The 29th Annual

Boston University
Conference on
Language Development

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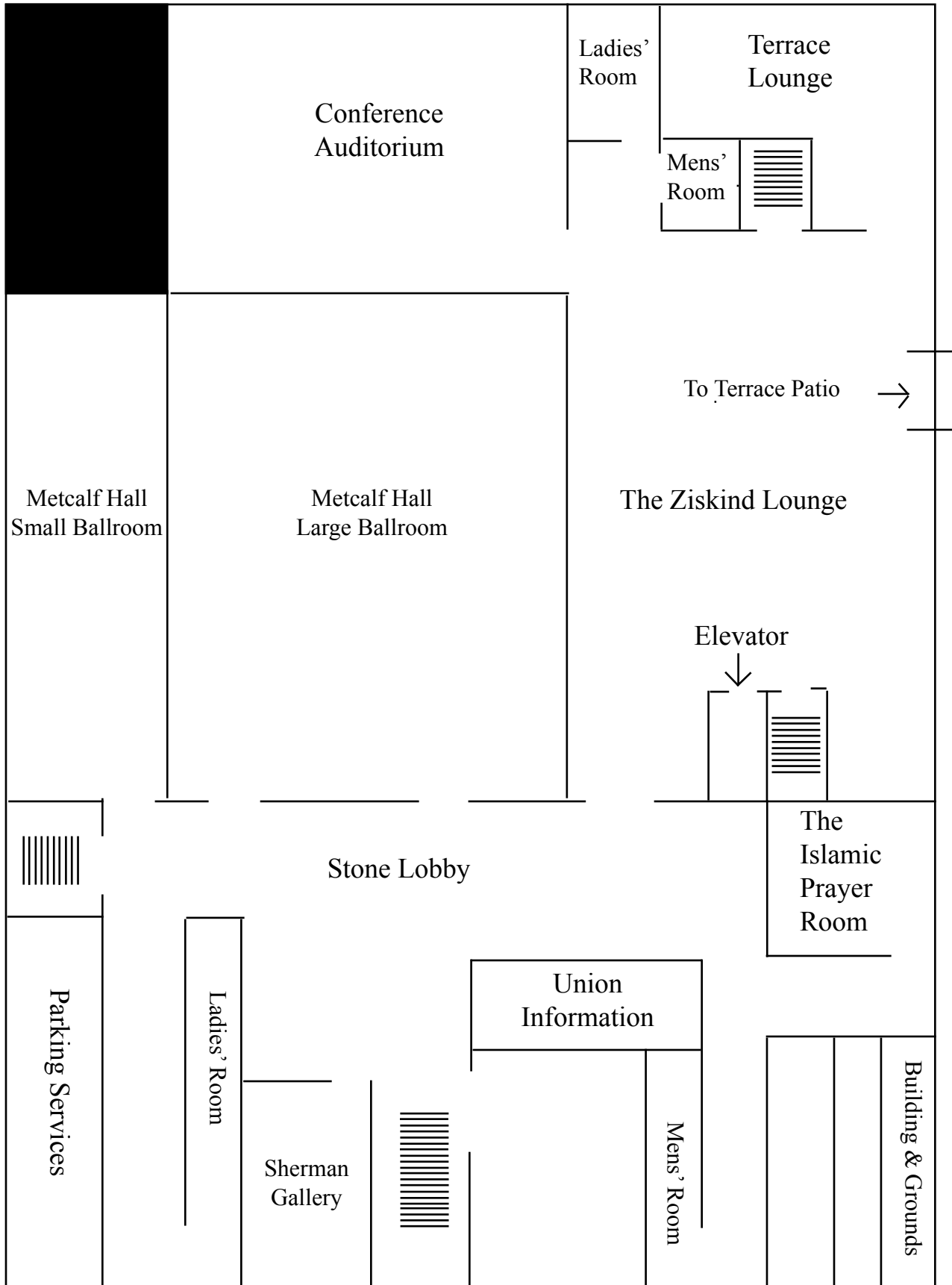Conference on
Language Development

Boston University
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Language Development

November 5-7, 2004

Map of George Sherman Union (Second Floor)

Commonwealth Avenue

Conference Auditorium

Ladies' Room

Terrace Lounge

Mens' Room

To Terrace Patio →

Metcalf Hall Small Ballroom

Metcalf Hall Large Ballroom

The Ziskind Lounge

Elevator

Stone Lobby

The Islamic Prayer Room

Parking Services

Ladies' Room

Union Information

Sherman Gallery

Mens' Room

Building & Grounds

↓ To First Floor and Main Entrance

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Welcome

Our 29th Year

We would like to welcome all of you to the Twenty-Ninth Annual Boston University Conference on Language Development. This conference was started in 1976 and has been organized by graduate students in Boston University's Program in Applied Linguistics ever since. Over the years, various faculty members have generously given their time and energy as advisors to the conference, and several generations of graduate students have achieved continuity from one year to the next. The organizers have been honored to host participants from around the world, including linguists, psychologists, and other researchers of language acquisition and development. We thank them all for the research accomplishments they have shared with us here over the past quarter century.

Invited Speakers

At this year's conference, we are honored to have Elizabeth Spelke and Ken Wexler as our featured speakers. Professor Spelke will present Friday's keynote address, "Language and core knowledge." Saturday's program will close with Professor Wexler's plenary address, which is entitled "Beauty and awe: Language acquisition as high science." We are pleased to once again host a symposium during the lunch period on Saturday. This year's symposium will be in the form of a debate, with participants Stephen Crain and Michael Tomasello. The title of the symposium is "Where does grammar come from? A debate on the nature of child language acquisition."

Paper and Poster Presentations

The rest of the program is devoted to a wide range of papers chosen from submitted abstracts. This year we received 386 submissions, each of which was sent out to five reviewers for anonymous review. Of these, 87 papers and 46 posters were selected for presentation, for an acceptance rate of 34%. We are sorry not to have had space to include more of the many excellent submissions we received. We have also included abstracts for those individuals who generously agreed to serve as alternates in case of cancellations.

Proceedings

Once again this year we will be publishing the Proceedings of the Conference, including both papers presented and those selected for alternate status. Information about ordering copies is available in your registration folders and at the Cascadilla Press table during the book exhibit. We will also have an online supplement to the proceedings for papers accepted for poster presentation, which will be published on the web by BUCLD. In addition, we hope to make available a DVD of the lunch symposium with pricing and ordering information. An email will be sent to all BUCLD registrants in late November.

Enjoy

We are committed to providing an on-going forum for work in the diverse field of language development, here at Boston University. We hope you will enjoy the conference!

The 2004 Conference Committee
Alejna Brugos
Rossie Clark-Cotton
Seungwan Ha

Coordinators
David Bamman
Jean Crawford
Erin Gabrielson
Marj Hogan
Colleen Lefler
Sharla Mylar
Rebecca Shepardson

Acknowledgements

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Yasuhiro Shirai
Leher Singh
William Snyder
Rex Sprouse
Daniel Swingley
Margaret Thomas
Michael Tomasello
Ianthi Tsimpli
Virginia Valian
Marilyn Vihman
Laura Wagner
Jürgen Weissenborn
Lydia White
Fei Xu
Andrea Zukowski

General Information

• Registration and Session Locations

All sessions will be held in the George Sherman Union, 775 Commonwealth Avenue. Registration will take place in the 2nd floor lobby (see diagram on the back of the front cover). You may register on Thursday starting at 12:00 PM, on Friday starting at 8:00 AM, or Saturday and Sunday, starting at 8:30 AM.

Please register before attending the sessions. We rely greatly upon registration fees to cover the costs of the Conference. We appreciate your willingness to wear your name badge; you may be asked to present it before entering sessions.

• Plenary events

The **Keynote Address** will be delivered by Elizabeth Spelke on Friday at 8:00 PM in Metcalf Large. Poster Session I (attended) with desserts will immediately follow in Metcalf Small.

The **Plenary Address** will be given by Kenneth Wexler on Saturday at 5:45 PM in Metcalf Large. Poster Session II (attended) with hors d'oeuvres will immediately follow the address in Metcalf Small.

• Poster Sessions

Poster Session I: 23 posters will be on display in Metcalf Small. There will be two attended Poster Sessions on Friday: one at 3:15 PM and one at 9:15 PM, in Metcalf Small. Refreshments will be available at both sessions.

Poster Session II: 21 posters will be on display in Metcalf Small. There will be two attended Poster Sessions on Saturday: one at 3:30 PM and one at 7:00 PM, in Metcalf Small. Refreshments will be available at both sessions.

• Special sessions

A **BUCLD Business Meeting** will be held on Friday at 12:15 PM in the Conference Auditorium. Bagged lunches are available on a first-come first-served basis. They must be purchased before 11:00 AM at the registration desk, and will be available for pick-up in the 2nd floor lobby at 11:45 AM.

A **Lunchtime Symposium** on "Where does language come from? A debate on the nature of child language acquisition" with presentations from Stephen Crain and Michael Tomasello, moderated by Ray Jackendoff, will be held on Saturday at 12:00 PM in Metcalf Large. Bagged lunches are available on a first-come first-served basis. They must be purchased before 11:00 AM at the registration desk, and will be available for pick-up in the 2nd floor lobby at 11:45 AM.

A special session entitled **"Federal funding: What's hot and how to apply"** will be facilitated by Peggy McCardle (NIH) and Joan Maling (NSF) on Saturday at 8:00 AM in the Conference Auditorium. Coffee and bagels/muffins will be provided.

• Additional Information

Parking is available in: the lot at Granby St. (near Burger King) for $12 on Friday and $6 on Saturday; the lot at 808 Commonwealth Avenue for $6, Friday only; the lot at BU Bridge, 1 University Road for $6, Saturday only. No parking lot is available on Sunday but there is free on-street parking.

Temporary luggage storage space will be made available next to the registration desk. The area will be staffed during conference sessions only. Although a student volunteer will be present in the registration area, participants leave their luggage at their own risk.

A **nursing room** will be available for nursing mothers (GSU 310-311).

Publishers' exhibits will be held in the Ziskind Lounge on Friday and Saturday from 8:30 AM to 5:00 PM, and Sunday from 8:30 AM to 1:00 PM. For a list of exhibitors, see page 63.

NSF and NIH consultation hours will be held in the Ziskind lounge on Saturday 9-11:30 AM, 2-5 PM; Sunday 9-1 by appointment.

Refreshments will be served in Ziskind Lounge before the morning sessions and during breaks, and in both Ziskind Lounge and Metcalf Small during attended poster sessions. A list of local restaurants is provided in your registration packet, and the Food Court on the ground floor of the George Sherman Union offers a wide selection.

The Registration desk provides the following services:

ASL Interpreters (Please inquire when you arrive.) ~ Message Board ~ Lost and Found ~ Campus Maps ~ MBTA Maps

The 30th Annual Boston University Conference on Language Development is tentatively scheduled to be held on November 4, 5, and 6, 2005, at Boston University.

Schedule at-a-glance

Friday, November 5

8:00 am	Registration Begins
9:00 am - 10:30 am	Talks
10:30 am - 10:45 am	Morning Break with refreshments
10:45 am - 12:15 pm	Talks
12:15 pm - 1:00 pm	BUCLD Business Meeting
1:45 pm - 3:15 pm	Talks
3:15 pm - 4:15 pm	Poster Session I Attended with refreshments and Afternoon Break with refreshments
4:15pm - 5:45 pm	Talks
5:45 pm - 8:00 pm	Dinner Break
8:00 - 9:15 pm	Keynote Address
9:15- 10:30 pm	Poster Session I Attended with refreshments

Saturday, November 6

8:00 - 9:00 am	Funding Symposium
8:30 am	Registration Begins
9:00 am - 10:30 am	Talks
10:30 am - 10:45 am	Morning Break with refreshments
10:45 am - 11:45 pm	Talks
12:00 pm -2:00 pm	Lunch Symposium
2:00 pm -3:30 pm	Talks
3:30 pm - 4:30 pm	Poster Session II Attended with refreshments and Afternoon Break with refreshments
4:30 pm -5:30 pm	Talks
5:45 - 7:00 pm	Plenary Address
7:00 - 8:15 pm	Poster Session II Attended with refreshments

Sunday, November 7

8:30 am	Registration Begins
9:00 am - 10:30 am	Talks
10:30 am - 11:00 am	Morning Break with refreshments
11:00 am - 1:00 pm	Talks

Time	Session A Metcalf Large	Session B Conference Auditorium	Session C Terrace Lounge
9:00	C. Dietrich, D. Swingley, J. Werker: One-year-olds' language-specific phonological categorization in word learning: A cross-linguistic study	C. Havasi, M. Malik: The acquisition of verb lexicalization biases	I. Arnon: Relative clause acquisition in Hebrew: Movement is not all it's about
9:30	A. Seidl, E. Johnson, A. Redman, D. Brentari: Segmentation of clauses in English, Dutch, and American Sign Language	A. Papafragou, K. Cassidy, L. Gleitman, J. Hulbert: How children acquire mental verbs	M. Isobe: Pied-piping in child French: An experimental study
10:00	D. Swingley, R. Aslin: Competition from familiar words inhibits learning of phonologically similar words by 18-month-olds	R. Pulverman, A. Brandone, S. Salkind: One-year-old English speakers increase their attention to manner of motion in a potential verb learning situation	H. Ozeki, Y. Shirai: Semantic bias in the acquisition of relative clauses in Japanese
10:30	BREAK (Ziskind Lounge)		
10:45	A. Vouloumanos: A role for probabilistic information in word learning?	D. Rus, P. Chandra: Bare participles are not root infinitives: Evidence from early child Slovenian	E. Kidd, T. Cameron-Faulkner: Overcoming polysemy in first language acquisition: The case of 'with'
11:15	A. Fernald, R. Zangl, T. Early, A. Portillo, C. Quam: Two-year-olds use verb information in rapid inferential learning of novel nouns	C. Dye: The status of ostensibly nonfinite matrix verbs in child French: Results from a new corpus	N. Sethuraman: Learning argument structure in an argument-dropping language
11:45	L. Singh: Integration of content and form in normal and pragmatically impaired populations	S. Sigurjonsdottir: The different properties of root infinitives and finite verbs in the acquisition of Icelandic	Y. Gertner, C. Fisher: How early does word order guide sentence comprehension?
12:15	LUNCH MEETING: BUCLD Business Meeting (Conference Auditorium)		
1:45	D. Papadopoulou, I.M. Tsimpli: Morphological cues in children's processing of ambiguous sentences: A study of subject / object ambiguities in Greek	A. Shusterman, L. Abarbanell: Fast mapping and generalization of spatial reference terms by 4-year-olds	E. Dabrowska: Low-level schemas or general rules? The role of diminutives in the acquisition of Polish case inflections
2:15	T. Marinis, H. van der Lely: The underlying representation of wh-questions in subgroups of children with SLI: Evidence from on-line sentence processing	L. Lakusta, L. Wagner, K. O'Hearn Donny, B. Landau: Conceptual foundations of spatial language: Goals and sources in manner of motion events	A. Tremblay: On the status of determiner fillers in L1 French: What the child knows
2:45	J. Trueswell, L. Gleitman, J. Novick, Y. Choi, D. January: Referential scene contributions to structure, revisited	M. Casasola, M. Wilbourn, S. Yang: English-learning toddlers can acquire and generalize a novel spatial word	A. Bolonyai: Vulnerable morphemes in imperfect bilingual L1 acquisition
3:15	POSTER SESSION I Attended (Metcalf Small)	BREAK (Ziskind Lounge)	
4:15	L. Roberts, T. Marinis, C. Felser, H. Clahsen: Gaps in children's sentence processing: Evidence from cross-modal picture priming	Y. Kedar, M. Casasola, B. Lust: 18- and 24-month-olds rely on syntactic knowledge of functional categories for determining meaning and reference	M. Buckley: Prosodic constraints and the syntax-phonology interface: The phonology of object clitics in L2 French
4:45	H. Branigan, J. McLean, M. Jones: The *blue cat* or *the cat that is blue*? Evidence for abstract syntax in young children's noun phrases	B. Ambridge, C. Rowland: Comparing different accounts of uninversion errors in children's wh-questions: What experimental data can tell us	H. Goad, L. White: Representational 'deficits' in L2: Syntactic or phonological?
5:15	H.-J. Song, C. Fisher: Syntactic priming in 3-year-old children	K. Deen: Productive agreement: Against a piecemeal approach in Swahili	A. Carpenter: Acquisition of a natural vs. an unnatural stress system
5:45	DINNER BREAK		
8:00	KEYNOTE ADDRESS: Language and core knowledge" Elizabeth Spelke, Harvard University (Metcalf Large)		
9:15	POSTER SESSION I Attended (Metcalf Small) Food and beverages will be served.		

Time	Session A Metcalf Large	Session B Conference Auditorium	Session C Terrace Lounge
8:00	NSF/NIH FUNDING SYMPOSIUM: What's hot and how to apply (Conference Auditorium)		
9:00	G. Marcus, S. Johnson, K. Fernandes, J. Slemmer: Rules, statistics and domain-specificity: Evidence from prelinguistic infants	J. Paradis, M. Rice, M. Crago, W. A. Richman: Missing inflection or (extended) optional infinitives? Comparing child L2 English with English SLI	L. Davidson, J. Brunette: Epenthesis in L2 acquisition: Phoneme insertion or consonant coordination failure?
9:30	K. Chambers, K. Onishi: Generalizing phonotactic regularities across vowel contexts in infancy	H. van der Lely, C. Marshall: The impact of phonological and morphological complexity on past tense inflection	E. Zsiga, H.-K. Kim: What transfers? Word-integrity and assimilation in Korean/English interlanguage
10:00	E. Newport, D. Weiss, E. Wonnacott, R. Aslin: Statistical learning in speech: Syllables or segments?	A. Perovic: A syntactic deficit in Down syndrome: Evidence from Serbo-Croatian	M. Akita: The effectiveness of a prosody-oriented approach in L2 perception and production
10:30	BREAK (Ziskind Lounge)		
10:45	S. Özçaliskan, S. Goldin-Meadow: Gesture is at the cutting edge of early language development	S. Unsworth: Overcoming the poverty-of-the-stimulus: Scrambled indefinites in English-Dutch interlanguage	L. Green, R. Quigley, N. Seifert: Distinctions in past marking in child African American English
11:15	L. Wagner, E. Kako, E. Amick, E. Carrigan, K. Liu: Children's use of pointing to anchor reference during story-telling	C. Borgonovo, J. Bruhn de Garavito, P. Prévost: Knowledge of mood distinctions in L2 Spanish	K. Shin: The development of tense and aspect in child Korean
12:00	LUNCH SYMPOSIUM: (Metcalf Large) "Where does language come from? A debate on the nature of child language acquisition" Stephen Crain, University of Maryland at College Park Michael Tomasello, Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology		
2:00	E. Wonnacott, E. Newport: Novelty and regularization: The effect of novel instances on rule formation	U. Bohnacker: From V2 to V2: Swedish learners of German	P. Fikkert, M. van Heugten, P. Offermans, T. Zamuner: Rhymes as a window into grammar
2:30	H. Behrens: How informative is input frequency?	M. Umeda: Scope and reconstruction of wh-movement in Japanese-English interlanguage	D. Chambless: Sonority and head faithfulness in medial consonant cluster reduction
3:00	F. Smolik: Lexical growth and acquisition of morphological forms	J. Tran: Verb position and verb form in English-speaking children's L2 acquisition of German	M. Ota: Swedish tone accents in early production (revisited)
3:30	POSTER SESSION II Attended (Metcalf Small)	BREAK (Ziskind Lounge)	
4:30	N. Bernstein Ratner, R. Newman, K. Dow, A. M. Jusczyk, P. Jusczyk: Infant speech segmentation ability predicts later language development	R. Okabe: Children's acquisition of benefactives and passives in Japanese	P. Li, A. Papafragou, C.-H. Han, Y. Choi: Learning evidential morphology
5:00	J. Geren, J. Snedeker: Language development in internationally-adopted preschoolers: Does cognitive development set the pace for early language production?	M. Babyonyshev, S. Marin: Object clitics in child Romanian	T. Matsui, T. Yamamoto, P. McCagg: Who can you trust? A closer look at preschoolers' developing sensitivity to epistemic expressions
5:45	PLENARY ADDRESS: (Metcalf Large) "Beauty and awe: Language acquisition as high science" Ken Wexler, Massachusetts Institute of Technology		
7:00	POSTER SESSION II Attended (Metcalf Small) Food and beverages will be served.		

Time	Session A Metcalf Large	Session B Conference Auditorium	Session C Terrace Lounge
9:00	E. Haryu, M. Imai, H. Okada, L. Li, M. Meyer, K. Hirsh-Pasek, R. Michnick Golinkoff: Noun bias in Chinese children: Novel noun and verb learning in Chinese, Japanese and English preschoolers	K. Sugisaki: Early acquisition of basic word order: New evidence from Japanese	S. Edelman, Z. Solan, D. Horn, E. Ruppin: Learning syntactic constructions from raw corpora
9:30	L. Steenberge, T. Mintz: A toy can't be 'stoof' if it's not really a toy: Object knowledge and adjective acquisition	B. Kang: A learnability puzzle in scrambling	F. Chang: The development of the transitive construction: A connectionist account
10:00	D. Barner, R. McKeown: The syntactic encoding of individuation in language and language acquisition	D. Lillo-Martin, R. Mueller de Quadros: Focus constructions in ASL and LSB	K. Fernandes, G. Marcus, J. DiNubila: Generalizing argument structure in the third year of life
10:30			
11:00	A. Casile, L. Singh: Selective effects of allophonic variation in early word learning	N. Niederberger, U. Frauenfelder: Linguistic proficiency of the deaf bilingual child in French Sign Language and written French: What is the relation between the two?	I. Krämer: When does 'many' mean 'a lot'? Discourse pragmatics of the strong-weak distinction
11:30	M. Sundara, L. Polka, M. Molnar: Detail in phonetic representation in infancy: Effects of monolingual and dual language exposure	D. Adone: Acquisition without a language-model: The case of Mauritian Sign Language	T. Goro, U. Minai, S. Crain: Two disjunctions for the price of only one
12:00	G. Jia, W. Strange, Y. Wu, J. Collado, Q. Guan: Age differences in perceptual sensitivity to new speech sounds: The younger the better?	S. Katseff, A. Senghas: Effects of acquisition on the Nicaraguan Sign Language number lexicon	K. Miller, H.-H. Chang, A. Munn: Young children understand some implicatures
12:30	M. Molnar, L. Polka: Vowel perception biases in infancy: The role of early language experience	M. Coppola, W. C. So: Abstract vs. object-anchored deixis: Competing pressures in adult homesign systems	L. Meroni, G. Russo-Lassner, S. Crain: When children are more 'pragmatic' than adults

ALTERNATES

L. Serratrice	Anaphora resolution in monolingual and bilingual Italian acquisition
C. Rowland	Why do his head spins round? Errors, do and modals in English question acquisition
A. Gouvea, G. Aldana, T. Bell, K. Cody, C. De Groat, C. Johnson, D. McCabe, L. Zimmerman, J. Kim	18-month-old infants' sensitivity to number agreement inside the noun phrase
M. Hara	How a poverty-of-the-stimulus problem can be overcome in SLA: Identifying L2 trigger input
K. White, L. Wier, J. Morgan	When is a *dar* a car? Effects of mispronunciation and context on sound-meaning mappings
J. Pater	Learning a stratified grammar
D. Ogiela, M. Casby, C. Schmitt	Default aspect: Evidence from SLI children
L. Onnis, M. Christiansen, P. Monaghan, N. Chater	The importance of variety in language acquisition: Segmentation and generalization in artificial language learning
C. Hudson Kam	Understanding the link between complexity and regularization: What counts as complex?
E. Johnson	Grammatical gender and early word recognition in Dutch
R. Newman	The development of infants' ability to recognize speech in noise

Friday, November 5 Posters will be on display from 9:00 AM to 10:00 PM	

Authors	Title
J. CRAWFORD	An adversity passive analysis of early-acquired Sesotho passives: Reanalyzing a counterexample to maturation
J. GANGER, S. DUNN, P. GORDON	Genes take over when input fails: Findings from a twin study of the passive
V. HACQUARD, S. HULSEY, D. FOX, A. GUALMINI	Beyond surface scope in child language
Y. KAYAMA	Acquisition of no-movement: The case of Japanese wh
J.-H. KIM, S. MONTRUL, J. YOON	Binding interpretations by Korean heritage speakers and adult L2 learners of Korean
H. KO, T. IONIN, K. WEXLER	Parallels between L1- and L2-acquisition of determiners: The role of partitivity
H. LITTLEFIELD	Lexical and functional prepositions in acquisition: Evidence for a hybrid category
C. MCCARTHY	Default morphology in a second language: The Morphological Underspecification Hypothesis
R. NEWMAN	The development of infants' ability to recognize speech in noise
L. ONNIS, M. CHRISTIANSEN, P. MONAGHAN, N. CHATER	The importance of variety in language acquisition: Segmentation and generalization in artificial language learning
Y. OSHIMA-TAKANE, F. GENESEE, A.M. S. GUERRIERO, M. HIRAKAWA	Argument realization and omission in English-Japanese bilingual acquisition
J. PATER	Learning a stratified grammar
T. PICCIN, P. BLEWITT	A resource conservation view of the Mutual Exclusivity Effect in children's word learning
D. PLESA SKWERER, H. TAGER-FLUSBERG, C. SCHOFIELD, A. VERBALIS, S. FAJA	Differential sensitivity to lexical and affective prosody in Williams syndrome
S. POWERS	Early unaccusatives in child English
M. RODRIGUEZ-MONDONEDO, W. SNYDER, K. SUGISAKI	Clitic-climbing in child Spanish and the theory of parameters
K. SYRETT, J. LIDZ	Children want to access every interpretation adults do
G. TESAN	The emergence of INFL: Nature vs. nurture
E. VALENZUELA	Examining the representational deficit hypothesis at the end state level: Evidence from L2 Spanish CLLD and English CLD constructions
K. WHITE, L. WIER, J. MORGAN	When is a *dar* a car? Effects of mispronunciation and context on sound-meaning mappings
S. YANG, B. LUST	Effects of bilingualism on the Attention Networks Test: Its significance and implications
A. ZUKOWSKI, J. LARSEN	Tags are learnable, aren't they?: The status of polarity in children's tag question rules

Saturday, November 6 Posters will be on display from 9:00 AM to 7:30 PM	

Authors	Title
A. Brown, A. Ozyurek, S. Allen, S. Kita, T. Ishizuka, R. Furman	Does event cognition influence children's motion event expressions?
C. Caprin, P. Lorusso	Overt subject distribution in early Italian children
J. Chen	When transparency doesn't mean ease: Learning the meaning of verbs and verb compounds by Mandarin-speaking children
B. Conboy, M. Rivera-Gaxiola, L. Klarman, E. Askylou, P. Kuhl	Associations between native and nonnative speech sound discrimination and language development at the end of the first year
J. Gilkerson	The acquisition of English particle verbs by native Spanish speakers
A. Gouvea, G. Aldana, T. Bell, K. Cody, C. de Groat, C. Johnson, D. McCabe, L. Zimmerman, J. Kim	18-month-old infants' sensitivity to number agreement inside the noun phrase
A. Hacohen, J. Schaeffer	Crosslinguistic influence and subject realization in early Hebrew/English bilingual acquisition
M. Hara	How a poverty-of-the-stimulus problem can be overcome in SLA: Identifying L2 trigger input
C. Hudson Kam	Understanding the link between complexity and regularization: What counts as complex?
E. Johnson	Grammatical gender and early word recognition in Dutch
K. McClure, J. Pine	Investigating the abstractness of children's early knowledge of argument structure
A. Nadig, J. Sedivy	The development of discourse bridging: Examining definiteness and time-course
N. Novakovic	The role of L1 in the acquisition of Serbo-Croatian second-position clitic placement
D. Ogiela, M. Casby, C. Schmitt	Default aspect: Evidence from SLI children
E. Ruigendujk, N. Vasic, S. Zuckerman, M. Fontein	Pronoun interpretation and the accessibility of the number feature in Dutch child language
T. Sano	The acquisition of Japanese topicalization and the role of discourse context
L. Serratrice	Anaphora resolution in monolingual and bilingual Italian acquisition
E. Sneed	The role of input in the acquisition of generic NPs
M. Takahashi	Frequency effect on the development of syllable structure in Japanese children
A. van Hout, A. Bos	Interpreting derived -er nominals
W. Weikum, J. Werker, A. Vouloumanos, J. Navarra Ordono, S. Soto Faraco, N. Sebastian Galles	When can infants start discriminating languages using only visual speech information?

Session A--Metcalf Large

One-year-olds' language-specific phonological categorization in word learning: A crosslinguistic study

Christiane Dietrich, University of British Columbia
Daniel Swingley, University of Pennsylvania
Janet Werker, University of British Columbia

Demonstrations of language-specific phonological tuning in infancy typically reveal infants' developing inability to discriminate subtle phonetic variations absent from their linguistic environment. Here we show that young children also interpret salient phonetic variation in language-specific ways when learning new words. A series of audiovisual habituation experiments examined 18-month-olds' learning of novel word-object pairings. In some cases, two words varying only in their vowel duration were used to label two objects. Subjects were Dutch-learning children (whose native language has vowels distinguished primarily by duration) or English-learning children (whose native language doesn't). Though both groups dishabituated to "mislabeling" of novel objects using words with altered vowel quality, only the Dutch dishabituated to changes in vowel duration. A follow-up study tested whether children have learned a feature, or specific contrasting vowels. The results show that early phonological learning requires interpretation, not just tuning attention away from subtle phonetic cues.

Session B--Conference Auditorium

The acquisition of verb lexicalization biases

Catherine Havasi, Massachusetts Institute of Technology
Mahvash Malik, Harvard University

Adults and school-age children use the lexicalization pattern of their language as a probabilistic constraint in word learning tasks; preschoolers do not (Naigles & Terraza 1998; Hohenstein & Naigles 2000). Using the manner-path bias (Talmy 1975), this research explores how verb lexicalization biases may be acquired. We hypothesize that language-specific lexicalization patterns are generalizations learned from the previously acquired words (Smith et al. 2002).

Adult English speakers were taught novel verbs to determine whether word-learning experience could change their lexicalization biases. Participants adjusted their initial manner biases to reflect the words they learned. Five-year-olds were initially unbiased but quickly picked up the lexicalization bias in the input. Children who learned manner verbs were more likely to extend novel verbs by manner, while those who learned path verbs extended by path. We conclude that abstract verb lexicalization biases remain plastic, and can be learned by young children.

Notes

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Session C--Terrace Lounge

Relative clause acquisition in Hebrew:
Movement is not all it's about

Inbal Arnon
University of Edinburgh

Many studies report that children have difficulty with object relative clauses, (*Show me the granny that the girl is kissing*). One prominent explanation attributes the difficulty to syntactic movement. This paper presents findings from two experiments on the acquisition of object relative clauses in Hebrew that go contrary to a movement-based explanation. The first experiment detected a novel error in comprehension. The full error range suggests that children have difficulty both with the thematic assignment (reversal errors, choosing the wrong *granny*) and with the modifying nature of the clause (agent errors, choosing the agent of the clause: *the girl*). The second experiment showed comprehension was still poor on resumptive object relatives, which are not assumed to involve movement. The results run contrary to the predictions of a movement-based explanation in the range of errors and in the poor performance on resumptive structures. Alternative processing-based explanations for the difficulty are pursued.

Session A--Metcalf Large

Segmentation of clauses in English, Dutch, and American Sign Language

Amanda Seidl, Purdue University
Elizabeth Johnson, Max Planck Institute
Amy Redman and Diane Brentari, Purdue University

We present a series of cross-linguistic studies which show a universal sensitivity to prosodically well-formed clausal units in both signed and spoken languages. In a series of experiments we show that 6-month-old Dutch-learning infants are able to segment and remember a Dutch clausal unit better than this same word sequence as non-clausal unit and that younger Dutch- and English-learning infants are able to segment and remember a clausal unit better than this same word sequence as non-clausal unit in a foreign language. In addition, given that no research on prosodic bootstrapping has been carried out on signed languages we explore segmentation in American Sign Language (ASL). In these studies we were interested in learning whether or not there is a language general bootstrapping mechanism. We found that 9-month-old infants did seem to remember familiarized ASL clauses better than the non-clauses, thus suggesting a general mechanism.

Session B--Conference Auditorium

How children acquire mental verbs

Anna Papafragou, University of Pennsylvania
Kimberly Cassidy, Bryn Mawr College
Lila Gleitman and Justin Hulbert, University of Pennsylvania

We report a series of experiments which investigate the contribution of observational and syntactic cues to the acquisition of mental predicates. We first demonstrate that particular observational contexts can be helpful in prompting reference to mental contents, specifically, contexts that include a salient and/or unusual mental state (e.g. a false belief). We then compare the potency of such observational support to the reliability of syntactic information (e.g. sentential complementation) in tasks where both children and adults are required to hypothesize the meaning of novel verbs. Overall, our results demonstrate that (a) syntactic information is a more reliable indicator of mentalistic interpretations than co-operative contextual cues, and (b) when both types of cue conspire, they vastly promote mental verb conjectures in both children and simulated adult learners. We conclude that the informational demands of word-to-world mapping can bear much of the explanatory burden for the learning challenges posed by mental verbs.

Session C--Terrace Lounge

Pied-piping in child French:
An experimental study

Miwa Isobe
Meikai University

It is widely known that while wh-movement can strand prepositions in English, this is impossible in French: P must be pied-piped along with the wh-word. Law (1998) and Salles (1997) attribute this lack of P-stranding in French to an independent morphological property of this language: the existence of amalgamated forms of prepositions and determiners. Under their system, the existence of P+D amalgams constitutes a sufficient condition for the obligatory P-pied-piping: In every language that has P+D amalgams, D-to-P incorporation is obligatory and P-pied-piping is required. This analysis predicts that children should exhibit pied-piping as soon as they acquire P+D amalgams and overt wh-movement. The results of my experiment with French-speaking children falsified this prediction. There were children who successfully produced both P+D amalgams and overt wh-movement but still failed to produce P-pied-piping. This finding directly contradicts Law-Salles' parametric system that creates an implicational relationship between P+D amalgams and P-pied-piping.

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Session A--Metcalf Large

Competition from familiar words inhibits learning of phonologically similar words by 18-month-olds

Daniel Swingley, University of Pennsylvania
Richard Aslin, University of Rochester

We tested the ability of 18-month-olds to learn novel words that either did or did not sound similar to words the children already knew. Learning of novel phonological neighbors was significantly impaired. Furthermore, children did not show a "mutual exclusivity" response pattern when interpreting novel phonological neighbors. Previous tests of children's responses to the novel neighbors had shown that the novel neighbors were discriminated from their familiar partners but were nevertheless interpretable as instances of those familiar words. Thus, even at 18 months, lexical activation processes can trump phonological discrimination capacities; children do not yet have phonologically appropriate criteria for distinguishing similar words in word learning.

Session B--Conference Auditorium

One-year-old English speakers increase their attention to manner of motion in a potential verb learning situation

Rachel Pulverman, Amanda Brandone and Sara J. Salkind
University of Delaware

This study explores infants' attention to two of the semantic components most commonly encoded in motion verbs - path and manner. We previously showed that English-learning one-year-olds attend to both manner and path in silent motion events. This experiment tests whether hearing a novel verb during an event increases infants' attention to MANNER as compared to observing the event in silence. Since English motion verbs most frequently express manner, such an attentional change might help children learn verbs. English-learning 14- to 17-month-olds were habituated to an event with both a manner and a path, accompanied by audio presenting a novel verb. They were then tested on 4 types of events: (1) same path, same manner (control); (2) same path, different manner; (3) different path, same manner; and (4) different path, different manner. Infants noticed manner more when a verb was present than in silence. Implications for verb learning will be discussed.

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Session C--Terrace Lounge

Semantic bias in the acquisition of relative clauses in Japanese

Hiromi Ozeki, University of Tokyo
Yasuhiro Shirai, Cornell University

In this paper, we analyze conversation data from five children (0;11-3;11) acquiring Japanese to examine how children acquire relative clauses (RCs) in Japanese, which involve pre-nominal modification. We found that Japanese children acquire RCs as restrictive modifiers right from the beginning in contrast to children acquiring English, who start to use RCs to assert new information concerning the head noun (Diessel & Tomasello 2000). The head nouns of early RCs are mostly indefinite (pro)nouns such as *mono* 'thing', *yatu* "thing', *tokoro* 'place' -*no* 'one', and the predicates in the RCs are mostly stative/generic. Functionally, RCs are used to describe the attribute of the head noun and single out the referent among various things of the same kind. We argue that these findings support Comrie's (2002) claim that noun-modifying clauses in many Asian languages (e.g. Japanese, Korean, Chinese) are "attributive clauses", structurally different from RCs in European languages.

Session A--Metcalf Large

A role for probabilistic information in word learning?

Athena Vouloumanos
University of British Columbia

Although the process of word learning likely requires constraints about possible word meanings and sensitivity to the social and pragmatic context, it may also involve a sensitivity to probabilistic variation, a hypothesis that has never been directly tested. We investigate infants' sensitivity to the frequency of co-occurrence between words and objects in a novel word learning task. Infants of 15 and 18 months were exposed to three novel words and objects in an experimental environment in which probability of co-occurrence was the only cue available for linking words and objects. We found that infants of both ages were acutely sensitive to the probabilities of word-object co-occurrence, modulating their looking time towards the matching test object as a function of probability, and even keeping track of conflicting low probability information. Sensitivity to probabilistic variation may provide infants with a foundation upon which more sophisticated inferential and word-learning mechanisms may operate.

Session B--Conference Auditorium

Bare participles are not root infinitives:
Evidence from early child Slovenian

Dominik Rus, Georgetown University
Pritha Chandra, University of Maryland, College Park

The analyses for root infinitives (RIs) range from proposals centering on truncated phrase structures to underspecified tense or number features. Varlokosta, Vainikka and Rohrbacher (1996, 1998) further claim that RIs and bare participles (BPs) should be treated analogously as 'root non-finites'. On the basis of the data from early child Slovenian, exhibiting a high percentage of BPs but no RIs, we argue that BPs are full clauses with pro subjects with rich agreement. Given current minimalist assumptions that T hosts tense and phi features, we claim that Slovenian children do not lack a T head, and that bare participles are not analogous to bare perfectives. Our final observation is with regard to the semantics of BPs. We argue that these constructions do not correspond to bare perfectives in having an irrealis/modal interpretation, nor do they obey the eventivity constraint, a usual property of RIs.

Session C--Terrace Lounge

Overcoming polysemy in first language acquisition:
The case of *with*

Evan Kidd and Thea Cameron-Faulkner
University of Manchester

The present paper reports on an investigation of one child's acquisition of the multiple senses of the preposition *with*. Two competing claims regarding children's early representation and subsequent acquisition of *with* were investigated. The "Multiple Meanings" approach predicts that children form individual form-meaning pairings for each sense. The "Monosemy" approach claims that children apply a superordinate meaning by abstracting core features early in acquisition. The child's speech and his input were coded according to eight distinguishable senses of *with*. A detailed analysis of the input showed that many clues are made available that potentially enable the child to distinguish between different senses. The acquisition data suggested that the child initially applied a restricted one-to-one form-meaning mapping, which is argued to reflect the spatial properties of the preposition. We interpret this result as supporting neither approach, and instead argue for a position where senses are distinguished over time from an initial prototype.

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Session A--Metcalf Large

Two-year-olds use verb information in rapid inferential learning of novel nouns

Anne Fernald, Renate Zangl, Tiffany Early,
Ana Luz Portillo and Carolyn Quam
Stanford University

Children increasingly use linguistic context to interpret unfamiliar words, using semantic knowledge to identify the referent of an object word introduced with a thematically related familiar verb. In an online eye-tracking procedure 26-month-olds (n=36) saw novel target objects (pastry, rickshaw) paired with novel distracters (appliance/scrubber). On teaching trials they saw the pastry/appliance pictures and heard, *You can eat the manju*, or the rickshaw/scrubber pictures, with *You can drive the tempo*. On testing trials, both target objects were shown together and they heard, *Where's the manju/tempo?* Eye movements were coded frame-by-frame, showing that children mapped *manju* onto the pastry and *tempo* onto the vehicle. Although none of the unfamiliar objects was ever directly paired with its name, 26-month-olds used verb knowledge to infer which novel picture was associated with each novel word, orienting to the appropriate picture within a fraction of a second on their first encounter with the unfamiliar words.

Session B--Conference Auditorium

The status of ostensibly non-finite matrix verbs in child French: Results from a new corpus

Cristina Dye
Cornell University

Previous studies have argued that two-year-old children optionally use nonfinite verbs in contexts where adult grammar requires finite verbs (e.g., Wexler 1994). Recent work, however, has revealed that these ostensibly nonfinite verbs show syntactic and semantic correlations with adult periphrastics (e.g., Josefsson 2002). The present study examines the status of ostensibly nonfinite verbs in child French. The basis for this investigation is a new corpus of over 5000 child utterances containing cross-sectional natural speech samples from 18 monolingual Parisian children ages 1;11 to 2;11. The new corpus shows that a) ostensibly nonfinite verbs occur at an extremely low rate, and b) many apparent cases of nonfinite verbs involve a phonologically reduced auxiliary or the presence of a subject clitic which implicate the presence of a finite auxiliary. These results lend support to the view that such forms are due to children's leaving unpronounced an auxiliary/modal.

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Session C--Terrace Lounge

Learning argument structure in an argument-dropping language

Nitya Sethuraman, Indiana University

Do children learning Tamil, a language which commonly drops arguments, learn argument structure similarly to English-learning children? We consider three developmental possibilities:

1. Argument structure is learned similarly. This suggests that real world context helps constrain and define the argument structure associated with a verb.

2. Argument structure is learned more slowly. This would suggest the child makes use of explicit marking of arguments.

3. Argument structure plays a lesser role in developing verb meanings. As a consequence, verbs may be used to refer to a more diverse array of events.

Participants chose pictures that could be appropriately referred to by a single verb and described videos which explicitly depicted all roles and arguments of different actions. The results suggest that children learning a language that drops arguments do learn argument structure, but more slowly and perhaps differently: argument structure may be more important to verb meaning in some languages.

Session A--Metcalf Large

Integration of content and form in normal and pragmatically impaired populations

Leher Singh
Boston University

On-line speech processing involves integrating linguistic and paralinguistic cues. An inability to integrate these two sources of information is found in Asperger's Syndrome, Autism and its associated spectrum disorders (AS/ASD). In Experiment 1, 11-year-old children undergoing treatment for AS/ASD were tested on their ability to process lexical and affective information. An auditory emotional Stroop task was presented to AS/ASD individuals and normal controls. While normal controls showed a strong interference effect, individuals with AS/ASD did not. A second experiment investigated alternative interference effects in AS/ASD individuals using a gender-based Stroop task. In this task, both normal controls and AS/ASD individuals showed strong interference effects. Finally, we examined whether individuals with AS/ASD were able to label vocal affect in an offline task. These findings revealed that subjects were as accurate as normal controls in labeling emotional intent but simply were not able to integrate this knowledge in real-time speech processing.

Session B--Conference Auditorium

The different properties of root infinitives and finite verbs in the acquisition of Icelandic

Sigridur Sigurjonsdottir
University of Iceland

In this paper we explore the development of root infinitives and finite verbs in data from an Icelandic girl, Eva, who was followed longitudinally from the age of 1;1, when her first two word utterances appeared, to 2;4. This data supplements longitudinal data available from two Icelandic children, age 2;0-2;6 (cf. Sigurjonsdottir 1999). The new data gives important additional information on the characteristics of the root infinitive stage in Icelandic. Special emphasis is put on describing the characteristics of Eva's early pure root infinitive stage, when she uses root infinitives 100% of the time. This stage is compared to the consequent optional infinitive stage, e.g., with regard to the semantic properties of root infinitives. As Icelandic is a language with morphological infinitives, like Dutch, it is interesting to compare the results of this study to the analysis of Hoekstra & Hyams (1998) and to Blom & Wijnen's (2000) "modal shift hypothesis."

Session C--Terrace Lounge

How early does word order guide sentence comprehension?

Yael Gertner and Cynthia Fisher
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

At what age can children use abstract knowledge of word order to guide sentence comprehension? Prior research has shown that 17-month-olds understand word order in transitive sentences with familiar verbs (*Cookie-Monster is tickling Big-Bird*, Hirsh-Pasek & Golinkoff, 1996). However, infants could succeed based on verb-specific knowledge, rather than by using more abstract knowledge of the word order of English. We found that 25-month-olds (Experiment 1) and 21-month-olds (Experiment 2) use word order to comprehend sentences with novel verbs (*The duck is gorping the bunny*). In addition, they were able to interpret the postverbal noun as the patient in sentences with a pronoun subject (*Who is gorping the bunny?*). We argue that children can use non-lexical knowledge of word order in transitive sentences. These findings help reveal how children with a limited vocabulary use the beginnings of syntactic knowledge to guide sentence interpretation.

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Session A--Metcalf Large

Morphological cues in children's processing of ambiguous sentences: A study of subject/object ambiguities in Greek

Despina Papadopoulou and Ianthi Maria Tsimpli
Aristotle University of Thessaloniki

This paper reports on two self-paced reading grammaticality judgment tasks with Greek adults and 10 to 12-year-old children. The critical sentences tested involved temporal subject/object ambiguities in Greek. Case and agreement information was used to manipulate the grammaticality/ungrammaticality of the sentences and also to resolve the ambiguity. In the ungrammatical sentences, the children were able to use morphological cues to detect the ungrammaticality. Moreover, they detected the ungrammaticalities on the functional category D, whereas the adults did so on the lexical N. In the temporally ambiguous sentences, children were not garden-pathed in the Case or in the Agreement condition, whereas adults showed garden-path effects. We argue that this contrast between child and adult processing provides evidence for the priority of the functional over the lexical categories in children's parsing. Furthermore, the children seem to process sentences based on morpho-syntactic properties rather than on thematic ones.

Session B--Conference Auditorium

Fast mapping and generalization of spatial reference terms by 4-year-olds

Anna Shusterman and Linda Abarbanell
Harvard University

Children need to learn words for highly abstract concepts, including spatial terms like left, right, north and south. What are the conceptual representations that support children's acquisition of spatial terms? We designed a novel training methodology to observe the process of spatial word-learning in 4-year-old children (mean age 4;7). In a series of experiments, we probed children's initial understanding of the egocentric words left and right and the geocentric terms north and south. We also tested children's ability to learn the meanings of these terms when given feedback and generalize the meanings on their own. The results suggest that children have an initial bias to interpret spatial reference terms geocentrically and that they learn geocentric terms more readily than egocentric terms. Our findings contrast with previous claims that children's spatial representations are primarily egocentric (Piaget & Inhelder 1948/1967) and add to cross-linguistic evidence for non-egocentric spatial frameworks (Levinson 1996).

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Session C--Terrace Lounge

Low-level schemas or general rules? The role of diminutives in the acquisition of Polish case inflections

Ewa Dabrowska
University of Sheffield

According to usage-based theories, learners' initial generalizations are low-level, phonologically- or lexically-specific schemas; thus, learners should supply inflections more reliably with words belonging to very densely populated phonological neighbourhoods (for which they are likely to have extracted low-level schemas) than with words with few neighbours (for which no low-level schemas may be available).

This paper tests this prediction by investigating Polish children's ability to supply case inflections with unfamiliar words. By far the most densely populated regions in Polish children's noun lexicons are those defined by the three most productive diminutive suffixes (masculine *-ek*, feminine *-ka*, and neuter *-ko*), since diminutives are very frequent in the input. Therefore, if the low-level schema hypothesis is correct, children should be more productive with diminutives and diminutive-sounding words (i.e. words ending in *-ek*, *-ka*, and *-ko*) than with simplex forms. Results indicate that this is indeed the case.

Session A--Metcalf Large

The underlying representation of wh-questions in subgroups of children with SLI:
Evidence from on-line sentence processing

Theo Marinis and Heather van der Lely
University College London

This paper investigates how typically developing (TD) children and subgroups of children with SLI process wh-questions in real time. 17 G(rammatical)-SLI children, 7 L(exical)-SLI children, 14 age-matched (CA) and three groups of 38 language-ability controls participated in a cross-modal picture-priming experiment. We found that processing speed in TD children develops as a function of age, but G-SLI children were slower than CAs. TD, L-SLI and G-SLI children showed qualitatively different processing patterns. TD children showed priming at the trace. L-SLI and younger controls also showed priming at the subcategorising verb. In contrast, G-SLI children did not show any priming at the trace, but only at the verb. These findings: 1) reveal that SLI subgroups have different underlying syntactic representations, 2) provide evidence for psycholinguistically distinct SLI subgroups, and 3) provide evidence for different mechanisms in the processing of filler-gap dependencies. We discuss the implications of our findings for SLI theories.

Session B--Conference Auditorium

Conceptual foundations of spatial language:
Goals and sources in manner of motion events

Laura Lakusta, Johns Hopkins University
Laura Wagner, Wellesley College
Kirsten O'Hearn Donny and Barbara Landau
Johns Hopkins University

Studies indicate that when children talk about events, they often mention Goals (e.g., *into a bowl*) but not Sources (e.g., *out of a bucket*), suggesting a linguistic Goal bias. The current studies explored whether this bias extends to non-linguistic event representations. Infants were familiarized to an animal moving toward one of two Goal objects. During the test, the locations of the two Goals were switched and infants saw either the animal move along the old Path to a new Goal or along a new Path to an old Goal. Infants looked longer when the animal moved along an old Path to a new Goal, suggesting that infants encoded the Goal. In subsequent studies the objects were Sources rather than Goals and infants failed to discriminate test endings unless the Source objects were made more salient. Together, the results suggest that Sources and Goals may be represented asymmetrically in non-linguistic event representations.

Session C--Terrace Lounge

On the status of determiner fillers in L1 French:
What the child knows

Annie Tremblay
University of Hawai'i at Manoa

Three hypotheses have been posited to account for the occurrence of filler syllables in child language: (1) fillers are phonological (i.e., pre-morphological) elements that the child produces to preserve the typical foot structure of a language (e.g., Veneziano & Sinclair 2000); (2) fillers are proto-morphological elements reflecting the child's syntactic knowledge of certain functional categories (e.g., Bottari et al. 1993/1994); (3) fillers are true morphological elements that the child cannot pronounce accurately due to performance problems attributed to his/her phonology (e.g., Gerken 1991). This study aims to determine which of (1)-(3) best accounts for the occurrence of fillers in the development of determiners by a French Canadian child, Max (1;9-2;5) (Plunkett 2002). Specifically, it looks at positions where fillers are syntactically "illicit," but where their occurrence is predicted under (1), specifically (a) before monosyllabic proper nouns/adverbs, (b) between nouns and monosyllabic adjectives, and (c) between adjectives and monosyllabic nouns.

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Session A--Metcalf Large

Referential scene contributions to structure, revisited

John Trueswell, Lila Gleitman, Jared Novick,
Youngon Choi and David January
University of Pennsylvania

What role does the visual reference world play for adults and children in recovering the structure of an utterance? Prior work suggests it can be decisive: hearing *Put the frog on the napkin into the box* in the presence of multiple frogs guides adults toward a modifier interpretation of the first PP, despite countervailing verb information; similar scenes allow young children to interpret relative clauses that they would otherwise fail to understand. We argue here, however, that effects of reference to a visual scene have been overestimated and oversimplified. First, we show that adults actually have difficulty with *on the napkin* in 2-frog scenes, an effect that went undetected in earlier studies. We then review evidence that 5-yr-olds' ambiguity resolution abilities are sensitive to lexical constraints but not this reference-to-scene constraint. We offer a developmental parsing theory that explains these and other findings as arising from discovering reliable predictors of structure.

Session B--Conference Auditorium

English-learning toddlers can acquire and generalize a novel spatial word

Marianella Casasola, Makeba Parramore Wilbourn
and Sujin Yang
Cornell University

Young children display little difficulty acquiring the semantic spatial categories specific to their language (e.g., Choi & Bowerman 1991; Choi, McDonough, Bowerman, & Mandler 1999). The current study explored how quickly this learning occurs. English-learning toddlers of 21 months were taught a novel spatial word for two tight-fitting containment and two tight-fitting support events, consistent with the Korean semantic category of *kkita*. A second group of toddlers viewed the same events without hearing the novel word. When toddlers' comprehension of the novel word was tested in a preferential-looking paradigm, only toddlers who were taught the novel word looked significantly longer at a familiar and three novel tight-fit events when hearing the novel word than when hearing attention-getting phrases. Hence, toddlers can learn to comprehend and generalize a novel spatial word relatively quickly. The results also demonstrate how a novel spatial word motivates the formation of a semantic spatial category.

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Session C--Terrace Lounge

Vulnerable morphemes in imperfect bilingual L1 acquisition

Agnes Bolonyai
North Carolina State University

This paper examines the production of L1 inflectional morphology by L2-dominant bilingual children, with the aim of exploring causes of difficulty in agreement marking in imperfect L1 acquisition. Spontaneous data (18 hours) from six Hungarian-English bilingual children, aged 7 to 9, is used to compare the production of possessive inflections and verbal inflections, which are expressed by almost identical surface morphology in Hungarian.

Results indicate significant differences in the accuracy of agreement morphology. Inflections are almost error-free in possessive nominals and subject-verb agreement; however, agreement markers are frequently omitted in possessive *be* sentences, suggesting (i) transfer of semantic-syntactic properties of English possessive *have* on Hungarian possessive *be* constructions; (ii) difficulty with long-distance agreement in possessive *be* constructions; and (iii) influence from Hungarian locative constructions on possessive *be* constructions. It will be argued that morphological variability is selective and points to vulnerability at the interface between syntax and the lexicon.

Session A--Metcalf Large

Gaps in children's sentence processing:
Evidence from cross-modal picture priming

Leah Roberts, Max Planck Institute for Psycholinguistics
Theo Marinis, University College London
Claudia Felser and Harald Clahsen, University of Essex

This paper investigates the processing of filler-gap dependencies in children using the cross-modal picture-priming paradigm. 44 5 to 7-year-olds and 54 adult controls listened to object relative-clauses, such as, *John saw the peacock to which the small penguin gave the nice* [1] *birthday present* [2] *in the garden last week*. At the position of the trace [2] or at a control position [1] participants saw the picture of the antecedent (*peacock*) or an unrelated picture and performed an animacy task. We found that working memory interacted with antecedent reactivation in both children and adults. High memory children and adults showed a priming effect of the antecedent at the gap [1], indicating that at this position they access the antecedents of dislocated arguments. This effect was absent in the low span groups, suggesting that the filler-gap dependency was not established at the gap position due to working memory limitations.

Session B--Conference Auditorium

18- and 24-month-olds rely on syntactic knowledge of functional categories for determining meaning and reference

Yarden Kedar, Marianella Casasola and Barbara Lust
Cornell University

Do children focus on the lexicon alone or is syntactic knowledge also involved in the first stages of language acquisition? Four function word kinds were used to create one grammatical and three ungrammatical conditions (an ungrammatical English function word, a nonsense-syllable, and an omitted-function-word condition) in a preferential looking-listening study with 32 monolingual 18- and 24-month-olds, yielding significant differences in:

1. *Latency*: Between the grammatical condition and all three ungrammatical conditions for the 24-month-olds, and between the grammatical and two ungrammatical substitution conditions for the 18-month-olds.
2. *Correct First Look* (i.e., directed to the target object or not): between the grammatical and two ungrammatical substitution conditions for the 24-month-olds.

We argue that toddlers of 18 months already distinguish the different roles of specific English function words (*the* versus *and*), and utilize this knowledge to facilitate reference even when a noun and its visual referent are clearly heard and seen.

Session C--Terrace Lounge

Prosodic constraints and the syntax-phonology interface:
The phonology of object clitics in L2 French

Meaghen Buckley
McGill University

Studies on the L2 acquisition of clitics have shown that there is an asymmetry between comprehension and production, with production being delayed or impaired. Researchers have focused on syntax as the cause; nevertheless, other work on inflectional morphology has shown that prosodic phonology also plays a role. I look at the L2 acquisition of French object clitics by adult native-speakers of English. French has syntactic object clitics and allows Prosodic Phrase (PPh) recursion, while English has neither of these properties. Subjects were tested with a grammaticality judgment/production task. Stimuli with accusative and dative object clitics were used, including both syntactic and prosodic structures non-existent in the L1. Learners averaged 90% accuracy on the grammaticality judgment task; however, their phonological production was non-native-like in a majority of cases. Stress patterns indicate that the learners have not yet acquired PPh recursion, suggesting that prosodic constraints do impact clitic production.

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Session A--Metcalf Large

The blue cat or *the cat that is blue*? Evidence for abstract syntax in young children's noun phrases

Holly Branigan, Janet McLean and Manon Jones
University of Edinburgh

Syntactic priming - the tendency to repeat syntax across otherwise unrelated sentences - provides strong evidence that adult production involves abstract syntactic representations. We report a syntactic priming study that examined whether 3- and 4-year olds' noun phrase production also involves abstract representations.

The experimenter and a child alternately described pictures depicting colored objects. The experimenter used a determiner-adjective-noun description (e.g. *the blue cat*) on half the trials, and a noun-relative clause description (e.g. *the cat that's blue*) on the other half. We found strong priming: Children repeated the structure of the experimenter's description in their own descriptions both when the Head Noun was repeated (70% priming effect) and when it was not repeated (52% priming effect).

Our results provide evidence that 3- and 4-year old children have abstract syntactic representations, shared between comprehension and production: Merely hearing one exemplar of a structure increases the likelihood of producing that structure.

Session B--Conference Auditorium

Comparing different accounts of uninversion errors in children's wh-questions:
What experimental data can tell us

Ben Ambridge, University of Manchester and
Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology
Caroline Rowland, University of Liverpool

This study investigated generativist and constructivist accounts of children's acquisition of object wh- questions, e.g., *Who is Mickey hitting?*. Questions using each of 4 wh- operators (*what*, *who*, *how* and *why*), and 4 auxiliaries (copula *be*, auxiliary *be*, *do* and *can*) in 3sg and 3pl form were elicited from 28 children aged 3;6-4;6. Contrary to the predictions of DeVilliers (1991) and Valian et al (1992), adjunct operators attracted fewer uninversion errors (*Why Mickey can hear the frog?*) than argument operators. As predicted by Stromswold (1990) and Santelmann et al (2002) copula *be* and auxiliary *do* attracted the most uninversion errors, contrary to Van Valin's (2002) prediction that *can* would show the highest level of uninversion. Interactions between the variables of wh- operator, auxiliary and number suggest that Rowland and Pine's (2000) constructivist model, under which children acquire frequent wh- operator+lexical auxiliary combinations from the input, can potentially provide the best fit for the data.

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Session C--Terrace Lounge

Representational 'deficits' in L2:
Syntactic or phonological?

Heather Goad and Lydia White
McGill University

Two transfer-based accounts exist for variable suppliance of L2 morphology. The Representational Deficit Hypothesis (RDH) attributes variability to L1-based morphosyntax; the Prosodic Transfer Hypothesis (PTH), to L1 prosody. We test RDH vs. PTH by examining English past and perfective acquisition by Mandarin speakers. English has overt tense and perfective, represented through Prosodic Word adjunction. Mandarin has no overt tense, but perfective is realized, PWd-internally. RDH predicts problems for English tense, not for perfective. PTH predicts that past and perfective are both acquirable. However, because adjunction is illicit in Mandarin, suppliance should be depressed, depending on stimulus shape. Subjects were tested through a sentence selection/production task. Segmentally-parallel monomorphemic, past, and perfective stimuli were constructed, including forms that PTH predicts to be impossible to produce if the Mandarin analysis has been transferred into English. Preliminary data support PTH: L2ers are highly accurate on English morphosyntax and adopt various strategies to get around Mandarin prosodic constraints.

Session A--Metcalf Large

Structural priming in 3-year-old children

Hyun-joo Song and Cynthia Fisher
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

Syntactic priming provides some of the most compelling evidence that syntactic representations, independent of particular words, are created during sentence processing. The current studies used a sentence imitation task to measure syntactic priming in young children. Three-year-olds repeated test sentences presented in ditransitive (*Mary told the children a story*) or prepositional dative form (*Mary told a story to the children*). Each test sentence was preceded by two primes, with the same structure as the test sentence, or the other structure. Prime and test sentences contained the same verb (Experiment 1) or different verbs (Experiment 2). Children simply listened to the priming sentences. In both experiments, 3-year-olds more accurately repeated test sentences that maintained the same structure than those that changed structure from the primes. These studies show abstract priming of the double-object and prepositional dative structures in 3-year-olds. Young children, like adults, can represent syntactic structure independently of particular words.

Session B--Conference Auditorium

Productive agreement:
Against a piecemeal approach in Swahili

Kamil Ud Deen
University of Hawai'i at Manoa

I argue against a piece-meal perspective on the acquisition of agreement (Rubino & Pine 1998) using three pieces of evidence from the naturalistic speech of two Swahili speaking children (ages 1;8-2;2 and 2;10-2;11) that show productive agreement in early Swahili. First, the overall error rate is extremely low (approximately 1%). Second, contra data from Rubino & Pine, no asymmetry between errors in singular and plural agreement is observed. Finally, agreement is not limited to a small set of verb stems, nor are particular agreement morphemes restricted to non-overlapping sets of verbs. The low error rates in both the singular and plural as well as the fact that agreement is not limited to particular verb stems or sets of verb stems shows that agreement is not being acquired in a piece-meal fashion. Rather, these facts are more compatible with an approach that assumes an abstract rule of agreement is being applied.

Session C--Terrace Lounge

Acquisition of a natural vs. an unnatural stress system

Angela Carpenter
University of Massachusetts Amherst

Recent research on the acquisition of natural vs. unnatural phonological processes provide some support for the idea that learning a natural process is easier than learning an unnatural one (Nowak 2003; Wilson 2003). These findings are important in that they indicate that adult learners have access to universal linguistic principles. This study examines the acquisition of two stress patterns that are identical except in naturalness:

A) Stress leftmost low vowel, else leftmost - a natural pattern; or
B) Stress leftmost high vowel, else leftmost - an unnatural pattern.

System A is attested cross-linguistically, and is based on well-motivated constraints, while System B is not. Twenty-one college-age, native-English speaking subjects were put in the natural group and 19 in the unnatural. Both groups succeeded in learning the stress pattern. However, the natural language group had greater success at learning the stress pattern of their language than did the unnatural language group.

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KEYNOTE ADDRESS

Language and core knowledge

Elizabeth Spelke
Harvard University

Do any human concepts depend on natural language (linguistic determinism)? Are any of the concepts available to speakers of one language not available to speakers of a different language (linguistic relativity)? Drawing primarily on studies of spatial and numerical concepts in human adults, young children, and non-human animals, I'll suggest that the claim of linguistic determinism is true for a limited but crucial set of human concepts. Indeed, all the concepts that are unique to humans may depend, in part, on language. In contrast, this research provides no clear evidence for linguistic relativity. Children who learn any natural language may gain access to the same set of uniquely human concepts and cognitive abilities.

NIH/NSF Consultation Hours

Peggy McCardle (NIH) and Joan Maling (NSF)

Saturday: 9:30am-11:30am, 2:00pm-5:00pm
Sunday: 9:00am-1:00pm (by appointment)

An adversity passive analysis of early-acquired Sesotho passives: Reanalyzing a counterexample to Maturation

Jean Crawford
Boston University

Demuth (1989, 1990, 1992) claims passive verbs in children acquiring Sesotho discredits the Maturation Hypothesis (Borer & Wexler 1987). Babyonyshev et al. (2001) proposes if passives are required, children might employ 'syntactic homophones' (structural misanalyses) to produce a sentence that sounds adult-like. Demuth (1989) observed children acquiring Sesotho using passive forms as early as 2;8. Wexler (1999) suggests that these early forms are similar to Japanese adversity passives (Miyagawa 1989), whose syntax is different from verbal passives. I propose Sesotho-speaking children are using adversity passive constructions as syntactic homophones for verbal passives. Two children from Demuth's Sesotho corpus (2;1-3;0 and 2;2-3;2) were examined. Many passive utterances contained the morpheme *ets* or *ts* in conjunction with the passive morpheme. These have previously been analyzed as the perfective morpheme (Demuth 1989), but they are also homophonous with the applicative morpheme. 32-56% of the children's passives contained this morpheme. Most other purported passives in this study are suspect on other grounds (e.g., lexicalized forms, lack of alternation with active forms). The implications of the adversity passive analysis are discussed.

Genes take over when the input fails: Findings from a twin study of the passive

Jennifer Ganger and Sabrina Dunn, University of Pittsburgh
Peter Gordon, Columbia University

To determine whether the rate of acquisition of passives is principally governed by linguistic input or endogenous processes, we compared heritability and environmentality coefficients using the twin method. We tested 169 pairs of identical and fraternal twins aged 3-6 years on passive voice comprehension. Half the items were actional, half-nonactional. Although heritability was small for all passives combined, there was a contrast between types of passives. Actionals had moderate shared environment (.53) and no heritability (-.20), while nonactionals showed moderate heritability (.50) and no shared environment (-.01)This pattern is consistent with previous findings of Gordon & Chafetz (1990) regarding the frequency of passive types in children's input. Since actional passives are frequent, individual differences in acquisition are influenced by linguistic environment. This is indicated by the stronger role of shared environment for these verbs. Non-actional passives, which are exceedingly rare in parental input, show no effects of environment and individual differences are conditioned instead by endogenous cognitive/linguistic abilities that are influenced by genetic differences.

Beyond surface scope in child language

Valentine Hacquard, Sarah Hulsey,
Danny Fox, and Andrea Gualmini
Massachusetts Institute of Technology

An apparent generalization emerging from studies on children's interpretation of scopally ambiguous sentences is that children's scope assignment tends to coincide with surface c-command: this is the Observation of Isomorphism (Lidz and Musolino 2002, among others).

We claim that Isomorphism plays no role in child language. We introduce a new theory, the Question-Answer Requirement, which holds that the primary requirement in disambiguating a scopally ambiguous sentence is choosing an interpretation that answers a contextually salient question.

We conducted a Truth Value Judgment task (Crain & Thornton, 1998) experiment testing childrenís interpretation of sentences like *Some pizzas were not lost*. The results show that 4- and 5-year-olds, unlike adults, often interpret some in the scope of negation. This suggests that there is no exaggerated preference for surface scope in children and supports the view that a relevant factor for scope resolution is choosing an interpretation that addresses the question under consideration.

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Acquisition of no-movement:
The case of Japanese wh

Yuhko Kayama
McGill University

This study investigates whether second language learners (L2ers) of Japanese can acquire the distinction among wh-phrases with non-movement properties. In Japanese, wh-phrases do not undergo movement, unlike languages such as English, but remain in-situ. Thus, wh-phrases can appear in complex NPs (i.e. relative clauses (RCs)). Yet, not all wh-phrases are allowed in RCs; the wh-adjuncts, why and how, cannot occur in RCs because LF movement of why and how is disallowed, while other wh-phrases (who/when/where, etc.) undergo movement at LF. The contrast among wh-adjuncts in RCs is not explicitly taught in classrooms. If L2ers acquire this contrast, then such knowledge provides evidence of UG in L2 acquisition. The experiment was conducted with Korean and English learners of Japanese. The results show that both groups of learners are able to detect the unavailability of why/how phrases in RCs though still allowing other wh-phrases in RCs, suggesting L2ers's full access to UG.

Interpretations of Korean reflexive *caki* by Korean heritage speakers and late learners of Korean with English L1

Ji-Hye Kim, Silvina Montrul and James Yoon
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

This study investigates the acquisition of the Korean reflexive caki by learners with English L1 and Korean heritage speakers with the objective of teasing apart UG-related factors and language-specific factors in the acquisition/loss of Korean binding. We examined whether and how (i) the size of GC (UG property) and (ii) acceptability of sub-commanding antecedents (language-particular property) influence the interpretation of Korean binding by L2 learners of Korean and English-dominant Korean heritage speakers. Fourteen late learners of Korean with English L1 and 22 Korean heritage speakers and 30 Korean native controls completed a Truth Value Judgment Task composed of 72 stories testing GC-difference and sub-commanding antecedents. The results demonstrate that there is transfer from English to Korean binding in late L2 learners as well as Korean heritage speakers. On the other hand, L2 learners with English L1 behaved differently from Korean heritage speakers in treating the language-particular property (sub-commanding antecedents).

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Parallels between L1- and L2-acquisition of determiners:
The role of partitivity

Heejeong Ko, Massachusetts Institute of Technology
Tania Ionin, University of Southern California
Ken Wexler, Massachusetts Institute of Technology

This paper argues for similarity between L1- and L2-acquisition of articles. We demonstrate that partitivity (= [+partitive] DP denotes an individual that is a member of a set introduced by previous discourse) contributes to overuse of 'the' in L2-English. We propose that adult L2-English learners have difficulty with Maximality, similarly to child L1-English learners (cf. Wexler 2003). The data come from a forced-choice elicitation task with 20 adult L1-Korean learners of English: partitivity contributed significantly to 'the' overuse with indefinites regardless of whether set membership was explicit (four boys - a boy) or implicit (orchestra - a musician). Furthermore, partitivity did not interact with other semantic factors - scope and referentiality. Our findings imply that that 'the' overuse is tied to a semantic factor (lack of Maximality, Wexler 2003) rather than to children's egocentricity (Maratsos 1976). Our data also provide evidence that partitivity and referentiality are independent factors at work in L2-acquisition.

Lexical and functional prepositions in acquisition:
Evidence for a hybrid category

Heather Littlefield
Boston University

This study uses the longitudinal data of two children from the CHILDES database (MacWhinney & Snow 1985,1990) to examine the acquisition of prepositions. Recent syntactic research points toward a less homogeneous view of prepositions than is generally assumed. Most proposals draw a fundamental distinction between lexical and functional prepositions. If this distinction exists, then evidence should be found in the longitudinal acquisition of prepositions, given the patterning of lexical and functional elements in other domains of acquisition (namely, lexical use typically precedes functional use). The data from Naomi (Sachs 1983; MacWhinney & Snow 1985) and Sarah (Brown 1973) show a steady, relatively rapid increase in their use of lexical prepositions over time, while functional prepositions do not enter their spontaneous speech until much later. Error rates also support such a difference: both children initially have a 100% error rate with functional prepositions, which doesn't occur with the lexical prepositions.

Default morphology in a second language:
The Morphological Underspecification Hypothesis

Corinne McCarthy
McGill University

Several theories have attempted to explain the failure to supply targetlike second language morphology. While it has been observed that learners often employ default forms, the form of these defaults is not predicted by any of these theories. This paper begins with the observation that certain forms emerge as defaults, whereas others do not. Spontaneous production data were collected from 10 intermediate and advanced learners of L2 Spanish (L1 English). The data show that, for agreement morphology, third person forms are used as defaults in non-third contexts; other persons are not used as defaults. For determiners, masculine forms emerge as defaults and occur in feminine contexts, but the reverse does not occur. These patterns follow from a model of L2 grammar that assumes underspecification of morphological features. By inserting underspecified forms, L2 speakers avoid feature clash in their productions.

The development of infants' ability to recognize
speech in noise

Rochelle Newman
University of Maryland, College Park

Most work on infant speech recognition occurs in quiet laboratories without outside distractions. Yet, infants often find themselves in noisier environments, where they must separate one speech stream (for example, their caregiver's voice) from others. We examined infants' abilities to recognize their own name in the context of multi-talker noise. Infants heard a woman repeating either the child's name or an unfamiliar name while other voices spoke in the background. 5-month-old infants listened longer to their own name than to foil names when the target voice was 10-dB more intense than the background babble, but not when it was 5-dB more intense. 9-month-old infants also failed at this 5 dB S/N, but 13-month-old infants succeeded. Thus, 5-month-old infants possess some capacity to selectively attend to a voice in the context of competing voices. However, this ability is quite limited, and does not improve until infants near their first birthday.

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Argument realization and omission in English-Japanese bilingual acquisition: Learning a stratified grammar

Yuriko Oshima-Takane, Fred Genesee and A.M. Sonia Guerriero, McGill University Makiko Hirakawa, Tokyo International University

Spontaneous speech data from one Japanese-English bilingual child, Chantal, at 31-32 months and her parents were coded for the informative status of arguments, form used, and nonlinguistic pragmatic correlates. The goal was to investigate if the argument choices of this child, learning overt and null argument languages simultaneously, reflected sensitivity to the information flow in discourse and followed Discourse-Pragmatic strategies. The results indicated that Chantal was sensitive to the information status of the arguments in the discourse and she showed the English-specific Discourse-Pragmatic strategies seen in an age-matched English monolingual child. Her Japanese patterns were similar to those of an age-matched Japanese monolingual, but neither had acquired the Japanese-specific Discourse-Pragmatic strategies. Chantalís Japanese pattern was distinct from her English pattern and was strikingly similar to that of her mother, suggesting that her slow acquisition of the Japanese-specific Discourse-Pragmatic pattern was due to her motherís use, rather than internal, crosslinguistic interference.

The importance of variety in language acquisition: Segmentation and generalization

Luca Onnis and Morten Christiansen, Cornell University Padraic Monaghan, University of York Nick Chater, University of Warwick

Statistical learning of adjacent structure is robust for sequences of syllables, tones, and visual stimuli in both infants and adults. However, to account for core aspects of language learning a statistical learning mechanism must also be capable of tracking relations among nonadjacent items. We propose that adjacent information must be overcome to detect nonadjacent information, as there is potentially a computational impasse of computing too many transitional probabilities simultaneously, and that this can be accomplished when there is high variability of the intervening items (Gómez, 2002). In a series of experiments, we show that this variability hypothesis can explain previous failures to segment speech based on knowledge of nonadjacent syllables. We also show that segmentation and generalization can be achieved simultaneously when there is large variability in the intervening speech between syllables with nonadjacent dependencies, and may not necessitate a distinction between two separate and consecutive computational processes.

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Learning a stratified grammar

Joe Pater University of Massachusetts, Amherst

This paper shows that a simple extension of the Biased Constraint Demotion Algorithm (BCD: Prince and Tesar 2004) results in the construction of stratified grammars (Itô and Mester 1999). Phonological structures are sometimes restricted to particular sets of words, such as loanwords. To capture such generalizations, Itô and Mester (1999) propose that faithfulness constraints applying to subsets of the lexicon are interspersed between markedness constraints.

Three learnability problems present themselves:

1. How does a learner create lexically specific constraints for exceptions to phonotactics?
2. How do the markedness constraints get in the right order?
3. How do the faithfulness constraints get interspersed correctly?

To address 1, I propose that when a learner encounters a form that requires an adjustment to the grammar, it makes the initial conservative assumption that this adjustment is specific to that word. With this one assumption, BCD automatically yields answers to problems 2 and 3.

A resource conservation view of the Mutual Exclusivity Effect in children's word learning

Thomas Piccin and Pamela Blewitt
Villanova University

The tendency of children to resist applying multiple labels to the same object has often been interpreted as evidence of a "mutual exclusivity" constraint on word learning. We offer evidence that the mutual exclusivity effect is not specific to word learning, and suggest that it is rooted in a tendency to conserve mental resources of attention and memory. In the current experiments, we demonstrate that when it is communicatively useful to adopt multiple labels for an object, 3-year-olds readily do so, but when there is no apparent communicative benefit to using multiple labels, they prefer to use a single label. Furthermore, we show that children exhibit identical patterns of responses in both a word learning and non-word learning situation. We argue that this effect across tasks is strongly implicative of a common underlying mechanism and suggest that it is driven by an inclination to conserve mental resources.

Differential sensitivity to lexical and affective prosody in Williams Syndrome

Daniela Plesa-Skwerer, Helen Tager-Flusberg,
Casey Schofield and Alyssa Verbalis
Boston University School of Medicine
Susan Faja, University of Washington

People with Williams syndrome (WS) are known to use prosodic devices extensively in conversation and narratives, but their ability to interpret prosody to comprehend speakers' communicative intentions and emotional states has not been investigated. We present findings from four experiments probing sensitivity to lexical stress and to affective prosodic cues at several processing levels -- using implicit interference-type tasks and explicit, emotional judgment tasks. Adolescents and adults with WS were compared to age, IQ and vocabulary matched participants with mental retardation (MR) and to age-matched normal controls on accuracy and reaction time. The WS group outperformed the MR group only in recognizing emotional tone of voice in filtered speech. Results reflect a relative sensitivity in WS to affective prosody, while the ability to use lexical prosodic cues remains constrained by perceptual and cognitive limitations, suggesting a possible dissociation in sensitivity to different types of prosody in this population.

Early unaccusatives in child English

Susan Powers
Lyrix, Inc.

While syntactic theory distinguishes two classes of intransitive (single argument) verbs, the two classes are virtually indistinguishable at English surface structure as both appear with preverbal subjects. In order to determine if children learning English are sensitive to the underlying structural distinction, this paper analyzes the earliest child English productions with accusative verbs. The main finding is that the single argument of unaccusative verbs always appears post-verbally in the earliest utterances. Post-verbal subjects even occur with novel/child-invented unaccusative verbs like bye-bye (disappear), hi (appear), and boom-boom (fall). English children's initial preference for post-verbal subjects with unaccusative verbs suggests a sensitivity to the underlying argument structure. While the input may provide clues as to the special structure of unaccusatives, the fact that children extend this word order to their own novel unaccusatives supports the hypothesis that unaccusative verbs are already structurally distinguished from unergatives when children start using intransitive verbs.

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Clitic-climbing in child Spanish and the theory of parameters

Miguel Rodriguez-Mondonedo and William Snyder
University of Connecticut
Koji Sugisaki, Mie University

While Spanish permits clitic-climbing (CC), French does not. Kayne (1989) has proposed that this cross-linguistic difference is tightly connected to the possibility of null subjects. If Wexler (1998) is correct in claiming that the null-subject parameter is set quite early, Kayne's proposal predicts the following: Spanish-learning children will begin to use CC as soon as they acquire other relevant knowledge (specifically, clitics and infinitival complements); they will NEVER go through a stage in which enclisis (onto the lower infinitival) is consistently chosen over CC.

To evaluate this prediction, we analyzed five longitudinal Spanish corpora in the CHILDES database. The results show that NO CHILD acquired enclisis significantly earlier than CC. Our findings support Kayne's parametric proposal that the possibility of CC follows directly from the positive setting of the null-subject parameter. The findings also support Wexler's claim that this constitutes one of the early-set parameters.

Children want to access every interpretation adults do

Kristen Syrett and Jeffrey Lidz
Northwestern University

Recent investigations into children's acquisition of quantification (Musolino, Crain and Thornton 2000; Lidz and Musolino 2002) indicate that children strongly prefer the surface scope reading of quantificational elements in scopally-ambiguous sentences (1). However, Lidz et al. (2004) argue that this isomorphism preference is due to performance, and not competence factors, since children derive adult-like interpretations for sentences which lack negation but require QR, like (2), involving antecedent-contained deletion (ACD). We examined four-year-olds' interpretations of sentences such as (3), which have multiple landing sites for QR to determine whether children are restricted to short (vP-level) QR. We show that children can perform long QR, further supporting the performance account of isomorphism and the conclusion that children's grammars are adult-like with respect to quantification.

(1) Donald didn't eat two cookies.
(2) Bert jumped over every frog that Ernie did.
(3) Miss Piggy *wanted to* drive [every car that Kermit did].

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The emergence of INFL: Nature vs. nurture

Graciela Tesan
University of Maryland at College Park

In contrast to the Generative approach, Constructivists propose that children "learn" the language specific linguistic "constructions," eschewing innate linguistic knowledge. This study evaluates the predictions the two accounts make about the acquisition of the inflectional category in simple present 3rd sg contexts as in (1a). The constructivist approach predicts that children's "constructions" are conservatively tied to the input. Based on the input, children produce rote-learned utterances like (1a) or pared-down utterances like (1b). In a longitudinal study, two children produced non-adult utterances like (1c). It will be shown that these are not pared-down versions of adult sentences as predicted by Constructivists. Instead, it will be argued that the Generativism ties these cases together, by assuming that early child grammars project an abstract INFL category. Although INFL does not have the same morpho-phonological properties in the early grammar as it does in the target grammar, its properties are nevertheless UG compatible.

(1)   a. The cat like-s the star
         b. The cat like-(the star
         b. The cat s like the star

Examining the Representational Deficit Hypothesis at the end state level: Evidence from L2 Spanish CLLD and English CLD constructions

Elena Valenzuela
McGill University and McMaster University

Representational Deficit (RD) (Hawkins 2000, 2003; Hawkins and Chan 1997; Hawkins and Liszka 2003) claims that native-like performance is the result of having mapped properties from the L2 onto L1 structures, and that fossilization occurs because of the impossibility of acquiring L2 [-interpretable] features not instantiated in the L1. In order to examine the RD claims about the L2 end state, a bidirectional study was conducted in which 15 end state speakers of L2 Spanish/L1 English and 15 end state speakers of L2 English/L1 Spanish were tested. Three tasks were administered (Sentence Completion Task, oral Sentence Selection Task, and oral Acceptability Task) targeting topic constructions and the associated interpretive properties. Results for both studies indicate that while the syntactic properties were acquired, the interpretive properties of specificity were fossilized. Implications of the data will be discussed in terms of the RD and its claims about fossilization in the end state.

When is a *dar* a car? Effects of mispronunciation and context on sound-meaning mappings

Katherine White, Lauren Wier and James Morgan
Brown University

Infants as young as 14 months have demonstrated sensitivity to phonological detail in referential tasks, distinguishing correct from incorrect mispronunciations when presented with pictures of familiar objects. However, in previous studies, infants interpreted mispronounced labels as referring to the target object, displaying an apparent mispronunciation bias. In addition, infants did not distinguish between different degrees of mispronunciations. In the current experiments, a different referential context was used to explore these two phenomena. 19-month-old infants were presented with picture pairs including one familiar and one unfamiliar object. Infants were told to look at either the familiar object or the unfamiliar object; the name of the familiar object was either pronounced correctly or mispronounced by one, two, or three phonetic features. Findings reveal the extent to which referential context affects infants' interpretation of mispronounced labels and, further, whether there are conditions under which infants demonstrate sensitivity to the degree of featural mismatch.

Effects of bilingualism on the attention networks test: Its significance and implications

Sujin Yang and Barbara Lust
Cornell University

The present study took the initiative in testing bilinguals' cognitive performance in a computerized attention networks test (ANT), which has been used in brain imaging studies. The ANT is designed to probe developmental differences in attentional networks of alerting, orienting, and executive control in terms of percentage accuracy and reaction time. We tested four-year-old English monolinguals and Korean-English bilinguals, on the Dimension Change Card Sort (DCCS) and the ANT. We hypothesized that if bilingualism was beneficial to the development of executive attention, bilinguals would outperform monolinguals in the DCCS and ANT that tested the same processing variance. Our ANT results support a positive relation between early childhood bilingualism and executive attention. However, they raise issues about the relation between tasks assumed to test executive attention, since the two tasks did not correlate. We discuss significance and implications of the ANT results and the contrasting findings in the DCCS.

Tags are learnable, aren't they?:
The status of polarity in children's tag question rules

Andrea Zukowski and Jaiva Larsen
University of Maryland

Children show asymmetric development of different aspects of English tag questions, with early mastery of pronoun and auxiliary requirements, but very late mastery of the polarity mis-matching requirement. Surprisingly, little is known about the status of polarity in children's individual grammars (i.e. do children probablistically follow adult polarity patterns, or do they genuinely overgenerate?). We examined individual polarity patterns for 20 children (age 4-7) in an elicited production study and a grammaticality judgment study. The results suggest that most children have grammars that robustly generate non-adult tags. Yet most children do eventually get polarity right in tags (Weckerly et al. 2004). We show how a recent pragmatic account of the polarity mismatching requirement (Romero & Han 2004) may help to resolve this paradox. We also present results from 27 people with Williams syndrome from the same tasks, and discuss the implications of the pragmatic account for understanding their performance.

SATURDAY 9:00 AM

Session A--Metcalf Large

What's special about speech? Evidence from a contrast
between rules and statistics

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Session A--Metcalf Large

Generalizing phonotactic regularities across vowel contexts in infancy

Kyle Chambers and Kristine Onishi
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

Phonotactic regularities are language specific and affect language processing, but the mechanism and representations involved in their acquisition remain underspecified. Recent work demonstrated that novel consonant-position and consonant-vowel (CV) regularities can be rapidly learned by adults and infants implicitly tracking distributional information in the linguistic input and that adults can generalize these newly learned phonotactic regularities to novel vowel contexts regardless of vowel similarity. Do infants' representations allow generalization to new vowel contexts (e.g., 'f' is an onset) or are they limited to specific CV transitions? After listening to consonant-position regularities in two vowel contexts, infants discriminated between syllables that followed and violated the consonant-position regularity even though it now occurred in a new vowel context. Hence, infants' speech sound representations both maintain detailed information and allow for generalization to novel tokens and CV combinations. This generalization suggests that infants' phonological representations, like adults', support the abstraction of rules.

Session B--Conference Auditorium

The impact of phonological and morphological complexity on past tense inflection

Heather van der Lely and Chloe Marshall
University College London

An ongoing focus of psycholinguistic research concerns whether past tense production is best modelled by a single mechanism or a words and rules model. Investigating children with Specific Language Impairment can illuminate this debate. Although children with Grammatical-SLI are impaired in both regular and irregular inflection, regular inflection is disproportionately affected (van der Lely & Ullman, 2001). We argue that alongside a syntactic impairment in tense-marking, G-SLI children are impaired in regular inflection because of deficits in forming morphologically and phonologically complex forms. We test this hypothesis by considering two aspects of inflected verb-end structure: (1) morphological complexity (as revealed by phonotactics): the presence of consonant clusters that are either legal (occur in monomorphemic forms), or illegal (do not occur in monomorphemic forms), and (2) phonological complexity: the presence versus absence of consonant clusters. Our results indicate that autonomous deficits in morphology and phonology interact in regular past tense formation in G-SLI.

Session C--Terrace Lounge

What transfers? Word-integrity and assimilation in Korean/English interlanguage

Elizabeth Zsiga, Georgetown University
Hyouk-Keun Kim, Speechworks, Intl.

Previous studies of L2 pronunciation have found a "word integrity" principle: learners tend to pronounce words separately, with no assimilation between them. This study investigates word integrity in Korean/English interlanguage, focusing on two cross-word-boundary assimilations that apply in native Korean: nasal assimilation, a categorical phonological change, and voicing assimilation, a gradient phonetic effect. Sixteen Korean learners of English read English sentences where nasal assimilation or voicing assimilation was possible. The extent of nasalization and voicing in all tokens was measured. A word-integrity effect was not supported: both nasal assimilation and voicing assimilation were evident. However, voicing assimilation applied more often than nasal assimilation, and there was a significant effect of level of instruction on nasal assimilation but not on voicing assimilation. These differences suggest that instruction can help learners overcome transfer errors involving categorical substitutions, but that routines of articulatory coordination, even across word boundaries, transfer more readily.

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Session A--Metcalf Large

Statistical learning in speech: Syllables or segments?

Elissa Newport, Daniel J. Weiss,
Elizabeth Wonnacott and Richard Aslin
University of Rochester

A central issue in statistical learning concerns the units of analysis over which computations are performed. Initial studies of statistical word segmentation utilized artificial languages where either syllable-to-syllable or consonant-to-vowel statistics could be used to parse speech streams. However, recent studies suggest that adults, infants, and monkeys may parse speech streams using different units of analysis. Here we investigate this question directly.

Three studies test whether learners perform a word segmentation task by computing the statistics of syllables, phonemic segments, or both types of units. Our results indicate that adults parse streams using a highly articulated representation of speech, including both syllable and segment statistics and their interrelationships. Still underway are the same studies with infants and monkeys. One possibility is that more primitive listeners encode speech only in terms of syllables. Infants may then develop the ability to perform computations over segments with maturation, or through statistical learning itself.

Session B--Conference Auditorium

A syntactic deficit in Down Syndrome: Evidence from Serbo-Croatian

Alexandra Perovic
Massachusetts Institute of Technology

This study investigates knowledge of binding in Serbo-Croatian speakers with Down Syndrome (DS). Young adults with DS showed significant difficulties in assigning an appropriate interpretation to the reflexive pronoun, governed by Principle A of standard Binding Theory (Chomsky, 1981), in contrast to personal pronouns, constrained by Principle B. In addition, they performed significantly worse on the full reflexive form as opposed to the reflexive clitic form. The pattern found contrasted sharply with two groups of matched younger, typically developing children, who showed mastery of constraints governing all pronominal elements. However, the performance of subjects with DS was in line with that reported by Perovic (2001), Clahsen & Ring (2003) for English-speakers with DS, revealing a particular deficiency in establishing a binding relation between an anaphor and its antecedent. The findings further support the argument that grammar, in comparison to other linguistic modules, is inordinately impaired in DS.

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Session C--Terrace Lounge

The effectiveness of a prosody-oriented approach in L2 perception and production

Mamiko Akita
Waseda University

A pretest-treatment-posttest design study was conducted to compare the changes in the perceptual/production abilities of Japanese English learners as a result of two instructional procedures: segmental and prosody-oriented approach. The basic teaching procedures were identical for all three groups (prosody, segmental, & control). The only treatment difference among the groups was that the prosody group received prosody-focused instruction while the segmental group received training to discriminate/articulate individual sounds. The results show that in the two pre-tests, there was no statistically significant inter-group difference. Regarding perception, significant improvement was observed for all three groups in the post-test. Regarding production, only the segmental and prosody groups exhibited improvement; the prosody group outperformed the segmental group in the post-test phase of the production test. The results provide new pedagogical evidence that the prosody-oriented approach was effective in improving learners' perception and production, and it was more effective than the segmental-oriented approach regarding production.

Session A--Metcalf Large

Gesture is at the cutting edge of early language development

Seyda Özçalıskan and Susan Goldin-Meadow
University of Chicago

At the one-word stage children use gesture to supplement their speech ("eat"+point at cookie). The age at which children first produce supplementary gesture-speech combinations reliably predicts the onset of two-word speech. Gesture thus signals a child's readiness to produce multi-word sentences. The question is what happens next. Gesture could continue to expand a child's communicative repertoire, combining with words to convey increasingly more complex ideas. Alternatively, after serving as an opening wedge into language, gesture could cease its role as a forerunner of linguistic change. Our analysis of 40 children, at 14, 18, and 22 months, showed that children increased their supplementary gesture-speech combinations over time. More importantly, the types of supplementary combinations changed over time and presaged changes in their speech. Children produced three distinct constructions across the two modalities several months before these constructions appeared entirely within speech, suggesting that gesture provides stepping-stones to increasingly more complex linguistic constructions.

Session B--Conference Auditorium

Overcoming the poverty-of-the-stimulus:
Scrambled indefinites in English-Dutch interlanguage

Sharon Unsworth
Utrecht Institute of Linguistics

When an indefinite NP object in Dutch is 'scrambled' from its preverbal base position (1) to a (traditionally) VP-adjoined position (2), it is generally associated with a 'specific' interpretation. For the English-speaking L2er of Dutch, acquiring the interpretive difference between (1)/(2) presents a POS problem. Truth-value-judgement data were collected from 31 English-speaking L2ers of Dutch. 19.4% (6/31) produced native-like responses, suggesting that it is possible for L2ers to come to know targetlike restrictions on <form, meaning> pairings, despite the POS. Nevertheless, most subjects exhibit an L1-based response pattern. An account of the L2ers' response patterns is sought in the overlap between L1 transfer and L2 input.

(1)   Het meisje heeft twee keer [een bal] gegooid
        [specific/non-specific]
        the girl has two times   a ball thrown
        'The girl threw a(ny) ball twice.'
(2)   Het meisje heeft [een bal] twee keer t_i gegooid
        [specific/*non-specific]
        'The girl threw a (certain) ball twice.'

Session C--Terrace Lounge

Distinctions in past marking in child
African American English

Lisa Green, Rebecca Quigley and Nikki Seifert
University of Texas, Austin

This study focuses on how African American English (AAE)-speaking children interpret the remote past tense-aspect marker BIN, which is stressed. The experiment was conducted with 18 3 to 5-year-old AAE-speaking children and 18 3 to 5-year-old non-AAE-speaking children. The stimuli consisted of 10 scenarios. Some scenarios portrayed objects/characters as having been in a state (engaged in an activity) for a long time as compared to other objects/characters that had been in the state (engaged in the activity) for a shorter time. Participants answered questions about the stories, in which BIN preceded a verb, adjective, preposition, or noun. The AAE-speaking children did better than the control group on some BIN constructions, and the non-AAE-speaking children did insignificantly better on BIN+preposition. AAE-speaking children associate the marker BIN with the remote past. These findings and natural conversations in which participants used BIN suggest that AAE-speaking children use the marker to code distant past.

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Session A--Metcalf Large

Children's use of pointing to anchor reference during story-telling

Laura Wagner, Emily Amick, Emily Carrigan and Kris Liu
Wellesley College
Ed Kako, Swarthmore College

Young children often fail to adequately anchor their pronouns, using them deictically instead of linking to established discourse antecedents. We report on two studies examining 3-year-olds' use of an explicit deictic gesture - pointing - and its role in anchoring reference when children told stories from cartoon pictures. Experiment 1 asked if pointing substituted for linguistically based anchoring: for half the stories, children were prevented from using their hands. Results showed children pointed more when referents were not already anchored linguistically or via common ground, but showed no significant effects of the hands/no-hands manipulation. Experiment 2 asked if pointing was socially sensitive: Children told half the stories to a listener unable to see the pictures. Children's rate of pointing was not affected by the listener's status. We argue that pointing is not directly incorporated into children's linguistic system but complements their linguistic performance. Moreover, it serves a child-internal cognitive function, not a communicative one.

Session B--Conference Auditorium

Knowledge of mood distinctions in L2 Spanish

Claudia Borgonovo, Laval University
Joyce Bruhn de Garavito, The University of Western Ontario
Philippe Prévost, Laval University

We investigate ultimate attainment in L2 acquisition by focusing on the acquisition of mood distinctions in Spanish relative clauses by English-speaking learners. Mood in such contexts signals the specificity of the modified NP, with indicative yielding a specific interpretation and subjunctive a non-specific one (see Quer 2001). Moreover, subjunctive is licensed in intensional environments such as those created by strong intensional predicates, negation, imperatives, and future, and are ungrammatical in any other environment. A truth-value interpretation (TVI) task and a grammaticality judgment (GJ) task were administered to 20 English-speaking advanced learners of Spanish and 12 native speakers. The learners performed within the controls' range in the TVI task, which suggests that native-like knowledge can be attained in L2 acquisition (contra Coppetiers 1987). In the GJ task, however, they did not accept all grammatical sentences with the subjunctive, which suggests that certain intensional contexts were not identified as licensing environments.

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Session C--Terrace Lounge

The development of tense and aspect in child Korean

Kyung Sook Shin
University of Hawai'i at Manoa

This study investigates the acquisition of inherent lexical aspect and the tense marker -*ess* in the naturalistic speech of two Korean children (1;7-2;5) and the speech directed to them. It shows that the children initially used -*ess* with punctual activity verbs and telic verbs to refer to perfective aspect rather than past tense, which supports the Grammatical Aspect Hypothesis (Wagner 2001). However, the mothers used -*ess* primarily with durative activity verbs to encode past tense, which contradicts the Distributional Bias Hypothesis (Li 1989). Finally, it was found that the children started to use time adverbs when they began to use the tense marker to refer to past events, which supports the Cognitive Limitation Hypothesis (Bronckart & Sinclair 1973). This supports the position that children acquire aspect earlier than past tense and develop the temporal concepts in the following steps: pre-temporal stage > aspect stage > past tense stage.

LUNCH SYMPOSIUM

The emergence of linguistic knowledge

Stephen Crain
University of Maryland at College Park

According to nativists, children are expected to form linguistic generalizations that are not even suggested by the input. Evidence of such generalizations has been obtained in experimental studies of young children's production and interpretation of language. This talk will briefly rehearse the kinds of poverty-of-stimulus arguments that have become the stock-in-trade of linguists working in the generative tradition, and these arguments will be backed up with findings from research on child language.

LUNCH SYMPOSIUM

Where does grammar come from?
A usage-based view

Michael Tomasello
Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology

Presents the position that language structure emerges from language use (including both comprehension and production) in historical and ontogenetic time.

LUNCH SYMPOSIUM

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DVDs will be made available at cost. An email with price and ordering information will be sent to all registrants in late November.

LUNCH SYMPOSIUM

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Session A--Metcalf Large

Novelty and regularization:
The effect of novel instances on rule formation

Elizabeth Wonnacott and Elissa L. Newport
The University of Rochester

Previous researchers have distinguished between statistical learning (words) and rule learning (syntax). We suggest that a more crucial distinction is whether learners are asked about experienced instances or whether they must generalize regarding novel cases.

Subjects were exposed to a miniature language in which a construction - either word order or a determiner - was used inconsistently. Subjects were then tested to see if they would regularize that construction in their own sentence productions. When subjects used 'old' vocabulary (nouns and verbs previously heard in the construction), they reproduced the inconsistencies of their input. In contrast, when they used 'new' vocabulary (nouns and verbs that had only been presented during vocabulary training), they showed regularization, using the inconsistent constructions in highly consistent, rule-guided ways. Adult learners thus appear to form rules to guide their production of variable structures, but only when they do not have access to particular instances in their input.

Session B--Conference Auditorium

From V2 to V2:
Swedish learners of German

Ute Bohnacker
Lund University

Germanic verb second is often said to be difficult for L2ers irrespective of their L1. Recent work on Swedish/German (vulnerable C-domain, processability) claims that speakers of a V2-language learning another V2-language start with a non-V2 interlanguage grammar, i.e. don't transfer V2, but follow a universal developmental path of verb placement.

I contest this claim, documenting extremely early V2 production by post-puberty Swedish ab-initio learners of German (4 & 9 months exposure, quantified new oral data), at a time when their interlanguage syntax elsewhere is nontargetlike (e.g. head-initial VPs (VO)). For informants for whom German is their first L2, V2 is 100% targetlike, but for those with substantial previous exposure to English, V2 is only 45%. This suggests that there is no universal developmental route, that learners do make use of their V2-L1 syntax, and that knowledge of a non-V2 language (English) can make it initially harder to acquire another V2.

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Session C--Terrace Lounge

Rhymes as a window into grammar

Paula Fikkert, University of Nijmegen
Marieke van Heugten,
Max Planck Institute for Psycholinguistics
Philo Offermans, University of Nijmegen
Tania Zamuner, Max Planck Institute for Psycholinguistics

Fikkert and Levelt (2004) argue that children's early production preferences give rise to emerging constraints. When the child's lexicon contains initial labials, a constraint is generated directing labials to word-initial position. The data contain no dorsal-initial words, leading to a constraint against word-initial dorsals. Coronals freely occur; hence, no specific coronal constraints emerge. We asked whether these early constraints show up as preferences in the grammars of older children and adults. Participants (4-5 years, 7-8 years and adults) were asked to rhyme to non-words with either a dorsal onset and a labial coda or a coronal in both onset and coda. 4-5 year-old children had a preference for word-initial labials. For the older children and adults, responses differed depending on the rhyme prime. Across all groups, dorsal-initial responses were produced least, suggesting that dorsals are avoided initially. Results showed that early-emerged constraints show up as preferences in later stages.

Session A--Metcalf Large

How informative is input frequency?

Heike Behrens
University of Groningen

This study analyzes the distributional information and production rates in a particularly rich corpus of German child and adult language. All of the 500,000 words produced by the child (age 2-5) and a size-matched sample of the input are coded for (1) the part-of-speech, (2) the internal constituency of the 300,000 noun phrases (2) and the 200,000 verb complexes (3). In these domains the distribution in the adult input is extremely homogenous over time and thus has high cue validity. Moreover, the child shows a steady approximation to the adult distribution. The amount and steadiness of information about the structure and conventions of German in the input data provides support for earlier findings from usage-based and probabilistic theories of language acquisition. Here, connectionist simulations or probabilistic models showed, for example, that part-of-speech information can be extracted from surface co-occurrence relations.

Session B--Conference Auditorium

Scope and reconstruction of wh-movement in Japanese-English interlanguage

Mari Umeda
McGill University

Learners whose L1 lacks overt wh-movement have been argued to be unable to represent overt wh-movement in the L2 (Hawkins 2001). There are two major proposals for nonnative-like representations for overt wh-movement: One assumes that the wh-phrase is base-generated in the topic position, binding a pro in an argument position (White 1992), and the other assumes that the wh-phrase is fronted using a scrambling operation (Hawkins 2001). This study investigates the validity of these proposals by examining the availability of reconstruction and scope freezing, both present in "real" wh-movement. Nineteen Japanese-speaking learners of English (Japanese has no overt wh-movement) and twelve English native speakers were tested for their knowledge of scope freezing with an acceptability judgment task, and reconstruction with a grammaticality judgment task. The results from the L2 group showed almost no statistically significant differences from the native speakers group, suggesting that interlanguage representations are consistent with "real" wh-movement.

Session C--Terrace Lounge

Constraint interaction in word-medial cluster reduction patterns

Della Chambless
University of Massachusetts at Amherst

Sonority has been claimed to play a role in word edge cluster reduction patterns in child phonology, in so far as low sonority consonants are typically those retained in onsets, while higher sonority consonants are preferred as codas. The focus of the present study is reduction in intervocalic s-stop clusters. In this position as well, sonority is predicted to influence deletion choices. In addition, experimental and corpora data reveal differences in patterns of preservation in s-stop clusters based on both word position (initial vs. medial) and prosody. While inter-child variation is evident, in general, /s/ is selected over the stop more frequently in word-medial than in word-initial position; furthermore, the ratio of /s/ to stop preservation is greater following a stressed syllable than an unstressed syllable and following a lax vowel than a tense vowel. Individual and group results are shown to be products of universal constraint activity and interaction.

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Session A--Metcalf Large

Lexical growth and acquisition of morphological forms

Filip Smolik
University of Kansas

The study investigates the relationship between the acquisition of morphological forms in English, their frequency in the language input, and the potential moderating effect of linguistic category on this relationship. Data from CHILDES Manchester corpus (12 children aged 23 - 36 mo.) are used to explore the acquisition timing of English regular and irregular past tense forms, 3sg. present, and regular plurals. Survival analysis and multilevel modeling indicate that the lag between the acquisition of an unmarked form and the corresponding marked form is shorter in forms that are more frequent in the input. This means that input frequency indeed determines some of the acquisition order. However, the relationship between input frequency and acquisition is different in each linguistic category investigated. This suggests that input frequency is not sufficient to explain the order of acquisition, and that linguistic factors play indispensable, though unclear, role in acquisition timing.

Session B--Conference Auditorium

Verb position and verb form in English-speaking children's L2 acquisition of German

Jennie Tran
University of Hawai'i at Manoa

L1 acquisition data indicate that children know very early the German position-form contingency: finite verbs in V2 position; nonfinite verbs in verb-final position (e.g. Poeppel & Wexler 1993). The present paper investigates whether child L2 learners pattern like child L1 learners, reporting on young English speakers' acquisition of (nonsubject-initial) verb second (V2) in German. Fifteen L1 English child L2 learners of German completed two elicited-production tasks, one targeting topicalized-DO sentences, the other targeting topicalized-PP sentences. Age at testing ranged from 8;2 to 14;0 (age at onset: 4;0–5;0). The results show that the child L2ers do not pattern like L1 German children. The results (i) contest Prévost's (1997) extension of Truncation to child L2 acquisition, (ii) are more compatible with Missing Inflection (Haznedar & Schwartz 1997), and (iii) suggest that (unlike in L1 acquisition but like in adult L2 acquisition) verb form and verb position are not developmentally interdependent in child L2 acquisition.

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Session C--Terrace Lounge

Swedish word accents in early production (revisited)

Mitsuhiko Ota
University of Edinburgh

One way in which children may unravel the phonological system that underlies pitch movements in the ambient language is to identify contour patterns that reliably recur with linguistic units such as syllables, words and utterances. This hypothesis predicts that the aspect of word accent in Stockholm Swedish that is acquired first, if any, should be the falling contour on the stressed syllable -- the invariable cue that marks Accent 2 from Accent 1. Contrary to this prediction, previous investigations concluded that the Accent 2 fall is not acquired before the more variable rising contour on the post-stress syllable. A reanalysis shows, however, that the falling contour is in fact present in the spontaneous speech of children between 1;1 and 1;6, except that its phonetic realization is subject to the segmental makeup of the stressed syllable. These findings are consistent with the view that invariable contour patterns lead pitch phonology acquisition.

Session A--Metcalf Large

Infant speech segmentation ability predicts later language development

Nan Bernstein Ratner, Rochelle Newman and Kathy Dow
University of Maryland
Anne Marie Jusczyk, Johns Hopkins University
Peter Jusczyk

Does infants' perceptual performance in the laboratory predict their long-term language development? We examined 119 infants who had participated in a series of speech perception studies between five and 12 months of age. Infants who had been successful in specific types of studies (those requiring word segmentation between 7-9 months) had significantly higher vocabulary scores at age 2 than those who did not demonstrate such ability. In a second analysis, we followed a subset of these children (N=27), and assessed their language and cognitive abilities at age 4-6 years. Children who had been successful in infant segmentation tasks scored significantly higher than those who had been unsuccessful as infants on all language measures (p<.005); differences between groups were not found for general measures of intelligence. Results suggest that speech segmentation ability is prerequisite for timely language development, and may eventually facilitate earlier identification of infants at risk for language delay.

Session B--Conference Auditorium

Children's acquisition of benefactives and passives in Japanese

Reiko Okabe
University of California, Los Angeles

It has been reported that Japanese complex constructions with *mora-w* (receive) are acquired later than their counterparts with *age-ru* (give). However, the reason why children find *mora-w* benefactives more difficult than *age-ru* benefactives has been controversial. Also, a number of studies point out that passives are acquired later than actives. We first observe that *age-ru/mora-w* benefactives and actives/passives share a similar case-marking pattern, and both *mora-w* benefactives and passives involve A-movement. Contrary to Borer and Wexler's (1987) A-chain maturation analysis, our experimental data lead us to claim that the source of difficulty lies in the Agent marking ni-phrases (by-phrases). This claim is supported by the result that even children who found canonical case-marked *mora-w* benefactives and passives difficult could correctly comprehend them once *ni*-phrases were replaced by *kara*-phrases (*from*-phrases). We further argue that the difficulty is due to the fact that *-ni* is ambiguously goal/source/agent, whereas *-kara* is unambiguously source.

Session C--Terrace Lounge

Learning evidential morphology

Peggy Li, Harvard University
Anna Papafragou, University of Pennsylvania
Chung-hye Han, Simon Fraser University
Youngon Choi, University of Pennsylvania

This paper investigates children's acquisition of evidentiality and its relation to evidential reasoning. Previous studies suggest that the comprehension and use of evidential morphology come in relatively late, perhaps in accordance with developing cognitive abilities (Aksu-Koc 1988 on Turkish). Other research suggests that evidential suffixes appear correctly in production as early as age two (Choi 1995 on Korean). We report several new experiments testing 3 and 4-year-old Koreans' comprehension and use of evidential morphemes. A further experiment tested whether these Koreans have the (non-linguistic) ability to identify different types of evidential sources. Contrary to previous reports, we find young Koreans have difficulty with the semantics and discourse functions of evidential morphology, but are able to reason about information sources in non-linguistic tasks. Our results support the conclusion that the acquisition of evidential morphology poses considerable problems for learners. Despite previous suggestions, however, these problems are not conceptual in nature but may plausibly relate to the unavailability of obvious situational correlates when an evidential morpheme is produced.

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Session A--Metcalf Large

Language development in internationally-adopted preschoolers: Does cognitive development set the pace for early language production?

Joy Geren and Jesse Snedeker
Harvard University

Language development is characterized by predictable shifts in the complexity of children's utterances and the composition of their lexicons. What causes these shifts? Are the early stages present because the child is cognitively immature or do they represent necessary steps in decoding language? To explore this question we examined the acquisition of English in internationally-adopted preschoolers. Like infants, these children acquire language from child-directed speech in the home. However they're older and more cognitively advanced. We collected parental reports and speech samples from Chinese and Eastern-European adoptees. Adopted preschoolers showed the same patterns of acquisition as infant controls (including a one-word stage, a tight correlation between lexical and syntactic development, and an early lexicon dominated by nouns). We conclude that the characteristic patterns of early language production are not solely attributable to non-linguistic cognitive or maturational factors-they occur even in more mature learners exposed to a similar learning problem.

Session B--Conference Auditorium

Object clitics in child Romanian

Maria Babyonyshev and Stefania Marin
Yale University

In this talk we demonstrate that, contrary to earlier claims in the literature (Avram 1999), Romanian children do not omit object clitics at a significant rate. Eliciting third person singular object clitics from 25 monolingual Romanian children aged 2;0-3;10, we found that children with MLU over 2.0 have a low clitic omission rate (14%), while children with MLU under 2.0 show a high rate of clitic omission (84%). Thus, if a Romanian child is capable of producing utterances of the length required in the clitic constructions (has MLU greater than 2.0), than she experiences no additional problems with object clitics, demonstrating that her grammar is capable of generating them. However, in a number of other Romance languages, such as French and Italian, object clitics remain problematic even after the required MLU is reached. We provide an explanation of this cross-linguistic difference based on the Unique Checking Constraint hypothesis (Wexler 1998).

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Session C--Terrace Lounge

Who can you trust? A closer look at preschoolers' developing sensitivity to epistemic expressions

Tomoko Matsui, International Christian University
Taeko Yamamoto, Kyorin University
Peter McCagg, International Christian University

In this study, Japanese-speaking children aged 3 to 7 were confronted with making choices based on conflicting input from speakers who varied in the degree of certainty and the quality of evidence they possessed for their opinions. Certainty and evidentiality are encoded in Japanese both in high-frequency, procedurally indicative sentence-final particles and also in low-frequency, conceptually more complex mental predicates. Our results suggest that children are able to make use of information encoded in the sentence-final particles earlier than information encoded in verbs; and understanding of speaker certainty precedes understanding of quality of evidence. Furthermore, although the results confirmed that children's overall understanding of epistemic vocabulary was correlated with their understanding of false-belief, detailed analyses revealed that understanding of sentence-final particles on its own did not correlate with false-belief understanding. We suggest that early understanding of sentence-final particles is based on children's implicit understanding of other's mental states.

PLENARY ADDRESS

Beauty and awe: Language acquisition as high science

Ken Wexler
Massachusetts Institute of Technology

The general point of this talk is that the investigation of language acquisition is capable of achieving (and to some extent has achieved) the status of high science - the ability to grasp reality with clear models and precise experimentation yielding categorical data that allows for crucial experiments. Furthermore, the study of development is beginning to have important applications, including studies of impaired language and ultimately the ability to do genetics of language. I'll start with a recent examples of the major steps that the field has made in the last 20 years. One of them will be the beautiful cross-linguistic generalization about clitic omission: (Given that a language has morphological marking to show the relevant features), a child will omit object clitics in a language if that language shows participial agreement with the clitic. This generalization follows from the Unique Checking Constraint, which is right given the time overlap of clitic omission with the Optional Infinitive stage. The stunning success of studies of early finiteness, its maturational basis, integration with linguistic theory and ability to foster work among a wide variety of scientists is something we should attempt to duplicate in other areas. The major topic of the talk is the classic A-chain problem. We know that verbal passives and unaccusatives are delayed until children are about 5 or 6. The A-Chain Delay Hypothesis is the classic explanation for this fact. But there is a major problem with the analysis - namely children raise subjects out of VP's with no problem at this age, and that raising is an A-chain. So we have spoken about object to subject A-chains, but the problem has now been solved. A new theory of development captures the facts precisely. The assumption is that children have no defective phases; all vP's and CP's are phasal. Thus verbal passives and unaccusatives are ungrammatical as are subject to subject raising structures. But raising the subject out of vP is fine for the child, because it comes at an edge; there is no need for defective phases. I will review experiments that show that non-actional verbal passives (short and long) are delayed, go through unaccusative delay (e.g. omission of NOM in Japanese unaccusatives) and delay of raising structures. Then we will see that the theory predicts that if these defective phase structures are tested via a wh-phrase argument, the theory predicts no problem for the children (via Fox-Reinhart arguments). An experiment confirms this stunning prediction. The attempt is to move the study of more complex structures than finiteness into the realm of high science.
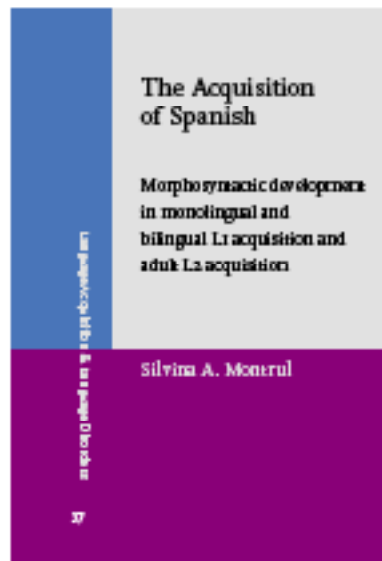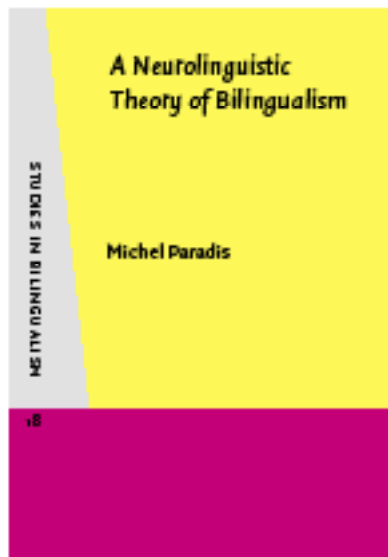
Does event cognition influence children's motion event expressions?

Amanda Brown, Boston University, Max Planck Institute
Aslı Özyürek, Koç University,
Shanley Allen, Boston University
Sotaro Kita, University of Bristol, Tomoko Ishizuka, UCLA,
Reyhan Furman, Bogaziçi University

This study focuses on cognitive understanding of the relationship between Manner and Path. Narratives were elicited from 20 3-year-olds and 20 adults using 6 animated motion events that were divided into two groups based on Goldberg's (1997) distinction between causal (Manner-inherent; e.g. roll down) and non-causal (Manner-incidental; e.g. spin while going up) relationships between Manner and Path. The data revealed that adults and children are sensitive to differences between inherent and incidental Manner. Adults significantly reduced use of canonical syntactic constructions for Manner-incidental events, using other constructions. Children, however, while significantly reducing use of canonical syntactic constructions for Manner-incidental events, did not use alternative constructions. Instead, they omitted Manner from their speech altogether. A follow-up lexical task showed that children had knowledge of all omitted Manners. Given that this strategic omission of Manner is not lexically motivated, the results are discussed in relation to implications for pragmatics and memory load.

Overt subject distribution in early Italian children

Claudia Caprin, University of Milano-Bicocca
Paolo Lorusso, Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona

The distribution of the subjects in early Italian productions is used to retrieve information about the grammatical knowledge of children. We performed a cross-sectional study of 59 children's productions (age 22/35 months) and a longitudinal study of 4 children's utterances (age 18/39 months).

The subject use was analyzed in:
* copula versus lexical verbs.
* unaccusative versus unergative/transitive.
The overt subjects were analyzed for:
* the nominal/pronominal status.
* the pre/post verbal position.

We found that the subject use is greater with copula than main verbs and with unaccusative than unergative verbs and that SV order is preferred with *to be*, "transitive" and "unergative" verbs, while VS order with "unaccusative" verbs. These findings suggest that children distinguish between copula and lexical verbs and between "unergative" and "unaccusative" verbs, showing that the subject of the unaccusative verbs is generated in internal argument position.

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When transparency doesn't mean ease: Learning the meaning of verbs and verb compounds by Mandarin-speaking children

Jidong Chen
Max Planck Institute for Psycholinguistics

In learning the meaning of a verb, children have to figure out how meaning components are lexicalised in the language they are acquiring (Tomasello 1998; Behrens 1998). The referential terrain covered by an English change-of-state verb is conceptually divided into two portions in a Mandarin verb compound, while the majority of Mandarin verbs are either moot-fulfillment (like *hunt*) or implied-fulfillment types (like *wash*) (Talmy 2000). This study investigates Mandarin children's knowledge of the meanings of verb compounds and individual verbs on the basis of Wittek's study of German children's acquisition of change-of-state verbs (1999). Four groups of children (mean age 2;6, 3;6, 4;6, 6;2) and an adult group participated in an elicitation task. The results reveal that though the transparency in form facilitates their learning of the meanings of verb compounds, Mandarin children have difficulties in unpacking the meanings of individual verbs, which suggests the learning of verb meanings is language-specific.

Associations between native and nonnative speech sound discrimination and language development at the end of the first year

Barbara Conboy, Maritza Rivera-Gaxiola, Lindsay Klarman, Elif Askylou and Patricia Kuhl
University of Washington

One explanation for the preference for native over nonnative phoneme discrimination observed towards the end of the first year is that language experience produces a neural commitment to the features of native-language speech (Kuhl 2000b). Studies have further suggested that this pattern is linked to subsequent language learning (Kuhl et al. 2004; Tsao et al. 2003). We hypothesized that the extent to which perception favors native over nonnative speech at 11 months is also related to emerging language abilities at that same age. Infants from English-speaking homes were tested on English and Spanish phonemic contrasts during a single head turn session. As predicted, performance was better for the native vs. non-native contrast at 11 months, although it was similar for both contrasts at 7 months. Word comprehension at 11 months was negatively related to nonnative discrimination ability, and positively related to the degree of preference for native vs. nonnative discrimination.

The acquisition of English particle verbs by native Spanish speakers

Jill Gilkerson
University of California, Los Angeles

This study investigates the acquisition of particle verbs by native Spanish-speaking adults and children learning English as a second language. There is no Spanish analog to the English particle verb, so it provides a unique opportunity to explore both transfer effects and UG access. 33 native Spanish-speaking adults and 32 native Spanish-speaking kindergarten children completed an elicited production and grammaticality judgment task. Results from both tasks indicate that while adult and child second language learners demonstrate similarities with respect to avoidance behavior and transfer effects, they are markedly different in other domains. I discuss the results as they relate to various theories of L2 acquisition, including the Full Transfer/Full Access Hypothesis (Schwartz and Sprouse 1994, 1996) and the Fundamental Difference Hypothesis (Bley-Vroman 1989).

18-month-old infants' sensitivity to number agreement inside the noun phrase

Ana C. Gouvea, Gabriela Aldana, Todd Bell, Kate Cody, Cy de Groat, Charlotte Johnson, Devon McCabe, Lindsey Zimmerman and John J. Kim
San Francisco State University

The Headturn Preference Procedure is used to investigate whether 18-month-old children are sensitive to morphosyntactic dependencies in the noun system as they are to such dependencies in the verb system (Santelmann & Jucszyk 1998). To test this, 8 grammatical passages each consisting of 6 sentences with grammatical dependencies between the determiner and the noun (e.g. *the puppies hid behind the tree*) were constructed. A matching 8 ungrammatical passages were constructed by replacing *the* with *a* (e.g. *a puppies hid behind the tree*). Listening times to grammatical and to ungrammatical passages was the dependent measure.

18-month-old children listened longer to grammatical passages (6.6s) than to ungrammatical passages (5.4s) (t (23) = 2.06, p<.05), showing that 18-month-old children are sensitive to morphosyntactic dependencies in the noun system. Various explanations for the results and directions for future research are discussed.

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Crosslinguistic influence and subject realization in early Hebrew/English bilingual acquisition

Aviya Hacohen and Jeanette Schaeffer
Ben-Gurion University of the Negev

This paper reports the results of a study on the use of (c)overt subjects by a child acquiring Hebrew and English simultaneously. Early spontaneous Hebrew data were collected from one bilingual girl, EK, and compared with a group of five monolingual controls. The children were 2;11,25-3;2,15 years old. Hebrew is a partially pro-drop language, in which subjects are grammatically optional when the verb is in the 1st/2nd person past/future tense. Our analysis of the children's data shows that the production rate of inappropriate overt subjects is more than five times higher for EK than it is for the monolinguals. Our results strongly suggest that influence from English occurs in the domain of subject realization in Hebrew in the context of bilingual acquisition, providing support for Hulk &Müller's hypothesis that crosslinguistic influence does not occur at random, but rather, that it is a systematic and predictable phenomenon.

How a poverty-of-the stimulus problem can be overcome in SLA: Identifying L2 trigger input

Sharon Unsworth, Utrecht Institute of Lingusitics
Masahiro Hara, Truman State University

Many generative SLA studies have demonstrated that L2 learners can overcome poverty-of-the stimulus (POS) problems, but little is known how this process occurs. The paper addresses this question drawing on GJ data on Japanese passives gathered from intermediate to advanced English and Chinese learners. It capitalizes on related but different semantic properties of Japanese passives (those available in L2 input (trigger properties) and others unavailable (POS properties)) as well as on typological differences in passives of the three languages, to wit, the English passive has neither of the above properties, but that the Chinese passives have both. The paper shows that English learners who acquired the POS properties had learned the trigger properties, but that same sufficient learning condition did not hold for Chinese learners. It thus identifies L2 input whose incorporation into IL grammar may lead to overcoming POS problems.

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Understanding the link between complexity and regularization: What counts as complex?

Carla Hudson Kam
University of California, Berkeley

Hudson & Newport (2001) found that increasing the number of inconsistent forms in a miniature artificial language increased regularization of the more common probabilistic grammatical patterns. They suggested that this might be an effect of complexity: when input contains patterns that are highly complex learners fail to acquire all of the variation and focus on the most common patterns. Gomez (2002) reports a similar finding. Here we ask whether any apparent complexity has this effect, or whether more specific types of complexity are required. We exposed adult learners to a language containing a high degree of complexity but no inconsistency. Over nouns as a class, the statistics of determiner usage were exactly the same as in Hudson & Newport. However, for individual nouns, determiners were completely consistent. Learners in the present study did not regularize the determiners, suggesting that complexity in and of itself is not enough. Instead, unpredictably may be necessary to induce regularization.

Grammatical gender and early word recognition in Dutch

Elizabeth Johnson
Max Planck Institute for Psycholinguistics

In Dutch, neuter nouns are preceded by the definite determiner *het* and common nouns are preceded by the definite determiner *de*. Dutch toddlers often produce determiners incorrectly, or omit them from their utterances all together. This could be taken as evidence that Dutch toddlers have not yet mastered the determiner system of their language. However, studies with English-learning infants have demonstrated that toddlers perceive and process determiners long before they begin producing them. In the current study, we investigate infants' perception of definite determiners in Dutch, a language containing grammatical gender. Using the Split-screen Preferential Looking paradigm, 28-month-olds' recognition of familiar words was tested under three conditions: correct gender, uninformative gender (both pictures on screen have same gender), and incorrect gender. The results demonstrate that Dutch-learners recognize words fastest and most accurately when target words are preceded by determiners carrying informative and correct gender information.

Investigating the abstractness of children's early knowledge of argument structure

Kathleen McClure, City University of New York
Julian Pine, University of Nottingham
Elena Lieven, Max Planck Institute
for Evolutionary Anthropology

In the current debate about the abstractness of children's early grammatical knowledge, Tomasello and Abbott-Smith (2002) have suggested that children might first develop 'weak' or 'partial' representations of abstract syntactic structures. This paper attempts to characterize these structures by comparing the development of constructions around verbs in Tomasello's (1992) case study of Travis, with those of 10 children (Stage I-II) in a year-length, longitudinal study. The results show some evidence that children's early knowledge of argument structure is verb-specific, but also some evidence that children can generalize knowledge about argument structure across verbs. One way to explain these findings is to argue that children are learning limited scope formulae around high frequency subjects and objects, which serve as building blocks for more abstract structures such as S+V and V+0. The implication is that children may have some verb-general knowledge of the transitive construction as early as Stage I, but that this knowledge is still far from being fully abstract knowledge.

The development of discourse bridging:
Examining definiteness and time-course

Aparna Nadig, University of California, Davis
Julie Sedivy, Brown University

This study investigates children's understanding of definite descriptions as referring to discourse-given entities, in the case of part-whole bridging. 4- and 5-year-olds displayed a reliable tendency to map a novel part description to a previously mentioned referent, rather than to any perceptually available referent. However, they had this bias for both definite (*the shell*) and indefinite (*a shell*) expressions, indicating the absence of a familiarity constraint specific to definites. A clear distinction between definite and indefinite expressions in discourse bridging did not emerge until 7 to 8 years. A second experiment used eye-tracking to investigate the time course of discourse bridging. The expectation that definites refer to mentioned entities, while indefinites refer to unmentioned entities, was observed in adults' real-time processing. In contrast, 6-year-olds did not display this bias in real-time, though their judgments suggest an awareness of the pragmatic distinction between definites and indefinites with respect to discourse bridging.

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The role of L1 in the acquisition of Serbo-Croatian
second-position clitic placement

Nadezda Novakovic
University of Cambridge

The acquisition of Serbo-Croatian clitics by French and English native learners shows L1 influence from the initial to the advanced stages. Serbo-Croatian clitics raise to the highest functional head in the extended projection of the verb, and may be separated from the verb by other clausal constituents. French clitics are almost always verb-adjacent.

At the initial stages, French learners show advantage over the English one in those aspects of Serbo-Croatian clitic placement that match those of their L1. In the intermediate stages both groups of subjects produce word orders which are not characteristic either of their L1 or the L2, but can be attributed to L1 influence. They all however have problems with the language specific requirement of raising clitics above AgrSP.

The results also show that learners seem to be faster in changing the strength value of functional category features, than in acquiring features not present in their L1.

Default aspect:
Evidence from SLI children

Diane Ogiela, Michael Casby and Christina Schmitt
Michigan State University

We examined whether early use of verbal morphology in SLI children correlates with different aspectual classes, as attested in the early language of normally developing children. Applying the notion of Default Aspect (Bohnemeyer & Swift 2004), we predicted that the distribution of morphemes would be unequal across verb phrase (VP) types. As predicted by Default Aspect, the analysis of the language transcripts of SLI children from an SLI corpus of the CHILDES database showed that the past tense, which implies perfectivity in English, was used most frequently with Event VPs; the third person singular, which implies imperfectivity, was used more frequently with States and Activities than with Events; and the progressive, which states imperfectivity, was used more frequently with Activities than Events. The results for the past tense and progressive were statistically significant, although those for the third person singular did not reach such significance.

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Pronoun interpretation and the accessibility of the number
feature in Dutch child-language

Esther Ruigendijk, Nada Vasic,
Shalom Zuckerman and Maud Fontein
Utrecht Institute of Linguistics

In addition to the Delay of Principle-B effect (Chien & Wexler 1990), it has been shown (see Baauw 2000 for overview) that children also allow coreference of the pronoun and the subject in Exceptional Case Marking (ECM) constructions. A prominent account of these facts is the under-specification of the number feature model (Philip & Coopmans 1996; Baauw 2000). This model predicts no difference in children's performance with sentences where the pronoun matches the local antecedent in number vs. sentences with a number mismatch between the pronoun and the local antecedent in both ECM and Simple Transitive Sentences (STS). Our results do not support the number under-specification account; the mismatches between the pronoun and its local antecedent improve children's performance in both types of sentences. We argue that the data on children's interpretation of pronouns are better captured within an economy based approach, as argued by Zuckerman et al. (2001).

POSTER SESSION II

The acquisition of Japanese topicalization and the role of discourse context

Tetsuya Sano, Meiji Gakuin University

Japanese canonical active sentences have an SOV word order. In this paper, I inquire into children's comprehension of Japanese OSV object topicalization.Young children have difficulties in comprehending (1) (age 3-4: 30.5%(11/36), age 5-6: 59.4%(38/64)). However, when the topicalized phrase is introduced in previous discourse and it is accompanied by a definite marker *sono* 'that', as in (2), children of the same age performed very well with it (age 3-4: 80.6%(29/36), age 5-6: 100%(64/64)). Thus, young children do not lack grammatical knowledge of topicalization.confirming the Continuity Assumption of grammatical competence (see Otsu (1994) for a similar analysis.

(1)   buta-wa zou-ga ketobashi-masi-ta.
          pig-Top elephant-Nom kick-Polite-Past
          'The pig, the elephant kicked.'
(2)   zou, kaeru ga i-masi-ta.sokoe buta-ga yatteki-masi-ta. sono
          buta-wa zou-ga ketobashi-masi-ta.
          elephant frog-Nom be-Polite-Past there pig-Nom come-
          Polite-Past pig-Top elephant-Nom kick-Polite-Past
          'There was an elephant and a frog, and there came a pig.
          That pig, the elephant kicked.'

POSTER SESSION II

Anaphora resolution in monolingual and bilingual acquisition

Ludovica Serratrice
University of Manchester

This study reports the results of an experiment on the anaphoric interpretation of null and overt pronominal subjects in Italian by a group of English-Italian bilingual eight-year-olds, a group of age-matched Italian monolinguals and a group of adult Italian monolinguals. The participants were administered a picture verification task to select between three different anaphoric interpretations of the null/overt subject in the test sentences: subject, object, or new referent. There were no significant differences in the acceptance of null pronouns as co-referential with either a subject or an object antecedent in the three groups. By contrast, overt pronominals were accepted as co-referential with a subject significantly more often by the bilingual children than by the monolingual children and the adults. Monolingual children also accepted pragmatically inappropriate overt pronominal subjects significantly more often than adults. The interpretation of ambiguous subject pronouns poses non-trivial problems to children as old as eight, with children exposed to a non-pro-drop language exhibiting more protracted and more significant effects.

POSTER SESSION II

The role of input in the acquisition of generic NPs

Elisa Sneed
Northwestern University

Much recent work by Gelman and colleagues (Gelman 2004; inter alia) has shown that parents use all types of noun phrases (NPs) to refer to generic concepts, and has argued that children must therefore rely heavily on contextual cues and world knowledge to determine whether a given utterance was generic. In short, these authors argued that the input by itself, except in the broadest sense (i.e., children can attend to the use of the plural when their caregiver says, for example, *They bark* in the presence of a single dog) is uninformative regarding generic interpretation. In this paper, I show that a more careful examination of a subset of the transcripts used in these studies (Gelman & Raman 2003; Gelman & Tardif 1998) reveals a systematic distribution of types of noun phrases in the input that a child could latch onto to learn about the expression of genericity.

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Frequency effect on the development of syllable structure in Japanese children

Maki Takahashi
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

This study investigates the effect of frequency in mothers' speech on the development of different syllable structures in Japanese children. Japanese children are observed to develop from the unmarked to the marked syllable structure (Ota 1999), but what role the input frequency plays in Japanese has not been studied yet. In the present study, frequency order of different syllable types in mothers' speech was compared with the acquisition order of those suggested in Ota (1999) and Takahashi (2003). The result suggests that the input frequency order of different syllable types can strongly predict the course of acquisition suggested by Ota and children's frequencies of errors in different syllable structures examined in my previous study. These results are consistent with the crosslinguistic findings that frequency as well as markedness influence the course of phonological development (Demuth 1995; Levelt et al. 2000; Ota 1999; Stites et al. 2004).

Interpreting derived *-er* nominals

Angeliek van Hout and Andrea Bos
University of Groningen

We present new evidence that children learning English are overly liberal in their interpretation of deverbal nominals like sweeper of leaves. Whereas -er-nominals with an of-PP complement can only refer to Agents: the one doing the sweeping (Levin and Rappaport 1988; Van Hout and Roeper 1998), children readily allow Instrument readings: the broom the leaves are swept with. Our findings are in line with results from previous studies (Randall 1982; Johnson et al. 1996): children are not sensitive to the argument structure of derived nominals. We argue that children's -er-nominals with of-PPs don't have the underlying VP that such adult nominals have. Instead, children attach modifying of-PPs in both kinds of nominals freely which allows for interpretations as Agent and Instrument. Their lexicon-syntax interface for derived nominals is not adult-like, and they still need to learn the mapping rules of a verb's argument structure when it is nominalized.

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When can infants start discriminating languages using only visual speech information?

Whitney Weikum, Janet Werker and Athena Vouloumanos
University of British Columbia
Jordi Navarra Ordono, Salvador Soto Faraco
and Nuria Sebastian Galles
University of Barcelona

Considerable research has revealed the steps infants progress through when developing sensitivity to the phonetic and rhythmical information in their native language. This work has focused almost exclusively on information available in the acoustic signal, overlooking the rich source of phonological information available in the head and face. We tested infants on their ability to discriminate their native language from an unfamiliar language using only visual information available in the face. Six-month-old infants were habituated to silent faces of French/English bilinguals reciting sentences in either language, and then shown test trials in the same language as the habituation trials, or in the other language. Infants who watched a different language during the test trials looked significantly longer, indicating that they noticed the language switch. Four-month-old infants show a similar pattern of results. This enriches our understanding of how infants come to recognize and learn their native language.

Session A--Metcalf Large

Noun bias in Chinese children: Novel noun and verb learning in Chinese, Japanese and English preschoolers

Etsuko Haryu, University of Tokyo, Mutsumi Imai, Keio University, Hiroyuki Okada, Tokai University
Lianjing Li, Peking University
Meredith Meyer, University of Oregon
Kathy Hirsh-Pasek, Temple University
Roberta Michnick Golinkoff, University of Delaware

In the noun vs. verb controversy, the input dependent view states that the children speaking argument-dropping languages like Chinese and Japanese are learning verbs more easily than nouns since verbs appear more frequently, which contrasts with English. Chinese might be even more "verb-friendly" than Japanese, because verbs do not have morphological inflection. We investigated how these linguistic properties affect word learning by children speaking Chinese, Japanese and English. The results showed that children in all language groups learn nouns more easily than verbs, supporting the universal noun advantage view. We also found that the properties of languages affect early verb learning in an unexpected way. Although Japanese- and English-speaking five-year-olds could fast-map a novel verb to its meaning, Chinese five-year-olds tended to map a novel verb to a novel object. We propose that morphological simplicity of verbs, combined with the argument-dropping property, makes verb learning even more difficult in Chinese.

Session B--Conference Auditorium

Early acquisition of basic word order:
New evidence from Japanese

Koji Sugisaki
Mie University

It has often been suggested that children acquire the basic word-order at an early age. In this study, I present a novel piece of evidence from Japanese, a free word-order language.

In addition to its basic SOV, Japanese permits English-like SVO order. Yet, this SVO exhibits various restrictions that do not apply to SOV, which indicates that the former is a marked order, derived from the latter. For example, the SVO order is incompatible with object wh-questions.

Japanese-learning children around the age of 2;5 sometimes produce VO sentences. In order to determine whether such VO sentences in the child's speech have the same marked status as in adult Japanese, I analyzed two longitudinal corpora from the CHILDES database. Both VO sentences and direct-object wh-questions occurred reasonably often, but there was never an example of a direct-object wh-question with VO order. This finding suggests that OV is the only basic word-order even in early child Japanese.

Session C--Terrace Lounge

Learning syntactic constructions from raw corpora

Shimon Edelman, Cornell University
Zach Solan, David Horn and Eytan Ruppin
Tel Aviv University

We describe an unsupervised algorithm that learns syntax from unannotated corpora, including ATIS, CHILDES and the Bible. The algorithm iteratively identifies significant patterns, using a unique context-sensitive probabilistic criterion formulated in terms of local flow quantities in a graph whose vertices are the lexicon entries and where the paths correspond, initially, to corpus sentences. A pattern is defined as a bundle of aligned sub-paths; a partial alignment leads to the formation of a slot where members of an equivalence class of words specific to the context set by the pattern appear in complementary distribution. New patterns and equivalence classes can incorporate those added previously, building up an ensemble of recursively structured units that has the expressive power of a bounded-depth context-sensitive grammar. Our system achieves precision and recall performance that far surpasses that of other learned grammars, while replicating diverse linguistic phenomena such as long-range agreement and "tough movement" constraints.

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Session A--Metcalf Large

A toy can't be *stoof* if it's not really a toy:
Object knowledge and adjective acquisition

Laura Steenberge and Toben Mintz
University of Southern California

Prior research indicates that the modified noun influences the interpretation of novel adjectives (e.g., Mintz & Gleitman 2002; Mintz in press). The present study demonstrates that children's object concepts also influence adjective interpretation. In prior studies, when 36-month-olds were shown three unfamiliar artifacts sharing a salient property, each described as *a stoof toy*, toddlers failed to map *stoof* to the property. Yet they succeeded when the objects were familiar toys, or when they were unfamiliar, but when the adjective modified a novel `basic-level` term (e.g., *stoof poztaro*, *stoof freeble*, etc.). We hypothesize that toddlers failed because "toy" clashed with their representations of the unfamiliar, non-toy-like objects. In the present study, puppets played with the objects labeled *stoof toy* to emphasize the "toyness" of the artifacts. Subjects now successfully mapped the adjective to the target property. Thus, adjective interpretation involves integrating conceptual information from the noun with the learner's object knowledge.

Session B--Conference Auditorium

A learnability puzzle in scrambling

Bosook Kang
University of Connecticut

This study investigates the acquisition of scrambling, addressing the question of what kind of linguistic experience triggers the development of grammar. Two possible scenarios are considered: by hearing sets of scrambled sentences or detecting a distinct trigger. Longitudinal data on Korean reveal that the input frequency of scrambling is less than 1%. This raises a learnability problem: how do children learn that their language allows scrambling? We explore Overt Acc marker as a candidate for a trigger. We conducted an experiment to determine whether the acquisition of scrambling is correlated with the acquisition of overt Acc marker. Our results show a strong contingency between passing Acc and passing scrambling, suggesting that Acc marker is the trigger. This provides evidence against any variants of Input matching model of language acquisition, in which grammar develops in response to input data, picking up distributions or regularities of elements in the linguistic environments.

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Session C--Terrace Lounge

The development of the transitive construction:
A connectionist account

Franklin Chang
Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology

The relative importance of experience and syntactic predispositions in the development of the transitive construction is controversial, because existing theories (Tomasello 2000; Gleitman 1990) are not explicit about how different tasks tap the developing representations. To provide an explicit account, a connectionist model of sentence production (Chang 2002) that was designed to account for adult generalization behavior (e.g. structural priming) was tested in preferential looking and elicited production during development. As in the human data, the model exhibits transitive knowledge in preferential looking before it does so in elicited production, and therefore it provides an explicit account of how different tasks use the same representations at different points in development. The model also displays a robust transitive-causative preference in preferential looking before its intransitive-non-causative preference (as in the human data), and the model's account of these differences provides a testable prediction about the early transitive preferential looking.

Session A--Metcalf Large

The syntactic encoding of individuation in language acquisition

David Barner and Rebecca McKeown
Harvard University

Four experiments investigated mass-count semantics and the claim (e.g., Bloom 1999; Gordon 1985) that all count nouns denote individuals and all mass nouns denote non-individuals. In Experiments 1 and 2, 4-year-olds and adults based quantity judgments on mass or volume for substance-mass terms (e.g., *butter*) but on number for count nouns and object-mass terms (e.g., *furniture*), suggesting that some mass nouns denote individuals and that mass syntax does not force an un-individuated construal. In Experiment 3, participants based quantity judgments for mass-count flexible terms (e.g., *stone*) on number only when used in count syntax. Thus, while some mass terms (*furniture*) specify number as a dimension for comparison others (*stone*) do not. From this, we propose the Number Asymmetry Hypothesis, and contrast it with existing proposals. Experiment 4 demonstrates a possible origin of this asymmetry, suggesting that children use a combination of number and object complexity to acquire object-mass nouns.

Session B--Conference Auditorium

Focus constructions in ASL and LSB

Diane Lillo-Martin, University of Connecticut
Ronice Mueller de Quadros, Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina

In doubling constructions associated with emphatic focus, a single sign appears twice within the same sentence: once in its usual position, and again in the sentence-final position. In addition to doubling constructions, emphatic elements may appear in sentence-final position without their counterpart in its usual position. These sentence-final constructions may involve the same derivation as the doubling constructions, but with the sentence-internal element null (Lillo-Martin & Quadros 2004); alternatively they are derived by completely different mechanisms (Neidle et al. 2000).

If the availability of doubling and sentence-final constructions in a language is due to a single parameter, then the acquisition of these structures should be correlated. We studied the longitudinal spontaneous production data of children acquiring American and Brazilian Sign Languages and found that double constructions are acquired at the same time as sentence-final constructions, supporting the hypothesis that the two sentence-types are derivationally related.

Session C--Terrace Lounge

Generalizing argument structure in the third year of life

Keith Fernandes, Gary Marcus and Jennifer DiNubila
New York University

The view that toddlers younger than age 3 treat verbs as individual memorized units (Tomasello 2000) has been challenged by studies showing that children treat novel verbs differently depending on whether they are presented transitively or intransitively (Fisher 2000,2002; Bavin & Growcott 2000) and by Naigles et al (2002), who gave evidence that children could generalize novel verbs from transitive to intransitive. The former studies, however, did not specifically assess generalization between syntactic frames, and, in the latter, children could have relied on animacy cues rather than genuine abstract syntactic knowledge. We thus presented toddlers (mean age 29 months) with novel actions in which both agent and patient were animate, and tested their abilities to comprehend those actions when embedded in new syntactic frames. We found that — even when task demands precluded purely semantic strategies — toddlers could both distinguish transitive and intransitive frames and generalize them to new syntactic frames, suggesting that the seeds of argument structure germinate well before the age of 3.

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Session A--Metcalf Large

Selective effects of allophonic variation in early word learning

Amanda Casile and Leher Singh
Boston University

In word recognition, listeners must process relevant (phonemic) variation in the signal and disregard irrelevant sources of variation. In this study, we examine the effects of phonetic variation on word recognition in monolingual and bilingual children, for whom variation is allophonic in one language (English) and phonemic in the other (Hindi). Result with monolingual children demonstrated effects of lexical status: Allophonic variation delayed processing of words that were known to children but facilitated processing of novel words. In a follow up study with bilingual children, children treated known words differently depending on whether they were Hindi or English words, treating variation as allophonic in English and phonemic in Hindi. With unknown words, children treated words presented with variation as Hindi words and those presented without variation as English words. Results suggest that phonetic variation can inform bilingual children about the linguistic origin of a word as well as strengthen their perception of the phonetic composition of unknown words.

Session B--Conference Auditorium

Linguistic proficiency of the deaf bilingual child in French Sign Language and written French: What is the relation between the two?

Nathalie Niederberger and Ulrich Frauenfelder
University of Geneva

This paper presents data on the relationship between the linguistic proficiency developed by deaf children in French Sign Language (FSL) and in written French. Previous studies showed positive correlations between ASL and written English skills by deaf adults and children (Chamberlain & Mayberry 2000), with little analysis of this relationship. We studied 39 bilingual deaf children of the French-speaking part of Switzerland, aged from 8 to 17. Their comprehension and production skills were tested at the morphosyntactic and discourse levels, using matching tasks in the two languages. Results show highly significant correlations between the skills developed in written French and FSL. More specifically, they show that this relation is stronger for some linguistic domains, namely comprehension and the discourse-level abilities. These data provide new evidence that early mastery of natural sign language facilitates the acquisition of a written language.

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Session C--Terrace Lounge

When does *many* mean *a lot*?
Discourse pragmatics of the weak-strong distinction

Irene Kramer
University of Nijmegen

Children aged 4-7 have been shown to fail to assign properties associated with "strong" readings to weakly quantified Noun Phrases, sometimes disregarding syntactic cues that force strong readings (Kramer 2000, 2003; Lidz & Musolino 2002; Su 2001). The present study addresses the interpretations of weakly quantified Many N, specifically the distinction between the proportional and the cardinal or existential readings. When presented with the following sentences

(1)   Veel eieren zitten in de mand
        (A lot of eggs are in the basket)
(2)   Er zitten veel eieren in de mand
        (There are a lot of eggs in the basket)

Dutch children (aged 4-7) displayed no sensitivity to syntactic structure, virtual absence of the proportional ("strong") interpretation in favour of cardinal ("weak") interpretations, and context-independent interpretations of *many*.

I propose that in the case of *many*, the unfolding of adultlike syntax and semantics depends on pragmatic development.

Session A--Metcalf Large

Detail in phonetic representation in infancy:
Effects of monolingual and dual language exposure

Megha Sundara, Linda Polka and Monika Molnar
McGill University

English learning infants discriminate dental and retroflex stops at 6 to 8 months but not at 10 to 12 months of age (Werker & Tees 1984). It may be useful for 10 to 12-month-olds to ignore this difference because the retroflex-dental contrast is not meaningful in English, but what if one member of the contrast occurs frequently in the input? Discrimination in this case will depend on the detail in which phonetic categories in the native language are represented. To explore this, we tested monolingual French-learning, monolingual English-learning, and bilingual French and English-learning 6 to 8 and 10 to 12-month-olds on their ability to discriminate the dental/alveolar stop contrast. This contrast is also not meaningful in French or English; however, French-learning infants hear dental stops, whereas English-learning infants hear alveolar stops. Discussion will focus on how detailed phonetic representations are at the end of the 1st year.

Session B--Conference Auditorium

Acquisition without a language model

Dany Adone
University of Cologne and University of Dusseldorf

This study examines how isolated deaf children in Mauritius, born to hearing parents, develop a language-like gestural system in the absence of a conventional language model. The participants involve 6 deaf children in the age range 4 to 8 years. Data collection includes both experimental and spontaneous sign samples. It is argued that the characteristics of this gestural system converge with the typical characteristics of home signs. The results will be discussed in the light of previous work done on home signs by Goldin-Meadow and others.

Session C--Terrace Lounge

Two disjunctions for the price of only one

Takuya Goro, Utako Minai and Stephen Crain
University of Maryland, College Park

We report the findings of an experimental investigation of children's interpretation of disjunction in sentences containing the focus operator only. An experiment investigated children's knowledge of the different truth conditions associated with or in the two meaning components of sentences with only. We tested 21 English-speaking children (3;6 - 5;8), using a Truth Value Judgment task in the Prediction Mode. We find that children correctly assign the 'conjunctive' interpretation of *or* in the hidden downward-entailing (DE) meaning component of sentences with *only*, whereas they assign the usual 'disjunctive' interpretation to or in the overt content of such sentences. The findings reveal that children know the "two-faced" character of *or* in sentences with *only*. The results are evidence of children's knowledge of the complex entailment structure induced by the focus operator only, and its interaction with the truth conditions of *or*.

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Session A--Metcalf Large

Age differences in perceptual sensitivity to new speech sounds: The younger the better?

Gisela Jia and Winifred Strange, City University of New York Yanhong Wu, Peking University, Julissa Collado, City University of New York, Qi Guan, Peking University

This study investigated age differences in the perception of American English (AE) vowels by native Mandarin speakers. 84 Monolingual native Mandarin speakers (7;0-19;0), 134 native Mandarin bilinguals, with 61 "recent arrivals" and 73 "past arrivals" were used. Perception of 6 AE vowel contrasts was tested using an AXB discrimination task. For monolinguals, older age predicted significantly higher vowel perception accuracy. "Recent arrivals" showed no significant relation between age of arrival (AoA) and accuracy. For "past arrivals", an older AoA predicted significantly lower accuracy, opposite of the age trend of monolinguals. These findings indicate the L2 acquisition advantage of younger children emerges gradually. With no immersion experience, older learners are more accurate than younger learners in discriminating non-native vowels. With moderate immersion experience, age differences disappear. With increasing immersion experience, younger learners outperform older learners. This is consistent with the environmental account, which postulates younger and older immigrants experience different language environments that accumulate, resulting in younger learners' advantage in the long run.

Session B--Conference Auditorium

Effects of acquisition on the Nicaraguan Sign Language number lexicon

*Shira Katseff, Columbia University
Ann Senghas, Barnard College*

The recent emergence of a sign language among Deaf children and adolescents in Nicaragua (Nicaraguan Sign Language, or NSL) provides an opportunity to study the influence of language acquisition on language form. Previous work shows that these child learners enhanced their language as they learned it, changing it from a simple gestural system to a grammatically complex language (Senghas 1995). The present study documents the effect of acquisition on NSL signs for numbers. Adults, adolescents, and children were asked to produce the sign corresponding to the quantity of stickers on flashcards and to count to 100. Three types of number signs were observed, in a systematic distribution across age cohorts that suggests an historical development from highly iconic numerical representations to a smaller, more conventionalized lexical system. The changes imply that during acquisition, semantic transparency is sacrificed in favor of phonological distinctness and motoric reduction.

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Session C--Terrace Lounge

Young children understand *some* implicatures

*Karen Miller, Hsiang-Hua Chang and Alan Munn
Michigan State University*

We compared children's comprehension of *some* in three contexts: C1 and C2 are presuppositional, since the predicate *make X,Y* is a change of state predicate. C3 is non-presuppositional, since *make X* is a verb of creation. In the presuppositional contexts, we varied focal stress on the determiner or adjective. Children drew on 4 partially drawn faces that were missing only their mouths.

C1.   Make some faces HAPPY.
        Presuppositional, unstressed
C2.   Make SOME faces happy.
        Presuppositional, stressed
C3.   Make some HAPPY faces.
        Non-presuppositional, unstressed

When *some* was stressed, children constructed the correct quantity implicature, but not when it was not stressed. In the non-presuppositional cases, children and adults show that non-presuppositional *some* does not have a quantity implicature. Our results show that at least in some contexts, children can use focal stress to construct quantity implicatures.

Session A--Metcalf Large

Vowel perception biases in infancy:
The role of early language experience

Monika Molnar and Linda Polka
McGill University

Infants show robust directional asymmetries in vowel discrimination that can be predicted by the relative position of vowels within the traditional articulatory-acoustic vowel space. Polka and Bohn (2003) hypothesized that the form of this bias shows that peripheral vowels have a privileged perceptual status; they also claim that this bias is language-independent. The present study is set out to test this view directly by examining listening preferences for vowels in infants exposed to different languages.

Our preference data confirm that infants have perceptual asymmetries favoring more peripheral vowels utilizing a direct measure of perceptual bias within the same infants. Our findings indicate that this bias emerges later in infants receiving bilingual or multilingual input, suggesting that emergence of the bias is shaped by language experience and is affected by the number or complexity of the input languages.

Session B--Conference Auditorium

Abstract vs. object anchored deixis:
Competing pressures in adult homesign systems

Marie Coppola and Wing Chee So
University of Chicago

Sign languages universally use space to indicate grammatical relations. To discover precursors to spatial agreement systems, the present study examined the gesture systems of three isolated deaf Nicaraguans (aged 9-24), who have had no contact with any conventional language. Adult homesigners used deictic (pointing) gestures in two ways. Abstract deixis resembles established sign languages, in which an empty spatial location is consistently associated with a referent. In Object-anchored deixis, a homesigner associates himself and/or his interlocutor with a referent; such a device is not attested in any sign language.

These two uses of space reflect homesigners' competing pressures: to organize a gesture system in an arbitrary language-like way, and to expedite communication with conversation partners who do not share one's linguistic organization. Once deixis is freed from anchoring (perhaps in the context of a signing community) it may develop stronger within-system regularities (e.g., a common spatial layout, as in Nicaraguan Sign Language).

Session C--Terrace Lounge

When children are more 'pragmatic' than adults

Luisa Meroni, Grazia Russo-Lassner and Stephen Crain
University of Maryland, College Park

It has been assumed that the truth conditions of sentence (1) closely resemble the ones of sentence (2), (Lewis 1975; Higginbotham 1986).

(1)   Every child received a book if he found a turtle.
(2)   Every child who found a turtle received a book.

In some cases, however, due to a pragmatic implicature (Conditional Perfection) the equivalence between (1) and (2) does not hold. The Conditional Perfection invites language users to interpret the if-clause in (1) as a biconditional if only if-clause, as in (3). By contrast, no such implicature is invited for (2).

(3)   Every child received a book if and only if he found a turtle.

Based on the previous literature, children might be expected to fail to compute the implicature thus treating both types of sentences alike. A Truth Value judgment task on 16 children showed the opposite pattern with children rejecting both sentence to the same extent.

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Anaphora resolution in monolingual and bilingual acquisition

Ludovica Serratrice
University of Manchester

This study reports the results of an experiment on the anaphoric interpretation of null and overt pronominal subjects in Italian by a group of English-Italian bilingual eight-year-olds, a group of age-matched Italian monolinguals, and a group of adult Italian monolinguals. The participants were administered a picture verification task to select between three different anaphoric interpretations of the null/overt subject in the test sentences: subject, object, or new referent. There were no significant differences in the acceptance of null pronouns as co-referential with either a subject or an object antecedent in the three groups. By contrast, overt pronominals were accepted as co-referential with a subject significantly more often by the bilingual children than by the monolingual children and the adults. Monolingual children also accepted pragmatically inappropriate overt pronominal subjects significantly more often than adults. The interpretation of ambiguous subject pronouns poses non-trivial problems to children as old as eight, with children exposed to a non-pro-drop language exhibiting more protracted and more significant effects.

"Why do his head spins round?" Errors, *do* and modals in English question acquisition

Caroline Rowland
University of Liverpool

A key aspect of successful theories of language acquisition is an ability to predict when errors will occur in child speech and why some utterances seem to be protected from error. The present study tested generativist and constructivist predictions on the questions produced with auxiliary *do* and modal auxiliaries by 6 children (between 2 to 4 years of age) from the CHILDES database. The analyses demonstrated that although yes-no questions requiring auxiliary *do* attracted higher error rates than those requiring modal auxiliaries, this was not the case for wh-questions, contrary to the generativist prediction. The data were better explained in terms of a constructivist account; the results suggest that well-learnt entrenched item-based constructions may be protected from error in children's speech and that errors occur when the child has to resort to more complex operations. However, further work on theory development is required.

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18-month-old infants' sensitivity to number agreement inside the Noun Phrase

*Ana C. Gouvea, Gabriela Aldana, Todd Bell, Kate Cody,
Cy de Groat, Charlotte Johnson, Devon McCabe,
Lindsey Zimmerman and John J. Kim
San Francisco State University*

The Headturn Preference Procedure is used to investigate whether 18-month-old children are sensitive to morphosyntactic dependencies in the noun system as they are to such dependencies in the verb system (Santelmann & Jucszyk 1998). To test this, 8 grammatical passages each consisting of 6 sentences with grammatical dependencies between the determiner and the noun (e.g. *the puppies hid behind the tree*) were constructed. A matching 8 ungrammatical passages were constructed by replacing "the" with "a" (e.g. **a puppies hid behind the tree*). Listening times to grammatical and to ungrammatical passages was the dependent measure. 18-month-old children listened longer to grammatical passages (6.6s) than to ungrammatical passages (5.4s) (t (23) = 2.06, p<.05), showing that 18-month-old children are sensitive to morphosyntactic dependencies in the noun system. Various explanations for the results and directions for future research are discussed.

How a poverty-of-the stimulus problem can be overcome in SLA: Identifying L2 trigger input

Sharon Unsworth, Utrecht Institute of Linguistics
Masahiro Hara, Truman State University

Many generative SLA studies have demonstrated that L2 learners can overcome poverty-of-the stimulus (POS) problems, but little is known how this process occurs. The paper addresses this question drawing on GJ data on Japanese passives gathered from intermediate to advanced English and Chinese learners. It capitalizes on related but different semantic properties of Japanese passives (those available in L2 input (trigger properties) and others unavailable (POS properties)) as well as on typological differences in passives of the three languages, to wit, the English passive has neither of the above properties, but that the Chinese passives have both. The paper shows that English learners who acquired the POS properties had learned the trigger properties, but that same sufficient learning condition did not hold for Chinese learners. It thus identifies L2 input whose incorporation into IL grammar may lead to overcoming POS problems.

When is a *dar* a car? Effects of mispronunciation and context on sound-meaning mappings

Katherine White, Lauren Wier, and James Morgan
Brown University

Infants as young as 14 months have demonstrated sensitivity to phonological detail in referential tasks, distinguishing correct from incorrect mispronunciations when presented with pictures of familiar objects. However, in previous studies, infants interpreted mispronounced labels as referring to the target object, displaying an apparent mispronunciation bias. In addition, infants did not distinguish between different degrees of mispronunciations. In the current experiments, a different referential context was used to explore these two phenomena. 19-month-old infants were presented with picture pairs including one familiar and one unfamiliar object. Infants were told to look at either the familiar object or the unfamiliar object; the name of the familiar object was either pronounced correctly or mispronounced by one, two, or three phonetic features. Findings reveal the extent to which referential context affects infants' interpretation of mispronounced labels and, further, whether there are conditions under which infants demonstrate sensitivity to the degree of featural mismatch.

Learning a stratified grammar

Joe Pater
University of Massachusetts, Amherst

This paper shows that a simple extension of the Biased Constraint Demotion Algorithm (BCD: Prince and Tesar 2004) results in the construction of stratified grammars (Itô and Mester 1999). Phonological structures are sometimes restricted to particular sets of words, such as loanwords. To capture such generalizations, Itô and Mester (1999) propose that faithfulness constraints applying to subsets of the lexicon are interspersed between markedness constraints.

Three learnability problems present themselves:

1. How does a learner create lexically specific constraints for exceptions to phonotactics?
2. How do the markedness constraints get in the right order?
3. How do the faithfulness constraints get interspersed correctly?

To address 1, I propose that when a learner encounters a form that requires an adjustment to the grammar, it makes the initial conservative assumption that this adjustment is specific to that word. With this one assumption, BCD automatically yields answers to problems 2 and 3.

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Default aspect:
Evidence from SLI children

Diane Ogiela, Michael Casby and Christina Schmitt
Michigan State University

We examined whether early use of verbal morphology in SLI children correlates with different aspectual classes, as attested in the early language of normally developing children. Applying the notion of Default Aspect (Bohnemeyer & Swift 2004), we predicted that the distribution of morphemes would be unequal across verb phrase (VP) types. As predicted by Default Aspect, the analysis of the language transcripts of SLI children from an SLI corpus of the CHILDES database showed that the past tense, which implies perfectivity in English, was used most frequently with Event VPs; the third person singular, which implies imperfectivity, was used more frequently with States and Activities with than Events; and the progressive, which states imperfectivity, was used more frequently with Activities than Events. The results for the past tense and progressive were statistically significant, although those for the third person singular did not reach such significance.

The importance of variety in language acquisition:
Segmentation and generalization

Luca Onnis and Morten Christiansen, Cornell University
Padraic Monaghan, University of York
Nick Chater, University of Warwick

Statistical learning of adjacent structure is robust for sequences of syllables, tones, and visual stimuli in both infants and adults. However, to account for core aspects of language learning a statistical learning mechanism must also be capable of tracking relations among nonadjacent items. We propose that adjacent information must be overcome to detect nonadjacent information, as there is potentially a computational impasse of computing too many transitional probabilities simultaneously, and that this can be accomplished when there is high variability of the intervening items (Gómez 2002). In a series of experiments, we show that this variability hypothesis can explain previous failures to segment speech based on knowledge of nonadjacent syllables. We also show that segmentation and generalization can be achieved simultaneously when there is large variability in the intervening speech between syllables with nonadjacent dependencies, and may not necessitate a distinction between two separate and consecutive computational processes.

Notes

Understanding the link between complexity and
regularization: What counts as complex?

Carla Hudson Kam
University of California, Berkeley

Hudson & Newport (2001) found that increasing the number of inconsistent forms in a miniature artificial language increased regularization of the more common probabilistic grammatical patterns. They suggested that this might be an effect of complexity: when input contains patterns that are highly complex learners fail to acquire all of the variation and focus on the most common patterns. Gómez (2002) reports a similar finding. Here we ask whether any apparent complexity has this effect, or whether more specific types of complexity are required. We exposed adult learners to a language containing a high degree of complexity but no inconsistency. Over nouns as a class, the statistics of determiner usage were exactly the same as in Hudson & Newport. However, for individual nouns, determiners were completely consistent. Learners in the present study did not regularize the determiners, suggesting that complexity in and of itself is not enough. Instead, unpredictably may be necessary to induce regularization.

Grammatical gender and early word recognition in Dutch

Elizabeth Johnson
Max Planck Institute for Psycholinguistics

In Dutch, neuter nouns are preceded by the definite determiner *het* and common nouns are preceded by the definite determiner *de*. Dutch toddlers often produce determiners incorrectly, or omit them from their utterances all together. This could be taken as evidence that Dutch toddlers have not yet mastered the determiner system of their language. However, studies with English-learning infants have demonstrated that toddlers perceive and process determiners long before they begin producing them. In the current study we investigate infants' perception of definite determiners in Dutch, a language containing grammatical gender. Using the Split-screen Preferential Looking paradigm, 28-month-olds' recognition of familiar words was tested under three conditions: correct gender, uninformative gender (both pictures on screen have same gender), and incorrect gender. The results demonstrate that Dutch-learners recognize words fastest and most accurately when target words are preceded by determiners carrying informative and correct gender information.

The development of infants' ability to recognize speech in noise

Rochelle Newman
University of Maryland

Infants often find themselves in noisy environments, where they must separate one speech stream from others. We examined infants' abilities to recognize their own name in the context of multi-talker noise. Infants heard a woman repeating either the child's name or an unfamiliar name while other voices spoke in the background. 5-month-old infants listened longer to their own name than to foil names when the target voice was 10-dB more intense than the background babble, but not when it was 5-dB more intense. 9-month-old infants also failed at this 5 dB S/N, but 13-month-old infants succeeded. Thus, 5-month-old infants possess some capacity to selectively attend to a voice in the context of competing voices. However, this ability is quite limited, and does not improve until infants near their first birthday. Drawing primarily on studies of spatial andnumerical concepts in human adults, young children, and non-human animals, I'll suggest that the claim of linguistic determinism is true for a limited but crucial set of human concepts. In contrast, this research provides no clear evidence for linguistic relativity. Children who learn any natural language may gain access to the same set of uniquely human concepts and cognitive abilities.

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