

**CENTER FOR COGNITIVE SCIENCE**  
University at Buffalo, State University of New York

**Thursday, April 22, 2004**

**3:30 pm - 5:00 pm**

**Screening Room**

**North Campus**

**Eve Clark, Ph.D.**

**Department of Linguistics**

**Stanford University**

**"Conceptual Perspective and Speaker Choices"**

Adult speakers choose among perspectives when they talk; they use different terms to pick out different perspectives (e.g., *the dog, our pet, that animal*). The perspectives adult speakers adopt affect how they both categorize and remember events. Yet studies of lexical acquisition in young children have often proposed a single-perspective view that assumes children can at first use only one term for talking about a referent object or event: a cat can only be called "cat", not "animal" or "Siamese" as well. But since children are exposed to multiple perspectives by the adults around them, it seems reasonable that they too should adopt alternative perspectives from an early age—the many-perspectives view. Moreover, adults offer children pragmatic directions about the meanings of new words and hence about new perspectives. Evidence for this many-perspectives account comes from a range of sources: children spontaneously use more than one term for the same object; they construct novel words to mark alternate perspectives; they shift perspective when asked; and they readily learn multiple labels for the same referent.

*Eve V. Clark, Professor of Linguistics & Symbolic Systems at Stanford University, grew up and was educated in the UK and France. After completing her PhD in Linguistics with John Lyons at Edinburgh, she worked on the Language Universals Project at Stanford with Joseph Greenberg, and two years later, joined the Linguistics Department at Stanford University. She has taught there since, aside from several years 'off' in the UK and the Netherlands. She has been a Fellow at the Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences, Stanford (1979-1980) and a Guggenheim Fellow (1983-1984); she is a Fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, and a member of the Royal Netherlands Academy of Sciences. Her research has focused on first language acquisition, in particular on the acquisition of meaning, where she has done extensive observational and experimental research; she has also worked the acquisition and use of word-formation, with detailed comparative studies of English and Hebrew in children and adults, and she has explored the pragmatics of word-coinage, applying the principles of conventionality and contrast to language use as well as to the process of acquisition. In her most recent work, she has been looking at the kinds of information adults offer children about unfamiliar words and their meanings, at the amount of negative evidence children may receive in the course of conversation, and at the relative contributions of gesture and gaze vs. language in adult exchanges with one- and two-year-olds. She has published numerous articles and chapters in linguistics and psycholinguistics. She is co-author of *Psychology and Language* (1977), and author of *The Ontogenesis of Meaning* (1979), *Acquisition of Romance, with special reference to French* (1985), *The Lexicon in Acquisition* (1993), and, most recently, *First Language Acquisition* (2003).*

**With the Co-Sponsorship of:**

**Department of Linguistics, Department of Philosophy, Department of Psychology,  
Refreshments will be available. Everyone is welcome to attend!**

<http://www.cogsci.buffalo.edu/Activities/Colloquium/CLLQs04/2004spring.htm>

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