Emergent Literacy Intervention for Preschool Children with SLI: The Impact on Narrative Skills

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ABSTRACT

This poster presents the impact on narrative skills of a randomized control trial of a group intervention program targeting emergent literacy skills in children with Specific Language Impairment (SLI). Thirty-seven 4-5-year-old children with SLI were randomly assigned to immediate treatment or a delayed-treatment control group. The intervention program included a parent training session and 8 intervention sessions. The intervention sessions were 75 minutes long and involved a small group of 2-3 children. Goals included narrative skills, phonological awareness, alphabet knowledge, and print referencing skills. Treatment duration (dosage) was found to be an important predictor of treatment gains. Children who received the most intensive treatment duration made the greatest gains in narrative skills.

METHODS

Participants: 37 children with specific language impairments (SLI) participated in the program.

Group Sessions: Each group session included:
- Introduction (20 min)
- Storybook Reading (20 min)
- Storytelling Activity (20 min)
- Post-Story Activity (20 min)

There was a significant effect of time on all measures (p = 0.05). However, there was no significant group by time interaction on any measure (p = 0.05).

In conclusion, this study indicates that treatment duration (dosage) is an important predictor of treatment gains. Children who received the most intensive treatment duration made the greatest gains in narrative skills.

INTRODUCTION

9%–10% of preschool children have language impairments.

This can have a serious impact on future academic achievement and social-emotional development (e.g., Buchanan, et al., 2007).

Children with oral language impairments are at high risk for reading and writing difficulties (e.g., Goldstein et al., 2001).

They have significant weaknesses in narrative skills (e.g., Cleave et al., 2001).

Narrative development has been found to impact literacy development and academic achievement (e.g., Dickson & Tabor, 2001).

Furthermore, narrative skill is an area of oral language in which delays are less likely to resolve over time (e.g., Girolametto et al., 2001; Marrhardt & Reasor, 2002).

The intervention program reported here targeted narrative skills in addition to other emergent literacy skills (i.e., phonological awareness, alphabet knowledge, and print referencing skills).

RESULTS – NARRATIVE SKILLS

Group Comparisons (n = 37)
- Group did not differ on any pretest measure (p > 0.194).
- Repeated Measures ANOVA for group by time (2) were conducted to assess treatment effects.
- There was a significant effect of time on all measures (p < 0.05).
- However, there was no significant group by time interaction on any measure (p = 0.05).
- Box children made gains on the narrative measures but there was no evidence of a treatment effect using an "intent-to-treat" analysis.

In conclusion, this study indicates that treatment duration (dosage) is an important predictor of treatment gains. Children who received the most intensive treatment duration made the greatest gains in narrative skills.

DISCUSSION

This poster describes an intervention program targeting emergent literacy skills in preschool children with SLI and presents the impact of the program on narrative skills.

Using an "intention-to-treat" analysis, there was an effect of time but no evidence of treatment effects on all narrative measures.

Perhaps the time effect detected is due to familiarity since T1 and T2 assessments involved the children telling stories to the same picture stimulus. Perhaps if different stimuli, rated for equivalency and counterbalanced, were used to collect the narrative scores at T1 & T2, treatment effects would have been seen.

In the treatment group, the amount of treatment received was related to narrative gains. Perhaps a longer, more intensive, or more focused program applied consistently to all children would have resulted in significant treatment effects.

REFERENCES


