

Antimentalism in Linguistics  
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1. Linguistics is necessarily a mentalist science. In *Speech and Brain Mechanisms* (1959:114-5), Penfield and Roberts photographed an area of the brain where vocabulary items were stored. A patient, shown a human foot (p. 117), was unable to name it when the area was blocked by an electric discharge. Finding a morpheme for a sememe is demonstrably a mental operation.
2. Psychological work from 1950 onwards (e.g. George Miller 1956 *Psychological Review*: "The Magical Number 7, plus or minus 2", measuring the capacity of the Working Memory) has demonstrated that antimentalism in Psychology is at least 70 years out of date.
3. Antimentalist definitions in Linguistics are often completely absurd. A language is NOT a set of sentences (Bloomfield 1926. Def 4:154, Chomsky 1957:13). **Sentences cannot be produced BEFORE the speaker has a language.** They are the product, NOT the means of production. Bloomfield's 1926 definition is cart-before-the-horse linguistics, an unacceptable aberration.
4. A sentence is also a product that belongs to a particular time and place. It typically belongs to a situational context, which cannot be removed *without creating a change of meaning*: "He closed the door" (?house, room, cupboard, building, kennel, attic, barn, cellar, outhouse, shed, bus, car, truck, plane, closet, prison, shop, church, hotel, etc, etc). A shed door is observably different from a door on a church or a car or an aircraft.
5. If the sentence is abstracted from its context of situation (time and place), it becomes an ideal sentence, a gross abstraction to be avoided by any honest empiricist.
6. The Bloomfieldian "set of sentences", consequently, would be an ideal set, an imaginary conception of the mind, irrelevant to both science and common sense.
7. This kind of antimentalism distorts the whole process of speaking > listening > hearing > interpreting > understanding, all of which require mental involvement. Spoken sentences, in fact, are recorded by the Working Memory (see 2 above).
8. How can a small child, who learns the community language in stages: one-element sentence, two-element sentence, three-element sentence (R.M. Jones, *System in Child Language* 1970: 45-204) be learning an infinite set of sentences? What children learn in their first three years is *how to make a sentence*.
9. A language is, consequently, a mechanism for *making sentences*, and it is typically learned in the first three years of life. It is *not* an abstract collection of sentences. If you want to make (i.e. create) sentences, you must *first* learn a language. The Bloomfield/Chomsky definition is absurd.