1. Overview: Communication Development

Overview: Communication Development

Leher Singh, Ph.D.
Boston University

(c) 2006, Leher Singh, M.D.

2. Definition of Terms

Definition of Terms

- The Language Code
- Phonology
- Semantics
- Syntax
  - Morphology
- Pragmatics

Linguistic fluency entails mastery of each of these elements

(c) 2006, Leher Singh, M.D.
3. Stages of Language Development

### Stages of Language Development

- Pre-linguistic (0-12 months)
- Word Learning (13 months onwards)
- Syntactic Relations (20 months onwards)
- Discourse/pragmatics (elementary school years)
  - Irony, sarcasm, humor (non-literal communication)
  - Perspective taking
  - Social/interactional skills

(c) 2006, Leher Singh, M.D.

4. Prelinguistic Communication

### Prelinguistic Communication

- Infant Communication
  - Perceptual -
    - ‘Motherese’
    - Affect
  - Productive
    - Babbling Patterns
    - Timetable for babbling

(c) 2006, Leher Singh, M.D.
5. Speech Production

Speech Production

Stage One:
- Reflexive crying and vegetative sounds stage
- Automatic sounds - infant has no obvious control over sounds that come out in response to the environment or during activities
- 0-2 months

Stage Two:
- Cooing and laughter stage
- Mostly vowel-like sounds; not well-defined
- May include protosyllables (syllabic nasal consonants or nasalized vowels)
- 2-4 months

(c) 2006, Leher Singh, M.D.


Speech Production, cont.

Stage Three
- Vocal play stage
- See the emergence of prolonged vowels or sustained consonant-like sounds
- Start to see changes in loudness and pitch accompanying the sounds
- Much more variation in tongue height and position compared to Stage 2
- 4-6 months

(c) 2006, Leher Singh, M.D.
7. Speech Production, cont.

Speech Production, cont.

Stage Four

Canonical Babbling.

- Babbles = Consonant-vowel sequences. Two forms
  - Reduplicated babbling (all syllables are the same) e.g., /bebebebebe/
  - Variegated babbling (specific consonants or vowels change from one syllable to the next)
    e.g., /bedigod/go/
- Both forms may be present from the beginning
- 6 months onwards

(c) 2006, Leher Singh, M.D.

8. Speech Production, cont.

Speech Production, cont.

Stage Five

- Jargon stage
- Overlaps with period of first words
- Babbling is combined with changes in intonation, rhythm, and pausing
- Sounds like “sentences without words”
- 10 + months

- Delayed canonical babbling most predictive of language disorder/delay

(c) 2006, Leher Singh, M.D.
9. Vocabulary Composition

**Vocabulary Composition**

- Begins at approximately 13-15 months
- Enormous variability
  - First word
  - Rate of growth
- General Nominals
- Specific Nominals
- Action Words
- Modifiers
- Personal-Social Words
- Function Words

(c) 2006, Leher Singh, M.D.

10. Rate of Growth

**Rate of Growth**

- **50 words – noun spurt**
  - Most children show a ‘vocabulary spurt’ at this age
  - ‘Conceptual knowledge’
  - ‘Fast mapping’
  - Not all children go through this stage
    - More gradual course of acquisition

(c) 2006, Leher Singh, M.D.
11. Transition to Early Syntax

**Transition to Early Syntax**

- One to two-word stage – Begins 18 to 24 months
- What counts as syntax?
  - Evidence of syntax e.g. 'ow eye'
  - Not evidence of syntax ‘idontknow’
- Two word combinations
  - "Daddy sit"
- Relational meaning
  - Possessives ("More juice")
  - Locatives ("Shoe there")

---

(c) 2006, Leher Singh, M.D.

12. 2 to 3 Words

**2 to 3 Words**

- Begins 27 to 30 months
- Expansion of 2 word utterance
  - "I watch (it)"
- Here and now
- Affirmative & declarative
- Missing bound morphemes & functors ("in", "on", "to", verb inflections)
- Telegraphic Speech
- Ends by 36 months

---

(c) 2006, Leher Singh, M.D.
13. Grammatical Elaboration

Grammatical Elaboration

- Begins 31 to 34 months
  - Introduction of negative in correct form
  - Beginning of question forms
  - Noun phrase elaboration (e.g. inclusion of ‘some’, ‘any’, etc.)
  - Still simple sentences

14. Complex Sentences

Complex Sentences

- Begins at 35 to 40 months
  - Use of embedded sentences
    - “The girl [who talked to me] is there”

- Begins at 47+ months
  - Sentence combinations
    - “And”
    - “So”, “because”, “if”

(c) 2006, Leher Singh, M.D.
15. Grammatical Development

**Grammatical Development**

- Not closely tied to age
- Tied to grammatical complexity (e.g., verb agreement, pluralization)
  - Complexity of sentences predicts:
    - Use of Negatives
    - Mastery of Question/forms
    - Use of more complex sentence types (e.g., passive voice)

(c) 2006, Leher Singh, M.D.

16. Language Development in School Years

**Language Development in School Years**

- Increased heterogeneity
  - Stylistic
  - Effects of education (input)
- Slower rate of change
  - Discovering structure
  - Adding to existing knowledge
  - Efficiency of processes
- Metalinguistic awareness
- Media of expression
- Personal development

(c) 2006, Leher Singh, M.D.
17. Issues in Language Assessment

**Issues in Language Assessment**

- Heterogeneity of population:
  - Normal Variability vs. Pathology
- Nature of pathology:
  - Delay vs. deviance
- Relationship between domains of language
  - Interdependence vs. independence of domains of language
  - Phonological disorders -> reading difficulties -> dyslexia -> vocabulary delay -> syntactic delays

(c) 2006, Leher Singh, M.D.