INTRODUCTION

- Children with autism display language learning difficulties.
- Previous studies identified differences in narratives of children with autism. Narratives produced by children with autism are:
  - Shorter with less complex syntax and syntactic diversity (Capps, et al., 2000; Tager-Flusberg, 1995)
  - Contain twice as many morphological errors compared to typically developing children (Capps, et al., 2000)
  - Use a narrower range of evaluations (Capps, et al., 2000)
  - Lack causal statements (Capps, et al., 2000; Tager-Flusberg, 1995)
  - Include more bizarre, inappropriate, and irrelevant utterances (Loveland, et al., 1990)
- Limited research on narratives of young children with autism
  - Does lack of picture support hinder narrative generation?
  - How do narrative skills in children with autism differ compared to chronological and language matched children?

PURPOSES

- Determine influence of picture support on narratives
- Compare narrative performance of a child with autism vs. chronological age and verbal language age matched children

METHOD

Subjects
- 1 Child with autism (5;8 years)
- 1 Chronological age match (5;7 years)
- 1 Verbal language match (3;5 years)

Data Collection
- Parent Questionnaire
- Story generation
  1. Without pictures (Moonlight)
  2. With pictures (Sunshine)
- Generic prompts as needed
- Recorded all stories

Analysis
- Narratives transcribed
- 4 Raters
  - 3 CSD faculty
  - 1 CSD undergraduate student
  - All familiar with Stein (1988)
- Story Structure Levels (Stein, 1988)
RESULTS

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INTERPRETATIONS
- Chronological age matched child and child with autism produced equivalent narratives with pictures
- Without pictures, chronological age matched child performed better than child with autism
- Picture support helped child with autism, while picture support limited narrative of chronological age matched child

IMPLICATIONS
- Assess child’s narrative performance skills with and without contextual support
- Use narrative assessment information to guide intervention in pragmatic skills

FUTURE DIRECTION
- Evaluate production of personal narratives in children with autism
- Expand narrative data in children with autism
- Examine skills leading to proficient narrative development in autism

REFERENCES


