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Taking the Floor: a conversation analysis of teenage girls with ASC

13/06/17 Critical Autism Studies Conference
Rosie Murray - “Taking the Floor: a conversation analysis of teenage girls with ASC”

Girls with ASC
- Lower prevalence in females (Fombonne, 2009).
- Later diagnosis (Simone, 2010)
- 'Research Orphans' (Bazelon, 2007)
- 'Misdiagnosed and Misunderstood' (Nichols, 2009).
Proposed Gender Differences

- ‘Masking’ of ASC symptoms.
- Relatively strong social skills:
  - Pretend Play (Attwood, 2013)
  - Communication (Nichols, 2009)
  - Social imitation (Hsiao, 2013)
- Friendship quality (Head, 2014)
- Behavioural problems (Williams et al, 2012)

Internalising

  - Externalising e.g. hyperactivity and conduct problems
  - Internalising e.g. anxiety and depression

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- Higher rates of social anxiety generally (Kuusiko, 2008)
- High rates of bullying associated with diagnosis (IAN, 2012)
- Higher rates of social isolation among girls with ASC (Solomon, 2012)
Adolescence as a girl with ASC

- Friendship quality changes in adolescence (Laursen and Hartup, 2002)
- Gender differences occur: ‘talking’ vs ‘doing’ (Nichols, 2009)
- Similar gender differences found in teenagers with ASC (Kuo, 2013)
- Differences in aggression: relational aggression (Gridland, 2014)
- Nonetheless, desire for and understanding of friendships (Foggo and Webster, 2016)

Positive Psychology

- Wellbeing and the deficit-led models
- ‘deficits in social communication’.
- Hope, Optimism and ASC (Zager, 2013)
- Changing the focus, developing positive qualities rather than ameliorating deficits.
**Conversation Analysis**

“(...) take singular sequences of conversation and tear them apart in such a way as to find rules [...] that can be used to generate the orderly features we find in conversations” (Sacks, 1984)

- Naturalistic Data
- NOT a statement about reality

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**Sophie + Jade**

- 2 teenage girls with ASC.
- Video and voice recording: 38 minutes
- Sophie ‘takes the lead’
- **HOW?**
  - 1. Story pre-telling
  - 2. Topic drifts
  - 3. Interactional scaffolding
- Sometimes successful
  - Bidirectional
  - Sequentially progressive
- Sometimes not successful

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**Use in ASC**

**Interactional Scaffolding**

**Topic Drifts**

**Story-telling (pre-telling)**
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Interactional Scaffolding

924  S  wh-which zipper've you been on - where y-where your--don't fall sit down.
925  J  "um" () I don't know how I describe it'
926  ()
927  S  "but basically "um" I was--impressed "an then" #ah# I got "slipped" () 'slipped?'
928  J  (were you) at go up.
929  S  (what) -
930  J  cause go up have zippers as well as pants -
931  S  (oh)
932  J  (0.5)
933  S  I went 'under' wood .
934  S  ()
935  J  (0.5)
936  S  oh that's near SHEERWOOD forest.
937  (0.5)

Topic Drifts

80  J  [I've al]ways wanted to go "like" it's my dream--
81  S  = "I want to go =
82  J  = "I haven't been aligned I know I was "like" but () and
83  J  that's when we went to disneyland PARIS, =
84  J  = "And I really want to go abroad again () but I can't
85  (1.0)
86  J  because I've a dog and no one can look after my dog =
87  J  = "and my dog needs to go to the kennels, "so I
88  J  don't know."
89  (0.5)
90  J  unless someone stays at home with my dog and I can go abroad--'
91  J  ()
92  J  I'll go abroad again I have to get my passport updated = and
93  J  go get "my passport" "my picture" "redraw = "(looks at J)
94  S  ()
95  J  = "yes it"
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**Story-telling (pre-telling)**

- Conversational success is there!
- Should not make assumptions about the social worlds of teenage girls with ASC

**Q & A**