

Learning change-of-state verbs: Does transitivity affect lexicalization biases?

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“Experiments in Linguistic Meaning (ELM)”

University of Pennsylvania, online conference, 16-18 September 2020

Research question: Language development

Overall

- How do children find out which meaning features are encoded in verb?
 - Manner? Result? Change-of-state? Change-of-location? Causative? Motion?

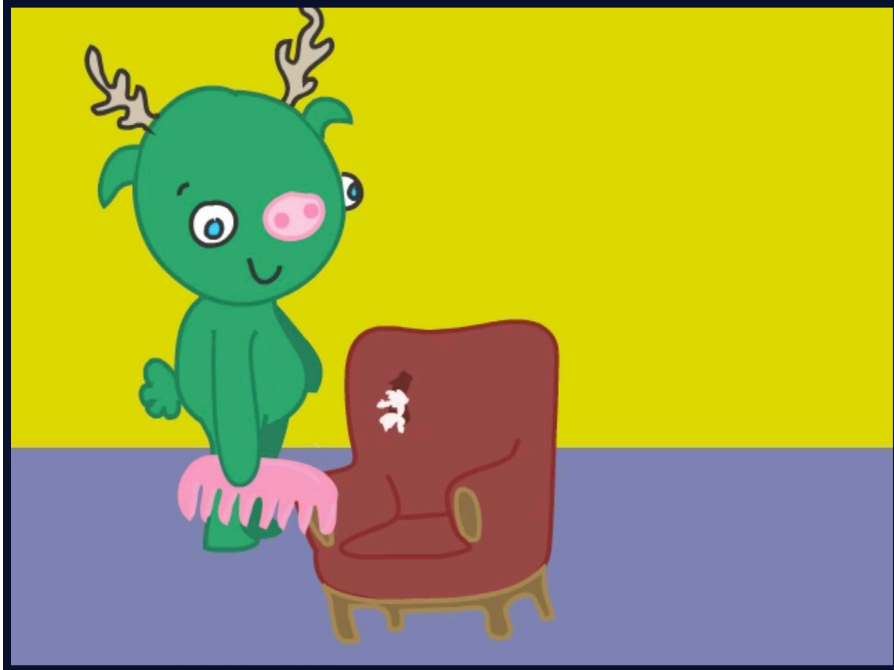
RQ

- To what extent does transitivity guide lexicalization preferences in children?

Hypothesis & Predictions

- Telicity is associated with direct objects
- If so, transitivity guides lexicalization choices
 - Novel verb in transitive frame will trigger more often a result meaning than novel verb in intransitive frame
 - Both in adults and children

Study 1 Training



Intransitive / Transitive

The monster is going to dax (the chair).

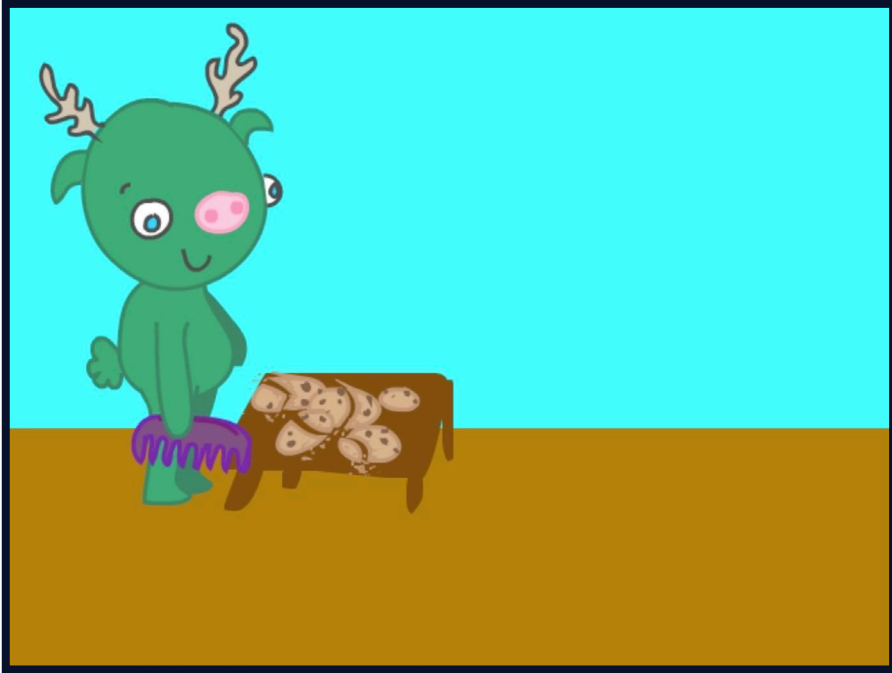
Look, the monster is going to dax (the chair).

He's daxing (the chair).

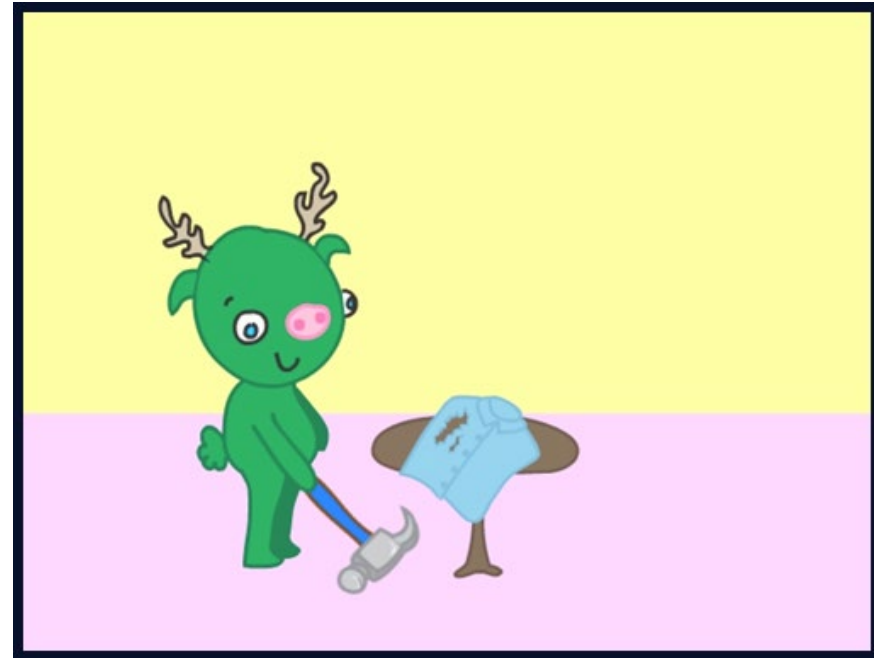
See, he daxed (the chair).

The monster daxed (the chair).

Which video shows daxing?

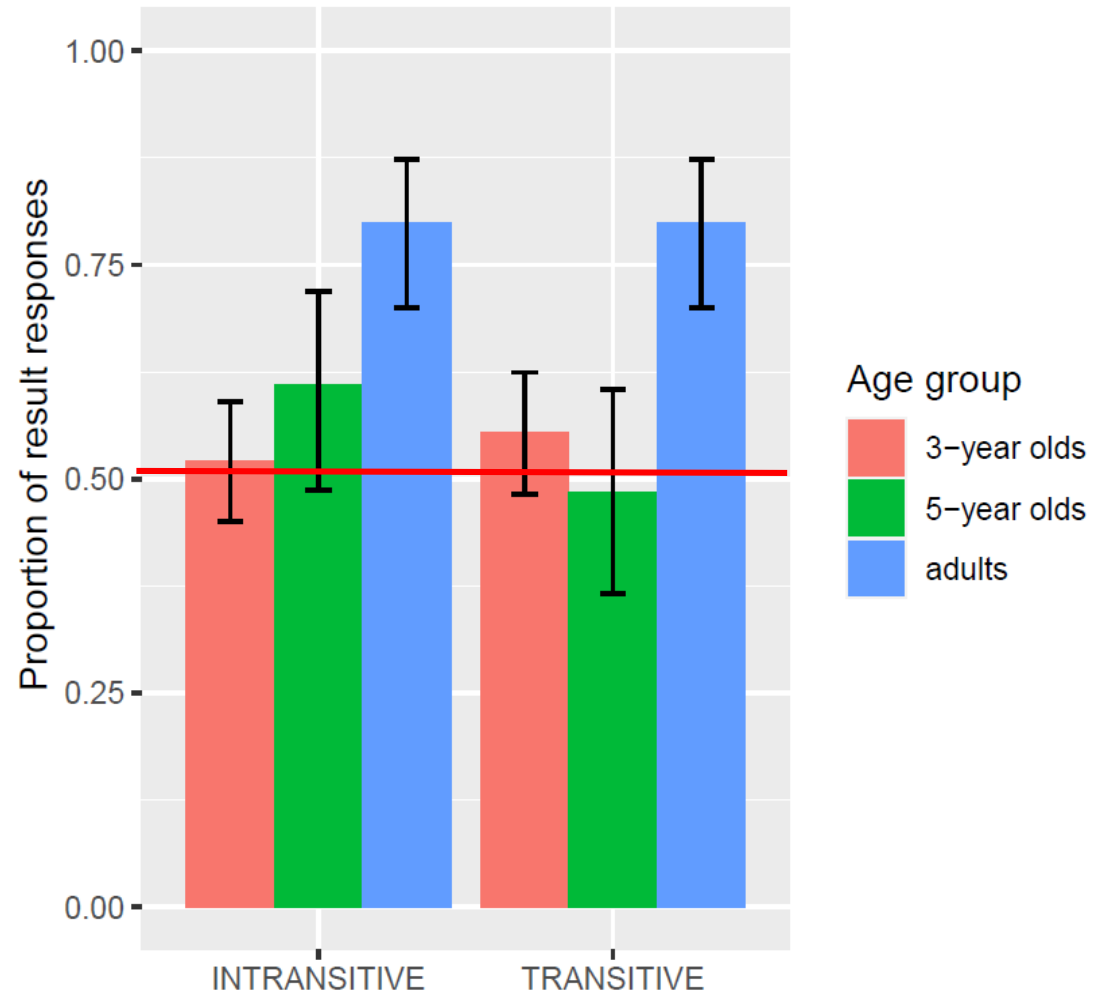


Manner match



Result match

Results forced-choice selection task



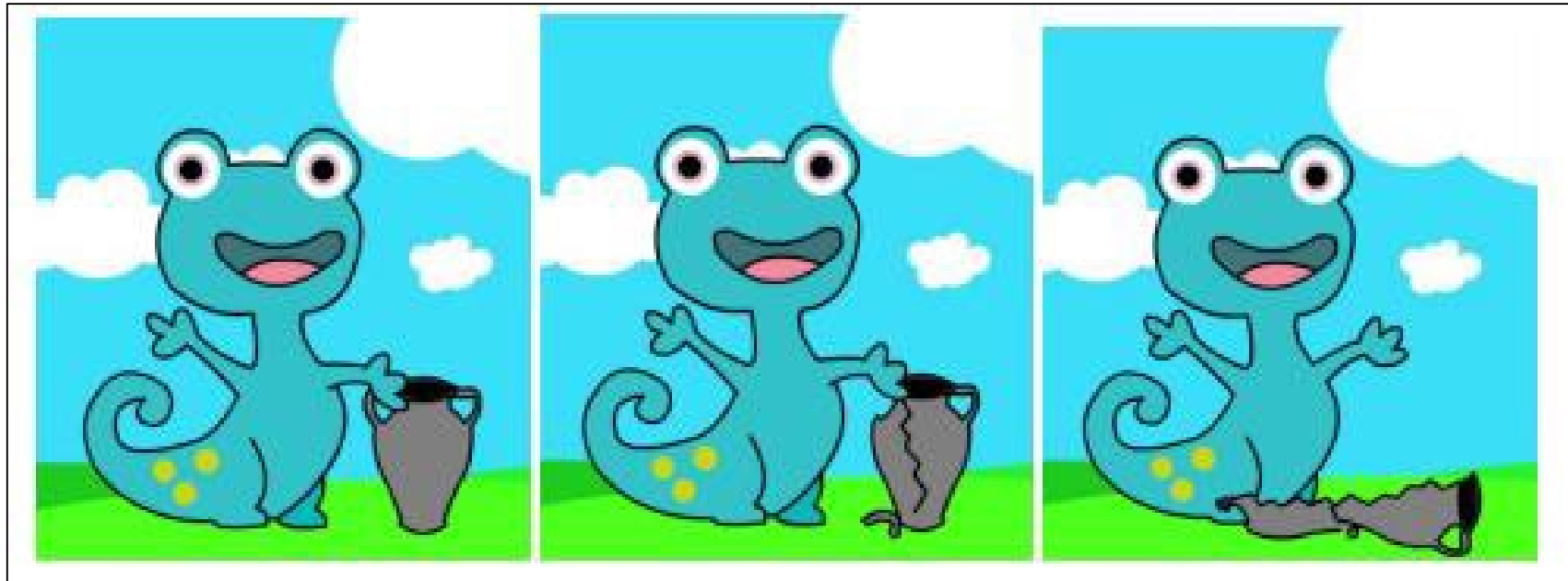
Analyses

- Age $p < .001$
- Result bias in Adults $p < .001$

Study 2

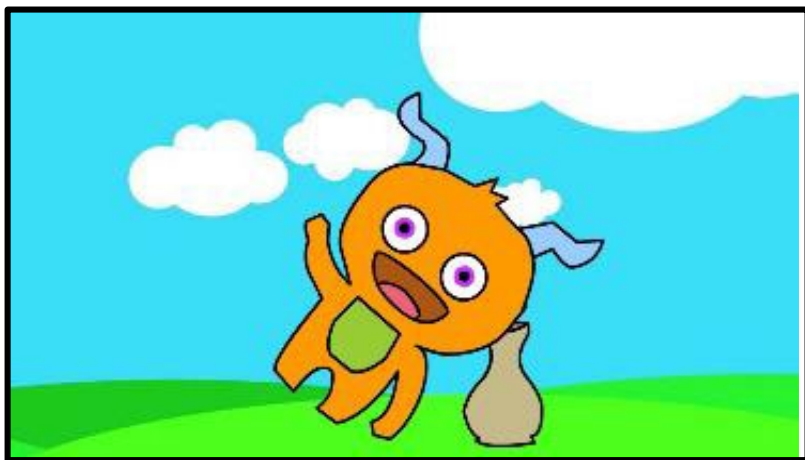
Look! The blue monster is blorking (the vase)

Sample



Is the orange monster blorking (the vase, or not)?

Match

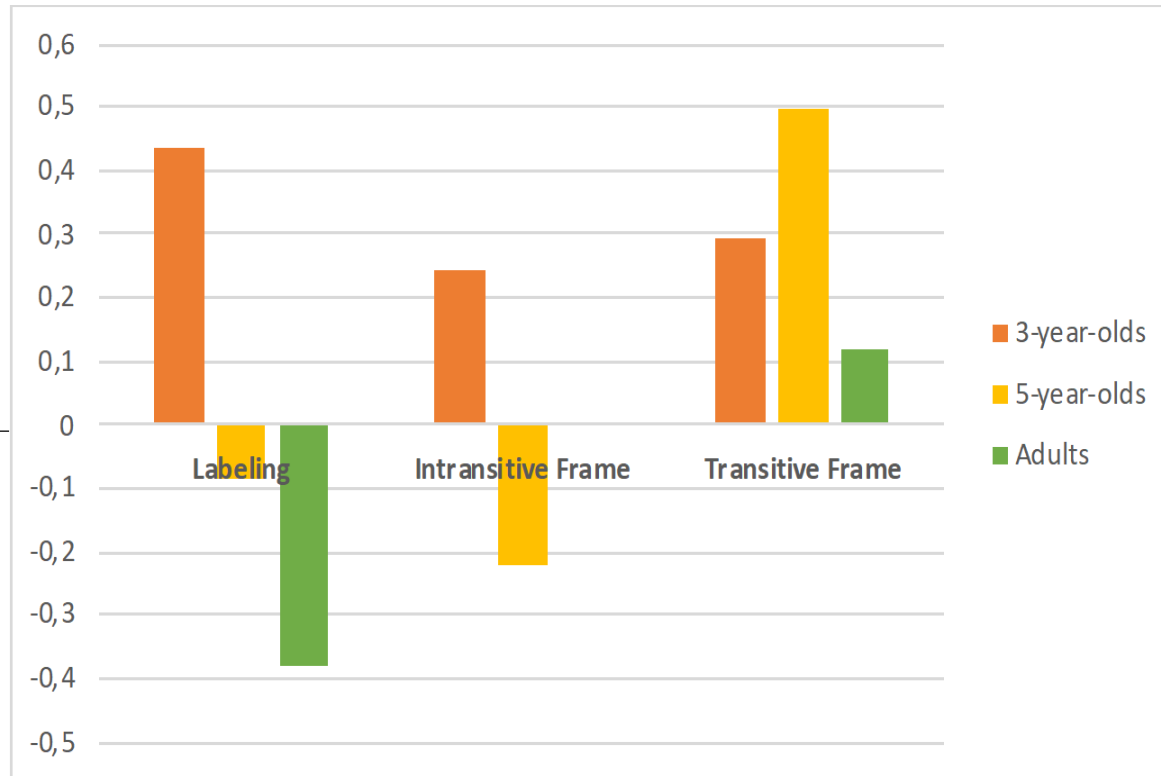


Results match-to-sample task

Result bias



Manner bias



Research question

RQ

- To what extent does transitivity guide lexicalization preferences?
- Not in adults
- Not in 3-yr-olds
 - Not replicate prior studies
 - Instead overall result bias
- **Yes** in 5-yr-olds
 - Transitive triggers result lexicalization

Hypothesis & Predictions

- Telicity is associated with direct objects
- If so, transitivity guides lexicalization choices
 - Novel verb in transitive frame will trigger more often a result meaning than novel verb in intransitive frame
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Only supported by 5-yr-olds...

Conclusions Language Development

- 3-yr-olds
 - Represent multi-interpretable scenes in terms of **result**. Why?
- Goal bias
 - Non-linguistic, cognitive bias
 - Triggers initial lexicalization of result meaning
 - Needs to be given up in subsequent stages

Carpenter et al., 2005; Csibra et al., 2003; Lakusta et al., 2007; Woodward, 1998

- Homology
 - Similarities event structure in language and cognition
 - Linguistic encoding builds on non-linguistic event representation

Ünal, Ji & Papafragou, 2019