

# Non-present talk and narrative ability in young Dutch children

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# Narratives in children

- *Definition of narrative:*
  - extended discourse form;
  - contains a description of at least 2 different but related events outside the here-and-now (*Ninio & Snow, 1996*)
- *Developmental pattern:*
  - later development (*Peterson & McCabe ,1983*)
  - scaffolding from adult necessary  
(*Roelofs, 1998; Minami 2001*)
  - elicited narratives focus of research (*Frog-story*)

# Non-present talk

- *Non-present talk (NPT)*
  - talking outside-the-here-and-now
  - a prerequisite for narrative
  - is offered in input
  - predictor of narrative skills at age 5 on basis of elicited narratives (*Uccelli et al. 1998*)

***BUT how does NPT develop in spontaneous interaction?***

***Development of NPT up to age 5 not yet well described.***

# Research project:

## *Precursors of narrative ability*

- longitudinal study 0 – 7;0 years
- three children in two families
- at least 60 minutes recording
- every 3 months
- spontaneous interaction
- *What are the precursors?*
- *The role of parental strategies?*
- *Predictive relationship with narrative ability age 7;0?*

## METHOD

# Research questions today

1. Development of NPT in parent-child interaction (frequency)?
2. Roles of adult / child in NPT?
3. Role of Scaffolding?

# METHOD

## Data

- Recordings at 1;9 – 2;9 – 3;9
- 60-118 minutes spontaneous interaction
- Sequences containing NPT analysed

## Categories of NPT

### (1) Past based on distance in time

*a. minutes-hours*

*b. days- week*

*c. weeks –months*

*d. > 6 months*

### (2) Future based on distance in time

*a. next few minutes- hours*

*b. next days-week*

*c. next weeks-months*

*d. > 6 months*

### (3) Not past- not future, but elsewhere

### (4) Fantasy: symbolic play, role playing, story (re)telling

# RESULTS

## 1. Frequency of NPT (% of time) (Adult and child together)

	1;9	2;9	3;9
1. Past	5.5	7.9	8.9
2. Future	1.8	1.4	3.4
3. Elsewh.	4.6	2.5	0.6
4. Fantasy	0.0	15.8	4.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>11.9</b>	<b>27.6</b>	<b>16.9</b>



# 1. Development of NPT

- **Total:** general increase over time, but fantasy causes inversed U-curve
- **Category Past** increases steadily.
  - starts near-the-present (1.a) at 1;9
  - longer ago (> 6 months, 1.d) only at 3;9
- **Category Future** increases steadily.
  - near-the-present (2.a) at 1;9
  - further away (2.d) starts at 3;9
- **Elsewhere** declines – bridge form?
- **Fantasy Talk:** not present at 1;9, dominant at 2;9 but decreases at 3;9. Reason?

## 2. Roles child / adult NPT

Analysis only at 1;9

Non-verbal utterances counted with verbal utterances

**Result:** adult produces twice as many utterances as child per category

## 3. Scaffolding

- At 1;9 parents offer NPT and start asking about past events, accepting minimal en non-verbal responses
- At 1;9 children already take some initiative: ask about non-present people and objects
- Children take more initiative in Fantasy with less scaffolding.
- At 3;9 children start to produce narratives with almost no scaffolding.

# VIDEO-EXAMPLES

Stijn 1;9

non-present talk *elsewhere*

# VIDEO-EXAMPLES

Stijn 3;9

*scaffolded narrative*

*Willem van Oranje*

# Conclusions

- NPT increases over time.
- NPT is present at 1;9 but limited to the close past or future, or in the category Elsewhere.
- NPT develops to times further away from present by 3;9.
- Talking about the past or future is heavily scaffolded by parents.
- Fantasy talk (role playing) is less scaffolded and more child-initiated.

# References

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