

Lexical and Morphological Acquisition

Kids Are Highly-Motivated Lexical Acquisitionists

The Poverty of Stimulus

- Kids get degenerate input:
 - false starts
 - strange intonations
 - don't get corrected often
- Effectively, they don't get the right stimulus.
- So, they must have some internal mechanism that disposes them for language.



Galen, 27 mo.

Galen: Randy Harris

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And you brought GARBAGE BAGS! GREEN ONES! These are BIG GREEN GARBAGE BAGS! And LIGHTBULBS!



Galen, 27 mo.

Galen: Randy Harris

Proto-Words: Semantically Meaningful Utterances?

Proto-words (Oriana, 16 mo.)

Word	Pronunciation	Context
negative	nej, now, mm	said when declining; often accompanied by, or substituted with, vigorous head shaking
affirmative	mmm	said when accepting; sometimes accompanied with one, slight, upward jerk of the head
gone	ga	said when something is gone
uh-oh	ʌʔo:w	said when something is unaccountable assaulted by gravity
get-your-ass-in-gear	ʌʔʌʔʌʔʌʔ	said when something is desperately required (being carried; getting out of the crib; getting lifted over a barrier)
there you are	eja	said during exchanges of objects

Proto-Words: Semantically Meaningful Utterances?

Pardon me?

dudawa dej
ΛΛΛ dudijdi

dudawa dej
ΛΛΛ dudijdi



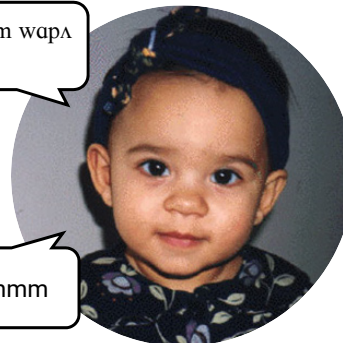
Oriana: Randy Harris

Proto-Words: Semantically Meaningful Utterances?

Is that right?

Λwu Λm wapa
wapa

mm hmm



Oriana: Randy Harris

First Words Serve in a Range of Functional Roles

Words (Galen, 15 mo.)

Word	Pronunciation	Accompaniment/Substitute
cat	tæt	"mrroww"
cow	tao	"mooo"
lamb	læm	"baaa"
monkey	mənti	"eh-eh-eh-eh"
duck	dʌt	a trilled, lateral, tongue, against- inner-cheeks flapping
whale	weɪə	
lion	laɪn	
bird	bɜr	none
bear	bɛ	(non-totemic)
yak	jæt	
owl	auw	
otter	ata	

Hand: Noedelhap/Stock/Thinkstock

First Words Serve in a Range of Functional Roles

Words (15 – 17 mo.)

- mostly "nouns"
- some "verbs"
- a few "prepositions"
- a few "adjectives"
- some "greetings"

Word

chair	button
man	train
truck	pizza
hat	fan
horn	light
vegetables	bath
night-time	diaper
baby	hospital
medicine	paper
shampoo	submarine
belt
watch	
mail	
sleep	

First Words Serve in a Range of Functional Roles

Conversing with Oriana (14 mo.)

Oriana: bapa! bapa!

IR: Yes, Oriana?

Oriana: wu baktijn matsa mow^Λ

IR: Juice?

Oriana: gij (affirmative intonation, nod)

Oriana: bapa! bapa!

IR: Yes, Oriana?

Oriana: hæmij wu ta wu

IR: Juice?

Oriana: wu (affirmative intonation, nod)



Hand: Noedelhap/Stock/Thinkstock; Oriana: Randy Harris

Early Morphological Processes

Well, papa.
I don't want you to do no
more jokeness.
You did jokeness. Why did
you do that? That jokeness.



Oriana: Randy Harris

Early Morphological Processes



Those are ambulances, Papa: ambulancES! (21 mo.)

I'm digestING my penne, mommy. DigestING. (28 mo.)

WolFS, papa, wolFS. Not woLVES, wolFS. (28 mo.)

I'm up-pleased. (c 27 – 29 mo.)

I need a ball to tennis. (26 mo; upon picking up a tennis racket)

What's it for tanking? (27 mo; of a tanker truck)

This is an other-nose, and this is an other-nose. (pointing to nostrils, 28 mo.)

Galen: Randy Harris