Impact of Adult Vocabulary Noneliciting and Eliciting Questions on the Novel Vocabulary Acquisition of Preschoolers Enrolled in Head Start

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Purpose
This experiment investigated the impact of two adult questioning styles—vocabulary noneliciting questions and vocabulary eliciting questions—on the novel vocabulary learning of preschoolers enrolled in Head Start.

The Article
A variety of adult questioning styles may accompany shared storybook reading to help preschoolers’ word learning. Results indicate that children who were asked vocabulary noneliciting questions, or questions that included novel words, had significantly higher receptive word knowledge posttest scores than children who were asked questions that elicited the novel words.

What this Means for the Field
This study may inform practices for promoting preschoolers’ novel vocabulary learning in the context of shared storybook reading. During storybook reading that includes pictorial representations, it may be important to ask noneliciting questions (e.g., “Where are the snowshoes?”), or questions that include the novel words but do not require children to include the novel word in their responses. Noneliciting questions provide more exposure to the novel words and help develop receptive word knowledge. It appears that noneliciting questions serve an important developmental role and are more effective than eliciting questions for the novel receptive word learning of children enrolled in Head Start.

Citation

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