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The dynamics of child-driven active information-seeking and caregiver scaffolding during word learning

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Abstract

Language learning emerges from dynamic communicative exchanges characterized by two key dimensions. First, children are not simply passive observers, but instead actively seek new information. Second, caregivers scaffold the learning environment. We will present results from a preregistered study (target N=90; 36-72 mos; preregistration: https://osf.io/s24eb) investigating how caregiver scaffolding and children's information-seeking mutually contribute to word learning. We introduce a novel word learning paradigm that independently varies whether children and/or their caregivers can structure input in a joint Learning Phase and measure children's word learning in a pre-post test design. We predict that (1) children and caregivers will actively structure learning events and (2) children will benefit when they themselves and their caregivers can structure the Learning Phase. Our results will provide insight into how children's information-seeking strategies interact with caregivers' scaffolding to create informative word learning moments.