

# ACCOUNTING FOR DIVERSITY IN FIRST LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

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## **Day 1. Core questions on first language acquisition**

The theories and methods of developmental language science have changed drastically in the last half-century, but many of the core questions have remained the same. In this lecture, I will give an overview of the core “problems” posed by first language acquisition and how they relate to larger questions in linguistics, psychology, and education. I will then lay out an initial set of interconnected skills and types of knowledge that children must learn in order to become fluent language users, drawing attention to areas where our understanding is most clear, areas that are ripe for further investigation, and possible blind spots.

## **Day 2. Communicative foundations of first language acquisition**

Children acquire language in the context of and for the sake of their everyday interactions with others. For this reason, communicative needs and the infrastructure of coordinated interaction may serve as a key access point into identifying commonalities in first language acquisition across children from typologically and culturally diverse language environments. In this lecture, I will highlight a few interactional pragmatic skills and demonstrate how they may provide insight into aspects of early language development in multiple linguistic communities.

## **Day 3. Looking ahead: Diversity in first language acquisition**

Most of what we currently know about first language acquisition comes from children growing up in WEIRD (Henrich et al., 2010) families. While most researchers support work on non-WEIRD first language acquisition, a motivated shift in research will only come when it is clear exactly what we stand to gain by studying acquisition non-WEIRD settings. In this lecture, I will discuss the role of diverse sampling in first language acquisition, focusing on both theory and methods. I will outline connections between comparative work on socioeconomic classes and cultural-linguistic communities and open up discussion on the general relationship between theoretical and applied work on early language development, now and in the future.