

The multimodal nature of triadic interactions in the first year: a home-based approach

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ABSTRACT

Developmental psychology has emphasized the importance of early adult-infant interactions in fostering social-communicative skills, such as referential communication and language (Moll et al., 2021; Terrace et al., 2022). However, key aspects, such as the influence of materiality and multimodality in these encounters, remain largely unexplored. Moreover, most studies focus on the emergence of early linguistic forms (Yang et al., 2024), leaving open the question of how preverbal communicative skills develop in multimodal interactions with adults (Alessandroni, 2023; Carpendale et al., 2021; Moreno-Núñez et al., 2017).

This doctoral thesis addresses these gaps through three studies. The first is a systematic review of theoretical and empirical perspectives on early triadic interactions (adult-object-infant). The second empirically investigates the use of musical components in early interactions. Finally, the third study longitudinally analyzes communicative dynamics in the home context during the first year of life.

Preliminary findings suggest that early communication operates as a dynamic, multimodal, and reciprocal system, underlining the importance of studying it in naturalistic contexts (Cárdenas et al., 2020; Rossmannith et al., 2014). Additionally, these findings illustrate how such interactions enrich parental strategies, fostering infants' communicative development, agency, and effective social participation. This research could contribute to the design of early childhood care initiatives and opens avenues for integrating innovative tools to study interactive dynamics during the first years of life.

Keywords: Early interactions; Multimodality; Referential communication; Early development.