

SPEECH AND LANGUAGE GROWTH IN PRESCHOOLERS: THE ROLE OF PARENTAL INTERACTION

Ikromova Nodira Makhmudovna

Department of Physiology, Fergana Medical Institute of Public Health, Fergana, Uzbekistan

ikromovanodira00@gmail.com

Eminov Ravshanjon Ikromjon ugli

Department of Faculty and hospital surgery, FMIOPH, Fergana, Uzbekistan

Abstract: Speech and language development in preschool children is profoundly shaped by parental interaction. This study highlights the importance of verbal communication, reading habits, and parental education level in fostering language acquisition between ages 3–6. Interactive shared book reading, storytelling, and verbal engagement improve vocabulary, grammar, and communication skills. Moreover, socioeconomic status and educational background influence the quality of parental support, further affecting speech development outcomes.

Keywords: speech, language, preschool, parents

Аннотация: Развитие речи и языка у детей дошкольного возраста во многом определяется взаимодействием с родителями. В исследовании подчеркивается значение вербальной коммуникации, привычек чтения и уровня образования родителей для формирования речевых навыков в возрасте от 3 до 6 лет. Совместное чтение, рассказывание историй и речевая активность способствуют развитию словарного запаса, грамматики и коммуникативных навыков. Кроме того, социально-экономический статус и образовательный уровень родителей влияют на качество речевой поддержки.

Ключевые слова: речь, язык, дошкольник, родители

Annotatsiya: Maktabgacha yoshdagi bolalarda nutq va til rivojlanishi ota-onalar bilan o'zaro muloqot orqali shakllanadi. Ushbu tadqiqot 3–6 yosh oralig'ida bolalarning nutq o'zlashtirishida og'zaki muloqot, kitob o'qish odatlari va ota-onaning ta'lim darajasining ahamiyatini ta'kidlaydi. Birgalikda kitob o'qish, ertak aytish va faol so'zlashuv so'z boyligi, grammatik tuzilma va muloqot ko'nikmalarini rivojlantiradi. Bundan tashqari, ijtimoiy-iqtisodiy holat va ota-onaning ma'lumoti til rivojiga bevosita ta'sir ko'rsatadi.

Kalit so'zlar: nutq, til, maktabgacha, ota-ona

Introduction

Speech and language development in preschoolers is a complex process that is significantly influenced by parental interaction, particularly through verbal communication, reading habits, and parental education level. These factors collectively create a nurturing environment that fosters linguistic and cognitive growth. Research has consistently shown that active parental involvement, especially in the form of shared reading, storytelling, and interactive communication, plays a pivotal role in enhancing children's language skills. Additionally, the quality of these interactions, often shaped by parental education and socioeconomic status, further moderates the effectiveness of these practices. This response explores the interplay of these factors, drawing on insights from multiple studies to provide a comprehensive understanding of their impact on preschoolers' speech and language development.

Parental interaction plays a crucial role in the speech and language growth of preschoolers, with verbal communication, reading habits, and parental education level being significant factors. Parents serve as primary models for language use, providing children with vocabulary, grammatical structures, and essential communication skills through rich verbal interactions[2].

The quality of these interactions is influenced by the context, with activities like book sharing and reminiscing eliciting higher quality speech compared to toy play[10]. Parental education level further impacts the linguistic quality of interactions, with higher education levels associated with more sophisticated language use[10]. Reading habits, particularly shared book reading, are instrumental in language development. Dialogic reading, an interactive method of shared reading, has been shown to improve early language and literacy skills in preschoolers[3]. This method encourages verbal interactivity and engagement, which are crucial for language acquisition[9]. Parent-child reading not only enhances vocabulary and syntax but also fosters communication skills, providing a strong foundation for future academic and social success[4]. Moreover, shared reading experiences have been linked to neurocognitive development, influencing white matter organization in the brain, which is associated with subsequent reading abilities[6]. Parental involvement in reading activities, such as reading aloud and engaging in literacy-based activities, further supports language development and increases children's interest in reading[8]. Overall, parents equipped with effective communication strategies and an understanding of their child's unique learning pace can create an environment conducive to holistic language development[1] [2].

Verbal communication and parental interaction

Verbal communication between parents and children is foundational to language development. Studies have demonstrated that the frequency and quality of parent-child conversations significantly predict children's lexical and grammatical skills. For instance, research indicates that more frequent reading, storytelling, and singing by parents are associated with higher levels of expressive lexical and general language ability in preschoolers [1]. These activities not only expose children to a wider range of vocabulary but also provide opportunities for them to practice articulation and comprehension. Furthermore, interactive shared book reading (ISBR) has been shown to have a superior value in fostering language development, particularly in infants and toddlers. The quality of ISBR, characterized by interactive strategies such as questioning, elaboration, and feedback, has been found to significantly enhance children's communication and language skills, including nonverbal communication, vocabulary, morphology, and syntax [2].

Table: Key Findings on Speech and Language Growth in Preschoolers

Aspect	Key Findings	Citation
Verbal Communication	Frequency and quality of parent-child conversations predict lexical and grammatical skills.	[1] [2]
Reading Habits	Interactive shared book reading enhances vocabulary, morphology, and syntax.	[1] [2] [3]
Parental Education Level	Higher education levels are associated with greater linguistic support and interactive strategies.	[2] [5]
Socioeconomic Status	SES influences access to literacy materials and the quality of parental interaction.	[3] [5]

The role of parental education in shaping verbal communication cannot be overstated. Higher levels of parental education are often associated with greater linguistic support, as educated parents are more likely to engage in activities that promote language development. For example, mothers with higher education levels are more likely to use interactive strategies during shared book reading, which in turn enhances children's language outcomes [2] [5]. This highlights the importance of parental education in creating a linguistically enriching home environment.

Reading habits and language development

Reading habits are a critical component of parental interaction that directly influences language growth. The frequency and quality of reading activities have been consistently linked to improved language skills in preschoolers. A study conducted in Helsinki found that more frequent reading was associated with higher levels of expressive and receptive language abilities, as well as phonological skills [1]. Similarly, research in Zambia highlighted the importance of shared book reading, singing, and storytelling in fostering oral language development [3]. These activities create a responsive and encouraging home literacy environment that supports the acquisition of oral language skills.

The quality of reading interactions is equally important as the quantity. Interactive shared book reading, which involves active engagement and dialogue, has been shown to have a more significant impact on language development than passive reading. For example, a study involving Greek-speaking families found that the quality of shared book reading, characterized by interactive strategies, had a larger effect on children's language skills than the frequency of reading alone [2]. This underscores the importance of engaging children in meaningful conversations during reading, rather than simply reading to them.

Parental education level and socioeconomic status

Parental education level is a key factor that influences the quality and quantity of parental interaction. Higher levels of parental education are often associated with greater linguistic support and a more enriching home literacy environment. For instance, mothers with higher education levels are more likely to engage in interactive shared book reading and use a wider range of vocabulary, which in turn enhances children's language development [2] [5]. Additionally, parental education level has been found to moderate the relationship between parental involvement and children's literacy development. A study in China revealed that mother's education level directly moderated the relationship between parent-child literacy activities and children's literacy achievement [5]. This suggests that the impact of parental involvement on language development is amplified when parents have higher levels of education.

Socioeconomic status (SES) also plays a role in shaping the home literacy environment and parental interaction. Families from higher SES backgrounds often have greater access to literacy materials and resources, which can enhance children's language development. For example, a study in Zambia found that socioeconomic factors influenced the availability of books and other literacy materials in the home, which in turn affected children's oral language skills [3]. Additionally, birth order and the presence of siblings can also influence the quantity and quality of shared book reading, with firstborn children often receiving more attention and interaction [2].

The interplay of verbal communication, reading habits, and parental education

The interplay between verbal communication, reading habits, and parental education level creates a complex web of influences that shape children's language development. Verbal communication provides the foundation for language acquisition, while reading habits build on this foundation by exposing children to new vocabulary, grammar, and narrative structures. Parental education level enhances the quality of these interactions by providing parents with the skills and knowledge to engage in more sophisticated and interactive communication.

For example, parents with higher education levels are more likely to use complex vocabulary and engage in extended conversations, which can accelerate children's language development [1] [2]. Additionally, the combination of frequent reading and high-quality interaction creates a synergistic effect that maximizes language growth. A study in Helsinki found that reading combined with storytelling had the highest explanatory value for grammatical skills, while reading alone had the highest explanatory value for lexical and general language ability [1].

Practical implications for parents and caregivers

The findings from these studies have important implications for parents and caregivers. First, they highlight the importance of engaging in frequent and high-quality verbal communication with children. This can be achieved through activities such as storytelling, singing, and interactive shared book reading. Second, they emphasize the need to create a home literacy environment that is rich in books, stories, and other literacy materials. Finally, they underscore the role of parental education in enhancing the quality of these interactions and creating a more supportive environment for language development.

For policymakers and educators, these findings suggest the need for interventions that promote parental involvement and provide resources to families from diverse socioeconomic backgrounds. For example, programs that provide training for parents on interactive shared book reading strategies, or initiatives that distribute books to families with limited resources, could have a significant impact on children's language development.

Conclusion

In conclusion, speech and language growth in preschoolers is profoundly influenced by parental interaction, particularly through verbal communication, reading habits, and parental education level. The frequency and quality of these interactions, shaped by factors such as socioeconomic status and parental education, create a home environment that either supports or hinders language development. The findings from the studies reviewed here underscore the importance of fostering a linguistically enriching home environment through activities such as shared book reading, storytelling, and interactive communication. By doing so, parents and caregivers can provide preschoolers with the foundation they need to develop strong language skills and achieve their full potential.

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