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Critical Developmental Psycholinguistics: Connecting Metalinguistic Knowledge and Social Power

People *language* in unique ways, yet we can notice when they use "the same words." This suggests that *linguistic* information is a special kind of shared knowledge. However, there is also a lot of information we interpret from language use that *isn't necessarily linguistic*. We can get impressions of how a person is feeling, or how they might be gendered. The availability of this "non-linguistic" information impacts linguistic processing at every level of analysis and is implicated in processes of sociolinguistic learning and linguistic discrimination (Tripp & Munson, 2021).

Historically, institutional antiBlack and imperialist bias has marginalized linguistic projects which examine questions of power and oppression (Charity Hudley & Flores, 2022). I argue that the overrepresentation of white experimental participants and the systematic exclusion of sociolinguistic knowledge from theories of language acquisition share a common etiology: a resistance to challenging socially dominant, white supremacist folk linguistic ideas.

Opposing the erasure of the cognitive burden represented by racialized consciousness (DuBois, 1903), I present a computational model of language learning (Tripp et al., 2021), situating linguistic behavior within a framework of meta-linguistic awareness and social desire. Drawing on data from studies of speech perception and learning in infants, children and adults, I discuss the consequences of characterizing differently marginalized language learners as completing identical tasks.