

Children's Literature and Syntactic Development: Acquisition of basic Sentence Structures (Subject Verb Object SVO)

Wong Yu Joy

Hong Kong Metropolitan University, Hong Kong

Abstract:

The development of fundamental sentence structure is a crucial milestone in children's language acquisition. Previous research has placed significance in parental input and child-directed speech (CDS) in shaping a child's understanding of Subject Verb Object (SVO) word sequence; yet, the influence of children's literature has received relatively less attention. The study aims to investigate how the syntactic structure presented in children's English literature facilitates the learning of basic SVO sentence pattern. A corpus analysis of 20 best-selling English children's books with targeted age group between 4 to 7 years old in diversified themes will be performed. Each sentence in the books will be coded for its grammatical structure to identify the prevalence of SVO pattern, as well as other simpler discourse patterns such as Subject Verb (SV) and Verb Object (VO). The diversity and frequency of such syntactic structures will then be compared with CDS or the parental language input which children receive in natural communication. We aim to suggest that children's reading books offer a broader diversity of linguistic input than the CDS and should be considered for its role in early childhood educational modules.

Project Objectives:

The objective of this research is to analyse the sentence structure presented in chart-topping children's English reading books and compare with the naturalistic child-directed speech to evaluate how children's literature contributes to the basic syntactic patterns of Subject Verb Object in young readers. The study also aims to provide implications on early childhood education practices.