

It's in the Hands: Developmental Changes in the Quality of Naming Events for Two-Year-Olds

Sumarga Suanda

Indiana University

Danika Geisler

Indiana University

Linda Smith

Indiana University

Chen Yu

Indiana University

Abstract: Between the first and second year, toddlers' word learning accelerates. Explanations for this "vocabulary spurt" include the emergence of domain-specific constraints and a change from associative to referential learning. What these and other accounts share is that the proposed mechanism is in the toddler's head. Here, we propose a different explanation: the input during the spurt changes in ways that promotes learning. We observed, through toddler-perspective head cameras, the visual input to 13- (pre-spurt) and 20-month-old (mid-spurt) toddlers as their parents named objects in an object-play session. Results suggest that the named object was more likely to dominate the older toddlers' view. Coding of toddlers' and parents' holding behavior suggests that this increase in dominancy is due to an increase in 20-month-olds' holding during naming. Interestingly, we also observed an increase in parents' holding during naming. Implications for the cascading effects of motor development on language development will be discussed.