

L. S. VYGOTSKY and A. R. LURIA. *The Function and Fate of Egocentric Speech.*

1. By a series of investigations a specific stage in the development of child speech was found, a stage which Piaget characterized as "egocentric speech." It was supposed that this term of verbal behavior was only an expression of the general autistic attitude of the child. This form of speech, as was shown by some investigators, disappears with the development of the social behavior. The function of egocentric speech and the psychological mechanisms responsible for its evolution were still unclear.

2. Our experiments, concerned with the problem of the function of egocentric speech, showed that this form of verbal

behavior always appeared very frequently when the child was confronted with a difficult situation. By making the performance of an activity difficult we obtained on the part of the child an explosion of egocentric speech reactions; these reactions, however, were not merely a process accompanying the main activity of the child, but were directed towards the solution of the problem. The child was trying first to solve the problem verbally, in order to organize its subsequent activity. These experiments show that egocentric speech is not merely a kind of accompanying process, but has a *specific organizing function*, which distinguishes it from other processes in the child's behavior.

3. By observing the development of egocentric speech we find that this function does not simply disappear, being replaced by a socialized form of verbal behavior. Its planning functions are taken by specific pauses which have an intellectual character and are filled by internal speech. The qualitative analysis of the exteriorized internal speech shows its resemblance to egocentric speech with respect to its structure, function, and genesis. The analysis of this process shows that egocentric speech becomes internal in its evolution, remaining as a specific function directed to the organizing of the child's own behavior.

4. On the strength of our experiments we consider it possible to change the traditional schema of the verbal evolution of explicit speech, viz., external speech—internal speech, into external speech—egocentric speech—internal speech. We thus consider egocentric speech as one of the most important processes having a specific function in the evolution of the cultural behavior of the child.