

Communication and interactive behaviour of Portuguese female educator and male educator in Tandem Standardised Procedure

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Paper presented at the EECERA SIG Gender Balance research conference

Diversities: New perspectives on gender balance research in ECEC

Monday, 7.9.2015, Barcelona/Spain

Background:

Although most workers and educators (preschool teachers) in early childhood education (ECE) are women, previous research indicates that male educators bring novelty to daily pedagogical practices and ECE routines (e.g., Rohrmann, 2009).

In a pioneer research the German Tandem team (Brandes, Andrä Wenke Röseler & Schneider-Andrich 2015) found that female ECE workers were more likely to produce subjects that represent persons or figures whereas male ECE workers produced more objects. Another gender difference found in that study, is that man were more likely to use tools than materials. Additionally, ECE workers of both genders behave differently toward boys and girls. For example, female ECE workers tend to use more fantasies with girls and to speak in objectively-concretely manner with boys. Thus, this previous study indicates that educators gender affects their behaviour and interaction with children.

Aims of the Present Study:

Following the original Tandem study, we aimed to compare the interactive behaviour and verbal communication of Portuguese female and male educators.

Furthermore, we investigated the types of products manufactured, the product authorship, the educators interactive behaviour regarding empathy, ability to challenge the child, dialogical interaction, communication contends and cooperativity with child. The adult communicative behaviours was described micro-analytic taking including instructions, questions, requests, positive feedback, etc.

Method:

Tandem Standardised Procedure: is a videotaped observation of an interaction between an adult and child working together to produce an object.

In this study participated 20 dyads of male educator-children and 22 dyads of female educator-children. Children were about 3 years old.

Two suitcases are offered to each dyad: one with materials and another with tools.

Time frame of 15 minutes.

Main Results:

With regard to the interactive behavior of educators, findings barely indicate gender differences between male and female educators. Nevertheless, in this study educators of both genders had communicated differently with children. We speculate that how educators communicate expressed their interactive goals (oriented direct teaching or task-oriented/indirect teaching)

Our results are considerably different from those found in Germany. We speculate that there is a cultural effect on gender issues.

The Portuguese team felt that the scales organized by German Tandem team were quite complete and took in consideration the main aspects of educators interactive behaviour, and their application generated an important debate between coders.

Study limitations:

A larger sample is needed to further results generalization.

Throughout the scoring process observers were getting more "habituated" in their evaluation and it was necessary to constantly reflect on scoring process and on the interpretation given by each observer to each the item.

This scoring process is very time consuming and requires an enormous availability from coders. Nonetheless, an important reflection was brought out about educators and children behaviors (*the shared inter-subjectivity*).

Future research:

We are trying to describe child behavior in order to generate a system that describes child interactive behaviour as well as dyadic interchange like engagement, reciprocity and synchrony.

Additional samples, with mothers and fathers were collected and results are being compared.