

Joint Engagement and Vocabulary Development: Re-defining data collection, categorization and analysis

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This paper analyses the frequency distribution of engagement levels, joint attention activities, and their correlations to vocabulary development in different cultures. Information was collected *observationally* from 18 subjects in rural and urban Mozambican communities, averaging 13-months at commencement. Each family was observed twice, 18 weeks apart, with a third observation planned in 2011.

In analysis, two engagement levels were added to those of previous studies, creating: (i) *Unengaged*; (ii) *Onlooking*; (iii) *Object Interaction* (OI); (iv) *Person Interaction* (PI); (v) ***Shared Attention*** (SA) – an active version of *Onlooking* where a partner is interacting with an object/activity; (vi) *Passive Joint Attention* (PJA) – where subject and partner jointly attend to an object, but the subject does not attend to the partner; (vii) *Coordinated Joint Attention* (CJA) – where the subject and partner both attend to an object, each other, and complete an intention-goal sequence; (viii) ***Shared Joint Attention*** (SJA), which is similar to CJA, though lacks a completed intention-goal sequence.

In the rural data, both PJA and CJA have a significant positive correlation ($p < 0.05$) to word-**understanding**, as does the sum of all three types of joint attention. The urban data, on the other hand, shows that PI exhibits a stronger positive correlation to word-**production**, as does the sum of all engagement levels involving partners. The differences between the two cultural groups demonstrate that joint attention is not necessarily a direct predictor of vocabulary development. Possibly, these differences are instead related to family-size and socio-cultural structures in each group.