Research proposal

Goal: 1-2 page (single-spaced) description of an experiment about language acquisition you would like to do

• **Question:** What question are you trying to answer? Motivate what needs to be understood.

• **Hypotheses:** What do you predict will happen? If you don’t have strong predictions on one direction, explain why this or that might happen

• **Method:** Briefly, how would you test this idea? Participants, task information

• **Predicted Results:** Very briefly, what would your predicted results look like?

• **Discussion:** What would this finding mean? What is the significance? Lots of options: If you find what you expect, what else would you want to explore? How might this finding be applied?
Constraints

• About infant or child language learners, but an adult sample can be included
• Can be related to research you are doing, but not identical
• Experimental or correlational
• Include an example of stimuli: example sentences, labels, artificial languages, but not an entire stimuli set
• Does not have to be related to a specific article in class, but keep in mind that this is our shared knowledge
  *Most direct path: Pick an idea from research we’ve discussed, design a follow up experiment
• Phrase like you will do it (I will test...)


• **Question:** Previous research has shown that monolingual-English learning infants are open to learning lexical tones as object names early in word learning. Are bilingual (non-tonal learners) more or less open to learning this type of non-native form as an object name?

--set up why this might be the case

• **Hypotheses:** I predict that bilinguals will be more open to learning tone labels than monolinguals because it takes longer to determine the structure of two separate sound systems.

• **Method:** I will test 14- and 19-month-old Spanish-English bilinguals. Switch task. Same labels as Hey et al.

• **Predicted results:** If infants learn the labels, they will look longer on Switch trials than Same trials. If bilinguals are like monolinguals, only 14-month-olds will learn the labels.
• **Discussion:** This finding would suggest that bilinguals are more open to learning non-native sounds in object labels than monolinguals. This seems adaptive because they have a variable sound system to figure out.

  • Unanswered questions: Is this specific to tones? What about other non-native sounds? Is it specific to speech? What about non-speech stimuli? Bilinguals may be open to tone specifically because it is relevant in all languages.....

  • How long does it last? Is there an age bilinguals stop attending to lexical tones? I would expect so, because the information would be misleading.