

## **UC Merced**

# **Proceedings of the Annual Meeting of the Cognitive Science Society**

### **Title**

Preschoolers Evaluate Information about Word Meaning

### **Permalink**

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/4qc6w3tj>

### **Journal**

Proceedings of the Annual Meeting of the Cognitive Science Society, 40(0)

### **Authors**

Sun, Yuyue

Jimenez, Sofia

Tippenhauer, Nicholas

et al.

### **Publication Date**

2018

# Preschoolers Evaluate Information about Word Meaning

**Yuyue Sun**

Vanderbilt University, Nashville, Tennessee, United States

**Sofia Jimenez**

Vanderbilt University, Nashville, Tennessee, United States

**Nicholas Tippenhauer**

Vanderbilt University, Nashville, Tennessee, United States

**Megan Saylor**

Vanderbilt University, Nashville, Tennessee, United States

## Abstract

We used a between-subjects selective trust paradigm to investigate whether 3-year-olds (N=28) and 5-year-olds (N=28) evaluate the quality of informants definitions for familiar and unfamiliar words. 3-year-olds did not choose the informative definer (silly=goofy) over the circular definer (silly=silly) for familiar or unfamiliar words. In contrast, 5-year-olds endorsed the informative definer for familiar ( $M=.71$ ,  $t(12)=2.38$ ,  $p=.04$ ) and unfamiliar ( $M=.82$ ,  $t(14)=3.41$ ,  $p=.004$ ) words. Additionally, 5-year-olds in the unfamiliar word condition chose to learn new information from the informative definer, such as asking about novel words ( $p<.001$ ) and novel object functions ( $p<.001$ ). The unfamiliar word condition may have elicited better performance than the familiar word condition because the contrast between the two informants was more obvious. We are currently investigating whether 3- and 5-year-olds prefer an informant who uses familiar words to define novel words (meager=small) to one that uses other novel words (meager=paltry).