

In-class Activity
Language Development
March 30, 2022

As a child's lexicon grows, how is their syntax developing? Let's take a look in CHILDES at Naomi's production of verbs from one to four years old to find out!

- **Work together** to address the items for each component.
- **Save your data** in a collaborative document.
- **Submit the link to your document** in Canvas via the 'Syntax activity' Assignment in 'Attendance and Participation' by the end of the in-class activity.

Go to <https://sla.talkbank.org/TBB/childes/Eng-NA/Sachs>

- You'll be exploring **the syntactic development of one child (Naomi)** from the Sachs corpus, focusing on one component in particular: **verbs**!
 - We'll **target 5 verb types** that take different kinds of complements.
1. **Review** these verb types, and make sure you understand how they differ, by comparing the token examples in parentheses.
 - a. **Intransitive** verbs that don't take an object argument (e.g., *cry, fly, rain*)
 - b. **Transitive** verbs that take an NP/DP complement (e.g., *like, take, wash, look at, get, close*)
 - c. **Ditransitive** verbs that take two complements (an NP/DP and a PP locative phrase) (e.g., *put, bring*)
 - d. **Transitive** verbs that take either a noun complement or a sentential complement of an infinitival form (*want*)
 - e. **Transitive** verbs that take either a noun complement or a sentential complement of a finite form (e.g., *know, hope, think*)
 2. **Spot-check the corpora** to find information on the production of these verbs.
 - a. **Use the 'FIND' function** to search for these verbs in randomly selected files from 1;08 through 4;09.
 - b. **Focus on the Naomi's productions** (but pay attention to what the adults are saying, too, because you might notice that adults are using these verbs when Naomi isn't).
 - c. **Create a table** summarizing what you find, including the type of verbs, tokens, age/corpus file, example utterances with the tokens. Like this:

verb type	verb token	age/file	utterance
intransitive	v1		
	...		
transitive	v1		
	...		
ditransitive			
transitive-inf			
transitive-fin			
 - d. **Draw conclusions** based on the pattern you've seen in (6c).
 - i. When did each of these verb types start being produced?
 - ii. Were children always producing the full frame? If not, when did this seem to start in development (for each of the verb types)?
 - iii. What can we conclude about the development of these verbs, and their syntactic structures? Is there an order to acquisition? If so, what do you think guides this order?