



Gestalt Language Development

Session 1:
Assessment, Supports, and Case Example

Session 2:
Language Sampling and Scoring; Older
Students, Other Considerations

October 12, 2026



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*Natural Language Acquisition on the Autism Spectrum:
the Journey from Echolalia to Self-Generated Language (2012)*

Have you worked with students who don't seem to develop language no matter how hard we (and they) try? Have you read somewhere that if they don't develop language the expected way that they might develop language a different way?



Are they disordered? Do we need to just teach them
"survival language" because we think they're not capable of
developing real language?!



Manasa RB



We're worried about them. They don't develop language like we think they should.

Maybe they don't talk. Maybe they just sing. Or talk in ways we don't understand. Are they disordered thinkers? No!



They are "gestalt language processors"!



They develop language a different way!

The gestalt way!



Manasa RB

Gestalt processing is a different (and normal)
way of thinking ... and developing language!
And it starts with 'echolalia'!!



Once we understand what gestalt processing means, our autistic and other gestalt kids look like superheroes!



Did they change? No! We did!



Gestalt Language Development Session 1

Session 1

1. You will be able to list observable behaviors that suggest that a child uses a gestalt language development process.
2. You will be able to describe each stage of gestalt language development researched as Natural Language Acquisition.
3. You will be able to describe general research-based supports for gestalt language development.
4. You will be able to describe specific supports for gestalt language development at each NLA stage



Session 2

1. You will be able to describe grammar development from Stage 4 through Stage 6.
2. You will be able to describe similarities and differences between supports for younger students and supports for older students.
3. You will be able to describe 'horizontal progress' as compared with 'vertical progress.'
4. You will be able to score a short language sample, using NLA scoring.
5. You will discover some of the characteristics of 'dual processors'
6. You will learn some 'short-cuts' only experienced NLA practitioners can teach you!

Session 2

Including:

GLP goals templates

~

NLA Scoring Guide

DST and DSS

Assessment form

~

Forum invitations



Gestalts represent meaningful experiences - and mean something important to the GLP
Since their meaning isn't always 'literal,' we should never be offended!

Happybirthdaytoyou
happybirthdaytoyou
happybirthday
dearmama
happybirthdaytoyou

कीदुम पेजोमाराहथौड़ा

कहाँहैमेराखिलौना?

wantsomemoremilk?

toinfinityandbeyond

abcdefghijklmnop
qrstuvwxyzandz
nowiknowmy
abcs
nexttimewontyouusingwithme

लकड़ीकीकाठीकाठीपेघोड़ाघोड़े



Language gestalts come in all shapes and sizes!

मछलीजल कीरानीहै

Each is the soundtrack of a meaningful experience, so they can come in any language and can be unintelligible, musical, and dramatic

Hiephiephiephoera!



A gestalt might not seem like it applies to the current situation — but it does ... to the child!

ढूँढतेहैंकार!

लकड़ीकीकाठीकाठीपेघोड़ाघोड़े

Sienverdadestáscontentototusonrisaeselreflejo

रानीहै.....

اوووہ|ت|ر|ت|ت|

veux-tu un biscuit?

And it leads naturally to self-generated language!





How do we know?

~

We have foundational research
Our longitudinal research
And everything we've learned since

~

By the end of the day on Monday, you will be invited
to two free forums

~

communicationdevelopmentcenter.com



Marge Blanc, M.A., CCC-SLP ~ As a Speech-Language Pathologist for over 50 years, I have loved every minute of being an SLP! I worked with students in public schools in the US and Canada for 20 years ~ before coming to Wisconsin. As a Clinical Associate Professor at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, I learned about gestalt language development in 1994: on-the-job! Autistic students were coming to Wisconsin to be ‘cured’ by a devotee of Ivar Lovaas, who was conducting an ABA ‘replication study.’ Needless to say, his study ‘failed,’ and he called those students “Lovaas failures.” So they were referred to our University clinic! We found out that these children used a gestalt style of language development instead of the one ABA tried to ‘teach,’ but of course that researcher didn’t know it.



My first little GLP moved from echolalia to grammar naturally! I could see the gestalt signs immediately ~ and his mother verified them. We supported him with the principles of gestalt language development I had learned from Barry Prizant and Ann Peters ~ and they resonated with Dylan very quickly! Since it was a University clinic, we documented everything with regular video-taping and language samples ~ and I soon realized that my research career had begun! Dylan became my ‘textbook kid’ long before I had written the ‘textbook.’ That happened after we conducted the 15 years of longitudinal research that became the Natural Language Acquisition (NLA) book! His case example was published in 2005, however, as “Finding the Words: To Tell the Whole Story,” available to download from our website.

That first three-year study became part of the service-delivery in the physically-supportive clinic I then founded (Communication Development Center) in 1997. After 15 years and 85 children, my colleagues and I compiled our findings in the book, Natural Language Acquisition on the Autism Spectrum: the Journey from Echolalia to Self-Generated Language (2012). The NLA framework is the outcome of our extensive research about how echolalia leads to the natural development of self-generated grammar, a description of the six NLA stages of gestalt language development, along with case examples of a wide variety of children, primarily autistic children.

Since then, I have been actively sharing the lessons learned about gestalt language development through courses, webinars, and the Center’s website, communicationdevelopmentcenter.com.



Broadening our lens about natural language development

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Recognizing gestalt language development And knowing what to do



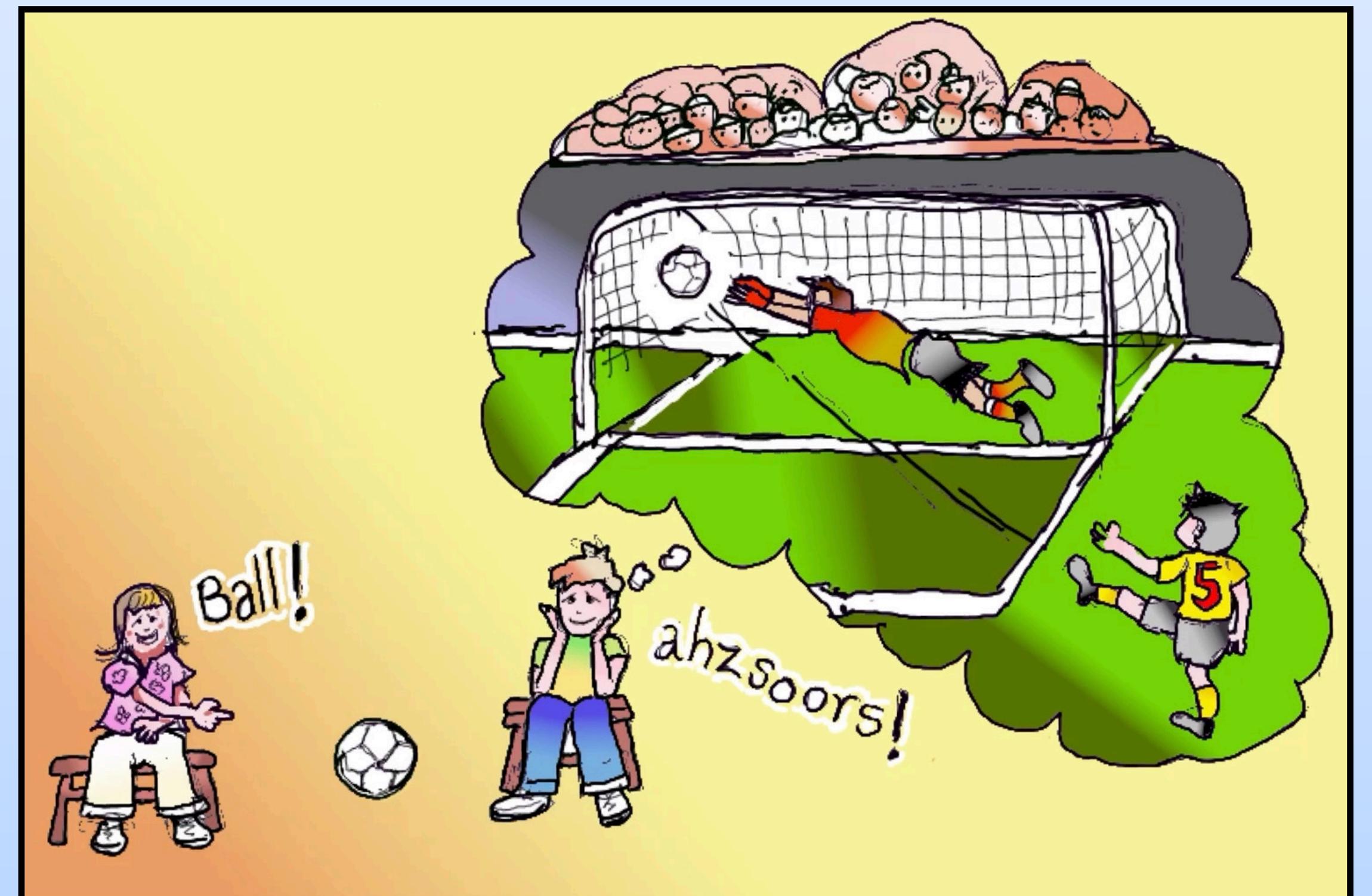
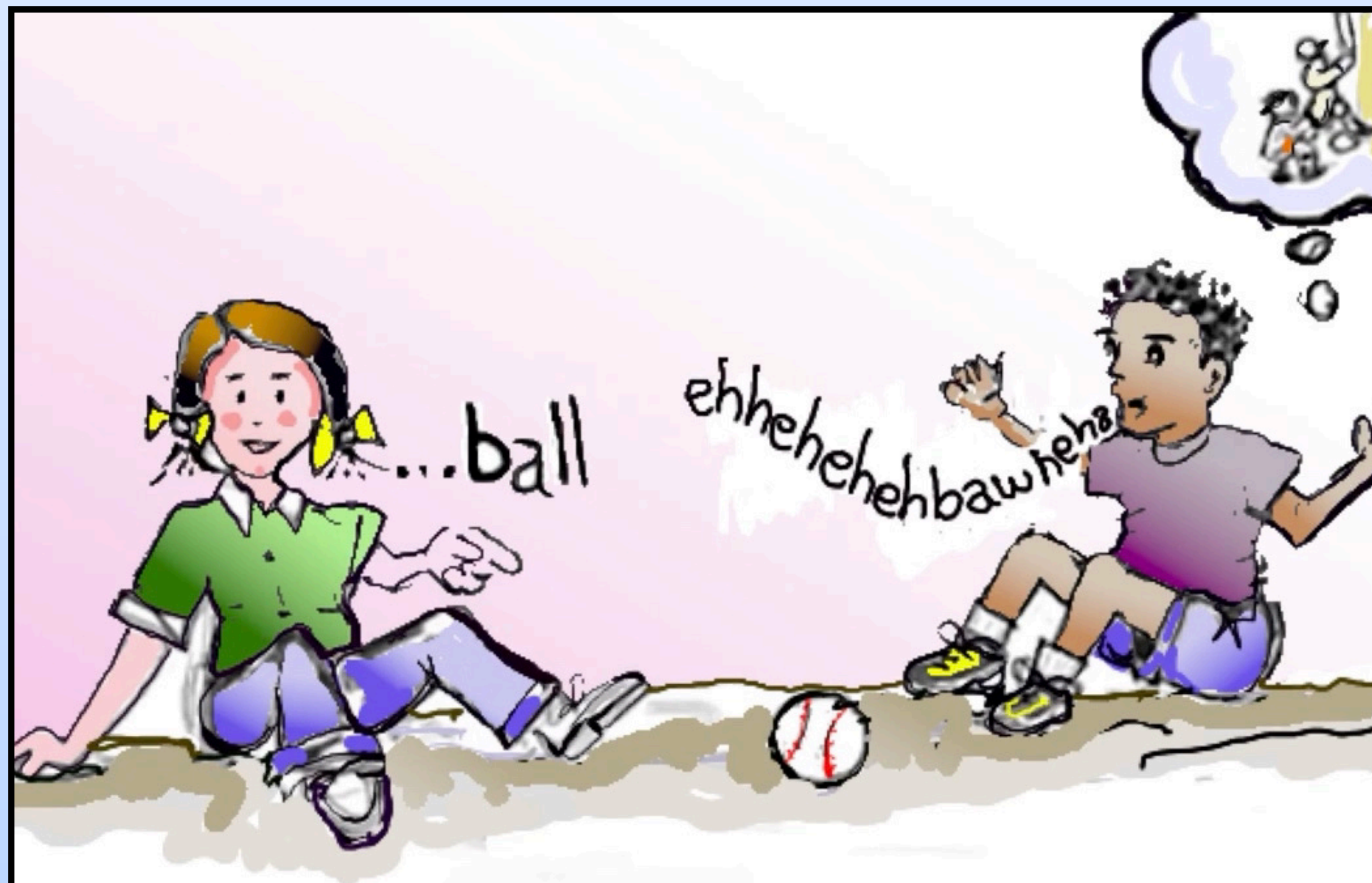
- ★ It's natural and achievable — flexible and self-generated
- ★ Whether a child seems 'typical' or not!
- ★ If we understand whether they are processing analytically or gestalt!
- ★ Then it's available to ALL children: neurotypical and neurodivergent



The advantages?



- No drilling
- No prompting
- No rote learning/splinter skills
- A complete grammar!



Gestalt Language Development: NLA Stages

- 1 Language gestalts (unanalyzed wholes/scripts/songs 🎵)
- 2 Mitigations (changed/shortened gestalts)
Mix and match combinations of mitigations
- 3 Single, isolated words (referential)
Word + word combinations without grammar
- 4 Original phrases and beginning sentences
- 5 Original sentences using more complex grammar
- 6 Original sentences leading to a complete grammar system



How do we know what we know?
...about language development, analytic and gestalt?

And why are we rediscovering/recognizing the gestalt style now?

Please join us and find out!



Natural Language Acquisition

- founded on Ann Peters, Barry Prizant, and colleagues' qualitative research
- elaborated through 15 years of clinical research with 85 clients
- a detailed description of the original four stages of gestalt language development &
- an expansion to six stages to include children's use of more complex grammar
- the evidence is not 'experimental.' It's empirical, experiential ~ longitudinal ~ and now seen all over the world!





Gestalt language development is now being documented
all over the world!



What else are we learning?

On Monday, you'll find out!