VOCABULARY AND WORD COMBINATIONS IN SPANISH-SPEAKING TODDLERS: SOCIO-EDUCATIONAL EFFECTS

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SES DIFFERENCES IN LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

❖ English-speaking children from lower SES families in the U.S. are slower in their vocabulary and early grammar development than children from middle SES families (Arraiga et al., 1998; Dolloghan, et al., 1999; Hart & Risley, 1995; Hoff Ginsberg 1991; Rodríguez, 2006; Fenson et al, 1994, 2000, 2007). More differences in type/token relations than word types alone (Hart & Risley)
❖ Data from Spanish-speaking children

Norming study MBCDI-Spanish (Jackson-Maldonado, Thal, Fenson, Marchman, Newton, Conboy, 2003)
❖ significant differences in vocabulary comprehension (low SES report higher)
❖ production (mid SES higher)
❖ no differences for gestures
❖ M3L and complexity only at 26-30 months
❖ Other studies
• based on parental report and observational data children 10 and 12 months no statistical differences for word comprehension, production or gesture use were found (Jackson-Maldonado & Barcenas, 2003)
• syntax language comprehension task in 20 and 28 month olds significant differences at 28 months. No differences for MLU and complexity (López Pérez, 2003)

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

❖ Do SES differences observed in younger children persist in older children?
❖ If there are differences, are they found both in vocabulary and early word combinations?
❖ Is the relation between vocabulary and early grammar in younger children still found at 3 years of age?

GOALS

❖ Analyze MLU-w in 2 groups of 3 year old children from different SES backgrounds
❖ Determine differences between SES groups based on MLU-w and vocabulary
❖ Relate vocabulary scores to early word constructions

METHOD

PARTICIPANTS

❖ 3-year old monolingual Spanish-speaking children from 2 socio-educational level families (SES) in Central Mexico
• 12 whose mothers more than a High School education (MSE)
• 11 whose mothers had less than a Middle School Education (LSE)

PROCEDURE

❖ Part of a larger project with multiple tasks
❖ Children were seeing in a natural language interaction with age specific toys with mother and research assistant for 30 minutes
❖ Samples were transcribed using CHILDES

RESULTS

❖ Type-token vocabulary production separating routine-like/deictic forms (mira, aquí, éste, sí, no, y, ya...)
❖ MLU-w (Jackson-Maldonado & Conboy, 2007)

Non-“corrected” analysis
❖ No differences word types or tokens
❖ Higher type-token for MSE than LSE group (p < .001)

“Corrected” analysis
❖ Significant difference word tokens and type-token, higher for MSE (p= .009, p =.02)
❖ Differences not significant for MLU. Large variability in each group. Larger N could be significant
❖ Correlations between type-token and MLU were highly significant

CORRELATIONS TYPE-TOKEN TO MLU

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<th>mlu</th>
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<td>.784**</td>
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*p < .01
**p < .001

MLU EXAMPLES

CONCLUSIONS

❖ Consistent with previous research, SES differences are found in older children
❖ MSE children use more tokens and TTR are different
❖ MLU differences could be significant with larger N
❖ LSE children use similar words, but are less productive.
❖ LSE children use more routines, not significantly
❖ Consistent with previous research, vocabulary and early grammar are strongly correlated

IMPLICATIONS:

Build language variety and productivity via known forms in new linguistic contexts
REFERENCES


