INTRODUCTION

- Generics are statements that assign a property to a category without reference to a specific individual.
- Parents' production of generics is linked to child language abilities.
- Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) have demonstrated more difficulty with categories and shape bias tasks than their typically developing (TD) peers.
- Could this group difference be attributable to a difference in parent input?

Objective

We examined parents' generics production to determine its relationship with concurrent and subsequent child language measures.

METHODS

Procedure

- The sample was taken from larger longitudinal study.
- 30-minute play sessions between parent and child were recorded over 6 visits, each separated by 4 months.
- Transcripts from the first four visits were coded for generics produced by parents.
- Each generic utterance in parent speech was noted in each visit for each parent-child dyad.
- Child outcome measures are from the play session at Visit 6.

Table 1. Participant Demographics at Visit 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>ASD (N=24)</th>
<th>TD (N=32)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age (months)</td>
<td>32.31 (5.44)</td>
<td>20.30 (1.51)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ADOS</td>
<td>12.96 (3.87)</td>
<td>0.69 (1.18)</td>
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<tr>
<td>MullenRL</td>
<td>23.21 (8.57)</td>
<td>24.34 (3.43)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MullenEL</td>
<td>18.58 (7.52)</td>
<td>19.53 (4.70)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Groups were matched on language measures at visit 1 — Mullen Scales of Early Learning (EL) subtests

DISCUSSION

- Parents in both groups increased their generics production across visits, but more strongly in the TD group.
- As predicted, parents of TD children produced more generics than parents of children with ASD.
- Parents who produce more generics have children with stronger language, both concurrently and longitudinally.
- Higher generics input could be important for child language development.
- Caveat: when controlling for parent word types, the significant relationships between child language and parent generics disappeared, suggesting that with this sample size, parent generics and parent word types are capturing the same variance.
- With a larger sample, and using data collected later in development, we might see independent effects of parent generics on child language.

RESULTS

Parents in both TD and ASD groups increased their generics production across visits.

Visit 3: Parent Generics Correlate with Child Word Types

Visit 4 Parent Generics Predict Visit 6 Child Language in the ASD Group

Visit 3 Parent Generics Predict Visit 6 Child Language in both ASD and TD Groups

REFERENCES


