

## Sequential Analysis of One-off Interactions: The Influence of Scaffolding and Interactive Modalities on the Utilisation of Complex Syntax by Children Aged 3-6

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### Abstract

The objective of this study is to examine the impact of scaffolding and interactive modalities on the utilisation of complex syntax among children aged 3-6 in one-off interactions, employing sequential analysis. Numerous studies have employed sequential analyses to delineate the processes involved in interactions within informed, albeit instructional, contexts. For instance, Justice et al. (2002) demonstrated that following parental directives, requests elicited greater responses compared to comments and were more conducive to the development of code-related skills. Within educational settings, investigations have indicated that interrogatives promote increased mean utterance length (Deshmukh et al., 2019). Concerning later developmental stages, the interactive modalities (assertions vs. questions) and scaffolding strategies (recasts vs. offers) employed by adults in a language stimulation program have been shown to impact the complexity and comprehensiveness of children's utterances (Saulpic et al., submitted). Nonetheless, scant attention has been given to whether these effects manifest in sporadic interactions between an adult and a child with varying degrees of familiarity.

The data utilised stem from the TCOF project, gathered by students from diverse academic backgrounds engaging with unfamiliar children under varied support conditions. Forty-eight dyads were enlisted for the study, evenly distributed across three age cohorts comprising 16 children each: ages 3-4, 4-5, and 5-6. Two scaffolding modalities were scrutinised: recasts and offers, alongside two language-promoting practices: requests and comments. Sequential analysis was employed to ascertain their influence on the syntactic structure of children's utterances.

Our findings reveal that adults employ fewer recasts and more questions compared to observations within instructional settings. Questions tend to stimulate the production of simplistic and incomplete constructions, while recasts exhibit minimal to negligible impact on the syntactic structure of children's utterances. In conclusion, the influence of recasts on the utilisation of complex and comprehensive syntax is contingent upon the interaction context, whereas questions exert a consistent effect irrespective of the study context.

### References:

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