



Language acquisition in a bodily-tactile modality

A thesis proposal

1. Research Questions:

- In what ways can the strategies/elements in child directed speech be explained in relation to a tactile/bodily modality?*
- Which strategies/elements from child directed speech are adapted to a tactile/bodily modality and used as a contribution from the seeing/hearing partner?*

2. Background

A person with congenital deafblindness perceive and make sense of the world from a bodily/tactile perspective, and the communication partner is used to perceive the world from a seeing/hearing perspective. This creates a mismatch affecting their relation and shared communication and as a consequence of that the language development is affected. This means that the communication partner must be willing and able to adjust the language input into a modality which could be perceived by the person with congenital deafblindness.

In the past years there has been a focus on how to develop early social interaction in a bodily-tactile modality resulting in important known strategies. Yet, there are few people with congenital deafblindness who develops a tactile language leaving the social environment with the question of why? This thesis proposal originates from this question, *searching for a way to get additional knowledge of how to describe in what way the communication partner exposes a cultural language to the individual with congenital deafblindness in a bodily/tactile modality*

So how could we get this additional knowledge and describe strategies for language acquisition in a bodily-tactile modality? As known children develop language in social interaction with their primary caretaker. The parents, or other persons, is assisting the child in the learning process, both to be part of the linguistic culture but also to become fully fledged users of linguistic units. One way of assisting the child in the learning process is to adjust the language use to the child, so-called child directed speech (CDS). *The aim in this thesis is therefore to use parameters from CDS, as a focused part of language acquisition in general, and translate these parameters to a bodily-tactile modality.*



3. What is child directed speech?

Child directed speech, also known as baby talk or motherese, is defined as a special language style many adults use in addressing children. Some of the common features in child directed speech are:

- using a higher pitch
- slower rate of speech
- repetitions
- echoing the child's invented words
- provide both question and answers
- expansion of the child's utterances

The contribution of child directed speech is helping the child to identify conversational turns, identifying linguistic units and how to map your own ideas onto language. Child directed speech is therefore assisting the child in the process of learning a language.



4. Method

The method for this thesis is a casestudy involving a youth with congenital deafblindness and his teacher and caregivers.

Video will be used to record their interaction and communication. The filmsequences will be analysed focusing on the partner's contribution in their communication, providing a cultural language in a bodily-tactile modality. The analysis will address the research question trying to describe how the strategies in child directed speech could be explained in a bodily-tactile modality, and which parameters the teacher/caregivers are using or not.

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