



Segmentation of verb forms in preverbal infants

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It has been observed that children's early vocabulary is dominated by nouns, with verbs being much delayed. The current study investigated if this delay is related to infants' failure to segment verb forms. Using a preferential looking procedure, French-learning preverbal infants were tested on novel verbs segmentation. Infants at the onset of vocabulary learning (11-month-olds) succeeded in segmenting the targets: they listened longer to test sentences containing previously familiarized verbs versus those containing nonfamiliarized verbs, suggesting that the delay in verb learning is not due to segmentation difficulty. Semantic and syntactic complexities of verbs could be among the underlying factors.

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