Child Responses to Examiner Prompts in Oral Narration

Alesha Stralow, B.A.
Eastern Illinois University, Charleston, IL

Allison Haskill, Ph.D., CCC-SLP
Augustana College, Rock Island, IL

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Introduction

• Narratives bridge the gap between oral and written language
• Narratives require the use of numerous language & organizational skills (McCabe & Bliss, 2003)
• SLPs may examine children’s oral narratives to assess expressive language
• Narrative deficits have been observed in numerous populations:
  • **PDD/ASD** (Loveland, McEvoy, Tulani, & Kelley, 1990; Norbury & Bishop, 2003)
  • **SLI** (Swanson, Fey, Mills, & Hood, 2005; Norbury & Bishop, 2003; Leonard, 1998)
• Narrative Analysis
  • Types
    • Story grammar
    • Syntax
      • Grammatical accuracy
      • Grammatical complexity
    • Story structure
    • Cohesion
    • Fluency
    • Content analysis
  • Purpose of narrative analysis
    • to provide assessment or diagnostic information
    • baseline for narrative intervention
• Narrative elicitation techniques
  • Narrative stimuli/tasks
    • Story retellings
    • Film clip retellings
    • Expository
    • Personal interviews
    • Story starters
  • Examiner prompts or verbal interactions (beyond providing instructions for a task) may be necessary for children to begin and sustain narration
    • (McCabe & Rollins, 1994; Strong, 1998)
• **Narrative prompt types/ examiner responses** (McCabe & Bliss, 2003; Strong, 1998)

• **Neutral prompts**
  • “uhhuh,” “keep going”

• **Pauses/expectant look**

• **Affirmative comments**
  • Great job!

• **Repeating child**
  • Child: The boy has a frog
  • Examiner: The boy has a frog?

• **Visual prompts**
Rationale for the Present Study

• The importance and relevance of examiner prompting in narration has been discussed previously (Gillam & Pearson, 2004; McCabe & Bliss, 2003; Strong, 1998)

• Few, if any, studies have been designed specifically to examine child responses to examiner prompt in oral narration
Purpose of Study

- To describe types of examiner prompts used in different narrative elicitation tasks
- To investigate types of examiner prompts that result in the highest % of accurate child responses for school-age children with SLI and PDD
- To determine if there are group differences in % accurate responses to examiner prompts in oral narration for children with PDD, SLI, and typical language development (TL)
Method

- 3 Participant Groups of Children
- All participants were age 6;0-9;0
  - **PDD** (n=12)
    - Diagnosed by qualified diagnosticians
    - Marked deficits in social interaction & language (per school report)
  - **SLI** (n=11)
    - Nonverbal skills WNL; language scores >1 SD below the mean
  - **TL** (n=11)
    - Expressive language & nonverbal skills WNL
    - No other areas of concern
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>M age</th>
<th>Expressive Language</th>
<th>Nonverbal Score</th>
<th>MLU in Morphemes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PDD</td>
<td>7;5 (6;4-8;8)</td>
<td>66 (52-90)</td>
<td>104 (92-122)</td>
<td>7.01 (4-9.87)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SLI</td>
<td>7;7 (6;7-8;9)</td>
<td>71 (57-81)</td>
<td>98 (91-113)</td>
<td>6.78 (4.33-8.78)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TL</td>
<td>7;9 (7;1-8;6)</td>
<td>97 (89-116)</td>
<td>112 (102-130)</td>
<td>9.51 (5.77-12.07)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Procedure

• Testing Phase
  • Expressive language (CELF-P or CELF-4)
  • Nonverbal (CTONI)

• Narrative Phase
  • Each participant completed 5 oral narrative tasks
    • Personal narrative
    • Story retelling
    • Film clip retelling
    • Story starter
    • Expository narrative
Narrative Elicitation & Coding

• The trained examiners provided basic oral directions for each task

• Examiners were instructed to encourage participants to sustain narration when they encountered difficulties

• Narrative samples were transcribed & coded
  • Examiner prompts during narration
  • Child responses to examiner prompts

• Agreement checking
  • Narrative transcription: >90% across all narrative samples
  • Coding of examiner prompts & child responses: >80% for 75% of narrative samples
  • Discrepancies resolved through consensus
Examiner Prompt Types (n=14)

- Neutral prompt
- Requests for clarification
- Counterpoints
- Expansions request
- Restating directions
- Direct questions
- Cloze tasks
- Yes/no questions
- Repetition of child’s utterance
- Forced choice
- Recast
- “Other”
Child Responses to Examiner Prompts

• 6 different child response categories
  • Fully accurate
  • Acceptable
  • Ambiguous
  • Inadequate
  • No response
  • Child responded with a question
Results
Proportion of Examiner Prompt Types Used

Personal Narrative

PDD
- Neutral Prompt
- Affirmative Comment
- Counterpoint
- Restating Directions
- Preparatory Set
- Cloze Tasks
- Repetition of Child
- Recast
- Request for Clarification
- Expansion Request
- Direct Question
- Yes/No?
- Forced Choice
- Other

SLI

TL

Proportion of Examiner Prompt Types Used
Proportion of Examiner Prompt Types Used

Story Retelling

PDD

SLI

TL

Legend:
- Neutral Prompt
- Affirmative Comment
- Counterpoint
- Restating Directions
- Preparatory Set
- Cloze Tasks
- Repetition of Child
- Recast
- Request for Clarification
- Expansion Request
- Direct Question
- Yes/No?
- Forced Choice
- Other
Proportion of examiner prompt types

Film Clip Retelling

PDD

SLI

Neutral Prompt
Affirmative Comment
Counterpoint
Restating Directions
Preparatory Set
Cloze Tasks
Repetition of Child
Recast
Request for Clarification
Expansion Request
Direct Question
Yes/No?
Forced Choice
Other
Proportion of Examiner Prompt Types Used

Expository Narrative

PDD

SLI

TL

- Neutral Prompt
- Affirmative Comment
- Counterpoint
- Restating Directions
- Preparatory Set
- Cloze Tasks
- Repetition of Child
- Recast
- Request for Clarification
- Expansion Request
- Direct Question
- Yes/No
- Forced Choice
- Other
Proportion of Examiner Prompt Types Used

Story Starter

PDD

SLI

TL

Legend:
- Neutral Prompt
- Affirmative Comment
- Counterpoint
- Restating Directions
- Preparatory Set
- Cloze Tasks
- Repetition of Child
- Recast
- Request for Clarification
- Expansion Request
- Direct Question
- Yes/No
- Forced Choice
- Other
Accuracy of Participants’ Responses

Personal Interview

- **PDD**
  - Fully Accurate: 712
  - Acceptable: 299
  - Ambiguous: 103
  - Inadequate: 37
  - No Response: 109
  - Other: 2

- **SLI**
  - Fully Accurate: 766
  - Acceptable: 283
  - Ambiguous: 84
  - Inadequate: 41
  - No Response: 109
  - Other: 0

- **TL**
  - Fully Accurate: 854
  - Acceptable: 236
  - Ambiguous: 56
  - Inadequate: 26
  - No Response: 48
  - Other: 0
Accuracy of Participants’ Responses

Story Retelling

PDD

SLI

TL

Fully Accurate
Acceptable
Ambiguous
Inadequate
No Response
Other

11
14
0
9
6
1
5
2
14
17
0
14
70

0
1
3
45
Accuracy of Participants’ Responses

Film Clip Retelling

PDD

SLI

TL

- Fully Accurate
- Acceptable
- Ambiguous
- Inadequate
- No Response
- Other
Accuracy of Participants’ Responses

Expository Narrative

PDD

SLI

TL
Accuracy of Participants’ Responses

Story Starter

PDD

SLI

TL
Accuracy by Prompt Type: PDD Group
Accuracy by Prompt Type: TL Group

- Neutral Prompt
- Affirmative Comment
- Request for Expansion
- Request for Clarification
- Direct Question
- Yes/No Question
- Forced Choice
- Other
Discussion

• 4 types of examiner prompts frequently cited in the literature
  • Neutral prompts
  • Pauses/expectant looks
  • Affirming words
  • Repeating what the child said
• Present study found 14
  • Previous 4
  • Counterpoint
  • First words of a sentence (cloze task)
  • Restating directions
  • Preparatory set
  • Recast
  • Request for clarification
  • Expansion request
  • Direct question
  • Yes/no question
  • Forced choice
Implications for Clinical Practice

• Examiner prompts
  • Consider frequency and types
  • Different narrative tasks may require different types of examiner prompts
  • Different groups of children may respond differently to certain examiner prompt types

• Narrative type
  • Different narrative tasks may place different demands on participants, may necessitate different types of examiner prompts
  • Groups of children (SLI, ASD, TL) responded differently depending on narrative type
• Flaws
  • Groups not precisely matched for age & language/nonverbal level
  • Would help to have a younger, TL control group
  • Too many prompt categories?

• Future Directions
  • Control for examiner prompt type use & frequency
  • Include a younger control group
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References


