

# **Mahesh Srinivasan**

Department of Psychology  
University of California, Berkeley  
Tolman Hall, Rm. 3315  
Berkeley, CA 94720  
Phone: (650) 823-9488  
Email: [srinivasan@berkeley.edu](mailto:srinivasan@berkeley.edu)  
Website: <http://lcdlab.berkeley.edu>

## **Employment**

---

- |              |  |
|--------------|--|
| 2013-Present | Assistant Professor<br>Department of Psychology and Cognitive Science Program<br>Director, Language and Cognitive Development Laboratory<br>University of California, Berkeley |
| 2012-2013    | Assistant Project Scientist<br>Department of Psychology<br>University of California, San Diego, La Jolla, CA   |
| 2011-2012    | Post-Doctoral Research Fellow<br>Department of Psychology<br>University of California, San Diego, La Jolla, CA   |

## **Education**

---

- |           |   |
|-----------|---|
| 2007-2011 | Ph.D., Developmental Psychology<br>Harvard University, Cambridge, MA                                  |
| 2005-2007 | A.M., Developmental Psychology<br>Harvard University, Cambridge, MA                                   |
| 2001-2005 | B.S. with Departmental Honors, Symbolic Systems (Phi Beta Kappa)<br>Stanford University, Stanford, CA |

## **Research Interests**

---

How representations of language and concepts arise and interact in human development and across cultures. Specific interests include the acquisition of polysemy and metaphor, the representation of abstract concepts, the development of normative reasoning, and cross-cultural differences in social cognitive development.

## Grants

---

- 2016-2019 National Science Foundation, "The Development of Lexical Flexibility", \$325,000
- 2016-2019 National Institute of Child Health & Human Development, "Longitudinal Research on the Links between Reasoning and Math" (co-PI), \$168,414
- Award supports post-doctoral researcher in Bunge and Srinivasan labs
- 2014-2015 University of California Faculty Research Grant, "The Origins of Conventionality", \$8,800
- 2011-2013 IARPA "Validation of Metaphor" Grant (co-PI), 2011-2013
- 2006-2009 National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowship

## Other Honors and Awards

---

Association for Psychological Science *Rising Star*, 2016  
World Economic Forum "Young Scientist", 2016  
Cognitive Development Society Travel Award, 2011  
APA Dissertation Research Award, 2010-2011  
Norman H. Anderson Graduate Psychology Award, 2009-2011  
Harvard University Stimson Restricted Funds Award, 2009  
Society for Research in Child Development Travel Award, 2009  
Harvard University Graduate School of Arts and Sciences Award, 2005-2006  
Phi Beta Kappa, 2005  
Center for Study of Language and Information Research Fellowship, 2003-2004  
Boothe Prize in Writing Excellence Finalist, 2002

## Articles Under Review or Revision

---

Xu, Y., Malt, B. & **Srinivasan, M.** Evolution of word meanings through metaphorical mapping: Systematicity over the past millenium.

**Srinivasan, M.**, Wagner, K., Frank, M.C. & Barner, D. Does expertise affect the allocation of visual attention? The case study of mental abacus.

Rabagliati, H. & **Srinivasan, M.** The conceptual basis of early word meanings: Insights from lexical flexibility.

## Published Articles

---

- Tillman, K., Marghetis, T., Barner, D. & **Srinivasan, M.** (2017). Today is tomorrow's yesterday: Children's acquisition of deictic time words. *Cognitive Psychology*, 92, 87-100.
- Srinivasan, M.**, Al-Mughairy, S., Foushee, R., Barner, D. (2017). Learning language from within: Children use semantic generalizations to infer new word meanings. *Cognition*, 159, 11-24.
- Srinivasan, M.**, & Barner, D. (2016). Encoding individuals in language using syntax, words, and pragmatic inference. *WIREs Cognitive Science*, 7(5), 341-353.
- Barner, D., Alvarez, G., Sullivan, J., Brooks, N., **Srinivasan, M.** & Frank, M. C. (2016). Learning mathematics in a visuospatial format: A randomized, controlled trial of mental abacus instruction. *Child Development*, 87(4), 1146-1158.
- Srinivasan, M.** & Rabagliati, H (2015). How concepts and conventions structure the lexicon: Cross-linguistic evidence from polysemy. *Lingua*, 157, 124-152.
- Srinivasan, M.**, Dunham, Y., Hicks, C. & Barner, D. (2015). Do attitudes toward societal structure predict beliefs about free will and achievement? Evidence from the Indian caste system. *Developmental Science*, 19(1), 109-125.
- Dunham, Y., **Srinivasan, M.**, Dotsch, R. & Barner, D. (2014). Religion insulates ingroup evaluations: The development of intergroup attitudes in India. *Developmental Science*, 17(2), 311-319.
- Srinivasan, M.** & Snedeker, J. (2014). Polysemy and the taxonomic constraint: Children's representations of words with taxonomically-different meanings. *Language Learning and Development*, 10(2), 97-128.
- Srinivasan, M.** & Barner, D. (2013). The Amelia Bedelia effect: World knowledge and the goal bias in language acquisition. *Cognition*, 128, 431-450.
- Srinivasan, M.**, Chestnut, E., Li, P., & Barner, D. (2013). Sortal concepts and pragmatic inference in children's early quantification of objects. *Cognitive Psychology*, 66, 302-326.
- Srinivasan, M.** & Snedeker, J. (2011). Judging a *book* by its cover and its contents: The representation of polysemous and homophonous meanings in four-year-old children. *Cognitive Psychology*, 62, 245-272.
- Matlock, T., Holmes, K.J., **Srinivasan, M.**, & Ramscar, M. (2011). Even abstract motion influences the understanding of time. *Metaphor and Symbol*, 26(4), 260-271.

**Srinivasan, M.** & Carey, S. (2010). The long and the short of it: On the nature and origin of functional overlap between representations of space and time. *Cognition*, 116, 217-241.

**Srinivasan, M.** (2010). Do classifiers affect cognitive processing? A study of nominal classification in Mandarin Chinese. *Language and Cognition*, 2(2), 177-190.

## Articles in Preparation

---

**Srinivasan, M.**, Berner, C., & Rabagliati, H. Children use polysemy to structure new object categories.

**Srinivasan, M.**, Kaplan, E., & Dahl, A. How do children reason about religious doctrines? Evidence from Hindu and Muslim children in India.

**Srinivasan, M.**, Bartnof, A., Foushee, R. & Barner, D. The scope of conventionality: Do children expect newly-learned words to be mutually known?

Marghetis, T., Tillman, K., & **Srinivasan, M.** Learning to put time in its place: The development of spatial gestures for time.

Xu, Y., Ramiro, C., Malt, B., & **Srinivasan, M.** Mental algorithms in the historical emergence of word meanings.

## Book Chapters

---

Rabagliati, H. & **Srinivasan, M.** (in press). Sense Relations. To appear in *Handbook of Experimental Semantics and Pragmatics*, Oxford University Press.

**Srinivasan, M.** & Barner, D. (in press). Lexical, syntactic, and pragmatic sources of countability: An experimental exploration of the mass-count distinction.

**Srinivasan, M.** (2016). Concepts as explanatory theories: Evidence from word learning and the development of lexical flexibility. In D. Barner and A. Baron, *Core Knowledge and Conceptual Change*, Oxford University Press.

## Conference Papers and Presentations

---

**Srinivasan, M.** Kaplan, E.A., Dahl, A. (2017). How do children reason about religious doctrines? Evidence from Hindu and Muslim children in India. Talk to be presented at the Biennial Meeting of the Society for Research in Child Development, Austin, TX.

**Srinivasan, M.**, Dunham, Y., Hicks, C. & Barner, D. (2017). The impact of social structure on

psychological mindset: Evidence from the Indian caste system. Talk to be presented at the Biennial Meeting of the Society for Research in Child Development, Austin, TX.

- Foushee, R. & **Srinivasan, M.** (2017). Developing sensitivity to subjectivity in language. Poster to be presented at the Biennial Meeting of the Society for Research in Child Development, Austin, TX.
- Jansen, R., Foushee, R. & **Srinivasan, M.** (2017). Broad definitions of math are linked to lower levels of math anxiety. Poster to be presented at the Biennial Meeting of the Society for Research in Child Development, Austin, TX.
- Williams, A.I., **Srinivasan, M** & Zhou, Q. (2017). The relations between parental code-switching and emotion expression in multilingual families. Poster to be presented at the Biennial Meeting of the Society for Research in Child Development, Austin, TX.
- Foushee, R., Dubey, R. & **Srinivasan, M.** (2017). The impact of social structure and culture on mindset and math anxiety: Evidence from an Indian middle school. Poster to be presented at the Biennial Meeting of the Society for Research in Child Development, Austin, TX.
- Yazdi, H., Heyman, G., **Srinivasan, M.** & Barner, D. (2017). Indian children endorse growth mindset beliefs despite awareness of an unfair world. Poster to be presented at the Biennial Meeting of the Society for Research in Child Development, Austin, TX.
- Bartnof, A., Foushee, R., Barner, D. & **Srinivasan, M.** (2017). Do young children expect newly-learned words to be shared by others? Poster to be presented at the Biennial Meeting of the Society for Research in Child Development, Austin, TX.
- Starr, A., Vendetti, M., **Srinivasan, M.** & Bunge, S. (2017). Eye movements provide insight into the development of analogical reasoning. Poster to be presented at the Biennial Meeting of the Society for Research in Child Development, Austin, TX.
- Srinivasan, M.**, Berner, C. & Rabagliati, H. (2016). Children's use of polysemy to structure new noun categories. Talk presented at the 41<sup>st</sup> Annual Boston University Conference on Language Development, Boston, MA.
- Xu, Y., Malt, B. & **Srinivasan, M** (2016). Evolution of polysemous word senses from metaphorical mappings. Paper presented at the 38th Annual Conference of the Cognitive Science Society, Philadelphia, PA.
- Tillman, K., Marghetis, T., Barner, D. & **Srinivasan, M** (2016). Deconstructing "tomorrow": How children learn the semantics of time. Paper presented at the 38th Annual Conference of the Cognitive Science Society, Philadelphia, PA.
- Foushee, R., Griffiths, T., & **Srinivasan, M.** (2016). Lexical complexity of child-directed and

overheard speech: Implications for learning. Paper presented at the 38th Annual Conference of the Cognitive Science Society, Philadelphia, PA.

Moty, K. & **Srinivasan, M.** (2016). Pragmatic inferences in definite and indefinite contexts. Poster presented at the 38th Annual Conference of the Cognitive Science Society, Philadelphia, PA.

Foushee, R. & **Srinivasan, M.** (2016). Sensing subjectivity: Children's semantic and epistemological development. Poster presented at the 42nd Annual Meeting of the Society for Philosophy and Psychology, Austin, TX.

**Srinivasan, M.** & Matlock, T. (2016). Battles and journeys with cancer. Talk presented at the Metaphor and Cancer Research Workshop, Berkeley, CA.

**Srinivasan, M.**, Bartnof, A., Foushee, R., & Barner, D. (2015). The scope of conventionality: Do children expect newly-learned words to be mutually known? Talk presented at the 40th Annual Boston University Conference on Language Development, Boston, MA.

Al-Mughairy, S., Foushee, R., Barner, D., & **Srinivasan, M.** (2015). Daxing with a dax: Evidence of productive lexical structures in children. Talk presented at the 40th Annual Boston University Conference on Language Development, Boston, MA.

Tillman, K., Marghetis, T., Barner, D., & **Srinivasan, M.** (2015). Placeholder structures in word learning: The case of deictic time. Poster presented at the 40th Annual Boston University Conference on Language Development, Boston, MA.

Rabagliati, H., Conte, S., & **Srinivasan, M.** (2015). Words as invitations to form categories? The case of polysemy. Poster presented at the 40th Annual Boston University Conference on Language Development, Boston, MA.

**Srinivasan, M.**, Al-Mughairy, S., Kaplan, E. & Dahl, A. (2015). Preschoolers' reactions to novel moral and conventional violations. Poster presented at the 9th Biennial Meeting of the Cognitive Development Society, Columbus, OH.

Foushee, R. & **Srinivasan, M.** (2015). Children's understanding of subjectivity in language. Poster presented at the 9th Biennial Meeting of the Cognitive Development Society, Columbus, OH.

Yazdi, H., **Srinivasan, M.**, Dunham, Y., Frank, M.C., & Barner, D. (2015). Children's perceptions of inter-caste sharing in India. Poster presented at the 9th Biennial Meeting of the Cognitive Development Society, Columbus, OH.

Tillman, K., Marghetis, T., Al-Mughairy, S., Barner, D. & **Srinivasan, M.** (2015). The development of explicit and implicit spatial representations of time. Poster presented at the 9th Biennial Meeting of the Cognitive Development Society,

Columbus, OH.

- Al-Mughairy, S., Foushee, R., Barner, D. & **Srinivasan, M.** (2015). Daxing with a dax: Evidence of productive lexical structures in children. Paper presented at the 37th Annual Conference of the Cognitive Science Society, Pasadena, CA.
- Tillman, K. Marghetis, T., Barner, D. & **Srinivasan, M.** (2015). When time becomes a place: Temporal gestures, timelines, and the development of children's spatial understanding of time. Poster presented at Biennial Meeting of the Society for Research in Child Development, Philadelphia, PA.
- Srinivasan, M.**, Wagner, K., Frank, M.C. & Barner, D. (2014). Does expertise direct the allocation of attention within visual arrays? The case study of mental abacus. Talk presented at the 36<sup>th</sup> Annual Cognitive Science Conference, Quebec City, Canada.
- Marghetis, T., Tillman, K., **Srinivasan, M.** & Barner, D. (2014). Linking space and time in the child's mind: The case of gesture. Talk presented at the 36<sup>th</sup> Annual Cognitive Science Conference, Quebec City, Canada.
- Barner, D., Alvarez, G., Sullivan, J., Brooks, N., **Srinivasan, M.** & Frank, M. C. (2014). Learning mental abacus improves mathematics achievement. Talk presented at the 36<sup>th</sup> Annual Cognitive Science Conference, Quebec City, Canada.
- Marghetis, T., Tillman, K., **Srinivasan, M.** & Barner, D. (2014). Learning to put time in its place: The development of spatial gestures for time. Poster presented at the Sixth Conference of the Society for Gesture Studies, San Diego, CA.
- Heintz, I., Gabbard, R., **Srinivasan, M.**, Barner, D., Black, D. S., Freedman, M., & Weischedel, R. (2013). Automatic extraction of linguistic metaphor with LDA topic modeling. Paper presented at *The First Workshop on Metaphor in NLP*, Atlanta, GA.
- Chestnut, E., **Srinivasan, M.**, Li, P., & Barner, D. (2013). Sortal concepts and pragmatic inference in children's early quantification of objects. Poster presented at the Biennial Meeting of the Society for Research in Child Development, Seattle, WA.
- Srinivasan, M.** & Barner, D. (2013). Putting milk onto cows: World knowledge and the goal bias in language acquisition. Poster presented at the Biennial Meeting of the Society for Research in Child Development, Seattle, WA.
- Srinivasan, M.** & Barner, D. (2013). *Daxing* with a *dax*: 4- and 5-year-olds expect words to label instruments and the actions they support. Poster presented at the Biennial Meeting of the Society for Research in Child Development, Seattle, WA.
- Srinivasan, M.** & Barner, D. (2012). Putting milk onto cows: A put-on bias in early denominal verb interpretation. Talk presented at the 37<sup>th</sup> Annual Boston University Conference on Language Development, Boston, MA.

Chestnut, E., **Srinivasan, M.**, Li, P., & Barner, D. (2012). Pragmatic inference and part-whole language in children's early quantification of objects. Poster presented at the 37<sup>th</sup> Annual Boston University Conference on Language Development, Boston, MA.

**Srinivasan, M.** & Snedeker, J. (2011). Four- and five-year-old children expect words to have taxonomically different meanings. Poster presented at the Biennial Meeting of the Cognitive Development Society, Philadelphia, PA.

Khan, M., **Srinivasan, M.**, Wittenberg, E., & Snedeker, J. (2011). Phonological overlap in German affects English lexical processing in German-English bilinguals. Poster presented at Architectures and Mechanisms in Language Processing, Paris, France.

**Srinivasan, M.** & Snedeker, J. (2011). The role of generative structures in the representation and acquisition of polysemous words. Talk presented at the Biennial Meeting of the Society for Research in Child Development, Montreal, Quebec.

**Srinivasan, M.** & Snedeker, J. (2009). Distinguishing polysemy and ambiguity in the child's mental lexicon. Poster presented at the 34<sup>th</sup> Annual Boston University Conference on Language Development, Boston, MA.

**Srinivasan, M.** & Snedeker, J. (2009). On the development of representations of polysemous and ambiguous words. Talk presented at Architectures and Mechanisms in Language Processing, Barcelona, Spain.

**Srinivasan, M.**, & Carey, S. (2009). On the nature and origin of structural similarities between representations of space and time. Talk presented at the Biennial Meeting of the Society for Research in Child Development, Denver, CO.

**Srinivasan, M.**, & Snedeker, J. (2008). The acquisition of polysemous words. Poster presented at the 33<sup>rd</sup> Annual Boston University Conference on Language Development, Boston, MA.

**Srinivasan, M.**, & Snedeker, J. (2008). On the nature of early lexical representations of polysemous words. Talk presented at the Sixth International Conference on the Mental Lexicon, Banff, Alberta.

**Srinivasan, M.** & Carey, S. (2008). The representation of spatial and temporal length. Talk presented at the 32<sup>nd</sup> Annual Boston University Conference on Language Development, Boston, MA.

## **Invited Talks**

---

Srinivasan, M. (2016). Words as windows onto thought. Talk presented at Homecoming Weekend, University of California, Berkeley.



- Srinivasan, M. (2016). The scope of conventionality: Do children expect newly-learned words to be mutually known? Talk presented at the Department of Psychology, University of California, San Diego.
- Srinivasan, M. (2016). Language as a signature of the flexible human mind. Talk presented at the World Economic Forum, Tianjin, China.
- Srinivasan, M. (2016). The role of flexible language in linguistic and cognitive development. Talk presented at the Department of Psychology, New York University.
- Srinivasan, M. (2016). The role of flexibility in linguistic and cognitive development. Talk presented at the Department of Psychology, University of California, Santa Cruz.
- Srinivasan, M. (2015). The scope of conventionality: Do children expect newly-learned words to be mutually known? Talk presented at the Cognitive Linguistics Seminar, University of California, Berkeley.
- Srinivasan, M. (2015). The role of biology and experience in language development. Talk presented at the Wright Institute, Berkeley, California.
- Srinivasan, M. (2014). The development of lexical flexibility. Talk presented at the Department of Linguistics, University of California, Berkeley.
- Srinivasan, M. (2013). The role of societal structure in children's beliefs about their own attributes: Evidence from the Indian caste system. Talk presented at the Stanford-Berkeley Cognitive Science Seminar.
- Srinivasan, M. (2013). The role of children's cognitive biases in the structure of the lexicon: Cross-linguistic evidence from polysemy. Talk presented at the Change Plasticity and Development Seminar, University of California, Berkeley.
- Srinivasan, M. (2013). The role of children's cognitive biases in the structure of the lexicon: Cross-linguistic evidence from polysemy. Talk presented at the Department of Cognitive Science, University of California, Merced.
- Srinivasan, M. (2013). The role of children's cognitive biases in the structure of the lexicon: Cross-linguistic evidence from polysemy. Talk presented at the Department of Psychology, Stanford University.
- Srinivasan, M. (2013). Flexibility in thought and language. Talk presented at the Cognitive Linguistics Seminar, University of California, Berkeley.
- Srinivasan, M. (2012). Flexibility in thought and language. Talk presented at the Department of Psychology, Rutgers University, Newark, NJ.

Srinivasan, M. (2011). The development of representations of polysemous words. Talk presented at the Center for Research in Language Seminar, University of California at San Diego, La Jolla, CA.

Srinivasan, M. (2009). Flexibility in language and thought. Talk presented at the Max Planck Institute for Psycholinguistics, Nijmegen, Netherlands.

Srinivasan, M. (2009). What we can learn from flexible language. Talk presented at the New York University Center for Child Language, New York, NY.

Srinivasan, M. (2009). Flexibility in language and thought. Talk presented at the Cognition, Brain, and Behavior Seminar, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA.

## Courses Taught

---

### Undergraduate

2015-Present	Psych 143/Ling 146: "Language Acquisition"
2014	Psych 148: "Topics in Language Development"
2015-Present	Cognitive Science 1: "Introduction to Cognitive Science" (guest lecturer)

### Graduate

2016	Psych 240A: "Cognition, Language, and Brain Development Proseminar"
2015-Present	Psych 290H: "Topics in Language and Cognitive Development" Psych 290H: "The Development of Normative Reasoning"

## Professional Service

---

**Ad hoc journal reviewer:** *Child Development, Cognition, Cognitive Development, Cognitive Linguistics, Cognitive Psychology, Cognitive Science, Developmental Psychology, Developmental Science, Journal of Experimental Psychology: Learning, Memory, and Cognition, Journal of Pragmatics, Lingua, PLOS ONE, Quarterly Journal of Experimental Psychology*

**Conference reviewer:** *Cognitive Science Society, Society for Philosophy and Psychology, Society for Research in Child Development.*

## Membership in Professional Societies

---

*Cognitive Development Society, Cognitive Science Society, Society for Language Development, Society for Research in Child Development*