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Exploring Gesturing as a Natural Approach to Impact Stages of Second Language
Development: A Multiple Baseline, Single Case Study of a Head Start Child

A thesis
presented to
the faculty of the Department of Teaching and Learning
East Tennessee State University
In partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree
Master of Arts in Early Childhood Education

by
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August 2016

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Keywords: Total Physical Response, Natural Approach, Gesturing, ELL, Language
Development, Multiple Baseline, Single Case Study

ABSTRACT

Exploring Gesturing as a Natural Approach to Impact Stages of Second Language

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by

Guillermo Ibarra Mendoza

There is an increase in Hispanic English Language Learners (ELL). Poverty levels and lack of teacher training can also be stacked against the ELL population. Gesturing is a teaching technique that is used in successful methods such as The Natural Approach (NA) and Total Physical Response (TPR) in helping ELL students in English comprehension and output. This study examined the effects that increased teacher gestures have on the number of words spoken by the child in multiple settings. Data were collected in the context of a multiple baseline design across three settings. The results indicate that there was an effect on the amount of words spoken in two out of three settings. Suggestions are presented to expand on this effect.

DEDICATION

To my wife, family, and friends who have always supported me in all my endeavors.

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I would first of all thank my lord and savior Jesus Christ, for giving me the strength and courage I needed throughout this process. I would also like to thank my wife Estrella and all of my family for their support, encouragement, and love; I would not be where I am today without them. Special thanks to my church Siempre Gozosos FWB Church for their constant prayers and emotional support that kept me motivated.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Problem

Oral language development is the foundation for literacy in school (Strickland & Shanahan, 2004). Another research point also shows how families in poverty and low socio-economic status are often predictors of a child's achievement in school (Brizius & Foster, 1993). Research by Reardon (2011) concluded that family income is now nearly as a strong a predictor as parental education in predicting children's achievement. His work was also revisited and supported by Wright (2015). According to Fiester (2013) in the article *Early Warning Confirmed*, intensive early education that emphasize on language, social, emotional and cognitive development during ages 1–3 may eliminate income-based cognitive and achievement gaps by ages 5 - 8. According to the same article, Black and Hispanic children are more likely than whites to experience family poverty and not read proficiently. School demographics continue to change and by 2023 Latinos will represent nearly 30% of all students enrolled in U.S. schools (National Council of La Raza, 2016). In the state of Tennessee, recent years, there has been an increase in the English language learners' student population (Kohler & Lazarin, 2007).

There is a lack of supply and an increase in demand for teachers who can teach English language learners (ELLs). According to Worthington et al. (2011), teachers feel inadequate, guilty, and frustrated because they often do not know how to communicate with ELL students. Most teachers will try to teach in ways that seem most appropriate based on their own experiences or knowledge, which is typically teaching conventional phonics. According to Moats (1998), "One of the most fundamental flaws found in

almost all phonics programs is that they teach the code backwards. That is, they go from letter to sound instead of sound to letter...The print-to-sound (conventional phonics) approach leaves gaps, invites confusion, and creates inefficiency” (p. 44). Herron (2008), is another advocate and supporter of this statement. Educators need to focus more on oral language in preschool, and focus less on print, this is particularly relevant when teaching ELLs. However, there are better research-based practices that can help all children, including those who are learning English as a second language. There is a growing body of research that indicates how adults’ interactional activities influence oral language development in children (Dickenson & Tabors, 2001; McEwan, 2002; Michaels, 1981; Wilcox, Bacon, & Murphy, 2000). Simple yet effective teaching methods can influence ELL’s English oral, expressive language and in turn influence cognitive, social, and emotional development.

Spanish ELLs Population Increasing

According to Brown (2008), Head Start programs have seen a dramatic increase of ELL students in their programs. Based on the U.S. Census Bureau (2004) in 2003, 21% of children under the age of five were Hispanic and according to the Head Start Bureau (2007) with an estimated quarter of children having Spanish as their primary language. For the fiscal year 2006, 34% of children served by Head Start were Hispanic, with an estimated quarter of children having Spanish as their native language (as cited in Piker and Rex, 2008). Latinos accounted for more than 8 million students in the U.S. K-12 public schools, or 19% of total school enrollment, making them the second largest segment of the U.S. student population after white students (Lazarin, 2006). Between 2005 and 2050, the population of Latino children under the age of 5 is expected to

increase by 146% (Calderon, 2005). With an ever growing population of Spanish native speakers, there will be a higher communication demand for ELL teachers or teachers who have been trained or have skills to teach both in English and Spanish alike.

Literacy Gap for Children in Poverty

Another factor that makes it more difficult for language comprehension for ELLs is their family's low-income background (Wright, 2015). According to Brizius and Foster (1993), poverty is the single best predictor of a child's failure to achieve in school. Many studies, such as the one by Lee and Burkam (2002) found that the achievement gap – between poor and non-poor children – begins early and persists. A longitudinal study by Hart and Risley (2003), found that three-year-old children from families on welfare not only had smaller vocabularies than children of the same age in professional families, but they were also adding words more slowly. Jiang, Ekono, and Skinner (2016), reported that 49% percent of children under the age of 3, years or 5.3 million-live in low-income levels. Sixty-two percent of Hispanic children under the age of 18 or 10.9 million, live in low-income families. Fifty-four percent of children under the age of 18 of immigrant parents or 9.6 million, live in poverty or low-income homes (Jiang, Ekono, & Skinner, 2016). Based on statistics and research, a child of an immigrant family, with a low socioeconomic status, and very little knowledge and understanding of the English language can have negative effect on a child's school achievement level, this issues of poverty and other challenges, in turn, impacts all other areas of development and learning.

Teacher Training

According to Piker and Rex (2008), rising numbers of Spanish-speakers in preschools require attention to increasing the likelihood of school success. It is as simple as supply-and-demand; there is an increase in demand for specialized ELL teachers but there is a lack of supply. Teachers with no specialized training are given the responsibility to teach ELL students. According to Darling-Hammond and Berry (2006), children of color and low-income families are less likely to have a ‘highly qualified’ teacher in their classroom. According to Samson and Collins (2012), the issue of the challenges ELLs face is further compounded by not having highly skilled teachers in the classroom.

According to Worthington et al. (2011), a survey was done by the National Center of Education Statistics (2000) in which many teachers reported not feeling prepared to meet the needs of these children. Teachers who do not have sufficient training cannot communicate properly with diverse students. They feel like they are not getting through to the children. Teachers feel the responsibility to communicate and to teach these students, but rather feel a negative effect because of the language barrier. There is a common saying that communication is key to establishing any type of relationship, but it is hard to make one when the problem is the lack understanding the different languages spoken in a classroom. Lack of proper communication can have negative effects on the following: Assessing children’s comprehension and learning, communication with the child and family, and lastly the feelings the teachers had as a consequence of not being able to teach diverse students (Worthington et al., 2011).

Vygotsky's Social Learning Theory

There are many educators who believe learning is a social activity and language supports learning. According to Vygotsky's theory of social learning, children are able to communicate and comprehend language better because of social interaction. According to Vygotsky (1978), "Learning awakens a variety of internal developmental processes that are able to operate only when the child is interacting with people in his environment and in cooperation with peers" (p. 90). This information was also supported by Haenen, Schrijnemakers, and Stufkens (2003). Vygotsky's theory is that of a social-interventionist perspective, in which it acknowledges that social experiences and interactions shape the language the child internalizes (Christie et al., 2011). The theory that learning takes place via social interaction can be described as learning through play. A study done by Piker and Rex (2008), found that Spanish primary children's acquisition of English appeared to be influenced by social interaction with their peers and teachers. Social contexts and interactions are critical for learning because they (1) provide information about important symbol systems (e.g., logic, language) and (2) expose students to more knowledgeable peers (Slavich & Zimbardo, 2012; Vygotsky, 1978). According to Christie, Enz, and Vukelich (2011) and studies done by Lindfords (1987), Tabors and Snow (1994), have documented how social interactions assist young children in negotiating meaning while their oral English proficiency increases. With research providing information about how children learn from social interaction, it is essential that educators use methods that are research-based that accommodate to social interactions from teachers and to ELL students.

Research-Based Practices

According to Worthington et al. (2011), one of the key challenges in Head Start is involvement in communicating with children and their families. Parental involvement research has shown how much of an impact parents have on any child, in this case, their literacy and comprehension (Duran, 1992; Jalongo, 2010). Learning a second language proficiently can also be a long and aggravating process. There are dozens of methods used to teach ELLs. There are certain methods that require intense language immersion, a focus on audio-linguistics and repetition, and traditional learning styles such as grammar-translation methods (Krashen & Terrell, 1983; Wright, 2015). ELLs are sometimes put through English as Second Language (ESL) courses or pull-out programs to help in the Second Language Acquisition (SLA) process. There are certain methods that use techniques that involve gesturing and body motion like Total Physical Response (TPR) and also by having a positive and stress-free environment like The Natural Approach (NA). In the NA, mistakes are not corrected but rather the focus is on comprehension more so than grammatical sequencing. Methods that tend to use NA and TPR have shown to work efficiently to impact the stages of Second Language Acquisition (SLA) (Duran, 1992; Wright, 2015). Much of the theories behind these approaches can be compared or related to from Vygotsky's social constructivist learning theory. Consideration of these issues led to the development of the following questions.

Research Questions

1. How does teacher's use of gestures influence ELL children's oral, language in various settings?

2. Does gesturing impact the frequency of ELL children's use of oral language in the primary or secondary verbal social interactions?
3. How do environmental settings influence the frequency of oral, expressive language?

Significance of the Study

There is a growing concern to many teachers in the United States, and they find themselves unprepared for the rapid increase of English Language Learners (ELLs). “With increasing numbers of linguistically and culturally diverse students, our schools are faced with the task of serving children and families with limited skills in English” (Green, 1997, p. 148). The reason for this concern is felt more now than before due to the vast quantities of immigrants from all nations coming to the United States to live. Some immigrants are migrant workers and in more recent years there has been an increase of migrant ELL students in Head Start. Teachers are now the ones who feel the heavy load of this growing situation. Some teachers express the fact that they have no proper training or skill sets to teach this new body of students. In some cases, there are teachers who have a hard time distinguishing an ELL student who has a learning disability from an ELL student who does not comprehend the English language (Duran, 1992). With certain methods, a teacher could potentially be able to identify the students who are comprehending the language from students who are falling behind and in need of intervention, or the students with a learning disability.

In general, it is assumed that learning a new language can be a difficult skill for children and adults. Knowing what works gives teachers a better understanding of what they can do to help both in social and cognitive development. Methods like the NA and

TPR have been used successfully with students who are learning a second language through the use of gesturing techniques (Asher, 2003). This particular study explored one specific component of the NA and TPR, which was the use of body and facial gesturing by the teacher was analyzed to see what kind of effects gesturing has on the amount of words spoken in English or Spanish by the participant child. This study sought to explore and focused on a migrant ELL student in early Head Start whose primary language is Spanish, who has a family with low socioeconomic status, and not yet mastered the English Language.

Limitations

Training Limitations

The teacher used in this study did not have the specific skills or any additional training outside of the required Head Start training to teach ELL students. This study did not offer any type of training, but rather examined the impact of the teacher's use of specific gesturing had on the frequency and type of oral language. She also had to remain flexible with the dynamic aspects of working in a pre-k classroom. The teacher was a native English speaker and not fluent in Spanish, she predominantly gestured and spoke in English to Leo. Although she was not a fluent Spanish speaker, she tried to communicate in Spanish to Leo by looking up Spanish words on the internet and trying to gesture the words at the same time. These episodes in Spanish were inconsistent and done randomly.

Fidelity

Teacher fidelity was also a limitation. The teacher would sometimes forget to use gestures due to the naturally occurring constraints of the hectic preschool environment.

Reminders were given to the teacher to use gestures; however, she would still sometimes forget to gesture.

Sampling Limitations

The sample is a convenience sample, which is appropriate for this research design, just one child participant, thereby not making it generalizable to larger preschool education populations. The study was also limited to one school setting and limited time frames due to the classroom and school schedules. The resulting information, however, may produce a foundation to expand the sample size in order to produce a larger study.

Definition of Terms

1. Early Head Start- a federally funded child care facility serving 2- 4 years of age (Infant/Toddler) of migrant workers.
2. English Language Learners (ELL) - According to Jalongo (2014), it is referred commonly to children who do not have English as a first language and who are working to acquire proficiency in English. According to Wright (2015), ELL “is a student who is in the process of attaining proficiency in English as a new, additional language” (p. 1).
3. Second Language Acquisitions (SLA) – It is a model stage process of learning a new language as defined by Krashen and Terrell (1983).
4. The Natural Approach (NA)-Theory also developed by Krashen and Terrell (1983) which focuses on learning a new language without conscious learning, to have a stress-free environment, and to focus more on language input with constant exposure to the new language.

5. Total Physical Response (TPR) - According to Asher (2003), TPR is based on commands in English that are modeled by teachers, parents, or students demonstrated by facial expressions or body motions as means of communication.
6. Gestures- Bodily and facial motions pragmatics as forms of expression and communication.
7. Comprehensible Input- is a hypothesis first proposed by Krashen, (1981), that suggests that ELLs acquire language by hearing and understanding messages that are slightly above their current English language level.
8. Binding- According to Terrell speech will only emerge after enough language has been “bound” through communicative input. Examples of this is “binding” a command with a TPR model.
9. Dual Language Learner- Children are mainly considered dual language learners (DLL) because they are still learning their primary language (L1) as they simultaneously learn a secondary language (L2). This study focused on a migrant ELL student, the following chapters will outline the methods that have helped ELL beginners in their SLA process.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Gestures

“People use hand gestures to expedite social interactions and to transmit information, feelings, or attitudes nonverbally...many gestures are universal (Hansen 2010, p. 38). The use of gestures can be a great tool for educators to use for any student trying to learn a new language. According to Hansen (2010), gesturing has become widely used in various professions, for example: Swimmers synchronize their movements with underwater signals, brokers gesture to bid on the New York Stock Exchange, baseball coaches gesture play signals, military officers indicating placement during maneuvers, and teachers use attention-getting signals. One way to help in learning a new language is by the use of gesturing because, as research has stated, many gestures are universal (Hansen 2010). This aspect of communication is linked to pragmatics. Pragmatics includes the study of “invisible” meaning or how we recognize what is meant even when it is not actually stated. A lot more is communicated in conversation than it is actually said” (Wright, 2015, p. 34). Certain methods and approaches adapt this tool in order to establish a foundation in the process of Second Language Acquisition, such as The Natural Approach and Total Physical Response.

The Natural Approach

Background

The Natural Approach (NA) is a method to teach English Language Learners (ELLs) the “natural way” to achieve Second Language Acquisition (SLA). Its main function is to adopt language acquisition in the classroom, by making it an environment

positive and stress-free as possible. Teachers can sometimes promote stressful situations without meaning to, so it is critical that teachers examine the atmosphere of the classroom environment. “A low anxiety situation can be created by involving the student *personally* in class activities” (Terrell, 1982, p. 124). The method was developed by Stephen Krashen and Tracy Terrell in 1983. The Natural Approach is very different than that of other mainstream approaches to learning a new language. Most other methods tend to focus more on an audio-lingual method that leads to drilling and error corrections. The natural approach is usually intended for beginners learning a new language (Duran, 1992; Krashen & Terrell, 1983; Richards & Rogers, 2001).

Principles of Natural Approach

In accordance with Krashen and Terrell (1983), Natural Approach broken down into three principles:

1. Emphasis on instruction as a type of communication rather than a form.
2. Oral production is never forced to come out, but rather in due time.
3. Early speech goes through “natural stages.”

In the NA, speaking the new second language is highly encouraged for the purpose of having meaningful communications with ELL students. The purpose for these types of communications is to enhance the students’ writing development and even higher oral communications in a way that is meaningful and relevant to students. Teachers who use this method are recommended to give lots of input in English and not in students’ native language. They are also encouraged to speak at a slightly higher language level than that of the student; this is what Krashen and Terrell (1983) call “comprehensive input.” Every classroom activity or event should be meaningful and with

a purpose, they should not focus on “conscious” learning and grammatical rules. An example of what Krashen and Terrell meant by conscientious learning is the learning process children go through when acquiring their first language. In other words, educators need to teach ELL students in a way that they are unaware that they are actually learning a language, so that language slowly emerges in due time, just like children who speak English as their primary language. In order to establish these meaningful conversations, the use of gesturing and other Total Physical Response methods can be used in order for comprehension of new language (Krashen & Terrell, 1983; Terrell, 1982).

Practices of Natural Approach

All the activities should be targeted to be fun, appealing, and safe to the students so that they are more focused on the content in English and feel more motivated to pay attention to English input. According to Krashen and Terrell (1983) and Terrell (1982), one of the best techniques recommended is role playing. Role playing is a fun interactive game that allows students to express a role they would like to play and act along to the scenarios (Duran, 1992), it is also a great activity to promote the use of bodily and facial gestures. This allows ESL students to be able to be engaged in the activity and allows them to practice their English with one another. Students are not expected to speak the language without mistakes; in fact, errors are usually not corrected. Teachers would only let students practice their English with the expectation that once they hear it out so often they will later correct their mistakes in due time. NA activities focus on understanding messages and place little to no importance on error correction, drilling, or on conscious learning of grammar rules (Duran, 1992; Krashen & Terrell, 1983).

Stages of Natural Approach

“The Natural Approach is consistent with the implications of the theory of second language acquisition” (Krashen & Terrell, 1983, p. 57). Students go through several stages in learning a second language, there are students who go through a silent stage and there are some that quickly pick up on the new language easily. Students who go through the silent stage usually concentrate a lot on the teacher’s comprehensive input. During this time, teachers do not force students to speak English at all until they feel more comfortable speaking. Usually, when students feel ready they will begin to speak one or two words to communicate. “Errors are usually not corrected; rather it is assumed that students will eventually correct their own errors as they are exposed to more input” (Duran, 1992, p. 137; Krashen & Terrell, 1983; Richard & Rodgers, 2001). Krashen and Terrell (1983), and Richards and Rogers (2001) stated about language learners going through three stages:

1. Comprehension Stage
2. Early Speech Stage
3. Speech Emergence Stage

During the comprehension stage, NA should focus more on students’ vocabulary knowledge, and focus on the ability for students to have the vocabulary in their long term memory. According to Terrell (1982), this process is also called “binding.” This is a key aspect of the study because Terrell declared that there are some techniques that help with this stage of language acquisition. Terrell recommends using gesturing or actions, such as in Total Physical Response, as more of a “binding” technique (Terrell, 1982). In the Early Speech Stage, students begin to use single words and a few phrases. Once they hit the

Speech Emergence stages, they develop a more advanced language such as role playing and more challenging activities like problem-solving.

Literature Inconsistencies

“Krashen and Terrell’s book contains theoretical sections prepared by Krashen that outlines his views on second language acquisition, and sections on implementation and classroom procedures, prepared largely by Terrell” (Richards & Rodgers, 2001, p. 178). Much of NA was based on many collaborating theories and hypotheses of Krashen, and Terrell such as the Acquisition –Learning Theory, Monitor Hypothesis, Input Hypothesis, and the Natural Order Hypothesis. Both Krashen and Terrell had many separate works that influenced their support and development of the NA method and bringing their ideas together. There are many inconsistencies in the literature from works that have been done by Krashen and the works from Terrell. For this particular study, the main focus is solely on the NA and its principles created by both Krashen and Terrell in 1983.

Criticisms of Natural Approach

According to Wright (2015), “Natural Approach, like Krashen’s theories on which the approach is based on, has been highly criticized for lacking a clear focus, providing too little guidance for teachers, and leaving too much to chance in terms of students’ learning needed vocabulary and grammatical forms” (p. 61). There are, however, many educators who have personally seen students succeed in learning languages with the use of the NA (Duran, 1992; Richards & Rodgers, 2001).

Total Physical Response

Background

Total Physical Response (TPR) has been used successfully with students who are learning a second language (Asher, 2003; Duran, 1992; Haynes, 2007; Terrell, 1982). TPR is another ESL method that is very popular and very effective, just as NA and has some common features. “TPR is used in a classroom where students are learning English, the teacher gives students commands in English. The teacher gestures, models, and says the commands to the students, and students respond by imitating the teacher” (Duran, 1992, p. 136). TPR was developed by James Asher in 1977 and is a comprehension method which focuses more on understanding of words than it is in grammatical technicalities. TPR focuses on comprehension before speaking. “This sequence of development-comprehension first, production second-is a functional property of the human brain which should not be violated in language instruction (Terrell, 1982, p. 124; Wright, 2015).

Hypothesis of TPR

TPR is based on three hypotheses according to Asher (2003), and Richards and Rodgers 2001):

1. The brain is naturally prone to learning new languages by listening.
2. In order to have effective learning, one must involve the right hemisphere of the brain.
3. Language learning should be in a stress-free and negative environment.

Description of the Principles

The method is unique because it requires the use of facial and body motions as a way to help students develop in their English oral expressions. The teacher gives commands in English and then models what he or she is saying. An example used by Duran (1992), described how a teacher gave the command “Open the Window” followed by the teacher demonstrating opening a window. Slowly students begin to retain the command because it had been reinforced by the motion or action of the specific command. TPR is used for the purpose of ELL students being able to listen, watch, and imitate through visuals, auditory, and kinesthetic (Asher, 2003). “The theory behind the approach is that a second language is best learned in the same manner and sequence as children learn their first language” (Duran, 1992, p. 137). Not everyone learns at the same speed, and Asher (2003) noted that students actively learning and listening to commands given in English will need ten hours or more begin to process the second language. Students who process secondary language slowly will take longer to learning the second language. The longer the time needed to listen and comprehension may be a sign of learning disabilities but also goes on to say that TPR is proven to help children with severe disabilities in Language Acquisition (Duran, 1992). The better the student listens the more the student pays attention and learns, that is why it is so highly recommended to use methods that are exciting to students to keep them engaged.

Criticisms of TPR

There are a few criticisms about TPR, according to Wright (2015), “Many believe that TPR is appropriate only for beginning-level ELLs (p. 166). Another criticism is that TPR it needs to be incorporated with other methods, especially by methods like NA that

emphasizes the role of comprehension in the second language acquisition (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). In the same article, Asher stressed that TPR should also be used with other methods and teaching techniques.

Second Language Acquisition

According to Vygotsky's theory of the zone of proximal development, educators are encouraged to know where students are in language development and where they are capable of working with support. Stages of Second Language Acquisition (SLA) helps educators know just exactly what stage an ELL student is in with their language development. Based on the stages of SLA teachers can apply better methods/approaches to scaffold children in the acquisition of learning a new language. SLA is also linked to the theory NA by Krashen and Terrell (1983), in which they explain 5 stages ELL students may be classified. The theory is composed of preproduction, early production, speech emergence, intermediate fluency, and advance fluency. Krashen and Terrell may have developed the theory but another proponent of SLA is Haynes (2007), who also emphasized the importance of each stage. "It is important for teachers to separate language ability from content knowledge" (Hill, 2016, p. 22), SLA helps in distinguishing the difference. Both NA and TPR use gesturing as a technique to improve the comprehension throughout the stages of SLA.

Stages of Second Language Development

Level 1- Preproduction. Preproduction is also known as the comprehension stage or the silent period, comprehension is the basic skill which promotes acquisition (Terrell, 1982). This is the area where students have a low amount of expressive vocabulary knowledge, up to 500 words (Haynes, 2007), but there are students in this

stage who do not speak at all. Students are not required to speak at this time, which is why it is also called the silent period. For ELL students this a crucial point, as it is a time for them to listen and absorb before they are required to practice speaking the new language. According to Terrell (1982) and Haynes (2007), using methods like TPR is critical during this time period to help with comprehension. Teachers should promote the use of role play, body language, and facial expressions for gesturing. Another way teachers can help is by using lots of pictures and real objects that captivate students' attention. It is very important to master this time period because students learn to listen and so comprehend, it is the teacher's job to give lots of English output and commands (Hill, 2016).

Level 2- Early Production. During the early production stages, students are able to speak very short phrases and respond with one or two words and typically have up to 1000 words memorized by this point. This stage also normally last up to six months for ELLs (Haynes, 2007). Terrell (1982) and Haynes (2007), described this stage as students responding to yes and no questions, either-or questions, open-ended sentences, and open dialog. Teachers should know what kind of questions and responses to give based on the level of the class or student. During this time interacting with peers can greatly benefit their skill by role playing or simple problem solving, and can help each other out by correcting each other and providing a stress-free and negative free environment. The use of TPR is used in this stage is still recommended to use for word comprehension.

Level 3- Speech Emergence. At this stage, the learner's expressive vocabulary is up to 3000-7000 words (Haynes, 2007). During this time, students are better able to communicate but may consistently make grammatical errors. Teachers should provide

additional support by analyzing the cognitive complexity, that is to say, the difficulty of a task and by contextual support such as hands-on activities (Cummings, 1982). According to Haynes (2007), the use of dialogue journals are good tools for ELLs to have in order to express their thoughts and ideas. Methods/approaches like NA can be applied here and into focusing more on exposure to the new language, and promote a stress-free environment where errors are not corrected (Krashen & Terrell, 1983).

Level 4- Intermediate Fluency. According to Haynes (2007), ELLs at this stage have an expressive vocabulary of 6,000 active words. They are able to have more expressive opinions, use more complex sentences in speaking and writing their thoughts. It is at this stage that learners begin to think in their second language, which ultimately helps ELL students be more proficient in speaking (Haynes, 2007).

Level 5- Advanced Fluency. Students can take up to 5-10 years to reach this stage (Haynes, 2007). It is at this level where they have achieved full mastery of the second language. ELL still need support in ongoing opportunities to engage in discussion and expressive conversations in practicing their new language (Haynes, 2007).

Summary

Based on literature review, research points have revealed how beneficial gesturing is for in the stages of SLA and teaching methods like NA and TPR promote the use of bodily and facial gestures increasing the overall acquisition of the ELL student. The next chapter highlights and demonstrates the overall methods used to analyze how the child's oral, expressive vocabulary is influenced through the use of teacher gesturing. The next chapter will also go into detail on the specific implementation of the intervention.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODS

Purpose

This study is an exploration of the use of teacher gesturing for ELL students in Early Head Start. A quantitative, single-subject design was used to see if there was any effect on the primary and secondary language by teacher's use of bodily and facial gestures. This design was selected because "single-subject designs provide experimental documentation of unequivocal relationships between manipulation of independent variables and change in the dependent variables" (Horner, Carr, Halle, McGee, & Wolery, 2005, p.169). For this study, the independent variable was gestures used by the teacher, and the dependent variable was the amount of oral, expressive language used by Leo, the child participant. As stated by Owens (2012), renowned child development specialist Jerome Bruner began his career studying language in very controlled situations and analyzing discrete bits of language. However, the model was confounding, and the language felt artificial. He then began studying children at home, videotaping open-ended interactions with the families. As a result, his later data had an authentic quality to it. For this reason, it is very much intentional that the child's routine schedule and activities not be disturbed. Abu-Akel, Bailey, and Thum (2004) stated that naturalistic studies, such as language samples, may yield very different data than experimental manipulations, Research by Owens (2012) also revisited and supports the same conclusion. This approach is appropriate for the study due to the very specific participant requirements and due to the complex nature of children's oral language development and social interactions. This study was specifically targeting an ELL migrant student, at or below

poverty, with limited oral language, that required assistance in communication. Studies show that poverty is the single best predictor of a child's failure to achieve in school (Brizius & Foster, 1993) and that the achievement gap – between poor and non-poor children – begins early and persists (Lee & Burkam, 2002); therefore, this is a critical area for research. Being a minority presents its challenges as well, as stated by Gándara and Santibañez (2016) in the *Educational Leadership Journal* (2016). In a study by Darling-Hammond and Berry (2006) children of color and low-income are less likely to have a 'high qualified' teacher in their classroom. Clearly ELLs also suffer from a teacher-quality gap (Samson & Collins, 2012). The purpose of this study is to explore through recordings and observations a teacher's use of gesturing, to see if there is any influence in the oral, expressive language of a migrant ELL child, with a family with a low socioeconomic status in early childhood.

Participant

There was one participant in this study, a young ELL Early Head Start student, Leo. To protect the anonymity of the child, little amount of information can be stated. The targeted participant was an ELL child whose primary language is Spanish and in an early Head Start program in the upper east Tennessee rural area. The child was from a family of a low socio-economic status, who had not yet mastered the English language, but rather be in the early stages of learning the English language and Spanish being his primary language of communication. In accordance with Krashen and Terrell (1983), Second Language Acquisition (SLA), the participant belonged in the preproduction stage. Convenience sampling was done by asking the teacher to choose a migrant ELL student, whose primary language is Spanish and English as the secondary.

Research Design

“Multiple-baseline and multiple-probe designs are appropriate for answering research questions regarding the effects of a single intervention or independent variable across three or more individuals, behaviors stimuli, or settings” (Byiers, Reichle, & Symons, 2012, p.403). “The logic of the multiple baseline designs is to demonstrate a change in responding when intervention is sequentially applied” (Plavnick & Ferreri, 2013, p.557). According to the same researchers, multiple baseline designs are 1) an effective design that experimental control is established by demonstrating a steady-state baseline for all independent behaviors 2) a design that is very much accepted by parents, teachers, and administrators as a method to demonstrate effects of intervention (Cooper et al., 2007). As stated by Plavnick and Ferreri (2013), the design is very flexible, easy to conceptualize, and the design’s simplicity makes the design highly preferred and widely utilized. In this study, data were collected in multiple baselines across three settings of the child’s school natural environment: Free play, circle time, and playground (Barlow & Hersen, 1984; Creswell, 2009; Koegel, Koegel, Green-Hopkins, & Barnes, 2010).

Baseline

During baseline data collection, the teacher was instructed to interact with the participant child as she would normally do in a regular class day. Baseline data had to be at a relative constant trend in order for the intervention to begin and intervention could not be introduced until then. The baseline period during free play setting was 4 days, for circle time 7 days, and for the playground was all 14 days of data recording. During the baseline sessions, the data were recorded by the primary investigator via video recordings

and field notes. Each session of recording from each setting was between 15-20 minutes, depending on teacher activity.

Intervention

Based on the information obtained by the stability of the baselines done individually, the intervention, teacher gesturing, was introduced systematically during free play while baseline data collection continues in the other settings. For this design, once responding verbally was stable in the intervention phase in the first setting, the intervention is introduced in the next setting and it continued until AB design sequence was completed in all three settings (Byiers, et al., 2011). It is important to note that an intervention could not be introduced until the baseline had a stable trend. For the intervention, the teacher was instructed to use facial expressions, body motions, and various voice expressions. Rather than using a script, the researcher observed daily classroom routines, then met with the teacher to demonstrate and describe the targeted intervention (e.g., hand and body motions, exaggerated facial expressions and other TPR techniques).

Settings

Leo, the participant, was observed in his natural environment during his daily school routine. Settings were during free play, circle time, and playground, with each session lasting 15-20 minutes. These were specifically selected because they are part of Leo's daily school routine. The effort was made to not disturb the child's routine and to capture the data in an authentic setting.

Free play. In this specific setting, Leo was allowed to be anywhere in the classroom and do any activity that he was interested in for that particular day. Which

would include, but not limited to playing with toys, playing with children kitchen appliances, doing crafts, writing/drawing, playing in the water table, or simply reading. During this time teacher often interacted with Leo in whatever he was interested in.

Circle time. In this particular setting, the teacher placed the students in a circle, with the participant child next to her. During this time Leo participated in all of the following: Singing/music time, storytelling, counting, naming of shapes and colors.

Playground. During this time, Leo interacted with the children but mainly played by himself. He would go down the slide, run around, ride a tricycle, and play in the sand box.

Procedures for Collection of Data

Video recordings were taken with a video camera and field notes were also taken for each session through the 14 days of data collection. The number of words spoken by the child participant during and after intervention were counted by reviewing the videos and were recorded in an Excel sheet. Every word was counted that Leo spoke for example if Leo said “this one,” it was counted as two words spoken. Table 1 illustrates how the child’s word count was recorded. Video recordings and field notes were important 1) to count word usage, type, and frequency by the child, 2) to preserve relevant details of situated actions, and 3) configuring and assembling relevant details (Creswell, 2009; Mondada, 2006).

Limitations

Training Limitations

The teacher used in this study did not have the specific skills or any additional training outside of the required Head Start training to teach ELL students. This study did

not offer any type of training, but rather examined the impact of the teacher's use of specific gesturing had on the frequency and type of oral language. She also had to remain flexible with the dynamic aspects of working in a pre-k classroom. The teacher was a native English speaker and not fluent in Spanish, she predominantly gestured and spoke in English to Leo. Although she was not a fluent Spanish speaker, she tried to communicate in Spanish to Leo by looking up Spanish words on the internet and trying to gesture the words at the same time. These episodes in Spanish were inconsistent and done randomly.

Fidelity

Teacher fidelity was also a limitation. The teacher would sometimes forget to use gestures due to the naturally occurring constraints of the hectic preschool environment. Reminders were given to the teacher to use gestures; however, she would still sometimes forget to gesture.

Sampling Limitation

The sample is a convenience sample, which is appropriate for this research design, just one child participant, thereby not making it generalizable to larger preschool education populations. The study was also limited to one school setting and limited time frames due to the classroom and school schedules. The resulting information, however, may produce a foundation to expand the sample size in order to produce a larger study.

Dual Language Learner

Based on observations, Leo was more than an ELL student, he was also a Spanish Language Learner. Children are mainly considered dual language learners (DLL) because they are still learning their primary language (L1) as they simultaneously learn a

secondary language (L2). This study focused on an ELL student, but after review of data and field note, Leo was a DLL. Because DLLs had not yet mastered a language, it can become difficult and confusing for a child to learn two languages for a while. According to Araujo (2002), DLLs may engage in “code-switching” by alternating the use of both languages from sentence to sentence or even within the same sentence (as cited in Christie et al., 2011, p. 60). Throughout data collection, there were some instances in which Leo would “code-switch” with other native Spanish speakers. With the methods established, the next chapter explains the results found from the observation video recordings and from field notes.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

Data Collection

The purpose of this study was to explore and observe the use of body and facial gesturing (e.g., hand gestures, facial expressions, body motions, etc.) by the teacher as an intervention to see any effects on the primary and secondary language. Based on the data collected and field notes, there was an increase of English words spoken by the child in two of the three settings, as shown in Table 1 and Figure 1. The intervention resulted in an increase in the number of words spoken by the child.

Table 1.

Daily Total of Words Spoken by Targeted Child in English and Spanish in Three Settings

	Day													
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
	Free Play													
English	45	25	45	38	98	117	102	121	123	101	133	125	130	53
Spanish	18	10	4	0	35	28	29	8	1	10	0	0	16	20
	Circle Time													
English	61	67	57	47	80	50	48	59	83	93	61	111	90	65
Spanish	15	8	17	10	18	3	19	0	19	2	0	16	0	0
	Playground Time													
English	35	25	8	27	26	29	55	48	-	45	58	23	-	39
Spanish	2	0	0	0	4	0	13	16	-	5	0	12	-	0

Note. Video recordings were taken every day for 14 days and were watched to keep track of the number of words spoken in all three settings. The number of words was put on the table to monitor appropriate times to introduce the intervention and to have a record of data. Dashes are used in some days because data was not obtained.

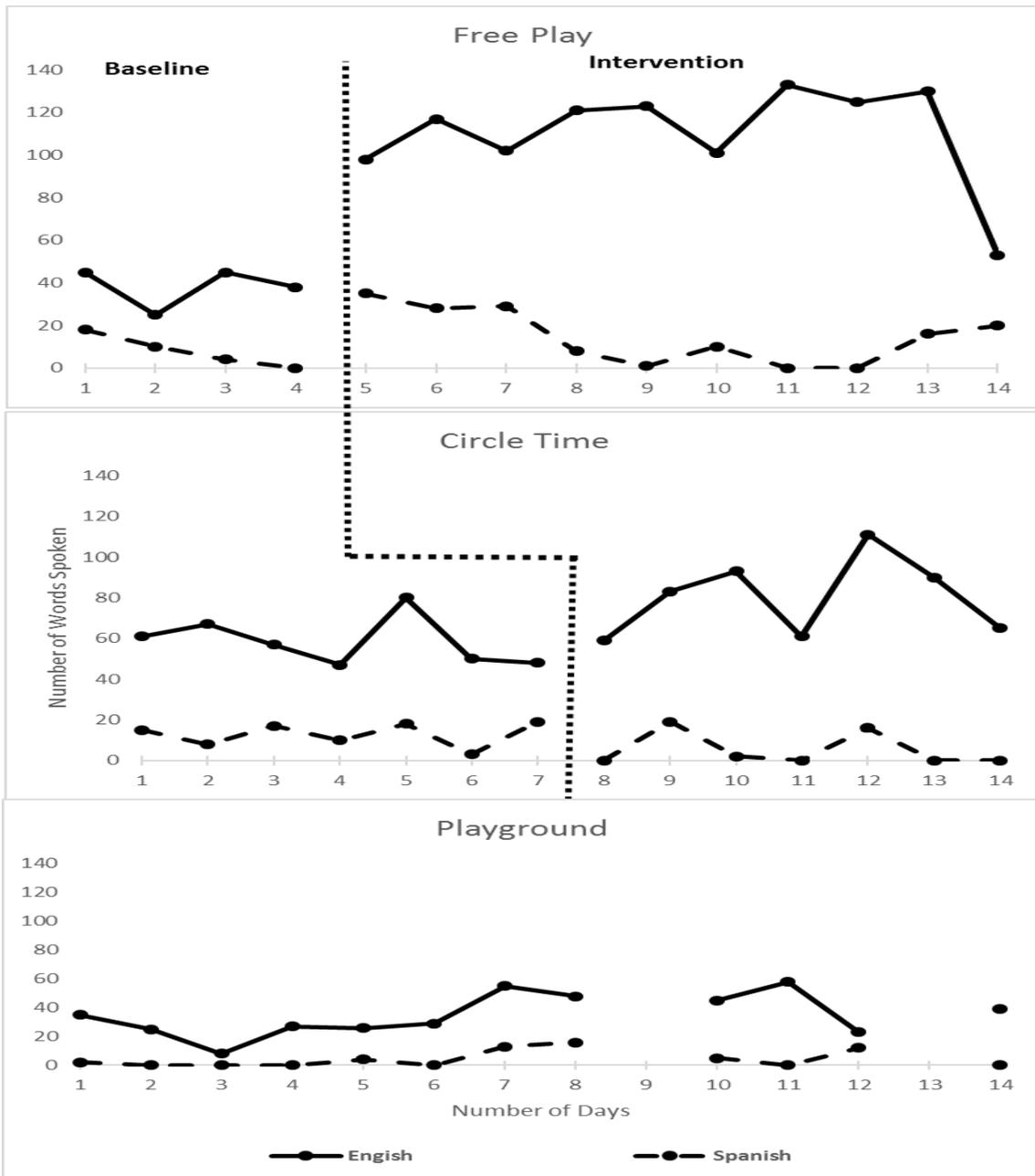


Figure 1. Number of Words Spoken with and without Intervention

Note. The dependent variables included the numbers of words spoken by child participant per day, shown in the y-axis. The independent variable was the teacher intervention. The experimental, single subject design had three settings.

Description of the Participants

The child participant was very shy and talked very little. For most of the activities, he chose to play by himself and only interacted with the teacher. He seemed to have a trusting relationship with the teacher but was shy around everyone else. Based on the field notes and videos taken, the child knew very little English. However, the child demonstrated knowledge of color names, shapes, and numbers in both English and Spanish. One interesting note is that the child spoke Spanish to other native Spanish speakers and would not communicate in English with them. The child participant could understand what the teachers and his peers would say, demonstrating his receptive language, but would struggle in communicating back. In some instances, he would mumble a lot and it was neither English nor Spanish, but it seemed like he was trying to communicate.

One very observable phenomenon was that he was very repetitive in certain words and phrases he knew. For example, every time that he wanted the teacher or his peers to look at something, he would say and repeat multiple times “This one” and other words that would be repeated would be: “Yes,” “no,” “no touch,” “right there,” “wow,” “me,” “no me,” “thank you,” “come on,” “nope,” “poke,” “oh no,” and “purple.” Some of these words were repeated multiple times throughout the day, and especially throughout the intervention. This phenomenon can be explained by Halliday’s (1975) seven functions of children’s language theory. Halliday identified seven functions that serve a purpose during the child’s early years. He stated that the first functions are to help satisfy physical, emotional, and social needs. Halliday came to call these the instrumental, regulatory, interactional, and personal functions. There are more functions in Halliday’s

theory, but are more complex functions and not relevant to this study. According to Halliday (1975), the participant child in this study can be placed in instrumental and regulatory functions. In the instrumental function, the child will use language to express his needs and wants for example, “no me” or “this one.” For regulatory functions language serves to tell others what to do for example, “no touch.”

The teacher was very open to the idea of doing more gestures when she communicated with the child although she was not a native Spanish speaker and she did try to model and speak certain words in Spanish and English. Rather than having a script the researcher observed daily classroom routines and activities, then met with teacher to describe and demonstrate the targeted intervention for example, body motion (e.g., using arms to demonstrate size of an object), hand motions (e.g., pointing), facial expressions (e.g., sad, happy, or mad face), voice tone (e.g., deep, low-tone voice for big objects) and other TPR techniques. There were times that the teacher did not use gestures due to certain activities she had planned and wanted to do. The teacher was very flexible in her schedule and cooperative throughout most of the data collection, and ultimately she had the choice whether or not certain activities would be done. Based on the field notes taken, it appeared that over time she used fewer body and facial gestures throughout the day, which ultimately may have affected the numbers of words that was spoken by the Leo.

Data Analysis

A baseline was recorded for all three settings, and the teacher intervention was first introduced during the fifth day in free play setting. When the teacher intervention was first introduced, there was a huge spike in the number of words that the child used, and in some cases, it doubled the amount of words spoken during baseline observation

and recordings. Once there was a steady increase and stability, the intervention was introduced into the second setting, circle time. It was not until the eighth day that the teacher intervention was added and likewise, as there was an increase in the number of words that the participant child spoke. The teacher intervention was not added to the playground setting, as there was little stability and weather affected the lack of data for the ninth and thirteenth days. Based on the field notes, there was little to no type of special activities that would allow teacher and student to interact together during playground. It was also difficult to capture Leo's language due to the noise level and movement of the children. Leo mostly went off by himself to run and play, which also made capturing his oral communications difficult. During the end of the data collection, the teacher fidelity became an unexpected variable. Based on the field notes, the teacher and Leo did different activities and the teacher used fewer gestures during the collection of data. Based on the data from the last couple of days, there was a decrease of number of words spoken by Leo, which may be explained by the few gestures the teacher used.

Effects of Primary and Secondary Language

The participant's secondary language, English, increased during the introduction of the teacher intervention. He still was not able to speak fluently or speak in sentences, but his use of repetitive commands increased as he tried to respond/communicate to his teacher. His primary language, Spanish, did not increase during the teacher intervention. On some days Leo did not speak any Spanish. This is a noteworthy because research has shown that children who are fluent in their primary language are more likely to be successful in the secondary language acquisition as well as literacy processes (Jalongo, 2014; Reutzell, 2013). The Committee on the Prevention of Reading Difficulties in Young

Children recommends teaching ELLs to read in their primary language, while at the same time, teaching them to speak English (Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998). “Thinking skills, background of knowledge, and reading skills learned in the students’ native language transfers to reading and writing in English” (Gunning, 2013, p. 32).

Based on the data collated, there was an increase of the number of words spoken by Leo in English when the teacher used gestures. The use of gesturing was used more often with the English language than with Spanish, this may also have also effected the increase in the English vocabulary. The teacher was also not a native Spanish speaker and had very little knowledge of the Spanish language, she tried to speak and gesture in Spanish sporadically with Leo, but the data collected indicated that there was an increase in expressive, oral language in English.

This study still was focused on oral, expressive language, and to see what language came out predominantly. In the next chapter, the results will be discussed and analyzed.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

The results of this study showed that there are effects of teacher gestures on the number of words spoken by the child participant, Leo. When the intervention was introduced during free play, there was a significant increase in the amount of words spoken by the child. There was also an increase in oral language production during circle time. Two out of three settings had an increase of words spoken in English but not in Spanish. Free play had the biggest increase of words spoken, based on the all the videos and field notes and this is where there was more teacher-student interaction. This was also the setting where the child chose what he was interested in doing. Circle time had more teacher led activities and she interacted with Leo on the lessons or activities that were teacher guided, such as story time or music/singing time. Playground data was very unstable and this could be due to the lack of activity that the teacher and Leo could have done together. The weather was also an unforeseen variable that prevented the child from going outside on the playground. Based on video recordings and field notes the number of words was increased and the words Leo spoke were very repetitive. In some cases, Leo repeated the same word up to 10-15 times to express to the teacher or peers what he was trying to say. It was also seen that Leo only spoke English to the teacher and native English speakers, and would only speak Spanish to native Spanish speakers.

Research Questions 1

How does teacher's use of gestures influence ELL children's oral language in various settings? To answer the question, both Table 1 and Figure 1 show that there was an increase in the amount of English words spoken in all but one setting. The

interactions during free play and circle time support oral language production and helped promote teacher-student involvement activities. There was more teaching structure and teacher-student interactions during free play and circle times. The playground had lots of unforeseen variables, like weather that prevented the collection of data. It was also during this time that there was no set teaching structure. Based on the data there is strong evidence that teacher gestures influence Leo's oral language production.

Research Question 2

Does gesturing impact the frequency of ELL children's use of oral language in the primary or secondary verbal, social interactions? Based on the data collected, the teacher's use of gesturing increased the English oral production of Leo; in some days, it doubled that of the baseline data. The data seem to show that there is an effect between the teacher gesturing and the amount of words spoken by the child.

Research Question 3

How do environmental settings influence the frequency of oral, expressive language? Based on the data collected, changes in setting did have an influence in the amount of words spoken by Leo. Indoor environments appear to help produce more English oral expressive language than outdoor settings, like the playground. This may be due to lack of teacher-student activities, and playground had no types of instructional activities.

Personal Experience

Being an ELL student myself growing up, I struggled through three years of ESL classes. I had a great ESL teacher, she tried to teach in various different forms and activities. I did, however, manage to catch up to my other peers in the third grade. From

personal experience, I can say that teaching methods like teacher gestures in the forms of Total Physical Response (TPR) and The Natural Approach (NA) helped me in the comprehension and acquisition of the English language. Spanish was and is the primary language at my home and I came to realize that the more I learned English, the less Spanish I spoke. With parental guidance, it became mandatory to speak Spanish in the home so that I would not forget and lose practice of our native tongue, and in turn, lose our Hispanic culture. In my school, they mostly taught English immersion, which was difficult for my parents to help with at home because they wanted me to practice Spanish. Because I was learning English and still had not mastered the Spanish language, I struggled in school and sometimes mixed grammar rules from both languages. This study focused on how gesturing can influence the English language output, but more questions arise as a part of the research process. What would happen if Hispanic parents used gesturing to help their child continue to develop in their Spanish acquisition and teachers used gestures to help the child in school with English acquisition? Research shows that children who are fluent in their primary language are more likely to be successful in speaking English (Gunning, 2013; Jalongo, 2014; Snow et al., 1998). As research shows, ELL students are a growing population. Early childhood education programs like Head Starts are witnessing this population shift first hand. Therefore, research-based methods should be trained to new teachers to be able to prepare for this new body of students who have specific language needs.

Future Recommendations

Multiple Children

The use of multiple children is recommended for future research to meet *What Works Clearinghouse* (WWCH) standards by Kratochwill et al. (2010), and such a study would be more generalizable. Having multiple children will also be beneficial for attrition.

Indoor Setting Only

It is recommended to have observations in settings that are indoors. Outdoor environments rarely have any type of teacher-student instructional interactions or activities. The weather and teacher's decision to go outside made the setting very unpredictable. Indoor environments tend to have more one-on-one communication with students and teachers. It is also easier to capture and record children's oral language indoors.

Teacher and Parent Training

It is recommended to have training sessions for teachers and for parents. Training would more beneficial to see if interventions can work at school and at the child's home. Data could be collected by doing home visits during certain daily routines of the child, preferably a time when the child is with together with parents. There is research that shows how much parental involvement helps children in language development and parents may not know the best ways to help their children in this complex process (Christie et al., 2011; Reutzler, 2013). A study needs to be done to understand parent's attitudes regarding second language learning. Parents are critical to young children's oral

language development and we need more research to understand parents' knowledge of this process, their skill in this, and their attitudes regarding language and cultural identity.

Intervention Removal

It is recommended to have intervention removed to see if the number of words spoken by the child will remain stable or decrease. It is important to see if intervention worked so it can be removed at any time.

Conclusion

Based on the data gathered from this study, a migrant ELL student may encounter various obstacles and challenges. Imagining a child who is not from this country, who does not speak any English, who comes from a low-income family, and is expected to learn from a teacher who may not have received any type of special training or skill to teach ELL students can be a very overwhelming. What can even be overwhelming for teachers is that there are many methods and trying to figure out which method is the best one can be frustrating; not to mention some methods are more expensive than others. There are methods like the NA and TPR that are effective and at little to no cost.

This study examined how gestures, a simple, effective component of NA and TPR, can influence the word production in a migrant ELL student; it is also economically friendly. Statistics and research point out that there is a continued growth in migrant ELL students in the country, and there is a demand for teachers who can teach the growing population of ELL students. From personal experience, I felt alone, scared, and confused when my parents dropped me off at school. I did not know anybody and I also could not understand anyone but I was expected to somehow get through each day with help from ESL teachers, who knew some Spanish. We are in a more diverse population of students

through most schools, I strongly believe that this problem should no longer be ignored.

More research is recommended to be able to train teachers on research-based practices, to help children like Leo.

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