

**Melissa Kline**  
Massachusetts Institute of Technology  
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## Education

2009-2015 Ph.D. in Cognitive Science

MIT Brain & Cognitive Sciences

Committee: Ted Gibson; Laura Schulz; Jesse Snedeker; Josh Tenenbaum

Thesis title: *Who did what to whom: Developmental perspectives on the meaning and communication of transitive events*

2004-2008 Sc.B. in Cognitive and Linguistic Sciences, magna cum laude

Brown University (Advisor Katherine Demuth)

Thesis title: *Syntactic generalization with novel intransitive verbs: Who is pilking?*

## Employment

2016-present Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Brain & Cognitive Sciences

Postdoctoral Associate; Supervisor Evelina Fedorenko

2015-2016 Harvard University, Department of Psychology

Postdoctoral Fellow; Supervisor Jesse Snedeker

## Publications

Kline, M., Snedeker, J. & Schulz, L.E. (2016). Linking Language and Events: Spatiotemporal cues drive children's expectations about the meanings of novel transitive verbs. *Language Learning & Development*, published online 5/11/2016, journal issue pending.

Kline, M. & Demuth, K. (2013). Syntactic generalization with novel intransitive verbs. *Journal of Child Language*, 41(3), 543-74.

Kline, M. & Demuth, K. (2010). Factors facilitating implicit learning: The case of the Sesotho passive. *Language Acquisition*, 17(4), 220-234.

Demuth, K. & Kline, M. (2006). The distribution of passives in spoken Sesotho. *Southern African Linguistics and Applied Language Studies*, 24, 377-388.

## Publications in progress

Kline, M., Schulz, L. & Gibson, E. (Submitted) Nothing but the truth, but not the whole truth: Adults choose to mention agents and patients in proportion to informativity, even if it doesn't fully disambiguate the message. (*Open Mind*).

Kline, M., Gallee, J., Balewski, Z., & Fedorenko, E. (Submitted) Understanding jokes relies on the Theory of Mind system. (*Psychological Science*).

Frank, M., Bergelson, E., Bergmann, C., Cristia, A., Floccia, C., Gervain, J., Hamlin, J.K., Hannon, E., Kline, M., Lew-Williams, C., Nazzi, T., Panneton, R., Rabagliati, H., Soderstrom, M, Sullivan, J., Waxman, S. & Yurovsky, D. (Submitted) A collaborative approach to infancy research: Promoting reproducibility, best practices, and theory-building. (*Infancy*).

Kline, M., Salinas, M., Lim, E., Fedorenko, E., & Gibson, E. (In prep) Word order patterns in gesture are sensitive to modality-specific production constraints.

Kline, M., Gibson, E. & Schulz, L. (In prep) Who did what to whom? Children's choices about referring to agents and patients are sensitive to the costs and rewards of information.

### Conference Proceedings

Wittenberg, E., Kline, M. & Hartshorne, J. (2016) Learning to talk about events: Grounding language acquisition in intuitive theories and event cognition. *Proceedings of the Thirty-Eighth Annual Conference of the Cognitive Science Society.*

Kline, M., Snedeker, J. (2015). 2-year-olds use syntax to infer actor intentions in a rational-action paradigm. *Proceedings of the Thirty-Seventh Annual Conference of the Cognitive Science Society.*

Kline, M., Muentener, P. & Schulz, L.E. (2013). Transitive and periphrastic sentences affect memory for simple causal scenes. *Proceedings of the Thirty-Fifth Annual Conference of the Cognitive Science Society.*

Kline, M., Snedeker, J., & Schulz, L.E. (2011). Children's comprehension and production of transitive sentences is sensitive to the causal structure of events. *Proceedings of the Thirty-Third Annual Conference of the Cognitive Science Society.*

### Presentations

Kline, M. (2016) Which semantic primitives and why those ones? Workshop talk, Learning to Talk About Events, 38<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference of the Cognitive Science Society, Philadelphia, PA

Kline, M., de Rechteren van Hemert, A., & Snedeker, J. (2016). Changing verb biases within and across domains: Manner/Path and Action/Event generalization. *Events in Language and Cognition Workshop*, Gainesville, FL (co-located with CUNY 2016).

Kline, M., Snedeker, J. (2015). 2-year-olds use syntax to infer actor intentions in a rational-action paradigm. 37<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference of the Cognitive Science Society, Pasadena, CA

Kline, M., Muentener, P. & Schulz, L.E. (2013). Transitive and periphrastic sentences affect memory for simple causal scenes. 35<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference of the Cognitive Science Society, Berlin, Germany.

Kline, M., Snedeker, J. & Schulz, L.E. (2013) Representations of causality in verb learning. 2013 Biennial Meeting of the Society for Research on Child Development, Seattle, WA.

Kline, M., Snedeker, J., & Schulz, L.E. (2011). Preschoolers prefer to map novel transitive verbs to events with spatiotemporal features that mark causation. 36th Annual Boston University Conference on Language Development, Boston, MA.

Kline, M., Snedeker, J., & Schulz, L.E. (2011). Children's comprehension and production of transitive sentences is sensitive to the causal structure of events. 33rd Annual Conference of the Cognitive Science Society, Boston, MA.

Kline, M. & Demuth, K. (2008). Syntactic generalization with novel intransitive verbs: Who is pilking? 33rd Annual Boston University Conference on Language Development, Boston, MA.

Kline, M. & Demuth, K. (2008). Frequency and structural priming in the input: Implications for learning the passive. *Generative Approaches to Language Acquisition North America (GALANA) 3*, Storrs, CT.

Kline, M. & Demuth, K. (2006). Learning passives from the input: Evidence from Sesotho. 2nd Bantu Acquisition Workshop, Northampton, MA.

## **Conference Posters**

- Mahowald, K., Kline, M., Fedorenko, E. & Gibson, T. (2015). Informativity and efficient compression of sentences. Annual CUNY Conference on Human Sentence Processing, CUNY 2015. Los Angeles, CA
- Kline, M., Snedeker, J. (2014) Daxing my toy or Daxing TO my toy? Two-year-olds use syntax to override rational imitation effects. 39th Annual Boston University Conference on Language Development, Boston, MA.
- Friel, D., Kline, M., Seed, A., & Schulz, L. (2011). It's okay to judge a block by its color: Toddlers' use of symbolic and intrinsic cues to objects' causal powers. Seventh Biennial Meeting of the Cognitive Development Society, Philadelphia, PA.

## **Honors and Awards**

- Harvard University Foundations of Human Behavior Grant, 2015 (\$40,000)
- NSF SBE Doctoral Dissertation Research Improvement Grant, 2012-2014 (Project title: *Causal Representations in Children's Transitive Sentences*; \$12,000)
- NSF GRFP Fellowship, 2011-2014
- Norman B. Leventhal Fellowship, 2010-2011
- Singleton Graduate Fellowship, 2009-2010

## **Service**

- Organizing committee, CUNY Sentence Processing Conference (March 2017)
- Co-Organizer, Learning to Talk About Events Workshop (August 2016)
- Co-Chair, Events in Language & Cognition Workshop (March 2016)
- CogLunch coordinator (2010-2011)
- Ad-hoc reviewer for Cognitive Science, Journal of Experimental Psychology, Language Learning and Development, Autism Research (Journals); Society for Research in Child Development, Cognitive Science, CUNY Sentence Processing Conference (Conferences)

## **Teaching Experience**

- Science of Living Systems 20/ Introduction to Psychological Science, 2013 (Teaching Fellow)
- Project consultant for 'Special Topics' independent research students (2013, 2014)
- Graduate Student Teaching Certificate Program, 2011-2012
- Infant & Early Childhood Cognition, Fall 2011 (Teaching Assistant)
- Laboratory in Higher-Level Cognition, Spring 2011 (Teaching Assistant)
- Models of Computation, Fall 2006 (Teaching Assistant)
- After-school science educator, 2008-2009 (AmeriCorps, Providence Children's Museum)

From 2010 to present: Supervisor for 3 masters' students, 16 full time and 14 part time/semester undergraduate research assistants, including one senior thesis supervision.