Department of Psychology  
Stanford University

Building 420 (Jordan Hall)

450 Serra Mall  
Stanford, CA 94305

650-724-4003

mcfrank@stanford.edu

May 17, 2016

Editorial Board

Child Development

Dear Editors,

Please accept our manuscript “The trouble with quantifiers: Exploring children’s deficits in scalar implicature,” which I am submitting with my coauthors Alexandra C. Horowitz and Rose M. Schneider. This manuscript explores young children’s pragmatic development through the lens of scalar implicature (SI). SI poses a developmental puzzle. Adults make a strong inference from the utterance “I ate some of the cookies” that a few remain, and that the speaker ate *some but not all*. Children struggle to make this implicature until relatively late in development, however.

Our work provides valuable empirical context on this puzzling failure by showing that preschoolers struggle to compute SIs, but not ad-hoc (or contextual) implicatures, and that their performance with scalar quantifiers “some” and “none” is closely linked. This last result is to our knowledge novel and revealing about the mechanisms of SIs. We find evidence that this correlation, and children’s broader difficulties computing scalar implicatures, are rooted in quantifier knowledge and access to relevant lexical alternatives. We are submitting to Child Development because we believe that the empirical findings here advance in our understanding of pragmatic inference and language development more generally.

Some of these data were reported in the Cognitive Science conference proceedings, a non-archival format (Horowitz and Frank, 2015). The entirety of this manuscript and data, however, have not been published before, and the manuscript is not under consideration for publication in any other venue. Please let me know if there is any further information you need in connection with this submission. I look forward to hearing from you regarding the manuscript.

Sincerely,

Michael C. Frank

Associate Professor of Psychology

Stanford University