

Abstract:

Family environments play an important role in shaping a child's linguistic development. Some children are raised in households where caregivers have pursued higher education, holding academic degrees, while others grow up in families where caregivers possess only Secondary School diplomas. These varying family contexts suggest exposure to different vocabulary inputs for children.

This study seeks to investigate the impact of caregiver education on children's vocabulary acquisition. We conducted a comprehensive analysis to address this, employing the Corpus frequency rankings of the Leipzig Vocabulary Tests in German. Our primary objective was to assess whether these rankings align with the vocabulary used by children. We compared children's speech corpus data from CHILDES German Leo Corpus, Miller Corpus, and Koch Corpus.

Moreover, we explored the potential influence of caregivers' socioeconomic status on their children's vocabulary. We analyzed whether children from families with different socioeconomic backgrounds tend to use words that align with the Leipzig frequency tests. We employed Quantitative Data Analysis techniques for our analysis, utilizing CLAN and R.

The study reveals a nuanced relationship between children's speech and the Leipzig German vocabulary test. Contrary to conventional expectations, socioeconomic status does not play as deterministic a role as anticipated, challenging the established "Matthew effect" principle.

This research contributes valuable insights into the interplay between caregiver education, socioeconomic factors, and children's vocabulary development. It underscores the need for a more nuanced understanding of the linguistic environment in which children grow and learn.