

Psychology

Geometry in Navigation: How children use the features of a space to guide them

Spring 2015

Sami Yousif

Mentored by: Dr. Stella Lourenco, Psychology

{ Abstract Unavailable }

Science in the Courtroom

Spring 2015

Julia Marshall

Mentored by: Dr. Scott Lilienfeld, Psychology

{ Abstract Unavailable }

Emergence and Development of Phonological Awareness in 2.5- and 3.5-Year-Old Children

Spring 2014

Arielle Friebling

Mentored by: Dr. Laura Namy, Psychology

Beginning readers decode words through individual pronunciation of the sounds represented by each letter in succession. This method requires not only the mapping of speech sounds onto their graphic representations, but also the more basic knowledge that words have the potential to be broken up into their component sounds, a skill called phonological awareness. Competency in phonological awareness is strongly associated with concurrent and later reading ability in young children, although the current literature posits that this knowledge only emerges at around 4 years of age. The accepted model of development postulates that phonological awareness is refined with increasing sensitivity to smaller intraword units. A different model theorizes that phonological awareness undergoes a process of explicitization, such that early implicit and receptive knowledge later becomes accessible to explicit verbal report. In this study, I aimed to determine whether 3.5- and 2.5-year-old children have receptive knowledge of phonological awareness that has been overlooked by the existing measures of this skill by implementing a novel measure with lower task demands. The results indicated that children at both 3.5 and 2.5 years old do possess receptive phonological awareness competency, and that variance in these abilities is predictive of improvement over a 6-month period. These findings challenge the accepted models of early phonological awareness development and urge further research into these abilities in very young children.

Popularity and Favoritism by 3-7 Year-Old Children

Spring 2014

Hazel Doctor

Mentored by: Dr. Philippe Rochat, Psychology

What does it mean to be popular? The purposes, dynamics, and effects of popularity have been explored since the 1930s through teachers' reports and sociometric models. More recently, studies on popularity have focused on differences between implicit and explicit views of higher status peers among older children (8 to 12 years old) and adolescents. The current study examined the implicit views of children from ages 3 to 7 ($N = 57$) through an Implicit Association Task (IAT) and the explicit tendencies of favoritism in moral decision-making tasks. In the IAT, participants matched popular or unpopular figures to positive or negative qualities. Results show differences among age groups in response times for selections made, but did not show differences in response times for choices that were either congruent or incongruent with popularity (i.e., having more or less friends). Furthermore, implicit and explicit views of popularity differed. In the moral decision-making tasks, three-year-olds displayed greater favoritism towards the popular figure, while five- to seven-year-olds did so for the unpopular figure. These findings suggest that beyond three years of age, children do not prioritize higher peer status in moral decision-making. Overall, the findings shed a novel light on the early perceptions of popularity and its development

Developmental and priming effects on allocation of attention during encoding of emotional stimuli

Spring 2013

Anne Hermes

Mentored by: Dr. Patricia Bauer, Psychology

{Abstract Unavailable}

The Color of Sound: Do Prosodic Cues Reflect Perceived Color and Brightness?

Spring 2013

Josephine Duan

Mentored by: Dr. Lynne Nygaard, Psychology

Traditionally, researchers have assumed that prosody (e.g., the rhythm, intonation, and rate of speech) conveys information either about the linguistic structure of language or about aspects of spoken communication such as speaker intentionality or emotion. Prosody has not been assumed to directly reflect or convey meaning. However, recent studies have shown that language users may be sensitive to prosodic cues to meaning in spoken language, suggesting that prosody may actually impact how we produce and perceive semantic or meaning-based information in speech. The current study examined one potential example of non-arbitrary sound to meaning mapping that may be reflected in prosody, the correspondence between sound and color. Two experiments examined whether speakers produce prosodic correlates to meaning when describing color and lightness. In Experiment 1, participants produced verbal labels for different colors and levels of lightness using actual color names. In Experiment 2, participants performed a similar task using novel words for color labels. Results showed that speakers' production of prosody differed across color descriptions, with significantly

higher pitch and amplitude for cool colors (purple, blue, and green) than for warm colors (yellow, orange, and red). Significant differences between prosodic correlates for dark and light shades were not found. Language users spontaneously produce prosodic cues to meaning, suggesting non-arbitrary sound to meaning correspondences between acoustic cues and referents. The use of prosody to convey meaning may be the result of a general sensitivity to cross-modal correspondences between auditory and visual domains

The Facilitative Effect of Sound Symbolism on Memory of Product Labels

Fall 2012

Michelle Linch

Mentored by: Dr. Lynne Nygaard, Psychology

{Abstract Unavailable}

Family Involvement and Well-being in an Assisted Living Population

Spring 2012

Evan Plys

Mentored by: Dr. Nancy Bliwise, Psychology

Family visitations provide residents of long term care facilities a link to the outside world, continuity of relationships, and social support (Tseng & Wang, 2001; Thomas, 2001). Previous research suggests that the quality of family relationships may have greater mental health impacts for older adults than the quantity of family interactions (Conner, Powers, & Bultena, 1979). This study investigated the relationship between the quantity of family interactions and the quality of family relationships, and their impact on long term care residents' life satisfaction and depression. Factors influencing the quality of relationships between residents and their primary family caregiver were also of interest. Forty-four assisted living residents were sampled. Participants completed four measures assessing emotional bondedness to family, perceived social support, life satisfaction and depression. In addition, open-ended interviews assessed residents' perceptions of family interactions. Regression analysis revealed that the quality of family relationships better predicted life satisfaction and depression than the quantity of family interactions. In addition, the amount of socio-emotional support activities families engaged in correlated to higher emotional bondedness. Families who reminisced also showed higher scores of emotional bondedness, suggesting reminiscing might be a tool for families to improve the quality of interactions with institutionalized elders. Predictors of life satisfaction and depression for assisted living residents included self-rated health, friendships within the facility, and family involvement. These results have implications for residents of long term care facilities and their family members, as well as, staff and social workers

Behavioral Analysis of the Effect of Septal Inactivation on Hypothalamic Stimulation Reward

Spring 2012

Nicholai Henry

Mentored by: Dr. Darryl Neill, Psychology/NBB

{Abstract Unavailable}

The Roles of Comparison and Function in the Categorization of Novel Objects

Spring 2012

Katherine Kimura

Mentored by: Dr. Laura Namy, Psychology

Young children interact with thousands of objects every day. To efficiently and effectively process this information, it becomes useful to organize the world into systematic categories. How do children learn to create categories, and, more specifically, how do they expand these categories once established? Children often use an object's shape as a basis for category membership (e.g., grouping an apple with other round objects). Overreliance on shape, however, can lead children to make mistakes, for example, by identifying a balloon as an apple. Research suggests that when children have the opportunity to compare objects within a category (e.g., an apple and a pear), they are more likely to group objects based on function even when the function match is perceptually dissimilar (e.g., a banana). Even in the absence of comparison, children are capable of extending category membership by function when functional information is provided. Although the role of comparison in familiar object categorization is well established, the present study explores the unique and combined roles of comparison and function in the assimilation of novel objects (e.g., kiwano) into familiar categories (e.g., fruit). Presented with either one or two objects, either with or without functional information, three-year-olds were asked to identify another category member between two unfamiliar objects: a perceptually similar, outside-of-category object and a perceptually dissimilar, within-category object. Contrary to previous research, the addition of function did not increase category responses. The opportunity to compare, however, elicited a marginal increase in within-category responses, suggesting that comparison may assist in integrating novel objects into familiar categories

Force and Causation in the Somatosensory System

Spring 2011

Samuel Ritter

Mentored by: Dr. Phillip Wolff, Psychology

The purpose of this study was to assess the role of the somatosensory system in the representation of causation. In the first experiment, participants viewed videos of launching events and similar non-causal videos. In the second experiment, participants viewed a causal video in which a marble cracked a cup and non-causal videos in which the cup did not crack. In the third experiment, participants viewed videos of social causation, or similar non-causal videos. In each experiment, participants viewed sets of these videos then performed a reaction time task to a somatosensory, auditory, or visual cue. It was found in each experiment that participants were faster to respond to the somatosensory cue after viewing causal videos than after viewing non-causal videos. This effect was not found for auditory or visual cues. This finding has implications for psychological and philosophical accounts of causation.

The role of social attitudes in auditory imagery for accented voices

Spring 2011

Megan Watters

Mentored by: Dr. Lynn Nygaard, Psychology

{ Abstract Unavailable }

Mindfulness and Test Performance

Spring 2011

Asher Siegelman

Mentored by: Dr. Nancy Bliwise, Psychology

{Abstract Unavailable}

The relationship between acute pain and empathy

Spring 2011

Allison Meyer

Mentored by: Dr. Ed Craighead, Psychology/Psychiatry

{Abstract Unavailable}

Children's Perception of Magnitudes of Emotion and Number

Spring 2011

Erin Denio

Mentored by: Dr. Stella Lourenco, Psychology

Numeric magnitudes often bias how adults and children organize information spatially. Specifically, studies have found consistent results that numerical information is mentally organized in left-to-right orientation like a “number line” and this orientation is applied to magnitudes of various types of stimuli: Arabic numbers, physical size, and duration of time. Most recently, studies have found that magnitudes of emotion in facial expressions are also organized in this left-to-right orientation in adults. In the current study, we investigated the existence of this left-to-right organization of degrees of emotional expression in children ages 3.5 - 6.5 years. Results suggest that children across this age range organize numerical magnitude from left-to-right, but only girls appeared to show some left-to-right organization of emotional expression. These findings suggest that spatial organization of numerical magnitude emerges early in development, but that there may be variation with respect to organization of emotional magnitude. The current study points to a previously unknown gender difference concerning the mental representation of emotion that deserves further investigation

Exploring Word Learning via Cross Situational Statistics

Summer 2010

Nassali Mugwanya

Mentored by: Dr. Laura Namy, Psychology

When children hear a new word there are an infinite number of possible interpretations. So how is it that children are able to figure out what object each word refers to? Past research has focused primarily on how word learning occurs within a single instance, many times with the aids of linguistic or social cues. However, word learning may also occur across

multiple instances. By hearing and observing words and objects together multiple times, learners can discover that there is likely only one potential referent that appears consistently across all these events. Thus, ambiguity can be resolved by tracking which word object pairings occur reliably across situations. Previous research showed that adult participants were capable of learning correct word-to object mappings across multiple ambiguous situations by noticing the statistical reliability with which words and their referent objects co-occurred. In the current study, we have extended this research to children ages four through six. Our preliminary findings suggest that children are able to learn words this way, however the extent of this learning is still under investigation.

Skin color versus gender preference in young children in the South Pacific

Summer 2010

Luisa Cuervo

Mentored by: Dr. Philippe Rochat, Psychology

According to social identity theory, categorical groups show a preference for their own group. However, minority groups in the United States display a lack of having an in-group preference. In 1949, Clark and Clark published a study in which they interviewed three- to five-year-old African-American children using their doll paradigm and reported that participants displayed a significant out-group racial preference. Bentley Gibson recently replicated Clark and Clark's work in the Atlanta area and found that three- to five-year old African-American children living in both predominantly African-American and predominantly Caucasian communities displayed an out-group preference; that female participants seemed to be more disposed to in-group favoritism than males; and that the participants' in-group and out-group preferences did not affect their tendency to share goods equally. The current study is an expansion and replication of Gibson's work in an effort to determine whether the preferences expressed by African-Americans in the United States would be comparative to the views of other minority groups. We used Gibson's protocol to interview fifty-four children of the indigenous populations in Samoa and Vanuatu, which are two island nations in the South Pacific Ocean. Living in such small and isolated countries, the people of the South Pacific are a part of a global minority in terms of culture and economic development. However, the participants in this experiment were not members of a racial minority like the participants in Gibson's study. Nonetheless, preliminary statistical analyses indicate that the participants in this study demonstrated a significant out-group racial preference.

Preschool in the South Pacific

Summer 2010

Jennifer Clegg

Mentored by: Dr. Philippe Rochat, Psychology

Preschool systems provide an opportunity to directly examine the process through which children become socialized to their culture within a relatively controlled environment. In the preschool setting, children are implicitly and explicitly instructed about cultural norms and practices, and because of this, preschools become microcosms of society. Cross-cultural psychologists have long sought a means of quantifying differences between cultures, but outside of qualitative interview analysis, little progress has been made in the examination of culture at the childhood level. Following the model of Tobin et al. (1989), a three-part method for the observation and evaluation of cultural models of preschool has been employed in the South Pacific. Through a preliminary analysis of the data, definitive differences have been found between cultural models that are indicative of broader cultural differences.

The Role of Nonverbal Skills in Adjustment of Children with Social Anxiety

Spring 2010

Jessica Sunshine

Mentored by: Dr. Stephen Nowicki Jr., Psychology

{Abstract Unavailable}

Attractiveness and Status: Communication Behaviors in Mixed Sex Dyads

Spring 2010

Rachel Fudman

Mentored by: Dr. Nancy Bliwise, Psychology

{Abstract Unavailable}

Comparison and Children's Categorization of Unfamiliar Objects

Spring 2010

Jane Fisher

Mentored by: Dr. Laura Namy, Psychology

{Abstract Unavailable}

Sound Symbolism and the Perception of Implied Motion

Spring 2010

Kaitlyn Bankieris

Mentored by: Dr. Lynne Nygaard, Psychology

{Abstract Unavailable}

Goizueta Business School Case Study Competition: Effects on Saliva Levels of Testosterone and Cortisol

Fall 2010

Molly Davis

Mentored by: Dr. David Edwards, Psychology

Team athletic competition in men and women is typically associated with increased levels of cortisol (the classic “stress” hormone) and testosterone, a hormone thought to be associated with dominance motivation. The purpose of this study was to determine how salivary levels of cortisol and testosterone are impacted by non-athletic team competition. Twenty-five (19 men and 6 women, a mix of graduate and undergraduate students in Emory’s Goizueta Business School) competed in one of three different “case study” competitions which required teams of three to six individuals to devise and present solutions to business-related problems in formally judged settings with cash prizes for winners. Each participant provided a saliva sample about one hour before, 5-10 minutes before, and then immediately after the end of the competition. For men, cortisol increased over the course of competition and levels at the end the competition were significantly ($P < .04$) higher than at the start while testosterone levels remained relatively stable. Four of the six women participants showed a substantial increase in cortisol and testosterone over the course of competition while two women showed a decrease in levels of both hormones. For women in a competitive setting, changes in testosterone and cortisol levels appear to be linked, with cortisol and testosterone levels either increasing or decreasing in concert with each other.

Generation Y in the Work Place

Spring 2009

Melissa Levine

Mentored by: Dr. Nancy Bliwise, Psychology

{Abstract Unavailable}

Deciphering Patterns in Children's Interpretation of Arbitrary Printed Symbols

Spring 2009

Anna Heilbrun

Mentored by: Dr. Laura Namy, Psychology

{Abstract Unavailable}

The Impact of Task Evaluation on Student' Self-Effacy and Performance

Spring 2009

Shannon Hollars

Mentored by: Dr. Nancy Bliwise, Psychology

{Abstract Unavailable}

The effects of an adeno-associated oxytocin receptor virus on prairie vole affiliative behavior

Fall 2008

Lauren Spiegel

Mentored by: Dr. Lawrence Barsalou, Psychology

{Abstract Unavailable}

Accent, Stereotypes, and Language Comprehension

Fall 2008

Hayley Heaton

Mentored by: Dr. Lynne Nygaard, Psychology

The main purpose of this project is to examine how context influences attitudes towards and comprehension of standard and non-standard accents. I am interested in the range of attitudes and judgments we form about how people speak and how these perceptions interact with what the person is saying. This project will examine factors that influence accent perception and will constitute my honors thesis in psychology. Participants will listen to passages with differing content spoken either in an American Southern English accent or in Standard American English. The passage topics are medicine, investment, hunting, and cooking and were designed to be more or less typical topics for each accent group. Participants will then engage in a comprehension task as well as complete questionnaires evaluating attitudes towards the speakers based on their accent. I predict that those passages, which are congruent with activities associated with certain accents, will be comprehended better than those that are not congruent. I also predict, based on previous research, that speakers of the southern accent will be judged as more friendly but less competent than speakers of the standard accent. However, the relationship between accent and linguistic attitudes are predicted to change as a function of passage content.

Effect of Deactivation of Nucleus Accumbens in FCN Performance in Rats

Spring 2008

Emily Watts

Mentored by: Dr. Darryl Neill, Psychology

{Abstract Unavailable}

The Basis for a Priority for Words over Gestures in Two-year-olds

Spring 2008

Laira Kolkin

Mentored by: Dr. Laura Namy, Psychology

{Abstract Unavailable}

Coercive Activity and Mother-Child Physiological Response

Spring 2008

Nicholas Brubaker

Mentored by: Dr. Patricia Brennan, Psychology

{ Abstract Unavailable }

Exploring the Potential Role of Sound Symbolism in Second Language Learning

Spring 2007

Allison Cook

Mentored by: Dr. Lynne Nygaard, Psychology

Recurring instances of phonetic sound symbolism challenge traditional assumptions of arbitrary relationships between words and their referents in linguistics, forcing the question of why these non-arbitrary relationships exist and are preserved in the human linguistic structure. To explore a potential function of sound symbolism in enabling language learning, adult native English speakers engaged in three different second-language vocabulary learning tasks. Despite varied performance in the most basic paradigm, participants ultimately learned to exploit sound symbolic mappings in order to store and reference information about novel words in conditions in which the working memory demands of the task were reduced. The discrepancy in results indicates that sound symbolism may function through a low-level, implicit process. Theoretical implications for the role of arbitrariness in language, the possible mechanisms of sound symbolism in the brain, and relevance to literary studies of sound symbolism are discussed

Effects of Attachment Style and Perceived Social Support on Job Satisfaction

Spring 2007

Natalie Koenig

Mentored by: Dr. Nancy Bliwise, Psychology

This study examined the relationship between attachment, perceived social support and job satisfaction. . Fifty employees at a family restaurant in San Antonio, TX and fifty employees of Emory University completed questionnaires that measured attachment dimensions of anxiety and avoidance as well the number and perceived quality of social supports and job satisfaction. Preliminary analyses revealed a significant negative correlation between avoidance and satisfaction with social support, suggesting that those who are not comfortable depending on others are unhappy with support provided. Further, results indicate that secure individuals perceive and are more satisfied with the level of social support. This indicates that securely attached individuals are willing to trust others and seek out help and support in times of need. Although fearful individuals do show some satisfaction with the number of people who support them this comfort is not received from coworkers. My research also indicates a positive correlation between preoccupied individuals, work challenges and resource adequacy. Preoccupied individuals are more anxious, thus may seek out challenges in order to gain the approval of others. In addition, this anxiety may also lead them to want to be perfect at everything they do, thus resources adequacy makes a big difference in their level of job satisfaction.

Investigating Developmental Trends in Gesture Learning

Spring 2007

Katherine Meyer

Mentored by: Dr. Laura Namy, Psychology

Young children interpret both words and symbolic gestures as object labels. However, children's willingness to interpret gestures symbolically declines with age. This study investigated whether this developmental decline was due to a failure to associate gestures with objects or an interpretative decision not to regard gestures as symbols. I employed an eye-tracking measure of associative processes and a forced choice measure of interpretive processes during a gesture-learning task with 27-month-olds. Children learned either a word or gesture as an object name and were subsequently tested on whether they implicitly associated the label and object during a looking phase. There were also tested on their interpretation of the label as an object name when asked to find the target object associated with the label during a choice phase. While children in the word condition chose the target object more reliably than children in the gesture condition, looking time measures failed to differentiate between conditions (word v. gesture) or trial types (target v. control trials). These preliminary findings begin to build a foundation for the use of this approach to studying word and gesture learning in young children and suggest that the decline in gesture is due to changing expectations about what constitutes a symbol.

The Effect of Nonverbal Accuracy and Locus of Control on Likeability in the Formation of Men's Friendships

Spring 2007

Lisette Wilcox

Mentored by: Dr. Stephen Nowicki, Psychology

The purpose of this study was to examine the impact of nonverbal decoding ability and locus of control on the formation of men's relationships. Prior research has found associations among nonverbal decoding ability, locus of control, and popularity, but few studies have examined the impact of these two factors on attraction in the early stages of relationships especially in men. To assess whether nonverbal receptive ability and locus of control predicted relationship outcomes, undergraduate men (n=40) were organized into small groups who met for three sessions. In each session, participants engaged in group activities and then rated each group member's degree of attraction using the Interpersonal Judgment Scale (IJS, Byrne, 1961). IJS ratings were found to be significantly correlated with nonverbal decoding ability as measured by the Diagnostic Assessment of Nonverbal Accuracy Scale (DANVA-2; Nowicki & Duke, 1994). Decoding ability, particularly facial decoding, was significantly related to likeability in sessions one and two. These results support the theory that nonverbal decoding ability is an important skill in beginning relationships. Contrary to predictions, likeability was not significantly correlated with locus of control as measured by the Adult Nowicki-Strickland Internal-External Scale (ANSIE; Nowicki & Duke, 1974). The results are discussed in terms of Nowicki and Duke's (2002) relationship model

The Effect of Stage Hypnosis: Changes in Beliefs About Hypnosis, Misconceptions of Hypnosis, and Dissociative Experiences in Audience Members and Participants

Fall 2006

Christine Murdock

Mentored by: Dr. Scott Lilienfeld, Psychology

{ Abstract Unavailable }

Comparative Analysis of Rodent Geniculo-Striate Visual System

Fall 2006

Toral Parikh

Mentored by: Dr. Hillary Rodman, Psychology

Within mammals, there are two main sets of visual pathways both of which involve the thalamus (Kaas and Huerta, 1988). One is the 'geniculostriate pathway' projecting from the retina to the dorsal lateral geniculate nucleus (dLGN) and to the primary visual cortex (V1). The other is the 'tectopulvinar pathway' which projects from retina to superior colliculus then largely extrastriate cortical regions. With recent research, K channel pathways, have been proposed as a third pathway, identified by the presence of calbindin D-28K (Cal) stained cells (Hendry and Reid, 2000). Prior studies of the rhesus monkey, cats, and squirrels show concentrations of K cell population which are coded by Cal in the interlaminar layers. Because little is known about the presence of these cells in rodents, the problem we will address is the existence of the 'K' cell population and geniculo-extrastriate projection organization in the hamster. Hamsters are largely nocturnal (night active) rodents and may differ in organization of their visual systems. We predict that there will be a set of extrastriate cortical areas, a region outside the V1, connecting to the dLGN and containing K cell populations, less extensive than we have seen in other mammals.

Psychopathy and the Frontal Lobe

Spring 2006

Martin Mayo

Mentored by: Dr. Scott Lilienfeld, Psychology

{Abstract Unavailable}

The Role of Comparison and Contrast in Category Formation

Spring 2006

Lauren Clepper

Mentored by: Dr. Laura Namy, Psychology

{Abstract Unavailable}

Vocabulary Size and Semantic Processing: An ERP study of Infants, Toddlers, and Adults

Spring 2005

Meryl Wagman

Mentored by: Dr. Debra Mills, Psychology

The debate between continuous vs. discontinuous development has been an important issue in the field of developmental psychology for many years. This study focuses on the vocabulary spurt and whether its emergence should be explained by a continuous developmental process, such as working memory, or by a qualitative shift in development. Event-related potentials (ERPs) will be recorded while participants undergo a cross-modal match/mismatch task. Thirteen month olds, 20 month olds, 3 year olds, and adults will be tested in order to highlight any ERP differences between pre- and post-vocabulary spurt children. If results show an ERP difference between children before after the vocabulary spurt, one may conclude that a qualitative shift is taking place in language development. However, these apparent qualitative shifts may also be due to continuous refinement in working memory

Apoptosis Factor Expression and Localization in Idiopathic Parkinson's Disease

Spring 2005

Tiffany Hodges

Mentored by: Allan Levey, Neurodegenerative Disease (SOM)

{Abstract Unavailable}

A Neural Basis of Color Knowledge Retrieval

Spring 2005

Vimal Ramjee

Mentored by: Dr. Lawrence Barsalou, Psychology

In this experiment, a neural basis for verifying the properties of concepts will be further explored. Twelve subjects will perform a property verification task while in a functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) scanner. An example of property verification would be to verify the property, red, of the concept, APPLE. Participants will be presented with dominant concepts of properties, non-dominant concepts, associated false concepts, and unassociated false concepts, with properties describing either motor or visual information about their corresponding concepts. During property verification, activation of modality-specific areas in the brain will be recorded using fMRI. Prior studies suggest that dominant concept-properties should exhibit the least amount of change in brain activation, indicating automaticity, and that false trials should show a large negative brain activation, indicating inhibition or suppression in the brain. If false trials are associated with inhibition, this may suggest that the brain has a modulatory mechanism for protection against representing false properties of concepts that we encounter in our everyday lives. In this sense, we can say that the brain may have a built-in filter that screens the false knowledge we encounter

The Role of Social Reference in Word Learning in 26-Month-Olds

Spring 2005

Anna Krueger

Mentored by: Dr. Laura Namy, Psychology

Word learning in children is a dynamic cognitive process that requires the child to gather cues to meaning from context and infer how they relate to the words they hear. Many cues, including syntactic, physical, and social cues, affect how children learn words. This paper focuses on those cues derived from social interactions between an adult speaker and the child such as joint attention, eye gaze, and pointing. In this experiment with 26-month-old children an experimenter drew

attention to objects while a talking teddy bear produced novel labels (e.g., "blicket") either in response to an experimenter's query (i.e., "What's this?") or contingently on the child's attention but without acknowledgement from the experimenter. Children's interpretation of the novel words was tested in a forced-choice task to assess whether cues to animacy and social interaction influenced children's mapping of the novel words to the target objects. Preliminary evidence suggests that at this age, children are more likely to interpret Teddy's words as object names with supplemental social cues from the experimenter, than in the condition without social interaction. This result differs from previous findings with 18-month-old children who readily mapped words to objects in both conditions. These results reveal that by 26 months, children have become more conservative about the range of contexts in which they will interpret a word as an object names reflecting their increasingly sophisticated insights into the intentions of others in social word-learning situations

The Role of Prosody in Novel Word Comprehension

Spring 2005

Kelly Chicos

Mentored by: Dr. Laura Namy, Psychology

Children have been shown to rely on several cues to infer the meanings of words. The present study investigates the role of prosody (i.e., tone of voice) as a cue to novel word learning. A previous study found that five-year-olds comprehended prosodic cues to meaning whereas four-year-olds did not. In this study, four-year-old children received practice using prosody as a cue to word meaning for happy and sad tone of voice. Following the successful completion of two consecutive practice trials, children saw picture pairs that varied along one of five dimensions (e.g., tall vs. short) and heard one of three pre-recorded speakers ask, "Can you get the (novel word) one?" spoken with prosody conveying one of the two meanings. Four-year-olds reliably choose the correct picture following training on the use of prosody as a cue, suggesting that this age group has the ability to use prosody to determine word meaning

New Approaches to Validity in Integrity Testing

Spring 2004

Brian Connelly

Mentored by: Dr. Scott Lilienfeld, Psychology

Integrity tests are commercial job applicant screening tools used by personnel departments to predict workplace occurrences of theft, drug/alcohol use, absenteeism, and other illicit workplace behaviors. Although these tests are widely used, research has been nebulous in validating the predictive ability of these tests, and it seems more likely that these tests actually measure conformity rather than integrity. To test this hypothesis, participants will complete a battery of psychological tests: three commercial integrity tests, a measure of ego development, a measure of moral reasoning, a measure of psychopathic personality, and a short test of verbal proficiency.