**EXPECTED FOR UPCOMING CONTENT:**

**Do children reason about speakers' informativity goals?**

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**BACKGROUND**

A comprehender’s estimate of what events or situations are typical in the world is distinct from their estimate of what a speaker is likely to report on.

Even so, there seems to be a discrepancy between what type of estimates is used by comprehenders and speakers.

Plausibility and typicality are favoured in comprehension:

- taking a sip from the *waterfall* → taking a sip from the *transmitter*;
- the man will ride the *motorbike* → the man will ride the *carousel*.

**Methods**

Sentence continuation task: about what can be found at 11 different locations as an index of expectations for upcoming content.

Participants aged 5-11 (US school grades 0-5) with English as first language (N=111).

Manipulate the presence or absence of a speaker in two conditions (between participants):

- **[bare]** N=39
  - At the zoo, there’s _____
- **[visible speaker]** N=38
  - *I’m at the beach, and there’s _____*

Typicality baseline was elicited from the remaining participants:

- **[typicality baseline task]** N=34
  - What do you usually find in a playground?

Data collection is ongoing.

**RESULTS**

Example responses for the playground item:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>children</th>
<th>adults</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>bare</strong></td>
<td><img src="image" alt="Bare Graph" /></td>
<td><img src="image" alt="Adults Graph" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>visible speaker</strong></td>
<td><img src="image" alt="Visible Speaker Graph" /></td>
<td><img src="image" alt="Visible Speaker Graph" /></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Like adults, children’s responses are more informative in the *visible speaker* condition:

- higher entropy
- less use of typical nouns
- more modification

Also some indication of a developmental pattern:

- less entropy as age increases
- marginal interaction for typicality, such that the children better distinguish between the two conditions as they get older

**RESEARCH QUESTION**

Do children reason about speakers’ informativity goals in adult-like ways?

If so, they should expect speakers to make contributions that are filtered, i.e., conveying informative and non-typical content.

If child-directed speech favours mention of typical events and properties, particularly at younger ages, children may instead expect speech to transparently reflect what the world is like.

There might also be a developmental pattern, whereby older children are more likely to take the speaker’s production choices into account when estimating what a speaker will say.

**TAKEAWAY**

Yes – children are attuned to speaker informativity, possibly with changes across development. Stay tuned for more data collection!

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