On indexicality and language development
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The study of indexicality -- how linguistic forms are linked to features of context -- has been at the forefront of linguistic anthropology and sociolinguistics since its inception (Silverstein 1976, Hay 2018).

Individuals are capable of associating language with a multitude of nonlinguistic contexts, and the shared knowledge of indexical meanings influences the distribution and spread of linguistics forms (Agha 2007, Eckert 2000).

We know much less about the development of linguistic indexicality or its broader effect on language change.

I would like to demonstrate three aspects of indexicality on the word-level. First, it has a robust influence on language change on a larger time scale, as shown by the rate of replacement of different lexical sets in Indo-European (Pagel et al 2007).

Second, immersion in the shared knowledge of indexicality enjoys primacy over individual strategies in language use, as shown by children's competence in the avoidance vocabulary of Datooga, a Nilotic language spoken by a traditionally pastoralist ethnic group living in northern Tanzania (Mitchell 2015).

Third, the way individuals learn new word-context associations is mediated by their expectations on which associations are useful in a social context, as shown in an on-line artificial language experiment with American English-speaking adults (Rácz et al 2017).

The emerging picture puts indexicality and the social context front and center in theories of language learning and language change, and points in exciting new directions of enquiry.

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