

A CRITICAL EXAMINATION OF THE APPROACHES TO THE  
APPRAISAL OF ORAL LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

by *JWE*

SEARA MCINTOSH WEIR

B. S., University of Kansas, 1962

---

A MASTER'S REPORT

submitted in partial fulfillment of the

requirements for the degree

MASTER OF ARTS

Department of Speech

KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY  
Manhattan, Kansas

1969

Approved by:

*Robert S. Brooks*  
Major Professor

LD  
2668  
R4  
1969  
W44  
C.2

#### ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Sincere appreciation is expressed to Dr. Robert S. Brooks, Associate Professor of Speech Pathology, for his patient guidance and encouragement as Major Advisor. The assistance given by him has been invaluable in the writing of this paper.

The writer also wishes to thank her husband, John, and her parents for their encouragement and enduring confidence.

Researchers have studied many parameters of language and derived a variety of procedures for measurement. The literature has revealed that many frames of reference have been used to describe language development, however little has been done to relate these approaches to one another.

It is the purpose of the present paper to critically examine contemporary writings on oral language, as reflected in the literature, in an attempt to gain an insight as to how these approaches relate to one another and to note their respective merits and shortcomings as reported by others.

A basic mastery of spoken language is normally acquired very rapidly during the pre-school years, usually between the ages of one and five. The child whose language development is seriously delayed for any reason labors under an almost unsurmountable handicap in his social and academic relationships. Wood (1964) believes that delayed speech and language development occurs with greater frequency and, at times, with greater complexity than any other known communication disorder.

Lerea (1958) points out that speech clinicians are finding themselves more and more involved with clients whose most severe handicap is language--its comprehension and formulation. They are called upon to assess the degree and the nature of the language retarded child's communication problems. Many times only the articulation and fluency aspects are considered and other important behaviors of speech and

language are overlooked. The clinicians need to understand the person as a speaker and listen to what he says as well as how he says it.

Shriner and Sherman (1967) believe that the need to assess children's language development has long been recognized. Wood (1964) suggests that appraisals of language delay are necessary to accumulate pertinent information and to select the most effective way to solve the problem. Carrow (1968) indicates that adequate assessment and treatment of language disorders depends a great deal upon knowledge of the nature and development of the language process and all students of communication disorders should delve into the process of language and its appraisal.

The present review is divided into five sections, each describing a different approach to the study and appraisal of oral language development. The first section describes the theoretical model approach which Carrow (1968) says is, "concerned with the formulation of theoretical process-descriptions (models) of language in terms of neuropsychological systems of learning." Under this section, the Illinois Test of Psycholinguistic Abilities (Kirk and McCarthy, 1961) is reviewed as an example. In the second section, the empirical or word centered approach is presented. Empirical approaches utilize normative data obtained through cross-sectional and longitudinal studies of different aspects of language reception and expression in children. The measures of verbal output, language structure and vocabulary are reviewed. The