

Dominik Rus
Department of Linguistics and
Brain & Language Lab
Department of Neuroscience
Georgetown University
Washington DC

LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

The workshop in language development is intended primarily for elementary and secondary school teachers, foreign language teachers and instructors, and those working in the field of human development. It provides the participants with the current insights into language and its development, drawing on various types of evidence from cognitive psychology, linguistics, computational learning and neuroscience. The main objective of the workshop is to demonstrate how the object of language has been studied from biological and cognitive perspectives rather than social, anthropological and pedagogical ones and how cognitive science research can and should inform more general clinical and educational practices.

The workshop starts with a brief general survey of child language acquisition by reviewing various theoretical approaches to language development in children; it continues by reviewing major approaches, methods, and most recent findings in the fields of the acquisition of phonology, morphology, syntax and semantics. Through these, the participants will also have an opportunity to familiarize themselves with most common research design and the methods for assessing children's linguistic knowledge in this rapidly developing field of psycholinguistics. The workshop will also briefly address several other related phenomena in the field of language development, such as the role of the input and language breakdown (e.g., wolf children, deaf kids, and other pathological cases), critical periods and bilingualism. At the end of the workshop, the participants will learn about the cutting edge technology and research into language and brain (neurolinguistics) in both healthy population, as well as children with developmental disorders (e.g., Specific Language Impairment, Down's syndrome, etc.).

ABOUT THE INSTRUCTOR

Dominik Rus is a doctoral student in Linguistics, Psychology and Neuroscience at Georgetown University in Washington DC. Broadly, he is interested in the connection between formal linguistic theories and language learnability. His main projects in graduate school have been in theoretical syntax and the child language acquisition of syntax, particularly the acquisition of verb morphology (specifically, tense, aspect and agreement). In the Brain & Language Lab, Dominik has studied the acquisition and use of morphosyntax in children with Specific Language Impairment (SLI), by bridging linguistic and neurocognitive perspectives.

Dominik is currently working on his doctoral dissertation which seeks to explore the interaction between genetic linguistic mechanisms, general human cognition, and environmental input in the learning of tense and agreement in child English, child Spanish and child Slovenian.