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# Class innovation and convention at the syntax/pragmatics interface: testing children's understanding of deverbal nouns

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## Abstract

This study investigates how conventions might impact the ability of children to understand cross-categorical lexical innovation. Children from 2 to 5 years old will encounter a series of either novel or familiar actions, introduced as verbs (e.g. 'he's plikking'), and then asked to identify them as nouns (e.g. 'who's the plikker?'). We hypothesize that familiar terms will be associated with conventions of class usage, while novel terms will have no such barrier to inferring the speaker's intended meaning. We predict therefore that children will be quicker to process nominalizations of novel terms than of familiar terms.

**Keywords:** Pragmatics/syntax interface, lexical innovation, developmental pragmatics

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