

Pretend play utterances become more complex over the course of language acquisition. Event Schemas are one way of measuring this increase.

Perspectivation and Pretend Play in Language Acquisition: A Corpus Study

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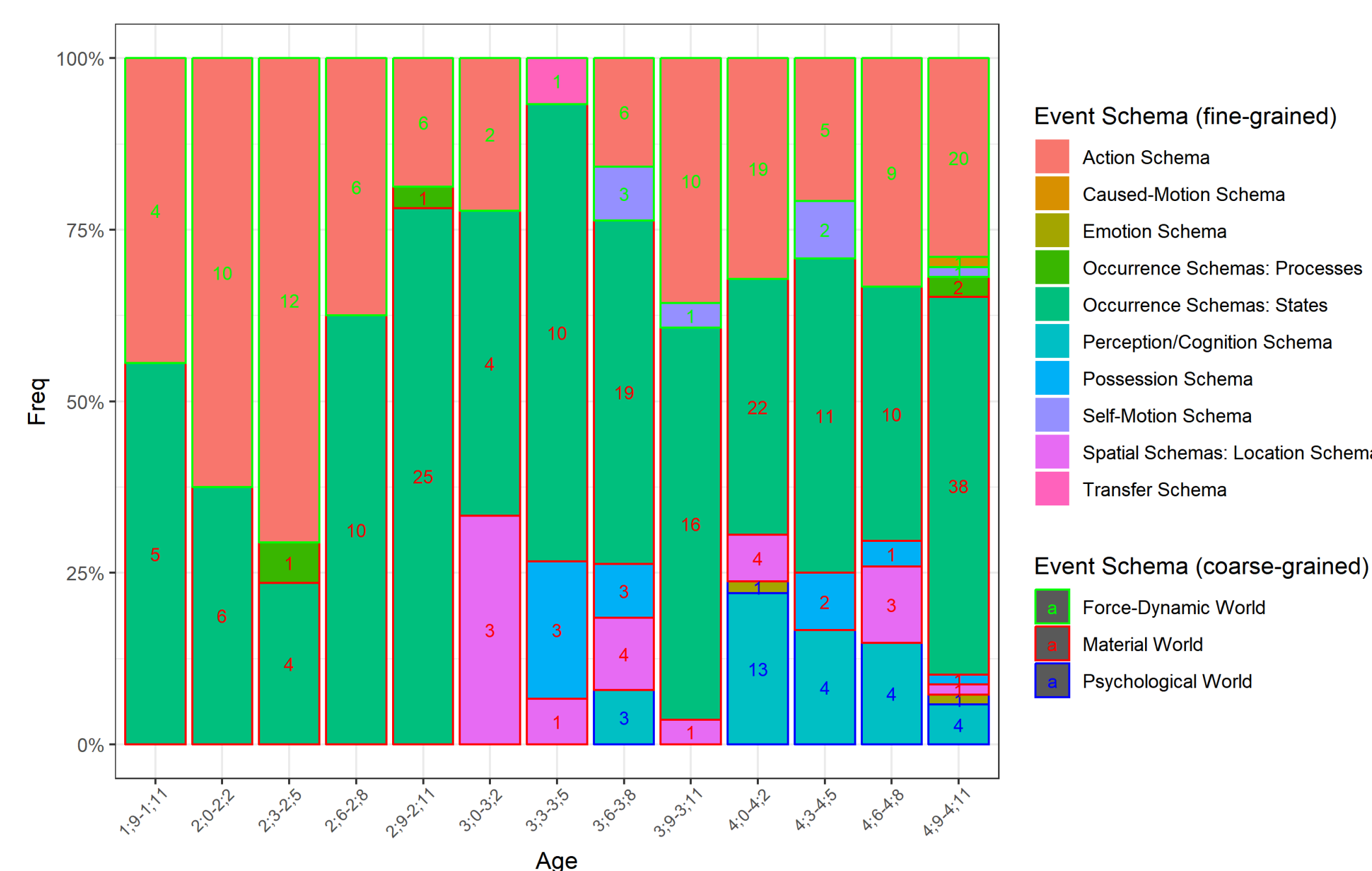
INTRO

- Pretend play plays an important role in language acquisition and vice versa (e.g., Quinn et al. 2018).
- Specifically, pretend play is an important context in which children learn how to share perspectives using language.
- In this study, I used the concept of event schemas to study the development of children's use of the lexical item *pretend*.

METHODS

- Database: CHILDES (MacWhinney 2000)
 - Thomas corpus (Lieven et al. 2009; 1 child, en, 2;0-4;11)
 - Manchester corpus (Theakston et al. 2001; 12 children, en, 2;0-3;0)
- Lexical tracking of CHI *pretend* utterances
- Coding for event schema categories and subcategories (Radden & Dirven 2007)

RESULTS



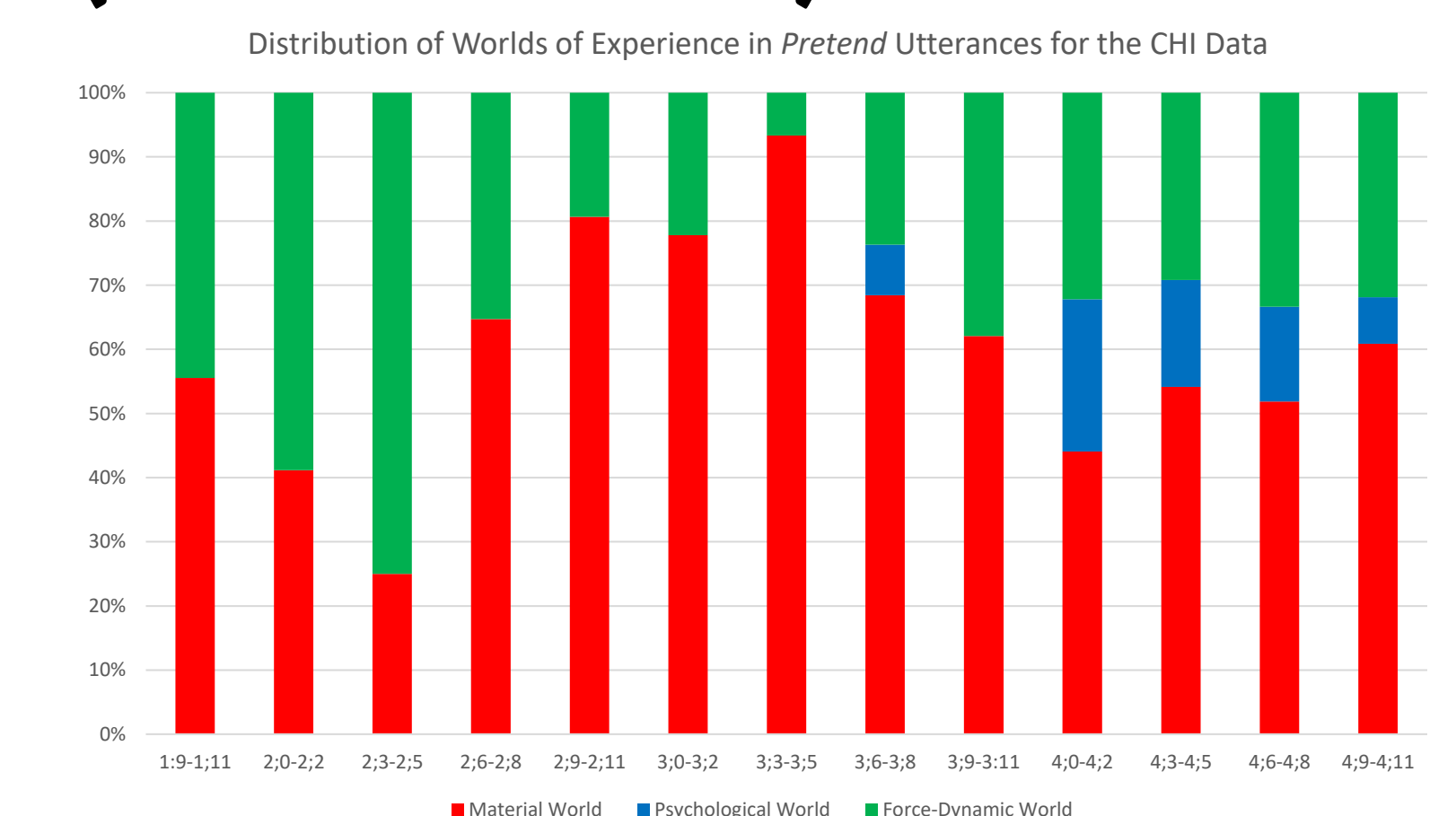
DISCUSSION

- Children show an increase in the complexity and number of event schemas in their pretend language as they grow older.
- However, there are no clear patterns showing that specific event schemas increase or decrease in frequency with age.
- One interesting observation which should be examined more closely in future studies is the increase in Psychological World event schemas around 4 years of age.

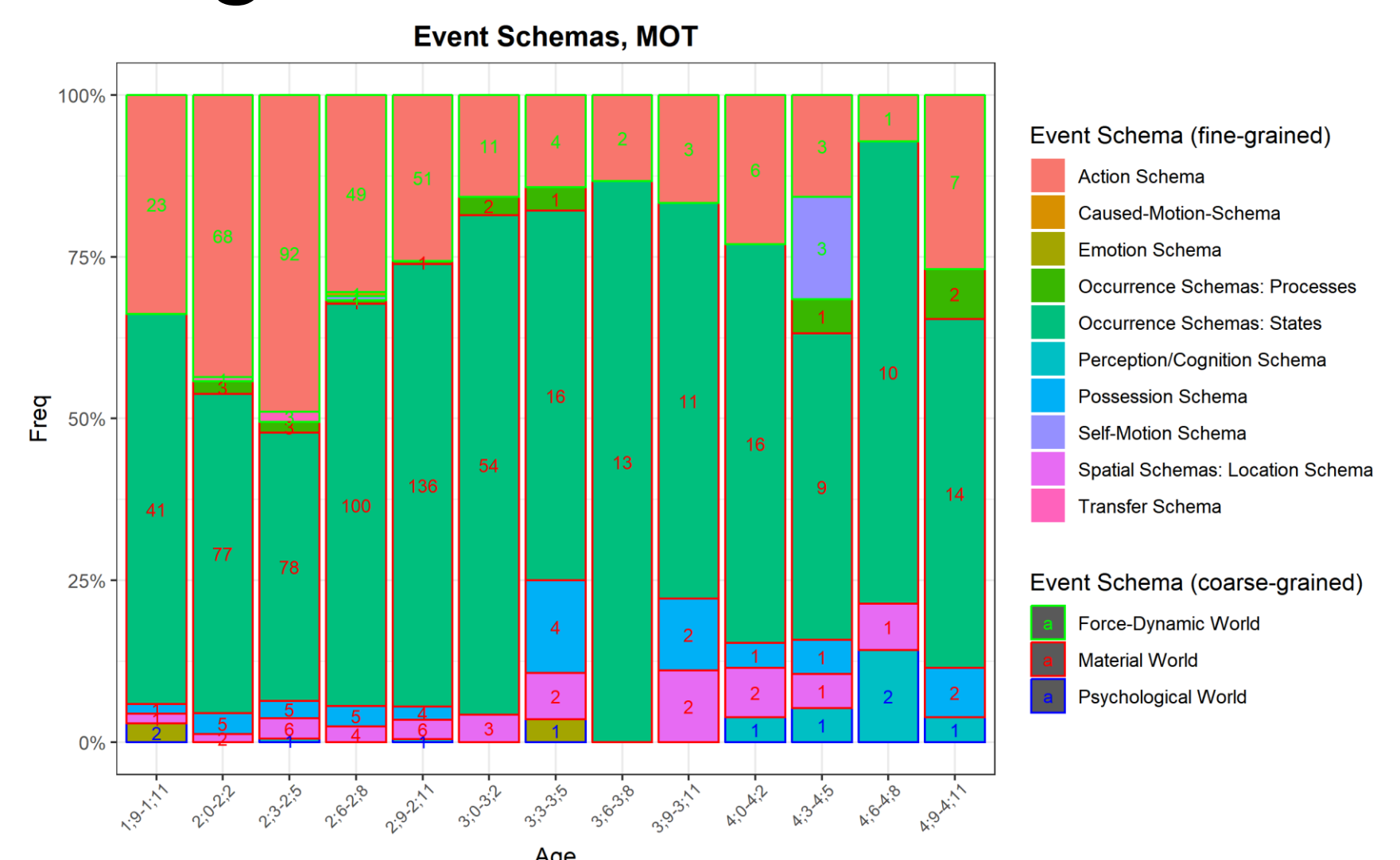
Typology of Event Schemas

| Event Schema | Example |
|----------------------------------|---|
| Material World | |
| Occurrence Schemas: States | <i>just pretend it was open</i> (4-01-02.cha) |
| Occurrence Schemas: Processes | <i>it's pretend snowing yet</i> (becky28b.cha) |
| Spatial Schemas: Location Schema | <i>pretend I was at crab hospital</i> (3-11-03.cha) |
| Possession Schema | <i>who's pretending they've got a sweetie?</i> (3-04-01.cha) |
| Psychological World | |
| Emotion Schema | <i>no, but just pretend you are very sad</i> (4-00-07.cha) |
| Perception/Cognition Schema | <i>Mummy, just pretend you've forgotten your [>] little boy</i> (3-08-02.cha). |
| Force-Dynamic World | |
| Action Schema | <i>you're pretending to eat him</i> (MOT, aran27b.cha) |
| Self-Motion Schema | <i>I'm going to pretend you arrived at Burger_King</i> (04-10-05.cha). |
| Transfer Schema | <i>Perhaps you could pretend to give one to Rhona's cat</i> (MOT, john10b.cha) |

Development of Event Schemas (Coarse-Grained)



Development of Event Schemas in Caregiver Utterances



References

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