

The young children's sensitivity to the communicative context as a trigger for grasping new words from the adult speech

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In this research we have tested if the young children's sensitivity to the communicative context influence on acquiring new word meanings. We suppose infants and young children to be able to create the common meanings with an adult. This base is built on the joint actions with adults and mediates children attention to the new words by an adult. The way this mediation works supposes that attention is attracted to the new information that appears only in communicative context-preserving condition. If the new information appears with a change in communicative context, attention to it will be weakened for its relevance to context other than initial.

We varied the communicative context in our experiments. Three- and four- year-old children heard a new word applied to the unknown artificial object while playing a game, but in one condition the communicative context were changed (the new word were uttered in the presence of a new adult who didn't participating in the game from the beginning) and in the other condition the context was preserved (second adult were there from the beginning). We found that three- year-old children recalled new object name much better in the context-preserving condition than in context-changing condition, but four- year-old children recalled equally well in both conditions.

In the second experiment we found that such sensitivity to the communicative context doesn't depend on the task difficulty: four- year-old children recalled new object name again equally well in both conditions even when the task performance was significantly complicated.