Bootstrapping into Attitudes

Valentine Hacquard
University of Maryland

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Collaborators





Jeff Lidz



Shevaun Lewis



Aaron White



Kate Harrigan



Rachel Dudley



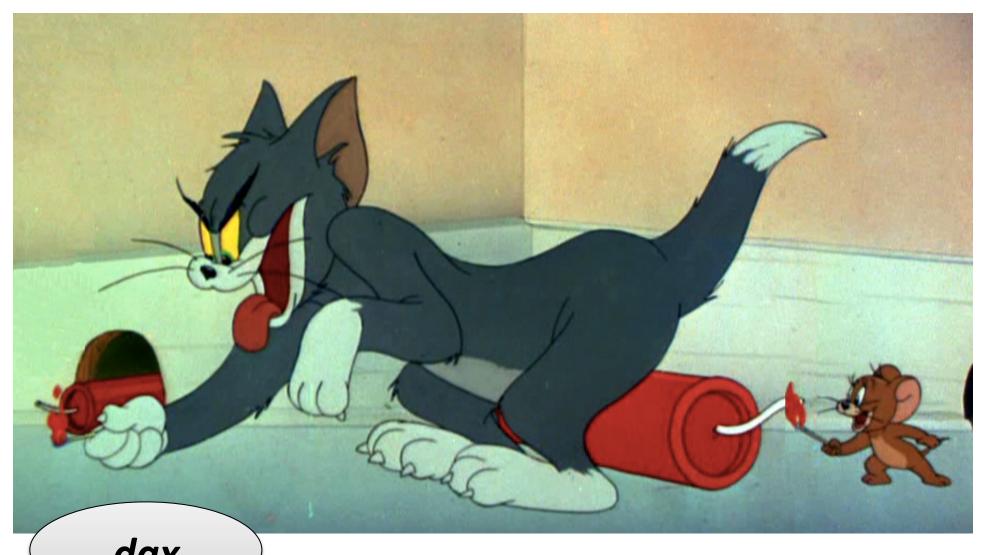
Naho Orita



Morgan Moyer



Erin Eaker



...dax...



Bootstrapping into Attitudes

 Not all meaning can be gleaned from situational context alone.

• Attitudes not directly observable. Meaning of attitude verbs (*think, want, know...*) hard to access without *linguistic context*.

Gleitman 1990; Gillette et al 1999; Papafragou et al 2004; Gleitman et al 2005



Syntactic bootstrapping

- Children learning meaning of new words work from constrained space of hypotheses.
- Principled links between certain semantic and syntactic properties.
 - Syntactic properties easier to observe.
 - Syntactic properties provide evidence to the learner about semantic properties.

(Gleitman 1990, Pinker 1989, Lidz 2006...)

Pragmatic challenge 1: Sentence vs. speaker meaning

Often what people *mean* goes further than what they *say*.

S: "Some students turned in their homework".

Implicature: Not all students turned in their homework

Sentence vs. speaker meaning

- What if the child only heard some in enriched contexts, might she lexicalize enriched meaning?
 - Probably not for some.

Noveck, 2001; Chierchia et al. 2001, Papafragou & Musolino 2003, a.o.

- Enough exposure to non-enriched contexts?
- Expectations about meaning complexity?

Sentence vs. speaker meaning challenge:

Can children always extract *literal* content of an expression from the meaning conveyed?

Pragmatic challenge 2: not at issue content

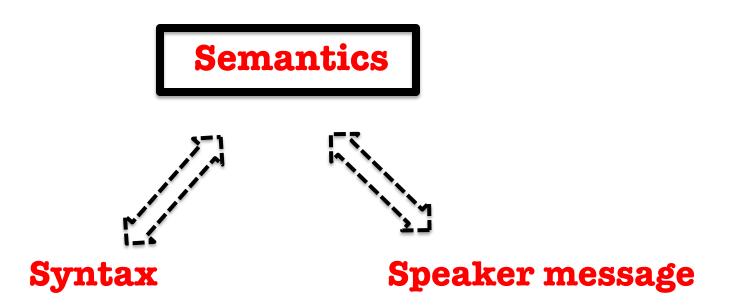
 Certain words impose requirements on state of discourse as conditions for use.

 Utterances made against a variety of background assumptions. How does the child detect which are required by the conventional meaning of an expression?

Not at issue content

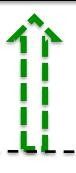
Sentences do not come with '#' any more than they come with '*'.

The pragmatic challenge

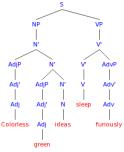


The pragmatic challenge

Semantics



Syntax







Speaker message



The pragmatic challenge

Given that children lack direct access to *semantics*, and only ever hear *speaker meanings*, how do they untangle semantic and pragmatic contributions?

- Might the child lexicalize an implicature?
- Might she miss a presupposition?

The pragmatic challenge & Attitudes

- Attitudes not directly observable.
- Some attitudes associated with presuppositions.
- Prone to *pragmatic enrichments*:
 - Attitude verbs report speech acts and mental states, and thus are often used for indirect speech acts.

Bootstrapping into Attitudes

- When and how do children learn attitude meanings?
- What role do syntax and pragmatics play?

Goals:

- Better understanding of young children's semantic and pragmatic competence, and acquisition process.
- Inform theories of interfaces between syntaxsemantics and semantics-pragmatics.

Bootstrapping into Attitudes: Road Map

 'Speaker vs. sentence meaning' challenge: the case of want and think

 'Not at issue content' challenge: the case of think vs. know

think vs. want

'sentence vs. speaker meaning' challenge

Early understanding of attitude verbs

Cross-linguistically, think is acquired late, but **want** isn't.

Previous research suggests that children:

- Don't fully master think until almost age 5.
- They seem to master want at least by age 3.

Early understanding of attitude verbs

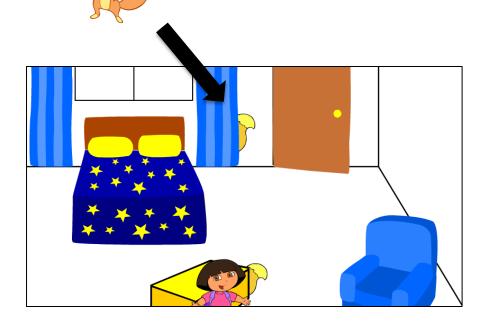
Young children consistently misinterpret *think* sentences.

Typical think Fail!

(1) Dora thinks that Swiper is behind the chest.

Context:

Swipe is behind the curtain Dora thinks he's behind the chest



Adults: -True!

3-4 year olds: -False!

Early understanding of attitude verbs

However, young children do **not** seem to have the same difficulties with **want** sentences.

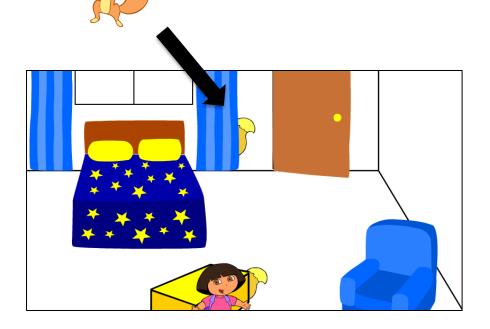
Typical want Success!

(2) Dora wants Swiper to be behind the chest.

Context:

Swiper is behind the curtain

Dora thinks he's behind the chest



Adults: -True!

3-4 year olds: -True!

want

Whether want is used to report a desire that conflicts with reality, or with the child's own desire, 3 year olds know that (2) can be true, even is the complement is false.



Kate Harrigan

Harrigan et al, in prep.

Conceptual Development Hypothesis

• *think* is acquired late because the concept it expresses, i.e., BELIEF, is itself acquired late.

want is acquired earlier because the DESIRE concept is acquired earlier.

Tardiff & Wellman (2000), Perner et al (2003), a.o.

Conceptual Development Hypothesis

Children don't understand that others can have beliefs different from their own until they're 4.

They don't have a "Theory of Mind", as evidenced by their consistent failure at False Belief Tasks.

Doubting the conceptual hypothesis

However:

• *Infants* show understanding of false beliefs in implicit measures.

Onishi & Baillargeon 2005, Song, et al. 2008, Southgate et al. 2007...

• Perhaps **belief concept** in place early on. Failures at explicit False Belief tasks due to extra task demands.

Children's understanding of think

Pragmatic Hypothesis:

Children learn the right semantics for *think* and know that people can be mistaken in their beliefs, but this knowledge is obscured.

Their difficulty with *think* is in figuring out what people *mean* when they *say* '*think*'...

Untangling sentence & speaker meaning

FB scenario: Swiper is behind the curtain, but Dora thinks he's behind the chest.

(1) Dora thinks that Swiper is behind the chest.

-FALSE!

(2) Swiper is behind the chest.

-FALSE!

Children seem to respond to the truth of the complement rather than truth of entire clause.

Understanding think

Even *adults* sometimes respond to the truth of the complement.

A: Why is John not in his office?

B: Mary thinks he's out of town.

C: Nuh-uh! He's here!

C doesn't deny that Mary holds a particular belief, but denies the content of the *complement* directly.

Understanding *think* in context...

Basic use of think...

Sometimes we use think to report a belief which we may not endorse (basic use):

Dora thinks that Swiper is behind the chest. (that's why she's looking for him there)

Pragmatic enrichment with think

Sometimes we use think to endorse someone's claim (pragmatically-derived "endorsement" use):

A: Why is John not in his office?

B: Mary thinks he's out of town.

What B said: Mary thinks John is out of town.

What B meant: John is probably out of town.

(I heard it from Mary).

Pragmatic enrichment with think

A: Why is John not in his office?

B: Mary thinks he's out of town.

- *Literal* content of B's utterance doesn't answer A's question.
- Relevance Implicature: B's answer addresses A's question if B endorses John's thought.
- Quantity implicature: not full endorsement (cf. 'Mary is out of town')

[Simons 2007]

Pragmatic enrichment with think

 Speakers sometimes use think sentences to 'proffer' the content of complement clause.

The complement clause carries the 'main
 point'; main clause plays evidential function.

[Simons 2007]

Pragmatic enrichment with think

Perhaps children systematically assume endorsement uses, even when adults do not?

Pragmatic enrichment with think

So that whenever children hear someone say:

"Mary thinks John is out of town"

They assume he *means*:

"John is (probably) out of town"

And they say:

"false!" if John is not out of town.

Pragmatic enrichment with think

Why would children systematically assume enriched uses?

- Uses of *think* with endorsement enrichments frequent in *adult* speech.
- Reinforced by the fact that many instances of *think* are with 1st person subjects.

cf. Diessel & Tommassello (2001)

Pragmatic hypothesis

If children's difficulty with *think* is primarily pragmatic, and not *conceptual*, they should be able to respond to *literal* content in the right contexts.



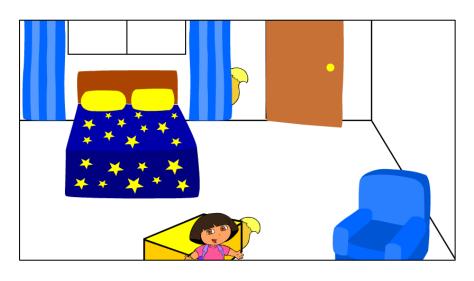
Lewis et al. 2012; Lewis 2013; Lewis et al, in prep.

Shevaun Lewis

3 year olds' understanding of think



Dora is looking for Swiper...



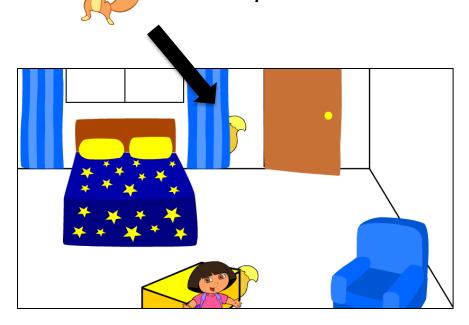
A game of hide and seek

Typical False Belief Fail

(1) Dora thinks that Swiper is behind the chest.

FB context:

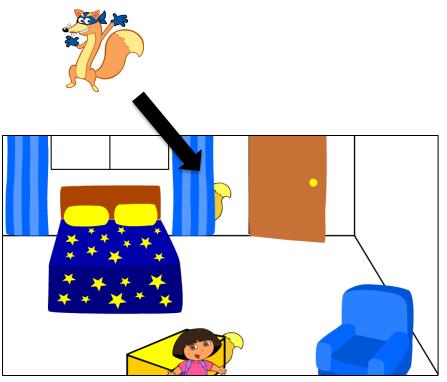
D. thinks Swiper is behind the chest sentence true Swiper is behind the curtain complement false



3 year olds: False!

Typical False Belief Fail

(1) Dora thinks that Swiper is behind the chest.



Pragmatic Hypo: kids say
False! because they assume
endorsement

Conceptual Hypo: kids say **False!** because they can't conceive a false belief.

 Can children respond to *literal* meaning as well (i.e., belief attribution?)

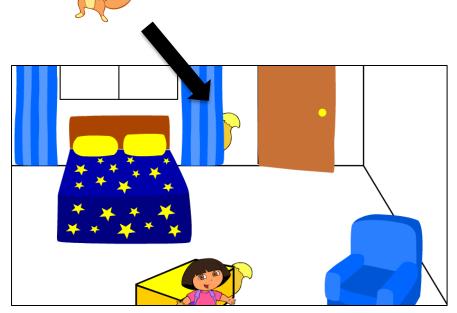
 Can they reject a think sentence that is false, based on a wrong attribution of belief?

think Fail?

(2) Dora thinks that Swiper is behind the curtain.

FB context:

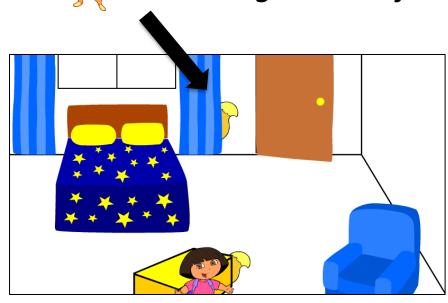
D. thinks Swiper is behind the chest sentence FALSE
Swiper is behind the curtain complement TRUE



think Fail?

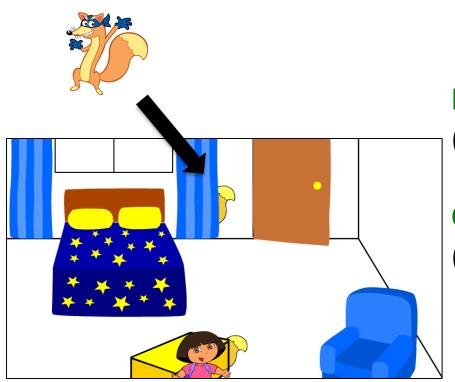
(2) Dora thinks that Swiper is behind the curtain.

If children understand the belief attribution that **think** expresses, they should **reject** (2), regardless of the truth of the complement.



think Fail?

(2) Dora thinks that Swiper is behind the curtain.



Pragmatic Hypo: kids say False! (respond to belief ascription)

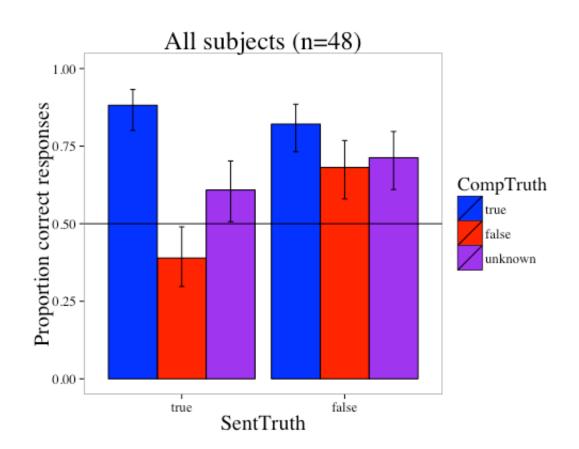
Conceptual Hypo: kids say *True!* (complement true; no False Belief)

Pragmatic Hypothesis Predictions

When the sentence is true, children assume endorsement and respond to truth of the complement.

When the sentence is *false*, children *reject* it,
 regardless of the truth of the complement.

Results



3 year olds' responses highly influenced by complement truth when the sentence is *true*.

3 year olds reject *false* sentences, regardless of complement truth.

Results

- Like adults, children reject sentences when the literal meaning is false.
- They further reject sentences when they take the *speaker meaning* to be false, even in cases where adults do not.

think

Hypothesis:

- Children have roughly right semantics for think.
- Difficulty is pragmatic: children assume enriched meaning for think p, in which speaker endorses truth of p, even when adults do not (either default pragmatic enrichment or lexicalized enrichment)

think vs. want

What about want?

Why are children so good with want?

 Why don't they ever respond to the truth of the complement, as with think?

want

Hypothesis:

- Children have the right semantics for want.
- Children don't respond to the complement with want, because want doesn't trigger the kinds of endorsement enrichments think does.

A: Where is John?

B: #(I want) him to be in Miami.

B: (I think) he's Miami.

think vs. want

Why does *think* lend itself to endorsement enrichments and *want* doesn't?

thinko = think but no endorsement interpretation
wanto = want but endorsement interpretation

- Why no thinko and wanto in natural language?
- Why no thinko and wanto in child language?

Semantics of attitude verbs: think vs. want

think vs. want: semantic sketch

Two semantic classes of attitude verbs:

– Representational attitudes express judgments of truth:

think, believe, claim, argue...

Preference attitudes express preferences:
 want, wish, order, demand...

Bolinger 1968, Searle&Vanderveken 1985, Stalnaker 1984, Heim 1992, Villalta 2000, 2008, Anand&Hacquard 2013...

think vs. want: semantic sketch

- think (but not want) expresses a judgment of truth, which a speaker can endorse directly:
- (1) Mary thinks that John is in Miami, which is true.
- (2) Mary wants John to be in Miami, #which is true.
- (3) Mary correctly thinks that John is here.
- (4) #Mary correctly wants John to be here.
- Or *indirectly* (via relevance implicature):

A: Where is John?

B: Mary thinks (correctly) he's in Miami.

think vs. want: semantic sketch

Because of their **semantics**:

- think gets endorsement of truth enrichments.
- want doesn't.

thinko & wanto in child language?

- Kids don't know a priori 'want' means want
 (preference) and 'think' means THINK (judgment of truth).
 - Why don't they ever assume endorsement enrichments for want?
 - Given how good they are accepting want sentences with a false complement, why do they respond to complement truth with think?
 THINKO?
- What gives away want and think's semantic classes?

Syntactic Bootstrapping

Syntax cues semantic class.

Finiteness of complement?

...Elmo DAXES that Ernie is behind the bench...

...Elmo DAXES Ernie to be behind the bench...

?Constraint: finite complements = judgments of truth infinitival complements = preferences

Syntactic Bootstrapping

?Constraint: finite complements = judgments of truth infinitival complements = preferences

 What about German or Mandarin, which lack same finiteness distinction for *think* and *want*?

- (1) Maria denkt, dass Peter heute noch kommt.
- (2) Maria will, dass Peter heute noch kommt.

 Maria thinks/wants that Peter today still comes

Finiteness just one of several syntactic cues that split the attitude pie in the same two halves (within and across languages)...

Mood selection in Romance languages:

- (1) Marie veut que Jean soit à Boston.
 Marie wants that Jean be-SUBJ in Boston
- (2) Marie pense que Jean est à Boston.
 Marie thinks that Jean be-IND in Boston

Bolinger 1968, Farkas 1992, Giannakidou 1998...

German: V2 complementation

- (1) Maria denkt, dass Peter heute noch kommt.
- (2) Maria will, dass Peter heute noch kommt.

 Maria thinks/wants that Peter today still comes
- (3) Maria denkt, Peter kommt heute noch.
- (4) *Maria will, Peter kommt heute noch.

 Maria thinks/*wants that Peter comes today still

Meinunger 2006, Truckenbrodt 2006, Scheffler 2008...

Syntactic cues differ cross-linguistically, even if the **semantic classes** are the same:

- Finiteness (English...)
- Mood (Romance...)
- V2 complements (German)

Issue: Children do not know they're speaking French vs. English vs. German...

The universality challenge

A syntactic bootstrapping account has to be abstract enough to be 'universal', but language-specific enough to be useful to the learner.

Cues varies across languages, but **converge** in making a distinction in whether a verb allows syntax of (declarative) '*main clauses*' in its complement (Dayal & Grimshaw 2009).

English

John is in Boston.

Mary thinks John is in Boston.

Mary wants John to be in Boston.

French

John est à Boston.

Mary *pense* que John est à Boston.

Mary veut que John soit à Boston.

German

John ist in Boston.

Marie *denkt*, dass John ist in Boston.

Mary will, dass John in Boston ist.

	main clause	complement of think	complement of want
English	finite	√ finite	X finite
French	indicative	✓ indicative	X indicative
German	Verb 2	✓Verb 2	X Verb 2

main clause syntax & representationality



Represent. attitude



<< >>

Syntax

main clause features

Speaker message

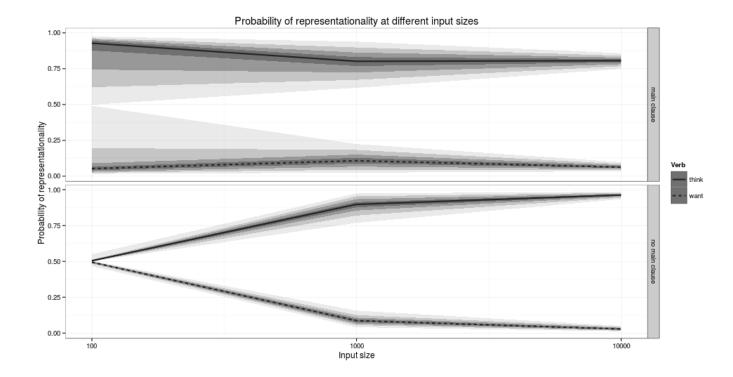
proffering (indirect assertion)

Addressing the Universality Challenge

- No need to specify *particular* syntactic properties.
- The learner only needs to note whatever syntactic features appear in (declarative) main clauses, and look for same features in embedded clauses.

What Would a Learner Do?

A learner looking for syntactic features in complement clauses that match **main clauses** quickly discovers the **representational/preferential** split.





Aaron White

think vs. want: summary

- Children differentiate think and want early on.
- Even when they are not fully adult-like, they know to treat think and want differently.

Proposal:

Syntax gives away **semantic class**, via the types of **pragmatics** enrichments these verbs trigger.

'Not at issue' challenge

Think and know both express belief:

- (1) John thinks that Mary is out of town.
- (2) John knows that Mary is out of town.

Know further presupposes truth of its complement.

Can children differentiate *think* and *know*?

- Do they understand that think is non factive?
- Do they understand that know is factive?

think: sentence v. speaker meaning

Three year olds tend to assume endorsement uses of *think*.

- Default pragmatic enrichment?
- Lexicalization of enriched meaning?

child think = adult know??

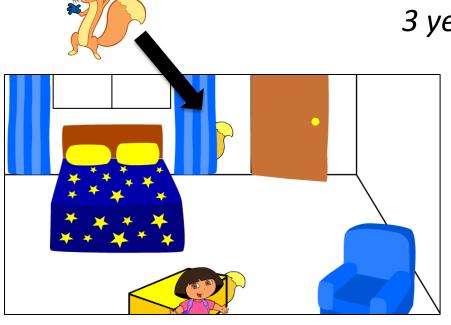
think

(1) Dora thinks that Swiper is behind the chest.

3 year olds: False!

(2) Dora thinks that Swiper is behind the curtain.

3 year olds: False!



Context:

Dora thinks Swiper behind the chest Swiper is behind the curtain

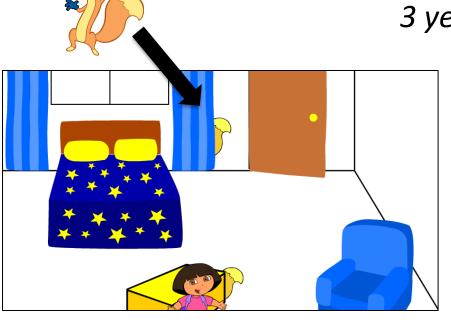
child think = know?

(1) Dora knows that Swiper is behind the chest.

3 year olds: False!

(2) Dora knows that Swiper is behind the curtain.

3 year olds: False!



Context:

Dora thinks Swiper behind the chest Swiper is behind the curtain

know: not at issue content

Can the child detect **know**'s **presupposition**?

- Children said to not distinguish think and know until age 4, and to not use meaning difference for quantity implicatures.
- (1) I think that the toy is in the blue box.
- (2) I know that the toy is in the red box.

Cf. Harris 1975; Abbeduto & Rosenberg 1985; Moore et al. 1989...

- Not surprising given endorsement uses with think.
- Can kids distinguish think and know under negation?

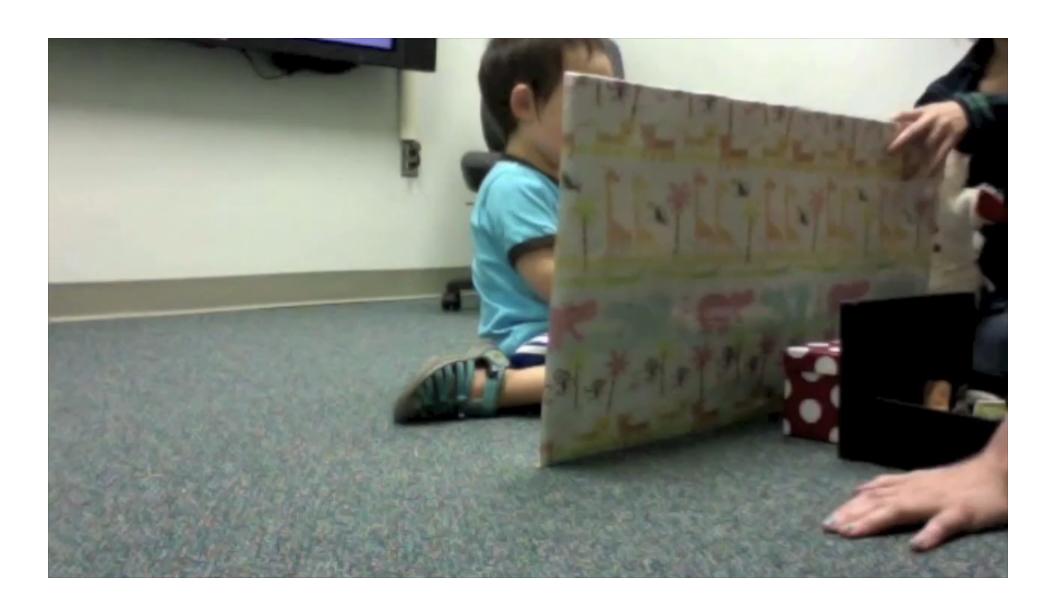
3 year olds understanding of think vs. know

Task: Find the toy!

- (1) Lambchop thinks that it's in the blue box.
- (2) Lambchop knows that it's in the blue box.
- (3) Lambchop doesn't think that it's the blue box.
- (4) Lambchop doesn't know that it's in the blue box.



Rachel Dudley



Results

- As a group, 3 year olds differentiate think and know.
- All 3 year olds have non factive think.
- Some 3 year olds have factive know.
- Some 3 year olds have non factive know.

think

 Three year olds seem to have adult-like non factive semantics of think.

 Tendency to assume endorsement with think not due to factive representation of think.

Hypothesis: Difficult with *think* sentences is in determining when *beliefs* are relevant in context (cf. Lewis 2012).

factivity

- What gives away know's factivity (and think's non factivity)?
 - Speakers' commitment to complement p?
 - State of the discourse? (was 'p' mentioned before?)
 - Syntax?
- And why don't *all* children figure out *know*'s factivity at the same time?

Syntactic clue?

Principled link between *factivity* and ability to take *declarative* and interrogative complements*?

- (1) John knows that Mary left.
- (2) John thinks that Mary left.
- (3) John knows whether Mary left.
- (4) *John thinks whether Mary left.

Cf. Hintikka 1975; Karttunen 1977; Ginzburg 1995; Egre 2007...

^{*}at least for doxastics

What's in the input?

Could *factivity* variation be due to *input* variation?

- What kinds of discourses do think and know appear in in child-directed speech?
- Have adult-like children heard more uses of know with both interrogative and declarative complements than non adult-like children?

Correlations between types of **think** and **know** sentences in input and performance on factivity task?



Rachel Dudley

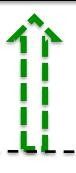
In conclusion...

Child attitudes

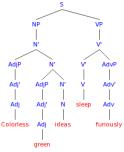
- think/know vs. want: Robust meaning difference.
 - Robustly tracked by syntax.
 - May help child early on.
- think vs. know: much more subtle meaning difference, which some 3 year olds can detect.
 - Syntax may help adult-like 3 year olds.
 - Syntactic cues not as reliable or salient?

The pragmatic challenge

Semantics



Syntax







Speaker message



Indirect speech acts and syntax

Representational (think):

- Report: judgment of truth
- Enrichment: indirect assertion (D thinks) S is behind the chest
- Syntax: declarative main clauses (assertions)

Preferentials (want):

- Report: preference
- Enrichment: indirect request (D wants you to) go to your room
- Syntax: imperatives

Rogatives (ask):

- Report: question
- Enrichment: indirect question (D is asking) where is S
- Syntax: interrogative main clauses

Indirect speech acts and syntax

 How frequent are request and question enrichments in child-directed speech? Do they ever trip up the learner?

 Can and does the learner exploit syntactic parallels between between direct/indirect requests and direct/indirect questions to learn semantics of preferentials and rogatives?

Child pragmatics

Are children "bad" at pragmatics?

- This question presupposes children have prior access to *literal* content that inferences are based off.
- However, what children ever get to hear are speaker meanings, not literal meanings.
- Children are in fact good at understanding speakers' meanings. Sometimes too good.

Thank you!

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Project collaborators:

Jeff Lidz, Shevaun Lewis, Aaron White, Kate Harrigan, Rachel Dudley, Naho Orita, Morgan Moyer, Erin Eaker, Meredith Rowe.

Research assistants:

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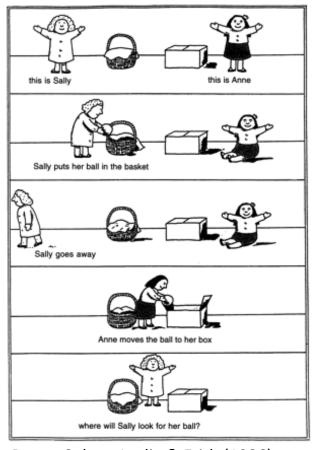
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False Belief Understanding



Baron-Cohen, Leslie & Frith (1986)

Change of Location Task (Wimmer & Perner 1983)

Where will Sally look for her ball?

- Adults and 5-year-olds:in the basket
- 3-4 year-olds: in the box

Cf. Wellman, Cross and Watson 2001 for meta-analysis

want

 3-year-olds have difficulty maintaining multiple perspectives:

- conflict with reality?
- conflict with own attitude state?

 These conflicts are always present with think but not with want in experimental contexts.

want

Typical experimental context for **think**:

Scenario: Ernie is NOT behind the bench.

(1) Elmo thinks that Ernie is behind the bench.

- Conflict with *reality*
- Conflict with *child's own belief state*

want

Typical experimental context for want:

Scenario: Ernie is NOT behind the bench.

(1) Elmo wants Ernie to hide behind the bench.

- No direct conflict with *reality* due to future orientation with *want*
- No conflict with *child's own desire state*

Children's understanding of want

Exp 1: Test *want* with forced present-orientation in situations that **conflicts with reality**.

Exp 2: Test *want* in situations where reported desire conflicts with child's own desire.

Results: 3 year olds succeed at both

Cf. also De Villiers 2005; Rackoczy et al. 2007



Kate Harrigan

Children's understanding of want

• 3 year olds are adult-like in understanding of want, even when the desire reported conflicts with reality, or with the child's own desire.

 Difficulty with think can't just be difficulty processing an attitude state representation that conflicts with reality, or with their own attitude state.

hope

 Hope shares semantic and syntactic properties with each *think* and *want*.

 How does hope fare compared to think and want in child language?



Endorsement want?

want doesn't get the kinds of endorsement interpretations think gets. But hope does.

Bill: Where is Jane?

Sue: #I want her to be in Miami.

Sue: I hope she's in Miami.

x hopes p: x believes that p is possible

[Portner 1992, Scheffler 2008, Anand & Hacquard 2012]

hope

hope shares **meaning components** with both **want** and **think**:

- It expresses a desire.
- It expresses a *doxastic possibility*, which allows endorsement uses.

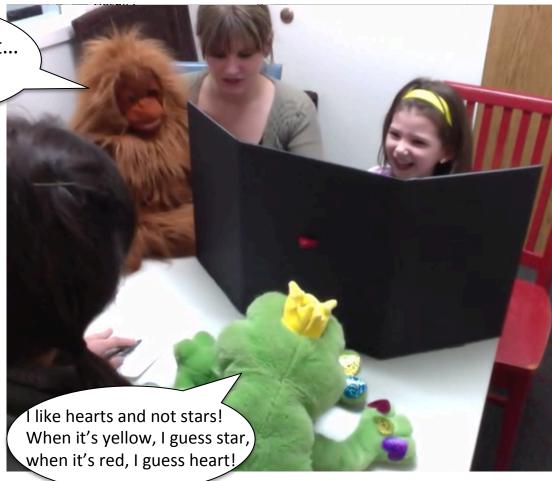
hope

hope shares syntactic properties with both want and think:

	Finite comp	Infinitival comp	Mood	Slift	V2
think	✓	*	indicative	✓	√
want	*	✓	subjunctive	*	*
hope	✓	✓	both	✓	✓

Hope

Froggy hopes to get...
Froggy hopes that...

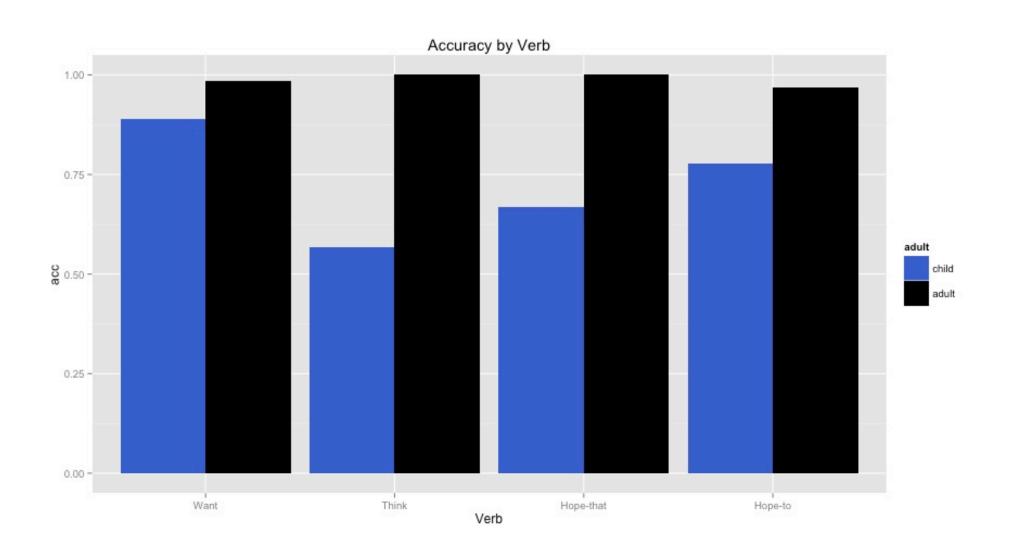


Hope: Design

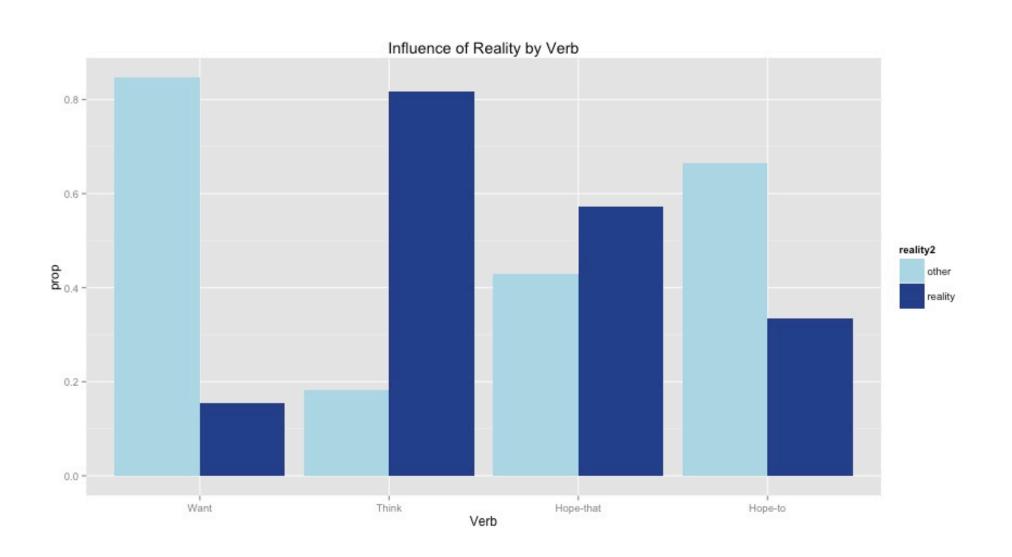
Breakdown of conditions: Adult-like responses

Clue	Actual		Want	Think	Норе	
	\(\frac{1}{2}\)	\Diamond	✓	✓	✓	1
		\Rightarrow	X	×	×	2
	*	\Diamond	✓	✓	✓	3
		\Rightarrow	X	X	X	4
	\bigcirc	\Diamond	✓	X	✓	5
		\Rightarrow	X	✓	X	6
	\Rightarrow	\Diamond	✓	×	✓	7
		\Rightarrow	X	~	X	8

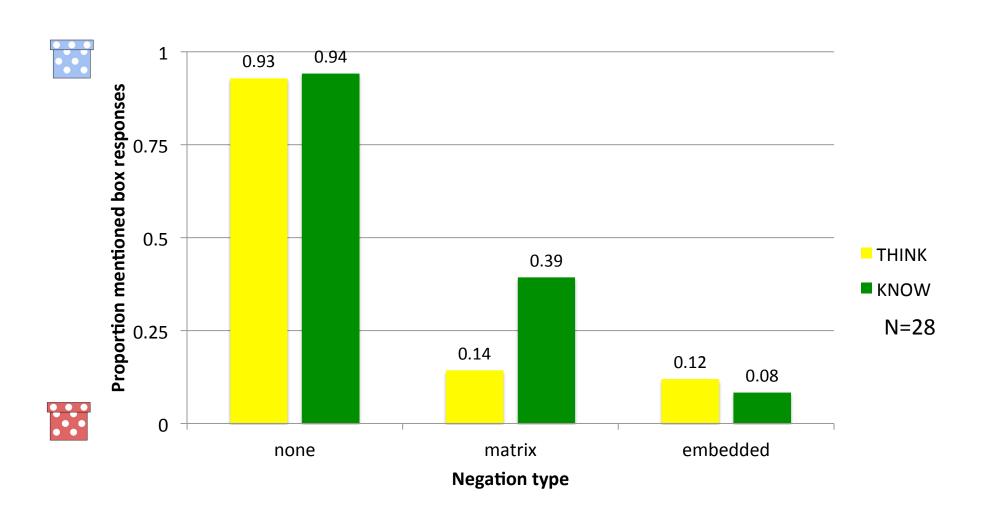
Results: hope vs. think vs. want



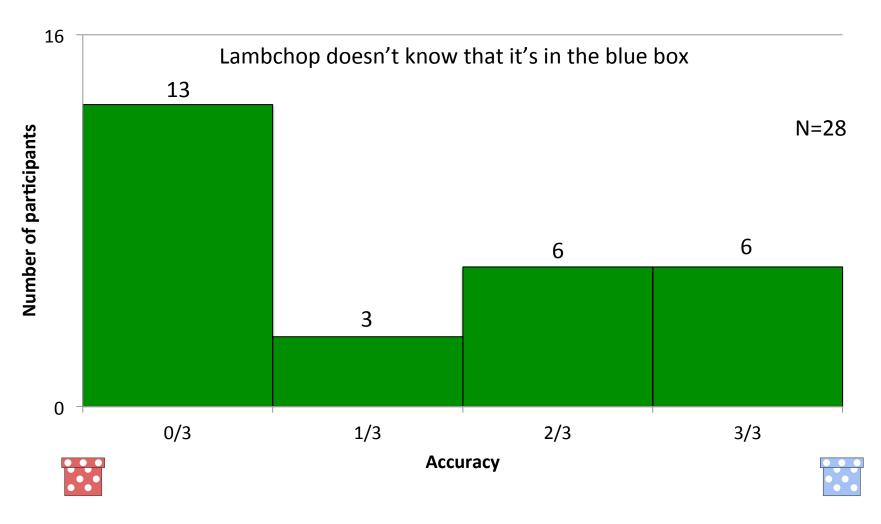
Results: hope vs. think vs. want



Results: think vs. know



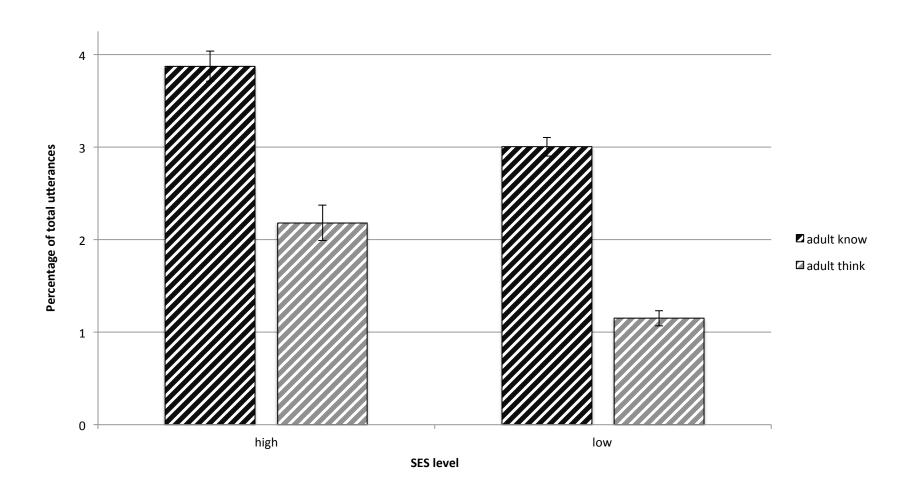
Individual measure: accuracy on know-matrix



- Children from low SES backgrounds show delays on FB and vocabulary tasks, compared to children from high SES backgrounds.
- Quantitative and qualitative corpus analysis of childdirected speech from low vs. high SES backgrounds.
- 'Where is the toy' task in children from low vs. high SES backgrounds.

Dudley et al, in progress

know vs. think: corpus study



know vs. think: corpus study

