

Contributions of Caregiver Interaction to Infant Attention

Many studies have been conducted to pinpoint how children learn language. Research shows the way adults communicate with children can be classified into two main categories: *Adult Directed Speech* (ADS), defined as the usual way adults talk to each other, and *Infant Directed speech* (IDS) defined as the way adults modify the acoustic features of their speech when talking and interacting with infants by lowering their tempo, increasing their overall pitch and variability in pitch, adding redundancy to their speech, and using amplified vowels (Schachner & Hannon, 2011). Past research focused on the maternal use of IDS, the current study however seek to investigate the differences in maternal and paternal use of IDS and to determine if there is relationship between infant attention and the use of IDS (Kulh, 2004; Hirsh-Pasek & Burchinal, 2006; Fisher & Tokura, 1996). We hypothesized that 1) the acoustic properties of IDS will be influenced by the amount of parental involvement in caregiving activities such as feeding, diaper changes, bathing, not necessarily by gender of the parent, and that 2) infants will pay more attention to parents who use more exaggerated IDS. Parent-infant interactions were video recorded during a toy play session at the family's home (n=31). The current study conducted an acoustic analysis of the parents' speech to look for indications of IDS. The videos are being coded for evidence of infant attention to parental speech. A statistical analysis is being conducted to investigate the relationship between the amount of attention an infant paid to his/her parent and the acoustic characteristics of the parent's speech. Concurrent with prior research, we expect to further demonstrate how caregivers interaction can contribute to infant language development.