Handling power-asymmetry in interactions with infants

A comparative socio-cultural perspective

Demuth, Carolin

Published in:
Interaction Studies

DOI (link to publication from Publisher):
10.1075/is.14.2.04dem

Publication date:
2013

Document Version
Early version, also known as pre-print

Note to the Author:
Please confirm the heading levels

Handling power-asymmetry in interactions with infants

A comparative socio-cultural perspective

Carolin Demuth
University of Osnabrück, Germany

Interaction between adults and infants by nature constitutes a strong power-asymmetry relationship. Based on the assumption that communicative practices with infants are inseparably intertwined with broader cultural ideologies of good child care, this paper will contrast how parents in two distinct socio-cultural communities deal with power asymmetry in interactions with 3-months old infants. The study consists of a microanalysis of videotaped free play mother-infant interactions from 20 middle class families in Muenster, Germany and 20 traditional farming Nso families in Kikaikelaki, Cameroon. Analysis followed a discursive psychology approach. The focus of analysis is on how mothers handle and negotiate power-distance in these interactions and what discursive strategies they draw on. Mothers in both groups used various forms of directives and control strategies. The Muenster mothers, however, mainly used mitigated directives that can be seen as strategies to reduce the competence gap between mother and child, while the Nso mothers mainly used upgraded directives to stress the hierarchical discrepancy between mother and child. The different strategies are discussed in light of the prevailing broader cultural ideologies and the normative orientations that they reflect. Finally, the findings are discussed with regard to possible developmental consequences of these distinct cultural practices for the child.

Keywords: power-asymmetry; mother-infant interaction; discursive psychology; culture; Nso farmers; Muenster middle class families

Interaction between adults and infants by nature constitutes a strong power-asymmetry relationship. The physical difference between caregiver and infant makes interactions highly asymmetric. Young infants depend on others for their care and eprotection. They are also dependent on the knowledge and expertise of adults who provide them with meaning of their experience in every

Interaction Studies 14:2 (2013), **212–239**. DOI 10.1075/is.14.2.04dem
ISSN 1572–0373/E-ISSN 1572–0381

day life. Social power-asymmetry hence appears to be an inherent feature of caregiver-child interactions, particularly in young infancy. Caregivers are not only in a position of caring and nurturing but also inevitably in a position of social power and authority (French & Raven 1959).

Within the family, parents are in a position to control and influence their children to adhere to values and principles of proper behavior deemed appropriate for the family as well as for the specific society they live in. In more positive terms, parents are in a position of responsibility to guide and direct their children and to provide them with what they need in order to become successful members of a society.

In the present paper, we argue that the way this power asymmetry is conceived of by parents and dealt with in raising their children, is not only inherently culturally organized by local theories of child-care but also locally co-constructed in situated social interaction. For this purpose, we will present discourse analytical work on mother-infant interactions in two distinct cultural contexts. The aim is to shed some light on the dialogical interplay of cultural ideologies and parental ethno-theories on the one hand and concrete discursive practices in social interactions with infants on the other.

With the shift within recent decades in modern Western middle class societies towards increasing "democratic" forms of family interactions, for instance, the focus of socialization strategies and ideologies has become children's agency, free choice and inter-generational negotiation rather than parental authority (Beck & Beck-Gernsheim 2002; Beck 1997). Aronsson and colleagues (Aronsson & Gottzén 2011; Aronsson & Cekaite 2011) for instance, found that Swedish middle class families in every day interactions draw on communicative devices marked by negotiation and the child's self-regulation rather than coercion or unmitigated parental requests which they see as prototypical for a modern democratic family model.

Similarly, German middle class families in the last decades have been found to stress children's agency and choice, self-confidence and self-reliance (Keller 2007; Pross 1982). German middle class parent's value the child's autonomous self-regulation and self-reliance (*Selbständigkeit*), expressed for example by encouraging the child to sleep alone at a very early age (Keller 2007; LeVine & Norman 2001; Norman 1991), or to play by him/herself and not get too upset when the mother is not available (Grossmann 1985).

In these child-centered societies, mothers and other caretakers view children as potential conversational partners from birth. In interacting with young infants, adults typically use highly child-centered and accommodating strategies that will enhance the infant's sense of agency and self-confidence (Heath 1983; Ochs & Schieffelin 1984). This is expressed, for example, by interpreting

the infant's vocalization and physical movements as meaningful and responding to it accordingly, e.g. by taking the perspective of the child, or by "echoing" an infant's gesture, and initiating a dyadic turn-taking pattern similar to adult conversation (Bates, Camaioni & Volterra 1979; Ferguson 1977). Situations and the language used in them are typically adapted to the child rather than the reverse. The child is the focus of attention, in that the child's actions and vocalizations are often taken up by the caregiver as a starting point of a sequence in the interaction. Schieffelin & Ochs (1998) have argued that accommodating to the child reflect a discomfort of Western middle class mothers with the competence and power difference between adult and the child and that caregivers use self-lowering (e.g. simplified speech) as well as child-raising strategies (e.g. acting as if the child were more competent than his behavior more strictly would indicate) to reduce this asymmetry.

In light of the actual competence differential between adult and the child, however, the agency granted to the child can always be only within the limits of the caregiver's support. When caregivers assist their children, therefore, their interventions conflict with parental ideals of independence, creating what has been described as "dependency dilemma" (Ochs & Izquierdo 2009; Weisner 2001; Whiting 1978). That is, children are apprenticed into a milieu where both independence *and* reliance on others are emphasized, (Ochs & Izquierdo 2009).

In many Non-Western traditional societies, local theories of child-rearing are strikingly different and communicative practices with children even underscore the power asymmetry between adults and children (Kulick & Schieffelin 2004; Ochs & Schieffelin 1984; Schieffelin & Ochs 1986). Especially in strongly hierarchical societies, age and status differences can affect the rights to take turns in a conversation (Keating & Egbert 2004). Among the Gusii in Kenya (LeVine 1990) or the Nso farmers in the Western Grassfields of Cameroon (Keller 2007), for instance, verbal exchange is largely restricted to persons whose kin relationship defines them as social equals. Parents and children, however, are considered inherently unequal even in adulthood and showing respect towards one's parents is vital in everyday communication. De León's (e.g. 1998) work among the Zinacantán Maya showed for instance that caregivers do not engage in conversations including dyadic turn-taking with their infants. Mayan Zinacantec babies do however have the status of "proto-addressees" (p. 142), i.e. they are addressed with speech in a variety ways, including for instance rhetorical questions, formal address in triadic interaction, speech activities to control the child's behavior. As these and many other authors (e.g. Lewis & Watson-Gegeo 2004; Mistry, Deshmukh & Easterbrooks 2006) have stressed before, communicative practices with infants need to be understood as culturally and historically situated and in line with local theories of good child

care. A simple distinction between modern Western industrialized societies and non-Western traditional societies clearly would be a reductionist approach to the rich cultural variety of communicative practices with infants. Research needs to take into account the specific local ethnotheories of good child care and how they relate to the concrete living conditions of a specific group under investigation (Whiting 1981).

While there exist a number of studies on caregivers' ethnotheories on good child care in different cultural communities, we still know little about how power-asymmetry is *locally constituted in concrete social interaction* with infants. In the sequential organization of the ongoing interaction, caregivers allocate speaking rights and develop structures of control (Blum-Kulka 1997; Ervin-Tripp, O'Connor & Rosenberg 1984; M. H. Goodwin 1990) and may position themselves in an authoritative or more egalitarian position. Asymmetrical, hierarchical relations and more symmetrical, egalitarian ones are mutually co-constructed through discursive strategies, particularly through different types of directives, the amount of negotiation allocated to children, and in the number of choices offered to them (cf. Fasulo, Loyd & Padiglione 2007; Goodwin 2003). The present study aims at investigating the interactional basis of how power-asymmetry is co-constructed in communication with infants by analyzing the sequential organization of mother-infant interaction in two distinct cultural communities. This investigation draws on prior work on family-interactions, within the framework of language socialization and discursive psychology, that investigated parenting strategies that foster familial and cultural values such as autonomy, interdependence and responsibility and that draw on different forms of authoritativeness. Negotiating practices and egalitarian strategies were found for instance in middle class families in Los Angeles (Fasulo et al. 2007; Sirota 2006) and Sweden (Aronsson & Cekaite 2011). Similarly, Hepburn & Potter (2011) analyzed the use of threats in British middle class family dinner interactions as a means of co-constructing social influence on children.

The paper also draws on previous studies that have investigated parental ethnotheories of good child care in middle class families in the North German cities of Muenster and Berlin, and among Nso farmers in the Western Grassfields of Cameroon (e.g. Yovsi 2001; Keller, Demuth & Yovsi 2008).

The present paper extends this prior work by applying a discursive psychology approach to interaction with very young (preverbal) infants. The goal is to enrich and expand the existing research micro-analytically by analyzing the trajectories of interactions situated within ongoing activities. Finally, by drawing on a comparative design this study aims at making explicit the cultural organization of social interaction even in early infancy (see also Demuth & Fatigante, in press).

1. Procedure

The present study draws on a broadly discursive psychological approach to social interaction (e.g. Potter & Wetherell 1987; Potter 2007). The aim of the analysis is to identify discursive resources that caregivers utilize when handling power asymmetry with young infants.

1.1 Material and participants

The data corpus consists of video recordings of free play during mother-infant interactions collected from 20 middle class families in Muenster, Germany and 20 traditional farming Nso families in Kikaikelaki, a small village in the Western Grassfields in Cameroon. These data form part of a larger study conducted by the Culture & Development department at the University of Osnabrueck in 1995/96 and 2002/03. The families were recruited following local practices, i.e. the Muenster mothers were contacted individually in hospitals and pre-natal classes. In Kikaikelaki, the hierarchical system required permission from the chief (fon) before getting in touch with families through a health center. Twenty native German mothers living in Muenster and 20 native Nso mothers from Kikaikelaki, a subsistence farming community in the North Western Grassfields of Cameroon, consented to participate.

Muenster is a city in the northern part of Germany with a high administrative and educational infrastructure and is marked by a very strong economy and a relatively low unemployment rate compared to other parts of Germany. With about 265,000 citizens in 1995/1996 when the data were assessed (288,050 in 2011), it constitutes a relatively big city in comparison to other German cities, with mainly middle to upper middle-class inhabitants. The Muenster mothers were between 26 and 40 years (average 30.7 years) at the time of infant birth and had an average school education of 14.4 years. All infants were firstborn. The families lived mainly in single-family houses or in apartment buildings with a maximum of 2 or 3 floors.

The Nso is an ethnic group who live in a local chiefdom in the central high plateau of the Western Grassfields in the North West Province of Cameroon and comprises a population of some 217,000 inhabitants. The Nso society is highly hierarchically structured and characterized by the centrality of chieftaincy and an emphasis on title and rank as significant political attributes (see Goheen 1996; Yovsi 2001 for a more detailed description).The families who participated in this study lived in the small village Kikaikelaki and lived from subsistence farming. They lived in compounds composed of the lineage head, his wife or wives, his adult sons and their families, children and other dependents.

The Nso mothers were between 17 and 47 years at the time of infant birth (average 27.8 years) and had an average school education of 8.5 years. Four infants were firstborns whereas all others were not. Mothers were video recorded by trained female local research assistants for approximately 10 minutes on a weekly basis over a total period of 16 weeks. The present account draws on the recordings from the 12th week session, when infants were 3 months of age.

The mothers were told that we would like to learn more about parenting and child care in different cultures, and that for this purpose, we wanted to videotape mother-infant free-play interactions. We aimed at studying the interaction in settings that reflected typical social encounters with infants in their respective communities. Accordingly, the Nso mothers were mostly sitting in front of their homes, in an open space with people passing by.[1] The Muenster mothers were inside the house, usually in the living room or the kitchen, alone with their child.

1.2 Method

The interactions were transcribed following the conventions by Jefferson (1984). Some notations were added to include specific features of infant communication (see Appendix). The local language of the Nso is Lamnso which has long been an oral language and its written form has only recently become available (Trudell 2006). The Nso interactions where therefore directly translated into English by a native Nso research assistant. Utterances in any language carry with them a set of assumptions, feelings and values that members of a given culture may or may not be aware of but that the researcher of a different cultural background usually is not. Also, different languages make available different grammatical strategies and vocabularies to construct conversations. Translation can thus never convey the exact meaning of an utterance in the original (see also Amorim & Rossetti-Ferreira 2004). The present study tried to minimize these limitations and to obtain the highest possible 'conceptual equivalence' by having the translations done by a native person who is familiar with the semantic network of the Nso and also fluent in English and has some background knowledge in sociolinguistics. Meanings of utterances that seemed ambivalent or unclear were discussed with that person or with a native colleague who works in the same department.

Analysis followed the procedures of Conversation Analysis informed by Discursive Psychology (Potter 2007). The aim is to analyze what is socially accomplished in an ongoing interaction on a micro-analytic turn-by-turn basis as the interaction evolves, as well as at deriving recurrent discursive patterns ("interpretative repertoires"). The focus of the present analysis is on how mothers handle and negotiate power-distance in these interactions and what discursive strategies they draw on in the two groups. Analysis started out with

a single case, and successively added further cases thus steadily expanding the data corpus. An initial step consisted of reading and re-reading the transcript and watching the respective video recording in parallel, focusing on how the interaction develops on a turn-by-turn basis. A collection of text passages was built that seemed relevant for the analytical focus. These passages were then analyzed more closely and systematically compared. This micro-analysis comprised looking for regular patterns, considering next turns, and comparing of deviant cases, which was followed by formulating tentative hypotheses and checking these against the data (e.g. Potter 2007). Analysis was supported by the software program Transana (see Demuth 2008 for a more detailed description). By systematically comparing the two data sets, groups of sequences were derived that show similar and contrasting patterns of communicative strategies. In line with previous research, special attention was given to discursive devices that are employed to position (Harré & van Langenhove 1999) the infant in the interaction with regard to the power-asymmetry relationship.

Although presentation of the results within this paper focuses on verbal utterances, other modalities of communication such as body movement, gaze, mimic and gesture were also included in the analysis. Transcripts are presented in a format suggested by Ochs (1979) allowing for parallel vertical lines arranging nonverbal behavior co-occurring with verbal/vocal utterances for mother and infant, respectively.

2. Analysis

Comparative analysis revealed various differences of parental control by deploying mitigated and upgraded *directives*, by the degree of *choice* given to the child, as well as *politeness strategies* like announcing an activity versus imposing it, self-lowering and other raising strategies. The excerpts discussed in the following represent interactional patterns found repeatedly within each group (see Demuth 2008) and therefore can be considered to be typical of the relevant group under study. An explanation of the transcription notations used in this analysis is listed in the Appendix. We will first discuss the prevailing patterns in the Muenster group and then those in the Kikaikelaki group.

2.1 The muenster interactions

2.1.1 *Use of directives*

Directives are utterances designed to get someone else to do something (Austin 1962; Blum-Kulka 1997; Ervin-Tripp 1976). They are a linguistic means to

constitute different forms of social power-asymmetry as well as solidarity in interactions (Aronsson & Cekaite 2011; Goodwin 2006). In parent-child interactions, different forms of mitigation such as reason-giving, explanation, terms of endearment, modal constructions, or tone of voice, laughter, kissing can soften degrees of coerciveness (Aronsson & Cekaite 2011; Goodwin 2006). Upgraded forms of directives such as repetition, increased volume of voice, threats or physical action, on the other hand, will stress coerciveness and power-asymmetry (ibid).

While directives were common in both groups, analysis revealed different interactional patterns of co-constructing power-asymmetry through directives. In the Muenster group, directives were used more subtly and in mitigated forms. They used directives in order to invite the child to enter into conversation with them or to gain their attention as the following two examples illustrate. Inviting the child to "narrate" (*erzaehlen*) was a very prominent pattern in the Muenster group (see also Demuth, Keller & Yovsi 2011). This pattern also corresponds to what has been widely described as 'protoconversation' (e.g. Bateson 1979; Snow 1977).

2.1.1.1 Inviting child to "narrate"
Example 1: Muenster 13

The baby is lying on the sofa, while the mother is sitting next to him and bends over him.

	BABY NONVERBAL	BABY VOCAL	MOTHER NONVERBAL	MOTHER VERBAL	ORIGINAL TRANSCRIPT
1	Looking at mother	((VO:C))	Benting over child looking into his face		
2				YES::!	JAH:: !
3				[Come on] Tell me about it! [Come on] Tell me about it! ↑Yee ^{0}[Come on] Tell me about it!^{0}	Erzähl's mir doch! Erzähl's mir doch! ↑Ji ^{0}Erzähl's mir doch!^{0}

The mother (M) takes up the baby's (B's) vocalization and ratifies it by a confirming utterance and emphasizing intonation (line 2), followed by a repeated prompt to 'narrate' (line 3) thus intensifying her prompt and expressing eagerness to hear the presumed story. It should be noted here that the German word "*erzähl*" used here

actually has a stronger connotation with narrating and corresponds more to the English word "narrate" than to the expression "tell about". By using the formulation '[come on], tell me about it' (or 'narrate it to me') she construes the baby's utterance as intentional and meaningful, as if the child were trying to tell her a 'story'. She emphasizes her prompt by repeating it several times (line 3). A few turns later, the same pattern is produced again:

4	((VO::C))		
5		Yes! Yes, well, tell me about it! Tell me about it!	Ja! Ja,dann er↑zählʼs mir doch! Erzählʼs mir doch!
6	((voc))	(1)	(1)
7		↑Come on do it! (1) Yes. You're such a good narrator at other times.	↑Tuʼs doch! (1) Ja. Kannst doch sonst so schön erzählʼn.
8		You don't feel like it this morning? You don't feel like it this morning? Hm?	Wollst heut morgen nicht? Wollst heut morgen nicht? Hm?
9		No? You don't feel like it this morning?	Nein? Wollst heut morgen nicht?
10	((voc))		
11		Ho:h ((imitates B))	Hö:h ((imitiert B))
12		<Still too tired?> Are you still too tired ? Hm? Are you still too tired?	<Noch zu müde?> Biste noch zu müde? Hm? Bist noch zu müde?

This time the mother emphasizes her prompt to narrate not only by repetition but also by adding "Come on, do it" [*tu's doch*] and commenting that at other times he has done so well. In lines 8–12 she provides an account (being not in the mood and being tired) for the missing response by the child which serves as an acceptable excuse. Moreover, she uses tag-questions which can be seen as mitigated forms of directives (Aronsson & Cekaite 2011).

2.1.1.2 Attention seeking directives

Example 2: Muenster 09

In this interaction the mother was continuously trying to get B's attention throughout the entire filming session while B was most of the time looking to the camera.

	BABY NONVERBAL	BABY VOCAL	MOTHER NONVERBAL	MOTHER VERBAL	ORIGINAL TRANSCRIPT
1	looks to camera		looks at B	°°Hey?°°	°°He?°°
			kisses B's neck	((laughs))	((laughs))
2				↑*little stinker*! Won't you look at me once!	↑Stinkerchen! Guck mich ma' an!
3			turns head in direction to where B looks at	(1)	(1)
4				You don't even <u>think</u> about it, right?	Du <u>denkst</u> gar nicht dran, ne?
5				That's not exciting, right?	Das is' nich' spannend, ne?
6			nods	I'm already familiar to you, right? <u>That's</u> what I thought!	Mich kennste schon, ne? <u>Das</u> hab' ich gerne.

Here, the mother draws on affective terms ('little stinker') and modal constructions (won't you) that represent mitigated forms of directives. Moreover, the mother provides a reason that serves as explanation and account for the child's 'non-compliance'.

2.1.1.3 Encouraging self-regulation

Some mothers used directive strategies in situations when the baby expressed negative affect (see also Demuth 2013 in press). Interestingly, this was only the case when the mothers interpreted the child's behavior as a desire to be fed outside of the regular feeding schedule as in the following example.

Example 3: Muenster 16

The interaction has been going on for about 6 minutes when the child starts to whine while trying to put his hand in his mouth and eventually starts crying:

	BABY NONVERBAL	BABY VOCAL	MOTHER NONVERBAL	MOTHER VERBAL	ORIGINAL TRANSCRIPT
1		((CR))	looks straight ahead	He :y ! (1)	He :y ! (1)
2	moves arms			Lu ::cas :!	Lu ::cas :!
3		((CR))		(2)	(2)
4			looks at B	Lu :::cas :!(1)	Lu :::cas :!(1)

5		((CR))	takes B in her arm	↑Ye::s when you get tired you always become a bit nasty, don't you?	↑Ja:: wenn du müde wirst dann wirst du auch immer'n bisschen schwierig, 'ne?
6				↓Ye::s (1)	↓Ja:: (1)
7		((WN))	softly prods B's stomach	He:, hey, hey, hey.	He:, hey, hey, hey.
8		((WN))	wipes B's mouth	Hey, hey, hey. Let me wipe that off, won't you	Hey, hey, hey. Lass mich das noch mal abputzen
9		((CR))		↑Hm:?	↑Hm:?
10		((CR))	softly prods B's stomach	>Hey!<	>Hey!<
11	turns head to M's breast	((WN))	looks at B	(4)	(4)
12		((WN))	swings B from side to side	No::, you don't need to drink that, you just drank something.	Nö::, das musst du gar nicht trinken, Du hast doch grad was getrunken.
13		((CR))		(1)	(1)
14			> B	↑Hm:? Hm::?	↑Hm:? Hm::?
15				(2)	(2)
16			puts finger in B's mouth	Well, take my finger, hm? °(Are you sucking) the finger a bit, hm?°	Nimm mal meinen Finger, hm? °(Saugst Du)'n bischen am Finger, hm?°
17		((CR))	looks at B	No::! (.) ⟨No!⟩ (.) ⟨NO!⟩	Ne::! (.) ⟨Nein!⟩ (.) ⟨NEIN!⟩

(…).

22	((CR))		↓A::h (magic bear) (ma::gic bear)	↓Och (Zau:berbär) (Zau::berbär)
23	((CR))		⟨No⟩	⟨Nein.⟩
24	((CR))		⟨No⟩ You don't need to drink anything now// (.) drink anything because you're tired	⟨Nein.⟩ Du musst jetzt nichts// (.) nicht trinken, weil du müde bist.

25	((CR))	caresses B's head	No, no, no, no, no.	Nein, nein, nein, nein, nein.
26	((CR))	bounces B	No=no=no=no=no.	Nein=nein=nein=nein=nein.
27	((CR))		↑No=no=no=no=no.	↑Nein=nein=nein=nein=nein.
28	((CR))		No=no=no=no=no.	Nein=nein=nein=nein=nein.

The mother in this sequence accounts for the child's behavior (tiredness) which she formulates as a habit of the child (line 5). Formulation and prosody of the sentence also indicate that there is nothing severely wrong and nothing to worry about. She produces attention seeking devices ("hey") which may serve to prompt the child to stop (line 7–10). When the child turns his head towards M's breast, the mother takes this up and interprets it as wanting to be breastfed (line 11–12). While her reaction in line 12 might be related to the fact that she does not want to breastfeed the baby while being filmed, it also suggests that there is a certain feeding schedule to stick to. She then offers her finger to the child to suck on and hence encourages the child's self-regulation. The child first sucks the finger but then starts crying again and turns to M's breast which is quite vigorously denied by the mother (line 17, line 23–28). The mother constructs the situation as non-negotiable and rather authoritative compared with other situations. By providing accounts for her vigorous denial (line 5, line 12, line 24), however, she mitigates the coerciveness of her demand. This pattern of referring to a feeding schedule and inviting the baby to self-regulation was found repeatedly within the Muenster group.

2.1.2 *Announcing an activity*

Muenster mothers would also typically announce what they were about to do before changing the child's position or to start to do some physical exercise with the child. (See, for instance, Examples 4 and 5.)

Example 4: Muenster 14

The child is lying on his back as the mother takes his arms and pulls him up to a sitting position.

	BABY NONVERBAL	BABY VOCAL	MOTHER NONVERBAL	MOTHER VERBAL	ORIGINAL TRANSCRIPT
1				Come here, I pull you up!	Komm mal her, (ich) zieh dich mal hoch!
2			pulls B up		

3			↓Yea:h	↓Ja:.
4			And now back ag↑ain!	Und jetzt wieder zu↑rü:ck!
		lets B fall back again		

Example 5: Muenster 18.

	BABY NONVERBAL	BABY VOCAL	MOTHER NONVERBAL	MOTHER VERBAL	ORIGINAL TRANSCRIPT
1				[Come], we put you like <u>this</u>	[Komm], wir setzen Dich mal <u>so</u> hin.
2			changes B's position		
(…)					
				Now we'll sit down again, right? Otherwise it's going to be too exhausting for you, right?	Jetzt setzen wir uns wieder, ne? Sonst wird das zu anstrengend für Dich, ne?

By announcing and explaining future events to the child, the mothers treat the child as someone who is entitled to know what is going to happen to him. Generally speaking, announcing to a person what is going to happen to him in the next moment gives the other person the option to object rather than simply making him do something. Moreover, the mother uses the collaborative first person plural "we" which can be considered a politeness strategy for indirectly exerting control over the child. By drawing on these discursive strategies, the mother in this interaction characterizes the mother-child relationship as egalitarian rather than hierarchical. Within the Muenster data corpus the pattern of announcing upcoming activities and invoking collaboration through the use of the pronoun 'we' to frame the situation as a cooperative venture was very common. It was absent, however, among the Nso interactions in Kikaikelaki.

In the same way, the Muenster mothers asked their children whether they would like to do a suggested activity thus (presumably) giving the child the choice to decide. Announcing to a person what is going to happen to him in the next moment also gives the other person the option to object.

Example 6: Muenster 15

	BABY NONVERBAL	BABY VOCAL	MOTHER NONVERBAL	MOTHER VERBAL	ORIGINAL TRANSCRIPT
91	> M		looks at B	Should we do our clock game again? (1)	Soll'n wa wieder unser Uhrenspiel machen? (1)
92			swings B from side to side in gradually accelerated rhythm	*<big clocks do tick tack tick tack>. small watches do ticketacke ticketacke. And the little pocket watches >>ticketacketicketac ketacketicketacke tacke<<*	*<Große Uhren machen tick tack tick tack>. Kleine Uhren machen ticketacke ticketacke. Und die kleinen Taschenuhren >>ticketacketicketac ketacketicketacke ticke tacke<<*

Before starting a specific activity (clock-game), the mother produces an invitation in the form of a question and by using the collaborative pronoun 'we'. This pattern was ubiquitous among the Muenster sample when introducing an activity-related transition as the following excerpts illustrate:

> "Do we wanna do gymnastics once more? Do we both wanna do gymnastics once more?" (Muenster17)
> *"Woll'n wa noch einmal turnen? Woll'n wir beide noch einmal turnen?"*

> "Should we get another toy, hm:? The one you've got from Heike?" (Muenster07)
> *"Soll'n wa noch ein anderes Spielzeug holen, m:h? Was du von Heike geschenkt gekriegt hast?"*

> "Hey! (2) Should we do 'the little child on the throne' once again, hm? Do we wanna do that?" (Muenster09)
> *"Hey! (2) Soll'n wir mal wieder das Kindchen auf dem Thron machen, du mh? Woll'n wir das mal machen?"*

While the mothers actively structure the flow of the interaction, they draw on linguistic strategies that emphasize collaboration or solidarity which ostensively seem to leave the intent negotiable between the two interlocutors and mitigate or soften the potential interpersonal impact of imposition or coercion (Blum-Kulka 1997). As such they constitute politeness strategies. Politeness strategies, as Brown and Levinson (1987; see also Sirota 2006) have pointed out, allow for modification of the direction of interaction without threatening the affective-relational bond between the interlocutors.

3. The Nso interactions

3.1 Use of directives

Within the Nso group, directives were frequently used in an upgraded form such as repetition, increased volume of voice, threats, and physical action such as shaking. The overall pattern was a directive style of interaction with the mother clearly having the lead.

3.1.1 *Prompting the child to respond to received attention by others*

When the child looked to the researcher who did the video recording, several mothers took this up and prompted the child to look to the person or to say who this person was. They thus constructed a situation in which the child was expected to show a desired behavior and to comply in the presence of the researcher. The following example serves as an illustration.

Example 7: Nso 10

Previous to this sequence, the child in this interaction was whining and seemed tired and the mother had prompted her to look at her when the child looked to the camera:

	BABY NONVERBAL	BABY VOCAL	MOTHER NONVERBAL	MOTHER VERBAL
1	looks at camera		looks at B	
2	lowers gaze			**Who is that?** (.) **Who is that?**
3	stares			(1)
4				e:h? (.) **Who is that?**
5				(1)
6			abruptly nodding towards B	↑E:H? (.) **WHO IS THAT?**
7				(1)
8				°Who is it?° (.) Who is looking at you?
(…)				
16	Stares straight	pants		e:h, Mayra? ((clears throat)) Say it then!
17	forward			(4)

18	points head to	^{00}Look^{00}
19	looks at camera	(1)
20		Who is it queen?

The mother in this excerpt takes up on what the child is looking at by producing the repeated question "who is that?" (line 2). The tone of her voice suggests that the utterance is not meant as mirroring the inner thoughts of the child but as interrogative that requires a correct answer. This interpretation is confirmed by the increase of vocal volume in line 6 and the repetition of tag questions "e:h?" (line 4, 6, 16). The child, however, does not show much reaction and appears to be tired, as she stares straight ahead which eventually leads the mother to a direct prompt in line 16 followed by a command in line 18.

By taking up on what B is doing (looking at the camera) and commanding the child to do exactly what he or she is already doing, the mothers key the child's behavior as if the child is following the mother's command. This suggests that the mothers use the strategy of taking up on where the child is looking at in order to teach the child socially appropriate behavior.

3.1.2 *Shaming messages and upgrades*

A recurring pattern in sequences in which the child expressed negative affect was the use of shaming messages, rhetorical questions, repetition of directives, increase of volume of voice and physical forms of prompts (e.g. shaking the child). Once the child complied, however, the mother's voice typically would soften followed by caressing the child in some way. This pattern reveals a strong orientation towards obedience and avoiding the expression of negative affect (see Demuth 2013 in press for a more detailed discussion).

Example 8: Nso 6

In this interaction, the child had been whining and crying for a while and the mother was unable to calm her down:

204		Look at how you are sitting with tears on the eyes ((flicks lips))
205	looks at camera	Look! Look! (.) Look!
206		((clicking tongue))

(...)				
260		((WN))		
261				WHAT IS IT? LOOK AT HOW YOUR EYES ARE UGLY!
262			clicking fingers	LOOK! LOOK! LOOK! LOOK!
263		((CR))		No=No!You should stop crying
264		((CR))	takes B in her arms, bounces B	No! No! (2) No (.) No=no! (.) No=no!

The mother's mirroring of how the baby looks (line 204) is construed as a shaming message indicating that having tears in the eyes is not an appropriate conduct. This interpretation is confirmed by the repeated imperative "Look!" followed by the rhetoric question "What is it?" indicating that the mother expects the child to change her behavior. The mother produces another shaming device in line 261 by stating that the child's eyes (i.e. having tears in the eyes) are ugly followed again by a repeated imperative (emphasized also by clicking the fingers) and a repeated negative imperative form as well as an unmitigated imperative to stop. By drawing on these discursive devices, the mother frames the child's behavior as socially inappropriate. The emphasis is on what the child looks like and hence on the public appearance and what is considered good behavior in front of others. The intensity of the mother's efforts to calm her child down throughout the entire interaction further supports the interpretation of crying as socially unacceptable.

3.1.3 *Other forms of upgraded directives*

Example 9: Nso 2

In the following interaction, the mother had put up the baby in an upright sitting position and the baby now is struggling to sit on his own.

1			sits B on lap	
2	looks down	((GR))	leans back, looks at B	
3	struggles to sit			Hoh: (.) e::h (.)
4			takes arms away so that child sits without help	Hey!(.) Hey!(.) Sit like this! (.)
5	falls forward	((GR))		Sit! (.) Yes! (.)
6			pushes B back and removes her hands	SIT ERECT! (.) ho:: (.) ho:: (.)

7	falls forward	((pants))		Sit straight (.) Sit straight (.)
8				((laughs)) AHAHA::
9			pulls B closer to her, prodding him	heh heh he::h.
10	stares in front at M's chest		lifts B up, looks at B	↑hu::::::=Francis (.) ↑hu::::::=Francis (1) ↑hu::::::=Francis (.)
11			sits B down on her lap	Francis is seated (.).
12				You are seated now Wa::iy [wa::iy is the Lamnso term for friend], aren't you?

While the child is jiggling back and forth trying to gain balance and not fall over, the mother prompts the child to sit (line 4–5) and even pushes him back and commands him in a stern voice to sit erect as he falls over. The sterness in her voice disappears, however, in line 8–12 when she pulls B closer to herself and seats him in the desired position herself. Note that she recognizes it as if he has managed to sit by himself, although, in fact, she is the one who is supporting him. The mother thus uses a child-raising strategy (Ochs & Schieffelin 1984) by helping the child to do the required task but treating it as an accomplishment of the child himself. She addresses B as friend ("waiy") and adds a tag question which serves to elicit a ratification of B's accomplishment.

Assisting the infant to sit is an example of providing the infant with practice in order to accelerate motor development. The sooner a child can acquire various motor milestones, the sooner the child will be able to help in the household from early on. Several previous studies in Subsaharan Africa have found similar practices (Keller, Yovsi & Voelker 2005; Super 1976; Super & Harkness 1986).

In the 4th minute of the same interaction we find another example of installing obedience in the child. The mother has been moving B up and down rhythmically for a while when she stops and grasps a pen that is lying next to her.

Example 10:

1		Grasps pen	Take! Take! (.) Take! Have pen!
2	looks down	shows pen to B	(1) Take! Have this:!
3			(2)

4	Moves hand slightly			<HAVE THIS::::!> Have this pen! Say it!
5				((talks to others and laughs))
6		sneezes	puts pen away	

The mother stops her previous activity and introduces a new activity by commanding B to take the pen she is presenting him. She repeats her prompt several times with increasing emphasis which stresses the commanding nature of the utterances.

3.1.4 *Threats*

Another discursive feature used by the Nso mothers in interacting with their babies were threats. Threats are an intensified form of attempted behavioral influence and set up basic response options of compliance or defiance (Hepburn & Potter 2011). They are, therefore, particular ways of co-constructing power-asymmetry in social interactions. In the following excerpt, the mother uses a threat to warn the child not to do the same misbehavior as her older brother.

Example 11: Nso 10

The mother has just scolded the older brother who is also in the room and turns again to her baby daughter as we join the interaction:

	BABY NONVERBAL	BABY VOCAL	MOTHER NONVERBAL	MOTHER VERBAL
1				Mh:m (1)
2			points at B	Tomorrow it will be you
3				(2)
4				Ye:s, be smiling!
5	smiles, falls towards M	((pants))		oh=o::h
6	looks at B		looks at camera	((talks to researcher))
7			looks at B	
8				Be laughing Joy! (1)
9				Tomorrow it will be you. (1)
10	looks at M		nodding to corner of room	Then I will be whipping and going with you there like this. (2)

11	Looks at B	You have heard, haven't you?
12	leaning head to one side	Right? (1)
13	leaning head to other side	Right?

Reference to a future event here occurs in the context of learning obedience. The mother threatens that the same thing that has happened to her sibling, that is, being scolded, will happen to her, the daughter. By producing the question in line 11 and the twice repeated tag question "right?" (line 12–13) the mother asks for confirmation of having understood her message. The future event, thus, has the function of threatening the infant with punishment for behaving badly.

4. Discussion

We have argued in this paper that while caregiver-child interactions are by nature asymmetric in their structure, the way this asymmetry is portrayed and enacted largely depends on local cultural ideologies of appropriate child care. These ideologies become particularly salient when looking at mundane everyday interaction. Taking a discursive psychology/conversation analysis approach allowed us to study the sequential organization of co-constructing, asymmetric mother-infant interactions and to identify the discursive devices deployed in this organization. In the sequential organization of the ongoing interaction, caregivers allocate speaking rights and develop structures of control (Blum-Kulka 1997; Ervin-Tripp, O'Connor & Rosenberg 1984; M. H. Goodwin 1990) and may position themselves either in an authoritative or more egalitarian position. The way asymmetrical mother-infant interactions are co-constructed through discursive strategies frame children's activities in culture-specific ways. Co-constructions are enacted particularly through different types of directives, the amount of negotiation (or "pseudo-negotiation" in the case of pre-verbal infants) allocated to children and in the number of choices offered to them.

The Muenster interactions were characterized by subtle and mitigated forms of directives. Mothers employed directives to invite the child to narrate, to attract the child's exclusive attention and to self-regulate. Moreover, they offered choice to the child and initiated turn-taking. In doing so they co-constructed the interaction as one between quasi-equal partners.

The Nso interactions were characterized by unmitigated and upgraded forms of directives such as shaming messages and threats. The Nso interactions were clearly lopsidedly structured by the mothers thus stressing the asymmetric

relationship between mother and child. While mother-infant interactions are asymmetric in nature, this asymmetry could be shown to be also and primarily co-constructed through the use of specific discursive practices.

While previous studies within the field of language socialization and within a discursive psychology approach have mainly focused on family interactions with older children and adolescents, this study broadens the existing literature by applying this line of research to the study with preverbal infants (but see de León 1998, Duranti, Ochs & Schieffelin 2012). By drawing on a comparative design between mother-infant interactions of Muenster middle class families and Nso farming families in Kikaikelaki we hope to have made more explicit the cultural organization of social interaction with infants. Comparison of very distinct socio-cultural groups as in the present study may be misunderstood, however, as conceiving cultural differences in terms of extreme dichotomies such as egalitarian and hierarchical strategies and/or on the level of whole societies. We want to stress therefore that there exists a range of caregiver styles across and within societies and social groups (see also de León 1998). The present paper investigates mother-infant interactions in two distinct groups: the Nso farmers in Kikaikelaki and middle class families in Muenster. The findings therefore need to be understood to apply to these specific two socio-cultural groups at a specific historical time and place, and not to societies as a whole.

The findings are in line with previous studies on local ethnotheories of proper child care amongst German middle class families in Muenster and Nso farming families in Kikaikelaki (Keller, Demuth & Yovsi 2008; Keller, Yovsi & Voelker 2002). For instance, the Nso conception of a "good mother" is that the mother is supposed to know what is good for the child and to take the lead in the interaction. This concept of "responsive control" as the essence of good parenting is assumed to lead to optimal development according to the Nso ideologies (Yovsi, Kaertner, Keller & Lohaus 2009). The different socialization practices need to be understood within the respective broader cultural and socio-historical framework in which they occur (see also Harkness, Super, Moscardino et al. 2007; Keller 2007; Demuth & Fatigante 2012):

As other authors have pointed out (e.g. Goheen 1996), the Nso society is highly hierarchically structured and characterized by the centrality of chieftaincy and an emphasis on title and rank as significant political attributes. Titles and offices are important as symbolic capital. Most important titles are hereditary and obtained according to lineage. Social interaction is therefore structured by highly institutionalized modes of behavior according to age, gender and social title. These include terms and forms of address as well as behavioral signs of respect such as bending down, averting one's eyes, talking through one's hands (ibid). Family and socialization practices have been found more generally to center on obedience,

social responsibility and self-reliance in household tasks rather than the child's agency and free choice (Keller, Demuth & Yovsi 2008; Nsamenang & Lamb 1998; Tchombe 1997; Yovsi, Kaertner, Keller & Lohaus 2009). Social life is characterized by reciprocal obligations and mutual aid between kin which form a safety net for all Nso members. In light of the social organization of the Nso community, the socialization practices found in the present study therefore seem appropriate ways of preparing children for becoming successful members of the society in which they grow up. For children, to learn obedience and proper demeanor are of vital importance for the every day functioning of the family within this specific community. The way power-asymmetry is established in the Nso interactions is regarded as something desirable and functional within this community. It is from such an indigenous perspective that these interactional styles need to be understood. While from a "Western" perspective, these practices might be judged as "authoritative parenting style (Baumrind 1973), they are an expression of good parenting from the perspective of the Nso farmers.

The Muenster middle class families in this study are part of a highly educated class in a modern Western society within a post-industrialized democratic Welfare state. Educational counselors and parenting guidebooks stress the importance of children learning to negotiate mutual interest, to be independent, and to choose from a variety of options as they face the challenge of rapidly-changing post-modern life. The family, as an institution, now covers a wide range of organizational forms such as cohabitation, with or without marriage plans, singles and single parent families (Beck-Gernsheim 2010). With greater affluence, higher level of education, and alternative sources of old-age support, parents do not depend on their offspring as was the case some generations ago. The power of traditional family values such as obligations within the family is therefore decreasing (Kagitcibasi 2005). This may explain why immediate compliance and subservience are not necessarily a primary goal of caregivers' requests and directives (see also Aronsson & Cekaite 2011). At the same time, children need to learn to organize life around the family's daily activities and society's organization of time, which requires a certain amount of self-regulation, e.g. with respect to mealtime schedules.

While the Muenster mother mainly used discursive practices that mitigated directives (e.g. through reason giving, negotiating, modal constructions, collaborative 'we', and terms of endearment) and decreased the level of power-asymmetry, the Nso mothers used discursive practices that stressed the hierarchical discrepancy between mother and child (e.g. repetition, increased volume, physical action, shaming messages and threats). By drawing on discursive devices like directives and threats, mothers position themselves as possessing the power to engender positive or negative consequences (Hepburn & Potter 2011). By

complying, children display subservience and hence ratify the power-asymmetry. The findings, however, also confirmed that directives are a general feature in both groups and therefore seem to be a general feature of caregiver-child interaction.

Different types of parental control are achieved through mitigated (downgraded) and upgraded forms of directives. They vary not only across the two groups but also depending on specific domains of daily life. Fasulo and colleagues have shown that practices of parental control vary across specific tasks and activity domains (Fasulo et al. 2007). The Muenster mothers used directives to prompt the child to engage in intimate face-to-face interaction centering on the individual experience of the child (prompting to narrate, exclusive attention seeking) and to encourage self-regulation and learning to adapt to specific time schedules to organize family life. Moreover, they grant the child options and choice. These discursive practices can be seen as means to socialize children into an individual-centered, egalitarian world-view with a focus on independence and negotiating individual interests.

The Nso mothers used directives to prevent the expression of negative affect (see also Demuth 2012), to foster motoric development, and to request obedience and proper demeanor within the social community. These discursive practices can be seen as means to socialize children into subservience and early physical independence. Underlying are two major organizing principles of Nso society: social hierarchy and maintenance of social harmony. Hierarchy is maintained through the display of respect and silence. Social harmony is maintained through avoidance of expression of negative affect. Previous studies have shown that early motor development allows the mother to continue to work on the field and to assign little chores to the child (Keller 2007; Keller, Yovsi & Voelker 2003).

Overall, the study has shown that micro-analysis of the sequential organization of family interaction provides a window into the processes of how children learn to act in appropriate ways as a member of a given society. Gaining insight into the cultural differences within these socialization processes will hopefully also contribute to a better understanding of the challenges families face in an increasing multi-cultural society marked by a plurality of ethnotheories of good child care.

Note

1. While sibling care is a common practice among the Nso and infants are likely to be involved in multi-party interaction, during the first months after birth infants still spend most of the time with their mother.

References

Amorim, K.S., & Rossetti-Ferreira, M.C. (2004). Ethnotheories and childrearing practices: Some constraints on their investigation. *Culture & Psychology*, *10*(3), 337–351.

Aronsson, K., & Gottzén, L. (2011). Generational positions at a family dinner: Food morality and social order. *Language in Society*, *40*(4), 1–22.

Aronsson, K., & Cekaite, A. (2011). Activity contracts and directives in everyday family politics. *Discourse & Society*, *22*(2), 137–154.

Austin, J.L. (1962). *How to do things with words*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Bates, E., Camaioni, L., & Volterra, V. (1979). The acquisition of performatives prior to speech. In E. Ochs, & B.B. Schieffelin (Eds.), *Developmental pragmatics* (pp. 111–129). New York: Academic Press.

Bateson, M.C. (1979). The epigenesis of conversational interaction: A personal account of research and development. In M. Bullowa (Ed.), *Before speech: The beginnings of human communication* (pp. 63–77). London: Cambridge University Press.

Baumrind, D. (1973). The development of instrumental competence through socialization. In A. Pick (Ed.), *Minnesota symposium on child psychology* (pp. 3–46). Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Beck, U. (1997). Democratization of the family. *Childhood: A Global Journal of Child Research*, *4*(2), 151–168.

Beck, U., & Beck-Gernsheim, E. (2002). *Individualization, institutionalized individualism and its social and political consequences*. London: SAGE.

Beck-Gernsheim, E. (2010). *Was kommt nach der Familie?: Einblicke in neue Lebensformen: Alte Leitbilder und neue Lebensformen*. München: C.H. Beck.

Blum-Kulka, S. (1997). *Dinner talk: Cultural patterns of sociability and socialization in family discourse.* Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

de León, L. (1998). The emergent participant: Interactive patterns in the socialization of Tzotzil (Mayan) infants. *Journal of Linguistic Anthropology*, *8*, 131–161.

Demuth, C. (2013, in press). Socializing infants towards a cultural understanding of expressing negative affect: A Bakhtinian informed discursive psychology approach. *Mind, Culture, and Activity*, *20*(1), Special Issue: Psychology of emotions and cultural historical activity theory. Accepted author version posted online: 30 Aug 2012, doi: 10.1080/10749039.2012.71999.

Demuth, C., & Fatigante, M. (2013 in press). Comparative qualitative research in cultural psychology: Challenges und potentials. In: M. Hummrich, N. Pfaff, & S. Rademacher (Eds.), Kulturvergleichende qualitative Forschung". [Cultural Comparative Qualitative Research]. *Zeitschrift für Qualitative Forschung [Journal of Qualitative Research] 13*(1).

Demuth, C., Keller, H., & Yovsi, R.D. (2011), Mutter-Säugling-Interaktion als kulturhistorisch formierte Tätigkeit – Ein Vergleich. *Tätigkeitstheorie. Journal für tätigkeitstheoretische Forschung in Deutschland*, (4), 11–35. http://www.ich-sciences.de/index.php?id=87&L=0&tx_wecknowledgebase_pi1[cat]=5&cHash=1158cc43b1.

Duranti, A., Ochs, E., & Schieffelin, B. (Eds.). (2012). *The handbook of language socialization*. Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell.

Ervin-Tripp, S. (1976). "Is Sybil there?" the structure of some American English directives. *Language in Society*, *5*, 25–67.

Ervin-Tripp, S., O'Connor, M.C., & Rosenberg, J. (1984). Language and power in the family. In C. Kramarae, M. Schulz, & W. O'Barr (Eds.), *Language and power* (pp. 116–135). Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.

Fasulo, A., Loyd, H., & Padiglione, V. (2007). Children's socialization into cleaning practices: A cross-cultural perspective. *Discourse & Society*, *18*(1), 11–33.

Ferguson, C. (1977). Baby talk as a simplified register. In C.E. Snow, & C. Ferguson (Eds.), *Talking to children: Language input and acquisition* (pp. 219–236). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

French, J.R.P., Jr., & Raven, B. (1959). The bases of social power. In D. Cartwright (Ed.), *Studies in social power* (pp. 150–167). Oxford England: University Michigan.

Goheen, M. (1996). *Men own the fields, women own the crops: Gender and power in the Cameroon grassfields*. Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press.

Goodwin, M.H. (2006). Participation, affect, and trajectory in family Directive/Response sequences. *Text & Talk*, *26*(4/5), 513–542.

Goodwin, M.H. (2003). *Styles of parent-child interaction in directive-response sequence.* Working Paper 19, Sloan Center on Everyday Lives of Families.

Goodwin, M.H. (1990). *He-said-she-said: Talk as social organization among black children*. Bloomington, IN US: Indiana University Press.

Grossmann, K. (1985). Maternal sensitivity and newborns' orientation responses as related to quality of attachment in northern Germany. *Monographs of the Society for Research in Child Development*, *50*(1), 233–256.

Harkness, S., Super, C.M., Moscardino, U., Rha, J.-H., Blom, M.J.M., Huitrón, B., Johnston, C., Sutherland, M., Hyun, O.-K., Axia, G., & Palacios, J. (2007). Cultural models and developmental agendas: Implications for arousal and self-regulation in early infancy. *Journal of Developmental Processes*, *1*(2), 5–39.

Harré, R., & van Langenhove, L. (1999). *Positioning theory*. Oxford, UK and Malden, USA: Blackwell Publishers Ltd.

Heath, S.B. (1983). *Ways with words: Language, life, and work in communities and classrooms*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Hepburn, A., & Potter, J. (2011). Threats: Power, family mealtimes, and social influence. *British Journal of Social Psychology*, *50*(1), 99–120.

Jefferson, G. (1984). Transcription notation. In J.M. Atkinson, & J. Heritage (Eds.), *Structures of social interaction: Studies in conversation analysis* (pp. ix–xvi). New York: Cambridge University Press.

Kagitcibasi, C. (2005). Autonomy and relatedness in cultural context: Implications for self and family. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *36*(4), 403–422.

Keating, E., & Egbert, M. (2004). Conversation as a cultural activity. In A. Duranti (Ed.), *A companion to linguistic anthropology* (pp. 169–196). Malden, MA: Blackwell.

Keller, H. (2007). *Cultures of infancy*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Keller, H., Demuth, C., & Yovsi, R.D. (2008). The multi-voicedness of independence and interdependence – the case of Cameroonian Nso. *Culture & Psychology*, *14*(1), 115–144.

Keller, H., Yovsi, R.D., & Voelker, S. (2002). The role of motor stimulation in parental ethnotheories: The case of Cameroonian Nso and German women. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *33*(4), 398–414.

Kulick, D., & Schieffelin, B.B. (2004). Language socialization. In A. Duranti (Ed.), *A companion to linguistic anthropology* (pp. 349–368). Malden, MA: Blackwell.

LeVine, R.A. (1990). Enculturation: A biosocial perspective on the development of self. In D. Cicchetti, & M. Beeghly (Eds.), *The self in transition: Infancy to childhood* (pp. 99–117). Chicago, IL, US: University of Chicago Press.

LeVine, R.A., & Norman, K. (2001). The infant's acquisition of culture: Early attachment re-examined in anthropological perspective. In C.C. Moore, & H.F. Mathews (Eds.), *The psychology of cultural experience* (pp. 83–104). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Lewis, J.L., & Watson-Gegeo, K.A. (2004). Fictions of childhood: Toward a sociohistorical approach to human development. *Ethos*, *32*(1), 3–33.

Mistry, J., Deshmukh, I., & Easterbrooks, M.A. (2006). Culture and infancy. In A. Slater, & M. Lewis (Eds.), *Introduction to infant development*, 2nd edition. New York: Oxford University Press.

Norman, K. (1991). *A sound family makes a sound state: Ideology and upbringing in a German village.* University of Stockholm.

Nsamenang, A.B., & Lamb, M.E. (1998). Socialization of Nso children in the Bamenda grassfields of northwest Cameroon. In M. Woodhead, D. Faulkner, & K. Littleton (Eds.), *Cultural worlds of early childhood* (pp. 250–260). Oxon: Routledge.

Ochs, E. (1979). Transcription as theory. In E. Ochs, & B.B. Schieffelin (Eds.), *Developmental pragmatics* (pp. 43–72). NY: Academic Press.

Ochs, E., & Schieffelin, B.B. (1984). Language acquisition and socialization. Three developmental stories and their implications. In R.A. Shweder, & R.A. LeVine (Eds.), *Culture theory: Essays on mind, self, and emotion* (pp. 276–320). New York: Cambridge University Press.

Ochs, E., & Izquierdo, C. (2009). Responsibility in childhood: Three developmental trajectories. *Ethos*, *37*(4), 391–413.

Potter, J. (2007). Discourse analysis and discursive psychology. In P.M. Camic, J.E. Rhodes, & L. Yardley (Eds.), *Qualitative research in psychology* (pp. 73–94). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

Potter, J., & Wetherell, M. (1987). *Discourse and social psychology: Beyond attitudes and behaviour.* Sage Publications, Inc.

Pross, H. (1982). *Was ist heute deutsch? werteorientierungen in der bundesrepublik (what is German nowadays? Value orientations in the Federal Republic of Germany).* Reinbek: Rowohlt.

Schieffelin, B.B., & Ochs, E. (1986). *Language socialization across cultures.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Schieffelin, B.B., & Ochs, E. (1998). A cultural perspective on the transition from prelinguistic to linguistic communication. In M. Woodhead, D. Faulkner, & K. Littleton (Eds.), *Cultural worlds of early childhood* (pp. 48–63). Oxon: Routledge.

Sirota, K.G. (2006). Habits of the heart: Children's bedtime routines as relational work. *Text & Talk*, *26*(4), 493–514.

Snow, C.E. (1977). The development of conversation between mothers and babies. *Journal of Child Language*, *4*, 1–11.

Strauss, A.L., & Corbin, J. (1990). *Basics of qualitative research: Grounded theory procedures and techniques.* London: Sage.

Super, C.M., & Harkness, S. (1986). The developmental niche: A conceptualization at the interface of child and culture. *International Journal of Behavioral Development*, 545–569.

Super, C.M. (1976). Environmental effects on motor development: The case of "African infant precocity". *Developmental Medicine and Child Neurology*, *18*(5), 561–567.
Tchombe, T.M. (1997). Mütterliches sozialisationsverhalten in Kamerun: Kontinuität und veränderung. In B. Nauck, & U. Schönpflug (Eds.), *Familien in verschiedenen kulturen* (pp. 124–140). Stuttgart: Ferdinand Enke Verlag.
Weisner, T.S. (2001). The American dependency conflict: Continuities and discontinuities in behavior and values of countercultural parents and their children. *Ethos*, *29*(3), 271–295.
Whiting, B. (1978). The dependency hang-up and experiments in alternative life styles. In M.J. Yinger, & S.J. Cutler (Eds.), *Major social issues: A multidisciplinary view*. New York: Free Press.
Whiting, J.W.M. (1981). Environmental constraints on infant care practices. In R.L. Munroe, & B.B. Whiting (Eds.), *Handbook of cross-cultural human development* (pp. 155–179). New York: Garland.
Yovsi, R.D. (2001). *Ethnotheories about breastfeeding and mother-infant interaction. The case of sedentary Nso farmers and nomadic Fulani pastorals with their infants 3–6 months of age in Mbvem subdivision of the Northwest providence of Cameroon, Africa*. Doctoral Dissertation, University of Osnabrueck.
Yovsi, R.D., Kaertner, J., Keller, H., & Lohaus, A. (2009). Maternal interactional quality in two cultural environments: German middle class and Cameroonian rural mothers. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *40*(4), 701–707.

Appendix

Explanation of transcription conventions used in the above excerpts (Jefferson 1984; Ochs 1979):

↑↓	Vertical arrows precede marked pitch movement
Underlining	Signals vocal emphasis
CAPITALS	mark speech that is obviously louder than surrounding speech
°I know it,°	"Degree" signs enclose obviously quieter speech
(4)	Numbers in round brackets measure pauses in seconds
(.)	A micropause, hearable but too short to measure
:	Colons show degrees of elongation of the prior sound
> <	"Greater than" and "lesser than" signs enclose speeded-up talk
< >	"Lesser than" and "greater than" signs enclose slower talk.
=	"Equals" signs mark the immediate "latching" of successive talk
hhh	Aspiration (out-breaths); proportionally as for colons
.hhh	Inspiration (in-breaths); proportionally as for colons
((text))	Additional comments
Voc	vocalization
((WH))	whimper
((WN))	whining
((GR))	grunt
((CR))	cry
bold	indicates that the original utterance is in English

Author's address

Carolin Demuth
Universität Osnabrück
FB08 Humanwissenschaften
Institut für Psychologie
D-49074 Osnabrück
Germany

cdemuth@uni-osnabrueck.de

Author's biography

Carolin Demuth is a cultural developmental psychologist with a special interest in discursive psychology. Her research focuses both on socialization processes by which children come to orient themselves within cultural meaning systems, as well as on narrative self construction in mundane social interaction. She has done research with families from urban middle class families in Germany and farming Nso (North-West Cameroon), and also with families in New Dheli (India) and Turkish migrants in Germany.