Kissing a distressed dog in medical interaction

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Introduction

• The setting of this presentation is related to taking blood samples from dogs.

• Conversation analytic studies in medicine (e.g., Gill & Roberts 2013) have reported that human patients receiving medical attention must objectify their bodies for medical operations while maintaining that they are emotional beings with feelings (Heath 1992). In this setting, by contrast, dog bodies are objectified for medical operations regardless of their feelings on the matter. Instead, it is the task of humans—the dog owner and the person extracting the blood sample—to take care of the dogs as emotional beings who might fear the setting.

• Thus, our aim in this presentation is to show how and when dog owners address their pet dogs as emotional beings in this setting via means of kissing the dog as a loved family member.
Kissing in interaction

- Kissing, which can be heard as a bilabial click produced with both lips (Wright 2011), has been shown to occur in greetings (Kendon 1990), when humans sit next to each other and have “kissing rounds” (Kendon 1981), and in mother-infant interaction (Berducci 2016).

- Contributing to this thread of studies, this presentation offers evidence of humans kissing their dogs in interaction.

- The method is conversation analysis (Sidnell & Stivers 2013). Videotaped data (n=47) were gathered in collaboration with the Dog DNA bank at the University of Helsinki, Finland, during autumn 2017. The examples are transcribed following Lorenza Mondada (2018) and developed further according to the requirements of the data.
Findings

• We find that kissing a dog is a relevant activity after accidents and at the end of the procedure.

• After accidents, kissing is performed as a means of bemoaning (e.g., the dog’s ill fate). (Cases 1 & 2)

• By contrast, at the end of the procedure, kissing is presented as a reward for the dog’s bravery. (Case 3)

• What is common to these ways of kissing is that they are postponed until a break occurs in the medical procedure or the procedure has finished.
Case 1: Accident happened <10 seconds ago

09 VET + no nii + pitikin + PRT PRT had to CLI + + <niin> #joo# + <Right> #yeah#
DOG + + pulls + +

10 CLI + (0.3) + voi: kul+ta #pie+ni.# + (0.5) + (0.3) + Oh: #little# honey.
CLI + kiss + + + + + kiss +
DOG + pulls + + pulls + + +
VET + + + + + pitäsköhän + + Should
fig +#fig.2 + + + + + + +
Case 2: Accident happened <60 seconds ago

05 + (0.4) + (0.6) +
  CLI + hugs DOG + intensifies her hold +

06 + (0.2) + (0.3) +
  CLI + **kiss** +
  CLI + + lifts her head +
  VET + + kyllä niinku hhhh +
  Yes like so hhh
  fig + + #fig.7 +

07 + (2.0) +
  VET + wraps bandage over pad=>+
  CLI + rubs DOG’s ear =>+
Case 3: At the end of the consultation

04     +     (0.3)          +  (0.3)   +    (0.3)      +
DOG +moves head away     +head still+
CLI +=>moves head forward+ **kiss** +moves head away+
VET +turns gaze away + et et +
fig +    #fig.9 +

erm  erm.

VET

CLI
Comparison to mother-infant interaction

- Our findings are contrasted with the mother-infant interaction reported in Berducci (2016), where kissing occurred immediately after or within a few seconds of the infant’s displays of distress.

- Case 4 demonstrates an infant’s distress in vaccination. Each dose of vaccination is marked with the symbols “I---O,” where “I” stands for the needle that is penetrating the infant’s skin, “-” stands for an actual injection of a dose, and, finally, “O” stands for the needle being withdrawn. The nurse (NU) is injecting a dose of vaccination (lines 23 and 31). The mother (MO) is soothing and calming her infant (IN) through kissing “k” (lines 29 and 32).
Case 4 (Berducci 2016: 451)

23   NU: I-----------------------------------O
24   IN: ehehEh .h! EH!::::::::::::::::e.h!
25     (0.4)
26   NU: I kno:w ba:by
27   IN: ehAH eh eh eh eh! .h!
28   IN: e[hAH eh eh eh eh! .h! (0.1) eh AH eh .h  eh]
29-> MO:  [kkkkkkkkkkkkkkkkkkkkkkkkkkkkkkkkkkkkkkkkkkkkkkkkkkkkkkkkkkkkk]
30   IN: .h eh [.h!
31   NU:       [I-----------------------------------O]
32-> MO:  kkkkkkkkkkkkkkkkkkkkkkkkkkkkkkkkkkkkkkkkkkkkkkkkkkkkkkkkkkkkkkkk sh::: :::::::::]
33   IN: eh h! .h! eh:AH:ah:[:
Conclusion

- This study suggests that an “infant in distress” receives affective kisses much faster than a “dog in distress” when the caretaker is accompanied by an official person or persons. This official person stands as an authority figure maintaining the medical order of the situation. For the mother, the infant’s distress overrides this medical order, which is not the case for the dog’s distress: rather than interfering in the medical procedure, the dog owners waited for a suitable moment to manage their dogs’ feelings.

- The implication of our study is that the well-being of the genetic offspring of humans takes priority over other loved family members, pet dogs, when it comes to showing affiliation via kisses.
References


