

The effect of book syntactic complexity on caregiver and child language profile during shared book reading

Anastasia Stoops

University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Urbana-Champaign, Illinois, United States

Jessica Montag

University of Illinois, Champaign-Urbana, Champaign, Illinois, United States

Abstract

Shared book reading positively effects language development, yet the causal pathways of this relationship are not understood. Evidence shows that the book complexity modulates caregiver talk, but the link between the book linguistic complexity and child syntactic development remains unclear (Noble, et al. 2017). This project describes the speech generated during book reading to see how it differs from typical child-directed speech and whether the picture-book sentence complexity is present in the speech that children hear. 10 families with children aged 30-37 months (MBCDI raw vocabulary 350-675 out of 680 total) recorded 6-12 picture-book reading sessions in their homes. The books were controlled for word length (short: 125 words vs long: 1472 words) and syntactic complexity according to the 8 categories analyzed in Montag (2019): complex (17 tokens) vs. simple (0-7 tokens). The caregiver and child speech syntactic complexity modulation as a function of picture-book syntactic complexity will be discussed.