had only about 40 files in this database and now we have the complete set of 122. This is a longitudinal study of two girls (Sarah and Laura) and the documentation for the project can be found in the database manual on the web, as well as in the third printed edition of the manual. https://childes.talkbank.org/win/germani/dutch
8. A large corpus of Japanese child language data that was collected beginning in 1948 by **Junya Noji** from his son Sumihare. The current corpus was prepared and contributed by **Norio Naka** and **Susanne Miyata** with the permission of Noji. https://childes.talkbank.org/win/otherlanguages/japanese/
9. A new corpus of the early sentences of six French children contributed by **Marie-Therese Le Normand.** Two of the children had epilepsy and four were diagnosed with SLI. The corpus includes about 200 short sentences from each child in a single CHAT file linked to the audio productions in a .wav file. These are not conversational data, but are intended instead to represent the vocal characteristics of speech in these children. The data (audio and transcripts) can be downloaded from https://childes.talkbank.org/audio

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:

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

AN INTERVIEW WITH ELENA LIEVEN

Steven Gillis

Elena Lieven is Professor at the University of Manchester and since 1998 she works at the Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology in Leipzig. As the editor of Journal of Child Language she is well known in the field. The Child Language Bulletin met with Dr. Lieven who talked about language acquisition, her job as an editor of JCL, and – off the record – about music, hiking in the mountains, and other exciting things.

STEVEN GILLIS: *Dr. Lieven, how did you become interested in the study of child language?*

ELENA LIEVEN: I did an undergraduate degree in natural sciences at Cambridge with Psychology as my third year subject. My PhD was on language development and individual differences. Joanna Ryan, who wrote a definitive early piece about the importance of pragmatics in the development of syntax, was my supervisor, although she left Cambridge for London to work on rather a different area in psychology about two years after I had started my PhD. I became interested in child language when she gave a lecture in developmental psychology in our undergraduate class. In fact, we only had four lectures on developmental psychology, and this was one. All the rest was animal psychology, learning behaviour, mathematical psychology, physiological psychology etc..! While I was a Ph.D student, I was part of a very exciting group of researchers at Cambridge

and Oxford where Jerry Bruner was Professor, who were trying to bring new theoretical approaches to developmental psychology.

S.G.: *When you started your research, what were the main things to do in the field in your opinion?*

E.L.: Then I thought that the main thing to do was to try and identify the psychological processes by which children heard material in the input and transformed it into their own language, and I certainly thought that it was important to look at ordinary children and to follow them in detail. I suppose that I still feel the same thing. Most particularly I think that language development is part of the discipline of psychology and therefore that we ought to bring our knowledge of developmental and psychological processes to bear on the issue of how children learn to talk.

S.G.: *What is the most important message you think students enrolled in a language acquisition course should get today?*

E.L.: I think the most important positive message is that experimental, modelling, observational and crosslinguistic methodologies all have to come together if we are to arrive at anything like a comprehensive account of children's language development.

S.G.: *What is the most important message you received, but which you would not like your students to receive?*

E.L.: The more negative message would be that you must study linguistics to understand the ways in which languages vary and to identify what some of the problems of language learning might be, but not for the solutions to the issue of how children do it. The field has been too dominated by formalist views, too greatly dominated by structuralist views of language abstracted from context and too little integrated into issues such as the nature of online processing and the development of representation.

S.G.: *How would you like to be remembered?*

E.L.: Who knows how, or whether, one will be remembered! It depends on which way the science develops. But perhaps as one of the lynchpins in the attempt to build a theory of language development based on psychological and developmental processes. My emphasis on individual differences in how children build language and what this reveals about the range of skills that they must bring to language learning are part of that. So is my concern with asking the right questions about how children transform what they hear into their own system: this is where the emphasis on the importance of slot-and-frame patterns, how they relate to distributions in the input and how they form the basis for abstraction comes from. Environments and languages differ so much that we are only right at the beginning of being able to sort this out – but the answers are central to any scientific way forward for our field.

S.G.: *What contribution would you have loved to be made (but someone came up with the idea before you)?*

E.L.: My problem is not so much that people come up with the ideas before me but some people are really good at thinking of ways to test and analyse them! In this context I much admire Slobin's crosslinguistic methodologies, Mandler's work on early categorisation, Jusczyk's and Fernald's work on early speech recognition and processing, Gentner's work on analogy, Tomasello's analysis of his daughter's verb development and his experimental studies, Pine's detailed work on patterns of errors and how to account for them and Bowerman's work on overgeneralisations – and that's only the beginning of a long list....

S.G.: *What convinced you to move from Manchester to Leipzig?*

E.L.: I moved from the Manchester department to the Leipzig Institute because of the unparalleled research opportunities that it afforded including the possibility of working in a multidisciplinary environment of developmental and comparative psychology, primatology, linguistics, genetics, human evolution and anthropology. It has allowed me to work full time on research in a context where I am closely involved on a day-to-day basis with other researchers and where the resources both of time and funding allow me much greater freedom to work on a wide range of interesting projects. However it is important to know that while I am based in the Leipzig Institute, we also have a Child Language Lab in Manchester with strong links to current members of the Psychology Department there. I spend on average about a week a month there conducting experimental and naturalistic studies on English language-learning children. In addition to which my first home is in Manchester, so I have not exactly left Manchester altogether or for good!

S.G.: Which research projects are you working on in Leipzig / Manchester?

E.L.: Our main projects within child language in Leipzig and Manchester are the development of what we call high-density databases where we estimate that we are gathering about 7 to 10 per cent of everything a small number of language learning children are saying, rather than the normal estimate of about 1 per cent. This is going to allow us to explore with much more confidence processes of generalisation and abstraction; and also to be much clearer about critical issues for the field, for instance the relevance of different kinds of error rates, both of omission and overgeneralisation. In addition to this, the experimental work that we do is directed at this issue of abstraction. We start from the position that children's language learning is initially relatively low-scope and only builds up to a more abstract and flexible representation over time. However, this obviously must be subjected to empirical test and it is clear that matters are not so simple, both because different languages afford different levels of possibility for generalisation and also because from very early on, children are generalisating and abstracting: the issue is to work out over what scope and how these generalisations join up to make a more abstract system.

S.G.: *What do you miss most of Manchester when you are in Leipzig, and vice versa?*

E.L.: When I am in Leipzig, I miss my family and the hills, and when I am in Manchester I miss the intellectual ferment and the space to write and think.

S.G.: *How did you become the editor of Journal of Child Language?*

E.L.: I became editor of JCL in 1997. I was asked by the outgoing Editor and the Journals Editor of CUP whether I would like to do it, having emerged as the most frequently suggested successor by the members of the Editorial Board. It was not an easy decision, because I knew then - although I know a lot better now – that it is the most extraordinarily time consuming job even to keep your head above water, let alone to do it well. But yes, I suppose I probably would do it again, because I think it is a critically useful job for the field. It is not easy, partly because the field is so theoretically divided that the choice of Associate Editors and of referees must always be extremely carefully balanced so that authors can have their manuscripts fairly reviewed from the point of view of scholars who are sympathetic to their theoretical persuasion.

S.G.: *You were about to become editor of JCL at the IASCL meeting in Istanbul. There you formulated a number of aims. You had 'a mission'. What aims did you attain? Which part of your mission is taking most of your time and energy now?*

E.L.: When I started as Editor, my aims were to increase the level of theoretical debate on the contents side and to speed up the turnaround process on the practical side. I think we have been reasonably successful in both. Certainly I think the Review and Discussion/Commentary sections have been very successful, although they are hard to set up and hard to edit. We have a number more in the pipeline and I am very happy with the way that this is going. In addition, we have perhaps somewhat tightened up our requirements for articles, such that we try to be very focussed on the fact that articles should make a really new contribution to methodology, theory or data. This was always the case but perhaps we are a bit sharper about it.

We have improved the turnaround – there is no doubt about that – although, as always, we are extremely dependent on referees either to return their comments within the four-week deadline that we give them or to tell us immediately if they are not going to do so. The next biggest time problem is the checking by Action Editors of revisions. This is an enormously time-consuming job to do well and at our last face-to-face meeting of the Editorial Group everybody agreed that to properly check a normal-sized revision takes a full day at least. Since all the Editors are extremely busy and active researchers you can see that this causes some difficulties for us.

One contribution that we are making to through-put is to move to four issues a year. While there can be hold-up at our end either with referees or with checking manuscripts, the biggest problem is the length of time from acceptance to publication. I really don’t know why it takes publishers so long to publish journals but clearly, if

we have four issues a year rather than three, this ought to speed up the process. It is very unsatisfactory for all of us to have to wait a year to see pieces that have been accepted out there in public domain.

S.G.: *Suppose you were to formulate a number of new aims at the next IASCL meeting in Madison: what would they be? What would you like to see changed in JCL?*

E.L.: I would like to see a large number of articles shortened, including my own! More seriously, I don't think that I really need to change the aims I have for the Journal. I want it to be the leading journal in the field of child language covering all aspects of both theory and methodology, and I think it does that fairly successfully – although there is always room for improvement.

S.G.: *What is the acceptance / rejection rate of JCL?*

E.L.: We last calculated this two years ago. For the previous three years a steady average of 60% of submitted articles was either rejected outright or were not resubmitted by authors after requests for major revision. My impression is that we are currently rejecting more than we were then, but we are in the process of recalculating this and I can't give an exact figure.

S.G.: *What's the nicest part of an editor's job?*

E.L.: The best thing about being Editor is completing a project with a difficult paper or one that I felt was worth working on but needed a huge amount of effort to get it into shape. Obviously it is also incredibly nice when either authors or readers congratulate you specifically on something they really liked or that you have helped them with. At JCL we have a rigid 'fire wall' between Editors and their own submissions and the worst problem for me is getting negative reviews on my own papers - but I share that with many authors!

S.G.: *Suppose that for some reason you would not have ended up in an academic environment..*

E.L.: I think I was absolutely destined for an academic career from childhood by my parents and the context of my upbringing, but had I not gone into that direction I suppose I would have loved to be a musician because I like the unity of body, mind and pleasure that comes in performing music - or a doctor, because it involves a mixture of people-interaction, hard - though interdeterminate - scientific knowledge, and efficient time organisation – i.e. it combines a number of skills that I think I have and it's useful. I like to combine things – single-mindedness is not my strength!

S.G.: *Dr. Lieven thanks for your time.*

FROM INFO-CHILDES

This section includes a discussion about different versions of the 'wug test' to measure early morphological developement. The messages have been taken from info-childes: info-childes@childes.psy.cmu.edu

Date: 12 May 2001

From: Brian MacWhinney

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I was recently browsing through the interesting set of articles in the recent issue of *Language and Cognitive Processes* devoted to language use in children with language disorders. Two of the studies there rely on the classic *"wug"* test introduced in the late 1950s by Jean Berko Gleason at Harvard and D. Bogoyvalenskiy in Moscow. These were:

- Thomas, M. S. C., Grant, J., Barham, Z., Gsödl, M., Laing, E., Lakusta, L., Tyler, L. K., Grice, S., Paterson, S., & Karmiloff-Smith, A. (2001). Past tense formation in Williams syndrome. *Language and Cognitive Processes* 16, 143-176.
- van der Lely, H. K. J., & Ullman, M. T. (2001). Past tense morphology in specifically language impaired and normally developing children. *Language and Cognitive Processes* 16, 177-217.

Both of these very interesting and carefully designed studies used the wug test in the way it was originally formulated by Jean Berko. To quote from Thomas et al.:

Task 1 was presented as a game called "Fill in the missing word." The experimenter said: I'm going to say something like: Every day I eat an orange and you have to repeat that. Try that now. Once the participant had successfully repeated the sentence the experimenter went on: Then I'll say something like: "Just like every day, yesterday I ..... an orange" and you have to finish the sentence to fit in with what happened yesterday. So after I say, "Just like every day, yesterday I ..... an orange" you might say "Yesterday I (brief pause in case the participant was able to complete the sentence spontaneously) I ATE an orange."

Van der Lely and Ullman used essentially the same form of the task. A quick check of related literature shows that much of the recent work in this area uses the task in this form. However, when I was doing work in this area back in the late 1970s, I found that this *"fill in the blank"* form of the task was very confusing for children. After using this form for about two days, I quickly shifted to a form like this:

Look here is the fox. He is niffing. Watch him niff. What did he do?

I found that very young children understood this version of the task much more readily and that, as a result the production of either nouns or verbs with zero marking was significantly reduced. I believe that it is a lot easier to understand that the totally natural question *"What did he do?"* requires the past tense than to understand what the researcher is trying to do with the rather unnatural *"fill in the missing word"* procedure. It turns out

that one of the major issues in the study of both SLI and Williams syndrome is the tendency for these children to answer questions with zero marking. However, if the form of the test itself tends to encourage zero marking, don't we have a measurement problem here? I am wondering if other researchers have also noted a difference between the two forms of the Berko test that I am mentioning. I suppose that I should have conducted a formal comparison of the two procedures back in the 1970s, but it is never to late to get this issue clarified.

Many thanks. Please feel free to post your comments on this directly to info-childes.

Date: Sat, 12 May 2001

From: Jean Berko Gleason

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I agree that filling in the missing word, especially in the middle of a sentence, can be confusing. In the original wug test we tried to put the required word at the end of the sentence, and in all of the past tense questions we did indeed also ask a question about what happened, as Brian suggests...Here is the original wording:

This is a man who knows how to spow. He is spowing. He did the same thing yesterday. What did he do yesterday? Yesterday he....." (similar for rick, mot, gling, bing, bod, and ring)

By asking what he did first, and then beginning the sentence that had to be finished with the appropriately inflected verb we pretty well constrained the kids to produce the verb+ending, if they could do this. If you just say, *"What did he do yesterday"* you are more likely to get the zero marked answer *"spow"*. But if you then add, *"Yesterday he...???"* there aren't a lot of choices. We used the same format for the progressive: *"This is a man who knows how to zib. What is he doing? He is ....?"* With the progressives, fully 97% of first graders said *"zibbing"*; about 75-80% got the -t or -d past tenses, and where the stem was *"bod"* only 31% of first graders (and 14% of preschoolers) came up with the -ed.

Preschoolers seem to be quite comfortable with this format, and not at all confused about what is called for. Many of them have no doubt already had experience with parents' test questions that are presented in much the same way. In one of our tapes we have a dad, for instance, who holds up a dime and asks his son, *"Who's picture is on the dime? It's Franklin D. .....?"* The kid responds, *"Jefferson."*

Date: Sat, 12 May 2001

From: Brian MacWhinney

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I agree that allowing children to fill in a word at the end of the sentence rather than in the middle helps a bit, but I wonder if that is enough by itself. By using the *"what are these?"* and *"what did he do?"* format I was able to get Hungarian children to respond with inflected plurals and verbs for nonce words down the age of 1;8 (*pigák* as the plural of the nonce form piga), whereas I believe that your original study mostly showed competence in English speaking children at age 4 and perhaps a few just before age 4. Of course, comparing Hungarian with all its morphology to isolating English is not quite fair, and I did notice that German children took a few more months to tune into this, so that I first saw plural productivity about 2;3. But my point is that, by using the more direct question-answering format, you can tap into knowledge perhaps earlier and perhaps more directly. If we are talking about children with SLI or WS, this is important, since we want to be sure that we are not just giving them a task which allows them to "get away with zero-marking." (see Leonard and others on the issue of optionality and omissibility).

Another important difference to note is that I used toys to display the action right in front of the child. You may be right that the child could still say *"miff"* as a past in my task, but somehow the immediacy of the action makes this a bit less likely. If we compare the answers on the plural test to the answers on the past, I think I see your point. For the plural, if I say *"What are these?"* it is fairly difficult for the child to just say *"wug"* as if two objects were one. However, for the verb, if I say *"what did he do?"* the answer *"miff"* instead of *"miffed"* seems a bit more acceptable. I agree that, by age 4 children begin to understand that they have to adapt their verb to the *"Yesterday he ...?"* frame, but again that is age 4, not age 2. I guess what we need here is a study that actually runs the two methods in a head on comparison. Of course each method has a combination of potentially important features. In particular, the question-answering method makes use of toys that the child can hold, whereas the fill in the missing word method seems to rely on totally verbal presentation, without even pictures as a support. What surprises me is that this crucial methodological issue has never been discussed in the literature. Or have I missed something?

Date: Sat, 12 May 2001

From: Annette Karmiloff-Smith

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In the Thomas et al. paper, we were purposely replicating other work to make a direct comparison. But we did use two different tasks to compare the results. There is also the general issue about what lack of generalisation to nonce terms in atypical populations really means.

Date: Mon, 14 May 2001

From: Michael Thomas

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Just to reinforce Annette's comments, in our work with children and adults with Williams syndrome, we were concerned that aspects of the task demands in the past tense elicitation task might differentially affect our atypical and control populations.

Our initial aim was to replicate work by Harold Clahsen and Mayella Almazan (*Cognition*, 2000) who used a past tense elicitation task on a small sample of children with WS. Our aim was to replicate these findings with a larger sample size, so we stuck to their stimuli and procedures. To address our concerns about task demands, we also included a past tense elicitation procedure developed by Lorraine Tyler and William Marslen-Wilson for use with adults with aphasia. In contrast to the *"fill in the missing word"* procedure, this task required no repetition of previous words, and participants were prompted in their response by the provision of the initial sound of the word. We called this procedure *"finish the word I started":*

The participant was told *"I'm going to say a sentence, and then I'll start another one and stop in the middle. Your job is to finish off the word that I've started"*

For example: *"The bull sometimes kicks. Yesterday, it k ___"*

This is similar to the procedure used by Jean Berko Gleason, (although compared to her procedure, we omit an intervening question, i.e. *The bull sometimes kicks. What did the bull do yesterday? Yesterday it ___)*. As Jean comments, putting the required word at the end of the sentence may provide a context which helps to constrain the response to the inflected form of the verb.

By incorporating a second task, we were then able to examine how the respective task demands affected the responses, and whether any effects differed between atypical and control groups. The results showed a slight advantage in performance on existing regular and irregular verbs in the *"finish the word I started"* task over the *"fill in the missing word"* task, but no interaction with participant group.

The interesting result here was in the pattern of errors, which showed up most clearly on irregular verbs. For both the participants with Williams syndrome and the typically developing children (our sample here was 6 year olds through to 10 year olds), the *"fill in the missing word"* procedure produced predominantly zero marking errors, whereas the *"finish the word I started"* procedure produced predominantly over-regularisation

errors. Thus the task demands appeared to alter the pattern of errors from one of omission to commission, while the level of correct performance was broadly similar between the two tasks.

This is consistent with Brian's suspicion that the form of the task itself may encourage zero marking errors. As Brian points out, the level of zero marking errors is of theoretical importance in studying disorders such as Williams syndrome and Specific Language Impairment, so evidence of the role of task demands is significant here. However, currently we are not clear whether the higher level of zero marking errors in the *"fill in the missing word"* task was due to that task's greater memory load (i.e., repetition of a sentence fragment prior to offering the verb form), or due to a context that constrained a past tense response less strongly than in the *"finish the word I started"* procedure.

In addition, we found that this task demand worked **differentially** on our atypical and control groups. The shift from zero marking to over-regularisation errors was characteristic of the younger control children. However, participants with Williams syndrome persisted in showing this pattern at verbal mental ages at which one would expect it to disappear. That is, they persisted with an immature pattern of response to the task demands.

Unfortunately, we weren't able to compare task effects on the production of nonce terms, since our second elicitation task comprised a larger set of regular and irregular verbs to allow examination of frequency and imageability effects. We do think it is important to collect data on the effect of task demands on nonce terms, because we believe it is still an open question about how one interprets failure to generalise to nonce terms in atypical populations, and in particular, atypical populations with lower IQs.

We also agree with Brian's suggestion that a comparison of question answering and sentence completion paradigms would offer an important clarification, especially in the light of ours and Brian's initial evidence for the effect of task demands in these elicitation tasks.

If anyone would like further details of the error data produced by our Williams syndrome and control populations, I'd be happy to provide them. (Incidentally, if you're trying to replicate these results, it's worth noting the statistical difficulties that arise in comparing non-independent proportions of error types!)

Date: Mon, 14 May 2001

From: Virginia Marchman

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We have used a version of this task in our work with several groups of children 3 1/2 years and up, and I would like to make a few comments/clarifications in the context of the ongoing discussion about task demands and the frequency of zero-marking vs. overregularization errors.

In the form of the task that we use, the procedure involves picture-supported prompts similar to the original Berko study (also Bybee & Slobin), for example, *"This boy is running. He runs everyday. Yesterday, he....."*. While it officially could be described as a *"fill in the missing word"* task, this is not really the best way to describe the task demands. As Jean Berko points out, the fill in portion comes at the end of the prompt, and so the task is really more analogous (in terms of memory load) to the *"finish what I've started"* version outlined by Thomas. Children are not required to repeat any part of the prompt and generally one word responses are all that are needed.

My intuition is that the main impact of the *"finish what I've started"* manipulation (versus *"fill in at the end"*) would be to reduce the number of times that the child provides a response that fits with the semantics of the prompt but does not use the target word (e.g., *"this boy is running. Yesterday, he...." "Fell down"*).Because the child does not know what sound they should start their response with, they are potentially free to provide something new. In all of our analyses, of course, responses in which the child provides their own new verb are excluded from final counts of particular error types (e.g., zero-marking vs. overregularization).

To comment on a minor point made by Brian, this task should not be considered to be "primarily dependent on verbal presentation" in that the children are always shown pictures depicting the action in conjunction with the prompt. The verbal presentation is important in that we try to get the child *"use the same word that I do"*, but the child has visual input to support their response as well. Most substantively, it is important to point out that at least some aspects of the theoretical issues at hand are crucially dependent on **which** items are subject to which error types. The goal of our studies (see references) was to determine the degree to which item features (e.g., phonological "shape") predicts zero-markings versus overregularizations. We found that regardless of the overall frequency with which zero-marking or overgeneralizations were produced (e.g. more zero-markings in children with SLI than NL), certain **items** were more (or less) likely to be vulnerable to those errors in both groups of children.

For example, if a zero-marking is going to occur, it is more likely to occur on a verb that ends in an alveolar stop consonant (for both regular and irregulars); irregular verbs are more likely to be overregularized when they have similar phonological features ("neighbors") as regular verbs, etc. These findings would suggest that even though task demands may make zero-marking or overregularization more or less likely to occur in general, it is item characteristics that predict the likelihood of particular error types. Interestingly, it may be possible that changes in zero-marking vs. overregularization frequency in the two tasks (reported by Thomas) is the consequence of how the task demands influence **which items** are produced erroneously, rather than zero-marking or overregularization per se.

We should note that some recent studies (e.g., van der Lely & Ullman, 2001) do not find a substantive role for item characteristics in determining error type. However, readers should evaluate the degree to which groups of items are balanced for these types of item characteristics (e.g., if zero-marking is strongly predicted by presence of stem-final alveolar stop consonant, then this feature should be represented in both regular and irregular items, high vs. low frequency items, etc).

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  Morphological productivity in children with normal language and SLI: A study of the English past tense. *Journal of Speech, Language and Hearing Research* 42, 206-219.
- Marchman, V. (1997).
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Date: Tue, 15 May 2001

From: Brian MacWhinney

macwhinn@hku.hk

I would like to thank Jean Berko Gleason, Annette Karmiloff-Smith, Michael Thomas, and Virginia Marchman for extremely helpful replies to my questions and observations regarding the form of the nonce-word *"wugs"* task. As Jean and Virginia note, none of the versions of the task should be viewed as *"fill in the blank"*. Instead better names would be:

1. finish my utterance (this is the original version from Berko 1958)
2. finish the word I started (this is the version introduced by Tyler and Marslen-Wilson and used by Moore et al.)
3. answer the question (this is the form used by MacWhinney, 1975, 1978).

These forms of the task then further vary by the nature of the visual or contextual support given to the child. This support can involve pictures, objects, or enactments. As I suggested, using objects that the child can hold and actual enactments can allow the task to measure productivity with nonce words down to 1;8, whereas the other methods can be used with children from 3;6, as Virginia notes.

There is another wrinkle to my earlier implementation of the task that I failed to mention. This is primarily important for children under about 2;6, but could also be important for children with SLI or WS. This is the fact that, if one uses real objects and demonstrates their action a couple of times, then it is easier to get the child to learn the name of the action, at least in fast-mapping terms. If the child has fast-mapped the noun or verb, then the formation of the plural or past tense is more likely to go through the normal productive system (whatever that might be). However, if fast-mapping has not been fully achieved and the child is trying to dredge up the word under load, then zero-marking is likely to result.

In regard to picture supports, I'm not quite sure how they work in the cases of nonce verbs. It would seem easy enough to draw good pictures for things like *"running"* and *"swimming",* but how do you draw *"miffing"* and *"tiving"* or the various novel actions that we see in recent studies by Brooks, Tomasello and others. I don't remember seeing displays of the pictures that were used in any of these studies with *"finish my utterance"* tasks for nonce verbs. However, verbs have become increasingly important in recent argumentation about the specificity of grammatical impairment in language disorders.

I should add that my ability to get nonce forms from age 1;8 using the *"answer the question"* procedure was for nouns in Hungarian. Also it worked at about 2;3 for nouns in German. For verbs in Hungarian, the *"answer the question"* procedure didn't work until about 2;3 in Hungarian. So, verbs are harder than nouns, as we know.

When reading the interesting article from Michael, Annette, and colleagues, I did of course notice the inclusion of a second task and the marked difference that the second task had on decreasing errors of omission from 26% to 5% in the WS group, as well as the youngest control group. In fact, it was this comparison that triggered me to raise the issue on info-childes in the first place.

It was crucial in these studies to continue to use the *"finish my utterance"* form of the task, since this has been used by Clahsen and Almazan (1998) and van der Lely and Ullman (2001). By using the *"finish the word I started"* technique of Tyler and Marslen-Wilson, Thomas et al. were indeed able to reduce memory load and get a fuller picture of morphological productivity. Michael's further comment was that "currently we are not clear whether the higher level of zero marking errors in the *'fill in the missing word'* task was due to that task's great memory load or due to a context that constrained a past tense response less strongly than in the *'finish the word I started'* procedure". I think that is exactly the right question to be asking.

Thanks for a useful discussion of these issues and happy *wugging.*

Date: Tue, 15 May 2001

From: Annette Karmiloff-Smith

a.karmiloff-smith@ich.ucl.ac.uk

If the child has fast-mapped the noun or verb, then the formation of the plural or past tense is more likely to go through the normal productive system (whatever that might be). However, if fast-mapping has not been fully achieved and the child is trying to dredge up the word under load, then zero-marking is likely to result.

This is an important point raised by Brian. But in an earlier study using nonce terms with participants with WS, Julia Grant and I found that they were actually better than typically developing controls at repeating the nonce

term - the controls were muddled by any resemblances the nonce had with real words e.g. '*"chalique"* ah that sounds like *"chalet"*'. We didn't have a single instance of this with the clinical population. But recalling the nonce term and adding morphological marking are of course different things entirely. The computational demands may well be a very important factor, as Brian points out.

9th IASCL CONFERENCE

MADISON, WISCONSIN

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www.waisman.wisc.edu/srcl/

BOOK NOTICES

Almgren, M.; Barreña, A.; Ezeizabarrena, M.J.; Idiazabal, I. & MacWhinney, B. (2001)
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FORTHCOMING CONFERENCES

2001

5-8 December Lyon (France)

Early Lexicon Acquisition (ELA 2001)

Sophie.Kern@ish-lyon.cnrs.fr

www.ddl.ela2001.ish-lyon.cnrs.fr

20-21 December Paris, France

Acquisition et construction du sens dans une perspective interlangue. Colloque interna-tional sur les acquisitions tardives en langue maternelle

e-mail: amr.ibrahiml@libertysurf.fr

2002

March 22-23. San Francisco, US

The Third Biennial International Conference on Practical Linguistics of Japanese (ICPLJ)

http://www.sfsu.edu/~japanese/Special/Special.html

http://www.sfsu.edu/~japanese/conference/ICPLJ.htm

April 6-9 Salt Lake City, US

American Association of Applied Linguistics

http://www.aaal.org/

April 12-14 Stanford, US

Stanford Child Language Forum

Submission deadline January 1, 2002

www-csli.stanford.edu/~clrf

April 19-21 Toronto, Canada

Linguistic Symposium on the Romance Linguistics

Submission deadline December 7, 2001

http://www.chass.utoronto.ca/lsrl32

April 26-28 Ottawa, Canada

The 6th Biannual Generative Approaches to Second Language Acquisition (Gasla 2002)

http://aix1.uottawa.ca/~gasla6/

May 1-4 Hong Kong, China

The 9th Meeting of the International Clinical Phonetics and Linguistics (ICPLA)

http://www.hku.hk/speech/icpla/

July 16-21 Madison, Wisconsin (US)

9th IASCL Conference/SRCLD 2002

Submission deadline (papers/posters) January 15, 2002

www.waisman.wisc.edu/SRCLD/

September 18-21 Basel, Switzerland

12th Annual Conference of the European Second Language Association (EUROSLA)

Submission deadline (panels) January 15, 2002

Submission deadline (papers/posters) February 28, 2002

http://eurosla12.romsem.unibas.ch

December 16-21 Singapore

13th World Congress of Applied Linguistics (AILA)

http://www.brad.ac.uk/acad/aila/

PETER JUSCZYK

IN MEMORIAM

Peter W. Jusczyk died unexpectedly on August 23 while attending a conference in Pacific Grove, California. His important contribution to the field of child language acquisition, his enthusiasm about his work and his outstanding qualities as a colleague and a friend will always be remembered. Here are some of the many letters written by Peter Jusczyk's friends.

Benedicte de Boysson-Bardies

Peter was a friend and furthermore knew how to be a friend.

As a researcher and as a friend he was one of those rare beings who give life a meaning. I will say little about him as a scientist even though he was a guiding light to all those of us who were fascinated by the baby's gift for language.

Of course, I remember well his enthusiasm, over fifteen years ago when he used to repeat, “what one has to understand is how babies segment language - that is the mystery I want to unravel.” And we all know what followed thereafter and the magnificent series of experiments that allowed him to begin to understand this major problem. We all followed his headstart with interest and have benefitted greatly from his creativity and his work. Thank you Peter.

But the person I would really like to thank is Peter the friend because his enthusiasm and his gifts were by no means limited to work. Peter cared about beauty; he was sensitive to the “tones” of life and to the music that he listened to so well and which gave him so much pleasure. He nearly killed me by making me race up the five floors of the Salle Pleyel so as not to miss a single instant of a concert by Yoyoma. But then, what a delight to find myself sitting next to him afterwards.

Peter was aware of beauty in all its different forms. He had excellent taste and the homes to which he and Anne Marie so often cordially invited me were always a delight.

Peter loved Paris and during his stays here he raced from art shows to shops with amazing agility. I remember how proud he was as he removed the tissue paper wrapping around the beautiful gifts he had picked at Dior for Anne Marie - without having forgotten a little personal spoiling in the shape of a tie for himself!

Peter and I will never again sip Chablis in the golden light of the Place des Vosges. Peter was young and had remained young. He would no doubt have continued to be young sparked by his enthusiasms and his passions. This is how I will remember him.

Thank you Peter.

Marilyn Shatz

When we were in graduate school at Penn from 1971-75, the scoop on Peter was that he was the classic American boy: friendly, clean-cut, and hard-working. Although we were both in language acquisition, our research interests were quite different. Nonetheless, we kept in touch after graduate school, meeting occasionally and chatting about the field and our careers. In the early eighties, while I was visiting at the Max Planck Institute in Nijmegen, and Peter was finishing a year on leave in Paris, my family and I took Peter up on his gracious invitation to spend a few days with him in his Paris apartment. I was stunned when he greeted us

at the door. Before us stood a suave, bearded fellow with a kerchief tied around his neck, in true Parisian fashion. Peter's transformation was complete--he had been charmed by everything French and he was determined to share its delights with us. We spent a wonderful three days with him; we picnicked on wine, bread, and cheese bought on our way to Giverny, he took us shopping at little boutiques where he'd bought things for Ann Marie, and we had one riotous evening where he taught my then-teenaged daughter how to dress like a Parisian. Since then, I have never thought of Peter or read any of his work without thinking about how mind-expanding his Parisian stay must have been for him and what a terrific host he was to me and my family.

Deborah Kemler-Nelson

My last visit with Peter Jusczyk was on June 20. It was never easy to find a time to meet with him. Peter's professional commitments had him flying all over the world to deliver talks and attend conferences and consult in colleagues' laboratories. If Peter was back at Johns Hopkins, there were always visitors passing through his lab. Still, a day trip to Baltimore on that Wednesday would work: Peter could free up his schedule; his wife Ann Marie, who directed his laboratory, also would be available; and most of his graduate students and post-docs would be there.

We could finish up the paper we had been working on and plan some new studies. For the last 17 years, Peter and I had been doing some research on infant speech perception together. This was a wonderful opportunity for me to benefit from his expertise and from his generosity in allocating the considerable resources of his laboratory to some collaborative work with me. These joint projects required a role reversal that we both negotiated smoothly: Over 25 years ago, I served as Peter's major advisor and dissertation supervisor at the University of Pennsylvania. (That was the time my long friendship with Peter and Ann Marie also began.) When it came to our work on speech perception, there was no doubt who the master was. Indeed, Peter Jusczyk's prodigious scholarly contributions are virtually synonymous with progress in understanding infant speech perception, particularly its relation to language acquisition. Peter's 1997 book *The Discovery of Spoken Language* will become a classic.

The day I spent in Baltimore was typical of visits with Peter—every minute filled. For part or it, we holed up in Peter's office—an office adorned with photographs of Lance Armstrong, one of Peter's heroes. We did finish up the paper we were intending to complete-- with the usual animated discussion when differences of opinion arose. We both could be stubborn. Peter cared deeply that we not only get the ideas exactly right, but that the writing also be elegant. Peter strove for excellence in every facet of his remarkably full life. We talked of Peter's plans to form a Language Development Society. He had already elicited encouraging responses from the professional community about the wisdom of such a new undertaking. As usual, Peter was ready to devote considerable personal energies and enthusiasm to a project that would benefit scholars and scholarship. Peter arranged time when I could meet with some of his graduate students and post-docs to discuss the projects

they were doing. He was always looking out for ways to arrange opportunities for his students that would foster their professional growth. He worried and cared about his students almost as a parent would, about his children.

My visit was typical as well in that Peter and Ann Marie convinced me not to schedule my return train until after a dinner of fine food and fine wine. The Jusczyks were always gracious and elegant hosts. (I'll never forget delightful long visits with them in Buffalo, including one that was cheerfully prolonged because of a gigantic East Coast blizzard.) Conversation over dinner turned to personal matters—their daughter Karla's job in Washington and their son Tad's major in architectural studies at Brown. Peter and Ann Marie anticipated with pleasure a vacation that they had planned for August. They would stay in a bucolic setting on the California coast. Peter would attend a small conference, but there would also be plenty of time for recreation. Peter and Ann Marie would ship their bicycles out from Baltimore.

Peter and Ann Marie were out bicycling in California the day before the morning he died. Peter was a man of remarkable integrity, vitality, sociability, and intellect. We shall all miss him very, very much.

Geraldine Legendre

I can distinctly hear his unmistakable footsteps in the hallway outside my office. It sounds even more fastpaced than usual. In fifteen seconds, he'll walk in with either a grin or a concern on his face. Is he on his way to the CogSci colloquium? or here to invite me and meet with visitors to his lab? Lucky me! In either case I bet I'll get to try a new restaurant in Baltimore tonite.

Well. This is not Thursday. Too bad. No cuisine tonite, just food. Is he here to discuss a new idea of his, or a new experiment, or some student-related issue, or simply sit down and chat? I wonder. Maybe he simply knows about a jazz concert I don't know about. That's Peter. He always shares with his friends.

Where does he get all his energy and drive from? Yeah, he is a workholic -- but a bon vivant as well. Never met anyone like him and probably never will. He knows his wine, his music, his literature, his clothes. He even finds the time and motivation to exercise. And his dedication to his work? Never seen anything like it. What's the term for the way he approaches his research? Oh yeah, he is an artist. That's it.

Another striking thing about Peter: He has a very close relationhip to his family. He talks about Tad and Carla often, in particular their visits. He must miss them a lot. Oh, and he enjoys cooking. How does he manage to do it all - and have time to drop by and chat?

I wonder which tie he'll be wearing today. I should try to guess and surprise him...

- Hi there, you look tired - what's up? How many talks have you given this past week?... Me too. You know, I had this nightmare last night and I can't shake if off. It keeps coming back to my consciousness. You know, sometimes these nightmares feel so real you wonder whether they are...

Melanie Soderstrom

Many people within the language development community know that a little less than a year ago now, Peter embarked on a mission to create a new Language Development Society. It was typical Peter, not just because he felt the drive to take upon himself a new major assignment when he was already extremely overloaded with work, but also because it epitomized his talent at building bridges. This talent manifested itself in a number of domains; in his work between linguistics and psychology, nativism and connectionism, as well as other theoretical chasms, and also between people - the cognitive science and psychology departments at Hopkins, biopsych and cognitive areas within the psych department, and also outside Johns Hopkins, at conferences and in collaborations, and in this new initiative to start a Language Development Society. As his student, the greatest lesson I learned was the importance of considering all sides of any theoretical issue, and the greatest opportunities that of the many collaborations he encouraged. The loss of this bridge building is a grave misfortune not only to those who knew him personally, but to the community as a whole. For this, and many other things, he will be missed.

Paula Menyuk

Peter Juczyk began providing me and other language development researchers with important information in his first paper in 1971. Evidence was obtained that infants, like adults, perceive speech categorically. Since then he has continuously added vital information about the perceptual and memorial abilities of infants during their first year. This information plays a vital role in our understanding the transition to lexical and further development. We appreciate the great loss that his family has suffered. We in the field have also suffered a loss. We won't have Peter to continue to add to our store of information.

Steven Pinker

Peter Jusczyk's passing was a terrible blow for those who knew him as a colleague and as a person. He was a scientist to his bones, who ingeniously and doggedly tried to figure out how things work, and who changed our understanding of language in the first year of life. He was a model scholar: fair, conciliatory, and generous to his colleagues and his field. And he was a lovely human being: unfailingly warm, supportive, and decent. I will miss him terribly.

Barbara Lust

I would venture to say that no one working in the field of language acquisition,- no matter what area, no matter what theoretical framework,- will be untouched by the sudden, still incredible, loss of Peter Jusczyk which we all now face. His work, standing at the interface between the very origins of language acquisition in the newborn and the overt productivity of language in the two year old, and at the interface between internal constraints and external experience in the child, pushes the whole field to new dimensions and fundamental discoveries. He was a brilliant, creative researcher, and working closely with Ann Marie, their incredible productivity has already profoundly enriched us all. Given his personal genius at collaboration, Peter leaves us with foundational work and superb collaborators and students, whose own efforts, as well as Ann Marie's, will be even more important now.

Peter D. Eimas
Joanne L. Miller

We write to offer a few words about our relationship with Peter over what is now more than 30 years, and to note briefly what we believe to be some of his most important contributions to the study of language development.

To begin, I (Peter E.) initially met Peter when he was a senior at Brown University in 1969. It was at that time that Peter decided to do his Honors research on the perception of speech under my direction, in the infant laboratory that I shared with Einar Siqueland. Indeed, I believe that one of my own major contributions to the field of language acquisition is that I introduced Peter to the study of speech in infants. I (Joanne) met Peter in the mid 1970's and over the next 25 years the three of us engaged in discussion and debate about the nature of infant speech perception and early language development. We didn't always agree about aspects of theory or the interpretation of a given set of findings (with Peter E. more often than not disagreeing with both Peter and Joanne), but our conversations were always lively, informative, and filled with enthusiasm, and in no way affected our friendship. Our discussions mostly took place during visits at Brown or Northeastern, where the two of us (respectively) have been all these years, or at one of the many places Peter has been: His career took him from Dalhousie to Oregon to Buffalo and finally to Johns Hopkins, with a stay along the way at the CNRS in Paris. We especially remember a wonderful dinner in Paris prepared by Peter. His interests were many and varied and generously shared – a truly extraordinary person!

During his career, Peter developed a thriving and amazingly productive research program. Early on, his work focused primarily on various aspects of the abilities of very young infants to perceive speech, and was closely related to the initial work at Brown. But then Peter turned his attention to the critical question of how the infant builds on these early abilities to acquire a productive language, and in this endeavor he developed and refined techniques to study such fundamental problems as how infants segment fluent speech into word-like units, how they represent word-like units in memory, the role of native-language experience in segmentation

and representation, and how infants begin linking sound to meaning. It is in this broader domain that Peter has especially made his mark, essentially defining a new area of inquiry in the field of early language acquisition.

Peter was a leading figure in our field and his untimely death is a great loss for all of us doing work in this area. On a more personal note, he was our friend, and we will miss him.

Linda and Maurice Smith

Remembering Peter

We remember Peter as the senior graduate student, the role model in Debby Kemler Nelson's lab at Penn. We remember his intelligence, his earnestness, his attraction to big questions, and his hard work. More importantly, we remember his kindness, his compassion, his integrity, and his availability to his friends and to noble causes. We remember his infectious enthusiasm about photography, about food, about jazz. We remember Baltimore Avenue, the cat who liked to be spanked, the four of us dancing, laughing, camping, and New Year's Eves.

We remember Halifax , the apartment with the new Scandinavian furniture and Peter as a real professor, Anne-Marie as a mother, and baby Karla. We remember experiments on "baga" and "bada," and the excitement of new collaborations and new recognition. We remember Peter as our summer houseguest in Bloomington teaching us to cook Chinese, to make eggs benedict and crostini the right way. We remember him singing while hogging the shower. We remember his perfect imitations of David Pisoni. We remember the twinkle in his eye, the time he gave to students, the fervor with which he sought to understand the origins of speech, his immediate assistance in times of need. We remember Peter when he came back from France, so stylish with that scarf. We remember his big lab in Buffalo -- so much energy, so many smart ideas, so much progress. We remember great dinners, and bottles of wine, big ideas, and jokes. We remember our pride in him as his contributions and recognition grew; we knew him when these achievements were mere dreams.

This is wonderful well-lived life. Peter leaves lasting contributions to knowledge. He leaves colleagues who warmly remember him and friends who love him. This is a life to applaud and rejoice. We are happy to have been part of it, and immeasurably sad that we will not see him again.

Paul Smolensky

Peter was a remarkable man — so many of the laws of the universe simply did not apply to him. He must surely have been able to be in several places at once, for how else could anyone manage one of the most productive research labs in the country, involving active collaborations with what seemed like dozens of colleagues and students, while apparently giving lectures each week in a different corner of the globe, hosting what seemed to be weekly visitors, keeping on top of his voluminous e-mail (while writing messages several times as long as the

rest of us), being up on the latest sports news at any time, devoting much energy to his family, maintaining a regular program of vigorous exercise, regularly reading not only a range of technical journals, but also interesting literature unrelated to his work, and, not least, managing to eat in each newly opened gourmet restaurant or jazz club in the greater Baltimore area months before the rest of us even hear of its existence.

Peter regularly broke the laws of reasonable collegial responsibility as well. We all know and dread those huge packets of papers that come with requests to write tenure reviews. To my continuing amazement, Peter actually read all those papers, while, apparently, being a model citizen in maintaining a heavy load of reviewing articles and grants. And Peter's prodigious memory for everything from detailed experimental results to jazz recordings was yet another way in which the confines of the possible simply did not apply to Peter.

For me one of the most important laws of nature that Peter broke was the one requiring experimental psychologists to have total disdain for theoretical linguistics. The devoted contribution of Peter and his students has played a huge role in supporting the intellectual environment of linguistics at Hopkins.

I learned a lot from Peter, and there was a great deal more I had yet to learn. While it was not always easy to divine what Peter was saying about some experimental or theoretical point, there was almost always something in there worth digging to understand. The strengths of his intuitions concerning psychology, linguistics, and especially language acquisition, struck me over and over again. I had a lot to learn from Peter about being a scientist — and at least as much to learn about living the life of a *bon vivant*.

In the field of language acquisition, Peter was that extremely rare scientist who could bring together a deep interest in theory with a singular talent for experimentation. His interest in theory was not as a political tool to climb the academic hierarchy, but the genuine scientific urge to understand. He was respected by everyone in a field split by intense divisions. He had just recently undertaken an important step for the field, one that perhaps no one else could take: to organize a new society and journal that put the political fights of the past behind, and launched the field onto a new era. So this is a great loss for the field at large, in addition to a terrible tragedy for Peter's family, friends, and colleagues. Perhaps we can all find some way to hold on to some of what Peter had to teach us. We will all miss him so very much.

Sandy Waxman

Peter was a vitality, a life force, an energy translated into action. He honed these qualities to create a stunningly successful career. He brought the field of infant speech perception alive, he connected his careful and creative work up with the larger issues of human perception, human language, and he engaged thoughtfully the enduring questions about nature and nurture. But there was another facet: Peter had a personal influence on many of us in the field, and it was in this arena that his vitality and exuberance rang out most clearly for me.

I was first “introduced” to Peter from afar, through his published work, which had already become part of the canon for graduate students at his alma mater. This was awesome: that a recent graduate, who had sat around the same tables, in the same rooms, with the same professors, had so quickly risen to the ranks of the “must-reads.” I then met Peter face-to-face at a conference, in one of those awkward rite-of-passage moments, in which I found myself shaking his hand, but with nothing – not a blessed thing – to say.

In Spring 1992, I got to know Peter, when the International Conference on Infancy Studies met in Paris. This was my first international conference, my first experience of leaving my young daughters behind on the other side of the Atlantic Ocean, and my first trip away from home since my father’s death earlier that spring. To say I was a bit unhinged would be an understatement. In the hope of recovering a hinge or two, I took an afternoon off to stroll. I wandered into a small store on Ile de la Cite and was captivated by a beautiful, rich piece of fabric – a remnant of an antique quilt. But somehow, I could not bring myself to buy it, though it really was within my reach. I wandered off again, and this time found myself sitting on a bench in Place Dauphin, thinking about home and about the fabric.

By chance, Peter walked into the square and recognized me. We went for a walk and I told him about the fabric. We wandered in the direction of the store. Peter wanted to have a look. He told me that he never hesitated to bring back mementos that captured him duing his travels, and that he never regretted it. So, thanks to Peter, I bought that piece of fabric that afternoon and brought it home. I am still captivated by it, not only because I find it beautiful, but also because it reminds me of making the most of a moment and of getting over that tentativeness and indecision that had gripped me when I was so unhinged. And it always will reminds me of Peter, and his exuberance, vitality and action.