

*Maternal Verb Usage and Its Relationship With Lexical Diversity in Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder*

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Early maternal verb input is associated with better language outcomes in typically developing children (Hadley, Rispoli, & Hsu, 2016). However, this topic has not been widely researched in children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD), a neurodevelopmental disorder characterized by social and linguistic deficits (American Psychiatric Association, 2013). This study examines the relationship between verb input of mothers and their children's lexical diversity (Malvern & Richards, 2002). Using audio-recordings collected in the families' homes through free-play interactions, we transcribed mother and child utterances in CLAN (MacWhinney, 2000) and computed proportion of maternal verb usage and children's D scores (measure of lexical diversity; Lai & Schwanenflugel, 2016). Maternal verb usage was represented by the amount of verbs per utterance that the mother used during the interaction while the child's lexical diversity consisted of the number of different words used in the language sample. Our results indicate that higher maternal verb usage is positively related to higher child lexical diversity. These findings may inform early language intervention practices for children with ASD.