Children play equally – conceptions of play. Support persons’ and researchers’ interference in children’s play with a robot.

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Background, earlier projects:
1. The LekBot-project:
   Children with severe disabilities (communicative, cognitive, physical) have few opportunities to play independently of a support person, and on equal terms with other children. We developed a speaking robot, the LekBot, in order to enable easy, pleasurable, independent, and equal play (Ljunglöf, 2011). The system was developed in iterations. Final functionality included dialogue, movement, dancing, looking for food and talking about the food, refusal, sounds.
   Evaluation:
   2 groups at 2 different pre-schools, one child with cerebral palsy and one peer, one support person in each. Free to play with the robot as often as they wanted.
   Recordings:
   After each new update of the LekBot-system the play sessions were video recorded, in all 6x2, 20 – 60 min.
2. Children’s play with LekBot:
   In Fern et al (2015) the focus was on enjoyment and play on equal terms. Neither participatory symmetry nor enjoyment were easily achieved and required sometimes considerable effort, including adult (both support person and researchers) involvement. But creative, spontaneous and highly enjoyable play was also observed.

Present study (work in progress):
Support persons’ and researchers’ interference in children’s play with a robot. Conceptions of play.
Method:
CA-inspired sequential analysis of video recordings.
Focus on: the adult’s actions during the children’s (recorded) play and the impact these actions have (adult facilitation, Fern 2015).
The support person in many of the recorded situations in this group, act as she is aware of the goal of the LekBot-project, i.e. to help the child with disabilities to play more actively together with his/her peer. She targets the children’s turn-taking, request that they should talk and listen to each other, and cooperate in playing together.

Example for IPA: SP: recording with Axel and Anna. LekBot has got new, sounding features. SP (support person for Axel) opens this play pass, when Axel continues playing, then SP calls to Axel about it an

Axel and Anna resist the adult’s repeated requests to talk and listen to each other. Anna wants Bee to run the track (line 51) without any “search-for-food”. SP asks Axel if he is sick with taking away the food (59). He immediately responds no. SP continues with a more elaborate explanation. Axel doesn’t answer, but after 5 sek he press a command to Bee, continuing with no notice on SP’s expansion. That is his answer.

Findings so far:
SP mostly address her questions and directives to Anna, frequently using the verb tänka (think). To Axel SP twice asks vat tro de om Axel [how about that (line 53) or what do you think]. In both cases he responds by a command to the Bee.
Frequently used are also prata med (talk to) addressed to Anna. Axel is the listner. Anna ville prata med mej nu Axel (line 42) and få du hjarna på va Anna säjer, få ni resonerar.
Lots of analysis remains to be done!

I would appreciate to discuss this sequence with you, whenever you like during the poster session on Thursday. All comments are welcome, as well as references to relevant work.

References:

Talk to Axel – listen to what Anna tells you

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