Titolo	
Relationships between structural and acoustic properties of maternal talk and children's early word recognition.	
Autori	
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Abstract dell'articolo

This study aimed to investigate specific associations between structural and acoustic characteristics of infant-directed (ID) speech and word recognition. Thirty Italian acquiring children and their mothers were tested when the children were 1;3. Children's word recognition was measured with the looking-while-listening task. Maternal ID speech was recorded during a mother–child interaction session and analyzed in terms of amount of speech, lexical and syntactic complexity, positional salience of nouns and verbs, high pitch and variation, and temporal characteristics. The analyses revealed that final syllable length positively predicts children's accuracy in word recognition whereas the use of verbs in the utterance-final position has an adverse effect on children's performance. Several of the expected associations between ID speech features and children's word recognition skills, however, were not significant. Taken together, these findings suggest that only specific structural and acoustic properties of ID speech can facilitate word recognition in children, thereby fostering their ability to extrapolate sound patterns from the stream and map them with their referents.

Parole chiave 3-5

Comprehension, infant-directed speech, language acquisition, prosody, word recognition.

Breve presentazione (max 100 parole)

Lo studio approfondisce il legame tra input materno e riconoscimento lessicale in una fase precoce dello sviluppo comunicativo linguistico, poco affrontato in letteratura. Inoltre, rispetto ai lavori già esistenti, si caratterizza per un approccio multi-metodo alla misurazione dei costrutti indagati, facendo ricorso all'osservazione diretta e all'utilizzo di un paradigma sperimentale. Infine, i risultati evidenziano, per la prima volta in letteratura, l'esistenza di un'associazione significativa tra l'allungamento della sillaba finale, nel parlato materno, e le competenze infantili di riconoscimento lessicale dei nomi.

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