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ABSTRACT

THE DEVELOPMENT OF LINGUISTIC COMMUNICATION
IN A 21 TO 28 MONTH OLD TRINIDADIAN BOY

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In the description of language acquisition data derived from audio recordings of a male pre-schooler it is shown that traditional morpheme-based and syntactic-based approaches fail to account for the communicative functions and abilities that mark the start of linguistic development and underlie all linguistic behaviour. An alternative approach is used which stems from the idea that the pragmatic aspect of language is central and should thus form the basis for description. The thesis finds support for this view in descriptive studies of communicative competence, the development of meaning and of functional potential. The advantage of this approach is that it comprehensively describes the earliest linguistic communication in terms and processes that are continuous with those of later development.