

Power of Words and Stories to Create the Life of the Mind

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#powerWords



- from a family of talkers & listeners
- Montessori Man
 - Elementary 6-9, 9-12, 5 years
 - Primary 3-6 year olds, 14 years
 - Trainer, Dallas Montessori TEP
- Men in Education Network 2004
- Texas AEYC *Early Years* 2012-16
- Dallas AEYC Co-President 2014-17
- Texas A&M University-Commerce 2004
- Family Man
 - Father of four
 - “Billy” to 10+ grandchildren
 - husband of one
- Pronouns he/him/his
- Live on the land of the Kiikaapoi & Wichita indigenous people
<https://native-land.ca/>

My mission is to promote and protect childlike wonder and love of learning in everyone I meet.

Power of Words and Stories to Create the Life of the Mind

Children learn their native language without formal lessons or teachers. This amazing power of acquisition is still available to us as adult learners. In fact, how we learn words and stories creates an interior life, the life of the mind, that informs and directs the way you live your life.

Our objectives in this presentation:

- Evaluate children's exposure to elements of language, i.e. phonology, semantics, syntax, prosody, and pragmatics.
- Identify influential experiences of your own early language experience that affect your epistemology – how you think and know, the life of the mind.
- Develop strategies and plans to implement a language-rich environment for young children and their families, teachers and their classrooms.

Start with a song!

I like to be <online> with you.

I like to learn a lot

About the kids and how they grow

At school and when they're not.

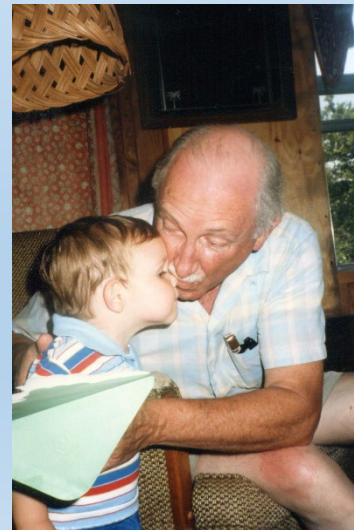
Stories of language use



“Happy, Joy”



“Horsey”



“Well”

Language Acquisition

Virtually every child, without special training, exposed to surface structures of language in many interaction contexts, builds for himself - in a short period of time and at an early stage in his cognitive development - a deep-level, abstract, and highly complex system of linguistic structure and use.

Lindfors, 1991, p. 90

Language

A system of rules

for using symbols

to construct and share meaning

Language systems

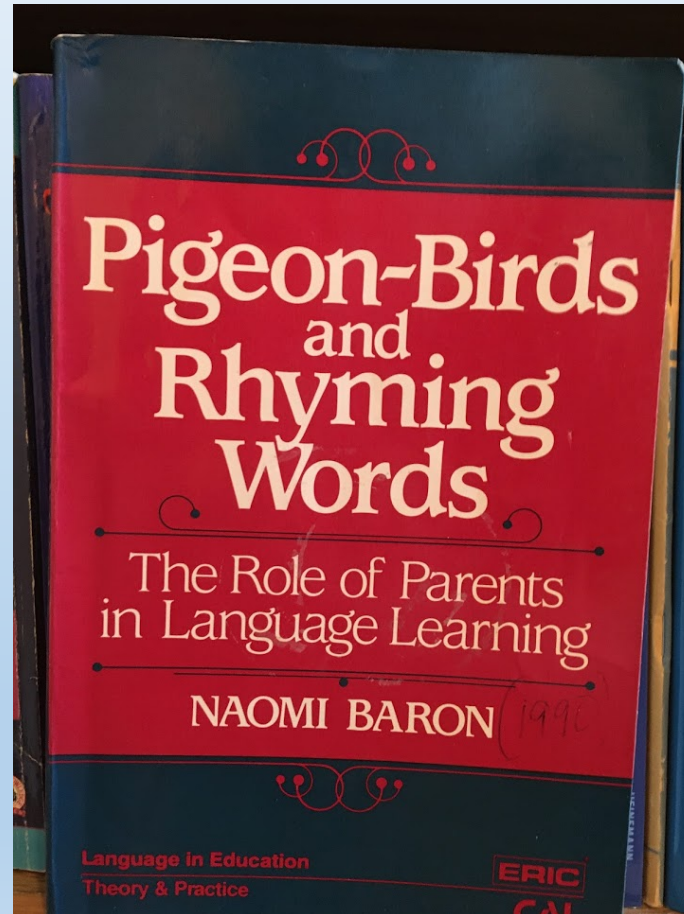
- Sounds – phonology, phonemic awareness, phonics, prosody
- Meanings – semantics, vocabulary, lexicon, morphology
- Structures – syntax, grammar
- Language use – conversation, communication, language functions, pragmatics

Language Instinct

The way language works, then, is that each person's brain contains a lexicon of words and the concepts they stand for (a mental dictionary) and a set of rules that combine the words to convey relationships among concepts (a mental grammar).

Pinker, 1994, p. 85

Baron, N. (1990). *Pigeon-Birds and Rhyming Words: The Role of Parents in Language Learning*. Prentice Hall and Center for Applied Linguistics.



Profile of common baby talk features

Baron, 1990, p. 22

PHONOLOGICAL FEATURES

- higher pitch
- greater range of frequencies
- slower rate of speech
- clearer enunciation
- emphasis on one or two words in a sentence
- special pronunciation of individual words

LEXICAL FEATURES

- substitutions
- diminutives
- semantically inappropriate words
- use of child's nonce forms

SYNTACTIC FEATURES

- use of nouns in lieu of pronouns
- use of plural pronouns in place of singular
- intentional ungrammatical usage
- more grammatically correct usage
- more grammatically simple phrases
- shorter phrases

CONVERSATIONAL FEATURES

- more restricted topics
- more repetitions of own utterances
- more questions, fewer declarations
- more deictic declaratives
- provision of both questions and answers by adult
- repetitions, expansions, recasts of child's utterance

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Communicative Competence

... the ability of native speakers to use the resources of their language(s) in ways that are not only linguistically accurate but also socially appropriate.

Wolfson, 1989, p. 3

Ethnography

The timing, location, and particular interplay of people and historic and social conditions make this, like every ethnography, a unique piece of social history.

Heath, 1983, p. 7

Shirley Brice Heath. (1983). *Ways with Words: Language, Life and Work in Communities and Classrooms*. Cambridge University Press.

Communicative Competence

... is knowing when to speak, when not to, what to talk about, and with whom, when, where, and in what manner to interact.

Hymes, 1972, p. 277

Communicative Competence and Pragmatics

Research on the acquisition of pragmatic competence is reviewed by Linda Thompson (1996), and she links pragmatic competence inextricably, and without explanation or apology, to Dell Hymes' communicative competence, which he defined as knowing "when to speak, when not, what to talk about with whom, when, where, and in what manner to interact" (Hymes, 1972b, p. 277). Herein she joins major branches of inquiry as she equates pragmatic competence, a term with roots in philosophy and formal linguistics, with communicative competence, Hymes' term derived out of his sociolinguistic framework.

Thompson, W.J., 2001, p. 13

Pragmatics

Pragmatics is how language is used in a social context, including how sentences are made to fit in with the flow of a conversation, how unspoken premises are inferred, and how degrees of formality and politeness are signaled.

Pinker, 1994, p. 480

Profile of common baby talk features

Baron, 1990, p. 22

CONVERSATIONAL FEATURES

more restricted topics

more repetitions of own utterances

more questions, fewer declarations

more deictic declaratives

provision of both questions and answers by adult

repetitions, expansions, recasts of child's utterance

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Language systems

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Some Memes (emic units)

Grapheme	Billy (5)
Phoneme	'bɪli (4)
Morpheme	Bill -y (2)
Grammeme	Noun (1)
Lexeme	Nickname (1)

Pragmeme

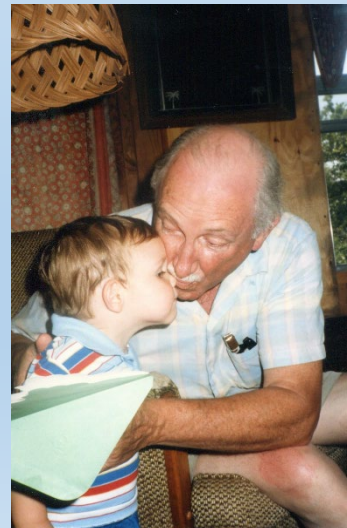
– smallest unit of communicative competence



“Happy, Joy”



“Horsey”



“Well”

Pragmeme

– smallest unit of communicative competence



“Billy”

The fundamental codes of culture -

- those governing its language, its schemas of perception, its exchanges, its techniques, its values, the hierarchy of its practices - establish for every man, from the very first, the empirical orders with which he will be dealing and within which he will be at home.

Foucault, 1966/1994, p. xx

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Resources

<http://faculty.tamuc.edu/jthompson/powerWords>

#powerWords

Billy

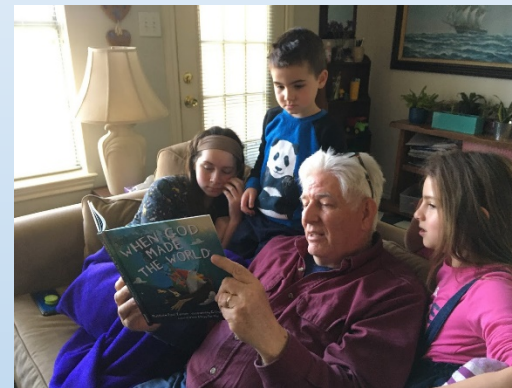
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My mission is to promote and protect childlike wonder and love of learning in everyone I meet.

[Facebook](#)/tamucECE

