THE DEVELOPMENT OF PROTO-ARGUMENTATION IN ADULT-BABY INTERACTION[1]

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- ABSTRACT: The present article focuses on the genesis of proto-oppositional conduct, defined as infantile actions interpreted as opposition to commands, desires and actions. The article assumes, as proposed by Leitão (2010; LEITÃO; FERREIRA, 2006), that such conduct constitutes remote older verbal actions of contraposition and response to opposition, seen as central constituencies of the argumentation. Based on references which place the genesis of human action and cognition in the realm of relations that are dialogically constituted (BAKHTIN; VOLOCHINOV, 1986; VYGOTSKY, 1980, 2012; WERTSCH, 1978), this article analyzes video-graphic records produced with two children, ages between the fourth week and six months of life, interacting with adults in a domestic context. Based on micro and macro-genetic analyses of these records (GRANOTT; PARZIALE, 2002), three moments were identified in the development process of proto-oppositional conduct: attribution of oppositional sense to crying; construction of infantile actions such as 'refusal' and, finally, interpretation of the infantile action as complex contraposition. In this last one, which implicates a displacement of the discursive place attributed to the child (LEITÃO, 2012), not only is the child seen as opposing the initiated actions by an adult, but also as proposing new actions.

- KEYWORDS: Protoargumentation. Child argumentation. Cognitive development.

Introduction

The present paper focuses on the emergence of proto-argumentative productions, specifically, proto-oppositional ones, during the initial phases of the child's development. In order to do so, it considers an argumentation concept as a cognitive-

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discursive activity marked by negotiation between opposing perspectives. Based on this assumption, Leitão defines *proto-arguments* and *proto-oppositions* as antecedents of the argumentative actions being developed. Hence, the prefix *proto* indicates the precursor of child actions that tend to be interpreted by the adults as *the assertion of a point of view* (of desires, wishes, goals) and *opposition* (to desires, wishes, goals, commands on the other´s part). Leitão claims that in virtue of being interpreted in such a way those actions would constitute the remote antecedents of productions considered as truly argumentative, such as defence of point of view, contraposition and response to opposition (LEITÃO, 2010; LEITÃO, FERREIRA, 2006).

The child´s proto-argumentative productions are analysed here from a dialogic perspective, taking into account the whole range of actions performed by the baby (such as gazing, arm and leg movements, vocalizations, cries, etc.) which are delimited and interpreted by the mother, in such a way as to acquire a meaning from the child´s actions, at first diffused and disconnected. In everyday interactional situations, we normally respond simultaneously to different signs, by interpreting not only words produced by the interlocutor, but also elements such as intonation and facial expressions he/she makes use of, even if such elements are employed in a redundant way. When we focus on the initial stages of the language acquisition process, this comprehensive response appears especially important, as a whole range of actions and processes on the baby´s part seem to acquire a semiotic value for the parents, who treat them as linguistic behaviour. These different elements are called here *productions*. They are delimited and combined by the adults, who, in Bakhtin´s expression, give them *completion* in language, making use of their own speech to ascribe structure and meaning to the child's actions (SCARPA, 1999, 2005, 2008).

According to the perspective taken, argumentation is distinct from other cognitive-discursive activities (narration, explication, etc.) due to the presence of specific linguistic-discursive elements. Among such elements, opposition is emphasized, for it generates in the participants the discursive need of negotiation of points of view seen as antagonistic (VAN EEMEREN et al., 1997). According to Leitão (2000, 2007, 2008b, 2011) this process of negotiation allows, in the individual psychological functioning, a reflection about ideas and alternative perspectives that are brought to the argumentation by the three basic elements that constitute it: the argument (point of view and support elements), the counter-argument (oppositive elements that challenge the argument) and the response to the oppositive elements.

According to the same author, the examination/evaluation of diverse perspectives, to be established in an argumentation, is a privileged resource in the knowledge construction processes, being equally effective in the development of what the author calls *reflexive thinking*. This reflexive thinking is defined as a particular form of psychological functioning that allows the individual to displace his/her attention from the *reflection about the world´s objects and events* (cognitive plan) to the meta-cognitive plan of *reflection about his/her own thought* on those objects and events.

Reflexive functioning, which is intrinsic to argumentation, is characterized by an action of attention, pursuit and evaluation of the fundamentals and limits of our own arguments (LEITÃO, 2007).

Based on this reference framework, which establishes strict connections between argumentation and cognition, the study of the conditions of the emergence and development of argumentative productions in the child is particularly relevant in order to fully understand the infant´s cognitive-discursive development. Based on this idea, the present study attempts to investigate the initial stages of the child´s development, with a specific focus on the child´s engagement in activities considered *proto-argumentative*.

Argumentation and proto-argumentation in the child

As far as we know, studies about the development of proto-communication in children are relatively meager (some of them will be dealt with later). In practical terms, we have been unable to find other investigations that focus specifically on the development of proto-argumentation. Up to the end of the present study, reference searches on key words such as *proto-argumentation*, *proto-argument, proto-opposition* (and the equivalent ones in Portuguese, French and Spanish) have not been fruitful. The lack of studies about proto-argumentation would probably be due to the assumption that argumentation is a late acquisition in the child´s language development. This assumption, according to Leitão (2010) and Leitão and Banks-Leite (2006), subordinates the emergence of argumentation in the child´s speech (and the emergence of language itself) to the child´s general cognitive development. However, several studies that stem from a different theoretical perspective actually challenge this idea and show that the child´s engagement in argumentative activities can be seen earlier (BANKS-LEITE, 1998; CASTRO, 1996, 2003, 2004; DEL RÉ, 2010; DEL RÉ; PAULA; MENDONÇA, 2014; DODANE; MASSINI-CAGLIARI, 2010; LEITÃO, 2008a; LEITÃO; FERREIRA, 2006; LEITE, 1996; VIEIRA, 2010).

Despite the lack of agreement about the precise moment when children would be able to create arguments (LEITÃO; BANKS-LEITE, 2006), an expressive set of studies undertaken during recent decades point to an early development of argumentation in the child. Stein et al. (1996), for instance, show that at already two and a half years old children do offer justifications for goals they wish to fulfil and defend choices facing an opponent, which are truly argumentative actions. These results confirm and expand those of the pioneer study of Eisenber and Garvey (1981), considered as a reference point in the investigation of the theme. The authors argue that children as young as three to six years old not only are able to justify positions, but they also expect the same from their partners, and understand that justifications are decisive elements in ´winning´ during an argumentation. In a similar way, Pirchio and Pontecorvo (1997) show that three to five year old children, being observed in their interaction with their

parents at dinner time, use complex conversational strategies of opposition and refusal, as well as ways of intensifying and lessening their opposition, being able to generate explanations and justifications for their disagreements. Leitão and Ferreira (2006) assert that children from two to five years old, being observed in an environment similar to that of the Pirchio and Pontecorvo study (lunch time) do produce a variety of counter-argumentative utterances, being actually able to anticipate oppositions to their demands (LEITÃO, 2008a).

Even at earlier ages, the child would already show a type of ´desire for discourse´, through prosodic elements, making use, for instance, of high pitch and raised intonation to mark opposition. This was shown by Del Re (2010), whose study was based on investigation of oppositive utterances that were produced by children between 20 and 33 months old. In a similar direction, Dodane and Massini-Cagliari (2010) identified in 14 to 28 month old children´s speech not only the presence of negation, but also its differentiation in categories, through specific prosodic markers to express refusal (usage of raised contours, high pitch and important syllable duration). Additionally, Vieira (2010), in an analysis of data produced by a child between 20 and 33 months, shows that from an very early age children would be able to reproduce prosodic elements related to argumentation (such as intonation in the adult´s speech). Her results allow her to suggest that, as assumed by Leitão (2010; LEITÃO; FERREIRA, 2006; LEITÃO, 2008a), the development of proto-argumentation would already have taken place in early moments of the child´s development, starting with body movements, crying, vocalizations and prosodic elements that shape them (pitch, duration, intensity, etc.). The study presented here is an attempt to contribute to the progress of this discussion being, as such, a developmental study. In order to do so, this article it is based on Vygotsky's (1980, 2012) socio-semiotic conception of development.

Theoretical framework: language and development

According to the theoretical framework above mentioned, in the present study we assume: the existence of close relationships between thought and language (VYGOTSKY, 1980); the regulatory function of language over human cognition (MORATO, 1996); the role of the initial adult-child interactions in the origin of meta-cognition (WERTSCH, 1978), interactive context essentially being the place where language acquisition takes place (FRANCOIS, 2006; ROMMETVEIT, 1992; SALAZAR-ORVIG, 2010). We assume, as does Vygotsky (1980, 2012), that the newborn baby is initially endowed with basic psychic processes, reflexes and elementary ways of psychic functioning, that allow him/her to act in a direct way (immediate) over the environment, being oriented by external environmental stimuli and without any auto-regulation resource. By contrast, higher mental processes will only appear depending on the child´s access and appropriation of culturally developed material and symbolic resources.

Based on this perspective, development is understood here as a process of change through the active appropriation of socio-semiotic resources, especially language (BAKHTIN, VOLOCHINOV, 1986; OLIVEIRA, 1997; VYGOTSKY; 1980). As far as proto-argumentations are concerned, child and adult are considered active partners that build the meaning of the baby´s productions together, at first based upon verbal and non verbal actions from the adult´s part, and then shared in the interaction child-adult (LEITÃO, 2010). More specifically, we assume, as does Leitão, that the appropriation of socially shared ways of either holding points of view or taking opposition and responding to opposition (which form argumentation) would have their more remote origin in a negotiation process involving the meaning of the child´s actions, similar to those being investigated and described here.

To deal with the appropriation of (proto)argumentative resources based on remote adult-child negotiations means to understand language acquisition as a process that takes place in specific dialogic contexts. Being so, Bakhtin's perspective is a theoretical support which allows one to understand that words are not acquired via dictionaries, with closed and complete meanings, but, instead, through the understanding of the ways in which they acquire meaning and form reality in the particular discursive contexts where they appear (BAKHTIN, 1990; BAKHTIN; VOLOCHINOV, 1986). It is also important to consider that the construction of meaning is produced not only from discursive verbal elements, but also from utterance chaining, through the interactional scenario where verbal action takes place, as well as through discursive non verbal factors such as intonation, for instance (BAKHTIN, 1990). Any utterance can only be understood within the discursive whole to which it belongs, comprehension being deeply rooted in the multiple elements that dialogically create its sense, here and now.

As we assume this reference framework in the understanding of the adult-child relation during initial stages of the child´s development, it is possible to say that the senses the adult ascribes to the child´s actions are dialogically built from the child´s actions and from a whole series of historical, social and situational elements that affect them. Take, for instance, the general knowledge of adults about children, about the history of this particular child with whom he/she relates, and about the immediate context where their interaction takes place.

A second point of Bakhtin's perspective is relevant in the reference framework undertaken in this study. It has to do with the recognition that no utterance can be taken in isolation, but is rather dialogically oriented/related (responsively) both to previous utterances (produced by others or by ourselves), and to anticipations of future utterances (BAKHTIN, 1990). In the child´s case, during the initial phases of his/her development, it is possible to assume a similar phenomenon: "even the cry of a nursing infant is 'oriented' toward its mother" (BAKHTIN; VOLOCHINOV, 1986, p.87). Therefore, the author´s assumption axiomatically claims that social/dialogical orientation in human relations does not begin only with the production of the first structured utterances, but already takes place during the very first baby/partner interactions. From this

assumption a developmental perspective can be derived: one that claims that from the initial interactions the child starts to notice the existence of someone else who reacts to his/her actions, and to whom he/she can also respond. Even if initially the child´s "cries" are not considered as intentional, nor conscious, they will be the antecedents of enunciative possibilities that will unfold during the child´s development.

It is assumed here that since movements, vocalizations, prosodic elements are inevitably directed towards someone, it is only from this someone else´s response that any utterance can acquire sense, in a dialogical process considered via Bakhtin´s concept of *responsivity* (BAKHTIN; VOLOCHINOV, 1986). *Mutatis mutandis*, we can assume that starting with the initial adult-child interactions the partners would act in a mutually regulatory way, verbal actions being complemented through applauses, smiles, vocalizations, etc. Together, these actions would then ultimately allow that the child´s productions acquire mutual sense in the interaction between the partners (BAKHTIN; VOLOCHINOV, 1986). As we hope to show through the data to be presented here, already during the initial phases of interaction with the baby the adult shapes different discursive situations (questions and answers, play and argumentative situations, etc.) in which he/she responds to the child in a way he/she considers adequate and may encourage the child to do the same. We assume that through playing like this it will be possible for the child to develop his/her responsive role in interaction.

Taken together, the ideas above shape the reference framework through which the present study investigates the hypothesis proposed by Leitão (2010) about the development of proto-argumentation. This author´s hypothesis claims that the child is interpreted by the adult "as if" he/she were engaged in assertive and oppositive actions well before he/she were conscious of those productions, or showed any type of regulation over them. These interpretations, together with the complete series of utterances addressed to the child in communicative situations of this sort, would be fundamental for the gradual mastery of proper argumentation by the child.

Initial development of semiotic actions: some landmarks in empirical research

In the study of interactive routines between mother and baby, Cavalcante (2009) asserts that the development of verbal means of communication begins with processes that happen very early between the child and his/her caretakers. Her studies pertain to child language acquisition and emphasize the joint attention construction of touch and speech directed towards the child as fundamental elements in the development of shared forms of comprehension and communication.

In a similar way, in their analysis of the development of mother/baby communication, Lyra (2000, 2006, 2007) and Scorsi and Lyra (2013) show how utterances, rhythm and intonation that the adults use in their interaction with the baby are "chosen" as a result of what is built, at each moment, in the interaction. At each

moment, the child´s and adult´s acts adapt themselves in a continuous dynamic joint construction. In Lyra´s theory of the development of mother/baby communication shows three phases of organization, which are described via the developmental model that the author calls EEA (establishment, extension and abbreviation). At first, the joint attention and sharing of interests between mother and child (Establishment) would take place; then there would be the extension and addition of new elements to the routines initially established (Extension), and finally interactions would occur in a more rapid and smoother way (Abbreviation). The author also suggests that the development should be regarded as a transformation process which simultaneously joins variability and universality.

By the same token, Moro and Rodrigues´ investigations (1991, 1998, 2008) are equally relevant. The authors analyse the origin and role of gestures considered *proto-declaratives, proto-interrogatives* (seen as gestures used to "call for attention" from the adults and to "ask" for actions) and three types of *private gestures – ostensive, indexical and symbolic* (analysed as gestures through which the child can regulate his/her own behaviour). The authors suggest that different communicative functions are initially co-constructed by adult and child from interactional situations (RODRIGUES, 2009). They assume that because he/she cannot act alone in the world, but only together with the adult caretaker, the child starts to understand the methods that his/her culture use in order to produce meaning. While they are semiotically built subjects, adults constantly ascribe meaning to objects and actions, thus enabling the child to start establishing mediated relations with the world (MORO; RODRIGUEZ, 2008). These authors´ hypotheses show relevant parallels with the reflections to be defended here. The origin of proto-oppositive productions is analysed here from observation of the ways the caretakers affirm, oppose and respond to opposition in the interaction with the child (thus building argumentative situations), as well as from the ways they ascribe similar argumentative meanings to the child´s productions.

Equally relevant for our study is another research, undertaken by Pea (1980) about the origins, in children´s speech, of the different usages of negation (*don´t, not, no* and *gone*). Pea (1980) noted that the first negation forms the children used were related to the way the adults produced the same negations in their interaction. He concluded that physical restrictions, linked to head movements and to word utterances such as *no* , (actions that were frequently performed by adults), formed the way the children initially got hold and later mastered these gestures/utterances as signs to indicate negation. In the same vein, Freitas (2012) argues that the usage of certain facial expressions, physical restrictions and prosodic traces of maternal speech would create a *reprehension* context that allows the child to grasp the meanings of ´no´. The present study takes this reference framework as fundamental and focuses on the emergence of opposition, seeking to understand how child actions (such as cries, vocalizations and agitation) establish themselves as proto-oppositive during the period of observation (CASTRO, 2005; LEITÃO, 2010).

Method

In this study we make use of the ideographic perspective, characterised by the systemic analysis of phenomena in their variability and context (SATO et al., 2007; YIN, 2009). We analyse data from two pairs of adult-baby partners, in an attempt to find similarities and variability, to allow us to derive a model of the development of proto-argumentation.

Data construction procedures

Two children were observed: Lara and Pedro (fictitious names). They are both only children of medium class families; the first lived in Recife, while the second lived in Maceio. In addition to these two children, the participants in this study are the adults who interacted with them during video-recorded sessions. They were the parents, the cameraman, uncle and aunts and grandparents. In both cases we made use of the same data construction procedures: video-recorded sessions produced every fortnight in the children´s homes, each lasting 20 minutes, alternating the parents and the research assistant, during the period of time the children were one to six months old. We registered daily situations such as meals, bath time and play.[2]

Analysis procedures

Both macro and micro-genetic analysis procedures (GRANOTT; PARZIALE, 2002; MEIRA, 1994) were used for the data analysis during three phases. During the first, proto-argumentative episodes were identified through close and repeated observation of all the records. *Proto-oppositive episodes* were identified from the children´s actions being interpreted as opposition, which comprises: the parents/interlocutors actions that immediately anticipated an action from the child, being interpreted as opposition; the child´s action according to his/her parents interpretation; and the child´s reaction to the parents' intervention. The second phase in the analysis involved the detailed transcription of these episodes, while the third consisted of raising hypotheses about possible developmental milestones of proto-oppositions.

Unit of analysis

Leitão (2000, 2007, 2008b) assumes as units of analysis in argumentation the three basic parts that composes it: the *argument* (point of view and support elements), the

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2   Lara´s records belong to the Database of the Research Group on Argumentation, (Nucleo de Pesquisa da Argumentação/ NupArg). Post-graduate program in Cognitive Psychology at UFPE, under the responsibility of the second author. Pedro´s data were produced during this study and later added to the Database above.

counter-argument (verbal or non verbal actions that challenge the argument) and the *response* (reactions to counter-arguments). The presence of argumentation in discourse depends on the presence of these three parts, in an explicit or implicit way. In order to analyse proto-argumentation phenomena, Leitão recommends that this very same unit of analysis be adapted in such a way that proto-argumentative episodes be identified from the observation of infantile *productions* that are interpreted by adults as *proto-assertions, proto-oppositions and proto-responses* (LEITÃO, 2010). However, in a way that differs from what can be seen in proper argumentation, proto-argumentative elements are not structured verbalizations, but, instead, they are child productions that are interpreted, structured and treated as linguistic by the adult.

Results[3]

Given the specific goal of this study, the analysis to follow will focus on actions being interpreted as proto-oppositions. Unless otherwise stated, child actions referred to as *opposition,* either in the data transcription or in the analysis, should be taken as *proto-oppositives:* that is child actions interpreted by the adults as oppositions.

The beginning of opposition: crying, whining and crying expression

The analysis of the video-recorded data in both cases made it clear that, during the whole period of observation, forms of crying, whining and crying expression were the child actions most consistently interpreted by the adults as oppositions. While 'crying' was produced in a rhythmic and lasting way, whining was similar, but less strong and briefer, with sudden rises and discontinuous rhythm. This distinction is similar to that used by Fonte (2011) and Cavalcante (1999), who distinguish 'crying' and a milder version of it, using similar criteria based on rhythm and duration. In addition, the authors characterize whining as a type of cry used to call for attention. Crying expression, on the other hand, is marked by eye closure, skin wrinkling around the eyes, forehead and nose, mouth opening and eyebrow lowering.

During this same time period it was noticed that other child actions were also interpreted as opposition (e.g. dropped pacifier or toy, interpreted as opposition when these objects were offered by the adults). Such actions were interpreted by the parents not only as a refusal of the object, but also as oppositions to their offerings, as if the child was irritated with their presence or offerings, demanding that they should be taken away. Parents tended to react by immediately taking them away, far from the child´s sight. A sort of 'development' of this type of interaction will be analysed on

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3   Although the authors recognize the importance of performing a specialized acoustic analysis, mainly of the vocalizations and crying, to allow for a consideration of the prosodic aspects of the child´s productions, such analysis will not be made here, due to the analytical boundaries of the present paper and textual space limitations. Such aspects will be considered in future research.

page 136 (opposition as refusal), when we will describe the circumstances where the parents start to establish routines in the interaction (such as object offering routines), in the hope to get more active participation from the child. The child´s non participation in these routines is then interpreted as a refusal; therefore, opposition. However, this type of interpretation is rarely made, as the child´s action is not yet interpreted as a refusal. Instead of an opposition to performing an action he/she would be able to perform, the child´s action is considered a type of request – the child would like to get rid of the object, but can´t manage to do so, because of which his/her parents take it away for him/her. Crying, whining and crying expressions are the actions most clearly interpreted as oppositions during this initial phase (see graphs I and II, pages 143 and 144). In contrast to this, the child´s quietness, at this phase, seemed to be interpreted as acceptance and compliance.

It should also be noted during this initial phase that the parents ascribe a certain 'demanding' quality to the child´s proto-oppositions. In fact, they seem to consider that because their children were not able yet to get rid of objects/people/situations they rejected, they would express their opposition through crying, as a sort of demand to parents to do something they themselves could not do. In doing so, the parents act in a way that could be called 'complementary' to the child´s actions, by acting and speaking *for* the child. When they speak in the child´s place, they mark the change of enunciator ('utterer') in this 'dialogue' via specific discursive elements such as: speech in *falsetto* (characterised by sharp high pitch tones), the use of childish speech (e.g. 'granny' instead of 'grandmother'), the use of diminutive words (e.g. 'little belly', instead of 'belly') and self reference such as 'mom, mommy and daddy'; as if they took the place of the child, and 'spoke in his/her turn', this way, giving voice to the child as an enunciator. Among such discursive traces, speaking in *falsetto* is the most frequently used. Through this, the adults mark moments in which they 'speak in behalf of the child', by contrast to those moments in which they 'speak for themselves'. Furthermore, it is also possible to notice utterances that were produced by two enunciators: in one part it is produced with *falsetto* (as if the child was the producer), while the other is not (showing that the adult goes back to his place as a producer).

An instance of this type of utterance production can be observed during interaction between Pedro and his mother, when Pedro was only one month old. The baby had just awoken and was lying in his crib, moving his arms and head, when his mother produces (without *falsetto*): *say* (changes to *falsetto) I am already getting annoyed, I want to get up, I want, can´t you understand me, Mommy? I want to get up, yes!* The use of "say", without using *falsetto*, shows the enunciative position of the mother, as if 'she herself' was directing her child a demand. Through this initial utterance, she seems to orient Pedro to 'say' what he feels, as immediately she herself does, using *falsetto*" *I am already getting annoyed (...)*. The use of *falsetto* shows a change of utterer in the mother´s discourse, as if at that moment she 'spoke for Pedro', producing a complaint directed to herself. It is possible to see how the utterance construction works in an

explicit dialogic form: the mother stages a small dialogue between herself and Pedro, giving 'voice' to his point of view through her own speech.

This communicative episode shows how the child´s actions at this initial phase are still not distinguishable and not so clear, apparently not containing any elaboration/distinction that could make interpretation easier. Children seem to produce a very limited number of actions (basically cries and some movements), which they repeat in different contexts. This lack of differentiation makes it difficult to ascribe a particular meaning to each action. Crying, for instance, can be interpreted as sadness, anger, hunger or pain depending on the diverse contexts, even if the crying itself apparently doesn´t vary very much. In the construction of interpretations of the child´s utterances, the adults seem to place themselves in a sort of 'interpretative cycle' which can be characterized by the presence of three activities. At first, they create a hypothesis about the meaning of the child´s behaviour. After that, they act according to this hypothesis, as if to 'test' it, and at the same time they observe how the child reacts to their action. Take, as an example, the fact that if they assume that the child is hungry, they try to feed him/her and observe how he/she reacts. If the child calms down, they interpret that he/she has 'accepted' the adult intervention and 'confirm' their hypothesis (by interpreting quietness as acceptance and confirmation). If, on the other hand, the child reacts by crying, or whining, they interpret this behaviour as if the child resisted the intervention made (feeding), which would lead the adults to abandon the original hypothesis and create a new one, starting a new interpretative cycle. Taking this view, the first oppositions on the child´s part seem to be built from the combination of his/her actions and the adult´s (verbal and non verbal) actions and hypotheses. In this context, crying and whining acquire oppositive roles due to the parents' interpretation and actions.

Continuing on, we reproduce part of the transcription and analysis of one of the first episodes that were registered with Pedro, one which seems to us compatible with the interpretative construction we have just described (similar aspects were also registered with Lara´s data). During the presentation of this episode, as well as some others, we combine the narration of the moments that precede or interleave with other episodes, and the transcriptions themselves.[4] The following episode took place in the paternal grandparents´ house, when the child (Pedro) was one month and one week old. The child and his mother are sitting on the sofa and the mother plays with the baby; grandmother occasionally interacts with him. The child´s father uses the camera.

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[4] Symbols used in the transcriptions: [ ] for the researcher´s comments on the participants´ speeches, for speech in *falsetto* and identification of the duration of crying/whining and crying expression in Lara, in seconds. ( ) for the non verbal actions of the participants. An exclamation mark (!) identifies exclamative utterances. The symbol (:) to the right of a letter indicates sound lengthening. The symbol (I) indicates simultaneous actions. The symbol (+) indicates pauses up to two seconds. The symbol (++) indicates pauses that last for more than two seconds. (...) indicates incomprehensible speech. (/...) indicates interrupted or unfinished speech. (↑) indicates rapid raising of intonation, generally used for reprehension. Finally, and due to space limitations of the present paper, the symbol (...) indicates that parts of the transcription have been suppressed.

Episode 1

Pedro is quiet, looking at his mother. The mother looks at Pedro, moves her head down and says (3m.45s): *hey, where´s granny? Where is granny? Granny? Granny: where´s granny?* Pedro moves a bit and yawns.

1. Mother (3m 57s): (Looks at Pedro, moves her head down) *Granny*

2. *where is she? Hey? Hey love*?

3. **Pedro** (3m 59s): (Pedro is agitated and produces some sounds, as if about to cry)

4. **Mother** (4m 03s) *Where is Granny? I don´t want to know about Granny now, what I*

5. *want is to stand up [falsetto]* (She makes Pedro stand up on her lap)

6. **Pedro** (4m 06s): (Looks at his mother)

7. Mother (4m 09s): (Looks at Pedro) hum? hum?

8. Pedro (4m 10s): (Produces crying expression)

9. Mother (4m 11s) *What happened? What do you want? Tell me.*

10. Pedro (4m 13 s): (Keeps crying expression)

11. Mother (4m 15s): (Kisses Pedro, turns him in the direction of the camera) *Look, Daddy!*

12. Pedro (4m 17s): (Keeps crying expression and starts to produce some sounds)

13. Mother (4m 18s): *Say Da:dy: (!)*

14. Pedro (4m 20s): (Produces some sounds)

15. Mother (4m 22s): (Agitates Pedro) *What do you want?*

16. Pedro (4m 24s): (Stops crying expression and looks backwards)

17. Mother (4m 26s) (Holds Pedro again, facing her) *Do you want the pacifier?*

18. Pedro (4m 27s): (Looks backwards, puts his tongue out).

19. Mother (4m 28s) (Agitates Pedro) *Hey? Hum Hum.*

20. Pedro (4m 32s): (Moves his head and produces sounds similar to whining)

21. Mother (4m 33s): No! (!). *You don't want? Tell Mummy, come on* (!) (turning

22. Pedro and agitating him)

23. Pedro (4m 35s): (Looks at mother, quiet).

In this episode, Pedro´s mother tries to direct his attention to his grandmother (Lines 1 and 2). Pedro gets agitated, produces some sounds and crying expressions (Line 3), then his mother says: *I don´t want to know about granny now, what I want is to stand up* (Lines 4 and 5)*.* She seems to interpret Pedro´s actions (agitation, sounds, and crying expression) as oppositions, as if Pedro manifested discomfort for being kept lying down (*what I want is to stand up)*. Then his mother lifts him, trying to resolve his discomfort, acting for him. However, Pedro does not calm down, but produces another crying expression (Line 8). In view of this action, his mother questions him: *what happened? What do you want? Tell me* (Line 9), abandoning her prior interpretation (according to which Pedro wanted to stand up). She considers that the child is opposed to that interpretation and consequently asks him to express his wish: *tell me.*

Next, Pedro´s mother turns him towards his father, producing *Look. Daddy* (Line 11), apparently ascribing a new meaning to his behaviour and interpreting it as a wish to see his father. However, Pedro, once again, does not calm down, but reinforces his crying expression (Line 12). His mother then goes back to asking: *what do you want? Do you want the pacifier?* (Lines 15 and 17). She once again seems to interpret his actions as a refusal of her previous interpretations, and creates a new hypothesis, according to which Pedro does not want to see his father, but wants his pacifier instead. Again Pedro whines (Line 20) and his mother once again ascribes an oppositive meaning to his whining, as a lack of agreement, a sign of her previous interpretation being incorrect: *No (!) You don´t want? Tell Mummy, come on(!)* (Line 21).

In this episode, it is possible to note how Pedro´s mother creates a sort of interpretative cycle in her interaction with him. At first, she seems to ascribe a certain meaning to his actions, creating a hypothesis ('point of view') about his behaviour (he would like to see grandmother, to stand up, to see his father, to get his pacifier). However, if Pedro produces crying expressions or whining in all these situations, these actions are interpreted by his mother as 'lack of agreement', oppositions that make her abandon her initial 'point of view' and create a new meaning for the child´s behaviour. This cycle seems to reflect the three minimal elements that define argumentation according to Leitão (2007): at first an *assertion* is made – a 'point of view' is created – about Pedro´s behaviour. Going on, Pedro (re)acts, with actions (mainly whining and producing crying expressions), to which the mother ascribes an opposite meaning (*proto-opposition*) and responds to them by abandoning her initial 'point of view' and producing a new assertion (creating a new 'point of view') about Pedro´s behaviour (*response).* As a result, this episode shows the interpretative actions made by Pedro´s mother, elucidating the way she interprets some of the child´s actions (whining and crying expressions) as oppositions, speaking and acting for him.

Opposition as refusal

During the period of observations, it was possible to see how new actions differentiate and become integrated with the 'oppositive repertoire' of the children. As the children develop, the adults start to expect them to accomplish more specific actions, asking for a more complex participation in their daily routines, thus seeming to gradually demand more from them. Apparently it was this goal that made the adults repeat routines in their interaction with the children, offering certain objects, as if hoping that the child would produce specific actions. Whenever the child reacted in an expected way (e.g. accepting the object being offered), they interpreted this action as agreement. However, when the child did not react and/or refused the objects and stimuli, the adults tended to interpret this action as opposition. While in the previously described phase the adults seemed to interpret lack of action as 'lack of capacity', and acted for the child, now they seemed to interpret lack of action as a 'deliberate choice' on the child´s part, as opposition, or refusal to interact. In the creation of these interpretations, the adults seemed to anchor themselves in the fact that the children frequently react positively in some situations (when they produce the expected actions). Otherwise, when they do not, this may indicate that the child actively opposes them and refuses to act.

An example of this type of interpretation can be observed in a piece of interaction between Pedro (two months and two weeks old) and his father. In this episode, Pedro´s father tries to give him the pacifier, but Pedro doesn´t grasp it. Then the adult says: '*you don´t want? Hey, cutie?*' in a way he seems to interpret the child´s action (not grasping the pacifier) as a refusal, which makes him conclude that the child doesn´t want it. Following on, in this same episode, Pedro´s father offers him the pacifier again, but this time the child reacts opening his mouth and accepting it. At this moment, his father interprets that the child wanted the pacifier. It is possible to observe how the child´s development happens in a regulated way. As the child develops and broadens the actions he/she can produce, it becomes possible for the adults to ascribe to and/or ask for new actions from them, thus demanding more and more and altering their interpretations – in this case altering the way in which they interpret the child's lack of action after an adult offer. As they observe the child´s development, the adults stimulate this development by creating situations that inspire the child´s actions and requiring him/her to perform specific actions.

Another example of this type of stimulation, similar to the offering of the pacifier, comes later when Pedro is lying down and his father tries to lift him. But, instead of touching him in a passive way, placing him on his lap and lifting him, the father holds his arms and starts to pull them, making the child lift his own neck and head. By doing so, his father stimulates him to perform a certain action, even in a very preliminary way, in the process of standing up. We argue that through actions of this type the adult tries to stimulate the child´s development by broadening his/her role

in the interaction. Despite this, the child´s actions produced at this moment are not completely free, but they are made possible by the parents, that is to say, they are limited by the situations and contexts which the parents specifically create to make the children act.

Now, we analyse a further example showing similar types of constructions. This time we take an episode involving Lara, at three months of age, where her mother tries to make her drink the rest of the juice out of her bottle. Video recording of this episode took place in grandmother´s home; the child was on the sofa of the living room, and the camera was used by one of her aunts.

Episode 2

1- Mother (5s): (making Lara lie down on her lap) *You are looking at the camera, are*

2- *you? Take the juice (!)*

3- Lara (7s): (Gets agitated, stretches her body backwards and produces crying expression)

4- Mother (8s) (Fixes bottle in the child´s mouth) [without *falsetto]*: melon juice, the

5- one you like [*falsetto] (I am) not annoyed, annoyed, annoyed.*

6- Lara (11s) (She has the bottle in her mouth and calms down (++) gets agitated,

7- moves her arms and chest)

8- Mother (15s) *(falsetto) Hum, what a delicious juice (!)*(Holding bottle in

9- Lara´s mouth)

As shown, Lara´s mother tries to make her drink the rest of the juice (Lines 1 and 2). Lara moves her body backwards and produces a crying expression (Line 3), an action that was interpreted by her mother as opposition (doesn´t want to drink the juice). Lara goes on drinking, reacting in a way her mother expected (Lines 6 and 7). Mother then says *(falsetto) 'what a delicious juice',* giving 'voice' to Lara and showing signs of interpreting the child´s action as an agreement and indication that she likes that juice, because of this she drinks it (Line 8). Let´s now examine a third episode, which follows this one:

Episode 3

10- Mother (57s): (Holding bottle in Lara´s mouth)

11- Lara (1m): (Doesn´t seem to drink the juice, produces some sounds)

12- Mother (1m3s): (Takes bottle out of Lara´s mouth) *You don´t want (it)?*

13- Lara (1m5s): (Looks quietly to camera)

14. Mother (1m7s): (Places herself on the sofa) *Take (it) (!)* Puts bottle back in

15- Lara`s mouth)

16- Lara (1m8s): (She has the bottle in her mouth, but doesn´t seem to drink (+)

17- (gently moves her arms and head)

18- Mother: (1m12s): (Takes bottle out of Lara`s mouth) *I think she doesn´t want it,*

19- *she won´t drink it* [very low]

In this episode, Lara´s mother once again tries to make her finish her juice. However, Lara doesn´t react/drink (Line 11). Lara´s mother takes the bottle out of her mouth and says "*you don´t want (it)?*" (Line 12), by interpreting her lack of reaction to the bottle as an opposition. Then, Lara´s mother goes back to trying to fix the bottle in the child´s mouth (Lines 14 and 15), but again Lara doesn´t react/drink, only gently moving her arms and head (Lines 16 and 17). Her mother then takes the bottle out of her mouth and says "*I think that she doesn´t want it, she won´t drink (it)*" (Lines 18 and 19), making explicit the way in which she interprets Lara´s actions, by concluding that the child doesn´t want to drink the juice. We note at this moment that opposition is marked by the actions of 'moving away from', or 'not accepting' (the bottle in this case). The mother brings the bottle close to the child, whose reaction (not accepting it) is then interpreted as an opposition/refusal.

From opponent to proponent

During the final stages of the period under investigation, it was possible to observe how the child´s actions seemed to get clearer to the parents, who interpreted them and responded more rapidly and with fewer hesitations. Such actions also seem more related to the contexts, more directly related to the environment and objects around them – the child actively going towards whatever attracted his/her attention and moving away from whatever annoyed him/her (by contrast to earlier stages when the parents did only act to bring or move away objects). By doing so, the children made it possible for the adults to ascribe a meaning to their actions more easily. Also the children seemed to acquire the ability to act in a way more directly opposed to the adult, by moving away from what they rejected and searching for objects, even when an adult directly opposed this action, by trying to avoid the child reaching an object. Finally, we can observe, at this stage, how the child´s actions, which were interpreted as oppositions, become more and more complex, not limited only to cries, but now including vocalizations and the handling of objects.

To the extent that the children actions acquired a clearer meaning for the parents, it was possible to observe how they (the parents) seemed to feel less and less need to speak *for* the children, to complement the children's actions with their utterances (as they had done previously). Instead of doing so, the parents now start to speak *with* the children. Based on these observations, it seems possible to conclude that as the child´s ability to act more directly over their environment increases, the parents start to ascribe a certain 'point of view ', and they now concentrate on trying to defend their own points of view, in opposition to the child´s. Instead of ascribing to the child only the role of opponent, who reacts to the parents´ actions, they also start to ascribe to them the role of proponent of new actions.

A clear example of this can be seen in Lara´s case, in a brief section of interaction between the child and her mother when Lara was five months and three weeks of age. Lara was sitting on her mother`s lap and seemed interested in the belt of her dress, as she held it and tried to pull it. At this moment her mother says: 'A*re you going to undress me, are you?* ' and *'No↑*', trying to get it back from Lara´s hand. From what has been registered in this episode, we can say that at that moment Lara´s mother was pondering the meaning of the child´s action (why would she pull the belt), by suggesting that this action was not planned by her, the mother, but surprisingly it was initiated by Lara. In addition to this, we can observe that the mother no longer speaks *for* Lara, but instead, for herself, in an opposition to Lara´s action, expressing her disapproval and asking Lara to interrupt the action, to release the belt. Therefore, this episode makes it possible to notice a type of differentiation in Lara´s actions; she not only does respond to actions that have been initiated by the adults, but her actions now seem to 'propose something' which the mother in turn, opposes: Lara pulls the belt, while her mother wishes her to release it.

This example shows that the child starts to act over objects and people, as if experiencing her role of 'agent' in the interaction. Based on Leitão (2012), it would be possible to say that a *'discursive displacement'* takes place here, in a way in which the child no longer is placed only in the opponent role (the one who reacts to stimuli from someone else), but also in the proponent role, that of someone who acts over the environment with a 'point of view of her own'. It is interesting to observe how the new actions of the child start to be captured in the maternal discourse in such a way as to consider the discursive role of the child becoming more and more complex. The child´s action seems to be no longer interpreted as just simple opposition, but also as a form of complex contraposition, via which not only does she oppose the adult, but also 'proposes' an action.

Finally, with regard to the child´s actions interpreted as oppositions during this period of time, it is possible to observe how crying, whining and crying expressions start to get established as child oppositive actions. Interpreted as oppositions from an early stage in the two cases under analysis, these actions continue to be interpreted in this way. However, at this moment, the parents start to interpret actions as if their

children start to intentionally make use of these actions, which suggests that they start to establish their oppositive status in the interaction. In order to illustrate these constructions, we reproduce part of a transcription and analysis of the last recording with Pedro, when he was five months, three weeks and two days old. In this episode, Pedro was in his baby seat (used for feeding him, with a tray at the front), being fed by his mother, who gives him a piece of banana with a spoon; the child´s grandmother is also present (camera standing on a tripod).

Episode 4

1- Pedro (7m29s): (looks at dish, verbalizes, raises his arms, hits the tray)

2- Mother (7m30s): (moves the spoon towards Pedro) *'all right, mother, take it'*

3- Pedro (7m31s): (opens his mouth and eats, holds spoon in his mouth and verbalizes)

4-Mother (7m37s): (tries to get the spoon from Pedro) *'what happened, son? Are you sleepy,*

5- *aren´t you?'*

In this episode, as in others at the same period, a type of cycle is created, where Pedro acts looking at the dish, vocalising, raising his arms and hitting the tray (Line 1). Given these actions, his mother reacts by taking the spoon to his mouth quickly to feed him (Line 2). From these interactions it is possible to conclude that Pedro´s mother interprets his actions as demands, as if Pedro hit the tray trying to call for her attention, persuading her to take the spoon to his mouth. The repetition of this cycle of actions seems to suggest that Pedro starts to understand that he can affect the environment and get things done via the adults, in this case, to get food from his mother, starting to play a protagonist role in interaction (the role of proposer).

Episode 5

5- Mother (10m46s): W*hat is it you want? Do you want the dish? Is it the dish?*

6- Pedro (10m49s): (verbalizes with crying expression, raises his arms)

7- Mother (10m52s): (she brings the dish and places it on Pedro´s tray) *Take it.*

8- Pedro (10m53s): (looks at dish, touches it, dilutes his crying expression, vocalises)

9- Mother (10m56s): (sits down in the sofa in front of Pedro) *"You are crafty(!)*

10- *Shall we have a bath?*

11- Pedro (10m58s): (moves the dish and almost lets it fall down)

12- Mother (11m): (holds the dish and takes it away from Pedro) *a, a, a, a:*

13- Pedro (11m01s): (looks at his mother, produces crying expression, and whines)

14- Mother (11m02s): (brings back the dish and takes it away from Pedro, producing some

15 - sounds)

16- Pedro (11m03s): (looks at his mother, rises his arms, produces crying expressions and

17- whines).

18- Mother (11m04s) (places the dish on his tray)

19- Pedro (11m04s): (looks at dish, dilutes crying expression and stops whining

20- Mother (11m05s): B*oy, you are smart, see?*

21- Pedro (11m06s): (touches the dish quietly)

22- Mother (11m10s): *Look at this, Mum!*

23- Pedro (11m14s): (raises the dish)

24- Mother (11m15s): (gets the dish from Pedro) *Give it to Mummy.*

25- Pedro (11m17s): (looks at dish, produces crying expression and whines)

In this episode, Pedro´s mother asks "What is it you want? Do you want the dish, Is it the dish?", and gives Pedro the dish, interpreting that the child wants to play with it (Lines 5, 6 and 7). As soon as Pedro gets hold of the dish, he dilutes his crying expression (Line 8). He then touches the dish and almost lets it fall down, so his mother takes it away from him (Line 12). Pedro looks at his mother, produces a crying expression and whines (Line 13). We highlight the way in which the mother brings the dish close to Pedro, to take it away soon after, as if testing his reactions. She notes that Pedro reacts by whining every time the dish is taken away (Line 16). In a similar way, when the dish is brought back (Line 18), Pedro immediately reacts diluting his crying expression and stopping the whining (Line 19). Then his mother says: 'Boy, you are smart, see!' (Line 20) as if she were surprised with his behaviour. The mother notes that Pedro starts to make use of his whining, hoping that she would respond to him, by persuading her to give him the dish.

It should be observed that Pedro seems to make use of his crying expression and whining to show irritation and to try to persuade his mother to do something (give the

dish). Here, Pedro reacts rapidly and repetitively to his mother´s intervention, always whining whenever the dish is taken away, and diluting his whining as soon as the dish is brought back. It seems plausible to hypothesise that the continuing reactions and interpretations on the parents´ part oriented his development, by stimulating him to repeat those actions (crying/whining) that were continually defined and interpreted by them.

Macro-analysis: idiosyncrasies in the development of proto-opposition

In general, this study describes three stages in the developmental process of the child´s actions interpreted as oppositions. The first one is identified by the presence of crying, whining and crying expression as the child´s actions are most consistently interpreted as oppositions. In the second, refusal is added to the child´s repertoire. Finally, the child´s actions start to be interpreted as complex contrapositions through which not only can the child oppose him/herself to the adult, but also can offer actions from his/her 'own' point of view. This general pattern can be observed in both cases under analysis, although there are variations in some characteristics of the developmental path of each child. The graphs presented make these variations explicit. In the graphs all the child´s actions interpreted as oppositions (by the adults who interacted with them) are registered, during the six months of data collection. The continuous line identifies all the moments where crying (crying, whining and crying expression) were interpreted as opposition. The pecked line shows the frequency with which the child´s actions were interpreted as opposition in the context of 'refusal' (the parents offer an action or object and interpret that the child refuses/opposes it). The dotted line comprises the child´s actions interpreted as complex oppositions, and was created based on the number of times the child´s action was not only interpreted as opposition, but also as proposition. Note that the latter only does start to appear during the two last months under analysis. Referring to the graphs it is possible to observe that the development of Lara and Pedro present distinctions.

Graph 1 – Pedro´s actions interpreted as oppositions[5]
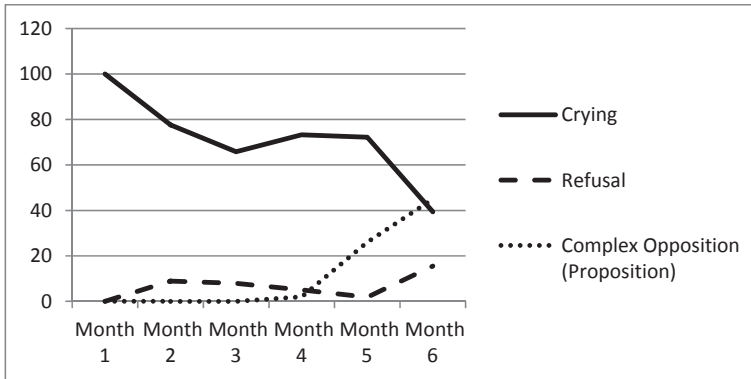
In Pedro´s case, crying appears as the action most frequently interpreted as an opposition, showing a constant tendency to diminish during the period under observation. In relation to the other actions that were interpreted as oppositions, these appear less frequently at the initial phases of development, and show a reasonably constant tendency to go up during the same period. These observations suggest that in Pedro´s case crying gets established as an oppositive sign first and is more frequently used. However, to the extent Pedro develops and widens his capacity to perform different actions, the frequency with which crying is interpreted as opposition falls, while the frequency of the other actions starts to increase, thus suggesting that these actions progressively get established as opposition signs in the interaction.

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[5] For the construction of the graph we considered all the episodes under analysis. In Pedro´s case 105 episodes were demarked during the whole period (02 episodes in the first month, 28 in the second, 20 in the third, 17 in the fourth, 19 in the fifth and 19 in the sixth). In Lara´s case 118 episodes were demarked (24 episodes in the first month, 22 in the second, 13 in the third, 23 in the fourth, 16 in the fifth and 20 in the sixth month). For the construction of this graph all the child´s actions interpreted as opposition were counted, within each episode; more than one child action could be interpreted as opposition. In Pedro´s case, 291 actions were identified and interpreted as oppositions, in Lara´s case, 170 actions were interpreted as oppositions.

Graph 2 – Lara´s actions interpreted as oppositions
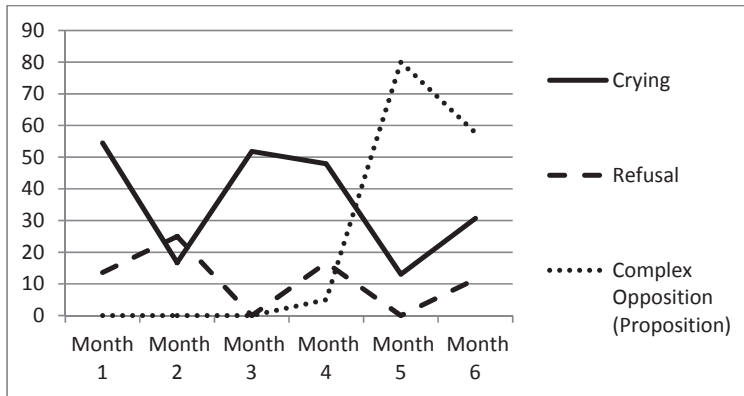
Source: Survey's data.

By contrast, in Lara´s case, it is possible to observe how the actions under analysis show abrupt oscillations in the frequency with which they appear during the period under observation. Nevertheless, even in face of these oscillations, it is possible to detect the same developmental tendency found in Pedro´s case. Firstly, we observe how crying also appears as the child´s action most frequently interpreted as opposition during the initial stages of development. In contrast, it is possible to observe the inversely proportional relation between the crying frequency and the frequency of the other actions interpreted as oppositions. When the crying frequency diminishes (at the second and fifth month), the frequency of refusal increases (at the second month complex opposition had not yet appeared, while refusal had, and its frequency increased during this period). In a similar way, when crying frequency increases (at the fourth month), the frequency of the other actions diminishes. At the fourth month, complex opposition starts to appear, although still in a very limited way, showing more expressively at the fifth and sixth month.

Concluding remarks

According to the theoretical framework adopted in this investigation, we observe that the process of development described is built up in a very co-regulated way (MORATO, 1996; VYGOTSKY, 1980). Adult actions stimulate the process of child development, while they themselves are modified in view of this development. Although the adults´ participation at first may seem the majority – since the child´s actions are still limited and undifferentiated – it is due to the characteristics of the child´s actions that adult interpretations are made possible, even at this early phase. In the final stages of the period under observation and as the child´s development progresses, the child´s

role seems to stand out. The child is increasingly considered as someone who proposes actions and opposes some of the adult's actions. Underlying this transition we can highlight some factors that make it possible and drive it forward. In first place we can emphasize the constant and continuous reaction on the adults' part towards the child's actions. The fact that they keep a certain routine and stability in the child's everyday life is an important factor that makes it possible for the child to learn and internalise the culturally established meanings of the actions that emerge from the interaction (MORATO, 1996; VYGOTSKY, 1980).

A second aspect stands out is the importance of the adults' responses during the process under investigation. The parents' actions, constantly responding to and producing meaning for the children' actions, make it possible for certain actions to be established as meaningful – acquiring a meaning - in the mother-child dialogue (BAHKTIN; VOLOCHINOV, 1986). In both cases under analysis, it is clear how crying/whining that appear initially in a way that could be considered undifferentiated, start to acquire the specific meanings of opposition and 'attention calling' (depending on the meaning the adult ascribes them). We propose that this transition is favoured by the way in which the adult constantly limits and interprets these behaviours, reacting to them in a consistent way (BAHKTIN; VOLOCHINOV, 1986).

It should also be emphasized that it was the theoretical/methodological framework adopted in this study that made it possible, during the period under observation, to identify not only the progressive assignment of meaning to the child' actions, but also a type of displacement in the discursive role that he/she occupied. The child was no longer considered an opponent, but seemed also able to assume the role of proponent in the interactions that were observed (LEITÃO, 2012).

The preliminary investigation of the proto-argumentative actions described here was built from observation of the similarities and idiosyncrasies in the two cases investigated. Through this descriptive effort, it was possible to characterise three stages that seem crucial to us in the development of the actions under investigation. These stages, which appeared in a similar way in both cases, equally showed developmental peculiarities deserving to be registered. Consequently, we suggest that this first description should be widened and altered in the future, particularly by investigating other situations that are more distinct from the ones analysed in this paper.

▪ *RESUMO: O presente artigo focaliza a gênese de produções proto-opositivas infantis, definidas como movimentos corporais, gestuais e vocalizações infantis interpretadas como oposições a comandos, vontades e ações. Assume-se, como proposto em Leitão (2010; LEITÃO; FERREIRA, 2006), que tais produções constituam antecedentes remotos da contraposição e da resposta à oposição, vistas como constituintes centrais da argumentação. Fundamentando-se*

em referências que inserem a gênese da ação e cognição humanas no âmbito das relações dialogicamente constituídas (BAKHTIN; VOLOCHINOV, 1986; VYGOTSKY, 1980; 2012; WERTSCH, 1978), este estudo analisa registros videográficos produzidos com duas crianças, entre a quarta semana e os seis meses de vida, em interação com adultos, em contexto doméstico. Com base em análises micro e macrogenéticas desses registros (GRANOTT; PARZIALE, 2002), três momentos foram identificados no processo de desenvolvimento de produções proto-opositivas: atribuição de sentido opositivo ao choro; construção de produções infantis como 'recusa' e, por fim, interpretação da ação infantil como contraposição complexa. Neste último, que implica um deslocamento do lugar discursivo atribuído à criança (LEITÃO, 2012), esta passa a ser vista não só como oponente de ações iniciadas pelo adulto, mas, também, como proponente de novas ações.

- *PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Protoargumentação. Argumentação infantil. Desenvolvimento cognitivo.*

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