



UiO • **Faculty of Educational Sciences**
University of Oslo

Collaborating with parents to support dual language learning

Utrecht, November 10, 2023

Vibeke Grøver, University of Oslo



Structure of the talk

- I. On the importance of teacher-parent collaboration in support of dual language learning (DLL)
- II. Studies of teacher-parent collaboration organized around shared reading for DLLs

Terminology

Studies of teacher-parent collaboration

- Interactions between home-and preschool: the meso-level in Bronfenbrenner's theoretical model
- Earlier studies: family programs to support home language environment
- More recent studies: acknowledge the importance of identifying families' strength and qualities, establishing partnerships

Facilitators in teacher-parent collaboration that support dual language learning (Norheim & Moser, 2020)

- Time for communication
- Systematic use of more languages
- Bilingual staff
- Translators

Studies of teacher-parent collaboration cont.

- Is one provider of an intervention better than two? (Justice et al.)
- A Danish preschool study of book-sharing effects on child language found no additional effects of including a home condition, but! (Bleses et al.)
- A metaanalysis found no clear effects of preschool teachers supervising parents in developmental support, but! (Grindal et al.)

(Justice et al, 2015; Bleses et al., 2018; Grindal et al. 2016)

Studies of teacher-parent collaboration cont.

- Supporting parents to engage in learning-related activities at home supported and empowered them
- Increased exposure dosage
- ECEC programs that taught parents interactive reading found positive effects on child language
- Monolingual children

(Rimm-Kaufman & Pianta, 2000; Bierman et al., 2015; Jordan, Snow & Porche, 2000; Lonigan & Whitehurst, 1998)

Previous research on impact of shared reading on L1 and L2

- Equal effectiveness of home storybook reading in either L1 or L2 on L2 vocabulary learning (Roberts)
- L1 word support during shared reading increased L2 vocabulary learning (Hermanns)

Roberts, 2008; Lugo-Neris et al, 2010; Hermanns, 2010; Castro, Espinosa, & Paez, 2011; Paez, Bock, & Pizzo, 2011, review study on DLLs and shared reading

The Norwegian ECEC context

- Universal access from age 1
- On a national level 22% have an immigrant background
- Emphasis on learning through play
- Teachers responsible for facilitating cooperation and dialogue with parents

The Norwegian ECEC context cont.

Teacher-parent collaboration typically include

- daily communication during mornings/afternoons
- phone calls
- communication through digital platforms
- parent conferences and meetings
- parent councils and informational gatherings

A study of effects of shared reading in preschool and at home on child language learning (Grøver et al., 2020)

- A randomized controlled study taking place in the larger Oslo area over one academic year
- Child language assessed prior to and post intervention
- Core components: shared book reading in preschool and at home
- All participating children were dual language learners
- Child language skills assessed as vocabulary, grammar, narrative skills and perspective taking
- A clustered latent variable analysis

Shared reading

Shared reading: a term used for interactive reading; reading during which adults encourage children's participation through questions and extensions

Quality shared reading interaction that promotes language learning

Adults

- ask open-ended questions that invite child participation through reasoning, inferences, and other types of talk
- connect book topics with other classroom activities such as play

Massey et al., 2008; Dickinson & Smith, 1994; Dowdall et al., 2019; Gamez et al., 2016; Chen et al., 2018; Nicolopoulou et al., 2015; Wasik et al., 2006)

The EXTEND program: Shared reading in preschool and at home a core component

Book sharing

- ECEC teachers shared 15 books over the year, organized in four thematic units
- Books selected to encourage child curiosity and reasoning

Professional training for teachers

- One day workshop
- Supervision during the year
- Teachers received support material for each book

Extending the book theme

Teachers asked to

- invite play based on book theme
- to collaborate with the parents

Collaborating with parents: home reading

Parents received 4 picture-books over the intervention year. Teachers asked to support parents

Parents audiotaped one shared reading per book

Instructions to parents: enjoy sharing the book with your child in your preferred language

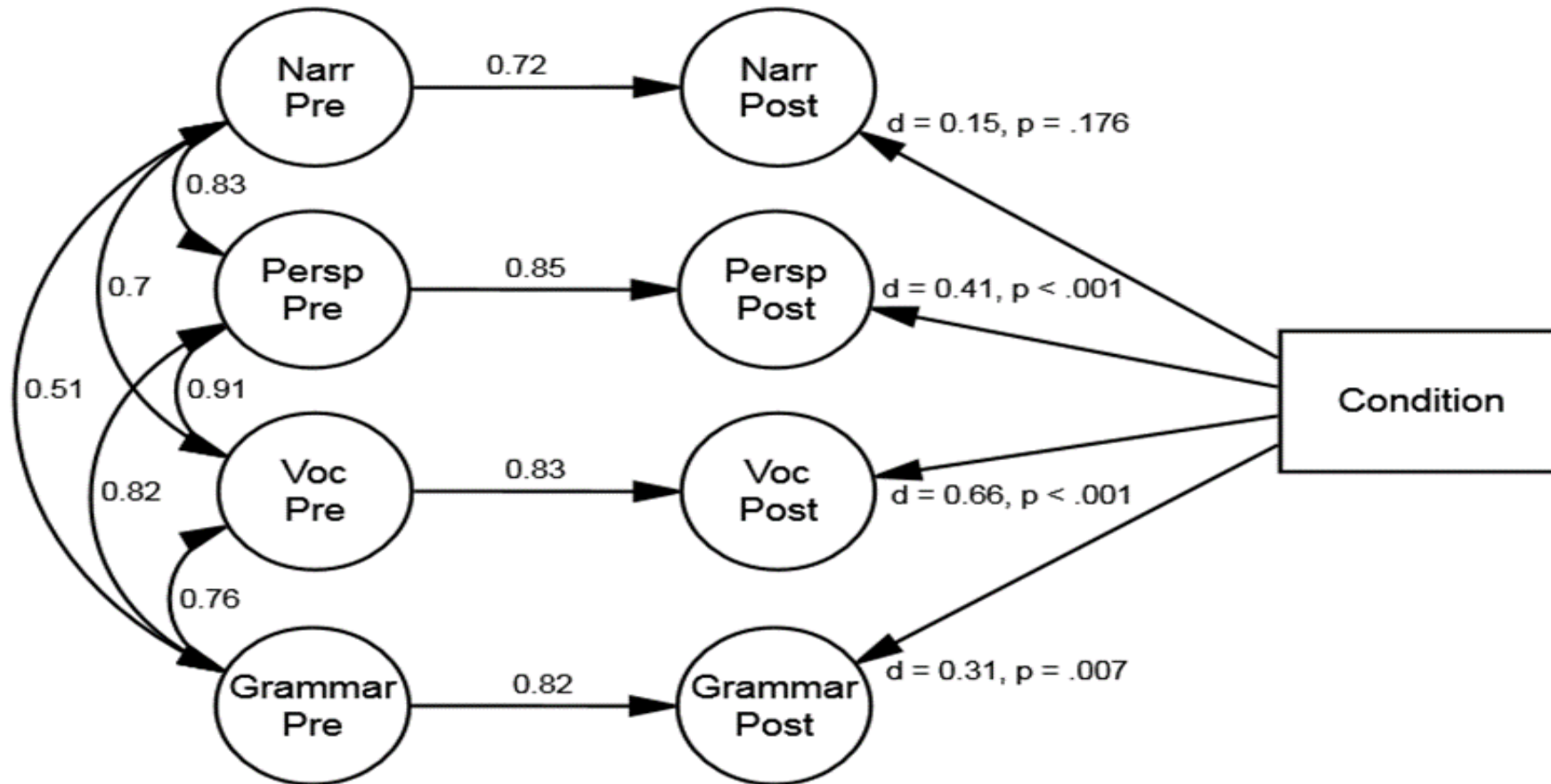
Participants

- 464 DLLs, aged 3-5 years
- 60 preschools, 123 classrooms
- Randomization on classroom level

Research questions

1. Did children who received the intervention develop their L2 vocabulary, grammar, narrative skills and perspective taking faster than children who did not receive it?
2. Did the home component of the intervention show effects on children's L1 vocabulary skills?
3. Were there any mediating effects of L1 vocabulary on L2 vocabulary?

RQ1: Did children who received the intervention develop their L2 faster than their control-group enrolled counterparts? (Grøver et al., 2020)



RQ2: Did the home component of the intervention show effects on children's L1 vocabulary skills?

- Intervention effects on children's L1 vocabulary for the words appearing in books shared with parents
($d = 0.30$, $t = 2.49$, $p = .013$).
- No effect of the intervention on knowledge of L1 words that the children were exposed to only in books encountered in preschool

RQ3: Were there any mediating effects of L1 vocabulary on L2 vocabulary?

A marginally significant effect of the intervention via L1 vocabulary posttest on L2 vocabulary posttest

($d = 0.05$, $t = 1.71$, $p = .087$)

Limitations

- Few books for home sharing
- Limited support for parents
- According to questionnaire information teachers did not report on frequent communication with parents regarding shared reading at home

Conclusions

- Teachers were supported to share books in ways that impacted children's vocabulary, grammar and perspective taking
- The home components of the intervention showed effects on children's L1 vocabulary for the words that appeared in the books sent home
- A marginally significant indirect effect of the intervention via L1 vocabulary posttest on L2 vocabulary posttest

Conclusion cont

- The parents were committed to support their children's dual language learning
- When opportunities for alignment with preschool-based book-sharing are available, parents can support the family language as a resource for learning the school language

Thanks to...

- Veslemøy Rydland, Catherine Snow and Jan-Eric Gustafsson
- The research assistants
- Oslo public library
- The reference group



The Oslo Early Education Study (OEES) – objectives

PIs: V. Rydland, R. Lekhal

- Assess the immediate and long-term effects of a multicomponent intervention on the quality of caretaker–child interactions (in the ECEC center and at home) and child language outcomes
- Investigate implementation processes that focus on the conditions for change and user perspectives to better understand the link between the system-level developments and child language learning



OEES – components

- A more comprehensive and practice-based professional development model (aided by the Pedagogical-psychological counseling service and the Center for Science Education)
- Activities to scaffold child participation in extended dialogues and exploration
- A strengthened ECEC–home collaboration



Challenges identified by the city districts

- Staff shortage: High turn-over rates among ECEC teachers and leaders
- Considerable variation in ECEC quality and limited systematic work to support children's language learning (Borgersen, 2019; Oxford research, 2019)
- Many children grow up in households characterized as persistently low-income

OEEES participants

887 children, 1-4 years old

56 ECEC centers (214 classrooms) in 5 city districts

Nearly 67% of the children use another L1 in addition to Norwegian at home

Randomization within city districts at the center level

OEES pedagogical content – extending book themes



Dialogic
reading,
home
component



Pretend play



Natural
science
activities

To sum up – OEES intervention

- A shift in perspectives from individual skills to system-level competencies
- Responds to the weak opportunities for practice-based professional development in the sector