

*Parents' Mealtime Conversation Techniques
with Children with Hearing Loss who use
Listening and Spoken Language*

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Disclosures

- Smolen: PhD funded by National Leadership Consortium in Sensory Disabilities; hard of hearing/wears hearing aids
- Hartman & Wang: Teachers College, Columbia University faculty

Introduction

- Children with hearing loss (HL) have historically struggled to develop listening and spoken language (LSL) skills commensurate with hearing peers (Lund, 2016; Mitchell & Karchmer, 2012; Moeller & Tomblin, 2015)
 - Delays in receptive vocabulary
 - Difficulties with basic concepts, especially for children with CIs
 - Critical for academic success

Introduction

- Recent research: some children develop age-appropriate skills, but outcomes continue to vary (Cruz et al., 2013; Park et al., 2013; Tomblin et al., 2018)
- Variation in home language environments:
 - Quantity of adult language input
 - Quality of input
 - Conversation techniques to prompt language or behavior (open- and closed-ended questions, reformulation, directives)
 - Previous studies: lab-based or prescribed tasks (usually with mothers)

The Present Study

- Used naturalistic, daylong recordings of home language environments (Language ENvironment Analysis [LENA] technology)
- Analyzed conversation and explicit-instruction techniques used by mothers, fathers, and other caregivers during dinnertime in children's natural home environment

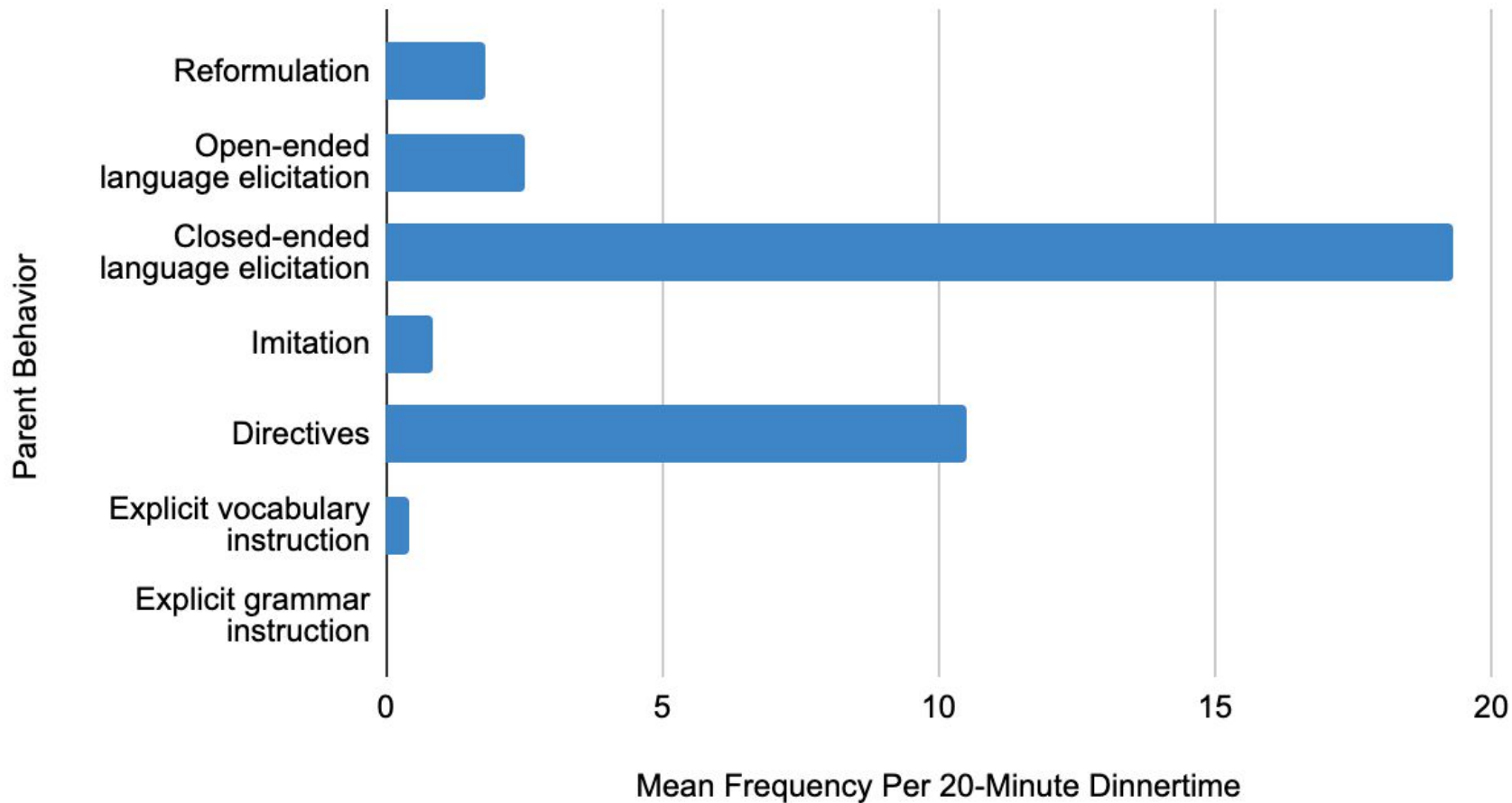
Method

- Participants: 37 children with HL (3 to 6 years old) and their families
 - Recruited from LSL preschool programs across the US
 - All used hearing technology and spoke English at home
- Data collection:
 - Full-day LENA recording
 - Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test (PPVT-4)
 - Boehm-Preschool Test of Basic Concepts (BTBC-3)

Method

- 20-minute dinnertimes extracted and transcribed
- Coding scheme (adapted from Duncan & Lederberg, 2018)
 - Higher-level conversation techniques: open-ended elicitation, reformulation
 - Lower-level techniques: closed-ended elicitation, imitation, directives
 - Explicit instruction: vocabulary, grammar

Mean Frequencies of Conversation Techniques



Preliminary Results

- Open-ended language elicitation related significantly to children's receptive vocabulary, $r(35) = .339$, $p = .040$
 - Opportunities to practice listening to and using new vocabulary on a variety of topics
- Explicit vocabulary instruction was correlated with basic-concepts skills, $r(34) = .410$, $p = .013$
 - Definitions included many function words critical for understanding basic concepts

Thematic Analysis

- 5 transcripts with greatest number of higher-level techniques and 5 transcripts with least number of higher-level techniques
- Thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006): close, repeated readings revealed four themes
 - Concrete topics (all): food, behavior, people present
 - Sibling speakers (all)
 - Abstract conversation topics (frequent higher-level techniques): day's events, future plans, people not present
 - Electronic media (infrequent higher-level techniques): TV, tablet

Discussion

- Wide variation in parents' use of techniques during dinnertime
 - Some conversations had no higher-level techniques in 20 minutes
 - Directives and closed-ended elicitations occurred frequently
 - Open-ended elicitations and explicit vocabulary instruction particularly important for receptive vocabulary and basic concepts (directionality?)

Discussion

- Common themes: concrete conversation topics related to dinnertime and sibling speakers (child-child conversations not coded)
- Role of electronic media: mostly correlated with few conversation techniques, except in one case
- Parents of children with HL may benefit from specific coaching on explicit vocabulary instruction and the use of higher-level conversation techniques during home routines, like mealtimes

Connect with us!

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