招待講演

8月23日（土）13:30～15:00 12階 特別会議場

演題：Entering a Symbolic World: Cognitive Functions of Language in the Pre-literacy Years

講演者：Katherine Nelson, Ph.D. (Distinguished Professor of Psychology Emerita, City University of New York Graduate Center)
司会者：高橋登（大阪教育大学）
（通訳付き）

講演要旨

Recent studies of cognitive development in early childhood have focused mainly on separate developments within specific domains of knowledge, for example, theory of mind, space, number, categories, memory, and word learning. Language and symbolic functioning have each been approached as separate domains. For many researchers, knowledge in each domain is thought to be represented in terms of a domain-specific theory resting to a greater or lesser degree on innate principles or categories.

In contrast, the neo-Vygotskian approach outlined in this talk views the developments in the pre-school years as movements toward a “community of minds” in which knowledge is shared through language and other symbolic cultural means. The development of symbolic functions is a basic foundation for human thought, reflected initially in the development of a first language during the second to fourth years. Language in this view is seen as an evolved system for representing affairs both in communication and cognition. Children begin to acquire bits of their native language for pragmatic communicative purposes, but their acquisition is almost immediately reflected in the tuning of the child’s concepts to those expressed in the social uses and cultural practices of the community.

Pragmatic communicative uses of language in everyday life, through conversations, stories, and other discursive means, leads toward the skills necessary for using language as a representational system by which to communicate mundane and profound meanings and common and esoteric knowledge. In turn, this representational function enables the child to use language as a cognitive tool for reflective thought in many diverse domains. Thus the child begins to move into the communities of mind that are based in symbolic means. The effects of the cognitive power of representational language are felt in all of the separate domains that theorists have explored as independent areas of development. Examination of these domain developments from the perspective of symbolic functioning reveals the close relationship among them and their inter-dependence with the development of complex language competence. The collaborative construction of cognitive categories and domain-specific knowledge through conversation and narrative will be illustrated by examples in different areas such as theory of mind, autobiographi-
tical memory, and abstract concepts of mind and time, systems of thought that are embedded in symbolic structures of cultural construction. Implications for the further symbolic development of literacy will be suggested.

略歴
1952年 Oberlin College卒業（History）、1968年 University of California Los Angelesで学位取得（Ph.D. Developmental Psychology）。Yale University Associate Professor, Distinguished Professor of Psychology Graduate School and University Center City University of New York等を経て、現在、Distinguished Professor of Psychology Emerita, CUNY Graduate Center

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