

Developing language for emotion through personal narratives

Professor Courtenay Norbury

8 may 2020

c.norbury@ucl.ac.uk

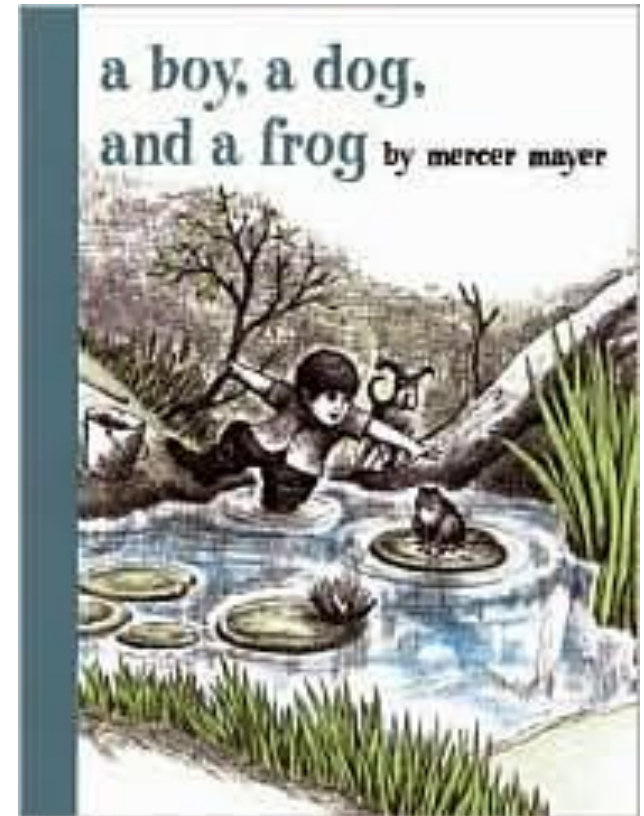


@lilaccourt

Children with language disorder have deficits in using internal state/emotion language

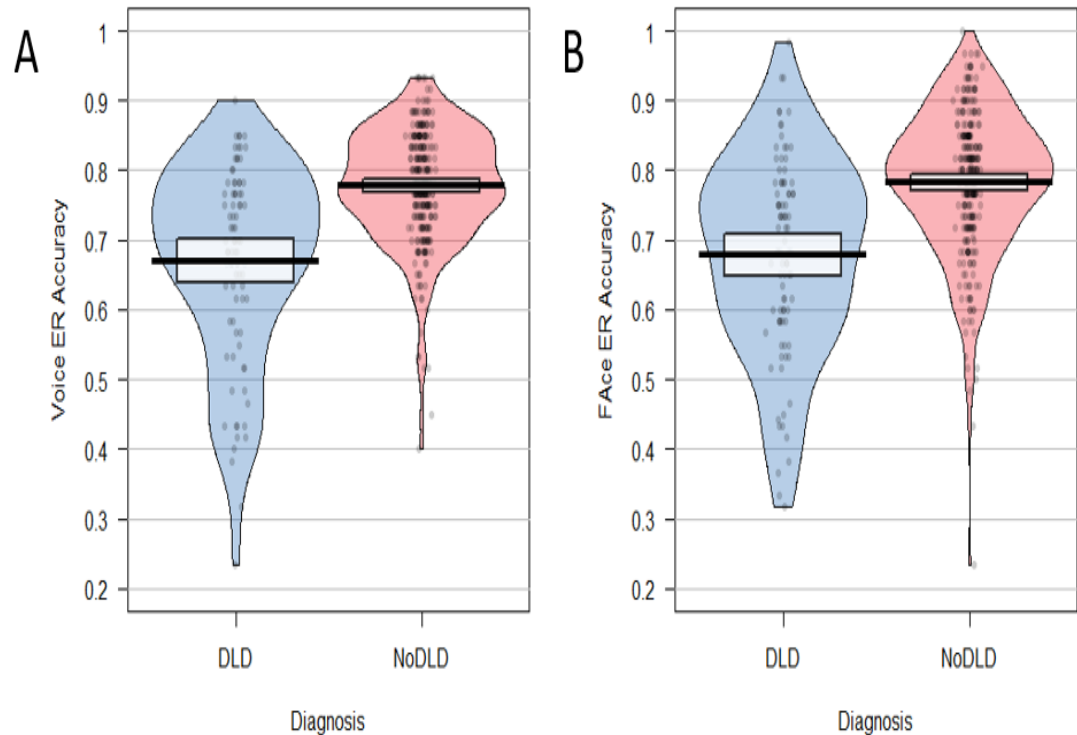
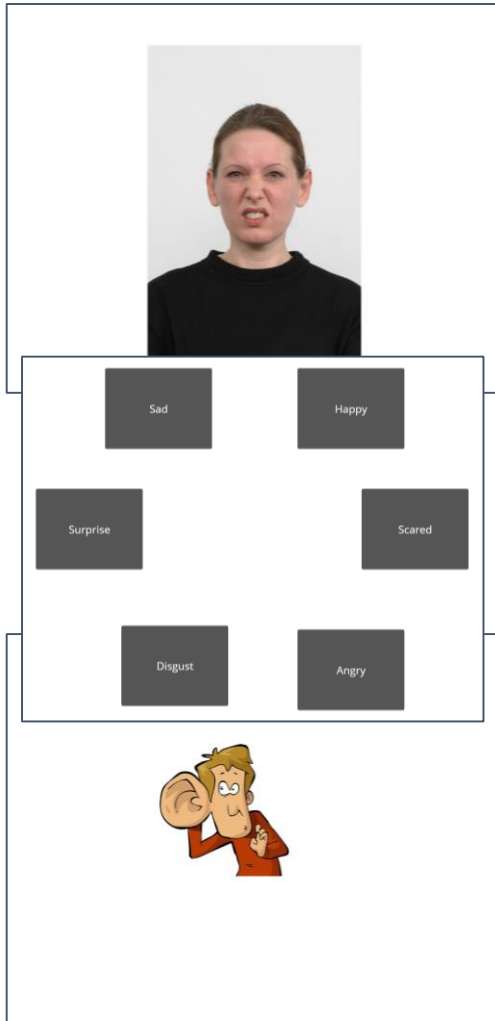
- The frog is *lonely*
- He *tricked* the boy on the log
- The boy is so *happy* to see the frog again

	Language disorder (n = 22)	Autism, language OK (n = 26)	Typical language dev. (n = 27)
Age (months)	129 79 – 184	134 78 – 189	118 81 – 182
Non-verbal ability	100 79 - 125	103 81 - 123	109 90 - 124
Vocabulary	89 70 - 118	105 81 - 131	105 90 - 130
CELF: total language	69 56 - 80	95 85 - 130	98 85 - 130



Autistic children used MORE mental state language than peers with language disorder!

Early language (but not non-verbal ability) is predictive of later emotion recognition from non-verbal cues



60 trials, 10 per emotion

How can we best equip children
with the language they need for
emotional competence??

Shared book reading interventions?



- Meta-analyses indicate small effects on overall language development (Noble et al. 2019)
- Can support word learning (Flack et al. 2018):
 - Many exposures to new words
 - Reading that includes pointing, explicit definitions, open-ended questions
- Implementation issues
 - Access/attitudes to books
 - Parent literacy levels
 - Other family issues

Personal narratives are important for self and social development

- Oral account from memory of an experienced event(s)
- Major component of most **social interactions** (e.g. 'how are you coping with lockdown?')
- Important for **self-identity, self-esteem, and emotional resilience**
 - Learn from experiences
 - Recall positive life events when dealing with adversity (Askelund et al. 2019)
- Important for **academic success**
 - Reading comprehension requires connections between lived experiences and fictional events
 - Children who provide more accurate and detailed accounts of their own past experiences are also more skilled at recalling fictional narratives (Wenner et al. 2008)



Westby & Culatta (2016). *Language Speech & Hearing Sciences in Schools*.

Children's personal narratives are associated with the **quality of reminiscing interactions** they have with caregivers



- Parents use highly elaborative talk
 - Lots of **detail** and **evaluative comments**
- Parents provide **coherent account** of what happened
- Parents **comment on child emotions**
- Use **open-ended questions, comments, and pauses** to share control of conversation with child

Parent elaborative talk that includes statements about...

- **When:** the temporal sequence of events – important for developing narrative coherence
- **Where** and **How:** elaborative details that enrich child stories (both personal and fictional)
- **Why:** makes explicit causal connections within the story, including emotional/internal state drivers of behaviour



Parents can be trained to provide more elaborative utterances and to provide more 'autonomy support' (i.e. take the child's perspective) in reminiscing (Cleveland & Morris, 2014).

Personal narrative deficits are common in a range of developmental conditions

- Developmental language disorders
 - Provide fewer evaluative comments that provide rationale for the story events
 - Fewer references to mental/emotional states
 - Fewer causal connectives to link episodes in a meaningful way
 - Less likely to provide a resolution to the issues raised in the story
- Autism
 - Greater difficulty telling personal stories relative to fictional stories
 - Potential deficits with episodic memory
- Emotional/conduct disorders
 - Personal narrative deficits may reflect co-occurring (and sometimes undetected) language deficits
 - Young offenders report facts/action sequences, but do not organise their accounts around goals and the thoughts/feelings of themselves or others
 - As result, stories lack coherence

Proposed intervention programme to develop personal narratives



Share stories using
photos/videos/text



Support school staff to:

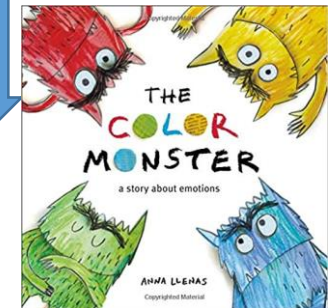
- Record everyday events
- Engage in elaborative reminiscing about these events



Share and personalise
fictional stories using
video/audio

Support parents to:

- Record everyday events
- Engage in elaborative reminiscing about these events



Link personal stories to fictional narratives

Recording memories for reminiscing

Daily Home School Communication Sheet

What has gone well this morning?

What has gone well this afternoon?

What has gone not so well this morning?

What has gone not so well this afternoon?

Daily Home School Communication Sheet

Things to remember for tomorrow...

Any notes home?

My evening was...

I slept...

For breakfast I have eaten...

Any messages from home?

ink saving Eco

TAPESTRY +

Seesaw time outside.

30/10/2013 with 2 Children



Jamie and Annie went really high on the seesaw today. Annie was giggling every time she got to the top.

Physical Development

40-60
months

Moving and Handling



Can this approach improve language and emotion/behaviour regulation?



Produce materials, prompts, videos, and lesson plans with teachers, speech-language therapists and families

Feasibility trial focus on dosage, fidelity/implementation and outcome measures

Randomised controlled trial

Thank you for listening!!

c.norbury@ucl.ac.uk



www.radld.org