RUTGERS
School of Arts and Sciences

Center for Cognitive Science

RuCCS Colloquia: Spring 2022
Tuesday, April 05, 2022 | 1PM - 3PM EST

Nonverbal Marginalization: Cognitive Architecture and Normative Harms

Dr. Austin A. Baker

<u>Dr. Baker</u> is a philosopher and cognitive scientist specializing in empirically informed philosophy of mind and social philosophy. Their research addresses social prejudice through the interdisciplinary lenses of philosophy, psychology, neuroscience, and law. Dr. Baker received their PhD in Philosophy and Graduate Certificate in Cognitive Science from Rutgers University and is currently a Postdoctoral Assistant Professor at the Rutgers Center for Cognitive Science.

Abstract: The nonverbal cues that accompany speech (e.g., facial expressions, gestures, and eye gaze) can be as communicatively significant as the meanings of the words used. In this talk, I identify and discuss a very common—but philosophically and empirically unexamined—phenomenon: the behavioral tendency to nonverbally engage with people in ways that are sensitive to contextual power dynamics (e.g., smiling and nodding more at powerful people). I offer a mechanistic account of this tendency (which I call 'nonverbal marginalization'), arguing that it can manifest and reinforce implicit cognitive biases about social identities like race, gender, sexual orientation, and disability.

Errors as Evidence: A Cross-Linguistic Investigation into Children's Use (and Misuse) of Complex Wh-Questions

<u>Dr. Lutken</u> received her B.A. in English literature from Whitman College before teaching English in France. During this time, she developed an interest in language acquisition (both first and second) which led her to pursue an M.A. in Linguistics from Newcastle University. She received her PhD in Cognitive Science from Johns Hopkins in January 2021, under Dr. Geraldine Legendre. She is currently working with Dr. Karin Stromswold to further pursue the relationship between linguistic competence and processing mechanisms.

Dr. Jane Lutken

Abstract: This research investigates the relationship between competence and processing in children's first language acquisition, particularly of biclausal wh-questions. English-speaking children make consistent errors in production and comprehension of these questions. In production, these errors surface in the form of medial wh-phrases as in (1) when the child wishes to express (2) (Thornton, 1990). In comprehension, children respond to questions such as (3) as if the relativizer what were the question to answer (de Villiers and Roeper, 1995). (1) What do you think who the cat chased?; (2) Who do you think the cat chased?; (3) Q: How did the boy say what he caught? Response: A fish! These errors are particularly interesting because they resemble "Wh-Scope Marking" (WSM), which is attested in languages such as German (as seen in (4)), but not in English. (4) Was hat Stefan Selina erzählt, was er stehlen wird? *What did Steven tell Sherry (what) he would steal?* Together, errors such as those in (1) and (3) suggest children may temporarily adopt multiple UG licensed grammars (Yang, 2002; Legendre, Vainikka, Hagstrom, & Todorova, 2002). This would be an example of syntactic creativity: the use of a UG-licensed grammar which is not the target grammar (Schulz, 2011). This research investigates whether these errors are true examples of syntactic creativity or the result of immature processing mechanisms.

All are welcome to join RuCCS Spring 2022 Colloquium

Hybrid event - <u>Zoom Registration Link</u> **OR** <u>In-Person Registration Link</u>

PSYCH Room 105, Busch Campus