

Abstract EFAS/DGA 2007

Preverbal Dialogues

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Background/ Aims

From the very first day of life parents are in close contact with their child and introduce both other people and the world to their newborn in a mutually dialogical way. Proceeding hand in hand they pass on basic dialogical competences. Our research "Dialogic Development of Infants" addresses the broad dialogic development of parents and infants within the first 18 months of life. Our objective is to describe these preverbal dialogs. Particular emphasis will be placed on the dialogic elements: vocalisation of the infant, greeting behaviours, motherese and dialogic echo of the parents.

Methods

The empirical data is derived from a longitudinal study within the first 18 months of the infant's life. The data is collected monthly by video recording in the natural setting. Using this method the dialogic development of Polish, American and German mother-child dyads is observed and documented. Participants (n= 111 in Germany) are infants with normal hearing (n=73) and hearing loss (n=12) as well as "preemies" (n=18) and infants with Down-Syndrome (n=8). Computerized analyses are used for the evaluation of the data in order to study correlations among variables e.g. vocalisation and dialogic echo of the parents.

Results

The results demonstrate a negative correlation of greeting behavior with the dialogic echo ($r = -0.30$) and the infant's vocalizations ($r = -0.34$). Parents use more greeting behaviors and less dialogic echo when the infant vocalizes less. Furthermore the greeting behaviors correlate with the use of motherese / fatherese ($r = 0.87$). This correlation is highly significant ($p = 0.0051^{***}$). Another significant correlation exists between the infant's vocalization and the dialogic echo ($r = 0.82$; $p = 0.0126$).

Conclusions

Parents increase the amount of greeting behavior to encourage the infant to enter into the dialog. This conclusion stems from the highly significant correlation between greeting behavior and the use of motherese / fatherese.

Literatur:

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