



Ask several children (at least 3) of different ages to define a set of words. Include both concrete and abstract words, and include the word 'word' in your set. Also ask the children 'what is your favourite word?', 'your least favourite word'; 'what would happen if we started calling a dog a cat?' Ask an adult the same questions, and use their results as a 'control'. Do you see a developmental progression in the children's ability to define words? Discuss the development of the metalinguistic skill of defining words, and how it relates to the development of adult-like meanings. Discuss how children progress from seeing words as 'iconic' to 'arbitrary'.

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Introduction

This study will consider the development of metalinguistic ability in children aged between 4 and 12 years old. It will focus on the acquisition of definitional skill in relation to the development of semantic categories, concepts and the cognitive progression from language as 'iconic' to 'arbitrary'.

Metalinguistics is defined as the process of using language to reflect on language, its properties and the way it functions (Gombert, 1992). Most relevant to a study on the development of definitions are the subdivisions of metalexical and metasemantic awareness. Gombert defines metasemantic awareness as 'the ability to recognize the language system as a conventional and arbitrary code' (1992: 63), whereas metalexical awareness refers to the ability to recognise an individual word and intentionally retrieve information from the mental lexicon (Gombert, 1992).

There are contradictory opinions regarding the age at which children develop metalinguistic awareness. The majority of these contradictions are grounded in a dispute over what is recognised as the acquisition of metalinguistic skill: whether it be an ability to use language to self-correct and reflect on linguistic features (sometimes referred to as epilinguistic processes (Gombert, 1992)) or a comprehension of the arbitrariness of language. Piaget (1929) argues that by age 11 children understand that language is arbitrary and thus metalinguistic development is complete. However, McGhee-Bidlack (1991) argues that there is a significant development in the metalinguistic skill of defining abstract nouns between the ages of 10 and 18, which could suggest that impact of direct teaching with regards to the emergence of metalinguistic skills. Similarly, Snow (1990) argues that levels of definitional ability are significantly influenced by formal instruction. Smith and Tager-Flusberg (1982) devised two hypotheses concerning when metalinguistic skills emerge: the autonomy hypothesis and the interaction hypothesis. The autonomy hypothesis considers metalinguistic awareness to be a skill that develops separately from other elements of language acquisition and is apparent at 6-7 years concurrent with the acquisition of literacy. The interaction

hypothesis suggests that metalinguistic skill is acquired at a young age and develops simultaneously with the stages of language acquisition.

Adult-like definitions are widely recognised to follow the Aristotelian format: An X is a Y that Z in which 'X' is an object or concept, 'Y' is the superordinate category and 'Z' is a specific identifying attribute. (Litowitz, 1976; Snow, 1990; Benelli, Belacchi, Gini and Lucangeli, 2006). Invoking the Aristotelian format, Snow (1990) considers definitional skill to be reliant on two components: (1) sufficient information about the lexical properties and semantic concept of the word and (2) knowledge about the conventional form and purpose of a definition. Litowitz devised a model documenting 5 levels in the development of definitional skill:

Level 1 a non-verbal statement or a verbal statement which is semantically empty

Level 2 word associations to the original stimulus word

Level 3 concrete example of actual experience associated as a predicate to the stimulus word.

Level 4 some awareness of a definitional form (a set predicate) and a beginning abstraction from the individual experience towards general social information

Level 5 pure Aristotelian definition

(1976: 294, 295, 296, 297).

Litowitz (1976) proposes that level one is characterized by gestures (e.g., pointing) or gestures accompanied by deictic language (e.g., 'that' + pointing), which may indicate a child's comprehension of the question but does not display the linguistic format of a definition. She argues that the word-association characteristic of level 2 reflects a cognitive development in the activation of a mental representation of the category, which demonstrates a child's understanding of relationships between words. A transitional phase between levels 2 and 3 is characterised by 'predicate linkings' whereby the 'stimulus word is repeated with a predicate (e.g., diamond — people steal diamonds)' (Litowitz, 1976: 295). Litowitz (1976) highlights the issue of level 3 as the idiosyncratic nature of the children's definitions, thus children have not yet acquired an understanding of the conventional purpose of the definition as something that can be understood from a social rather than a personal perspective. Litowitz suggests an exemplary feature of level 4 is 'the attempt to modify the individual personal experience into a hypothetical situation' (1976: 296). This hypothetical function is also characteristic of a transitional phase between levels 4 and 5; a definition provided at this stage would follow the format:

" an X is [(some)] thing (that) [+hypothetical definition
+ functional definition] "

(Litowitz 1976: 297)

In the Aristotelian ideal definition, the object or concept is identified as part of a superordinate category, thus the semantic organization of concepts and the development of categories must play an instrumental role in the acquisition of definitional skill. This is dependent on a development of cognitive control and the ability to intentionally retrieve

lexical and semantic information from the mental representation of a word or concept. Carey's (1978) phenomenon of 'fast-mapping' argues that children partially map a word onto a previously acquired conceptual domain before creating an individual conceptual domain for the new word. Fast-mapping is often related to categorisation as children map words onto semantically related concepts. Benelli, Arcuri and Marchessini argue that a child's ability to use superordinates indicates their comprehension of 'language as a symbolic classificatory systems with different levels of abstraction' (1988: 634), thus demonstrating an awareness that mental representations of a hierarchical conceptual system and the lexical distinction of superordinates and subordinates are mutually dependent. McGhee-Bidlack (1991) identifies that in the early stages of lexical acquisition children acquire concrete nouns before abstract nouns, transposed to the development of mental representations of concrete and abstract nouns. Abstract nouns are considered more conceptually complex because they are not tangible objects with easily identifiable perceptual and functional properties. Henceforth, because the format of the Aristotelian definition relies upon mapping a word onto a concept and highlighting features, predominantly functional or perceptual, that specify the word, consequently the ability to define a concrete noun in the Aristotelian format should precede the ability to define an abstract noun in the Aristotelian format.

In association with the development of conceptual categories, Piaget (1929) argues that before the age of 10 children cannot dissociate the sign from the signified, thus for young children a nominal is considered an intrinsic feature of the object. It is only after this dissociation is established that children understand the nature of language as arbitrary. Osherson and Markman (1975) built on Piaget's (1929) theory and confirmed an awareness of the arbitrariness of language recognised around age 11. In experiments concerning 'the awareness that interchanging the names of common objects does not affect their properties' (1975:220), their results supported Piaget's theory that children under age 11 consider a name to be an intrinsic property of the object. Berthoud-Papandropoulou's (1978) study asking children to define 'word' demonstrated that children under 5 either will not provide a definition or will provide an example of a word. Between the ages of 6-7, the majority of children associated 'word' with spoken language and it is at this stage that Berthoud-Papandropoulou (1978) identified that children begin to understand words as labels and are aware that they are comprised of letters. Berthoud-Papandropoulou (1978) argues that the semantic meaning of a word is not referred to in a definition until the age of 10, henceforth reinforcing Piaget's (1929) theory that age 10 is significant turning point in a child's metalinguistic development.

The data in this study will initially be analysed according to Litowitz's framework of definitional responses and subsequently evaluate whether the child is at the iconic, functional/perceptual, transitional or arbitrary stage of metalinguistic development. Specifically this study will focus on three questions: (1) How do definitional responses differ according to age? (2) Does the data demonstrate a significant impact of formal instruction in the development of definitions? and (3) Do these definitional responses reflect a significant developmental progression in metalinguistic awareness and a cognitive shift from understanding language as iconic to arbitrary?

Participants

There were 8 participants in the study: 6 children (3 males, 3 females) and 2 adults (1 male, 1 female). The children were divided equally into 3 groups according to age level: early years (range 4;10 – 4;11), primary school (range 7;8 – 8;3) and secondary school (range 11;5 – 12;2). The adults (age range 45;9 – 48;6) will be used as the control in this study. All children received parental permission to participate in the study. Each participant's name has

been replaced with a pseudonym. All participants were native British English speakers. The youngest participants, (Alice and Charlie) were from the North West of England; one child from the primary school group (Dominic) and one child from the secondary school group (John) as well as both the adults were from Yorkshire. The remaining two children (Rose and Kate) were both from South West England.

Methodology

Each participant was asked the same set of 10 questions in a specific order. The questions asked the participant to define a selection of concrete nouns (*boat, rain, animal*) and abstract nouns (*word, friendship, time, anger*), explain their choices of their favourite and least favourite words and answer the question ‘What would happen if we started calling a dog a cat?’ Each participant was interviewed individually; the data from the early years group was collected in a classroom environment. The data from all of the other participants was collected in a home environment. Each participant’s set of responses was audio-recorded; additionally the interviewer transcribed the participants’ answers during the study. The responses collected from each participant are recorded in the appendices.

Analysis

In the early years stage, both Alice and Charlie can provide no definition, only fillers, to the question asking them to define ‘word’ (A2, C2). Fillers indicate that they understood the question and that they were required to give a response but they did not have enough information about the genre of definitions or the concept of ‘word’ to provide an adequate answer. Both children’s responses to their favourite words refer to an object or an activity they like rather than commenting on linguistic attributes (A6, A8, C4). Charlie initially associated the question with a positive idiosyncratic experience (C4), but it becomes evident when asked to provide justification (CS) that he cannot reflect on ‘why’ and gives another example of an enjoyable activity. When asked to provide their ‘least’ favourite word, Charlie’s response of a negated sentence could suggest that he misinterpreted the statement by overextending the word ‘least’ to be used for all negative concepts. Alice’s response (A10) reflects a word with negative connotations. According to Litowitz’s levels, both Alice and Charlie provide definitions that would be categorized as level 2 or transitional phase, specifically in word-association (A18, C16) and response which involves the stimulus word and predicate (A16) and examples of repetition of the stimulus word (A14, A22, C10, C12). Alice lists functions of the referent as part of the definitional responses of the concrete nouns (A14, A26); in the latter example, dialectal features stemming from a Mancunian accent lead Alice to misinterpret the abstract noun ‘anger’ for the concrete noun ‘hanger’. Charlie draws on perceptual features in his definitional responses (C15); significantly this is the only response Charlie provides for abstract nouns. Thus it suggests that he has acquired the concept of ‘time’ and understands the word ‘clock’ is semantically related; however, as a concrete noun and a tangible object, ‘clock’ is much less conceptually complex than ‘time’ and thus a simple concept to verbalise. Both children refuse the possibility of interchanging the nominal ‘cat’ and ‘dog’ (A24, C20), which suggests that they both consider a name to be an intrinsic part of the object. The children’s definitions of concrete nouns would place them in the functional/perceptual stage of metalinguistic development. However, the lack of definitional response for abstract nouns is associated with the iconic stage of development. This suggests that the ability to define abstract and concrete nouns develops at different rates.

The two children in the primary group demonstrate a metalinguistic development in comparison to the early years group; however, the definitional responses are not at the same level as those provided in the adult model or the Aristotelian ideal. Dominic defines a word with regards to its functional properties (D2) and using the superordinate ‘something’, a

typical feature of the transitional stage of metalinguistic development, and present in 6/7 of Dominic's definitional responses. Rose appears to be slightly more advanced as her response incorporates both concrete and abstract features of a word (R2). Similar to the responses in the early years group, both children's responses to their favourite word denotes an object that they like and associated with an idiosyncratic positive experience (D6, R5). Rose's example of her least favourite word is associated with idiosyncratic negative connotations whilst Dominic's response demonstrates the beginnings of metalinguistic awareness in choosing a word because of its linguistic function (D9); however, this is still classified as an idiosyncratic response. According to Litowitz's categorizations, Dominic and Rose's definitional responses would be classified as between level 4 and the transitional phase to level 5. Rose demonstrates a typical level 4 response with an attempt to modify a personal experience to a hypothetical situation (R20). Dominic provides a typical transitional response (D15) whereby he uses the superordinate 'something' and gives both a functional and hypothetical definition. Although Rose's definitions of concrete nouns do not adhere to the format outlined by Litowitz, they demonstrate a level of abstraction from personal experience, incorporate functional definitions and demonstrate her developing awareness of definitional structure (R10). Both children's responses to the interchanged nominals question suggest that they still consider the name to be an intrinsic part of the object (D24, R26). Consequently, both children appear to be between the functional/perceptual and transitional stage of metalinguistic development. Although they are beginning to reflect on the language and think about it abstractly, the response to the non-definitional questions reveals qualities, such as idiosyncratic response and intrinsic association between object and referent, that are typical of earlier stages of metalinguistic development. This could be attributed to the progression in understanding of the definitional format as a result of formal instruction.

The children in the secondary group appear to demonstrate some advancements in metalinguistic skill. John's definition of 'word' is functional and still focused upon the spoken language aspect of the definition (J2). Kate's answer, whilst formally less like the Aristotelian ideal structure, draws attention to the composite units of words which highlights her perspective of language as arbitrary (K2). Both children's choices of their favourite word reflect metalinguistic awareness, Kate's answers are influenced by the sound of the word (K6) as well as whether or not she personally likes the referent (K4) whereas John's answers focus less upon phonological features and more on the semantic levels of the words (J4-5), which demonstrates he has begun to think about language abstractly; however, his choices are still associated with a positive experience. Similar to examples from previous groups, John's least favourite word is chosen due to its negative connotations (J7). Kate's definitional responses would be categorized as between level 4 and 5 on the Litowitz scale. Her answers demonstrate an awareness of the standard definitional form as a social convention and thus examples of personal experiences are omitted from her responses. Although her definitions do not reflect the Aristotelian ideal format, her awareness of the necessity of a superordinate is reflected in several of her responses (K14, K18, K26). Several of John's responses reflect Litowitz's level 5 of the Aristotelian ideal (J10, J13, J23); significantly these definitions are of concrete nouns, whereas John's definitions of abstract nouns reflect Litowitz's transitional phase between level 4 and 5, striving for the Aristotelian format but using 'something' as a superordinate and combining it with a functional definition (J19-20). In response to the interchanging names question, both children demonstrate an awareness of the arbitrariness of language. Kate's answer (K22) is typical of the arbitrary stage of metalinguistic development, whereas John's answer (J25), whilst recognising that the animals would be the same regardless of the name attributed to them, also suggests that on some level John believes the name 'dog' to be the best fit for that creature (J26), though he is aware that its name is not an

intrinsic feature of the object. Moreover, John's response references social confusion, which is typical in a transitional stage response to this question. Therefore, Kate would be categorised within the arbitrary stage and John between the transitional and arbitrary stages of metalinguistic development.

Discussion and Conclusion

The data from the three stages — early years, primary and secondary — demonstrate significant developments in metalinguistic skill. The data supports a link between cognitive and metalinguistic development, specifically in data from the early years group as it appears that a definition cannot be provided because the children have not fully established mental representations for the abstract concepts. Charlie's data supports Carey's (1978) theory of fast-mapping in relating the noun 'boat' to 'swim' because they are both lexical items associated with water. The early years data exemplifies the fact that the children are able to provide subordinate items in a category (C18) but do not possess linguistic knowledge concerning definitional form. Using Litowitz's (1976) levels of development to analyse the definitions of concrete and abstract nouns highlights supporting evidence for McGhee-Bidlack's (1991) theory that abstract definitions are acquired after concrete as none of the data from children or the adult models present abstract definitions that perfectly adhere to the Aristotelian format. Although the oldest children in the study are 12 years old, the variation in the definitional skill of the two children in the secondary group appears to support McGhee-Bidlack's (1991) theory that definitional ability continues to progress during the teenage years contrary to Piaget's (1929) theory that metalinguistic development is achieved by age 11.

While McGhee-Bidlack (1991) attributes the development of definitional skill between 10 and 18 to direct teaching, this data demonstrates that formal instruction is also influential in the primary stage, particularly in the scientific responses (R23, K12, J13). The lack of formal definitions in the early years group may reflect the different teaching style, which is focussed on communicative and personal development as opposed to direct transference of knowledge. Henceforth, the data suggest that in addition to knowledge about concepts and objects taught at primary and secondary level, children develop and understanding of the genre of definitions. Consequently, the development in children's definitional ability apparent in the primary and secondary groups supports Snow's (1990) assertions on the effect of formal education in relation to the two components she considers necessary for definitional skill.

The data from all three stages supports Piaget's (1929) theories on the development from seeing language as 'iconic' to 'arbitrary'. The data demonstrates that as children age, and develop cognitive ability, they steadily progress to be able to differentiate between an object and its referent. In accordance with Osherson and Markman's (1975) results, this data also exemplifies that young children consider the nominal an intrinsic part of the object; the primary group are confused by the concept but they consider the name to be attached to the object, and by age 11, in the secondary group, language is predominantly considered to be arbitrary but on some level a name is still attached to an object. This suggests that although age 11 is evidently an age at which there is significant metalinguistic development, children will continue to develop their metalinguistic awareness beyond this point.

In conclusion, the data collected validates many of the extensive theories on metalinguistic and definitional development concerning the influence of age, formal teaching and progression from understanding languages as iconic to arbitrary. Although the data represents a small sample, the linguistic responses collected confirm that while there is a steady progression in metalinguistic development, like all areas of language acquisition there

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are no rigid boundaries of categories and development does not cease either post-primary or post-secondary education.

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Appendices

Participant informed consent forms on file.

(I= interviewer, P= participant)

Alice – 4;10

- I: Can you tell me what a word is? **1**
- I: Erm (no answer)
- A: Do you have a favourite word?
- I: Yes
- I: What's your favourite word? **5**
- P: Lucy
- I: Why's that your favourite word?
- I: Because it's my dog's name
- A: Do you have a least favourite word?
- I: No **10**
- A: Do you know what a boat is?
- I: (nods head)
- A: Can you tell me what a boat is?
- I: B-o-t. You need to sail them
- A: Can you tell me what is rain? **15**
- I: It's what goes down when it rains
- A: Do you know what friendship is, what is friendship?
- I: Yes, your best friend
- A: Do you know what time is? Can you tell me what time is?
- I: Yes, erm, you know what time it is. **20**
- A: What is an animal?

I: Err they're just animals

A: What would happen if we started calling a dog a cat?

I: Err I don't know it would sound funny

A: What is anger?

25

I: Erm it's where you hang clothes up

Charlie – 4;11

- I: Can you tell me what a word is? **1**
- P: Err I don't know
- I: What is your favourite word?
- P: Err doing a job
- I: Why's that your favourite word? **5**
- P: Err playing
- I: Do you have a least favourite word?
- P: Erm Erm Erm I don't like playing with my friends
- I: What's a boat?
- P: Err a boat what you swim in **10**
- I: What is rain?
- P: Rain what makes puddles
- I: What is friendship?
- P: I don't know
- I: What is time? **15**
- P: A clock
- I: What is an animal?
- P: A goat
- I: What would happen if we started calling a dog a cat?
- P: You call it a dog **20**
- I: What is anger?
- P: I don't know

Dominic – 7;8

- A: Can you tell me what a word is? **1**
- P: A word is something that you write down
- I: What's your favourite word and why?
- P: Erm I don't know why but Macaroni oh I know why erm
- I: Tell me why **5**
- P: Erm because erm I made up a song where you go 'do the macaroni' and I also found it in a French Dictionary
- I: What is your least favourite word and why?
- P: Erm I can't think, I think it's 'and'
- I: And why's that? **10**
- P: Cause its just a really annoying word that you always say it so it gets really annoying
- I: What is a boat?
- P: A boat is something you travel across sea on...or water
- I: What is rain?
- P: Rain is something that comes down from the clouds and then you might try to drink it **15**
- I: What is friendship?
- P: Friendship erm is ... erm what .. erm friends are.
- I: What is time?
- P: Time is something you go through and it's ticking along right now. **20**
- I: What is an animal?
- P: An animal is something we look after so like a dog or a cat they're animals
- I: What would happen if we started calling a dog a cat?
- P: Erm the dog wouldn't respond.

Discuss the development of the metalinguistic skill of defining words, and how it relates to the development of adult-like meanings. Discuss how children progress from seeing words as 'iconic' to 'arbitrary'.

I: What is anger?

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P: Anger is something when you're angry and you're not happy.

Rose – 8;3

I: Can you tell me what a word is? **1**

I: It goes in a sentence and you can use it with other words and a word is made up of lots of different letters

I: What is your favourite word and why?

P: ‘Marshmallow’ because because I really like them and they’re really chewy **5**
and yummy

I: What is your least favourite word and why?

P: Probably ‘her’ or ‘she’ because I don’t like being called them

I: What is a boat?

P: Well it sails in the sea and there’s lots of different types of them **10**

I: What is rain?

P: Well it comes from the clouds up in the sky and they’re all wet and soggy and snow is made out of them.

I: What is friendship?

P: It’s like say me and my friends me and my best best best friend we have a **15**
really good friendship we’ve had one since reception with our friends ... it’s kind of what friends have together.

I: What is time?

P: Well it’s like you know the time by looking at a clock and it helps you say if your friend says meet me at the hairdressers at eight o’clock in the morning then you’d **20** look at the time to go to the hairdressers at eight o’clock to meet your friend.

I: What is an animal?

P: There’s lots of different types, there’s a herbivore, a carnivore, omnivore and they eat lots of different stuff depending on what they are and penguins don’t have any teeth.

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I: What would happen if we started calling a dog a cat?

25

P: They would get really confused and start chasing themselves because dogs chase cats so it would start chasing itself cause it knows that there's a cat around.

I: What is anger?

P: It's not very nice and you use it when you get really really angry and you start shouting and blaming people, it's not very nice to hear.

30

John – 12;2

I: Can you tell me what a word is? **1**

P: A word is a part of a sentence in speech that is used in everyday life to communicate

I: What is your favourite word and why?

P: Erm, I think my favourite word is ... altruistic because it's long and I actually know the meaning of it. **5**

I: What is your least favourite word and why?

P: I think my least favourite word is dispute because I never use it and it's quite a negative term most of the time.

I: What is a boat?

P: A boat is a vehicle that is used to travel across the sea, or a river or any large mass of water. **10**

I: What is rain?

P: Rain is erm weather where water that is evaporated and condensed in the sky drops down in the form of tiny droplets.

I: What is friendship? **15**

P: Friendship is erm a feeling that someone might feel to someone else when they trust and like them.

I: What is time?

P: Time is a measurement time is something that measures how the passage of seconds, minutes, hours, months, milliseconds, it's the passage of what happens... it's the passage of time. **20**

I: What is an animal?

P: An animal is a being that lives and moves and breathes.

I: What would happen if we started calling a dog a cat?

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P: People would get confused cause cats might still be called cats but due to the **25**
difference in appearance ... and the dogs would revolt cause they want their names.

I: What is anger?

P: Anger is a feeling of negativity towards someone or something that is usually caused by a
mishap

Kate – 11;5

- I: Can you tell me what a word is? **1**
- P: Erm letters put together... I dunno.
- I: What is your favourite word and why?
- P: Chocolate because it's tasty and I like the sound of it choc-late
- I: What is your least favourite word and why? **5**
- P: Mmmm I don't know ... Avocado.
- I: Do you know why?
- P: Don't the sound of it, odd.
- I: What is a boat?
- P: Erm something you sail and it's round shape if that makes sense **10**
- I: What is rain?
- P: Droplets of water that fall from the sky
- I: What is friendship?
- P: A bond between two people or people
- I: What is time? **15**
- P: Now... or on the clock.
- I: What is an animal?
- P: A creature err that moves
- I: What would happen if we started calling a dog a cat?
- P: If everybody called it? **20**
- I: Yes
- P: Erm nothing
- I: Why?
- P: Because erm because everybody would know what it is

Discuss the development of the metalinguistic skill of defining words, and how it relates to the development of adult-like meanings. Discuss how children progress from seeing words as 'iconic' to 'arbitrary'.

I: What is anger?

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P: An emotion like when you're cross or upset

Richard – 48;6

I: Can you tell me what a word is? **1**

P: A word is a set of letters that are formed in an order that makes sense and helps us to understand things.

I: What is your favourite word and why?

P: Erm favourite word... parallelogram, it's to do with its sound and all the different sections, lots of different syllables. **5**

I: What is your least favourite word and why?

P: Erm ... tawdry, it's very good at explaining, symbolising dull and cheap items.

I: What is a boat?

P: A boat is a craft that floats on water **10**

I: What is rain?

P: Rain is water that falls from the clouds

I: What is friendship?

P: Friendship is a level of er love, understanding and acceptance between two individuals. **15**

I: What is time?

P: Erm time is the on-going erm passage of events and actions

I: What is an animal?

P: An animal is a creature erm displaying the ability to live, breathe, et cetera.

I: What would happen if we started calling a dog a cat? **20**

P: Erm the meaning of the word would be confused and devalued.

I: What is anger?

P: Erm anger is how we express frustration when we are not able to achieve the results that we want.

Elizabeth – 45; 9

I: Can you tell me what a word is? 1

P: A word is a spoken or written way of naming or expressing something.

I: What is your favourite word and why?

P: I like the word onomatopoeia I like the sound of the word itself but I also like the fact

that it is the definition of words that sound like something you know like the fact 5

that there is a word for a word that sounds like a sound and I like the fact that it has lots of syllables ... six syllables.

I: What is your least favourite word and why?

P: Well a word that conjures up, a word like 'vomit' that makes me think of something unpleasant. 10

I: What is a boat?

P: A boat is a sailing vessel

I: What is rain?

P: Rain is a form of precipitation it falls to the ground in liquid form

I: What is friendship? 15

P: Friendship... is a connection between people, it's a relationship between people who are fond of each other and support each other.

I: What is time?

P: Time is a measurement of erm of time is , time is a measurement of erm of oh gosh

I'm not very good at expressing myself, time is a measurement of it's something 20

that you can count in seconds, minutes, hours, days, weeks, months, years et cetera. It's erm it's also a sort of precious thing that people long to have more of, so it's not just a measurement it's something people long to have.

I: What is an animal?

P: An animal is a living creature that can't fly cause if it could fly it would be a bird... **25**
erm it's it has a life span and in order to grow it needs nourishment.

I: What would happen if we started calling a dog a cat?

P: Do you mean all dogs called cats?

I: Yes

P: Well we would start specifying what kind of cat it was, well there would be a name **30**
for it like a dog-cat or a cat-dog. There'd be some kind of way of naming it more
specifically, a sort of subset within the family of cats, like a lion is in the family of cat, a
new name would be given for the type of cat that used to be a dog.

I: What is anger?

P: Anger is an emotion, it's a way, it's an expression of very strong feelings, normally **35**
a reaction to some news or something somebody has said or done.