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Proceedings of the Annual Meeting of the Cognitive Science Society

Title

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Permalink

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Journal

Proceedings of the Annual Meeting of the Cognitive Science Society, 42(0)

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Publication Date

2020

Peer reviewed

Co-occurrences and temporal distribution of caregivers indexical multimodal cues in real-world interactions

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Abstract

When caregivers talk to their children, they can also look, point or manipulate the objects they are talking about. These multimodal indexical cues can help the child disambiguate the referred object from potential targets in the environment during word learning. In fact, most naming episodes are modulated by some multimodal cues. In the work we present here, we use data from a semi-naturalistic corpus of caregiver-child interactions (ECOLANG corpus) where caregivers talk to their children about objects that are new or known to the child. We focus on caregivers production and ask: (i) how often caregivers use any of the multimodal cues when naming the referent for new vs. known objects; (ii) what the temporal relationship between multimodal cues and naming episodes is; (iii) whether there is a relationship between the cue usage (and its temporal distribution) and word learning.