

Inside this Issue:

◇ Upcoming Studies	1
◇ Lab Contact Info	2
◇ ARTICLE: Infants' Preference for Tunes in Native Language	
◇ Participation at UTD	3
◇ Lab Team — Fall 2016	

“Like” the **Infant Learning Project** on *Facebook* to receive weekly information about infant research, child development and parenting!



www.facebook.com/infantlearningproject

bbs.utdallas.edu/ilp

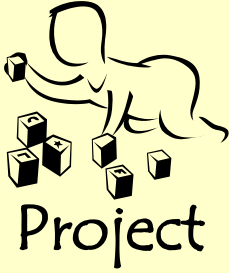
UPCOMING STUDY:

Multi-Language Infant-Directed Speech Study

- About the study: Infants will listen to samples of women speaking to babies in two non-native languages to examine whether they are able to recognize approving and comforting speech intent when presented in an unfamiliar language.
- Requirements:
 - ◇ Recruiting infants who hear English most of the time and are exposed to other languages less than 50% of their waking time.
 - ◇ Age: 5-5 — 6.5 months old
- Interested in participating? Please contact us via email or phone (info on Page 2)!



Infant Learning



Project

The University of Texas at Dallas
School of Behavioral & Brain Sciences

**Callier Center for
Communication Disorders**



Phone: (972) 883-3649
infantlearningproject@utdallas.edu

Faculty Lab Director:
Melanie Spence, Ph.D.

**We would like to express
our sincere gratitude to
the parents of the infant
participants in our
studies. Without you, our
research would not be
possible!**



Thank You!

Infants' Preference for Tunes in Native Language

Ritika Mallavarapu

Infants possess an innate curiosity regarding the world around them. Research has shown that the cultural context in which an infant is reared can influence his or her preferences. To further explore this idea, Soley and Sebastian-Galles (2015) conducted a study to investigate whether or not infants demonstrate a preference toward a specific tune when presented in their native vs. non-native language.

In order to explore this fascinating question, an experiment was conducted in which two tunes, each associated with a speaker of their native language, Spanish, or a foreign language, German, were presented to the infants. The length of time that the infants listened to each tune was measured. Both melodies were generated with a piano and were thus, new and unfamiliar. The participants in this study were infants approximately 7-months of age who came from predominantly Spanish-speaking families. Additionally, none of the infants had ever been exposed to the German language. The stimuli presented to the participants were videos that contained bilingual speakers who spoke 3 different sentences in both fluent Spanish and German.

The findings of the experiment highlighted that infants did not have any preference for either of the tunes that were played initially, but rather, once the melody was mentally associated with the individual who spoke the participant's native language, a preference for the tune was demonstrated. This was determined because infants listened to the tune played by the native speaker longer than the tune played by the individual speaking the foreign language. The researchers suggest that the findings can be attributed to two factors. Social bias may explain these findings in that infants may have deduced that the Spanish speaker liked the tune which influenced infants' perception of the tune which ultimately contributed to longer listening times. Another explanation is that infants enjoy the familiarity and sound of his or her own language thus, favoring tunes associated with their native language.

The information gathered from this experiment can be useful in a multitude of ways. Given that infants display an early auditory bias toward stimuli in their own language, they may be more attentive to interactions within their native language. In future research, comprehension levels can be assessed in order to determine if enhanced processing is exemplified with familiar native speakers.

Source: Soley, G., Sebastián-Gallés, N. (2015). Infants prefer tunes previously introduced by speakers of their native language. *Child Development*. 86, (6), 1685-1692

Are you looking for additional ways to participate at UTD?



- The Think Lab at UTD, headed by Dr. Candice Mills, is a research lab at UTD similar to the Infant Learning Project. This lab studies how children and adults think about and learn from the world around them.
- Recruiting families with children between the ages of 4-10-years-old!
- Current projects examine how preschool- and elementary school-aged children think about what others are likely to know, and how this influences their learning.
- Parents will receive gift cards as thanks for their participation, and children receive a prize.
 - ⇒ For more information, visit: www.utdallas.edu/thinklab
 - ⇒ Contact: utdallas.thinklab@gmail.com or (972) 883-6075

CRECE CONMIGO

- Free resource for the identification and prevention of developmental disorders in children ages birth –5. this program offers thorough developmental screenings and parents support in both English and Spanish at various locations across DFW.
 - ⇒ For more information, visit: ccf.utdallas.edu/programs-resources/crece-conmigo
 - ⇒ Contact: Cecilia Lazcano, M.S. @ (972) 883-4503 or cecilia.lazano@utdallas.edu

JUEGA CONMIGO

- Program of weekly free, drop-in, parent-child playtimes for children ages 0-3. Designed to foster strong parent-child relationships and children's growth through semi-structured play sessions. In this informal environment, bilingual developmental specialists facilitate play and learning activities using toys, music, and movement to promote sensitive, stimulating parent-child interactions and provide important support for school readiness.
 - ⇒ Contact: (972) 400-0286

Fall 2016 Infant Learning Project Team

Faculty Lab Director:

Melanie J. Spence, Ph.D.



Graduate Research Assistants:

Mariah Fowler, B.S.

Priscilla Jacob, B.S.

Hannah Pourchot, M.S., CCC-SLP

Undergraduate Research Assistants:

Kimberly Truong

Ritika Mallavarapu