The Effect of Foreign Accent on Children’s Learning of New Knowledge
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How do speaker accents affect children’s preferences as to who to learn new skills and conventions from?

Introduction
During development, children are selective about who they choose to learn from.
- When it comes to learning language, previous research has shown that children make judgments based on speaker accents, as well as speaker reliability and familiarity. (Kinzler et al., 2007, Corriveau et al., 2009, Wagner et al., 2014)
- No research has focused specifically on the effects of children’s socio-indexical features such as their age and gender.

Research Questions
1) Can we replicate the previously reported effect of talker accent (i.e., English speaking children prefer to learn new knowledge from a native as opposed to a non-native talker) with children younger than 5?
2) How do the children’s own demographics (such as age and gender) play a role in their preferences for speakers?

Methods
Participants
15 Males, 21 Females, Ages 4-7 (mean age= 4:8 SD=.86)

Procedure
Children are presented with two speakers demonstrate how to use 4 novel toys. After viewing both speakers wield each of the toys, they are asked to interact with it on their own.

Results
NF imitation by accent type

NF imitation by container (toy) type

NF imitation by age

NF imitation by gender

Conclusion
The older children become, the more likely they are to imitate the native speaker’s actions, as opposed to the nonnative speakers. They show preference for speakers who sound most similar to themselves.

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