



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 #6

CHILDES: Going beyond WEIRD



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Zoom Webinar

Admission: Free

Registration site ↓



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CHILDES: Going beyond WEIRD

Dr. Alex (Alejandrina) Cristia

There is a growing awareness in child development research - particularly in language acquisition - that studies are heavily biased towards WEIRD (Western, Educated, Industrialized, Rich and Democratic) populations. In this talk, I will present work in progress that starts by situating this acronym in the study of children's language development, to underscore that WEIRD represents a cluster of properties emerging from the crossing of multiple dimensions. Based on previous studies, we go on to argue that only some of these dimensions may matter in particular for the description of children's language input: how much speech is addressed to children, by whom, and with what qualitative features. This same literature review suggested to us that two dimensions are relevant for describing children's language input but have not been discussed frequently, namely a bias for English speakers and one for certain family structures (typically highlighting mother-child dyads). Next, we turn to a descriptive analysis of the major archive of child-centered language, CHILDES. We find that naturalistic speech samples represented in CHILDES are markedly varied in terms of languages and countries. However, they are biased in terms of education, urbanization, wealth, and family structure, both in terms of the countries represented, and in terms of the samples gathered in those countries.