

NORMAL CAREGIVER CHILD CONFLICT

IN RURAL COMMUNITIES

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OUR RESEARCH WORK: CHARACTERIZATION OF DISCORDANT DISCOURSE WITHIN WORKING-CLASS EUROPEAN AMERICAN FAMILIES

Our research work

Social and economic gaps are difficult to narrow. Children of poor or working class parents tend to remain poor or working class while children of middle or upper class parents tend to remain upper or middle class (Lareau, 2011).

What we know and do not know

Research demonstrates variation between the discourse within the home environment of low SES families versus middle SES families (Laureau, 2011; Miller & Sperry, 2012). Little research has focused on interlocutor-child discordant discourse (how children are told “no”).

Our study

How diverse is the discordant discourse within low SES European American families?

Our hypothesis

We expect little linguistic diversity in the ways in which children are told “no” in lower SES European American families.

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Study population

Children 20 to 42 months old from 10 European American families from a working-class community in rural Indiana

Program

**Videotaped naturalistic observations; 30 minute duration
Observations bimonthly for 22 months
Transcription of dialogue
Data set includes 2-3 transcripts for each of 10 children**

Analysis

**Conversational analysis (Duranti, 2007)
Coded discordant speech acts (Searle, 1969)
Calculated the rate per hour and total frequency of token speech acts.**

Approach & Method

**Qualitative research (Patton, 2002)
Direct observation
Grounded theory (Strauss & Corbin, 1990)**

PARTICIPANTS

Child*	Age of Sample (in months)											
Bridget	20	22	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	40	---
Bryan	---	22	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	42
Charlotte	---	22	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	42
Christy	---	---	24	---	---	30	---	---	---	---	---	---
Derek	20	---	24	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	42
Dexter	20	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	40	---
Eric	20	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	42
James	---	---	24	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	42
Jessica	20	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	40	---
Kristen	---	---	24	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	40	---

*Identified by pseudonyms



CODES

WAYS OF SAYING “NO”

OR	Order	SA	Sarcasm
EX	Explanation	PT	Protest
PH	Prohibit	PV	Provocation
UR	Urge	PM	Promise
CO	Correction	TH	Threat
CR	Criticism	TP	Third Party Criticism
RR	Rapid Request	WA	Warning
DC	Denial/Contradiction	IN	Interruption
TQ	Teaching Question	SH	Shame

EXAMPLES OF VERBAL STRATEGIES FOR SAYING “NO”

Category of “No”	Example
Order	Caitlyn (22 mos) is trying to put on her own sock and has given up. Grandmom: <i>Put on your sock.</i>
Prohibition	Dalton (20 mos) is fussing about which book to read. M: <i>Quit.</i>
Explanation	Robbie (34 mos) is crying because Dad has left. M: Honey, <i>Daddy’s just taking out trash.</i>
Urge	Jaymie (28 mos) and Mom are outside when Mom notices a bug on Jaymie’s shirt. M: <i>Come here.</i>
Promise	Sarah (26 mos) is crying because she wants Mom to sit in a particular lawn chair on the porch that is broken. M: It’s okay. <i>Daddy will straighten it up.</i>

RESULTS

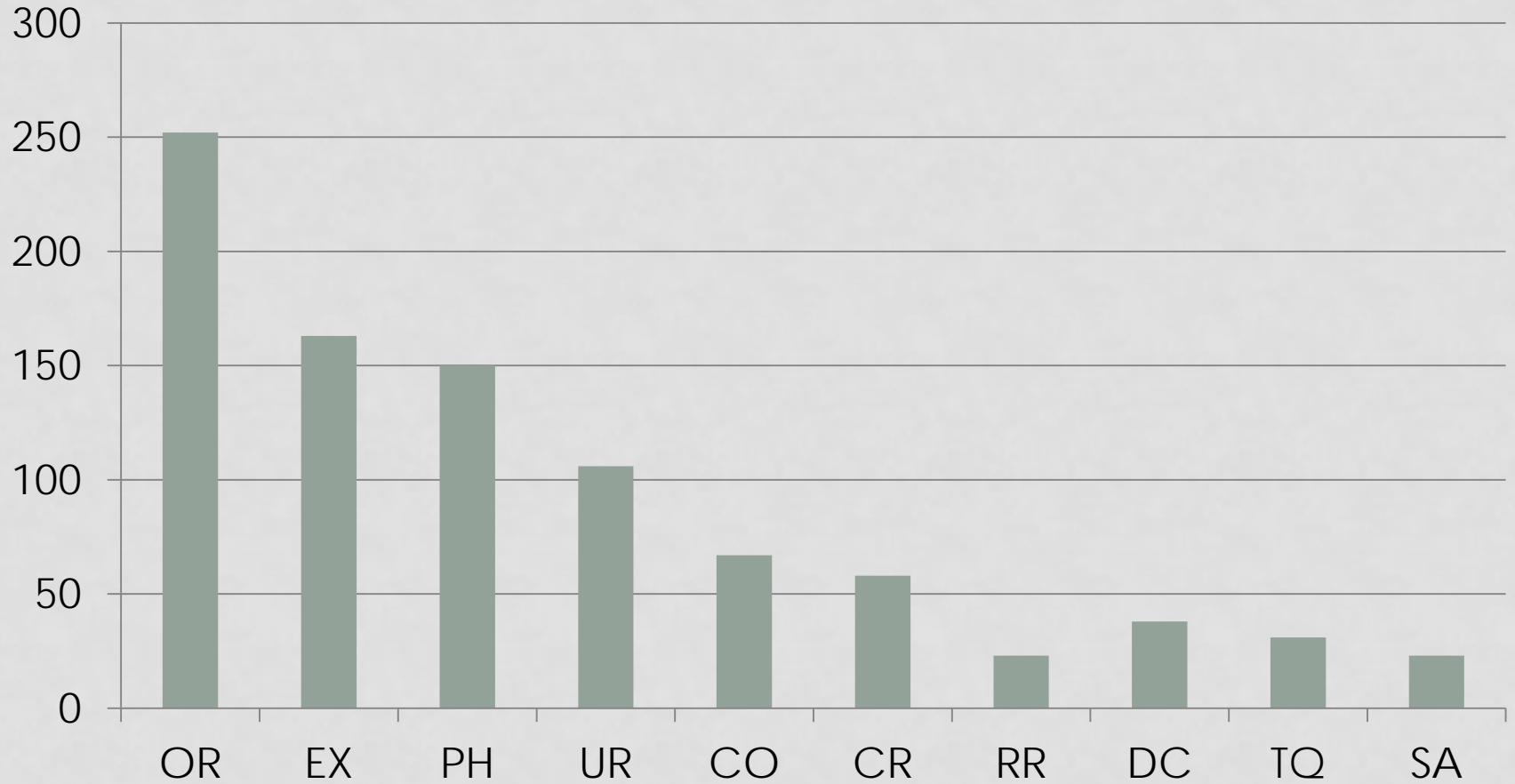
	OR	EX	PH	UR	CO	CR	RR	DC	TQ
Rate Per Hour	18	12	11	8	5	4	2	3	3
Frequency	252	163	150	106	67	58	23	38	31
	SA	PT	PV	PM	TH	TP	WA	IN	SH
Rate Per Hour	2	2	1	1	1	1	2	1	1
Frequency	23	21	14	13	9	7	17	2	3



MOST FREQUENT TOKEN TYPES

	OR Order	EX Explanation	PH Prohibit	UR Urge	CO Correction
Rate Per Hour	18	12	11	8	5
Frequency of Tokens	252	163	150	106	67

FREQUENCY OF TOKEN TYPES



CROSS-CULTURAL COMPARISON

Alabama (over 22 hours)

	UR Urge	OR Order	PR Prohibit	RR Rapid Request	CR Criticism
Rate per Hour	47	47	27	24	23

Indiana (over 14.5 hours)

	OR Order	EX Explanation	PH Prohibit	UR Urge	CO Correction
Rate per Hour	18	12	11	8	5



CONCLUSION

Based on previous research (Lareau, 2011), we expected little linguistic diversity in the ways in children are told “no” in lower SES European American families.

However, these results indicate a wide variety in the types of discordant discourse present in the home environments of the low SES children observed in this study.

18 types of discordant discourse were identified in the coded transcripts of the small sample set described today, indicating diversity in child-interlocutor discordant discourse.



NEXT STEPS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

- Conduct the same research with middle class children
- Expand the study to include school-aged children
- Study discordant discourse in classroom settings versus home settings for low and middle SES children

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