

Early words

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Language is an instrument

Language is used to ...

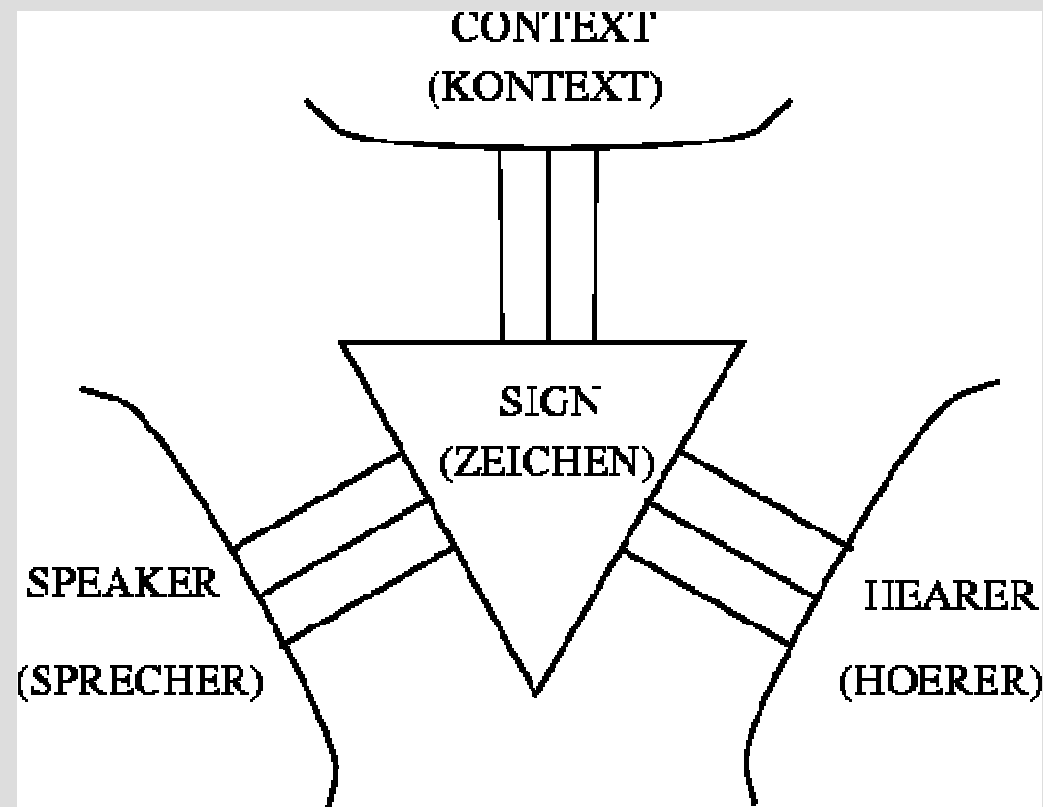
- express anger
- ask a question
- promise someone to do something
- warn somebody

Communication is triadic

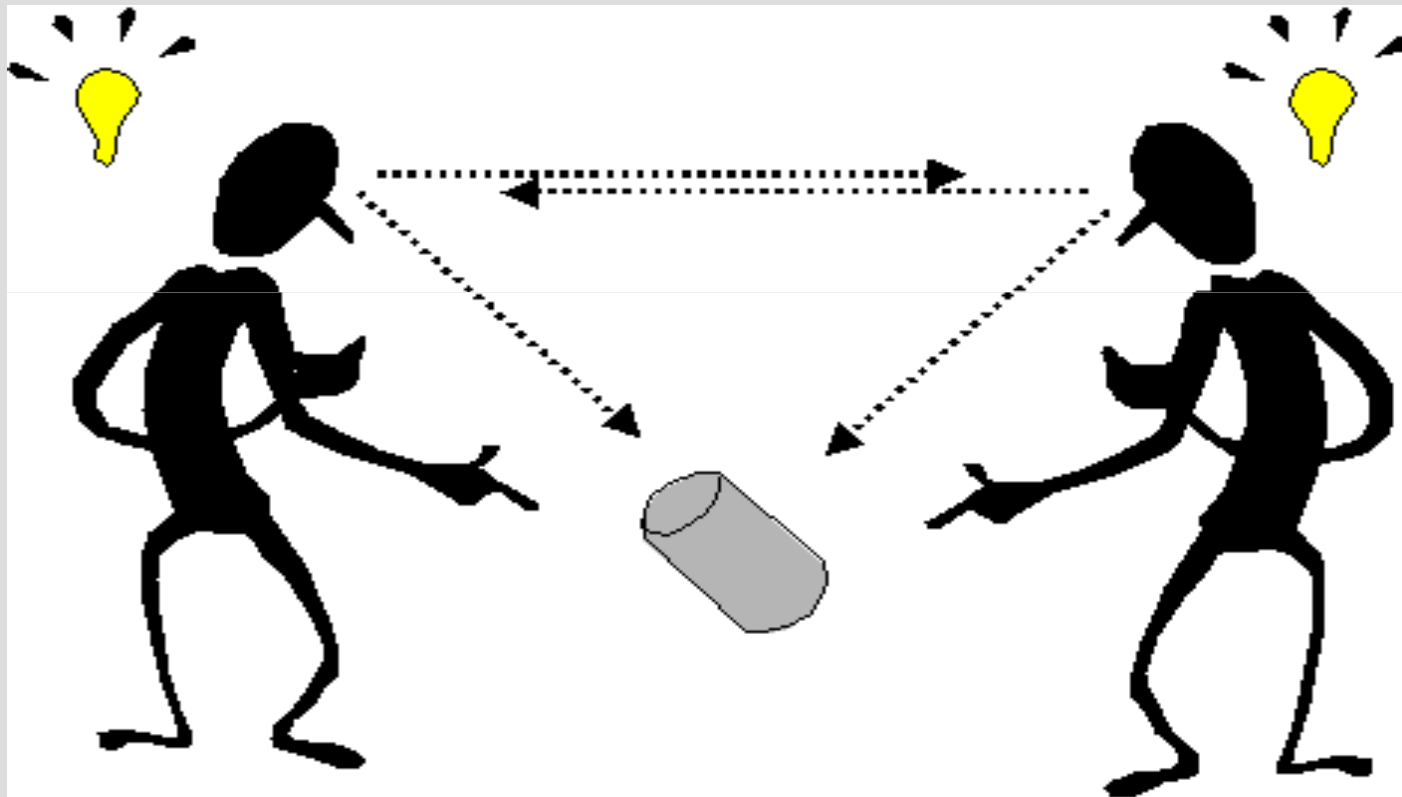
Language is learned in social interactions involving three important components:

- speaker
- hearer
- things and events talked about

Bühler's organon model



Joint attention



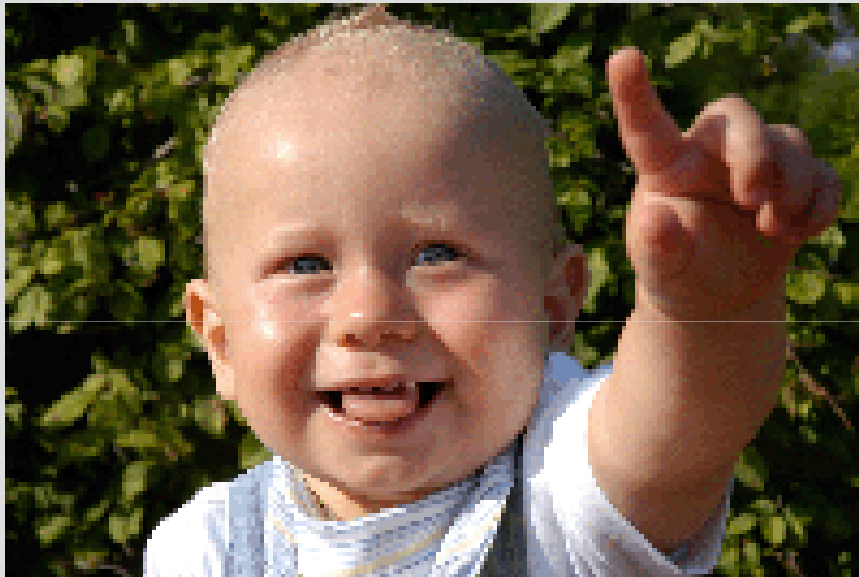
Diadic interaction



Eye gaze



Pointing



Deictic pointing is a communicative device that people of all cultures use to establish joint attention.

- Proto-imperatives
- Proto-declaratives

Declarative pointing is a unique trait of human communication.

Joint attention (and deictic pointing) marks a milestone in the ontogenetic development of the child and the phylogenetic development of humans.

Early words

Vocabulary development

1;2 – 1;3

First words

2;0

100-600 words

9-10 words a day

6;0

14,000 words

18;0

50,000 words

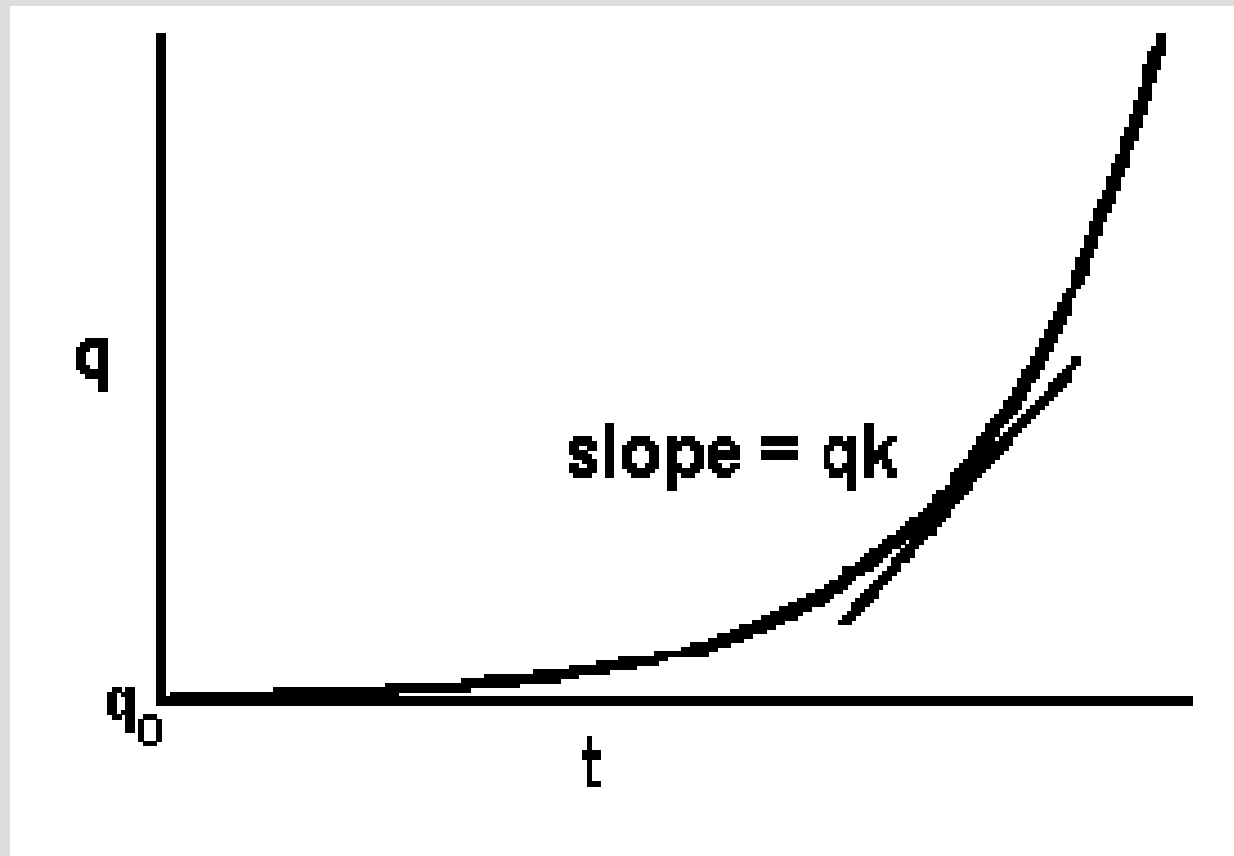
Susan Carey 1978

Vocabulary development

Age range	Words per day
1;0-1;4	0.3
1;4-1;11	0.8
1;11-2;6	1.6
2;6-6;0	3.6
6;0-8;0	6.6
8;0-10;0	12.1
10;0-17;0	7.8

Saxton 2010

Vocabulary development



What leads to the vocabulary spurt?

Hypotheses

- The vocabulary spurt begins when children recognize the symbolic nature of language (i.e. when they recognize that everything has a name).
- The vocabulary development is triggered by advanced articulatory skills.

Types of words

1;0	daddy, mommy
1;1	bye
1;2	dog, hi, uh oh
1;3	baby, ball, no
1;4	eye, nose, banana, juice, shoe, kitty, bird, duck, car, book, balloon, bottle, night-night, woof, moo, ouch, baa baa, yum yum
1;5	apple, cheese, ear, cracker, keys, bath, peekaboo, vroom, up, down, that
1;6	grandpa, grandma, sock, hat, cat, fish, truck, boat, thank you, cup, spoon, back

Types of words

- | | |
|--|---------------------------------|
| • Words referring to people | daddy, mommy, baby |
| • Words referring to animals | dog, kitty, bird, duck |
| • Words referring to body parts | eye, nose, ear |
| • Words referring to food | banana, juice, apple, cheese |
| • Words referring to toys | ball, balloon, book |
| • Words referring to cloths | shoe, sock, hat |
| • Words referring to vehicles | car, truck, boat |
| • Words referring to household objects | bottle, keys, bath, spoon |
| • Words denoting routines | bye, hi, uh oh, night-night, no |
| • Words denoting activities | up, down, back |
| • Sound imitating words | woof, moo, ouch, baa baa, yum |
| • Deictics | that |

Types of words

Verbs are initially infrequent. -- Why?

Verbs are relational: ___ kick ___
 ___ give ___ ___

But: What is the function of nouns in early child language? Do they have the same function as in adult language?

Communicative function of words

Children's early words (including children's early nouns) function as speech acts (i.e. there is no functional distinction between words and utterances).

The symbolic nature of language

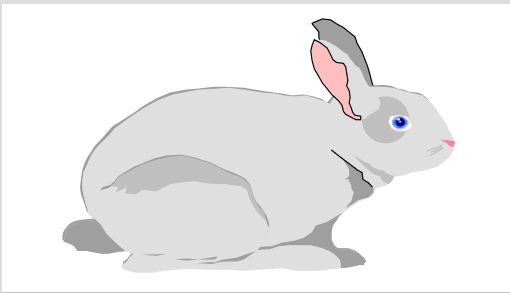
In order to learn language, children need to understand stand the symbolic nature of words.

What is a linguistic symbol?

Linguistic symbols combine a particular phonetic form with a particular meaning.

The linguistic sign

The combination of form and meaning is arbitrary.



/ræbit/



cock-a-doodle-do

onomatopoeic
words

Polysemy

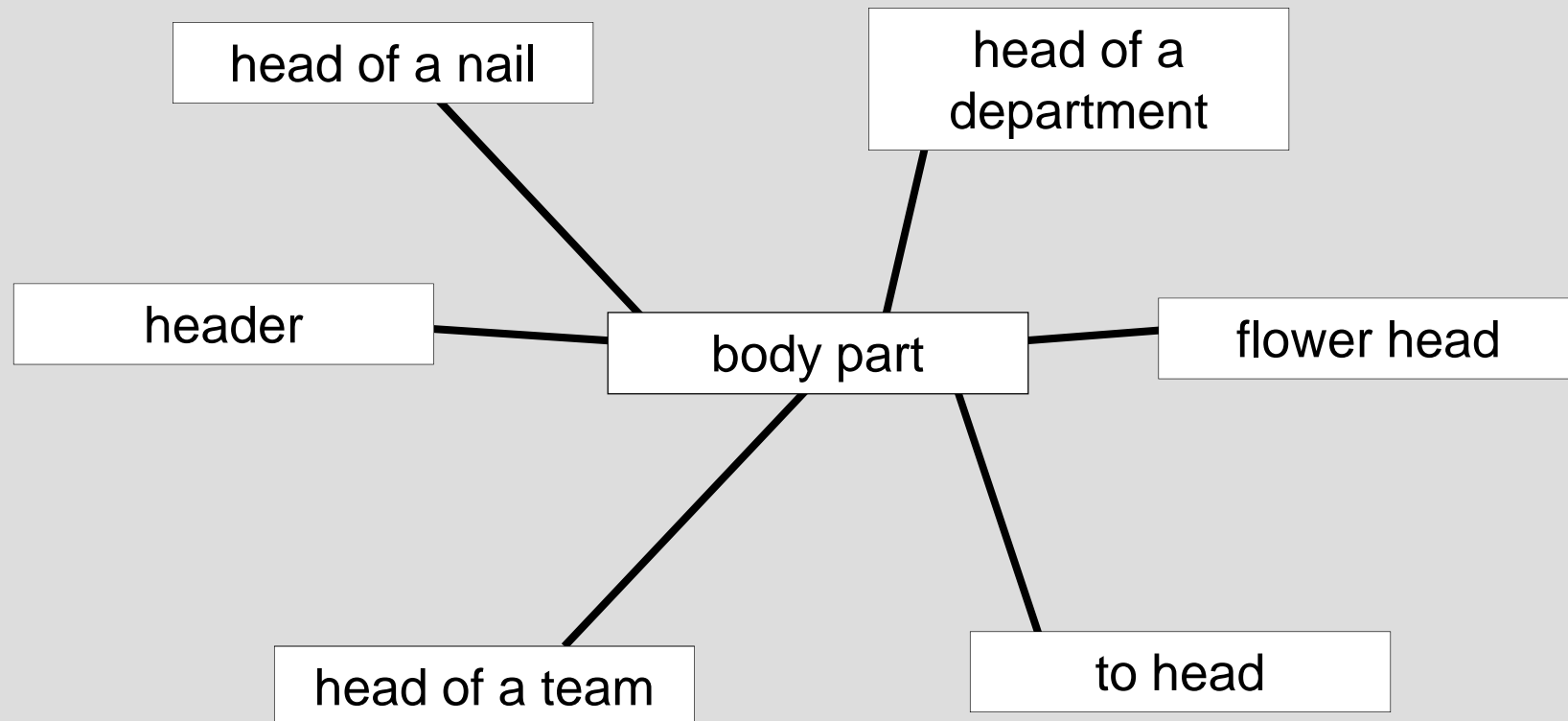
see 1. I saw Peter.
 2. I see what you mean.

run 1. She is running down the stairs.
 2. She ran into Peter.

car 1. vehicle
 2. toy

have 1. She has a dog.
 2. I have finished my work.

The meaning of ,head‘



Overextensions



doggy



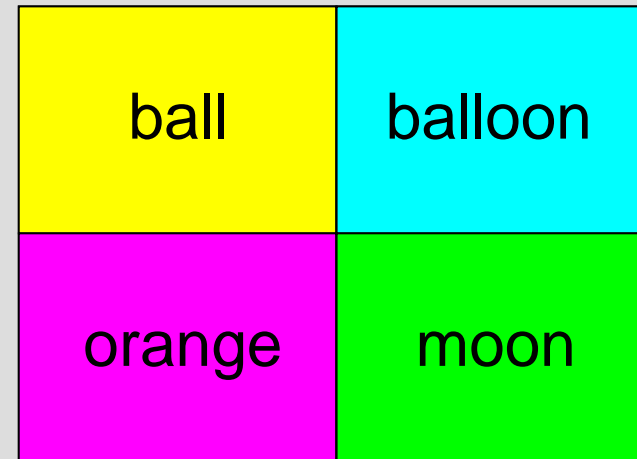
Word	First referent	overextensions
dog	dog	cat, horse, rabbit, lion, tiger, all four-legged animals
mooi	moon	cakes, round marks on window, round shapes in books, round postmarks, letter O
ticktock	watch	clock, gas meter, fire hose on spool, bath scale with round dial
baw	ball	apples, grapes, eggs, squash, bell clapper, anything round
mum	horse	cow, calf, pig, moose, all 4-legged animals
fly	fly	specks of dirt, dust, all small insects, child's own toes, crumbs of bread, toad
fm	worm	flies, ants, all small insects, heads of timothy grass
wau-wau	sound of train	all animals, toy dog, soft house, slippers, picture of old man in furs
sch (Germ)	dog	all moving machines

Overextensions

Why do children overgeneralize word meanings?

- Categorical error: Children are not yet able to distinguish dogs from other animals.
- Lexical gap: Children's restricted vocabulary forces them to overgeneralize words.
- Retrieval failure: Children accidentally activate the 'wrong' word from memory.

Overextensions

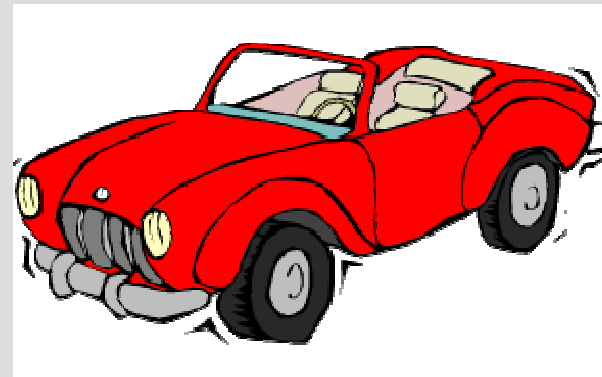


Partitioning of the conceptual space

Underextensions



car



Underextensions

