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## Socializing infants towards a cultural understanding of expressing negative affect

*A Bakhtinian informed discursive psychology approach*

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# Socializing Infants Toward a Cultural Understanding of Expressing Negative Affect: A Bakhtinian Informed Discursive Psychology Approach

Carolin Demuth

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## **TABLE OF CONTENTS LISTING**

The table of contents for the journal will list your paper exactly as it appears below:

*Socializing Infants Toward a Cultural Understanding of Expressing Negative Affect: A Bakhtinian Informed Discursive Psychology Approach*  
Carolyn Demuth

## Socializing Infants Toward a Cultural Understanding of Expressing Negative Affect: A Bakhtinian Informed Discursive Psychology Approach

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5

This article addresses the socialization of emotion expression in infancy. It argues that in order to adequately understand emotion development we need to consider the appraisal of emotion expression through caregivers in mundane, everyday interactions. Drawing on sociocultural and Bakhtinian theorizing, it claims that caregivers' appraisals of infants' emotion expression are dialogically intertwined with broader speech genres or "communicative genres" of a community and the emotional-volitional tone and normative orientations embedded in them. It aims to investigate how communicative genres become visible in early caregiver–infant interactions. 10

In a comparative study with 20 farming Cameroonian Nso mothers from Kikaikelaki and 20 German middle-class mothers from Muenster and their 3-month-old infants, we investigated discursive practices used by the mothers in reaction to the infants' expression of negative affect. We found distinct patterns of coconstructing the interaction that point to different normative orientations and communicative genres that can be considered to be specific to the two sociocultural contexts. These communicative genres were found to be in line with broader cultural ethnotheories on good child care in these two communities found in previous studies and by other researchers. 15

In recent years there has been an increasing acknowledgment that the development of emotions and emotion regulation is mediated by early caregiver–child interactions and hence by culture-historical processes of symbolization that color emotions in a culture-specific way (Cole & Tan, 2007; Friedlmeier, Corapci, & Cole, 2011; Halberstadt & Lozada, 2011). A prominent model has been the internalization model of emotional development suggested by Holodynski & Friedlmeier (2006; see also Holodynski & Kaertner, this issue) that highlights the significance of emotional expressions as the first culturally co-constructed system of communicative signs for the ontogenetic differentiation of emotion development. According to this model, emotional expressions are communicative signs that regulate not only regulations with others but also interactions with 20 25

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oneself through gradual internalization similar to Vygotsky's notion of inner speech (Holodynski, 2009; Holodynski & Friedlmeier, 2010).

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## A BAKHTINIAN-INFORMED DISCURSIVE PSYCHOLOGY APPROACH

This article departs from Holodynski and Friedlmeier's approach in that it considers the dialogical interplay between communication and emotion expression socialization from a Bakhtinian-informed discursive psychology approach. Whereas Holodynski and Friedlmeier's model focuses on mediation in terms of external signs that become internalized into an internal psychological unit (the self), this article considers mediation in terms of a dialogical conception of the self. The self is not conceived as something "inside" a person but something that is coconstructed through discursive practices in social interaction (e.g., Harré & Gillett, 1994). It is constantly in the process of change and dialogically intertwined with social interaction.

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As I go on to argue, such a dialogical conception of the self can, however, be fruitfully combined with a cultural-historical approach of emotion expression socialization by drawing on Bakhtinian's notion of speech genres: Bakhtin (1986) proposed to use the term "speech genres" to point out that "all our utterances have definite and relatively stable typical forms of construction of the whole" (p. 78). By this he meant that by using an utterance, an individual always draws upon the languages and words of others to which he or she has been previously exposed: "Each utterance is filled with echoes and reverberations of other utterances to which it is related by the communality of the sphere of speech communication" (p. 88). According to this understanding, an utterance is dialogic in the sense that it is a social act in response to other—a notion that Bakhtin (1990) referred to as "answerability" (see also White, this issue), that is, the dialogical nature of utterances is expressed in the polyphony of voices that are part of any utterance. Answerability allows for interanimation of the multiple perspectives of the participants. In other words, although interlocutors in social communication strive for intersubjectivity and shared meaning, there is always room for alterity, that is, heterogeneity of different perspectives, of different voices (see also White, this issue). Answerability, however, is always embedded in speech genres. Utterances hence are dynamic, living activities subject to sociohistoric and cultural change. The achievement of intersubjectivity as the members' consensus on a collective set of symbols and practices is at the heart of Conversation Analysis (e.g., Sacks, Schegloff, & Jefferson, 1974). It is interested in the way participants at talk display their understanding of the unfolding actions by means of their relevant orientation to certain formal features of conversation such as pauses, hesitations, intonation, overall prosody, overlaps, and other aspects of the sequencing of actions. It is hence considered a fruitful avenue to the study of socialization practices in mother-child interactions.

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Wertsch (1991, 1994) drew on this notion of speech genres to explain the dialogical interplay between human action (including discourse, mental processes, and expression of emotion), on one hand, and cultural, institutional, and historical contexts, on the other (Wertsch, 1995, p. 139). Discursive practices or "utterances" (in this case, the utterances of the caregiver in engagement with the infant, later on the utterances of the child) are always inherently and dynamically interrelated with the utterances of others and hence permeated with ideological knowledge that goes beyond the in situ interaction. Although Wertsch broadened the concept of internalization by a sociocultural perspective, this article suggests to apply a discursive psychology approach that

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conceives of socialization processes not in terms of internalization of external experiences into a psychic unity but as discursively coconstructed in social interaction. This view is actually in line with Bakhtin, who considered human subjectivity to be dialogically constituted through communication with others (Bakhtin, 1963/1984).

## THE ROLE OF “COMMUNICATIVE GENRES” IN EARLY EMOTION EXPRESSION SOCIALIZATION 75

Recent approaches to Bakhtian theorizing have suggested the conception of speech genres not as restricted to verbal utterances but as composing broader aspects of communication (Cresswell & Teucher, 2011; Linell, 2009). Linell (2009), for example, suggested that one speak of “communicative genres” rather than of “speech genres” to point out that speech genres comprise more than language. Moreover, he considered communicative genres to be a type of activity in social interaction. This approach to communicative interaction is very much in line with discursive psychology, which treats language as action and stresses the constitutive nature of discourse (e.g., Potter, 2007). Likewise, emotion expressions can be considered “discursive acts” (Harré, 1999; Harré & Gillett, 1994) in that they always are located in the sequences of social interaction, they are directed to something, and they are interpretable by others as performance of a social act. They serve to communicate the (relational) position of self vis-à-vis others (Parrott, 2003), for example, by blaming others or eliciting empathy in the case of expressing anger or sadness. Although not denying that emotion expressions have physiological correlations, our focus here is on their communicative function in situations with others. 80 85 90

Children still need to learn how to use emotions as discursive acts in accordance with local normative expectations (Bamberg, 2001; Brinkmann, 2011). In early infancy, the emotion expression can be considered a communicative act that signals various needs or enjoyment. In their engagements with infants, caregivers then provide an interpretative frame for the infant’s emotional experience and define the appropriate, normative way to engage in social interaction and conduct. Through repeated participation in social interactions the infant gradually acquires the cultural meaning and illocutionary force of expressing an emotion in terms of performing a social act and the appropriateness or inappropriateness of such a social act in a specific interactional context (Bamberg, 2001; Parrott, 2003). The expression of emotions is hence always intertwined with “culturally specific moral orders and normative systems that allow for assessments of the correctness or impropriety” (Parrot & Harré, 1996, p. 1) of this emotion. 95 100

Similarly, Cresswell and Teucher (2011) suggested that speech genres should be considered not as mediating tools but as *coparticipation* with others, that is, as “participating with others in the same generic mode of being” (p. 7). Drawing on the early phenomenological work of Bakhtin, they also considered speech genres not as limited to verbal expressions but also as emotional-volitional *experience*. Accordingly, embodied *expression* of emotion in infancy is socially constituted through coparticipation in communicative genres lived by caregivers (similarly Brinkmann suggested the notion of “distributed emotion”; cf. Brinkmann, 2011). From this perspective, already very young (i.e., preverbal) infants are able to participate in communicative genres. This is in line with Wertsch, who stated that the mediation of culturally appropriate expressions of emotions starts already in early infancy, that is, before children actually acquire language (Wertsch, 1985). 105 110

The aim of this article, however, is not primarily to consider the developmental aspect of infants' emotion expression (see Holodinsky & Kaertner, this issue) but to investigate how the meaning and normative evaluation of infants' expression of emotion is discursively coconstructed by caregivers and how these discursive practices can be related to broader sociocultural discourses and normativities. Because "discursive practices" as previously outlined comprise more than language and are conceived of in terms of a dialogical interrelatedness with broader cultural discursive practices, the term "communicative genres" is used in the following to refer to these practices. The term "discursive strategies" can be considered to refer to more specific communicative strategies used within a certain communicative genre.

### SOCIALIZING SOCIAL NORMS THROUGH THE EVALUATION OF EXPRESSING NEGATIVE EMOTIONS

The sociocultural evaluation of emotion expression becomes particularly salient when comparing emotion socialization in various cultural contexts. In a recent culture-comparative review on emotion socialization in terms of expression of negative emotions, Friedlmeier and colleagues (Friedlmeier et al., 2011) suggested that caregivers who find self-expression and open communication of "ego-focused" emotions that support the assertion of self as indication of autonomy and self-reliance important and desirable will consequently "accept children's expression of negative emotions, encourage the experience of such emotions, provide comfort and assistance, and scaffold self-regulation of distress" (p. 411). It is claimed, for instance, that this parenting style is prominent in urban German middle-class families with a high level of formal education (Keller, 2007). Cultural communities that devalue the expression of negative emotions in children, like the Gusii in southwest Kenya (Dixon, Tronick, Keefer, & Brazelton, 1981; LeVine et al., 1994), emphasize emotional restraint with their children. They are more likely to minimize, deny, criticize, punish, or ignore negative emotion expression.

From what has been argued so far, the question arises, What communicative genres do caregivers in distinct cultural communities draw on in interactions with infants? More specifically, how is the expression of an emotion framed by caregivers on a moment-by-moment basis as the interaction evolves? For this purpose, this article investigates the communicative genres of farming Nso mothers in Kikaikelaki in the Western Grassfields of Cameroon and of German middle-class mothers in the city of Muenster with regard to their infants' expression of negative emotions. With this study we aim to shed some light on the communicative genres that are involved in the process of emotion socialization in early infancy and how they are interrelated with broader cultural norms of how to raise children.

### THE STUDY SITES

#### Muenster

Muenster is a North-German university city with about 281,000 citizens and a well-developed administrative and educational infrastructure and is marked by a very strong economy and a relatively low unemployment rate. With about 265,000 citizens in 1995/1996 when the data were

assessed (272,000 in 2008), Muenster is a relative big city in German comparison with mainly middle to upper middle-class inhabitants.

Households in Germany usually consist of the nuclear family comprising parents and one or two children, and they live in their own condominium or house, often with a separate room for the child from early on. The social security system allows older people to be financially relatively independent of their offspring. Women have 14 weeks of maternity leave and are paid 100% of their salaries. Three years of parental child-rearing leave is compensated with an income-corrected flat rate for 2 years and is unpaid for the 3rd year. Most mothers stay home after child birth at least for several months and often even several years until the child enters school. Although fathers are able to take paternal leave, only 1.6% of fathers actually use it (Keller, 2007), so the mother is still seen as the primary caregiver during early infancy. Although public as well as private kindergarten and day care centers allow many parents to pursue dual careers, mothers reduce their labor time to a larger extent and over a longer period than mothers in other European countries, like Sweden, France, and Italy (Blome & Keck, 2007). Infants thus usually spend a long time at home with the mother. Later on, mothers may join weekly organized toddlers' group meetings with other mothers and their infants. To a far lesser extent, grandparents take care of the child.

A study of North-German middle-class families found that children are encouraged to sleep alone at an early age (LeVine & Norman, 2001; Norman, 1991) and to play by themselves (Grossmann, 1985), thus fostering autonomous self-regulation and self-reliance (*Selbständigkeit*).

### Kikaikelaki

Kikaikelaki village is part of a locally ruled chiefdom (*fondom*) of the Nso, who live in the north-east corner of Cameroon's North West Province. It is located about 8 km from Kumbo town and falls within Anglophone Cameroon. The official language used in school and administration is therefore English. Cameroonian Pidgin English is the common lingua franca. The local language is Lamnso', which has long been an oral language, and its written form has only recently become available (Trudell, 2006). The Grassfield region is one of the most fertile and populous regions in the country; however, infrastructure is still very poor. The savannah climate and lack of adequate sanitation and potable water are major risk factors for diseases such as malaria, diphtheria, diarrhea, worm ailments, and jaundice (Yovsi & Keller, 2003).

There are two systems of authority within the Nso society: the Cameroonian postcolonial state and the local chiefdom (*fondom*) of the Nso. The chiefdom is locally ruled by the *Fon*, who is both the head of the traditional government and the chief religious authority in charge of keeping the ancestors happy. The *Fon*'s political power is regulated by comparatively lower and upper chambers of parliament, for example, men's secret societies and military associations in combination with the *Fon*'s primary counselors and various lineage heads. Social interaction is structured by highly institutionalized modes of behavior according to age, gender and social title. These include terms and forms of address as well as behavioral signs of respect such as bending down, averting one's eyes, and talking through one's hands (Goheen, 1996).

Families earn their living primarily through subsistence agriculture and the average amount of formal schooling is in general very low. Families live in compounds that are composed of the



lineage head, his wife or wives, his adult sons and their families, children, and other dependents. Women assume basically the entire responsibility for food production (farming), provisioning the household, and child care, whereas men work in the wage-labor sector, grow coffee, and engage in a variety of entrepreneurial activities (Goheen, 1996). The Nso children grow up in a dense social network including parents, siblings, relatives, grandparents, and neighbors (Yovsi, 2003). Older children are expected to help on the farm, do household chores, and take care of younger siblings (Mbaku, 2005). The Nso community has been characterized by norms of collective responsibility, sharing, and exchange (Goheen 1996; Nsamenang & Lamb 1994) as well as harmonious and hierarchically organized relationships between family members and the wider social reference group (Mbaku, 2005; Nsamenang & Lamb, 1993; Verhoef, 2005). Although child rearing is the responsibility of the entire community it has been demonstrated that the mother is the primary caregiver during the first 6 months of life (Yovsi & Keller, 2003). Fathers are rarely at home and therefore play a minor role in the daily communication with their children when they are young.

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### Ethnotheories of Good Child Care in the Two Communities

North German middle-class families' conceptions of good parenting center around the child's psychological autonomy fostering the child's self-determination in relation to others as well as the child's uniqueness and free choice (Keller, 2007; Keller & Otto, 2011). Previous studies could show that North German middle-class mothers value socialization goals like "learning to be different from others," "expressing own ideas," or "being assertive" over goals like "learning to share with others, obeying the parents," or "maintaining social harmony" (Keller et al., 2006). A study by Levine and Norman (2001) conducted in a small town near Frankfurt revealed that children are also expected to acquire "love of order" (*Ordnungsliebe*), which means both "self-control and learning to comply with the demands of existing regimes of schedule first in the family and then in other institutions as the child grows older" (p. 91). They found, for example, that although caring for the infant's needs is considered of primary importance, it should not disturb family routines too much. Too much accommodation to the infant's needs is considered to risk "spoiling" the child and to collide with parental logistics, especially the mother's time and energy.

Nso mothers' conceptions of good parenting center around obedience, respect for elders, conformity, and compliance to rules, as well as practical autonomy (Keller & Otto, 2011), social responsibility, obligations, and a strong community spirit (Nsamenang & Lamb, 1994; Yovsi, 2003). For instance, they value socialization goals like "obedience to parents," "learning to share with others," and "maintaining social harmony" above goals like "learning to be different from others," "expressing own ideas," or "being assertive" (Keller et al., 2006).

Parental goals serve to socialize children to competent members according to the local structure of the community. Without functional integration into the hierarchically structured community, individuals are not considered to fully be a "person," that is, a sense of self cannot be obtained without reference to the broader community (Nsamenang & Lamb, 1994). Socialization accordingly focuses on the acquisition of pro-social skills such as honesty, cooperation and compliance to rules; deference and obedience to elders and superiors, including older siblings; social responsibility and commitment within the family system and ethnic community; and subordinating individual interests to those of the group in favor of a strong community spirit (Nsamenang

& Lamb, 1994; Yovsi, 2003; Yovsi & Keller, 2003). The goal is to socialize children toward acquiring a “good character.” It is to this end that control and regulation are often used in child care. It serves to prevent the child from developing a sense of pride about his own achievement, which would be regarded as “showing off” and “bad character” (Nsamenang, 1992; Nsamenang & Lamb, 1994; Tchombe, 1997). This corresponds to the Nso conception of maternal sensitivity defined in terms of closeness, monitoring, instructing, training, directing, and controlling infant activities (Yovsi, Kaertner, Keller, & Lohaus, 2009). 235

In a recent study on attachment with 1-year-old children, Otto (2008) found that many Cameroonian Nso children showed no emotional expression upon separation from a caregiver and arrival of a stranger. Physiological measurements (cortisol level) showed that these children were not distressed. These findings, which at first glance seem striking, become understandable when seen in the light of the Nso’s belief about good child care: In a comparative study between Nso mothers in the western grass fields in Cameroon and German middle-class mothers in Osnabrueck, Keller and Otto (2009) found that the Nso mothers valued obedience and maintenance of social harmony significantly higher than the Osnabrueck mothers whereas the Osnabrueck mothers valued the expression of own preferences significantly higher than the Nso mothers. The mothers in this study were also asked when they expected their children to express specific emotions. The Nso mothers in general expected the expression emotions later than the Osnabrueck mothers; however, they expected the expression of shame and guilt about 10 months earlier than their German counterparts. In an interview study conducted by Otto (2008) during her field work among the Nso, mothers expressed that a good child is one who does not express emotions, especially not negative ones. Mothers reported that a calm child is a child who can be taken care of easily by multiple caretakers and allows the mother to do her chores and fulfill her heavy workload (Keller & Otto, 2009; Otto, 2008). Otto concluded from her findings that the most adaptive emotion regulation strategy among the Nso children is characterized by avoiding the expression of negative emotions. 240 245 250 255 260

## PROCEDURE

### Data Assessment

The data corpus is part of a larger video archive collected from July 1995 to June 1996 in Muenster and from October 2002 to November 2003 in Kikaikelaki. The Muenster mothers were contacted individually in hospitals and preparation classes. In Kikaikelaki, the hierarchical system required permission from the chief (*fon*) before getting in touch with families through a health center. Twenty native German mothers living in Muenster and 20 native Nso mothers from Kikaikelaki consented to participate. The Muenster mothers were between 26 and 40 years at the time of infant birth (average = 30.7 years) and had an average school education of 14.4 years. All infants were firstborn. The Nso mothers were between 17 and 47 years at the time of infant birth (average = 27.8 years) and had an average school education of 8.5 years. They all lived from subsistence farming. Four infants were first born, 16 were later born.<sup>1</sup> They were video recorded 265 270

<sup>1</sup>The relatively high number of later borns is related to the high fertility rate among the Nso. A later born child hence is more representative of infants among the Nso than a firstborn.

TABLE 1  
Sociodemographic Features of the Participants

	<i>Muenster<sup>a</sup></i>	<i>Nso<sup>b</sup></i>
Infants (%)		
Girls	45%	55%
Firstborn	100%	20%
Mothers ( <i>M</i> , <i>SD</i> , or %)		
Age at birth of child	30.7 (3.7)	27.8 <sup>c</sup> (7.7)
Years of schooling	14.4 (3.2)	8.5 <sup>d</sup> (2.2)
Married/living with partner	100%	75%
Single	0%	25%
Religious affiliation (%)		
Christian	NA	70%
Moslem	NA	30%

Note. NA = unknown.

<sup>a</sup>*N* = 20. <sup>b</sup>*N* = 20. <sup>c</sup>*N* = 18. <sup>d</sup>*N* = 19.

for 10 min on a weekly basis over a total period of 16 weeks. The present account draws on the recordings from the 12th-week session, when infants were 3 months of age (see Table 1).

The families were visited at home by local, trained female research assistants and videotaped in a setting that reflects typical social encounters with infants. The Nso mothers were mostly sitting in front of their houses, in an open space with people passing by.<sup>2</sup> The Muenster mothers were inside their houses, usually in the living room or the kitchen, alone with their child. The mothers were told that we would like to learn more about parenting and childcare in different cultures. For this purpose, we wanted to videotape mother–infant free-play interactions. The interactions were videotaped for 10 mins.<sup>3</sup>

## Analysis

In line with the analytical procedures of discursive psychology and conversation analysis (Potter, 2007; Sacks et al., 1974), we transcribed interactions following the conventions by Jefferson (1984). Some notations were added to include specific features of infant communication (see appendix). The Nso interactions were directly translated into English by a native Nso research assistant. Other modalities of communication such as body movement, gaze, mimic and gesture were also included in the analysis. Transcripts are presented in a format suggested by Ochs (1979)

<sup>2</sup>Although sibling care is a common practice among the Nso and infants are likely to be involved in multiparty interactions, it is not unusual for mothers to play with their infants.

<sup>3</sup>Although we are aware that the filming situation may have provoked some “visitor behavior” that might not entirely correspond to naturally occurring everyday behavior, we believe that it is not possible to lay aside one’s habits that have been acquired in the course of a lifetime and that can, at least partly, be assumed to be subconscious. Moreover, it can be assumed that to the extent that mothers were influenced by observation they would have tried to model what they consider to be a “good mother.” Hence, mothers would produce speech and behavior that they associate with good mothering within their cultural model.

allowing for parallel vertical lines arranging nonverbal behavior co-occurring with verbal/vocal utterances for mother and infant, respectively. 290

It should be noted here that discursive psychology and conversation analysis methodology does not lend itself to formulate any hypotheses. From a Bakhtinian approach, however, we can expect that the findings will reflect communicative genres that are in line with broader cultural ideas of good child care as previously outlined.

The aim is to analyze what is socially accomplished in an ongoing interaction on a micro-analytic turn-by-turn basis as the interaction evolves, as well as at deriving recurrent discursive patterns (“interpretative repertoires,” or in Linell’s terms, “communicative genres”) in the two groups. Because the term “emotion” commonly denotes the projection/display of a feeling (which is social in orientation and hence shaped through socialization processes) whereas the term “affect” refers to an unformed and unstructured experience of intensity, we prefer in the following to refer to affect when talking about very young infants. The emotions of the infant can, however, be considered as direct expressions of affect (Shouse, 2005). 295 300

In line with discourse analytical procedures, analysis started with a rather broad research question (“How do mothers frame infant’s expression of negative affect?”) that was being refined as the analysis proceeded. The following analytic foci were used as heuristics to examine emotion socialization practices in the two samples: 305

1. Activity beginnings: How does the mother react to the infant’s expression of negative affect (such as whining or crying)?
2. Positioning (Harré & Van Langenhove, 1999): What kinds of subject positions are afforded to the child in the course of the interaction? 310
3. What broader normative framework do these patterns of interaction point to?

By systematically comparing the two data sets, groups of sequences were derived that show similar and contrasting patterns of communicative strategies that point to shared understandings and interpretation of interaction in each case. Analysis revealed salient different patterns between the two groups, which is discussed next. The excerpts discussed next represent typical patterns found repeatedly within each group. An explanation of the transcription notations used in this analysis is listed in the appendix. 315

## RESULTS

Overall, we found various interactional patterns in the two groups. These patterns can be described along the continuum of positioning the child as quasi-equal negotiation partner versus positioning the child as having to obey and comply in a hierarchical setting. There were various degrees of granting autonomy to the child and varying degrees of directness to which mothers exert control over the flow of the interaction. These patterns are discussed in more detail next. 320

Table 2 gives an overview of discourse strategies that were used in both groups in reaction to the infant’s expression of negative affect. In 16 (80 %) of 20 Muenster interactions, and in 9 (45 %) of 20 Cameroonian interactions, there were situations when the child started whining or crying. 325

TABLE 2  
Reaction to Baby's Expression of Negative Affect

<i>Discourse Strategy</i>	<i>Muenster<sup>a</sup></i>	<i>Nso<sup>b</sup></i>
Cooperatively finding out what is wrong	8	1
Downplaying (irony and mitigating)	3	—
Promoting time orientation and self regulation	4	—
Requesting compliance and obedience	1	8

<sup>a</sup>*n* = 16. <sup>b</sup>*n* = 9.

Moreover, although overall the co-operative first-person plural pronoun use (“we”) was prevalent in the Muenster data corpus (26 instances in a total of 14 out of 20 interactions), this was not the case in the Nso data corpus (2 instances in a total of 2 out of 20 interactions). 330

### The Muenster Families

In the Muenster group, the prevailing pattern in reacting to a child's expression of negative affect was the use of *co-operative* and *negotiating* strategies. For instance, mothers tried to find out what is wrong with the child by including the child in the solution-finding process using diverse turn-taking strategies and thus positioned the child as quasi-equal partner. Mothers also used *downplaying strategies* such mitigating devices and, in once case, irony. The following example serves as illustration of this reoccurring pattern: 335

#### *Interpretative Repertoire 1: “Co-operative and Negotiating Strategies”*

*Example 01: Muenster01\_t12 (85-185).* In the first example presented here, the mother was trying to engage her daughter in the interaction for about three minutes, first by prompting her to narrate, then by presenting a toy (mouse) when the child starts to whine. 340

	<b>BABY NONVERBAL</b>	<b>BABY VOCAL</b>	<b>MOTHER NONVERBAL</b>	<b>MOTHER VERBAL</b>
85		((WN))	presents different toy	(2)
86		((WN))	hesitates, looks briefly at toy	Oh (.)
87	> toy		shakes toy	>>Look<< (3 words unintelligible)
88	> side			(3)
89				Not good?
90			shakes toy	(3)
91	> mother			<u>Not</u> (.) good?
92	> side	((WN))		(2)
93				((talking to herself))
94			lays toy aside	No: (.) hhh (1)

95	wiggles	voc		((murmuring)) good
96		((WN))		(2)
97			> B	<u>BAH!</u>
98			takes B up	((sights))
99		((WN))	lays B over her shoulder	Not good at a:ll (1 word unintelligible)

The mother (henceforth, M) tries to distract the child by presenting a toy and prompting the baby (henceforth, B) to look at it (lines 85–88). She then poses a repeated question about the child’s preference (lines 89–100). Note that M has a clear sequential expectation of the child to respond in some way: She leaves a pause after each question and eventually provides the assumed answer herself (line 93). Questions always indicate that the person who poses it is missing some information that is important in the relevant situation. In this case, what M is asking for is information on B’s preference. Pauses usually indicate to the other person that it is his or her turn in the conversation. It can thus be interpreted that M expects some kind of signal from the child that helps her to find out what the child wants. M ratifies (“good”) what she interprets as the child’s noninterest in the toy and adapts the situation to the child by putting the toy away (lines 94–95) and changing B’s position (lines 98–99). She then repeats her interpretation of B’s preference (line 99).

	<b>BABY NONVERBAL</b>	<b>BABY VOCAL</b>	<b>MOTHER NONVERBAL</b>	<b>MOTHER VERBAL</b>
102		voc	> B	(1 word unintelligible) is good, hm?
103		voc		(5)
104		((groans))		↓Yeah (. )something was stuck, right?
105		voc		(2)
106	> floor		> B	↓Yea: :h, something was stuck. (2)
107		((groans))	seesaws B’s feet	(2)
108				Hm?
109			lifts B slightly	(3)
110	> ahead			Now it’s o.k.?

After having changed B’s position, M asks B whether everything all right now and offers an interpretation of the reason for B’s fussiness (digestive problems that might have been solved by changing the position of the child). The following discursive strategies are of interest here: Again, M has a clear sequential expectation of the child to respond in some way: First, in line 102, she adds a tag question (“hm?”) to her statement and leaves a long pause of 5 seconds. Tag questions request confirmation of the statement from the addressee. They function to express uncertainty of the speaker toward one answer and to invite the listener to take a conversational turn (Holmes, 1984; Nofsinger, 1991). We can therefore say that M is somewhat ambivalent whether her interpretation of the situation was correct and her strategy to change B’s position has solved the problem and that she expects the child to give her a hint to confirm her interpretation of the situation. Although it is obvious that M does not expect a “real” answer from her preverbal child, she obviously expects B to give her some kind of communicative feedback. In lines 104 and 106, M ratifies B’s vocalization with “yeah” and a falling intonation and provides an interpretation of

B's vocalization. She thus treats B's vocalization as an intentional communicative act. In lines 108 to 110, M is doing next turn repair work (Schegloff, Jefferson, & Sacks, 1977), that is, she treats the lack of a response as noticeable absence: she produces a tag question followed by a pause indicating that it is B's turn in the conversation. As B does not provide an answer M provides the answer herself, however with a rising intonation at the end thus keying it as a question rather than a statement, which indicates that she is still waiting for B to respond. We can derive from this sequence that M frames the interaction as a mutual endeavor to find a solution to B's expressed distress. She positions herself as someone who is supposed to interpret the child's signals correctly and react appropriately to B's expression of negative affect by adjusting to the child's preferences. She positions the child as someone who may express negative affect and who is invited to cooperate with her in the solution finding process by providing the relevant communicative signals. 375

The interaction continues by B starting to whine again and M attempting to calm the child down (not transcribed here). Finally, M offers a new possible interpretation: 380

	<b>BABY NONVERBAL</b>	<b>BABY VOCAL</b>	<b>MOTHER NONVERBAL</b>	<b>MOTHER VERBAL</b>
164				Are you <u>ti:red</u> ? (2)
165		VOC		That might be it(.) right? (1)
166			wipes B's mouth	↓Yea:h (1 sentence unintelligible)
167		sneezes		(5)
168	wiggles	((CR))		Hmh? (1) (asks researcher to bring her a pacifier)
169				
170				
171	> room	VOC	> B, seesaws B	Maybe you are <u>ti:red</u> , mh? (4)
172	Paddles with arms	VOC ((WN))		
173	wiggles			↑Mmh? (.) Laura? (3)
174		((WN))		>↓ <u>Hey</u> , you< (9)
175		((CR))		
176		((WN))	puts pacifier in B's mouth	
177			> B	°↓Yea:h° (6)
178	> mother/ upwards		caressing B's face	
179				
180				I think you are a bit <u>ti:red</u> (.) Can that be? (10)
181			caresses B's feet	
182	closes eyes			
183	opens eyes			Mhm, I think that's what it <u>was</u>
184	closes eyes			

M brings the child’s physical condition as a possible cause for her discomfort into play in form of a question (line 164). Note that she formulates it as a tentative hypothesis (lines 165, 171, 180–181), leaving pauses and adding tag questions in between by which she suggest that it is the child’s turn in the interaction. In light of this interpretation she gives a pacifier to the child and thus encourages self-regulation. This strategy turns out to be successful in that the child calms down and closes her eyes. M’s final comment, “I think that was it,” signals that she interprets this as confirmation to her interpretation but that she is still not 100% sure. 385

*Interpretative Repertoire 2: “Directive Orientation Toward a Time Schedule”*

Another pattern found in the Muenster group was the use of more directive strategies as reaction to the child’s expression of negative affect. This pattern occurred when the children’s behavior was interpreted by the mothers as desire to be (breast) fed. In these cases, the mothers commonly referred to a time schedule that the children need to stick to. They judged the situation as not critical because their babies were just being fed, thus providing a rationale for not giving in to what the children wanted. The following example serves as illustration of this interactional pattern. 390 395

*Example 02: Muenster16\_t12.* The interaction has been going on for about 6 minutes when B starts to whine while trying to put his hand in his mouth and eventually starts crying:

	<b>BABY NONVERBAL</b>	<b>BABY VOCAL</b>	<b>MOTHER NONVERBAL</b>	<b>MOTHER VERBAL</b>
1		((CR))	> ahead	He :y ! (1)
2	moves arms			Lu ::cas :!
3		((CR))		(2)
4			> B	Lu :::cas :!(1)
5		((CR))	takes B in her arm	↑Ye::s when you get tired you always become a bit <u>nasty</u> , don’t you? ↓Ye::s (1)
6				He:, hey, hey, hey.
7		((WN))	softly prods B’s stomach	
8		((WN))	wipes B’s mouth	Hey, hey, hey. Let me wipe that off, won’t you
9		((CR))		↑Hm:?
10		((CR))		>Hey!<
11	turns head to M’s breast	((WN))	> B	(4)
12		((WN))	swings B from side to side	No: :, you don’t need to drink that, you just have drunken something.
13		((CR))		(1)
14			> B	↑Hm:? Hm: :?
15				(2)
16			puts finger in B’s mouth	Well, take my finger, , hm? °(Are you sucking) the finger a bit, hm?°
17		((CR))	> B	No: :! (.) <No!> (.) <NO!>



In this excerpt M seems to be quite sure about the reason for B’s uneasiness. She immediately relates the child’s behavior to his bad mood due to tiredness. She formulates it as a habit of the child (line 5), thus strengthening her interpretation by indicating that she knows this behavior well. Formulation and prosody of the sentence also indicate that there is nothing severely wrong or to worry about. Using attention-seeking devices (“hey”) she indirectly prompts the child to stop (lines 7–10). When B turns his head toward M’s breast, M takes this up and interprets it as B wanting to be breastfed (lines 11–12). Her reaction in line 12 suggests that there is a certain feeding schedule to stick to. She excludes hunger as a possible reason for B’s crying. She then offers her finger to the child to suck on, which can be seen as way of “substitute” or self-regulation. The child first sucks the finger but then starts crying again and turns to M’s breast, which is quite rigorously denied by the mother (line 17). Overall, this interactional pattern points to a normative orientation toward a time schedule for meal times. Within this interpretative framework, the expression of negative affect is sanctioned as inappropriate by the mother and self-regulation is encouraged.

The Nso Families

In the reactions of the Kikaikelaki mothers to their children’s expression of negative affect, there was less variation and overall fewer instances of situations in which babies started whining or crying. The Nso mothers commonly used discursive devices to exert direct control and positioned the children as having to obey and comply in a hierarchical setting. Rebuking and shaming devices were found to be common reactions to B’s expression of negative affect. The following examples serve as illustration of this prevalent pattern.

*Interpretative Repertoire 3: “Unmitigated Directive Orientation Toward Obedience”*

Although reactions to whining varied in their intention and intonality across dyads, the reactions followed a very similar pattern: vocal distraction and rhythmic animation, expressing disappointment and scolding the child, conveying a social norm, commanding the child vigorously to stop, asking rhetorical questions, and assuring relational accord after the child complied. We find this pattern, for instance, in the following excerpt:

*Example 03: Nso10\_t12.* B is sitting on M’s lap, and M has just started to sing to the child as B starts crying:

	BABY NONVERBAL	BABY VOCAL	MOTHER NONVERBAL	MOTHER VERBAL
1			> B	Mama Happiness?
2		(pants)		(2)
3			sways B from left to right	Be dancing. <i>March on to victory</i>
4		(CR)	looks briefly to camera, then to B, shakes B	a: :y eme:y eme: :y!

5	(CR)	nodding each time with a stern look	(angrily shouting) A BAD CHILD! A BAD CHILD! A BAD CHILD! A BAD CHILD! A BAD CHILD!
6	(stops)		(3)
7			A BAD CHILD!
8	(GR)		↑He: : : : , a puppy? What is it? Are you a puppy?
9	(voc)		
10			O: : : : h, you are not a puppy, have you heard?
11		kisses B	You are not.

The interaction starts by M addressing the child as “Mama happiness” and prompting her to dance while she starts singing (lines 1–2). By this, M is actively structuring what the child is doing and indicates that happiness is a relevant topic to her. When the child starts crying, M reacts with looking at the camera and uttering an expression of surprise (line 4), which may be interpreted as sign of hesitation over how to react to her child’s behavior and points to an inappropriateness of B’s behavior in this situation. Part of the uneasiness can be explained with the performative character of being filmed and the assumption that M wants to display what is considered to be a nice mother–infant interaction according to her cultural belief. This points to a cultural ideal of a well-behaving and obedient child that does not display negative affect. She reacts with a direct and unmitigated shaming message, stressed by quintuple repetition as well as angry voice and mimic (lines 5–7) and a rhetorical question (lines 8–10) implicating that the child is not a puppy (puppies cry but not infants) and therefore there is no reason for her to cry. After B has calmed down, M’s voice softens and she relativizes her previous utterances (line 11) by stating, “you are not,” and kissing the child. By this she ratifies the child’s obedient behavior.

Another example illustrating this pattern is taken from an interaction that has been smoothly going on for almost 10 min when B starts to whine:

*Example 04: Nso22\_t12.*

	<b>BABY NONVERBAL</b>	<b>BABY VOCAL</b>	<b>MOTHER NONVERBAL</b>	<b>MOTHER VERBAL</b>
1		((CR))	moves B up and down	(( rhythmically ))
2			in same rhythm	<i>Little Emy,</i>
3				<i>little Emy,</i>
4				<i>little Emy</i>
5				<i>Let her not cry,</i>
6				<i>let her not cry</i>
7				<i>let her not cry</i>

8				<i>let her not cry</i>
9				<i>let her not cry</i>
10				<i>let her not cry</i>
11	> camera	stops		(.)
12			stops	Why do you want to cry?
13				Did I hit you?
14				(1)
15			approaches and kisses B	Did I hit the baby?

Here, M first appeals to the broader social environment by prompting an anonymous audience to “not let her cry” while she continues bouncing the child up and down. The repetition of the phrase underlines the character of a plea. Crying seems to be something to be avoided, and others seem to be expected to intervene to avoid crying. M goes on and addresses B directly in lines 12 to 15. Again, we find the pattern of a rhetoric questions (lines 12–15) calling into question that there is any reason for crying, and a gesture of endearment (kissing) after the child has complied (line 15). 445

In other interactions when there were only minor signs of uneasiness expressed by the children, mothers would simply react by using a negative imperative such as “No” or “you should not start,” and then continue what they were doing before. 450

Although rebuking and shaming devices were found to be common reactions to B’s expression of negative affect there was an interesting example when M, after a longer period of repeatedly asking B to stop crying, using shaming devices and imperatives, eventually changes the frame of interpretation toward the possibility of the child actually having health problems. 455

The interaction ends with M asking whether “it is bad” and making the suggestion to get some medicine for the child:

	<b>BABY NONVERBAL</b>	<b>BABY VOCAL ( (WN) )</b>	<b>MOTHER NONVERBAL</b>	<b>MOTHER VERBAL</b>
320				Wait! Let me make and go and look for medicine for you, m:h? We will go and look for medicine you, hear?

Of interest, M switches to a more co-operative discourse by using the suggestive formulation “let me,” adding tag questions after her suggestions twice, and by formulating the last sentence using the first-person plural pronoun “we.” There is thus a parallel to the previous examples insofar as M reestablishes relational harmony—in this case, not after the child has complied but after she acknowledges that the reason for B’s crying might be related to some serious problem rather than to “mere” disobedience. 460

We can infer from the described interaction patterns that among the Nso, crying is a socially unacceptable behavior and that the child needs to learn to behave well publicly and suppress his or her negative emotions. However, when the cause for the crying is assumed to be some serious health problem, soothing the child by breastfeeding and taking care of medical provision are 470

appropriate caregiver behaviors. Normally, the mother might have breastfed the child (as some of her comments suggest) but might have felt that she is not supposed to because of the filming instruction).

## DISCUSSION

We have argued that the development of emotions and emotion expression needs to be understood as a sociocultural and inherently dialogical process that is rooted in infants' participation in caregivers' communicative genres and their emotional-volitional tone. From a discursive psychology perspective, however, emotions are not internalizations of interpersonal experiences into an inner psychic *entity*. Rather, they are conceived as habitual participation in specific *communicative practices* that constitute meaning and ultimately the self. It can be assumed that through repeated social engagement with their caregivers, infants gradually acquire an understanding about the meaning of their physical arousals experienced as emotion as well as about the appropriateness of their expression. As we argued earlier, this is not a mere "one-to-one" transmission of meaning. Rather, social communication always consists of both the attempt to reach intersubjectivity and alterity. In early infancy, however, communication with caregivers is highly asymmetric, and infants have no knowledge about the variety of voices. Caregivers' utterances hence can be assumed to have a profound impact on the meaning construction of their infants' experience (Junefelt, 2010).

The aim of this study was primarily to identify the communicative genres used by caregivers to frame infants' expression of negative affect. The Muenster mothers drew on a communicative genre that encourages the expression of negative affect in the context of their children's preferences, but within certain limits that serve to ensure a smooth flow of family life. This communicative genre encourages self-determination as well as self-regulation and subservience to societal restrictions. The Nso mothers drew on a communicative genre that strongly discourages the expression of negative affect, provided that the reason is no severe health issue, thus fostering a sense of community that is concerned primarily with the subservience to hierarchical social structure and not with one's own emotions. Whether and to what degree children actually draw on these communicative genres later on still need to be tested.

We have further argued that emotion socialization is inextricably interwoven with the normative fabric of social life and needs to be understood against the backdrop of the requirements of a given ecological and societal and socioeconomic context. To deepen our understanding of the cultural organization of emotion expression, we have suggested investigating the communicative processes involved in emotion socialization in early infancy and in distinct cultural communities. For this purpose, we compared mother–infant interactions with a focus on mothers' reactions to infants' expression of negative affect. Through fine-grained discourse analysis we identified very distinct patterns of socializing expression of negative affect in the two communities under study. The Muenster mothers use various strategies to facilitate and guide the ultimate realization of compliance: predominantly, they enter into negotiation with the infant treating him or her as a quasi-equal partner. Moreover, they accomplish a blending of solidarity and social control via certain politeness strategies, such as indirectness (e.g., cooperative pronoun use "we") and explaining, thus managing and addressing nonimposition and positive support simultaneously (Brown & Levinson, 1987; Sirota, 2006). Reference is made to the needs and personal preferences of the mother, conveying the message that mutual interests need to be respected. Indirect

control is to a lesser extent also exerted by use of mitigating devices. Notably, this communication style emphasizes diplomacy, reasoning, and interpersonal maneuvering as strategies that work toward securing an alignment of relational perspectives with a minimum of direct, overt confrontation (Sirota, 2006, p. 502). To a lesser degree, they draw on overtly directive strategies. Directive strategies comprise expressing nonacceptance of the child's behavior and making clear that the decision is not negotiable. This pattern is found in conjunction with a strict orientation toward a feeding schedule. A mothers who draws on this last pattern communicates to the child that there is no reason to cry by providing a rationale or by using rhetoric questions. Overall, the Muenster mothers seemed to not see a big problem in letting B cry for a while. Moreover, the infant is encouraged to emotionally regulate himself, for example, by sucking on his own or the mother's finger.

The Nso mothers, on the other hand, demonstrate a strong orientation towards obedience and respect. They use very directive discursive strategies to facilitate immediate compliance, such as commands and shaming messages. They communicate to the child that there is no reason to cry by using rhetoric questions. They do not provide any further explanation after rebuking the child. Reference is made to social norms, conveying the message that crying is socially unaccepted and that social rules need to be respected without discussion. They achieve a balance between social control and emotional relatedness and warmth, however, by conveying relational closeness through signs of endearment once the child has complied. Negative emotions share the property of involving an appraisal that something is wrong (Parrott, 2002), for example, one lacks what one desires or one's well-being is threatened. Socializing children toward not expressing negative emotions can hence be seen as allowing the mother to distinguish whether the child is crying out of "selfish" desires or whether there are severe health problems with the child that would be assumed in case of excessive crying.

Taken together, the findings of this study suggest that emotion expression is socialized through specific discursive practices in which infants co-participate from early on. We conceive of these discursive practices as communicative genres of the specific communities under study that are permeated with the social norms of a larger group. Although we found clear differences between the two groups, it is interesting that there are also similarities: For instance, mothers in both groups use directive strategies, yet to various degrees and within different domains; in the Muenster group, this pattern was mainly found with regard to an existing feeding schedule. This is in line with previous findings that German middle-class families expect their children to learn to comply with the demands of existing regimes of time schedules (LeVine & Norman, 2001, p. 91). In the Nso group, directive strategies were much more prominent and focused on preventing the expression of negative affect in more general terms.

The findings support the claim that communicative genres play a crucial role in the ontogeny of emotions and emotion expression. We can assume that although initially the young infant may still live a common communicative genre with the caregiver, eventually an increasing overlap with other communicative genres and their emotional-volitional tones will creep into the child's life as the range of experiences with other speech genres grows (cf. Cresswell & Teucher, 2011). Nevertheless, the lived experience in early infancy can be assumed to have a fundamental impact on the development of emotion and emotion expression. It is noteworthy in this regard that in the Nso group there were generally fewer instances of infants expressing negative emotions. This may point to the possibility that the Nso infants have already interiorized the normativity of not expressing negative affect to a certain degree at that early age.

By co-constructing interactions with the infants, caregivers socialize children not only into local norms of emotions expression but also into socioculturally specific *subjectivities* (Bamberg, 2001; Rey, 2004). Already Vygotsky in his early work conceived of emotional processes as embedded in the integrative and dynamic systems of subjective sense and stressed the relevance of affective processes in the social genesis of the individual psyche (Rey, 2004; Vygotsky, 1984; Vygotsky, Rieber, & Carton, 1987). To enhance our understanding of the process of emotion socialization therefore ultimately also serves to understand the development of culture-specific pathways of self-development.

A critical point to be discussed in any cultural comparative research is the social meaning of the data assessment situation for the participants and comparability of the findings of the two groups (see also Demuth & Fatigante, in press, for a more detailed discussion). Data assessment always takes place within a certain research arrangement and research agreement established in that particular context between the participants and the research team. In cultural comparative studies, participants might feel compelled to emphasize cultural differences to the other group, especially if the research team belongs to this other group. In the present study, neither of the participant groups was familiar with what is considered to be good child care in the other group. We can therefore assume that mothers will have tried to what they conceived of as good child care in their own cultural framework without necessarily emphasizing specific differences to the other group. The research assistants who were filming the mothers belonged to the same ethnic group and had a comparable social status as the mothers (female German students in the Muenster group, and young Nso women of the same social status in the Kikaikelaki group) to ensure that mothers would feel comfortable and no status-related issues would impact the interaction, especially in the Nso group.

Working with translations inevitably carries limitations with regard to the subtle meanings of an utterance (see Temple & Young, 2004, for detailed discussion). The present study tried to minimize these limitations and to obtain highest possible “conceptual equivalence” by working closely with a native person who is familiar with the semantic net of Lamnso and fluent in English and who also had some background knowledge in sociolinguistics.

One distinction between the two groups was that all Muenster infants were firstborn children. This might have contributed to the fact that some mothers were less sure about interpreting the infants’ signals correctly (as, e.g., in the first example). We still believe, however, that the pattern we found in the Muenster group reflects “Western” ideologies of a good child care as defined for instance in Ainsworth definition of a sensitive mother (Ainsworth, Blehar, Waters, & Wall, 1978), whereas the concept of good infant care according to local ideologies of the Nso is “responsive control” (Yovsi, Kaertner, Keller, & Lohaus, 2009). Future studies that investigate the role of family size and birth order in more detail could shed further light on this.

The aim of this article was to deepen our understanding of the role of communicative genres in the process of socializing emotion expression by looking at caregiver’s discursive practices in interactions with infants. The study could provide evidence of distinct communicative genres in the two groups under study that are in line with the broader cultural ethnotheories found in other studies with these communities. Drawing on phenomenological aspects of communicative genres, the article argued that even preverbal infants are able to participate in communicative genres. Although it is impossible to empirically assess the phenomenological experience of infants, we can assume that it has a crucial impact on emotion development. To make further claims about emotion development it will be necessary to investigate in more detail and on a longitudinal basis

how infants take up the subject-positions they are afforded and to what extent they transfer these discursive practices to other contexts.

605

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610

615

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## APPENDIX

- Explanation of Transcription Conventions Used in the Excerpts (Jefferson, 1984; Ochs, 1979): 765
- ↑↓ Vertical arrows precede marked pitch movement

<u>Underlining</u>	Signals vocal emphasis
CAPITALS	mark speech that is obviously louder than surrounding speech
°I know it,°	“Degree” signs enclose obviously quieter speech
(4)	Numbers in round brackets measure pauses in seconds
(.)	A micropause, audible but too short to measure.
:	Colons show degrees of elongation of the prior sound
> <	“Greater than” and “lesser than” signs enclose speeded-up talk
< >	“Lesser than” and “greater than” signs enclose slower talk.
=	“Equals” signs mark the immediate “latching” of successive talk
hhh	Aspiration (out-breaths); proportionally as for colons
.hhh	Inspiration (in-breaths); proportionally as for colons
((text))	Additional comments
Voc	vocalization
((WH))	whimper
((WN))	whining
((GR))	grunt
((CR))	cry
>	“Greater than” sign indicating direction of gaze