

Pragmatics and language socialization in adult-child interactions

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This presentation discusses ways in which children's pragmatic development and language socialization feature in children's interactions with educators and with peers in early childhood educational contexts. According to language socialization perspective, language acquisition is closely linked to language use, and socialization into culture. Development of specific linguistic and interactional repertoires is scaffolded through children's participation in everyday interactional practices. Empirical examples discussed involve children's turn-taking, language play, and narratives, examined by using detailed analysis of video-recorded naturally occurring social interactions. In Swedish preschools, educators scaffold children's early narrations during recurrent peer conflict management. They solicit children's active discursive participation during conflict mediation and model extended stretches of discourse, requesting explanations, explication of causal relations, and use of emotion labels and verbs. In addition, these discursive practices foster children's perspective taking. Children's metalingual and metapragmatic awareness is demonstrated in their spontaneous language play in peer group talk. Young children's language play can be seen as collaborative exploitation and exploration of linguistic and pragmatic features, and collaborative language creativity, which is also linked to children's language development (Cekaite et al., 2014). Differences between adults' and peer group contribution to children's development of discursive skills are discussed.