

Liverpool Language Lab

Welcome to the third edition of the Liverpool Language Lab newsletter!

We want to say a big thank you to everyone who has taken part in our studies over the last year. We've had a really busy year running lots of different studies for a variety of ages.

We've also been to some child-friendly groups in the local area to spread the word about the Language Lab. We met lots of new children who wanted to become junior scientists!

Read on for more information about what we've been up to and to find out about the interesting studies that we've got coming up very soon.

Take part in our new studies!

We're always looking for local families to sign up to our database so that we can contact you when a study comes up that is suitable for your child's age.

If you or anyone you know has a child aged 0-5 and would be interested in being contacted about our studies, you can sign up online, by phone or by emailing us:

- <http://www.language05.co.uk/take-part.html>
- 0151 794 1109
- childlng@liverpool.ac.uk

Have your details changed since you signed up? If so please email us on childlng@liverpool.ac.uk so that we can update them.



Liverpool Language Lab in the wider community



This year, we've attended some exciting child-friendly classes in the local area including Beautiful New Beginnings, Moo Music and Makaton Liverpool just to name a few! We spoke to families about the work we do at the Language Lab and had lots of junior scientists signing up to get involved with our studies.

If you are a child-friendly group and would like to work with us in the future then please get in touch!

Our very own Dr Michelle Peter has had a busy year with the BBC, featuring in the programme 'Babies: Their Wonderful World'. The three part programme looks at babies from 0-2 years and how fascinating children's development is at this early stage.

Michelle has also spent some time filming a series of short videos with 18 month old children to provide some useful tips and fun ways that you can interact with your toddler to help support their development. Take a look at how Peek-a-Boo can help with young babies' understanding [here!](#)



Studies at the Language Lab this year

Language 0-5 project

After 5 years and almost 1500 visits the Language 0-5 Project is complete! Back in September 2014 researchers here in the Liverpool Language Lab started a study following the language development of 80 children from the Merseyside area from 6 months to 4 and a half years old. Over the four years the children took part in lots of tasks including day long audio recordings, eye tracking studies, play sessions, vocabulary tests, and many more.

We are pleased to announce that the first paper using the Language 0-5 Project data has been accepted. The team found that how quickly children look at a picture after they hear its label is related to how quickly their vocabulary grows and how quickly the complexity of their sentences changed. We are working on lots of other papers at the moment and will share our findings as soon as we can.



To celebrate the end of the Language 0-5 Project the team held a party for all of the participants and their families. There was a magician, balloon models and plenty of cake! It was a great way to end the project and thank all of the families for their time and dedication. It wouldn't have been possible without them.

BUT it's not over yet. Language 0-5 has become Language 0-6. Additional funding has been awarded to continue following these children into school with particular focus on literacy skills.

Bingo study

Judit and Beth have had a great time over the summer holidays playing bingo with some of our junior scientists aged 5-7. The study was investigating how sentences produced by children are affected by the sentences that they have just heard. The children took it in turns with Judit to describe some cartoon clips whilst filling up their bingo board.

We've now finished testing for this study and we hope to analyse and reveal the findings very soon!



Accent and Grammar Learning study



Anna, Beth and Heather have been very busy testing lots of baby scientists aged between 16-18 months for our accent and grammar learning study. For this study, we were interested in seeing which parts of speech children find useful when identifying words and how children respond to different accents.

We have almost finished testing for this study and will keep everyone involved in the study up to date with our findings!

Early Vocabulary study

Lana has spent the last year testing two-year-old children on lots of different tasks related to very early language development. This study focussed on why children at this age differ so much in the number of words they know and say. The children in this project completed lots of tasks including repeating nonsense words and watching clips on the eye-tracker.

Testing for this study is now finished and soon we will be able to analyse the data and see what we found!



Looking to the year ahead

New studies

Words and object learning study

In this study we are trying to understand how babies learn about the connections between words and the world around them, and particularly how hearing words and other sounds may help them pay attention to their environment.

Your child will watch a computer screen with moving objects on for around 10 minutes and we will measure their eye-gaze abilities through our eye-tracker. Eye-tracking is a safe, non-invasive method of recording looking behaviours.

If your child is approaching 9 months old and you would like some more information on this study, please email childlng@liverpool.ac.uk.



Learning through imitation study



This study will investigate how children learn what to do and say by copying others. For example, a child may learn how to produce sentences by copying the way another adult or child said it, sometimes with little understanding of why they said it that way. We are interested in how this simple copying can help children to go on and produce sentences of their own.

If you are from a nursery or primary school with children aged 3-4 and would like your setting to be involved in this study, please email childlng@liverpool.ac.uk.

Our new PhD students at the Liverpool Language Lab

A huge congratulations to Hannah and Anna who will be starting their PhDs in October. Hannah and Anna both studied Psychology at the University of Liverpool and alongside their studies have been working at the Language Lab. Read below to find out more about what they plan to investigate during their PhD.



Hannah

Anna

I have been working for the Liverpool Language Lab for the past 4 years on the Reading Together Project and Language 0-5. My PhD will be looking at how children learn to use verbs correctly and whether the input they hear from their parents can influence this process.

My studies will be for children of a variety of ages, and both typically developing children and children with language problems. I will ask them to complete a variety of language games such as sentence repetition and sentence completion tasks.

Since working for the Liverpool Language Lab on the Accent and Grammar Learning study and Many Babies, I have become really interested in what helps babies to learn. Specifically during my PhD I will be finding out about why learning words is so important to babies and whether learning these words helps them to remember objects and the world around them.

My studies will mainly be for 6-9 month olds, and will be using our eye tracker. By using the eye tracker I can find out lots about whether infants can follow and remember the objects they have seen.