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**Distributivity and universal quantification in language acquisition**  
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Pluralities are typically construed as sets or sums of individuals. Certain lexical expressions, including distributive predicates such as *round* or *tall* and universal quantifiers obligatorily pick out these individuals, or atomic subparts, for predication or quantification. Other predicates obligatorily apply at the group level. And still others are flexible enough to apply at either the individual or the group level, depending on the context. Children must not only be able to represent groups conceptually in a way that allows for these levels of predication, they must also be attuned to these semantic aspects of these linguistic expressions at the word level when building up a lexicon, and compositionally when interpreting sentences.

In this talk, I will review data from a range of experimental studies over the years, including recent work in my lab, demonstrating that children very early on possess the requisite conceptual structure fundamental to the understanding of pluralities. In addition, they also know that certain adjectives obligatorily apply at the individual level, and are also flexible enough in their interpretations to access multiple interpretations of sentences, reflecting collective and distributive construals of target sentences. Even so, their misinterpretations of certain sentences involving universal quantification – and most glaringly with *each* – persist well past the preschool years. I will consider both cognitive and linguistic expectations that could lead children astray, including those related to one-to-one correspondence, parity among agents in event participation, and perceived granularity levels within a plurality. This discussion will shed further light on the tight connection between conceptual structure and linguistic representations in development, and the challenges facing the language learner when it comes to distributivity.