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**Intersubjectivity and supportiveness in children's  
conversations with each other in pre-school settings.**

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# Conversational Acts

- Directives
- Informatives
- Affectives

Austin, J. L. (1962) How to do things with words.

Searle, J. R. (1969) Speech Acts. An essay in the philosophy of language.

# interpersonal and cognitive processes

- engagement
- attunement
- sympathetic awareness
- empathy
- perspective-taking
- memory
- Concepts

Trevarthen and Marwick (1986)

Trevarthen and Marwick (1982) HMarwick 2015

# interpersonal and cognitive processes

- presupposition (on basis of shared and personal experience)
- inference (on basis of perspective-taking, presuppositions, empathy and world knowledge)
- plausibility evaluation (on basis of world knowledge, presuppositions and experience)
- Creation/co-creation of meaning

Levinson (2000)

Buckley (2003)

# Propositional content parameters

Grice (1975) conversational assumptions:

- Relevance
- Quantity
- Quality
- Clarity

# Relationship and Contextual parameters

- familiarity of the participant
- group membership (including age and gender)
- Shared experience
- formality of the situation
- participant roles

Goffman (1989)

## ‘Interpersonal positioning’ (Marwick, 2015) in conversation

- Expression of how you are feeling or positioning yourself emotionally in relation to the other person/s in the conversation and interaction.
- ‘affective’ purpose and emotional ‘force’ of language
- E.g. Surprise, amuse, re-assure, comfort, flatter, perplex, confuse, disagree, mock, insult

# Supportive and unsupportive interpersonal positioning

- being ‘supportive’ or ‘unsupportive’ towards the other person
- interpersonal positioning and concordant or discordant intersubjectivity (Marwick and Minnis, 2006)
- Language enables complex and intentional expression of interpersonal positioning



# Pre-school settings

- Early conversations
- Adult-child conversations
- Scaffolding language and cognitive development through conversation

Anghileri (2006); Tizard and Hughes (2002)

# Development of meaning and understanding through intersubjective conversations

- Feedback role of language and conversational assumptions
- Understanding child's initiative and enquiry
- Meeting child's conceptual understanding
- Attuning to shared experience
- Scaffolding further conceptual development

Singer et al. (2014)

# Children's conversations

- Children's thinking and reasoning in communicative utterances
- cognitive, perspective taking, and conceptual development of children
- narrative coherence, imaginative content, and word use

Faulkner and Coates (2011)

# Interpersonal positioning in children's conversations

- Child-child conversations
- Emotional force
- Supportiveness, non-supportiveness

Example of children's conversation extract – Student/Early Years Practitioner Observation, University of Strathclyde, 2015

3 girls: 3y 5m (A); 3y 11m (B), 4y 2m (C), plus adult, in snack room:

- A (taking a bite from her pancake) "Look, What does this look like?"
- B- (looks up and says nothing).
- A - "I've made a boat, look, it's like a boat".
- B - "it's a boat A, that's good. (B laughs).
- A - (looks angry) "it's not a boat silly, it's a monkey!"
- B - (looks perplexed) "you said it was a boat?".
- A- "No, it's a monkey!".

- C - (looks up) "it's a pancake!".
- A - "you are just silly, it's a monkey!".
- C - "ok then, it's a boat?".
- A - "I already told you it was a monkey, a monkey is an animal! Is a boat an animal? No!".
- C - (looking confused) "ok, it's a monkey in a boat".
- A - "you are just boring me now, I already told you it's not a boat".

Student/EY Practitioner Observation, University of Strathclyde, 2015

- (At this point C leaves the group to go to another room. B also stands to get up and move away but A looks at her and asks her to sit down. B, at this point, looks towards adult. Adult says that B can go and play, and when A has finished eating she can come and find her friend).
- A - (looks at adult, then back at B). "Ok then B, you can go and play but when I come to find you we won't be playing at princesses".
- B sits down and waits for A to finish her snack.

Student/EY Practitioner Observation, University of Strathclyde, 2015

# Impact of interpersonal positioning in early conversation

- **Intersubjective experience**
- **Being supported or not supported**
- **belonging**
- **Emotional well-being**
- **Implications for early years settings**

Marwick et al. (2013)



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