

Contribution example 1

How can we improve vocabulary in late talkers? Evidence from the Vocabulary Acquisition and Usage for Late Talkers (VAULT) Treatment Efficacy Study.

There is variation in language acquisition patterns. Indeed, we know that while some children have already started to pronounce their first word combinations, others have not started to produce their first words yet. Children who experience difficulties in producing their first words and sentences have a language delay (or a late language emergence) and are called late talkers. A growing body of research is evaluating the efficacy of language interventions on improving late talkers' communicative-language skills.

We present work carried out by the University of Texas. They recruited 24-30 months old late talkers who received the VAULT treatment. The sample was split into two groups, differing in the utterance-length in which the target word was presented: brief (four words or fewer) or extended (five words or more).

No statistically significant differences were found between groups. The treatment showed an overall efficacy across groups. However, some children showed no gains in the post-intervention assessment.

These results suggest the utterance length used by speakers administering the interventions may not play a core role in the intervention efficacy. At the same time, it opens debates on the definition of the functional and developmental profile of children with or without a Language Disorder, in order to better understand and explain the efficacy of different interventions.

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