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Lexical Development – TENTATIVE syllabus
Fall 2020

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Children acquire new words with astonishing ease and speed. This course will explore theoretical and empirical research pertaining to the mechanisms by which children acquire the meaning of words. Questions to be examined include: Are there special word learning mechanisms? If so, what are some of them? If not, what are the sources of constraint on the acquisition of word meaning? Are the meanings of words from different syntactic categories learned in the same way? How do morpho-syntactic differences between languages influence the acquisition of word meanings? How do statistical properties of the input impact the course of lexical development? What is the role of parental input? Where do syntax-semantics correspondences in lexical development come from? What kinds of errors do children make in acquiring the meanings of novel words? How do they learn to correct these errors? What are the cognitive resources that the child must bring to the task of learning various different kinds of word meanings? We will cover research on the acquisition of the meanings of nouns, verbs, adjectives, spatial prepositions, and personal pronouns. Students will be introduced to the methods available for studying lexical development as well as their limitations.

Learning goals:
• Students will acquire knowledge of key theoretical debates and approaches to word learning
• Students will acquire knowledge of the strengths and limitations of the empirical methods used in word learning research
• Students will acquire in-depth knowledge in key areas of lexical development
• Students will learn how to critically evaluate and present research on lexical development

Evaluation:
2 presentations: 20% each
Participation: 10%
Paper: 50%

Presentations: Each student will do 2 presentations. Two students will present on each topic.

The presentations should: (1) cover the key background/ideas/data/conclusions of the assigned readings; (2) provide a critical assessment of the content of the assigned papers; (3) present additional key findings from papers not assigned; (4) Identify key questions for discussion/future research/implications.

All students should read the assigned papers and be prepared to discuss them. The presenters should draw from some additional papers when putting together their presentation and help lead the discussion of the assigned readings.

The two presenters for a session should figure out how they want to divide the presentations (e.g. by paper/by sections of papers/…)

Paper: The paper should be a critical review of a topic in lexical development. It could also be in the form of a proposal for experiments that will address an issue in lexical development.

Schedule:

Week 1 (): Lexical development—Is there such a thing? What may theory of lexical development look like? Key issues in lexical development. Theories of concepts.

Week 2 (): contd.

Week 3 (): Early competence ()

Bergelson, E., & Aslin, R. N. (2017). Nature and origins of the lexicon in 6-mo-olds. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, *114*(49), 12916-12921.

Bergelson, E., & Aslin, R. (2017). Semantic specificity in one-year-olds' word comprehension. *Language Learning and Development*, *13*(4), 481-501.

Ferguson, B., & Waxman, S. (2017). Linking language and categorization in infancy. *Journal of child language*, *44*(3), 527-552.

Havy, M., & Waxman, S. R. (2016). Naming influences 9-month-olds' identification of discrete categories along a perceptual continuum. *Cognition*, *156*, 41-51.

Week 4 (): Names for objects and substances ()

Li, P., Dunham, Y., & Carey, S. (2009). Of substance: The nature of language effects on entity construal. *Cognitive psychology*, *58*(4), 487-524.

Perry, L. K., & Samuelson, L. K. (2011). The shape of the vocabulary predicts the shape of the bias. *Frontiers in Psychology*, *2*, 345.

Week 5 (): Acquiring adjective meanings ()

Klibanoff, R. S., & Waxman, S. R. (2000). Basic level object categories support the acquisition of novel adjectives: Evidence from preschool-aged children. *Child development*, *71*(3), 649-659.

Waxman, S. R., & Klibanoff, R. S. (2000). The role of comparison in the extension of novel adjectives. *Developmental psychology*, *36*(5), 571.

Diesendruck, G., Hall, D. G., & Graham, S. A. (2006). Children's use of syntactic and pragmatic knowledge in the interpretation of novel adjectives. *Child Development*, *77*(1), 16-30.

Week 6 (): Acquisition of verb meanings   ()

Gleitman, L. R., Cassidy, K., Nappa, R., Papafragou, A., & Trueswell, J. C. (2005). Hard words. *Language Learning and Development*, *1*(1), 23-64.

Lidz, J., Gleitman, H., & Gleitman, L. (2003). Understanding how input matters: Verb learning and the footprint of universal grammar. *Cognition*, *87*(3), 151-178.

Lee, J. N., & Naigles, L. R. (2005). The input to verb learning in Mandarin Chinese: a role for syntactic bootstrapping. *Developmental Psychology*, *41*(3), 529.

Hartshorne, J. K., Pogue, A., & Snedeker, J. (2015). Love is hard to understand: The relationship between transitivity and caused events in the acquisition of emotion verbs. *Journal of child language*, *42*(3), 467-504.

Week 7(): Pragmatic knowledge in word learning   ()

Diesendruck, G. (2005). The principles of conventionality and contrast in word learning: an empirical examination. *Developmental Psychology*, *41*(3), 451.
de Marchena, A., Eigsti, I. M., Worek, A., Ono, K. E., & Snedeker, J. (2011). Mutual exclusivity in autism spectrum disorders: Testing the pragmatic hypothesis. *Cognition*, *119*(1), 96-113.

Hochstein, L., Bale, A., Fox, D., & Barner, D. (2014). Ignorance and inference: do problems with Gricean epistemic reasoning explain children's difficulty with scalar implicature?. *Journal of Semantics*, *33*(1), 107-135.

Week 8 (): Attention in word learning   ()

Trueswell, J. C., Lin, Y., Armstrong III, B., Cartmill, E. A., Goldin-Meadow, S., & Gleitman, L. R. (2016). Perceiving referential intent: Dynamics of reference in natural parent–child interactions. *Cognition*, *148*, 117-135.

Cartmill, E. A., Armstrong, B. F., Gleitman, L. R., Goldin-Meadow, S., Medina, T. N., & Trueswell, J. C. (2013). Quality of early parent input predicts child vocabulary 3 years later. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, *110*(28), 11278-11283.

Yu, C., Suanda, S. H., & Smith, L. B. Infant sustained attention but not joint attention to objects at 9 months predicts vocabulary at 12.

Clerkin, E. M., Hart, E., Rehg, J. M., Yu, C., & Smith, L. B. (2017). Real-world visual statistics and infants' first-learned object names. *Phil. Trans. R. Soc. B*, *372*(1711), 20160055.

Week 9 (): Acquiring spatial terms   ()

Landau, B. (2017). Update on "what" and "where" in spatial language: a new division of labor for spatial terms. *Cognitive science*, *41*, 321-350.

Shusterman, A., & Li, P. (2016). Frames of reference in spatial language acquisition. *Cognitive psychology*, *88*, 115-161.

Week 10 (): Temporal terms and metaphor　　　　　　()

Tillman, K. A., Marghetis, T., Barner, D., & Srinivasan, M. (2017). Today is tomorrow's yesterday: Children's acquisition of deictic time words. *Cognitive psychology*, *92*, 87-100.

Starr, A., & Srinivasan, M. (2018). Spatial Metaphor and the Development of Cross-Domain Mappings in Early Childhood. *Developmental psychology*.

Week 11 (): Number word acquisition　　　　　　()

Carey, S. (2010). Beyond fast mapping. *Language Learning and Development*, *6*(3), 184-205.

Wagner, K., Chu, J., and Barner, D. (in press). Do children's numbers words begin noisy? *Developmental Science.*

Davidson, K., Eng, K., & Barner, D. (2012). Does learning to count involve a semantic induction?. *Cognition*, *123*(1), 162-173.

Week 12 (): Polysemy　　　　　　　　　　()

Rabagliati, H., Marcus, G. F., & Pylkkänen, L. (2010). Shifting senses in lexical semantic development. *Cognition*, *117*(1), 17-37.

Rabagliati, H., Marcus, G. F., & Pylkkänen, L. (2011). Rules, radical pragmatics and restrictions on regular polysemy. *Journal of Semantics*, *28*(4), 485-512.

Srinivasan, M., & Snedeker, J. (2011). Judging a book by its cover and its contents: The representation of polysemous and homophonous meanings in four-year-old children. *Cognitive Psychology*, *62*(4), 245-272.

Srinivasan, M., & Snedeker, J. (2014). Polysemy and the Taxonomic Constraint: Children's Representation of Words that Label Multiple Kinds. *Language Learning and Development*, *10*(2), 97-128.

Srinivasan, M., Berner, C., & Rabagliati, H. (in press). Children's use of polysemy to structure new word meanings. JEP General.

Week 13 (): Cross-situational learning　　　　　　()

Yu, C., & Smith, L. B. (2007). Rapid word learning under uncertainty via cross-situational statistics. *Psychological science*, *18*(5), 414-420.

Woodard, K., Gleitman, L. R., & Trueswell, J. C. (2016). Two-and three-year-olds track a single meaning during word learning: Evidence for Propose-but-verify. *Language Learning and Development*, *12*(3), 252-261.

Aravind, A., de Villiers, J., Pace, A., Valentine, H., Golinkoff, R., Hirsch-Pasek, K., ... & Wilson, M. S. (2018). Fast mapping word meanings across trials: Young children forget all but their first guess. *Cognition*, *177*, 177-188.

Gleitman, L. R., & Trueswell, J. C. (2018). Easy Words: Reference Resolution in a Malevolent Referent World. *Topics in cognitive science.*

Week 14 (): Sortals & the formal dimension of common sense lexical concepts

Week 15 (): contd & wrap-up