Educational Programs Increase Children’s Vocabulary

Araceli Frias

California State University, Chico

Abstract

Children spent an average of 2 hours watching TV at an early age. This is one of children’s primarily activities that cause significant impacts in their language development and social skills. The sample will consist of 102 participants (55 boys and 47 girls), and they will be recruited voluntary. They will be assessed on the impact of co-viewing educational programs with their parents and its effects on children’s vocabulary. The age range of the participants is from 10 to 24 months. The measures will contain a parent questionnaire that will be measuring the predictor variable and the MacArthur Communicative Development Inventory that will be measuring outcome variable. The researcher will use the Pearson Product Correlation Coefficient (*r*) for the statistical analysis. This study will implicate about the importance of children watching television at an early age, and the possible impacts that TV has on children’s language development.

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 Interactions with adults and real play are important for children’s cognitive and language development as well as the acquisition of social skills. That is one of the reasons researchers are focusing on how much time children spent in front of a screen including television, DVDs, cell phones, and computers. More specifically, the correlation between children’s language delays and the amount of time children spend watching TV or other types of screens. Screen time may take away from children’s real interactions with adults such as parents or caregivers. Also, it is important to know the causes of language delays even though these can be several and hard to identify in order to look for solutions to the problem. Moreover, this study focuses on the possible positive impacts of educational programs in the children’s vocabulary acquisition when the programs are watched with parents.

 Today, children are watching more television than ever at an early age and for long periods of time, which has an impact on different aspects of their development such as language acquisition. For instance, Rideout, Vandewater, and Wartella (as cited in Chonchaiya & Pruksnanonda, 2008) informed that children in the United States and Thailand watched a significant amount of television, which is one of their first top activities besides sleep hours. Sixty-eight young children under the age of 2 years, view a type of screen media in a regular day according to a survey representing the population of the United States (Christakis & Garrison, as cited in Duch et al., 2013). Chonchaiya & Pruksnanonda (2008) found that there is a correlation between children who watched television throughout early infancy and those with language delay. Children with language delay, viewed television for as long as 2 hours or more daily when they were less than 12 months of age; compared with children with normal language development, who watched television less than 2 hours per day and were more than 12 months of age. The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) suggest that children, who are 2 years of age or less should avoid watching TV completely; additionally, they also suggested that children who are more than 2 years old must be watching not more than 2 hours of television during a regular day. Moreover, Linebarger and Walker (as cited in Chonchaiya & Pruksnanonda, 2008) reported that the type of television program and its content has variable impact on children’s ability to develop their language.

 It is crucial to evaluate a given type of a TV program such as an educational program and its impact on language development. Linebarger and Walker (2005) informed that children need repetitive and constant reinforcement in order to learn new skills and to completely comprehend ideas. For example, Linebarger and Kosanic (as cited in Linebarger and Walker, 2005) reported that the first author of this study assessed the program *Dora the Explorer* because a mother mentioned that his son, who was 15 months old by the time he pronounced his first word “backpack” after watching the program. Although it is not accurate to generalize the whole population, this proposes the question of how much television content young children are able to understand as well as learn from TV. According to Grela, Lin, and Kremar (as cited in Linebarger & Walker, 2005), reported that children can gain new vocabulary from programs that contain specific tactics to help children to gain new words such as pretended live interactions that stimulate children’s learning. For example, children who view the educational program called *Teletubbies* did not learn any vocabulary because it’s considered to be a program that does not implements interactive strategies where children can participate or communicate when watching this program. Overall, the educational programs that promote interactive characteristics are the ones that enable children to learn new vocabulary.

 The importance of repeating the words while watching educational program, is essential to have better results, and it’s even better if parents co-view television with their children. Children viewing TV compared to the attention they pay on the behavior caregivers showed to young children, gets the children’s attention by connecting words’ meaning with the action words may show, repetitive words, music, visual distinction, and practices. Children are capable of learning words from TV such as the alphabet song as an illustration. They may also learn some words from listening adults’ dialogues. The affection provided by parents through these words creates individuals to sound different, easy to remember, and gets children’s’ interest (Hart & Risley, 1995). Linebarger and Walker (2005) stated that the pleasant experiences are related to foster new abilities as language acquisition.

 The possible impacts associated with children watching educational programs. Researchers have found that watching educational programs with strategies that promote language learning at 2 years of age, had a positive impact associated with being ready to school and vocabulary acquisition compared with concurrent viewing (Wright et al., as cited in Linebarger & Walker, 2005). Moreover, *Blue’s Clues* and *Dora the Explorer* are educational programs that support language development by using the characters in the programs to talk directly to the children inviting them to participate, to point and identify objects, and to reply back several times. These programs were found to show positive effects on the expressive language of children and their vocabulary as well.

 The importance of the linguistic input on the language acquisition and productions are two significant determinants of how children are going to speak and select the words that they are going to express. Consequently, investigators focused on analyzing how much mothers talk to their children directly, so they established that the linguistic input is an important factor on children’s vocabulary expansion (Hart & Risley, 1995). Furthermore, children’s language development is important in children’s daily lives because from this concept derives the children’s expressive skills to share their emotions, ideas, and needs. Researchers who interested in children’s healthy development studied how they develop and under what conditions. Parents, members of the family, friends and television play an important role in children’s language expansion because form part of a child environment (Hart & Risley, 1995). There is a positive relationship between the amount of time children under 2 years of age spent co-viewing educational programs with parents and the increase of vocabulary words.

**Method**

**Overview**

The purpose of this study will identify if children under the age of 2, increase their vocabulary words by co-viewing educational programs with their parents. The research design is a correlational study because the researcher will use natural variables to analyze if they have a relationship. The predictor variable will be measuring the amount of time children under 2 years old spent co-viewing educational programs with their parents. The outcome variable will be the increase of children’s vocabulary after watching these programs. The level of measurement for both variables will be ratio.

**Participants**

The sample of this study will be selected from one city of the Northern California. The participants will be recruited voluntarily from different clinics that they attended for their regular visits to the clinics. This technique will be the more convenient for the researcher. The sample will consist of 102 participants. The participants will be 55 males and 47 females. The ages of the participants will range from 10 months to 24 months. The participants will be Hispanics, Asian American, African American, and Caucasian. The average annual income will be range from less than $20,000 to $55,000 or more.

**Materials/ Measures**

The measures will include questionnaire that provide the amount of time children spent co-viewing educational programs with their parents. For instance, how much time the parents spent co-viewing educational programs with their children each day? What programs are children and parent watching? Do children watch television alone? If so, how often children watch TV alone and how much time children spent watching TV alone? What days of the week parents are co-viewing educational programs with their children? This questionnaire provides quantitative information as well as qualitative information. The questionnaire consists of five fixed questions. The range is zero to 90, which represent the minutes parents spent co-viewing educational programs with children per week. This measure will not be valid and reliable because the measure was not used in the past. Then, The MacArthur Communicative Development Inventory that measures language acquirement for infants and toddlers. This measure will contain an assessment that will measure verbal language and gestures (no-verbal) in children from 8 to 18 months of age. This form called Level I will include a vocabulary checklist of 89 words in columns. The forms A and B for Level II will be designated for children from ages 16 months to 30 months, and each form has 100 words checklist. The MacArthur Communicative Development Inventory will show internal consistency *r* equals to .96, plus it will be effective on large samples and will save money to the researcher (Ferson et al. 1993).

**Procedures**

The IRB approval will be obtained from California State University at Chico before the study begins. Permission will be acquired from clinics’ supervisors to drop the surveys in the clinics both orally and written. The MacArthur Communicative Development Inventory will not be adequate for clinics that have a busy setting. Parents will be asked if they are willing to participate in this study in their regular visits to the clinics, and if so, they must signed a written informed consent that will be kept by the researcher. In this case the children are not cognitively ready to decide if they want to participate or not. There will be the possibility to send both questionnaires by mail or the parents will take the questionnaires home to answer them. The data collection will come basically from the parents that have to answer the questionnaire designed for the predictor variable and The MacArthur Communicative Development Inventory that is a standardized parent report inventory. The researcher will offer assistance to parents that need help to answer the both questionnaires. For instance, there might be the possibility to read aloud the questions to parents in order to answer the questions. The information as well as the participants’ identities will be captured separate and locked at the Modoc Hall in the California State University of Chico, and the researcher will keep the key. Incentives will be given to the participants after the study is finished. The incentives include a gift certificate or $20 and one educational toy.

**Statistical Analysis**

There is a positive relationship between the amount of time children under 2 years of age spent co-viewing educational programs with parents and the increase of vocabulary words. The research design is a correlational study, and the researcher will be use the Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient (*r*) for the statistical analysis. This test will be the most appropriate test for a correlational design because it will establish a relationship between two natural variables that will not be manipulated, and it will be only for one group. The test will be also appropriate for the level of measurement, ratio. At the *p* < .05 level, the critical value equals to .16, if the number obtained for *r* is greater than the critical value for the degrees of freedom of 100, the researcher will reject the null hypothesis because there is significant statistical relationship between children under the age of 2 co-viewing educational programs with parents and the increase on children’s vocabulary words. Then, if the number obtained for *r* is less than the critical value, the researcher is will not reject the null hypothesis because there is no significant statistical relationship between children co-viewing educational programs with parents and the increase on children’s vocabulary acquisition. This will be one tailed test hypothesis because the researcher provided a directional hypothesis.

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Demographic Questionnaire

Instructions: Please, fill out the following information that best applies to you or your child.

1. What is your child’s age?
2. What gender is your child?

\_\_Female \_\_Male

1. What is your ethnicity?

□African American □Hispanic/Latino □Asian American □Caucasian □Other­­­\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

4. What is your income level?

□less than $20,000 □$20,000-$30,000 □$30,000-$40,000 □$40-000-$55,000 □$55,000 or more

5. What is your marital status?

□Single □Married □Divorced □Other\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

6. What is your educational level?

□Some education without diploma □High School Diploma/GED

 □Some College, no degree □AA □Bachelor’s degree □Graduate degree □Other\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Parents’ Questionnaire

1. Does your child watch educational programs?

If so, which are the names of the educational programs?

□Dora the Explorer

 □Blue’s clues

□Barney & Friends

□Sesame Street

□Teletubbies

□Other\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

1. Do you co-view educational programs with your child?

If so, how much time per day? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_minutes per day

1. What days of the week are you co-viewing educational programs with your child?

\_\_Monday \_\_Tuesday \_\_Wednesday \_\_Thursday \_\_Friday \_\_Saturday \_\_Sunday

1. Does your child watch educational programs alone?

If so, how much time per day? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_minutes per day

1. What are your child’s favorite programs?

