Children's Acquisition of Kinship Knowledge: Theory and Method

25th-26th January 2018, Bristol, UK

How do children learn kinship concepts? Given that both kin terms and kinship systems vary in complexity, to what extent does linguistic and cultural variation affect the acquisition of kinship knowledge?

For many societies around the world, kinship provides the major framework for social organisation, yet we know very little about how children learn to categorise different kinds of kin. This **two-day workshop** at the University of Bristol will bring together researchers working both directly and indirectly on children's acquisition of kinship concepts to stimulate and refine research in an important area for the cognitive and social sciences.

We are keen to engage a broad range of theoretical and methodological perspectives on kinship acquisition. We aim to address the following questions:

- What do children of different ages know about kinship?
- In what contexts, and through what media, do children learn about kinship? (e.g., everyday conversation, ritual, narrative)
- What cognitive abilities does the acquisition of kinship terminology depend on? Is there anything "special" about kinship as a cognitive domain?
- What light can acquisition shed on semantic models of kinship terms?
- Do children differentiate close vs distant kin? How do they learn to classify the latter?
- How does socio-cultural context affect the acquisition of kinship terms?
- How, when, and why do children talk about kinship?
- To what extent does complexity affect learning of kinship concepts?
- To what extent do children differentiate kin from non-kin? How does this change over the course of development?
- How is kinship represented in play?
- How should we go about studying children's acquisition of kinship concepts?

Our **key speakers** for the workshop include:

Joe Blythe	**(Linguistics, Macquarie)**
Tanya Broesch	**(Psychology, Simon Fraser)**
Eve Clark	**(Linguistics, Stanford)**
Eve Danziger	**(Anthropology, Virginia)**
Alice Mitchell	**(Anthropology, Bristol)**
Bob Parkin	**(Anthropology, Oxford)**
Annie Spokes	**(Psychology, Harvard)**

You are warmly invited to **CAKTAM** and invited to contribute as a participant or attendee.

We are very happy to invite **additional contributions for 20-minute talks** that respond to one or more of our guiding questions. Scholars from any relevant discipline are welcome, including but not limited to anthropology, linguistics, sociology, psychology, education, social work etc.

We would also like to encourage **postgraduate students and early career researchers** who may be interested in conducting research on children's acquisition of kinship terms to attend the workshop. We will ask these participants to provide a short description of their research background for the workshop handbook, and, optionally, for those with an active or potential field site, to give a short, informal talk (5-10 minutes) discussing what this kind of research might look like in their particular research setting.

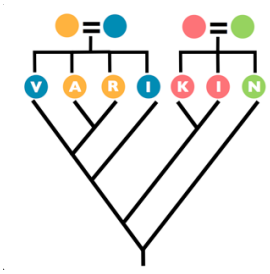
Short abstracts (200 words) for 20 minute talks, and brief expressions of interest in informal talks, should be submitted to varikin-project@bristol.ac.uk by 31st December.

In all cases, please email to express your interest in attending the workshop.

There is **no registration fee** for the workshop and lunches and refreshments will be provided. We are able to host up to 40 attendees and participants, so please contact us as soon as possible to reserve a place. We will provide attendees with travel directions and suggestions for local hotels.

A small amount of funding is available to help towards economy travel costs for students and early career researchers: please contact us for further details.

Workshop Organisers
Fiona Jordan
Alice Mitchell
Joe Blythe
Jo Hickey-Hall

Contact email: varikin-project@bristol.ac.uk

CAKTAM is a research activity of the ERC-funded VariKin project, hosted at the University of Bristol and led by Professor Fiona Jordan (https://excd.org/research-activities/#varikin).