

Undergraduate Research Opportunities Dr. Gary Raney's Language Research Lab

I am looking for students who are interested in gaining research experience related to how people process language and read texts. My graduate students and I study issues such as the following: (a) how is figurative language comprehended? For example, how do you comprehend familiar metaphors, such as “my lawyer is a shark,” and unfamiliar metaphors, such as “life is a pencil?” (b) Does your language background influence how you comprehend figurative language? For example, if you are asked to figure out the meaning of the idiom “don't look a gift horse in the mouth,” will a native English speaker come up with the same meaning as a native Spanish speaker or a native Hindi speaker? (c) Do monolinguals and bilinguals process language in different ways? For example, when bilinguals read a text, do they think about the text in both languages? (d) Do the left and right hemispheres of the brain process language in the same way?

You can be involved in all stages of the research process, including conducting experiments, coding data, data analysis, and literature searches. You need to be available at least 6 hours per week (daytime hours) and you may volunteer or participate for credit (e.g., for your Honors activity). You also need to be available Wednesday evenings (5:00-7:00 pm) for lab meetings. We need people who are not native English speakers to help with several of our projects, but we have many research projects with no language requirements. You do not need to be a Psychology major to work in my lab, but you must be interested in how people comprehend language.

Working in a research lab is a great way to gain experience and skills that enhance your opportunity to attend graduate school and possibly develop a capstone project. Recent and current capstone projects explore topics such as whether being bilingual influences mathematical problem solving, how different types of instruction influence vocabulary learning, whether the degree of hemispheric lateralization of language is similar for speakers of English and Gujarati, and whether the amount learned from a text is similar when the text is read to you or you read it yourself.

Contact information.

If you are interested in working in Dr. Raney's language lab, please contact me via email at geraney@uic.edu. More information about my research is available on my web site (www.uic.edu/~geraney). You can send an application via the UIC Undergraduate Research Experience web site (<http://www.uic.edu/uic/research/undergraduate/index.shtml>) or download an application from Dr. Raney's web site (www.uic.edu/~geraney/helpwanted.htm).