



Seminar Series for Joint East-West Early Language Project

アジア欧米言語獲得研究プロジェクト セミナーシリーズ

Seminar Series #1

Bootstrapping the Beginnings of Word Order: How Frequency and Prosody Cue Functors, Content Words and Their Relative Order in Infants



Judit Gervain
University of Padua

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Zoom Webinar

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Host: Reiko Mazuka

RIKEN CBS

JEWEL Project Principal Investigator

Registration site ↓



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Bootstrapping the beginnings of word order: how frequency and prosody cue
functors, content words and their relative order in infants

Judit Gervain (University of Padua)

This talk examines the beginning of the acquisition of the relative order of function and content words, a universal, but cross-linguistically highly variable aspect of grammar. I present a series of experiments showing that infants as young as 8 months of age can distinguish between functors and content words, and have a rudimentary knowledge of the order of these two universal lexical categories in their native language. I also provide evidence that human adults and non-human animals such as rodents process the same frequency and prosodic cues differently from infants, emphasizing the developmental relevance of bootstrapping function/content word order from surface cues available in the input. I discuss the implications of these findings for a synergistic view of language acquisition, considering how grammar acquisition interacts with word learning.