The International Association for the Study of Child Language organized its traditional meeting for the 13th time with ca. 600 participants from 14 to 18 July in the amazing city of Amsterdam. The program started every day with a plenary talk where influential scholars (Ann Senghas, Morten Christianssen, Debbie Mills, Elma Bloom and Aylin Küntay) of various child language research areas gave informative as well as really inspiring talks. Then we had two blocks of parallel symposia with a lunch break between them. 7 to 9 symposia were organized simultaneously with 4-5 talks in each on various interesting topics, which sometimes made it really hard to choose.

Symposia were followed by the poster session with ca. hundred posters per day. The topics appearing during the four days covered several areas of child language research: studies about typical and atypical language development, corpus-based and experimental investigations, research with monolingual and bilingual children, studies about sociolinguistic questions, about the relationship of language development with the development of other cognitive abilities and many interesting researches about sign language and gestures. Beyond the scientific relevance of the results their
their social utility was frequently emphasized. It was explicitly stated on the opening ceremony and also during several symposia that an important task of child language research is to help children who have disadvantages because of language-related reasons, like developmental language impairments, bilingualism or using a sign language as their mother tongue. The whole conference was really well organized; even if a problem emerged, someone was always there to solve it quickly. Another important merit of the organizer committee is that several talks were ASL interpreted. Unfortunately the meeting is organized only in every three years, therefore we have to wait for the next one until the summer of 2017, which will take place in Lyon.

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This year’s European Conference on Behavioral Biology, held in Prague, was a great event full of fascinating and enlightening lectures. I was primarily interested in the sessions and symposia focused on cooperative behavior among non-kin (organized by Michael Taborsky and Christina Riehl), which corresponds to my field of study, animal personality in comparative perspective (held by Martina Konečná and Alexander Weiss) and determination of cognitive skills in birds and other animals (held by Eva Landová). All of them were full of very good lectures and I cannot focus on all of them in the scope of one short report, therefore I’m going to mention the most interesting ones for me.

Tomas Bugnyar’s “raven politics” showed that ravens are capable of deducing hierarchy of individuals and third-party relationships by observation, not only by direct contact. Pavel Němec spoke of his research on cellular scaling rules on bird brains, which yielded extremely interesting results especially in comparison to mammalian brains. Birds can cram roughly the same number of neurons into a much smaller brain. Could it be a consequence of strong selective force for smaller skulls due to flight? Or different tolerance of oxidative stress (also due to flight)?

A. Carter showed how social information spreads in groups of wild baboons and what kind of social networks can be observed there. Michael Taborsky’s lecture on significance of information in reciprocal cooperation was highly interesting by showing what kinds of information promote cooperation among non-related individuals and how information transfer delay may negatively affect it.

Christina Riehl talked about cooperative breeding among non-kin and defenses against cheats (in greater anis). Her comparison of the social parasite strategy and cooperative group breeding strategy was clear and interesting. Raghavendra Gadagkar had a great lecture about evolution of social behavior in Ropalidia marginata, a primitively eusocial wasp. This species is intriguing in the way new queens are chosen: there’s no kin-related explanatory pattern in the reproductive queues and no observed conflict in queen succession. Though kin selection (via inclusive fitness) might be a strong driving force for evolution of eusociality, this species clearly shows the reality is not as simple as that.

The plenary lectures were all very riveting. Alexandre Roulin talked about interactions between...
siblings on the example of young barn owls and their signalling of hunger. It was especially enlightening for me and my colleagues since sibling interactions in human are studied in our lab at Charles University, so that we got to see first hand results from a totally different species. In the afternoon the same day, Tecumseh Fitch focused on evolution of honest signalling, which was perfect in context with the first lecture.

Hynek Burda talked about improbable research – one that first makes us laugh and then think. In behavioral biology, this was the case with magnetoreception in a wide variety of species and their behavior (such as alignment when feeding) dependent on the magnetic field. Erica de Waal had a lecture about social learning in velvet monkey – a very interesting take especially on the role of hierarchy in social learning. And finally, Christine J. Nicol’s talk dealt with foundations of empathy (in the model of chicken). Her experiments with hens and their chickens led primarily to the result that hens do show empathy in relation to the chicken but not toward other adults (which might be something to be considered in poultry farming).

Many of the lectures I had seen might offer useful leads for me later when I further pursue some lines of my take on evolution of altruism, cooperation and fairness. However, even apart from that, the whole conference had been truly great and I hope other ones I visit in future would be like this one too.

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**Upcoming conferences**

12th International Conference on Alzheimer’s and Parkinson’s Diseases and related neurological disorders
18-22 March 2015
Nice, France
Early registration deadline: 17 December 2014

The Creativity Workshop
18-24 March 2015
Prague, Czech Republic
Early registration deadline: 15 December 2014

The Seventh International Conference on Advanced Cognitive Technologies and Applications
22-27 March 2015
Nice, France
Paper submission deadline: 28 October 2014

International Conference on Cognitive Modelling
9-11 April 2015
Groningen, the Netherlands
Abstract submission deadline: 8 December 2014
Cognitive Futures in the Humanities
13-15 April 2015
Oxford, United Kingdom
Abstract submission deadline: 21 November 2014

12th International Conference on Adaptive and Natural Computing Algorithms
15-17 April 2015
Athens, Greece
Abstract submission deadline: 15 October 2014

Sixth International Conference of Cognitive Science
27-29 April
Tehran, Iran
Abstract submission deadline: 31 January 2015

International Psychological Applications Conference and Trends
2-4 May 2015
Ljubljana, Slovenia
Early registration deadline: 28 November 2014

17th congress of the European Association of Work and Organizational Psychology
20-23 May 2015
Oslo, Norway
Early registration deadline: 15 February 2015

Dubrovnik Conference on Cognitive Science
21-24 May 2015
Dubrovnik, Croatia
Deadlines: coming soon

Conference of the Society for Applied Research in Memory and Cognition
24-27 June 2015
Victoria, Canada
Registration opens soon

14th European Congress of Psychology
7-10 July 2015
Milan, Italy
Abstract submission deadline: 15 October 2014
13th International Cognitive Linguistics Conference  
20-25 July 2015  
Newcastle, United Kingdom  
Abstract submission deadline: 3 November 2014

XII International Conference on Cognitive Science and Psychology  
20-21 August 2015  
London, United Kingdom  
Paper submission deadline: 20 February 2015

Ninth Triennial Conference of the European Society for the Cognitive Sciences of Music  
17-22 August 2015  
Manchester, United Kingdom  
Abstract submission deadline: 29 December 2014

17th European Conference on Developmental Psychology  
8-12 September 2015  
Braga, Portugal  
Abstract submission deadline: 2 January 2015

6th International Conference on Spatial Cognition  
7-11 September  
Rome, Italy  
Abstract submission deadline: 15 January 2015

Introducing Research Institutes in East-Central Europe  
Department of Psychology, Middle East Technical University, Ankara, Turkey

Psychology Department of Middle East Technical University (METU), Ankara, was founded in 1959. METU has been selected as within the top 50-60 World Universities by reputation in 2013, and Psychology Department at METU is one of Turkey’s most competitive psychology departments by accepting the students with the highest scores in National University Entrance Examination. The department offers a minor’s program in psychology in addition to programs that lead to the degrees of B.S. in psychology, M.S. in developmental, clinical, industrial and organizational, social and traffic and transportation psychology, and Ph.D. in social, clinical, developmental, and industrial and organizational psychology. Both graduate and undergraduate students are presented with the opportunity to be a part of the Erasmus Program, which enables them complete a full semester or two in many European and North American universities. The education program is designed to provide the students with advanced theoretical, empirical and methodological knowledge in specific fields of psychology and to give them opportunities to apply this knowledge into their specialization areas. For further information, please...
One of the facilities in scope of the Graduate Program in Developmental Psychology at METU is the Child and Adolescent Development Lab. Both graduate and undergraduate students in this program can master their theoretical and practical knowledge through conducting or participating in various projects, collecting data from child and adolescent participants visiting the lab.

There are several projects about the effects of socialization on autobiographical memory development, individual differences in mother-child conversations, and autobiographical memories of adolescents from current or retrospective perspectives, focusing on various stages in life. Graduate students usually collaborate with Dr. Basak Sahin-Acar, or with their fellow students. Undergraduate students are also given the opportunity to work in and support the ongoing projects that are managed by graduate students working in the lab.

For further information, please visit our website: http://www.metu.edu.tr/~basaks

Buse Gönül
Ph.D. student

Recent publications from this research group:

Sahin-Acar, B., & Leichtman, M.D. (2014). Mother-child memory conversations and self-construal in Eastern Turkey, Western Turkey and the USA, Memory, DOI:10.1080/09658211.2014.935437


ABOUT CECOG:

The Central European Cognitive Science Association (CECOG) is a civil association promoting cooperation in the field of cognitive science in Central Europe. The association was initiated at a meeting in August 2008 by the Budapest University of Technology and the University of Zagreb. The CECOG organizing committee: Melita Kovacevic, Ilona Kovács and Csaba Pléh; President: Csaba Pléh; Managing organizers and local hosts of the DuCog series: Nevena Padovan and Dóra Kampis; Managing secretary of the association: Dóra Kampis.

Newsletter editors: Anna Kis and Ágnes Szőllősi; Contact: cecog@cecog.eu; Previous newsletters are available at http://www.cecog.eu/page_newsletters.php