# Chapter 5 Further Readings

(Note: This bibliography will be updated regularly.)

### Words and their interface to sound

By the time children are actively mapping sounds to meanings, they have already learned a lot about the sound structure of their native language. How do they use this phonological knowledge to guide their word learning? This paper provides one example from an intriguing body of work in which researchers study whether children are reluctant to map non-native sounds and patterns to referents:

May, L., & Werker, J. F. (2014) Can a click be a word? Infants’ learning of non-native words. Infancy, 19, 281–300.

### Debates over “fast mapping”

Children’s word learning points to a paradox: they are able to learn new words on the basis of very little input, sometimes seemingly after a single use in a process known as “fast-mapping.” Yet, as you have seen in this chapter, the mapping of sounds to meanings is inherently riddled with uncertainty. How do children form their initial hypotheses about words’ meanings, and how do they revise them when their first guesses are wrong? The following papers offer two very different perspectives on this problem:

Fitneva, S. A., & Christiansen, M. H. (2011) Looking in the wrong direction correlates with more accurate word learning. Cognitive Science, 35, 367–380.

Trueswell, J. C., Medina, T. N., Hafri, A., & Gleitman, L. R. (2013) Propose but verify: Fast mapping meets cross-situational word learning. Cognitive Psychology, 66, 126–156.

### Understanding speakers’ intentions

Though now over a decade old, this review article provides a very readable introduction to the literature on word learning and mindreading:

Bloom, P. (2002) Mindreading, communication and the learning of names for things. Mind and Language, 17, 37–54.

Exactly what cues about a speaker’s referential intentions are present in typical interactions between parents and children? The following paper represents an attempt to document and quantify these cues:

Frank, M. C., Tenenbaum, J. B., & Fernald, A. (2013) Social and discourse contributions to the determination of reference in cross-situational word learning. Language Learning and Development, 9, 1–24.

When parents hesitate or stumble while speaking, they may inadvertently be providing their children with useful cues about the meanings of new words. This paper explores the idea that disfluencies in speech help constrain the referential possibilities of a word:

Kidd, C., White, K. S., & Aslin, R. N. (2011) Toddlers use speech disfluencies to predict speakers’ referential intentions. Developmental Science, 14, 925–934.

### The importance of  linguistic input

In Chapter 5, you read that children from lower socio-economic backgrounds receive less input than children from higher socio-economic backgrounds, which carries implications for word learning. However, it is important to consider the quality of linguistic input as well as its quantity. The following paper explores one way to think about quality of input, and asks whether the quality of input also varies as a function of socio-economic status:

Cartmill, E. A., Armstrong, B. F., Gleitman, L. R., Goldin-Meadow, S., Medina, T. N., & Trueswell, J. C. (2013) Quality of early parent input predicts child vocabulary 3 years later. Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, 110, 11278–11283.

It has been reported that in some communities, adults rarely talk directly to preverbal children, so that the bulk of a child’s language input would need to come from speech that is heard as adults interact with others. In this paper, researchers visited a Mayan village to quantify and compare linguistic input in Mayan and US households. They also assessed the importance of child-directed language for word learning:

Schneidman, L. A., & Goldin-Meadow, S. (2012) Language input and acquisition in a Mayan village: how important is directed speech? Developmental Science, 15, 659–673.

### Using linguistic context to learn new words

In English and a number of other languages, children seem to have an easier time learning nouns than verbs. Is this a universal aspect of language learning, or does it depend on the specific syntactic cues that are available in a particular language for noun- and verb-learning? This review article summarizes crosslinguistic evidence relevant to the debate:

Waxman, S., Fu, X., Arunachalam, S., Leddon, E., Geraghty, K., & Song, H.J. (2013) Child Development Perspectives, 7, 155–159.

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