

Behavioural Development: A Series of Monographs

# Acquiring Language in a Conversational Context

Christine Howe

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Unlike previous studies which have concentrated on specific aspects, *Acquiring Language in a Conversational Context* characterizes mother-child conversation in total before discussing its relevance to language learning. To this end, the book begins with an empirical study of 24 mother-child pairs, videotaped in their homes on two occasions just before the child's second birthday. The new study revealed three distinct, and hitherto undiscovered, styles of mother-child conversation, subsequently labelled 'excursive', 'recursive', and 'discursive'. The three styles were evaluated for the degree to which they could inform children about their native language and (an aspect neglected by other studies) motivate them to learn it. Also considered are some new ideas about the prerequisites for language and the process by which language is acquired.

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## NOTES FOR CONTRIBUTORS

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Three copies of the typescript should be submitted, one of which should be the top copy. Contributions should be clearly typed with double spacing, on one side of the paper only, using a conventional size of paper, preferably A4 (or 21.6 by 28 cm). Authors should hold one copy for correction of proofs. Footnotes, which should be as few as possible, should be listed, double spaced, on a separate sheet at the end of the article. Tables and figures should be drawn on separate pages at the end of the article. Each table/figure should have a title, and there should be an indication in the body of the text as to placement. Tables and figures should each be numbered independently of examples of utterances, etc. The title-page should include the title, author's name and affiliation, together with the address to which proofs are to be sent. Titles should be so worded that the first part may be used as a running headline (with a maximum length of 50 characters, including spaces). An abstract of the article (max. 120 words) should be typed on a separate sheet.

Chronological age should be stated in years, months and (where needed) days as follows: 4; 5.17. Cited forms should be underlined to represent italicization in print. Translational 'meanings' should be placed within single quotation marks. Emphasis should be marked by the use of small capitals. Phonetic transcriptions should, wherever possible, employ the symbols and conventions of the IPA; they must never be used in footnotes, and should in no

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References are to be made in the text thus: (Neisser 1967: 222). If the author's name is part of the text, the following form should be used: 'Piaget (1967: 131) investigates...'. When a work written by three or more authors is referred to, all names should be given in the first citation, with an ampersand linking the last two; e.g. (Fraser, Bellugi & Brown 1963); in subsequent citations the first name only should be given, with '*et al.*' added.

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- Carroll, J. B. (1961). Language development in children. In S. Saporta (ed.), *Psycholinguistics: a book of readings*. New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston.
- Lenneberg, E. H. (1967). *Biological foundations of language*. New York: Wiley.
- Oldfield, R. C. & Marshall, J. C. (eds) (1968). *Language*. Harmondsworth: Penguin.
- Velten, H. V. (1943). The growth of phonemic and lexical patterns in infant language. *Lg* 19. 281-92.

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- F. Smith & G. A. Miller (eds), *The genesis of language*. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1966. Pp. xii + 400.

Reviewed by ROGER J. WALES,  
*Psychology Department,*  
*University of Edinburgh.*

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