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# When children are more pragmatic than adults: Norwegian children's comprehension of contextualized absolute adjectives

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## Abstract

Absolute adjectives (such as *straight*) can have both precise (perfectly straight) and imprecise (straight enough) interpretations. The current study investigates the developmental trajectory of understanding these adjectives. Using a picture-selection task, we show that children are first tolerant of imprecision, overwhelmingly accepting imprecise interpretations. This tolerance decreases with age, such that adults are overall less likely to accept imprecise interpretations relative to 3-year-olds. All age groups are similarly able to understand precise interpretations. The findings suggest that young children might start out with an underspecified lexical semantics for absolute adjectives which develops into a more precise representation with age.

**Keywords:** imprecision, absolute adjectives, developmental pragmatics

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