

Like all sections of *The Psychologist*, 'Supporting research' depends on your contributions. E-mail the Society's scientific officer Lisa Morrison Coulthard on lismor@bps.org.uk with your tips, questions, work in progress – anything related to the research process, from collaboration to dissemination, that you think would be of interest to our wide audience.

Research Seminars Competition

THE Research Seminars Competition was established by the former Scientific Affairs Board in 1996 and is now run by the Society's Research Board. The aim of the scheme is to support scientific development by enabling two or more institutions to hold a series of seminars over a two-year period, to extend and develop key research topics in psychology. To illustrate the success of the scheme, here are a couple of examples of series that have recently been funded.

GEORGE MONTGOMERY/PHOTOFUSION

Language impairment

In 2001 the Universities of Loughborough and Manchester collaborated on a series of seminars looking at the psychological assessment of people with language impairments. The aim of the series was to share and develop new techniques in pragmatics and conversation analysis and to determine which techniques are best at identifying 'miscommunication'.

A wide range of participants were invited to the seminars to promote discussion among academics from different approaches within psychology, practitioners and postgraduate students. The themes of the series included the discursive competence of individuals in

spite of their cognitive difficulties; the nature of the video record; and the hybrid nature of the assessment situation.

The series resulted in the development of a two-year study of the differences between psychologists' official interview questions and questionnaire items and how such questions are asked in spoken conversation. Feedback from participants was overwhelmingly positive: 'I have found these sessions most useful for both developing my knowledge of conversation analysis and developing and extending research ideas'; 'A useful and insightful series...which presented an interesting

array of fascinating data'; 'A fantastic opportunity for detailed analysis of a wide range of data'.

Child language

The CHILDES Workshop was organised by Luca Onnis at the Department of Psychology, University of Warwick on 16–18 September 2003. It brought together Warwick and Nottingham Universities. The CHILDES database (Child Language Data Exchange System) is a major scientific endeavour enabling developmental psychologists and linguists to tap into the succession of the cognitive and social

...work in progress...work in progress...work in progress...work in progress...

A developmental study of stereotype variability (ESRC, £28,126)

Mark Bennett and Fabio Sani (University of Dundee)

Traditionally, psychologists have viewed stereotypes as cognitive structures, mental descriptions of particular groups of people. Our research addresses a claim made by self-categorisation theory, namely that the content

of stereotypes is inherently comparative and that as a result it is highly flexible and variable over different social contexts. This claim has been substantiated amongst adult subjects (for example, the British are stereotyped as friendly and informal when participants have previously considered Germans, but as formal and reserved having

previously considered Greeks). Such findings pose difficulties for a cognitive structural view of stereotypes and instead suggest the need to construe the phenomenon in process terms – that is, we should think about *stereotyping* (process) rather than *stereotypes* (structures). Previously, it has been speculated that the cognitive processes involved in the intergroup comparisons that are presupposed by self-categorisation theory will not be found in young children. As a consequence, young

children's stereotypes may indeed reflect underlying structures, rather than being the outcome of a flexible process of stereotyping. Our research represents the first attempt to examine this matter systematically. However, our starting point is that even young children possess the sorts of cognitive skills that result in stereotype variability over different social contexts. Intriguingly, early findings provide evidence of both stereotype consistency and variability over different contexts.

If you would like your recently funded research to feature in this column, contact Lisa Morrison Coulthard on lismor@bps.org.uk with the funding body, amount awarded, period of funding, title, contact details and a clear summary of the project in under 50 words.

phases involved in the acquisition of communicative abilities by children. It consists of a rich variety of computerised transcripts from language learners and data from 26 different languages, as well as 40 programs designed to interrogate the database in a very flexible way.

The purpose of the workshop was to provide practical hands-on experience of the database, with a view to (a) contributing new material to the database by transcribing and digitising speech, and connecting audio and video to the transcripts; and (b) interrogating the database using the programs for basic and advanced queries.

The sessions benefited from CHILDES experts such as Stephen Gillis (Antwerp), Gary Jones (Derby), Caroline Rowland (Liverpool), Anna Theakston and Kate Joseph (Manchester). The course attracted 30 doctoral students and lecturers from five countries. Twelve grants covering registration fees and full accommodation were made available for postgraduate students through BPS support. Feedback

from those attending the workshop was extremely positive and filled a much-needed gap in expertise and training of CHILDES users.

□ Since the launch of the scheme, over 20 series have been funded by the Board

covering a wide range of areas of psychological research. Interested in applying for funding? Contact Lisa Morrison Coulthard for more details. The deadline for the next round is 17 September 2004.

FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES listed by deadline

23 January 2004

Alzheimers Research Trust. Research Fellowships. Contact: Rebecca Wood. Tel: 01223 843899; e-mail: enquiries@alzheimers-research.org.uk; website: www.alzheimers-research.org.uk

30 January 2004

MRC. Clinical Research Training Fellowships. Tel: 020 7636 5422; website: www.mrc.ac.uk

1 February 2004

US National Institute on Aging. Research projects on higher-order cognitive functioning and ageing, and genetics, behaviour and ageing. Contact: Linda Whipp. Tel: 00 1 301 496 1472; e-mail: lw17m@nih.gov; website: grants.nih.gov/grants/guide.html

Harold Hyam Wingate Foundation. Wingate Scholarships. Write to: 20-22 Stukeley Street, London WC2B 5LR.

Harry Frank Guggenheim Foundation: Dissertation Fellowships. Contact: Program Officer. Tel: 00 1 212 644 4907.

National Institute of Mental Health: Research grants on mental health illnesses in older adults and early detection and treatment of mental disorders in children and adolescents. Contact: Office of Communications. Tel: 00 1 301 443 4513.

National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism. Research grants for research on the role of alcohol dependence in alcoholism treatment; health services research on alcohol related problems; treatment of adolescence with alcohol disorders; advancement of behavioural therapies for alcoholism treatment; and mechanisms of action of behavioural treatments for alcoholism. Contact: Extramural Outreach and Information Resources Office. Tel: 00 1 301 435 0714; e-mail: grantsinfo@nih.gov; website: www.nih.gov/grants/oer.htm

Wellcome Trust. Biomedical Ethics Fellowships. Contact: Grants Section (Biomedical Ethics). Tel: 020 7611 8231, e-mail: biomedicaethics@wellcome.ac.uk; website: www.wellcome.ac.uk/en/1/pinbiogrukschstf.html

13 February 2004

ESRC. Research Seminars Competition. Tel: 01793 413000, website: www.esrc.ac.uk

14 February 2004

British Occupational Health Research Foundation.

Research Award. Tel: 020 7317 5898

17 February 2004

Nuffield Foundation. Undergraduate Research Bursaries in Science. Contact: Vicki Hughes or Joanne Campbell. Tel: 020 7631 0566; e-mail: sciurb@nuffieldfoundation.org

27 February 2004

Cancer Research UK. Research Grants Programme. Tel: 020 7317 5178; e-mail: scientific@cancer.org.uk; website: www.cancer.org.uk

31 March 2004

Fyssen Foundation. Postdoctoral study grants. Contact: Secretariat. Tel: 00 33 142 975316; e-mail: secretariat@fondation-fyssen.org; website: www.fondation-fyssen.org

1 April 2004

ESRC. Training Development Activities. Contact: Dawn Hill. Tel: 01793 413040; e-mail: dawn.hill@esrc.ac.uk; website: www.esrc.ac.uk

15 April 2004

Royal Society. Research grants. Contact: Susan Moss. Tel: 020 7451 2539; e-mail: susan.moss@royalsoc.ac.uk

open date schemes

EPSRC. Overseas travel grants, Visiting Fellowships, and research grants. Tel: 01793 444000; fax: 01793 444010; e-mail: infoline@epsr.ac.uk; website: www.epsr.ac.uk

ESRC. Research grants and research fellowships. Contact: Management, Psychology, Linguistics and Education Research Support Team. Tel: 01793 413000, e-mail: mple.rst@esrc.ac.uk, www.esrc.ac.uk

MRC. Grant for Centres, Programmes, Co-operative Groups, Development, and Strategic. Tel: 020 7636 5422; e-mail: rgb@headoffice.mrc.ac.uk; website: www.mrc.ac.uk

Nuffield Foundation. Social science small grants scheme. Contact: Louie Burghes or Ann Weber. Tel: 020 7631 0566; website: www.nuffield.org.uk

A searchable database containing full details of the various national and international funding opportunities for psychologists can be found on the Society's website at www.bps.org.uk/careers/funding.cfm

If you are a grant-awarding body, please e-mail Lisa Morrison Coulthard (lismor@bps.org.uk) with details of your scheme for inclusion in this column.

RESEARCH REQUESTS

■ I AM a self-employed author of psychology texts, unattached to any educational (or other) institution. I wish to undertake **research into people's (especially, but not exclusively, men's) experience of losing their hair.** If anyone knows of any relevant research (I've so far drawn an almost total blank), is currently engaged in similar or related research (or knows someone who is), or might be willing to advise on or supervise such research, I'd be eager and grateful to hear from you.

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■ I AM preparing to start research trials in Hay-on-Wye, to investigate the possible **links between complex PTSD and multiple sclerosis.** I will run proactive workshops for all MS sufferers that want to attend. Anyone wishing to join the trials, please contact me.

Karen Gillespie-Horne

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Karen@akashlifecoach.co.uk