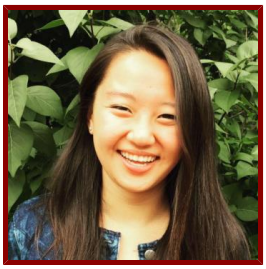
Stanford



Rebecca Zhu

Postdoctoral Scholar, Psychology

Curriculum Vitae available Online

Bio

BIO

I am a postdoctoral fellow in developmental psychology at Stanford University, working with Michael C. Frank. Previously, I was a PhD candidate and postdoctoral fellow at the University of California, Berkeley, working with Alison Gopnik, and a lab manager at Harvard University, working with Susan Carey.

My research investigates when and how children acquire, and consequently learn from, symbolic systems such as language and pictures. In one line of research, I investigate the mechanisms underlying children's acquisition of various kinds of non-literal language, such as metaphor and metonymy, as well as how children's non-literal language comprehension may further guide their thinking and reasoning. In another line of research, I work with urban and rural Kenyan children to investigate the efficacy of picture-based learning materials and the validity of picture-based assessments across cultures and contexts. My work in Kenya is conducted in close collaboration with researchers and non-profit organizations in Kisumu, Mombasa, and Nairobi.

This research program is innovative and interdisciplinary: these findings not only address fundamental debates in psychology, philosophy, and linguistics (i.e., by providing empirical insight into the mechanisms underlying children's ability to acquire and learn from symbolic systems), but also have direct implications for applied research in education, public health, and developmental economics (i.e., by improving the learning materials and assessment tools used in global early childhood development programs). My work has received funding from NSERC, SSHRC, the Jacobs Foundation, the Aga Khan Foundation, the American Psychological Foundation, Stanford's King Center on Global Development, and UC Berkeley's Center for Effective Global Action.

PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION

- Doctor of Philosophy, University of California Berkeley (2022)
- Honours Bachelor of Science, University of Toronto (2015)

STANFORD ADVISORS

- Michael Frank, Postdoctoral Faculty Sponsor