

# "You Are Not the Boss of My Words"

## Junie B. Jones, Language, and Linguistics

Jill S. Ratzan

*"You are not the boss of my words, Grace," I said. "This is a freed country. And if I want to say valentine, I can. And I will not even go to jail."*

—from Barbara Park's *Junie B. Jones and the Mushy Gushy Valentine*

Not the way I want my kids talking!" writes one reviewer at Amazon.com. "Children learn by example and will pick up on the good and bad habits that they see and hear, so why would anyone want his/her child exposed to this constant stream of sloppy language?" asks another. Barbara Park's *Junie B. Jones* beginner chapter book series, which follows "almost six"-year-old Junie B. through a new baby in her family, special occasions at school, and other day-to-day events, has been challenged in Colorado, Texas, Wisconsin, and other states. Park appears sixth on the American Library Association's list of the ten most frequently challenged authors



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of 2004.<sup>1</sup> Many complaints, like the ones quoted above, focus on Junie B.'s use of nonstandard English.

But knee-jerk objection is only one way of viewing the unusual grammar and vocabulary that characterize this series. Applying the principles of linguistics—the scientific study of language—to the *Junie B. Jones* series can shed a more interesting, more sophisticated, and ultimately more positive light on these books. From a linguistic point of view, Junie B.'s unique way of speaking illustrates four properties of language:

- Language follows rules
- Language is constantly changing
- Language is learned at special times and in special ways
- Language is a reflection of social power

Linguistics can help readers appreciate Junie B., and Junie B. in turn can inspire readers to learn more about linguistics.

Before beginning this discussion, a few qualifications are in order. First, this paper reflects a particular approach to linguistics called generative grammar, a theory that assumes language is a systematic, innate human trait driven by certain mathematical principles (specifically, language is a combinatorial, productive, and recursive system).<sup>2</sup> Second, most rules and other properties mentioned here have been simplified from versions a linguist would use. In particular, linguists see important differences between spoken and written language; because these books read as though Junie B. is telling a story, this

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article treats Junie B.'s written narration as if it were made up of spoken words. Additionally, because Junie B.'s grammar becomes more standard when she enters first grade in later books, this discussion focuses on the seventeen books in which Junie B. is in kindergarten.

Finally, this article does not address Junie B.'s name-calling and expression of negative emotions ("I hate that meanie Jim"), the other frequent complaint about these books.<sup>3</sup>

## Language Follows Rules

The idea that language follows rules should not come as a surprise; in fact, this is a major assumption behind complaints that Junie B. is *breaking* such rules. But thinking like a linguist leads to the surprising conclusion that Junie B. isn't breaking any rules at all—she's actually *following them completely*, unlike most speakers of standard English. Looking at matters this way, Junie B.'s speech can be seen as more clear and more logical than the standard speech to which it is compared.

For example, one of Junie B.'s most often-cited mistakes deals with the following past-tense rule:

- To make a verb past tense, add "-ed" to the end of it. Examples: walk + ed = walked; jump + ed = jumped.

What Junie B. says:

- "I runned straight to the sink" (run + ed = runned)
- "She beated me [at a race]" (beat + ed = beated)
- "I hidid under my backpack" (hide + ed = hidid)<sup>4</sup>

Although all of the above are examples of logical rule-following, the second, "beated," is the most interesting. In addition to being logical, this form is actually clearer than its counterpart in standard English. As linguist Steven Pinker points out, verbs like "beat," which have the same form in both present and past tense, are ambiguous; whether they're



being used to mean present or past actions can be unclear.<sup>5</sup> Speech like Junie B.'s, which uses a different form to indicate past tense, actually makes much more sense.

Here is another common English rule:

- To form the comparative and superlative forms of adjectives, add "-er" and "-est" to them. Examples: big + er = bigger; fast + est = fastest.

What Junie B. says:

- "She is way beautifuller than me" (beautiful + er = beautifuller)
- "Painting is the funnest thing I love" (fun + est = funnest)
- "They are the gorgeousest pictures I ever saw!" (gorgeous + est = gorgeousest)<sup>6</sup>

Here is another rule on pronouns:

- To form a reflexive pronoun, add "-self" or "-selves" to the possessive form of that pronoun. Examples: my (possessive) + self = myself; your (possessive) + self = yourself; our (possessive) + selves = ourselves.

What Junie B. says:

- "Big girls get to walk all by their-selves;"
- "Sometimes ladies have to go under the table and adjust theirselves" (their (possessive) + selves = theirselves)<sup>7</sup>

As in the previous case, Junie B.'s language use follows the preceding two rules exactly. This next rule is less of a rule and more of a pattern:

- The first syllable of a word is the stressed syllable. Although this pattern is not true of all English words, it tends to be true of words that young children hear most often, and is true of many words that Junie B. herself uses.

What Junie B. says (emphasis added):

- "I HURried to the LAUNdry room to get the CLOTHEspins"
- "JELly DOUGHnuts... with RAINbow SPRINKles"
- "My new BABy BROther NAMED OLLie"<sup>8</sup>

Junie B.'s application of this pattern is slightly more complicated than her use

of the rules above. If the first syllable of a word is stressed, then maybe the stressed syllable *is* the first syllable of a word. What Junie B. says:

- Mother "rolled me in afternoon kindergarten" (enROLLED)
- "Baby-sitter 'structions is all the stuff I'm not allowed to do" (inSTRUCTIONS)
- "That's 'zactly what kind of day I had" (eXACTly)<sup>9</sup>

This is not as odd as it first seems; when adults talk quickly, initial unstressed syllables can be hard to hear. For example, this author recently fielded a request from a child for books about "noles" (the child meant "aNOLES," a type of lizard often kept as class pets).

Finally, this last rule seems obvious, but has many interesting consequences: People say things that make sense.

One common example of this rule—literal speech versus idioms—is explicitly discussed in the Junie B. books. Misunderstanding her grandmother's idiom, "Your new brother is the cutest little monkey," Junie B. mistakenly thinks that her new brother really *is* a monkey; if he wasn't, why would Grandma say that he was? Later, Junie B.'s class talks about idioms and comes up with others, like "couch potato" (which, as her friend Lucille points out, isn't a real potato).<sup>10</sup>

Another example of this rule involves a different kind of misunderstanding. When Junie B. encounters an unusual phrase, she interprets it in a way that makes the most amount of sense. (Remember that fast, fluent speech can make hearing individual sounds difficult.) This desire for sense results in the following phrases from Junie B.:

- Mother "had a mybrain headache" (migraine)
- "I got fusstration inside me" (frustration)
- "The kind of vegetable named Sue Keeny" (zucchini)<sup>11</sup>

## Making Mondegreens

The term "mondegreen" was coined by writer Sylvia Wright and popularized by *San Francisco Chronicle* columnist Jon Carroll. Wright derived the term from her mishearing of the Scottish folk ballad "The Bonnie Earl O'Moray."

Oh, ye hielands and ye lowlands,  
 Oh, where hae ye been?  
 They have slain the Earl of Moray,  
 And laid him on the green.  
 (or: "and Lady Mondegreen"?)

From Steven Pinker, *The Language Instinct* (New York: Morrow, 1994), 182–83.

Phrases like these are called *mondegreens*, mishearings or misinterpretations of statements, after a particularly interesting example of one (see sidebar). Mondegreens result when listeners attempt to make sense of an unusual utterance and turn it into something that makes sense. Since Mother's problem is with her head, surely "mybrain" is the right choice of all the possibly heard options; when someone (particularly Junie B.) is "fusstrated," they tend to get fussy. And if a vegetable has a name, wouldn't "Sue" be a logical choice? As was the case above, Junie B. is not the only English speaker to draw such conclusions. Many adults use the mondegreen "notor republic" (for "notary public"), and linguist Steven Pinker quotes a child happily singing, "The ants are my friends, they're blowing in the wind," instead of "The answer, my friend, is blowing in the wind" from Bob Dylan's well-known song "Blowin' in the Wind."<sup>12</sup>

Based on the above, it seems that Junie B.'s grammatical errors are far from random—they come from following rules of English grammar and conversation to the letter of the law. A thoughtful challenger, however, could reply that the key here is Junie B.'s ignorance of the many rule *exceptions* present in standard English. Interestingly, much of what appears to modern English speakers as "exceptions" are actually living fossils of long-forgotten

rules. For example, Old English and its predecessors had a rule that made a verb past tense by changing its vowel; echoes of this rule still exist in words like "sing," which becomes "sang" in the past tense.<sup>13</sup> However, Junie B.'s strict rule-following can also be looked at in another way. Most likely, no one has explicitly taught her any of the above rules. She, like most young children, has derived them entirely on her own. This process, not her lack of memorized exceptions to rules, can be seen as what is *truly* amazing about Junie B. Jones' grammar.

## Language Is Constantly Changing

Like the idea that language follows rules, the idea that language is ever-changing makes intuitive sense. Anyone who has struggled through the early modern English of Shakespeare or the Middle English of Chaucer (or the virtually incomprehensible Old English of *Beowulf*) can see that these versions of English are very different from the version spoken today. One part of language that changes over time is the acceptable forms of words. Often, a regular form that follows a rule (like the "add -ed" rule) will replace an irregular one that does not. For example, "climbed" is currently the standard past-tense form of the verb "climb;" Junie B. uses this form correctly many times:

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- "I climbed onto my bed"
- "I climbed up on his lap."<sup>14</sup>

However, in early modern English, the standard form was the currently defunct "clomb," as seen in the following quote from John Milton's seventeenth century work *Paradise Lost*.<sup>15</sup>

So clomb this first grand Thief into  
Gods Fould:  
So since into his Church lewd  
Hirelings climbe.<sup>16</sup>

The verb "climbed" might have sounded as strange to Milton and other speakers of early modern English as "runned" sounds to us today.

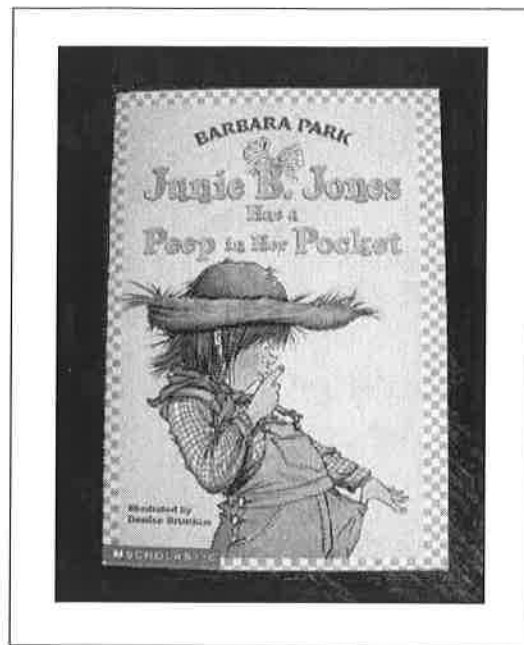
Another aspect of language change involves using existing words in new ways. With text-enabled cell phones, for example, *text* is now something you can do, not just something you can read; the noun "text" is now also a verb. Some linguists, including Donna Jo Napoli, suggest that a similar change is happening to adjectives and adverbs. Increasingly, Napoli argues, adjectives are being used both for their original function (roughly, to modify nouns) and for a new function, to modify verbs. She gives the following examples to illustrate this point:

- Mary plays rough. ("Rough" is an adjective modifying the verb "plays.")
- Don't work so hard. ("Hard" is an adjective modifying the verb "work.")<sup>17</sup>

Comparing these examples with quotes from Junie B. shows a striking similarity:

- "I smiled very happy." ("Happy" is an adjective modifying the verb "smiled.")
- "She quick grabbed my box." ("Quick" is an adjective modifying the verb "grabbed.")<sup>18</sup>

So can we argue that when Junie B. says "I quick runned" instead of "I ran quickly," she's actually working toward regularizing verbs and combining adjectives and adverbs?<sup>19</sup> Not really, since one speaker alone doesn't constitute overall change. But, as was the case with the language rules discussed previously, viewing Junie B.'s speech from the perspective of language change leads to a more interesting—and more satisfying—interpretation than simply rejecting it offhand. And her individual use does provide evidence for another claim: language is learned at special times and in special ways.



**Language Is Learned at Special Times and in Special Ways**

Child language acquisition—how children learn their first language—may be the area of linguistics most of interest to children's librarians.<sup>20</sup> The process of learning a first language is an incredible one, involving skills such as deciphering where words begin and end, determining what roles words play in sentences, and, of course, deciding what words mean. Because this daunting task is usually accomplished within the first few years of a child's life, and typically with little or no explicit instruction, linguists posit the idea that children are born with an internal language mechanism of some kind, allowing them to fit what they hear into an innate mental framework.

Pinker and many other linguists believe that such frameworks involve both systematic rules, like the "add -ed" rule, and individual words, like "cat," "dog," and "ran," which must be memorized individually. These two elements combine in particular ways to yield standard grammatical speech. For example, if a rule and a word conflict, like "ran" and "add -ed," an adult speaker will retrieve the word from memory in time to stop the rule from applying.

Young children, however, are often still working out kinks in this system.



## Love Language?

Check out these other linguistically interesting children's books.

### Archaic English

Tomie dePaola, *Tomie dePaola's Mother Goose* (Putnam, 1985) and other collections of traditional nursery rhymes.

### Idioms

Tedd Arnold, *More Parts and Even More Parts: Idioms from Head to Toe* (Dial, 2001 and 2004).

Wallace Edwards, *Monkey Business* (Kids Can Press, 2004).

Fred Gwynne, *The King Who Rained* (Windmill, 1970) and other titles by author.

### Language Change, Language and Power

Andrew Clements, *Frindle*, illus. Brian Selznick (Simon and Schuster, 1996).

### Mondegreens

Debra Frasier, *Miss Alaineus: A Vocabulary Disaster* (Harcourt, 2000).

### Reduplication

Andrew Clements, *Double Trouble in Walla Walla*, illus. Salvatore Murdocca (Millbrook, 1997).

### Sounds, Forms, and Meanings

Roald Dahl, *The BFG*, illus. Quentin Blake (Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1982).

Shel Silverstein, *Runny Babbit: A Billy Sook* (HarperCollins, 2005).

William Steig, *CDB! and CDC?* (Windmill, 1968 and Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1984; revised editions Simon and Schuster, 2000 and Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2003).

Experimental evidence suggests that children know irregular words like "ran" and "hid," even if they do not always use them. When a child's memory cannot come up with an irregular word quickly, their language framework defaults to applying the rule, resulting in overgeneralizations like "runned" and "hided." Sometimes memory works in time, but other times it does not; children often alternate freely between using irregular forms and their overregularized counterparts.<sup>21</sup> Even Junie B., well-known for her overgeneralizations, comes out with correct irreg-

ular verbs from time to time. Compare the following with the first set of examples above:

- "I ran out of the room" (not "runned")
- "I put my head on the table" (not "putted")
- "I hid my face" (not "hided")<sup>22</sup>

Alternatively, a child's brain may cough up the correct, irregular form, but continue to apply the rule anyway. This

results in oddly doubled expressions such as the following from Junie B.:

- "My bestest friend" (word "best" plus rule "add -est")
- "Somebody stole my mittens" (word "stole" plus rule "add -ed")<sup>23</sup>

Although these examples could be lamented by critics as the most objectionable examples of "bad grammar" in the series, they can also be viewed as the *best* demonstrations that language is made up of words, rules, and ways of putting the two together. A child who utters statements like those knows the rules for forming past-tense and superlative forms ("add -ed" and "add -est") and knows special words (like "best" and "stole")—the child has simply not yet mastered the idea that using one should inhibit using the other.

Linguists' observations show that children between the ages of two and five are actively engaged in refining their language frameworks to match those of others in their community. As children reach school age, they usually make no more than four mistakes for every hundred correct forms they utter.<sup>24</sup> Therefore when, in a later book in the series, a newly six-year-old Junie B. brags to her school principal, "I don't say *runned* anymore," she is demonstrating a level of language development typical of children her age.<sup>25</sup>

This theory of language learning partially addresses the complaint given at the beginning of this article, that impressionable youngsters "learn by example" and will imitate the grammar that they read and hear. According to the theory discussed here, children are not blank slates but filters. *They will only imitate what fits with their internal language frameworks.* For example, a child (or an adult!) can easily learn a new word like "mondegreen" because it does not interfere with what their language framework says is acceptable but will balk at a word like "runned" because it does.

If a child's internal grammar has already decided that "ran" is the right form to use for the past tense of "run," as most second graders have (the median

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intended audience for the Junie B. Jones books, according to *School Library Journal*), no amount of reading otherwise is likely to change their minds.<sup>26</sup> Significantly, even those children who use nonstandard forms in their own speech will often recognize—and reject—these words in the speech of others. As language researchers Joel Lachter and Thomas G. Bever report, one father's attempt to echo his son's overregularized utterance "Mommy goed to the store," was met with the emphatic reply "Daddy, I say it that way, not you."<sup>27</sup>

## Language Is a Reflection of Social Power

From the victory at the heart of Ed Emberley's *Go Away, Big Green Monster!* (Little, Brown, 1993) to the thrill of watching Harry Potter and friends defeat inept and evil grownups, children love books that make them feel smart, powerful, and in control. Most likely, this effect is responsible for part of Junie B. Jones' appeal.

As noted previously, the target audience for these books, early elementary school readers, has typically outgrown the speech patterns of younger children. Readers in this age group can therefore laugh with smug self-assurance at Junie B.'s childish way of talking, boosting their own sense of linguistic superiority.

In fact, the relationship between language and power forms the crux of what Junie B. would call the "disagreement" over her use of English.<sup>28</sup> While skeptics may concede that Junie B.'s speech is logical, clear, and in tune with patterns observed in language change and language acquisition, the fact remains, they could argue, that it is not standard English. Although Junie B. truly "will not even go to jail" for speaking in a nonstandard way, American society regards standard English as the right way to talk, and those who speak this way will be treated with more respect than those who do not.

By presenting such an argument, these critics would be correct. Again, however,

## Junie B. Jones books by Barbara Park

All books are published by Random House, New York City. This list is current as of September 2005.

*Junie B. Jones and the Stupid Smelly Bus*, 1992

*Junie B. Jones and a Little Monkey Business*, 1993

*Junie B. Jones and Her Big Fat Mouth*, 1993

*Junie B. Jones and Some Sneaky Peeky Spying*, 1994

*Junie B. Jones and the Yucky Blucky Fruitcake*, 1995

*Junie B. Jones and That Meanie Jim's Birthday*, 1996

*Junie B. Jones Loves Handsome Warren*, 1996

*Junie B. Jones Has a Monster under Her Bed*, 1997

*Junie B. Jones Is Not a Crook*, 1997

*Junie B. Jones Is a Party Animal*, 1997

*Junie B. Jones Is a Beauty Shop Guy*, 1998

*Junie B. Jones Smells Something Fishy*, 1998

*Junie B. Jones Is (Almost) a Flower Girl*, 1999

*Junie B. Jones and the Mushy Gushy Valentine*, 1999

*Junie B. Jones Has a Peep in Her Pocket*, 2000

*Junie B. Jones Is Captain Field Day*, 2001

*Junie B. Jones Is a Graduation Girl*, 2001

*Junie B., First Grader (At Last!)*, 2001

*Junie B., First Grader: Boss of Lunch*, 2002

*Junie B., First Grader: Toothless Wonder*, 2002

*Junie B., First Grader: Cheater Pants*, 2003

*Junie B., First Grader: One-Man Band*, 2003

*Top Secret, Personal Beeswax: A Journal by Junie B. (and Me!)*, 2003

*Junie B., First Grader: Shipwrecked*, 2004

*Junie B., First Grader: Boo . . . and I Mean It!*, 2004

*Junie B., First Grader: Jingle Bells, Batman Smells! (P.S. So Does May)*, 2005

linguistics allows us to think beyond our everyday assumptions about the idea of a "right" way to talk. What makes one style of speech "right," especially when the "wrong" one is the more logical of the two?

The answer is that the "right" form of English is the one used by people in positions of power. Historically, socioeconomic and political power acted as deciding factors. For example, when

London became the economic and cultural center of Britain in the seventeenth century, the particular dialect of English spoken by Londoners—the precursor of today's standard English—became the "correct" way to speak English. Speaking this way was desirable because it allowed one to identify oneself with the upper class living there.

Social and cultural issues continue to affect attitudes toward language. The

English of the rich Northeast is often regarded as "better" than that spoken in less economically privileged areas of the United States, and language columnists like William Safire use their power as cultural authorities to dictate what is considered "proper" speech.

However, another type of relationship is also important to the issue of language and power: the power dynamic between adults and children. Adults hold a tremendous amount of linguistic power; adult language is seen as superior to children's, *by definition*. Pinker sums up the situation when he writes that "we adults get to say what counts as 'correct,'" and if we regularize an irregular often enough [like 'clomb' and 'climbed'], we simply declare by fiat that it is not an error."<sup>29</sup>

## Conclusion

The four properties of language discussed in this article go far in showing that Junie B.'s English is much more complex and interesting than a simple label of "sloppy language" would suggest. But, as observant readers know, the examples shown are not the only oddities in Junie B.'s speech. Principles of linguistics can also explain Junie B.'s habit of referring to her friend as "that Grace" (a spectacular example of a phenomenon known as case-marking), her use of a rhyming device called reduplication ("yucky blucky," "stewie pewie"), her repetitive phrases ("whole entire," "plus also"), her odd application of past participles ("This is a freed country," as quoted at the beginning of this article), and numerous other aspects of her speech.<sup>30</sup> Even more strikingly, the fact that nonlinguist Barbara Park can create such a linguistically interesting character raises the provocative possibility that successful writers may possess an implicit understanding of linguistics.

Finally, children's literature is filled with other examples of the linguistic phenomena discussed here. Dr. Seuss and Lewis Carroll harness the power of English rules when they add familiar grammatical endings to invented words ("Sneetches," "galumphing," "chortled"); Peggy Parish's Amelia Bedelia comi-

cally misunderstands idioms like "dust the furniture;" Maurice Sendak uses an adjective to modify a verb when, in *Outside Over There*, baby goblins "quick churned into a dancing stream;" and Beverly Cleary's Ramona Quimby utters a famous mondegreen of *The Star-Spangled Banner* when she asks her sister to turn on the "dawnzer" ("It gives a lee light," she explains).<sup>31</sup>

If the Amazon.com reviews and book challenges are any indication, children's librarians should be prepared to defend the inclusion of the Junie B. Jones books in their collections. Explaining this series' unique features through the lens of linguistics provides one way of doing so. Independent of outside challenges, we librarians improve both our own and our patrons' appreciation of children's literature when we seek to understand it from a variety of perspectives. And those of us who also teach, or who work with classroom teachers, can easily imagine the extraordinary language lessons that these books can inspire. Perhaps thinking about language in this way will even inspire some readers to pursue linguistic inquiries of their own. As Junie B. would say, "Wowie wow wow!" ☺

## References and Notes

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2. Steven Pinker, *Words and Rules: The Ingredients of Language* (New York: Basic Books, 1999), 6-8.
3. Barbara Park, *Junie B. Jones and That Meanie Jim's Birthday* (New York: Random House, 1996), 19. A general argument defending the use of strong words in children's books can be found on pages 179-91 of *Language Matters: A Guide to Everyday Questions about Language* (New York: Oxford Univ. Pr., 2003), written by linguist and children's fiction author Donna Jo Napoli.
4. Park, *Junie B. Jones Is Captain Field Day* (New York: Random, 2001), 20; Park, *Junie B. Jones and Some Sneaky Peeky Spying* (New York: Random, 1994), 9; Park, *Junie B. Jones Has a Peep in Her Pocket* (New York: Random, 2000), 38.
5. Pinker, *Words and Rules*, 194.
6. Park, *Junie B. Jones Loves Handsome Warren* (New York: Random, 1996), 1; Park, *Junie B. Jones and Her Big Fat Mouth* (New York: Random, 1993), 61; Park, *Junie B. Jones Has a Monster under Her Bed* (New York: Random, 1997), 61.
7. Park, *Junie B. Jones and Some Sneaky Peeky Spying*, 26; Park, *Junie B. Jones Is (Almost) a Flower Girl* (New York: Random, 1999), 62.
8. Park, *Junie B. Jones and the Yucky Blucky Fruitcake* (New York: Random, 1995), 29; Park, *Junie B. Jones and Her Big Fat Mouth*, 13, 31.
9. Park, *Junie B. Jones Has a Peep in Her Pocket*, 1; Park, *Junie B. Jones and the Yucky Blucky Fruitcake*, 4; Park, *Junie B. Jones Is (Almost) a Flower Girl*, 7.
10. Park, *Junie B. Jones and a Little Monkey Business* (New York: Random, 1993), 21, 63.
11. Park, *Junie B. Jones and Her Big Fat Mouth*, 33; Park, *Junie B. Jones Is a Beauty Shop Guy* (New York: Random, 1998), 45; Park, *Junie B. Jones and Some Sneaky Peeky Spying*, 36.

12. Pinker, *The Language Instinct: How the Mind Creates Language* (New York: Morrow, 1994), 156, 271.
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18. Park, *Junie B. Jones Smells Something Fishy* (New York: Random, 1998), 15; Park, *Junie B. Jones Is a Graduation Girl* (New York: Random, 2001), 55.
19. Park, *Junie B. Jones Is a Beauty Shop Guy*, 40.
20. See Betsy Diamant-Cohen, Ellen Riordan, and Regina Wade, "Make Way for Dendrites," *Children and Libraries* 2, no. 1 (Spring 2004); Lynn Akin and Donna MacKinney, "Autism, Literacy, and Libraries," *Children and Libraries* 2, no. 2 (Summer/Fall 2004); and MaryKay Dahlgreen, "Ready to Read in Oregon," *Children and Libraries* 2, no. 3 (Winter 2004).
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23. Park, *Junie B. Jones Is Not a Crook* (New York: Random, 1997), 3, 25.
24. Pinker, *Words and Rules*, 199.
25. Park, *Junie B. Jones Is a Graduation Girl*, 17.
26. Median calculated based on reviews of *Junie B. Jones and the Stupid Smelly Bus* (Nov. 1992), *Junie B. Jones and Some Sneaky Peeky Spying* (Oct. 1994), *Junie B. Jones Has a Monster under Her Bed* (Nov. 1997), *Junie B. Jones Is Not a Crook* (Nov. 1997), *Junie B. Jones Is a Party Animal* (Jan. 1998), and *Junie B. Jones Is a Beauty Shop Guy* (Dec. 1998), all from *School Library Journal*, dates as shown.
27. Joel Lachter and Thomas G. Bever, "The Relation between Linguistic Structure and Associative Theories of Language Learning: A Constructive Critique of Some Connectionist Learning Models," *Cognition* 28, nos. 1–2 (March 1988): 195–247.
28. Park, *Junie B. Jones and the Mushy Gushy Valentine* (New York: Random, 1999), 29.
29. Pinker, *Words and Rules*, 200.
30. Park, *Junie B. Jones and Some Sneaky Peeky Spying*, 19, 36; Park, *Junie B. Jones Is a Party Animal* (New York: Random, 1997), 3, 57; Park, *Junie B. Jones and the Mushy Gushy Valentine*, 9.
31. Dr. Seuss, *The Sneetches and Other Stories* (New York: Random, 1961); Lewis Carroll, *Through the Looking Glass and What Alice Found There* (London: Macmillan, 1872), ch. 1; Peggy Parish, *Amelia Bedelia* (New York: Harper and Row, 1963); Maurice Sendak, *Outside Over There* (New York: HarperCollins, 1981); Beverly Cleary, *Ramona the Pest* (New York: Morrow, 1968), 173.

ARBUTHNOT HONOR LECTURE, continued from page 19

and can't have done it otherwise than I did. I hope some young people and old people like it." Signed: Fox.

Lest we forget, thinking takes work. Writing takes thinking over an arc of time to arrive at some meaning in the end, and, as I've found myself telling writers for years, "It's not easy saying what you mean; harder still is meaning something."

Hardest of all . . . meaning something without a *nap*. I've talked right through mine—and so much about the art and so little about the practicalities—the years of trying to get it right, of skipping stones from whatever address across the sea of chance in hope; in hope of seeing the stone hop-hop, hop, hop. I read recently that the longest recorded sequence is forty. Imagine that stone as a book, and know that even as it sinks finally it

doesn't disappear but washes up again in some new form on some new beach. So, yes, let's skip!

I've talked little about children and such a lot about just one child, who wasn't much read to and couldn't much read. I used to wonder how people could go to work and not have something to bring home with them at the end of the day. The making of things—books, in my case—seems to me to be everything. For the made thing needs naming, and naming is the beginning of writing, and writing is the beginning of books, which so surprisingly offered me a career, an audience, and a home. May others be so lucky. You'll see that editorial work and myself are finally one and the same. Mutuality indeed.

Paul Tillich said it: "The first duty of love is to listen."

Today, I feel loved especially.

Thank you, all.

You wanted the Antiques Show, right? The aisle of two-legged mouth-breathers?

Good. This is the place.

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