

Dyadic synchronisation in a therapeutic relationship



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Topic

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Longitudinal case study on the effect of
the treatment Emerging Body Language,
that is based on
dyadic synchrony
in a client-therapist interaction

Dyadic synchrony

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Infant-caregiver synchrony is a phenomenon that consists of three necessary components:

- a maintained, shared focus of attention
- temporal coordination
- contingency

It is achieved primarily via attunement on the part of the caregiver

Harrist, A. W. & Waugh, R. M. (2002). Dyadic synchrony. Its structure and function in children's development. *Developmental Review*, 22, 555-592.

Dyadic synchrony

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“The ability to achieve synchrony may represent a crucial developmental achievement for significant dyadic relationships, one that facilitates social, emotional, and cognitive growth for the child”.

Harrist, A. W. & Waugh, R. M. (2002). Dyadic synchrony. Its structure and function in children’s development. *Developmental Review*, 22, 555-592.

Method: Research design

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- Subject: cliënt-therapist dyad
- Naturalistic setting: foster home situation
- Longitudinal: 8 months
- Intervention: client-therapist meetings two hours twice a week

Method: Participants

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Therapist at the time of the intervention:

A Dutch women of 24 years-old studying special education at the Radboud University Nijmegen.

Method: Participants

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Client at the time of the interventions:

A Dutch girl of 7, 5 years old, living with her foster family for 6 years now.

Her IQ is expected to be on average.

She is diagnosed with Reactive Attachment Disorder and ADHD

Problematic behavior

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Main problems:

- Self-determined behaviour
- No focus, no concentration

Consequence:

- No attachment relationship with foster parents or other people
- No friends
- Low self-identity
- Delay in the socio-emotional development
- At risk of being placed into residential care

Treatment: Emerging Body Language

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Goals:

- Future: capable of forming attachment relationships
- Nearby future: experience mutuality, reciprocity and togetherness or harmony in the relationship with the therapist

Intervention

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Creating dyadic synchrony:

- Create moments of shared focus of attention
- Create moments of temporal synchrony

Action:

- Therapist follows gaze direction of the client
- Therapist invites client to follow her gaze direction
- Therapist carefully tries to match her rhythm with the rhythm of the client

Research Question

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Will dyadic synchrony emerge, with respect to gaze direction, as a result of the intervention?

Procedure

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- 8 films in 8 months
- Coding: 7-10 minutes each film
- Creating categorical time series for both the therapist and the client

Operationalisation of the variable gaze direction

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- Gaze direction towards the other's face
- Gaze direction towards the play / game
- Gaze direction towards all other remaining directions

Analysis

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Categorical Cross Recurrence Quantification Analysis

- Two time series of coded behaviour ‘gaze direction’: therapist and client
- Investigate the percentage of recurrent behavior that is performed at the same time.

Film: 26-10-2011

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- In this film the therapist and the client are sitting on a trampoline playing with different types of wool.
- The client displays volatile and restless behavior
- The therapist tries to catch the attention of the client

Film: 12-12-2011

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- In this film both the therapist and the client are eating a cake.
- One can see turntaking behavior: look what I do and look what you are doing...

Film: 09-01-1012

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- In this film the therapist and the client are both dancing.
- The therapist wants to dance together and to move at the same time as the client.
- The client is dancing independent of the therapist and is not aware of the movements of the therapist.

Film: 16-04-2012

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- In this film they are painting each other's face.
- They change roles in painting and being painted.
- They show turn taking behavior.

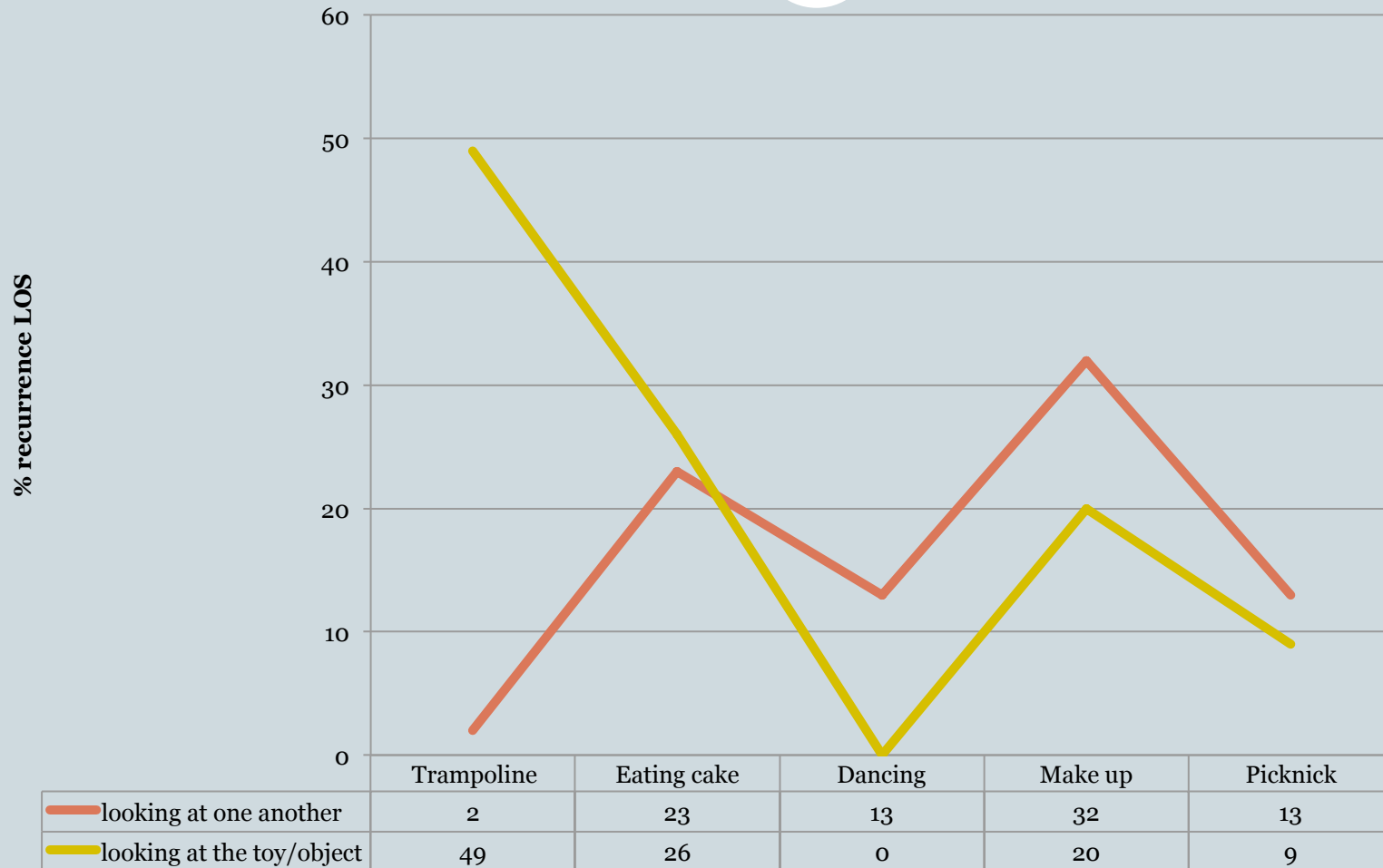
Film: 21-05-2012

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- In this film the therapist and the client are having a picnic in the park.
- It seems that they are having a very nice time together.
- The therapist doesn't need to work so hard to get the attention of the client.

Recurrence on Line of Synchrony

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Discussion

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Goal:

Client and therapist can experience mutuality, reciprocity and togetherness or harmony in their relationship

The films reveal that the goal is achieved.

Discussion

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Research question:

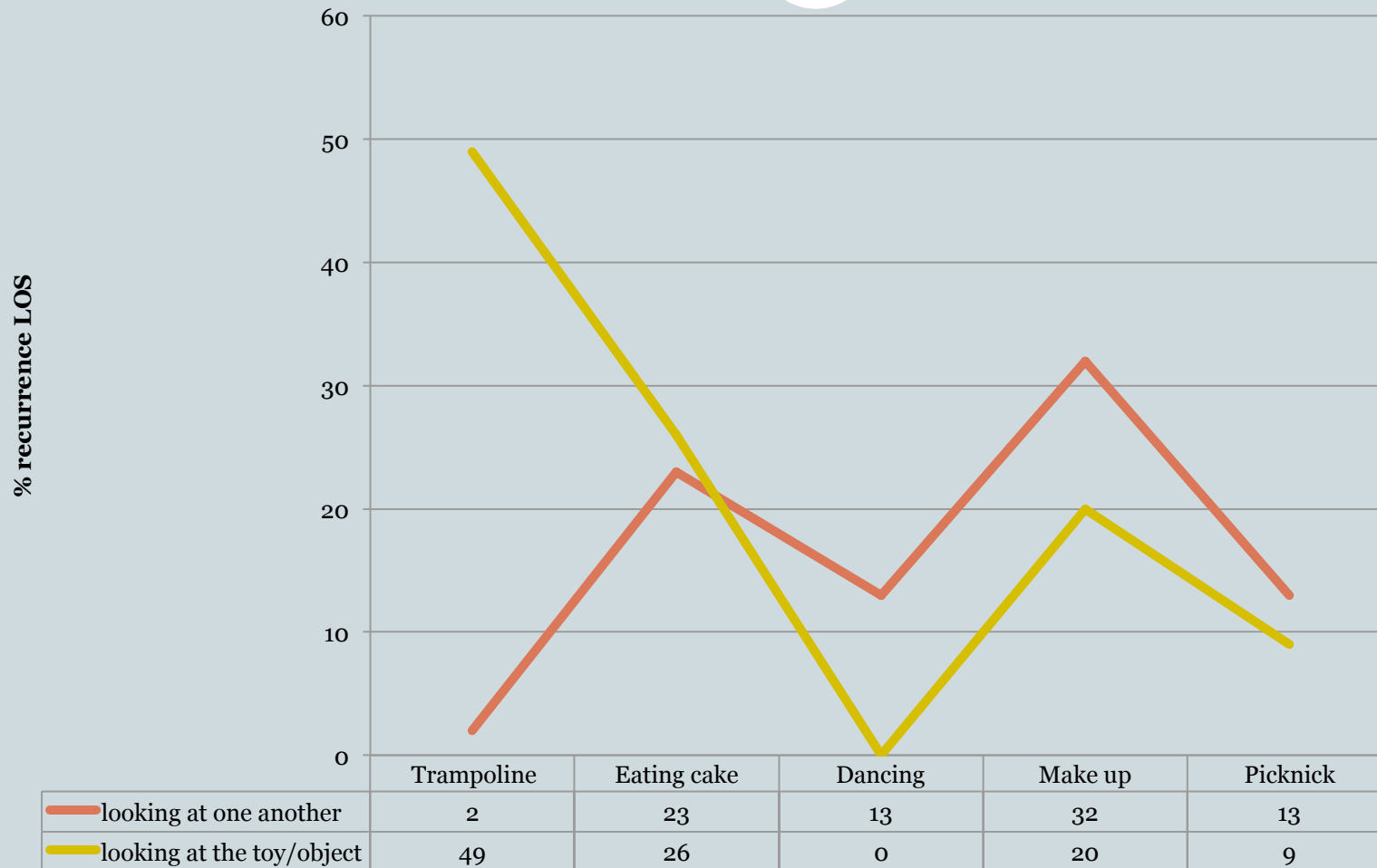
Will dyadic synchrony emerge, with respect to gaze direction, as a result of the intervention?

Looking at the results.....

How to answer the research question?

Recurrence on Line of Synchrony

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Discussion

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How to measure dyadic synchrony?