

# **Prefabs in L1 acquisition**

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# Early constructions

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The earliest multi-word units children produce are unanalyzed chunks:

- (1) Get-it
- (2) All-gone
- (3) What-s-that?

The earliest utterances composed of two or more words/units are often organized around specific words:

- (4) Put there
- (5) All-gone doggy
- (6) More milk

# Braine (1976)

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**More** \_\_

More car

More crereal

More cookie

More fish

More hot

More juice

More sing

# Braine (1976)

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<b>More</b> __	<b>All</b> __
More car	All broke
More crereal	All clean
More cookie	All done
More fish	All dressed
More hot	All dry
More juice	All shut
More sing	All wet

# Braine (1976)

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<b>More</b> __	<b>All</b> __	<b>No</b> __
More car	All broke	No bed
More crereal	All clean	No down
More cookie	All done	No fix
More fish	All dressed	No home
More hot	All dry	No mama
More juice	All shut	No pee
More sing	All wet	No plug

Martin Braine (1976): ‚Pivot constructions‘

# Tomasello (1992)

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<b>Find it __</b>
Find-it funny
Find-it bird
Find-it chess
Find-it bricks
Find-it Weezer
Find-it ball
Find it stick

‘item-based constructions’

# Tomasello (1992)

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<b>Find it __</b>	<b>__ get it</b>
Find-it funny	Block get-it
Find-it bird	Bottle get-it
Find-it chess	Phone get-it
Find-it bricks	Towel get-it
Find-it Weezer	Bedus get-it
Find-it ball	Coffee get-it
Find it stick	Mama get-it

‘Item-based constructions’

# Tomasello (1992)

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<b>Find it __</b>	<b>__ get it</b>	<b>__ gone</b>
Find-it funny	Block get-it	Peter Pan gone
Find-it bird	Bottle get-it	Raisins gone
Find-it chess	Phone get-it	Doo-doo gone
Find-it bricks	Towel get-it	Cherry gone
Find-it Weezer	Bedus get-it	Fox gone
Find-it ball	Coffee get-it	Hammer gone
Find it stick	Mama get-it	French fries gone

‘Item-based constructions’



# Early item-based constructions

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More car	1;9	Spoon back.	2;2
More milk	2,0	Tiger back.	2;3
More cookie	2,0	Give back.	2;3
More fish	2,1	Ball back.	2;3
More hot	2,1	Want ball back.	2;4
Boot off.	2;0	Clock on there.	2;2
Light off.	2;1	Up on there.	2;2
Hands off.	2;1	Hot in there.	2;2
Pants off.	2;1	Milk in there.	2;4
Hat off.	2;3	Water in there	2;5
All gone milk.	2;2	Dat Daddy.	2;0
All gone shoe.	2;2	Dat's Weezer.	2;0
All gone juice.	2;2	Dat my chair.	2;1
All gone bear.	2;3	Dat's him.	2;1

# Early item-based constructions

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Martin Braine (1976): Children's early utterances are composed of words from two different "word classes":

1. pivot words [i.e. relational terms]
2. open class words [i.e. non-relational terms]

**PIVOT** \_\_\_\_\_

Examples of pivot words:

- Verbs put, take, see
- Spatial particles up, off, back
- Relational expressions other, more, allgone
- Pronouns (of copular 'be') that, it
- Possessives my, your
- Certain adjectives big, pretty

# Item-based constructions in adult language

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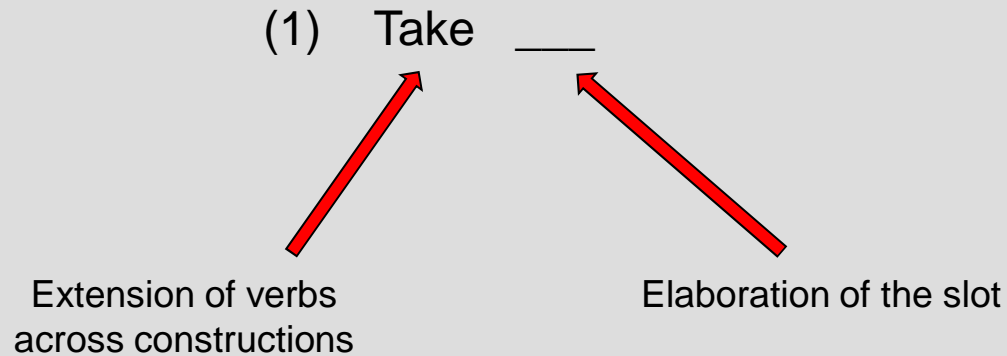
- (1) I was wondering if \_\_\_ .
- (2) Let's DO \_\_\_ .
- (3) I don't know \_\_\_ .
- (4) How about \_\_\_ .
- (5) Would you mind \_\_\_ .
- (6) Can I \_\_\_.
- (7) I was just about to \_\_\_
- (8) On the one hand \_\_\_ on the other hand \_\_\_

# **The development of children's item-based constructions**

# The development of item-based constructions

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The development of item-based constructions to more flexible constructions involves two general processes:



# **The development of the 'slot'**

# Elaboration of the ,slot‘

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Dabrowska (2000): The development of WH-questions.

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|-----|--|---------|
| (1) | <b>What-s-that?</b>                    | 1;10.11 |
| (2) | <b>What doing?</b> (many times)        | 1;11.11 |
| (3) | <b>Whats Mommy doing?</b> (many times) | 1;11.21 |
| (4) | <b>Whats donkey doing?</b> (4 times)   | 2;0.18  |
| (5) | <b>Whats Nomi doing?</b> (2 times)     | 2;0.18  |
| (6) | <b>Whats toy doing?</b>                | 2;0.18  |

**Whats AGENT doing?**

- |     |                                |         |
|-----|--------------------------------|---------|
| (7) | <b>Whats Mommy holding?</b>    | 2;0.26  |
| (8) | <b>Whats Georgie saying?</b>   | 2;1.19  |
| (9) | <b>What is the boy making?</b> | 2;11.17 |

# **The development of the 'pivot' word**



# Extending the use of verbs

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In adult language, pivot words (i.e. relational terms) can often be used across constructions:

- |  |                            |
|--|----------------------------|
| (1) He <i>broke</i> his arm.               | Transitive construction    |
| (2) The window <i>broke</i> .              | Intransitive construction  |
| (3) She <i>broke</i> the vase into pieces. | Caused motion construction |
| (4) The mirror is <i>broken</i> .          | Passive construction       |

Children have to learn that many „pivot words“ (notably verbs) can be used in more than one construction.

# Overgeneralization errors

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|-----|--|-----|
| (1) | Kendall <i>fall</i> that toy.  | 2;3 |
| (2) | Who <i>deaded</i> my kitty cat?  | 2;6 |
| (3) | They just <i>cough</i> me.   | 2;8 |
| (4) | Don't <i>giggle</i> me.  | 3;0 |
| (5) | I am gonna put the washrag in and <i>disappear</i><br>something under the washrag. | 3;7 |

# Overgeneralization errors

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- |     |                                    |             |
|-----|------------------------------------|-------------|
| (1) | He get died.                       | 3;8         |
| (2) | I don't like being falled down on. | age unclear |
| (3) | I don't want to get waded (on).    | age unclear |
| (4) | I pulled it unstapled.             | 3;8         |
| (5) | I am patting her wet.              | 4;0         |
| (6) | Are you washing me blind?          | 5;6         |
| (7) | I'll brush him his hair.           | 2;3         |
| (8) | I said her no.                     | 3;1         |
| (9) | Button me the rest.                | 3;4         |

# Extension of verbs across constructions

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- |     |  |                            |
|-----|--|----------------------------|
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