

Title: Behavioral Approach and Fear Moderates the Relationship between Insensitive and Intrusive Parenting on Early Language Development

Early language development has been implicated in a variety of other critical developmental outcomes making it important to understand contributors to the emergence of early language. Although still understudied, there is increasing recognition that children's temperament and early parenting may be important factors in the emergence of early language. To add to this growing body of work, in the current investigation, two aspects of temperament, infant fearfulness, underpinned by the behavioral inhibition system, and approach, underpinned by the behavioral activation system (Schwartz et al., 1999), were examined in relation to language when children were 14 months of age. In addition, mother's tendency to employ intrusive/insensitive parenting behaviors during play was examined as a contributor to child language, and was also examined in relation to child language in interaction with child behavioral inhibition and behavioral approach. The behavioral inhibition system (BIS) is the biopsychological system responsible for influencing an individual to withdraw from novel stimuli or situations. Based on prior work, it was expected that fear negatively, and approach positively associated with language. It also was expected that intrusive/insensitive parenting would be negatively related with child language. Although exploratory in nature, it was tentatively anticipated that stronger relations between intrusive/insensitive parenting and language would be observed for children high in fear, and high in approach (i.e., that intrusive/insensitive parenting would inhibit language in high approach children).

Mother-child dyads ( $n = 150$ ; 23.6% at or below poverty line) participated. At 12 months, mothers completed the Revised Infant Behavioral Questionnaire (IBQ-R; Gartstein & Rothbart, 2003). Two IBQ-R subscales, fear and approach, were used to assess these temperament attributes in the current study. Mothers were also observed interacting with the infants during a free play task during which no toys were provided. Intrusive/insensitive maternal parenting characteristics were coded using the Parent-Child Early Relational Assessment (Clark, 1985) At 14 months of age, infants were given the expressive and receptive language components of the Bayley Scales of Infant and Toddler Development, Third Edition (2006). Analyses were performed considering overall, receptive and expressive language scores as outcomes.

Unexpectedly, none of the anticipated direct relations were significant. However, interactions between infant approach and intrusive/insensitive parenting were observed for total language ( $p = .032$ ), receptive language ( $p = .018$ ), and expressive language ( $p = .061$ ). Across all three outcomes, intrusive/insensitive parenting was negative associated with language when children were high in approach (See figures), suggesting that approach only benefits children's language development under more optimal parenting conditions. Finally, for receptive language only, a trend-level ( $p = .094$ ) interaction between infant fear and intrusive/insensitive parenting was observed. As expected, for those children high in fear, there was a negative relation between intrusive/insensitive parenting and children's receptive language.

These findings point to the importance of considering children's temperament, and specifically approach- and inhibition-based systems, in interaction with contextual factors (e.g., parenting) for elucidating how these factors contribute to the emergence of early language. Additional implications will be discussed.