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Mixed results testing categorization in infants using a preferential-looking paradigm on Zoom

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Abstract

The link between language and cognition is evident in the first months of life. As early as three months of age, a parent labeling an object that the infant is looking at influences the infants' thoughts about those objects (Ferry et al., 2010). Prior research investigating this link between language and cognition has found successful categorization with 6- and 12-month-olds using face-to-face methodologies via preferential-looking paradigms (Fulkerson & Waxman, 2007). Due to COVID, we sought to validate an online counterpart of the categorization task. In Experiment 1, we found that language labels facilitated object categorization for 10- to 12-month-old infants. In contrast, a control condition that presented the same labeling phrases played in reverse did not facilitate categorization. In Experiment 2, we found that labels did not facilitate object categorization among 6-month-old infants. In sum, the advantage of online infant testing may be restricted to older ages.