

UC Merced

Proceedings of the Annual Meeting of the Cognitive Science Society

Title

Large differences in the distribution of instances of common object-based categories in early childhood

Permalink

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/66t4x86g>

Journal

Proceedings of the Annual Meeting of the Cognitive Science Society, 32(32)

ISSN

1069-7977

Authors

Pereira, Alfredo F.
James, Karin H.
Jones, Susan S.
et al.

Publication Date

2010

Peer reviewed

Large differences in the distribution of instances of common object-based categories in early childhood

Alfredo F. Pereira

Indiana University Bloomington

Karin H. James

Indiana University Bloomington

Susan S. Jones

Indiana University Bloomington

Linda B. Smith

Indiana University Bloomington

Abstract: Few studies have documented the examples of common early-learned object-based categories children actually encounter. This study asked parents ($N = 10$) to record, using a digital camera, the concrete instances their children saw ($M = 16$ mo). For five days, if an object was labeled with one of the nouns inside a pre-determined list of eight nouns, parents were to take a photo—our final dataset consisted of 700 photos. We coded the contents of each photo as: 3D real object, 3D realistic toy, 3D simple shape toy, 2D realistic object, and 2D simple shape.

Our results show large differences between categories in terms of type of exemplars: mostly composed of 3D real objects, with a mixture of 3D and 2D variability, or only experienced as 2D images.

These results are relevant to theories of visual object categorization—e.g. in understanding viewpoint invariance, or perception of abstract structural shape.