

**Language development and cognitive linguistics:
Where do we go from here?**

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Cognitive linguistics has provided researchers of children's language development with a promising alternative framework for thinking about how to characterise what children have to learn. In this talk I will reflect upon how far I think that this promise has been met. I will first discuss the evolutionary and ontogenetic underpinnings of children's language development. Next I will turn to the relationship between the language that children hear and their own language development, focusing on the latent structure of child directed speech and on the systematic errors that children make. Finally, I will outline my thoughts about future directions that research might take, emphasising, in particular, the functional basis of children's language development and the challenges set by the huge range of typological differences between languages and the variation in the socio-cognitive meanings that they express.