Monday 30 October, 1-2pm, G10 Chandler House

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Cognitive Underpinnings of Pragmatic Language: Theory of Mind versus Real World Knowledge

Individuals with Autism Spectrum Conditions (ASC) are often described as universally impaired in pragmatic language. Traditionally, this has been attributed to difficulties with Theory of Mind. However, the degree to which Theory of Mind is equally likely to underpin distinct domains of pragmatic language is unclear. In some cases, the ability to apply real world knowledge may be of greater importance. In addition, lexico-syntactic ability is highly likely to invariably play a contributing role. In the current talk, I will present data from typical children and children with ASC on referential communication, discourse contingency and the interpretation of conversational implicature as well as irony. Methodological issues relating to the assessment of Theory of Mind will also be discussed.