

Role of Home Literacy Environment and Language in the Development of Rhyme Awareness Skills in Preschool children in Lusaka Province, Zambia

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Introduction

Rhyme awareness skills

- Rhyme awareness is an understanding that words that end with the same sound (e.g. bat, rat) are pronounced in the same way.
- Rhyme awareness has been associated with other PA skills and later reading development (Bryant et al., 1990; Dunst et al., 2011; Goswami, 1999; Harper, 2011; MacLean et al., 1987)
- It is one of the earliest PA skills to develop in children. 2-year children
- They are expected to develop in children as young as three who are not yet in school (Cunningham & Stanovich, 1993). Hence literacy home environment (HLE) is key.

HLE, oral language and rhyme awareness

- Rich home literacy environment is associated with better rhyme awareness skills (*Foy & Mann, 2003; Reade, 2017*)
- Better language abilities are connected with better rhyme awareness (*Foy & Mann, 2003*).
- Poor literacy environment in most resource-contained Zambian families may hamper the development of rhyme awareness abilities (*Chansa-Kabali, 2014, Mwanza-Kabaghe 2022*)
 - **We wondered the extent to which the HLE supports the development of rhyme awareness skills.**

Methods

- **Description of Sample**

- 14 public preschools,
- 353 preschoolers (169 boys and 189 girls)
- $M_{\text{age}}=81.1$ months; $SD=15.7$

- **Measures**

- **Home literacy environment factors** (literacy activities; literacy materials)
- **SES** (home possession index)
- **Language tests** (*Receptive, Expressive picture vocabulary test; Familiar Language*)
- **Rhyming awareness skills** (*Rhyme recognition; Rhyme production*)

Results

Table 1: Descriptions statistics for the rhyme awareness tests

	N	Mean	SD	Min	Max
Rhyme Production	351	2.30	3.097	0	15
Rhyme recognition	351	5.49	3.915	0	17

Home Literacy activities and rhyme awareness

Table 2: Summary of Estimates of Fixed Effects on rhyme awareness

Parameter	Est	SE	df	t	Sig.	95% CI	
						UP	LB
Intercept	1.479	.284	61.157	5.201	.000	.910	2.048
Reading activities	<u>.448</u>	.205	58.010	2.188	<u>.033</u>	.038	.858
Language total score	<u>.140</u>	.049	62.766	2.869	<u>.006</u>	.043	.238
No. of books at home	.041	.156	54.316	.261	.795	-.271	.3521
No. of times parents read	.051	.037	59.133	1.383	.172	-.023	.1243

a. Dependent Variable: Rhyme awareness

Conclusions

- Aspects of the home literacy environment were associated with rhyme awareness skills of preschool children from resource-constrained homes (Foy & Mann, 2003)
 - Literacy activities were connected to rhyme awareness skills (Reade, 2017)
 - Literacy materials did not predict rhyme awareness skills (Castro et al. (2008)
- Language skills predicted rhyme awareness skills of preschool children from resource-constrained homes (Foy & Mann, 2003; et al., 2011).

Implication and recommendations

- Rhyme awareness skills predict future reading and are associated with advanced PA skills.
- They are among the earliest PA skills to develop. Children need to develop these skills way before grade one.
- Exposing children to literacy activities that support rhyme awareness skills at home before beginning grade one is crucial.
- Children with better oral language skills display better rhyme awareness than their counterparts with poor language skills. Hence oral language development should be supported at home.

References

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