We’re faced with a simple but difficult question to answer. We believe that this is one of the most fundamental questions of language acquisition. If you have any comments, please let us know.

What in a father’s speech is mimicked **acoustically** by his young children?

Young children often mimic their father’s speech. Acoustically speaking, however, they are not mimicking the utterance as it is. They are not trying to produce *their father* in their voices. Some may say that the children decode the utterance into a sequence of phonemes and then, each phoneme is generated by the mouth. But the young children don’t have good phonemic awareness and it is rather difficult for them to decode speech. In this situation, what is mimicked acoustically? As acoustic characteristics of a speaker are determined by the shape of his articulators, it is certainly impossible to produce their father. But it is true that, if they mimic the utterance acoustically, they must at least *try* to produce their father but we’ve never seen such children. We still believe that they are mimicking something in the utterance acoustically. What is THAT?

Nobuaki MINEMATSU (mine@gavo.t.u-tokyo.ac.jp) & Tazuko NISHIMURA (nt-tazuko@ams.odn.ne.jp)

If you have any answers, please visit our poster (9:00-10:50 on Wed in Colonade of Miyako Southeast).