

Tuning into interaction: from “getting into synch” to co-constructing intersubjectivity

Iris Nomikou¹

Centre for Interaction, Development and Diversity, University of Portsmouth, Portsmouth, United Kingdom

*Corresponding Author E-mail: iris.nomikou@port.ac.uk

ABSTRACT

In the first months of life infants become active participants in interactions, able to co-create actions with their caregivers. Within these engagements they develop as selves in relation to others and become participants of culturally organised social interaction, capable of co-constructing intersubjective experiences. Yet early communicative development is often conceptualised as a series of skills which are displayed by infants at different time points, and interaction is treated as a source of input into the developing infant and a predictor of these skills. In this talk I will discuss early communicative development as being guided by processes not residing *within the infant*, but by processes constructed *within interaction*. Most importantly, interaction here is not just the context in which development takes place but a part of the developmental process itself. Using a mixed-methods approach combining both detailed qualitative analyses of individual cases as well as global dynamic measures of coupling in various modalities, I will draw from different naturalistic longitudinal video corpora of caregiver-infant interactions in the first months of infants' life and present findings on the ways in which caregivers and infants actively organise meaning together within mundane interactions. I use these findings to reflect on the ways in which a “interaction as a developmental process” approach might influence how we view and operationalise development and how we design our research.

Keywords: early communicative development; infant–caregiver interaction; intersubjectivity; co-constructed meaning