First Language Acquisition
LING480/580

# Final Poster Session

December 10, 2019
7:30-9:00 pm

## Group A

(7:40-8:05pm)

*Room 1*

**"My grandchildren speak my language!"**
**Second-generation Chinese Immigrant Children Learning and Maintaining Heritage Language and Family Strategies in America**

Nhu Tran

Second-generation immigrant children in America tend to forget their mother tongue by the time they begin learning English in a professional environment. The research focuses on how Chinese immigrant children in the range of 3-4 years old learn and maintain heritage language. By the corpora collected from CHILDES, I reported the number of Chinese and English vocabularies that the children speak to measure and compare their proficiency in two languages during family conversations. The vocabularies must be produced by children (mimic or repeat from others won't be counted) and it shows that children can produce more Chinese words if parents avoid using English during conversations. Therefore, the more time children spend interacting in Chinese, the more they get fluency. In addition, there are some written data from literacy sources that mention parents' serious attitudes and strategies do affect children's skillfulness. This research is important for immigrant parents to study children's abilities and emotions to find good methods for teaching and maintaining heritage language for their children.

*Room 2*

**Code Switching in AAVE-speaking Kindergarteners in the Hall Corpus**

Claire Zimmermann

Code switching is a phenomenon that is seen in speakers of two or more languages, but it can also occur in speakers of a dialect or vernacular of one language. This project considers whether the code switching done by young children is affected by their teachers' presence. Four children were selected from the Hall Corpus and all were 4 years and 9 months old. These children are all spoke African American Vernacular English (AAVE) at home. I chose two specific structures to look for in the transcripts in CHILDES: the use of a double negative versus the use of a single negative, and null copula versus regular copula. I took into consideration the context of the production of each structure and marked tallies accordingly. In looking at the transcripts for each recording, the children did not seem to selectively code switch at this age, however they did use structures from both AAVE and "standard" English in their everyday speech; code switching was not affected by who was present at the time.

*Room 3*

**Accuracy in Production of French Gendered Adjectives by Children Age 2 and 3 Years**

Logan Kehoe

In French, gender plays a crucial role in the grammar and syntax of even the simplest sentences. Parts of speech that show gender agreement include determiners, $le_{MASC}$ and $la_{FEM,}$ and continue through nouns and adjectives. Prior research shows that by age two, children already have a representation of determiner to noun gender agreement. This study explores children's production of noun to adjective gender agreement, and the accuracy of this production over time. Existing transcripts of speech produced by the target age groups (2;0-2;3

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years and 3;0-3;3 years) in solo free play were analyzed. Utterances including gendered adjectives were documented and their accuracy was determined (i.e the accurate “il est pas beau” versus the inaccurate “il est pas belle”). Both age groups showed very accurate usage, with 2-year-olds producing four inaccuracies and 3-year-olds producing none. The results suggest that by the age of two, native French speakers have already acquired the ability to accurately produce adjective gender agreement through abstraction and exposure to the language.

*Room 4*

**Personal Pronoun Reversals and Pronoun Case Errors in Autistic and Typically Developing 2 to 6 Year Old English-speaking Children**

Ahmed Alzahrani

One of the main features of children with ASD (Autism spectrum disorder) is impired communication. Such impairment significantly impacts their language learning.Several studies have shown that autistic children show some patterns of errors in the use of personal pronouns such as PPR ( personal pronouns reversals) and pronouns case errors. However,This paper is concerned mainly with Personal Pronouns reversals,pronouns case errors, and the variety of personal pronoun uses between 3-6 yo (TD) typically developed children and children with ASD.In this study, I used eight transcripts for four TD children and four children with ASD ages 3-6 yo in playing sessions.I counted every use of personal pronoun along with the errors such as PPR and pronouns case errors made and compared both categories.The findings show that there’s no clear indication of PPR or pronouns case errors. The results also show that TD children use more variety of pronouns than children with ASD.

*Room 5*

**The Role of Frequency and Markedness in the Acquisition of Codas**

Snezana Scatamacchia

Both markedness and frequency are believed to play a role in children’s language development. Theories of language acquisition predict children should first acquire either the more frequent sounds of their native language or the unmarked coronals (t, d, s, z, l, r, n) and sonorants (m, n, l, ŋ, r). This study examines the effects of markedness in children’s production of word final codas which will help us better understand its role in language acquisition. I analyzed the production of codas with respect to sonority and the place of articulation by comparing the data from the speech of two monolingual English children ages 1 to 2 and 3 to 4 years old. I anticipated finding the presence of unmarked codas early in language development and the emergence of more marked segments later in the process. However, the comparison of the data revealed that both children favored marked codas which are also more frequent in English. Thus, the data provides evidence for the strong effect of frequency on the production of codas in children’s speech.

*Room 6*

**Persian Children’s Most Frequent Word Order**

Aram Hussein

Since Farsi Language is a free word order language, so what is the most frequent word order by Farsi speaking children? This journal project is to investigates the acquisition of the most

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frequent word order in Farsi speaking children. This is important and it matters because Farsi language is understudied and there is not enough research done about this language that is why not many language scholars know about Farsi language word order structures. Most importantly, this project aims to specifically find what the most frequent word order of simple two-content and three-content sentences used by the Farsi speaking children at the ages of 2.6 – 3.11 years old. Therefore, they key comparison was set up to compare the most frequent word order of simple two-content and three-content sentences. There are 5 Persian-speaking children participants 2 males and 3 females, and the 30 minutes language samples were audio-recorded during free play with a caregiver and their mother during description of pictures. The results will explain and tell us that these children use variety of word order structures such as OV, SOV, VO, SV, SVO structures. So, the conclusions will lead us to say that OV and SV turn out to be the most frequent word order for the Two-component and SOV for Three-component structures used by Farsi-speaking children.

*Room 7*

**Production of /ɹ/ in Onset Clusters**

Kaelynn Mae Kenny

The voiced alveolar approximant /ɹ/ is produced by typically developing children by age 5; in children with SSDs, the /ɹ/ inconsistently exists in their inventory due to lowered phonological awareness (Preston and Edwards, 2010). This paper describes the different ways English monolingual preschoolers with SSDs produce /ɹ/ in /Cɹ/ onsets. Data collected from PhonBank's Preston corpus represented 43 children with diagnosed SSDs. 9 clusters /Cɹ/ were identified, for a total of 1,216 tokens. The tokens were analyzed by output: correct production, approximant substitution /w/, velar-pharyngealization /ɻ̊/, full and partial cluster deletion, and other. Results show that correct productions of /ɹ/ appear with affricates or in reduction; however, children were more likely substitute /w/ (approximately 59% of tokens) or delete the cluster altogether (approximately 34% of tokens.) The results imply that children recognize the /ɹ/ sound but have difficulty with the placement of the sound. Utilizing certain contexts can help children recognize the correct placement and ameliorate long-term effects on phonological awareness.

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# Group B

(8:05-8:30pm)

*Room 1*

## Child Bilingualism and Time

Camden Powers

Many children grow up using more than one language. This may make language development a concern for parents. The process of children learning two languages at once led me to question how bilingual children choose which language to speak. To answer this question, I used data from one child over time (1;3-2;6). The data were child-adult conversations in English and Spanish, each with different familiar adults (e.g., grandmother, father). The child's responses were put into one of the following categories: English only, Spanish only, and code-switch. Early on, she responded a lot in both languages, regardless of the input. Language choice was best influenced by time. The child, by the end of the study, responded much more accurately than the earlier data collected. Time was the factor that had significant influence on the child's language choice. Families need not worry about their child's language choice because over time, the child will get it right.

*Room 2*

## Hedging Acquisition in English-speaking Children

Grace McGiffin

Hedging refers to the use of intentionally vague or indirect language. Research on L2 acquisition suggests that hedging frequency in adults increases as proficiency level does, with native speakers hedging the most out of all levels. This study investigates children's use of hedging, and whether the hedging frequency and variety of six-year-old children surpasses that of four-year old children, on the basis that older children are more proficient. The data came from online videos of parents "interviewing" their children; the number of hedges in each child's response was recorded, and each hedge was sorted into categories. The six-year-old group tended to use hedging more frequently, and used more nuanced, pragmatically complicated hedge types. The results suggest that hedging is an effective indicator of pragmatic competence since the older children, who have a better understanding of the English language, were the ones to utilize hedging that was not only more frequent but more diverse. Furthermore, the results support that children's hedging acquisition is similar to adult L2 learners' hedging acquisition.

*Room 3*

## Am I Enough? A Brief Study of Child Adherence to the Gricean Maxim of Quantity

Sharon Freeman

The Gricean Maxim of Quantity states that speakers provide the appropriate amount of informativeness in their speech. Prior research demonstrates children understand Gricean violations of this maxim as young as three years old. But current research does not study the active adherence to the Gricean maxims, so how can we gauge active child adherence to the Gricean Maxim of Quantity? In the present study, we looked at children's, aged 3, usage of content word utterances as compared to adult content word utterances during respective narrative-telling corpora to determine adherence of the Gricean Maxim of Quantity. The data

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comparison between children and adults refutes the idea of adult-like command of the maxim in children's speech. Comparatively, children did not utter the same amount of content words in their corpora as their adult counterparts but produced richer grammatical structures when compared with adults. In accordance with prior literature, children demonstrate a linguistic knowledge of maxim violations, yet they have not applied this knowledge to their personal speech.

*Room 4*

**Respect and Revitalization: Early Indigenous Language Acquisition in a Post-colonial World**

Sarah Luria

Indigenous language revitalization is extremely essential to expanding linguistic knowledge. There are many strategies for revitalization that I've found across my meta-analysis that should be noted and studied further in the fight against colonialism in linguistics. Early language learning is key to finding these strategies, and in many of these studies we can see how the critical period functions in indigenous language learning. Vocabulary data collecting was key, necessitating a reworking of the vocab tests themselves in many cases. A reimagining of the way that the home structure affects language learning is also necessary, especially in many cases where indigenous children had different types of linguistic input shown to them by their caregivers. The question of language revitalization, it seems, is less of possibility and more of opportunity, boiling down to parental concern, government funding, and community involvement. It is shown, however, that time and again, whether in Inuktitut, Yukatek Maya, Samoan, or any other indigenous language, revitalization is increasingly possible with the right amount of care, consideration, and respect.

*Room 5*

**Gliding Liquids**

Isabella Boardman

This study asked at which age do seemingly neurotypical children begin to stop their substitution of glides for liquids. Some PPD can cause children to make substitutions in their speech with sounds such as substituting glides for liquids. However these substitutions still take place in neurotypical children which can make it difficult to diagnose children under 7 years old. Looking at North American English speaking children, the percentage of these types of substitutions was calculated every 6 months by counting how many substitutions were made and how many opportunities were given for liquids in the syllable onset position. The data showed that the participants made more substitutions at 24 months than at 36 months. The participants went from substituting to palletizing or velarizing their liquids to saying the correct liquids almost 100% of the time within the year. This suggests that children who don't have PPD will stop substituting, palletizing, and/or velarizing their liquids by the time they are 3 years old. However more data needs to be collected to make any significant claims.

*Room 6*

**The Effects of Older Siblings on Bilingual Children**

Brenee Howell

Previous studies have shown that having an older sibling can affect language acquisition in monolingual children positively and negatively. Having a sibling can increase or decrease

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language input. In this study, I wanted to know if having an older sibling affects bilingual children's comprehension? To answer this question, I observed two Spanish-English bilingual three-year-old children, one with older siblings and the other with none. Two hours of footage was taken from each child's interactive family YouTube channel. To measure the child's comprehension, I counted every time the child answered a question correctly, code-switched, answered incorrectly, or refused to answer. If the child responded correctly or code-switched, it counted toward their comprehension; if the child answered incorrectly or did not respond, it counted against their comprehension. I reported on 20 questions for each child, half in English and the other half in Spanish. The results showed that the child with an older sibling had a stronger comprehension than the child with none in their L1(Spanish). However, there was no significant difference in comprehension of L2 (English).

*Room 7*

**Tracking Rule-Derived Denominal Verbs in Children's Language**

Dorothea Thomas

Denominal Verbs are a phenomena in language where nouns are transformed into verbs for connivence to the speaker. There are two types of denominal verbs, one being rule-derived (RD) where the verb gets it's meaning directly from the noun. For instance RD denominal verbs are created from technology based nouns that typically mean "to use *X"* where *x* means a specific app "I venmoed you for dinner." The second denominal type is idiosyncratically derived (ID), where verbs possess different meanings than the original noun. For instance the phrase "monkeying around" is figure of speech meaning to act mischievously, not to be an actual monkey, or turn into one. The data collection is from data bases using both parent led conversations and monologue periods before bed time, the children speaking are mix gendered and between the ages of 1-4. The data collected is the total number of verbs spoken in a copra compared to the amount of RD or ID denominal verbs are used. The deciding factor for a RD denominal verb is if the verbs used could originally be a noun. The results conclude that kids do not use RD or ID denominal verbs and tend to stick to simple verbs they know. This might have to deal with the fact of.a lot of children use words that happen function as both nouns as verbs. It does not conclude that children aren't creative when it comes to language, but rather they are not creative when it comes to morphology.

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# Final Poster Session

December 10, 2019
7:30-9:00 pm

## Group C
(8:30-8:55pm)

*Room 1*

### Comparing the Etymological Makeup of Juvenile and Preadolescent Vocabulary

Kostas Anastasakis

This research paper analyzes the etymological makeup of the vocabulary of children belonging to four different age groups. Words that refer to basic objects and concepts tend to be germanic, whereas words for technology and science tend to be Latin and Greek borrowings. To understand the changes in the etymological makeup of children as they get older, speech corpora of children aged 4, 6, 8, and 10 was collected from the CHILDES TalkBank database and then put into a single document for etymological analysis. With the help of the OED Text Visualizer, the transcripts were analyzed and given a precise etymological makeup. The results show a steady increase in lexical diversity as children get older, with children aged 4 and 6 having a stronger preference for germanic words than children aged 8 to 10, who rely more heavily on words from Latin and Greek. We can surmise that germanic words are expectedly more useful to younger children than to children aged 8 to 10, who are exposed to scientific terminology at school and advanced technology at home.

*Room 2*

### Adjective Phrases in Bilingual Children

Diana Mozqueda-Hernandez

Bilinguals children of English and Spanish at an early age know how to construct adjective phrases in both languages. Therefore, they have a well understanding of the syntax in both languages. In this research, I used a corpora transcript from CHILDES to count the adjective-noun phrases from five-year-old bilingual children. After counting the phrases, I analyzed them to determine if the children said the phrases in the right or wrong syntax order. The results were that most of the children did not make mistakes in creating Spanish and English adjective-noun phrases. However, most of the time the wrong adjective phrases were using the English syntax to Spanish, but not from using the Spanish syntax to English. The results show that at the age of five, bilingual children have a clear understanding of the adjective-noun structure. Also, it shows bilingualism is not perfect, but they recognize the differences in each language they learn.

*Room 3*

### *Invariant BE* Usage in AAVE-speaking Children

Linh Buckley

Although African-American Vernacular English (AAVE) is the most studied English dialect in linguistics, much of the literature is focused on adolescents and adults rather than child speakers. This study focuses on AAVE-speaking children's use of *invariant be* in comparison to adult speakers of the dialect. This question was addressed with 10 children whose average age was 4;9 in the CHILDES Hall Corpus of Black working-class families. The subject child of each transcript's use of *invariant be* was compared to that of adults (interviewer, parent, grandparent). Results show that despite roughly the same amount of data from adults and children, children tended to use *invariant be* more on average than the adults. Possible reasons

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for these results include children recently mastering comprehension of *invariant be* and higher usage in peer groups or siblings for building rapport. This research provides a glimpse into child speakers' acquisition of "non-standard" forms, and should be further supplemented with longer studies that identify the situations young children use these forms and any gender differences between them.

*Room 4*

**The Frequency of the Sentence-Final Particle "ná" in Thai**

Janalyn Miklas

This research sought to find the frequency of Thai-speaking caretakers use of the sentence-final particle "na" with male and female children over one year. This marker is ambiguous and relies on prosody and context to assign meaning. The most common uses for "na" are to signal intimacy, sincerity, annoyance, and other moods. The researcher counted adult utterances of "na" as well as four other sentence-final particles from a large corpus of Thai child-directed speech collected during toy play sessions. Sentence-final particles were recorded and analyzed based on the gender and ages of the child to observe the variation of "na" use by caretakers at 6, 9, and 12 months old. The use of the particles in child-directed speech were similar with each child, yet the trajectory of the use of "na" steadily decreased for females, but increased for males over the course of one year. This research demonstrates the that gender is not a determining factor for the increased use of "na", but that the use of sentence-final particles is significant in child-directed speech.

*Room 5*

**Vowels in Phonological Disorders**

Brigid McPhilamy

Phonological disorders in children are widely researched, however consonant production is the key focus. Why focus only on consonants and not research vowels? This study researches the vowel production in a child with a phonological disorder to determine if there are notable patterns in how the child produces the vowel and what changes occurred. I gathered data from two three-year-old English-speaking children, one with a phonological disorder and one without and compared correct vs incorrect vowel production. Calculations of each data set yielded distinct patterns. The child without a phonological disorder pronounced nearly all vowels correctly and had only a small number of mispronunciations. The child with the phonological disorder most notably produced the following patterns: word-final schwas were deleted and diphthongs were reduced to a monophthong. These patterns show a child with a phonological disorder struggling to pronounce vowels, supporting the idea that more research must be done on vowel production.

*Room 6*

**The Acquisition of Polite Verbs in Japanese Children**

Sean Moss

Japanese uses honorific verb endings to mark polite speech, or *teineigo*. Before understanding how children navigate the appropriate use of *teineigo* verb endings in different contexts, it is useful to understand when they acquire these forms. This project aimed to investigate the age at which children begin to produce *teineigo* verb forms compared to casual forms. Three

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corpora were chosen from the CHILDES database involving children 5 months of age to 4 years and 11 months. Instances of children producing polite forms were tallied in each corpus and compared to tallies of the casual counterparts of the same verbs. Results showed that the children began producing casual verbs at around 2 years, while polite forms began appearing 3 to 6 months later. Polite forms often first appeared in set phrases early on, with more productive usage increasing in frequency with age. These results confirmed previous conjectures in literature that children first learn polite forms by practicing set polite greetings, whereas productive usage is more nuanced and takes more time for children to learn.

*Room 7*

**Children's Comprehension of Parent WH-Questions**

Sawyer Kressin

No abstract available.

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