

**An Examination of the Factors Underlying the Facilitative
Effect of Word Phrases on Object Categorization
in 9-month-old Infants**

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Previous research indicated that novel words highlight object categories for preschoolers and 12-month-olds. We extend these findings to 9-month-olds in four studies. Infants were familiarized to slides of animals (e.g., birds). On several trials, infants in Word conditions heard infant-directed phrases ("a bird"); those in Tone conditions heard tones. Infants in both conditions also received silent trials. Infants looked longer on sounded than on silent trials. The test phase paired a new familiar-category exemplar (e.g., bird) with a novel animal (e.g., dinosaur). Infants in Word conditions showed significantly greater novelty preferences than those in Tone conditions. Infants hearing content-filtered words responded like those hearing words. Infants hearing tones with contour (melodies) responded like those hearing tones. These differential effects of words vs tones on categorization are interpreted in relation to other incipient language-related abilities during infancy.

SATURDAY MORNING: SESSION B CONFERENCE AUDITORIUM

*Saturday 9:30 AM**Conference Auditorium*

**The Second Language Acquisition of Dative Case:
From Absolute L1 Influence to Optionality**

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By assuming Absolute L1 Influence Hypothesis (Schwartz, 1993; Schwartz and Sprouse, 1994), two studies were conducted to test whether dative pronouns are the trigger for the functional projection Agr IOP (Sportiche, 1992), and the syntactic consequences entailed. In the first study, intermediate French (N=12) and English (N=12) learners of Spanish and a Spanish control group (N=12) were tested on double objects, preposition stranding, indirect passives and ECM constructions using a Grammaticality Judgment Task and a Preference Task. In the second study, another group of English (N=19) and French (N=17) learners were tested on verbs with dative subjects using a Sentence Interpretation Task and a Preference Task. Results show that English learners are constrained by their L1 at the beginning, but that they move through a stage of optionality with some structures before arriving at the correct mental representation of the L2 grammar.

*Saturday 10:00 AM**Conference Auditorium*