

Panel discusses acquisition of human language

The topic was "the Acquisition of Language as seen by Behaviorists and Rationalists." It was a discussion by UNL professors Don Jensen and Richard Weist, both of the psychology department, and Hassan Sharifi of the linguistics department.

Jensen said he used to think learning and thought were "terribly intertwined" but has since found that is not the case, that both functions can be independent.

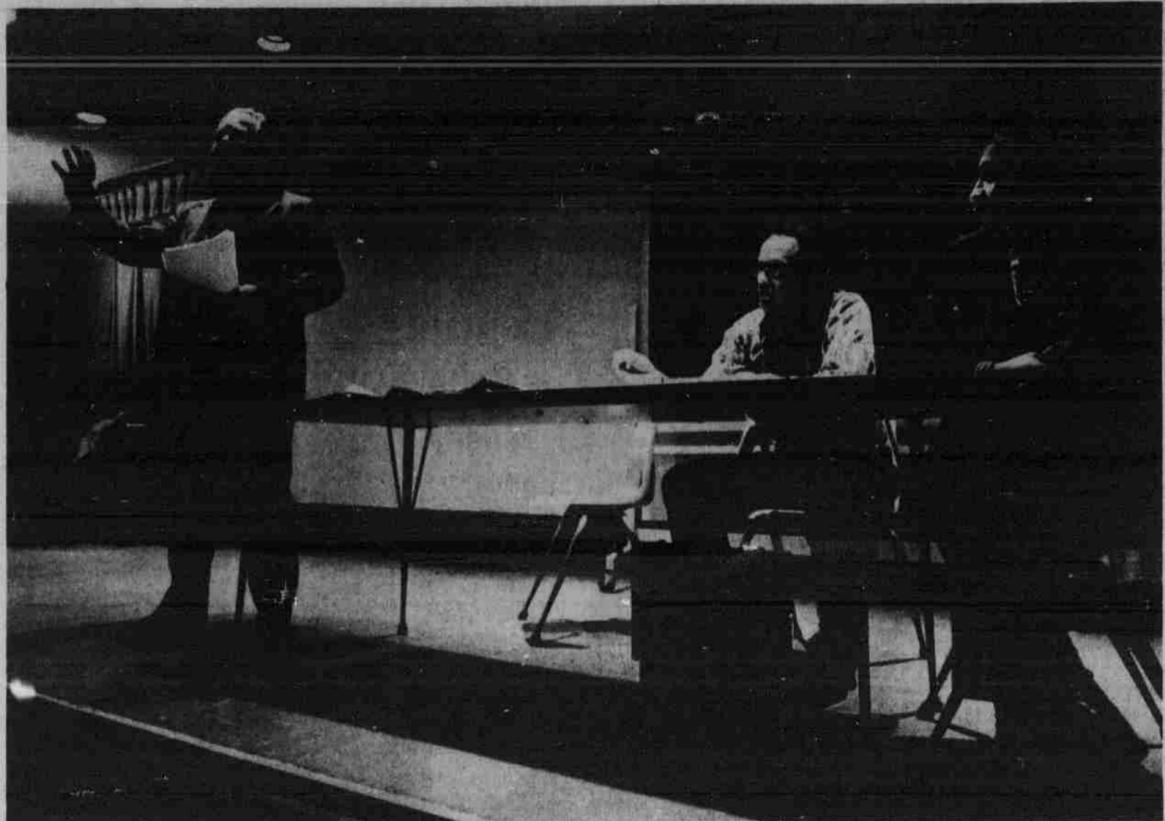
He told an audience of about 50 people Tuesday about a monkey named "Washou" who learned how to speak using hand signals like the deaf.

"Language is a primate characteristic, not just a human one," he said.

Sharifi told the group that rationalists hold that children are born with a special capacity for language above the capacity to learn, but that language is "specifically human, and linguists consider it as specially human."

Weist told the group that he disagreed with the notion of behavior reinforcement in teaching language.

"Why do all children begin to speak between 18 and 20 months after birth?" Weist asked. "It does not seem that practice plays an important role in learning language . . . the child learns it in any case."



Panel . . . language is specifically human, specially human.

short stuff

Civil Service session

The Civil Service will be holding a group session Thursday at 8:30 a.m., and 3:30 p.m. for Teachers College graduates interested in procedures and job openings for those people who have passed the Civil Service Examination. Anyone interested should sign-up in 107 Teachers College.

Boredom workshop

An interim workshop for graduate students entitled "Loneliness, Anxiety and Boredom" is being offered through the Human Development and the Family department. The workshop will be held Dec. 27 through Jan. 6 at the Dental College. Those interested in the workshop should contact Earl Green in the Extension Division.

Advent service

The Wesley House, 640 No. 19th, is holding a special advent service, "Christmas is Celebration," tonight at 9 p.m.

Free jazz

Three jazz bands will be performing free at 8 p.m. Friday in Kimball Recital Hall.

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Thurber reading

The University Readers will present a free reading entitled, "A Visit With James Thurber" on Wednesday and Thursday at 7:30 p.m. in the Small Auditorium of the Nebraska Union.

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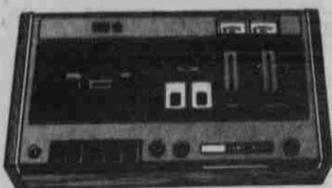
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