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inventory of what realms of behavior receive comment in this community; but he gives no evidence, other than the most adventitious, that there is a native theory of such talk.

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Child discourse. Edited by SUSAN ERVIN-TRIPP and CLAUDIA MITCHELL-KERNAN. New York: Academic Press, 1977. Pp. xii, 266. $9.50.

Reviewed by BRIAN MACWHINNEY, *University of Denver*

The appearance of this volume signals, in a certain formal sense, the inauguration of an important new line of child language research—the study of child discourse. Emerging from these papers is a picture of an area immersed in rapid change, expansion, and reformulation. There also emerges a picture of an area full of the promise of discoveries not yet made. The value of the collection is much enhanced by Ervin-Tripp & Mitchell-Kernan's introduction, which provides the reader with both a theoretical orientation to the subject and a detailed commentary on the major results of each article. The articles themselves are valuable both because they express a variety of sociolinguistic approaches to child discourse, and because they richly illustrate the specific varieties of child discourse.

The acquisition of discourse competence, like the acquisition of general communicative competence (to use Hymes's term) has been viewed from three somewhat different perspectives. The first, that of developmental psycholinguists (e.g. Bates & MacWhinney 1978, Maratsos 1976), has focused attention on the learning of those grammatical devices which are determined by intersentential relations. The second perspective, that of folklorists (Opie & Opie 1959) and developmental sociolinguists (e.g. Bernstein 1971, Ervin-Tripp 1969), has been primarily concerned with the acquisition of discourse patterns as determined by social role structure. The third perspective, that of cognitive developmentalists (e.g. Piaget 1926), has viewed the acquisition of new structures in discourse as a consequence of the acquisition of new cognitive structures. Although the unification of these three major approaches is largely a task for the future, several of the present articles indicate that consideration

of such a unification is not excessively premature. Let us examine the results of each article.

Catherine Garvey, 'Play with language and speech' (27–47), discusses the varieties of speech play. She argues that such disparate performances as babbling, making funny noises, rhyming, combinatorial monologs, play threats, and sham dialogs all involve social agreements that 'This is play' (Bateson 1956). But how can social agreements be relevant to solitary play? Are the goals of solitary play similar to those of group play? How does the researcher know when children are being serious and when they are being playful? Why do children choose certain topics for play, and not others? How do children manage to reach agreement on the nature of the topics they choose for speech play? Although Garvey never really addresses any of these fundamental issues, she presents a rich sampling of the varieties of data that will be useful to others considering these issues.

The second article, by D. Brenneis & L. Lein, '"You fruithead": a sociolinguistic approach to children's dispute settlement' (49–65), investigates the structure of arguments between grade-school children, elicited by asking pairs of children to argue about who was stronger or smarter, or by having them pretend that one of them had stolen a ball or pencil from the other. The argumentative devices used most frequently were simple assertion, simple contradiction, insults, bribes, threats, praise, or demands for evidence. Use of such devices involved little more than simple 'local' structures. For example, one child said *I'm stronger*, and the other countered with the statement *No, I am*. However, Brenneis & Lein cite one argument that suggests that at least some first-graders can manipulate arguments in terms of fairly elaborate structures. Thus one 6-year-old girl found herself arguing that her boy opponent could not be strong because he was not magic, that he was not magic because he had no magic hat, and that she knew he had no magic hat because she had searched his house and had failed to find one. When the boy argued that he had given the hat to his friend, the girl first countered that having done so robbed the boy of his magic powers. Later, she argued that she had searched the friend's house and had found no hat. Although the girl's argument was technically flawed, it seemed to involve an extraordinary command over rhetorical structure. But, we may ask, how much of the structure is planfully conceived by the arguing child, and how much arises epiphenomenally from the process of argumentation? As Klahr 1978 suggests, complex discourse structures may involve extensive manipulation of cognitive sub-goals. But how does the child process sub-goals? Can the child represent argument structure in any formal way? Can changes in ability to control argument structure be related to changes in the fundamental level of cognitive structuring? Answers to these questions could serve to initiate a useful dialog between the sociolinguistic and the cognitive-developmentalist approaches to child discourse.

Keith Kernan, 'Semantic and expressive elaboration in children's narratives' (91–102), shows that black girls 7–8 years old were less facile than those 10–14 years old in their use of devices which serve to 'set the stage' in a narrative for the listener. The devices Kernan examines are: (1) abstracts or summaries of the stories, (2) statements that introduce the narrative as a narrative, (3) statements orienting the listener to the mood of the story or the motives of the actors, (4) use of proper names to label the characters, (5) use of repetition, elaboration, and paraphrase in orienting statements, (6) use of the connector *so*, (7) overt statement of the narrator's attitude, and (8) the narrator's use of quotes of her own statements to indicate her own attitudes. Increased use of each of these devices seems to reflect what Piaget might have called declining egocentricity.

Elinor Ochs Keenan, 'Making it last: repetition in children's discourse' (125–38), attempts to show that the equation of imitation with repetition is erroneous and misleading. She notes that repetition serves the general function of establishing or preserving a discourse topic by overtly turning an utterance into shared knowledge. However, she also notes a variety of more special-ized uses of repetition: greeting, self-informing, agreeing, counterclaiming, querying, answering, reversing the direction of a question, imitating, and commenting. It is clear, then, that repetitions are not always imitations. But exactly why do children engage in so much repetition of discourse topics? Is it because they have not yet acquired command of alternative forms such as pro-nominalization and ellipsis? At one point (138), Keenan seems to suggest such a formal explanation; but elsewhere (135) she notes that children experience a great deal of communica-

tion failure, and rely on repetition to provide a maximum anchoring of their communications to previously understood discourse. Thus it might be the case that children avoid using pronouns and ellipsis when they want to make sure that they will be understood.

John Dore, '"Oh them sheriff"': a pragmatic analysis of children's responses to questions' (139–63), includes an attempt to characterize the production strategies underlying the behavior. First, Dore notes that, when asked a question, a child may do any of the following: (a) answer it, as it was understood; (b) perform the requested action; (c) request a clarification of the question; (d) contradict the presuppositions of the question; (e) state that he cannot answer; (f) respond with information that indirectly provides an answer to the question; (g) respond with varying degrees of non-sequitur; or (h) not respond at all. Dore also suggests a seven-phase production strategy that would be a necessary preliminary to answering a question as it is understood.

Ervin-Tripp's 'Wait for me, roller skate!' (165–88) provides a detailed analysis of the development of directives in English, Hungarian, Italian, and Turkish; and she finds at least five stages. In the first, directives are expressed by imperatives or by rising intonation. In the second stage, children use limited routines like *Where's the* ..., but without any apparent indirect intention. By age 3, children begin to use simple indirect formulas like *Would you please* ... or *Why don't you* ... The fourth stage at around age 4 involves the use of hints like *We didn't have a snack.* Finally, in the fifth stage, children begin to use elaborate oblique stratagems to express their desires. Like the arguments studied by Brenneis & Lein, these elaborate directives seem to involve extensive formation and storage of cognitive sub-goals. In addition to these observations on production of directives, Ervin-Tripp's article examines comprehension of directives, use of directives in the period of the first words, and acquisition of the marking of status variables in directives. The article is an extremely rich source of both theoretical perspectives and substantive findings.

Five other articles consider a variety of specific topics in child discourse. Karen Watson-Gegeo and Ralph Boggs examine the structure of group narrative in Hawaiian children. Jenny Cook-Gumperz discusses child discourse in terms of the negotiation of meaning. Mitchell-Kernan & Kernan examine the use of directives in black children from 7 to 12. Marida Hollos reports on the acquisition of address forms by Hungarian children. Finally, Carole Edelsky examines the development of judgments regarding the 'maleness' or 'femaleness' of a variety of lexical items and grammatical devices. Each of these five articles presents useful findings on aspects of child discourse.

Although the fundamental orientation of this volume is toward sociolinguistics, the majority of the authors express some interest in relating their findings to psycholinguistic or cognitive issues. It is this type of extension of the descriptivist perspective that seems to hold the greatest promise for future research. In particular, the critical reader would like to know how much of the communicative competence postulated by these observers is actually present in the minds of the children. How much of the narrative construction, problem-solving, inferencing, game-playing, deviousness, and oblique strategy application reported in these studies is the result of application of learned formulas, and how much shows evidence of productive combination of units? (Cf. MacWhinney 1978.) As Mitchell-Kernan & Kernan have noted elsewhere (1977), the study of child discourse errors can provide strong evidence for the productive use of discourse patterns. Future work on child discourse should consider assigning a high priority to examining the productivity of discourse devices.

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Meaning in child language: issues in the study of early semantic development. By LAWRENCE B. LEONARD. New York: Grune & Stratton, 1976. Pp. xii, 259. $17.50.

Reviewed by KEITH T. KERNAN, *UCLA*

For the past decade or so, there has been a wide-ranging and growing interest in the study of child language acquisition. Most recently this interest has focused on the underlying semantics of child language, and on the process of the acquisition of meaning. Leonard's book, however, does not deal broadly with the underlying semantics of child language; rather, it takes up a single aspect of meaning in child language—that of semantic relations or, in L's terms, SEMANTIC NOTIONS. Lexical referential meaning, syntax, and pragmatics are not considered except insofar as they can be used to resolve an issue in relational semantics. The focus is on Stage I speech, defined here as the entire period of linguistic development up to a mean utterance length of 2.25 morphemes.

In his introduction, L presents a case for a semantic approach to child language acquisition. In his view, it is the expression of relational meanings, combined with the act that the child's utterances can perform, that motivates the child in his early language usage. This view—along with the universal nature of the semantic notions expressed, and the apparent close relationship between what is known of the cognitive development of children and the development of meaning in child language—provides the rationale for the focus on the semantic relationships that underlie Stage I speech.

The semantic notions expressed in child language do not lend themselves to easy categorization; but some of the difficulties can be surmounted if one begins,