

# Effects of Latine Parent Calm Authority on the Language of Autistic Children

Martha P. Golemon, Sebastian Oliva, Erin Kosloski, & Pamela R. Rollins  
 University of Texas at Dallas, School of Behavioral and Brain Sciences



## BACKGROUND

- Reciprocal communication between parents\* and their children is essential for developing the language and social communication skills of all young children.<sup>1</sup>
- Parent-child interactions in Latine families have been shown to center around the cultural value of *respeto*.<sup>2</sup>
- There is often a misconception that *respeto* is an authoritarian or harsh parenting style.<sup>2</sup> Latine parents, however, convey their expectations with a calm and affectionate authority. This is known as Parent Calm Authority (PCA).<sup>2</sup>
- Latine children in turn respond with affiliative obedience, known as Child Affiliative Obedience (CAO).<sup>2</sup>
- In a previous study, parents' PCA was found to have a small correlation with the number of total and different words their typically developing (TD) children produced.<sup>2</sup>

\*Parent can refer to any caregiver of the child.

## PURPOSE & HYPOTHESIS

- The purpose of this study was to evaluate the relationship between Latine parents' use of calm authority and their young autistic children's language.
- We hypothesized that the PCA level of Latine parents would positively influence the vocabulary and complexity of the language of their autistic children.

## PARTICIPANTS

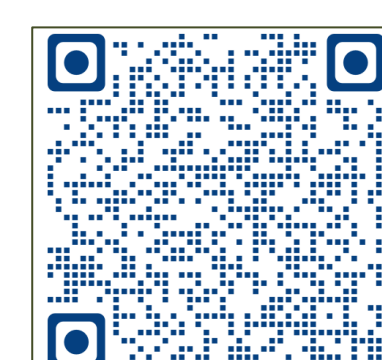
- Twenty-six Latine parents and their autistic children (mean ADOS-2 = 7.92, SD = 2.06; mean age = 37.23 months, SD = 8.05) participated in a broader Randomized Control Trial.<sup>3</sup>



## CONTACT

Email: [martha.golemon@utdallas.edu](mailto:martha.golemon@utdallas.edu)

Social Communication Lab:



## MATERIALS AND METHODS

### Procedure

- Children came to the lab at baseline for a battery of standardized assessments, including the Autism Diagnostic Observation Schedule Second Edition (ADOS-2)<sup>4</sup> and the Mullen Scales of Early Learning (MSEL).<sup>5</sup> The Communication and Symbolic Behavior Scales Developmental Profile (CSBS-DP),<sup>6</sup> and the Vineland Adaptive Behavior Scales Second Edition (VABS-II)<sup>7</sup> were conducted both pre- and post-intervention; results below are from post-intervention.
  - Assessments were conducted in the child's primary language.
  - Children were, on average, cognitively and linguistically delayed.
- Ten-minute parent-child interaction (PCI) videos were recorded in the home.
  - Parents were given a standardized set of developmentally appropriate toys and asked to play as they typically would.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics for Background Variables

	Mean	Median	SD	Min	Max
Mother's Education	14.65	15.50	2.54	9	18
Nonverbal IQ	60.90	57.71	18.13	30.36	98.91

### Measures

Parent-child interactions were transcribed and coded for the following:

- PCA and CAO were measured using a 7-point observational rating scale from the Joint Engagement Rating Inventory (JERI).<sup>1</sup>
  - PCA measures the confidence and calmness in the parents' authority while interacting with their child.
  - CAO measures the obedience and deference the child reacts with when interacting with their parent.
- Child Language measures include:
  - The number of different words (NDW), which measures vocabulary skills
  - Mean Length of Utterance in words (MLU), which measures the complexity of the child's language production

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics for Outcome Measures

	Mean	Median	SD	Min	Max
PCA	3.65	4	1.29	1	6
CAO	3.50	3.50	1.56	1	6
NDW	21	8.50	24.78	0	94
MLU	1.36	1.35	0.59	0	2.77

### Data Analysis

- We conducted a log transformation of child MLU and child NDW in order to satisfy the linearity assumption. There was a floor effect since most of our children don't speak at all or speak very little.
- We used Pearson's product correlations to evaluate whether PCA was correlated with child language measures.
- We conducted a sensitivity analysis on one outlier to evaluate its influence on the relationship between PCA and CAO.

## RESULTS

Table 3: Correlations Among PCA, Background & Child Variables

	PCA	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
PCA	1											
Maternal education (years)	.08	1										
Child age	-.21	.12	1									
ADOS Social CSS	.06	-.06	.57**	1								
ADOS Total CSS	.04	-.02	-.46*	.94**	1							
Nonverbal IQ	.09	.02	-.14	-.16	-.23	1						
VABS Adaptive Functioning	.28	.09	-.38	.29	.17	.57**	1					
CSBS2 Social (raw)	.06	.10	.22	-.26	-.40*	.41*	.47*	1				
CSBS2 Speech (raw)	.10	.07	.37	-.25	-.35	.42*	.39	.65**	1			
CSBS2 Symbolic (raw)	.10	-.19	.39	-.25	-.34	.45*	.49*	.81**	.70**	1		
CAO	.31	.06	-.13	-.29	-.31	.68**	.41*	.39*	.34*	.41*	1	
Log of NDW	.01	-.04	.44*	-.19	-.23	.39*	.28	.32	.76**	.55**	.35	1
Log of MLU	-.07	.07	.31	-.10	-.18	.55**	.37	.49*	.60**	.59**	.43*	.71**

Note. Ages are in months. \*p < .05, \*\*p < .01

### PCA and Language (Table 3)

- There were no significant correlations between Latine parents' PCA and either of our child language measures.

### PCA and Background Variables (Table 3)

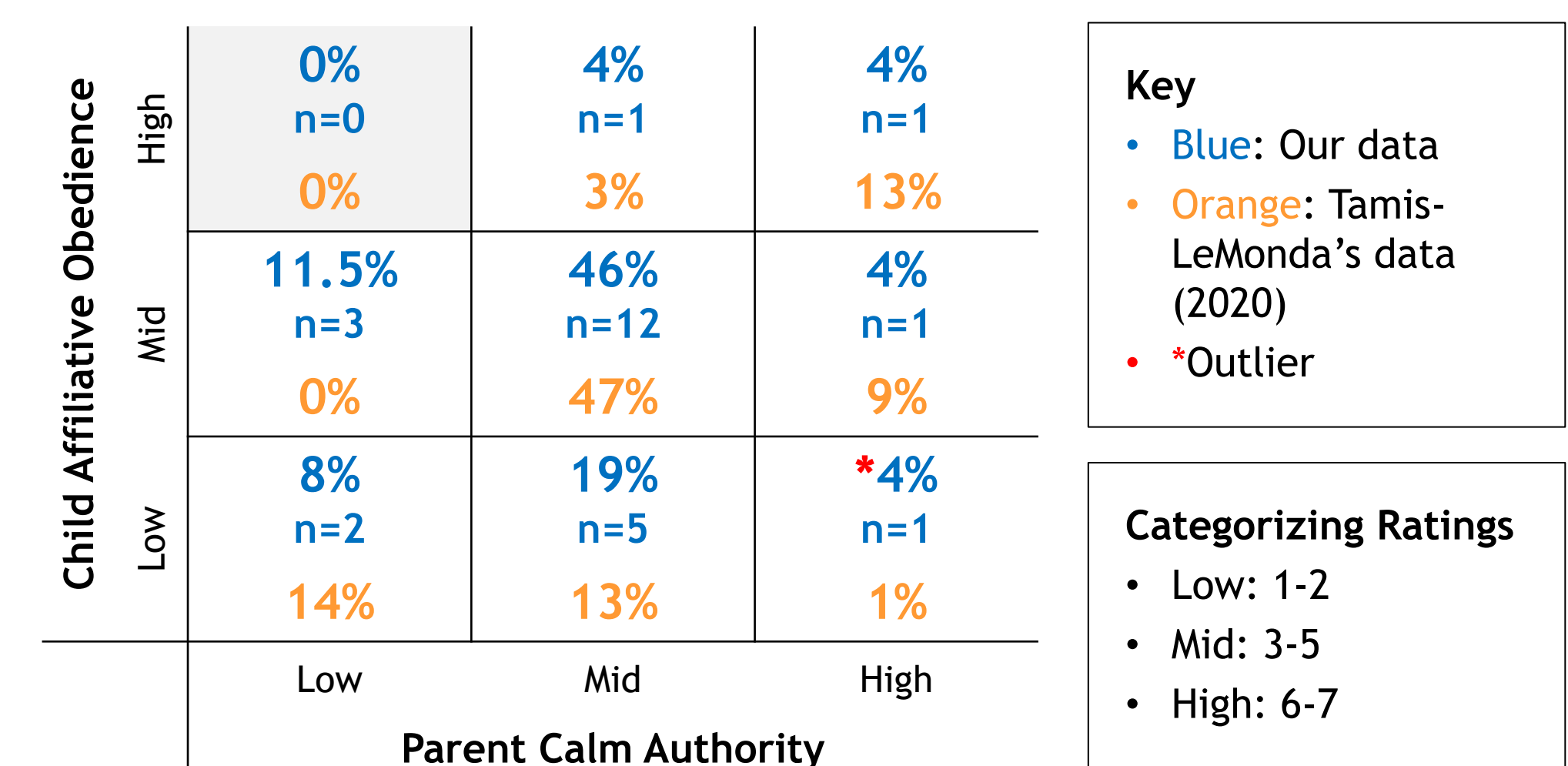
- PCA was not related to any other child or family background variables.

### Sensitivity Analysis: PCA and CAO

- However, the sensitivity analysis revealed a strong and significant relationship between PCA and CAO ( $r = .49, p = .01$ ).

## COMPARISON TO TYPICAL CHILDREN

Distribution of the respeto ratings as measured by the cross-classification of CAO and PCA



## DISCUSSION

- Unlike our hypothesis, PCA does not correlate with concurrent child language measures.
- Interestingly, none of the other family background variables or child variables related to PCA.
- After removing the outlier, PCA was significantly and strongly correlated with CAO.
- Our distribution resembled that of a prior study with TD dyads.

### Limitation

- We used post-intervention data because the children had more language than at baseline. However, we do not know if intervention group membership influenced our results.

### Future Direction

- We will code pre-intervention PCA and child language to see how they compare to these findings. We are curious to what extent intervention affects parents' PCA levels.

### Conclusion

- The value of *respeto* has traditionally been associated with authoritarian parenting. However, Latine parents' calm authority is affectionate and directive.
- These findings show that the confidence and calmness of the caregiver's authority do not relate to the concurrent language ability of their autistic child.
- However, they emphasize the clear dyadic relationship between PCA and CAO, for both autistic and TD children.

## REFERENCES

