An Evaluation of Adding an Echoic Response Requirement to Picture Prompts During Receptive Training
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Introduction
- Receptive training in which children are presented with an array of pictures and vocally instructed to select one (e.g., “Point to cat”) addresses children’s comprehension of spoken language and occupies a large proportion of early intervention curricula for children with autism and young typically developing children (e.g., Lovaas, 2003).
- Previous research has demonstrated that receptive training can be facilitated by using picture prompts (Fisher, Kodak, & Moore, 2007) or requiring the child to echo the word spoken by the teacher before selecting a picture (Charlop, 1983).
- The present study sought to extend previous research by evaluating the effects of combining these two prompting procedures and assessing preference.
- It was predicted that the combination of the two prompting procedures would result in faster acquisition than the picture prompting alone.

Method
- Participants were two typically developing preschoolers ages 3-4
- Sessions were conducted 3 times per week in an empty preschool library and lasted approximately 20 m
- Children earned tokens that they placed on a token board
- An alternating treatments design was used with 4 alternating conditions

Prompting Evaluation
- 4 alternating conditions
  - Play (PL)
  - Trial and Error (TE)
  - Picture Prompt (PP)
  - Echoic Picture Prompt (EPP)
- Different stimuli in each experimental prompting condition
- 16 trials per condition
- Criterion: 14/16 correct responses

Preference Assessment
- “Give me the X card”
  - PL
  - TE
  - PP
  - EPP
- Correct Response: Praise + Token

Results
- For Tina, criterion was met only in the PP condition with two sets of stimuli, and a preference was shown for the TE condition.
- For Amy, criterion was met in both the PP and EPP conditions with two sets of stimuli; however, there were no differential effects between the conditions. No preference was shown for any of the experimental prompting conditions.

Discussion
- Contrary to the prediction, results showed that the picture prompt alone was equally or more effective in facilitating acquisition of receptive skills than when the picture prompt included an echoic response.
- It is possible that a mitigating factor of acquisition during receptive training is immediate feedback following an incorrect response; therefore, having the child make an echoic response before the prompt would delay the feedback resulting in slower acquisition for some children.
- Tina demonstrated impulsive responding; therefore, her preference for the TE condition could be due to trials in that condition requiring less time to conduct compared to the prompting trials.

References