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TEACHER'S SUPPORTIVE INTERACTIONS ACCORDING
TO PERCEPTIONS OF LANGUAGE ABILITIES

A Thesis

by

DONNA JEANNE BROCK

Submitted to the Graduate School
Appalachian State University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

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ABSTRACT

TEACHER'S SUPPORTIVE INTERACTIONS ACCORDING
TO PERCEPTIONS OF LANGUAGE ABILITIES

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The purpose of this study was to examine the supportive interactions of kindergarten teachers toward and with the child, based on the teacher's expressed perceptions of language abilities.

Ten kindergarten teachers were selected as participants for the study. The teachers rated the children in their classroom according to how they perceived the children's language abilities. Four children from each class were selected based on the scores they received from the teachers. They were shown a film and the teacher had to teach a short lesson using 12 questions prepared by the investigator. As the teacher asked each question, the investigator recorded the following information: which child the question was directed to, whether the teacher allowed the child a five-second latency period and whether tutoring occurred.

A one-way analysis of variance was employed to examine the difference between the children perceived as high and the children perceived as low in language abilities in terms of equitable distribution of the questions, latency, tutoring, and the level of question difficulty.

The analysis revealed no significant difference in terms of equitable distribution, tutoring, and the level of question difficulty; but revealed a significant difference in terms of latency.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

One of the main techniques that teachers use to involve children in academic lessons is questioning. To plan an effective interaction for children, and especially children with difficulties in communicating, a teacher must carefully select and construct questions. This study was an attempt to determine the extent of the relationship between teacher perceptions of the language abilities of kindergarten children and the quality of teacher interactions while asking questions of these children.

The use of language is a uniquely human function which permeates each individual's life, affecting all learning and all interactions (Wiig & Semel, 1980). Higginbotham (1972) is of the opinion that language abilities are directly related to academic success. She concludes that the extent of the child's knowledge of the uses of language in a variety of communicative contexts has significant bearing on school performance.

Most children come to their first day of school equipped with sophisticated mastery of their native language. These youngsters are producing a near match for the adult grammatical model provided in their particular language community (Higginbotham, 1972). However, there are children entering school who have less than adequate mastery of language. "From kindergarten through fourth grade level, roughly 12 to 15 percent of the children have serious communication problems"

(Milisen, 1971, p. 622). Frequently, these children are not capable of controlling the idiosyncracies and complexities of their language necessary for academic success (Higginbotham, 1972).

"Although the form or structure of a child's language is essentially complete upon entering kindergarten or first grade, every teacher realizes there are wide and unfulfilled needs for continued speech and language development throughout school life" (Egland, 1971, p. 31-32).

The demands placed upon language in the traditional curriculum change considerably during the child's educational career. Preschool strategies seem to focus mainly on sensorimotor and language development as well as social and emotional growth, while from kindergarten through second grade, the curriculum shifts to provide the child with opportunities to develop perceptual-cognitive functioning. These basic academic skills are substantially founded in prerequisite language abilities. Subsequent grades bring progressively greater demands on a child's linguistic and symbolic language skills (Wiig & Semel, 1980).

The preschool and elementary years seem to be the critical time for acquiring language, and there are many theoretical accounts that attempt to explain the acquisition process (Bloom, 1978). Although childhood language authorities have been unable to resolve this phenomenon, there is a prevailing thought that the timetable for development is most critical in the early years (Higginbotham, 1972).

There is support of the notion that children reared in a restricted communication environment during these early years of development may eventually be impaired in some aspects of school learning (Higginbotham, 1972). For these youngsters, it is crucial that educators provide them

with viable communication experiences to meet their overall educational needs. In support of this view, Higginbotham (1972) states that the greatest challenge in the area of language instruction may be that posed for teacher education. She is of the opinion that for language learning, educators must move quickly to replace unproductive practices with those that maximize achievement.

The reality of today's classroom may be very different. During the first days of school, teachers form perceptions of future academic success of the children. The teacher, looking at each pupil, ponders what the year will bring for the students (Rosenthal & Jacobson, 1968), and these perceptions may affect a child in various ways, including language learning. Research related to other areas of achievement has shown that classroom interactions can be affected by teacher perceptions in both a positive and negative manner (Braun, 1976).

These classroom interactions are at the heart of language instruction. It is highly probable that the quality of these interactions influence language learning. For instance, a pupil functioning at a higher level may be involved in a more positive manner such as being directed more and higher level questions, given a sufficient latency period in which to respond, as well as receiving tutoring or probing if an answer is less than adequate. The pupil who is functioning at a perceived lower level may be overlooked during the classroom interactions because the teacher views the child as a potentially poor achiever and is treated as such.

Statement of the Problem

Normal language development indicates that by age five a child should use clear, well-formed sentences similar to those of adult speech. However, not every individual progresses along the normal language milestones (Egland, 1971). For those whose language is delayed, there may be problems in the areas of expressive and/or receptive language. These problems may put the child at a disadvantage in the classroom. This may be reflected in how and what a teacher does to foster language learning. Research shows that teachers form various opinions regarding each child.

The investigator feels that the teacher forms perceptions and opinions of each child's language abilities and that these perceptions affect the interactions that are executed in the class. Various studies have examined teacher interactions in other contexts such as reading. As language is of utmost importance, in the classroom, research needs to be conducted that examines how a teacher perceives a child's language functioning and thus carries out classroom interactions. Braun (1976) states "... questions that are worthy of further research relate to the degree to which individual teachers act on expectations they perceive ..." (p. 198).

"The teacher for varied reasons perceives competencies and potentialities of children differently and these expectancies are reflected in his interactions with children" (Braun, 1976, p. 185). Teachers' "... deprecatory attitude toward the language of their pupils inevitably affects their general attitude toward the children..." (Burling, 1971, p. 222). They "expect children who use 'poor' language to fail, and

their expectations are easily communicated to their pupils who readily fulfill their teacher's prophecies" (Burling, 1971, p. 222).

According to Brophy and Good (1970), Willis (1970), and McGinley and McGinley, (cited by Braun, 1976), there are specific interactions that occur between teachers and their "high" level children as opposed to teachers and their "low" level children. On this basis, it is presumable that a teacher's perception of a child's language development lead to the employment of specific supportive interactions. If this is true, then the perception and attitude of the teacher who stigmatizes a student on the basis of language development may adversely affect the academic performance and communication strategies of the child.

A question of paramount importance to both teacher education and research relates to ways in which the teacher acts on expectancy input, i.e., cues -- verbal and non-verbal -- which is transmitted to the learner. Relatively little research in teacher expectation has taken this into account. In an effort to secure related information, the investigator arranged for ten classroom teachers to each conduct a language arts lesson to a group of four kindergarten level students. Data gathered provided insights on whether a teacher alters the style of questioning to best fit the language ability of a pupil.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the present study was to examine kindergarten teacher's supportive interactions toward and with the child, based on the teacher's expressed perceptions.

Hypotheses

1. There is no statistically significant difference in the equitable distribution of the questions the classroom teacher asks of the children perceived as high in language abilities and low in language abilities.

2. There is no statistically significant difference between the latency period allowed for the children perceived as high and children perceived as low in language abilities.

3. There is no statistically significant difference in the complexity level of questions the teacher asks of the children perceived as high and the children perceived as low in language abilities.

4. There is no statistically significant difference in the amount of probing a teacher employs with children perceived as high and children perceived as low in language abilities.

Definition of Terms

Equitable distribution - The process by which a teacher calls on pupils to answer questions in a classroom equally (TESA, Note 1).

Latency - The time the teacher waits for a response after posing a question to a child (TESA, Note 1).

Probing - The method by which a teacher seeks an additional response is considered less than adequate. This is accomplished by asking for clarification on statements. Probing is designed to improve the quality of the initial answer as well as stimulate the child to demonstrate more awareness than was originally given (Brophy & Good, 1973) and (Gall, Ward, Berliner, Cahen, Winne, Elashoff & Stanton, 1973).

Narrow questions - Questions requiring one or two word replies or yes-or-no answers; drill questions; questions to which the specific nature of the response can be predicted (Weigand, 1971).

Cognitive-memory questions - Questions that require only low level thinking, with responses being from recall or rote memory (Weigand, 1971).

Convergent questions - Questions that require the person to state or explain relationships or concepts but have one "right" or "best" answer (Weigand, 1971).

Broad questions - Open-ended questions which are thought-provoking and call for unpredictable answers. They usually elicit a longer response than narrow questions (Weigand, 1971).

Divergent questions - Questions that permit more than one acceptable response. These are thought-provoking and require the child to predict, hypothesize, or infer (Weigand, 1971).

Evaluative questions - Questions that require the person to judge, value, justify a choice, or defend a position (Weigand, 1971).

Language delayed speaker - Children who follow a normal sequence of development but are slow in onset and acquire language in a slowed manner (Schiefelbusch, 1978).

Language disordered speaker - Children who are slowed in the onset of language development, proceed at a slow rate, but do not follow a normal developmental sequence (Schiefelbusch, 1978).

Assumptions/Limitations of the Study

1. The children were chosen on the basis of how the classroom teacher perceived their language development and abilities.
2. The conclusions drawn from this study will be limited to the population from which the participants were drawn.
3. The teachers who participated in the study possessed a baccalaureate degree with teacher certification in elementary education.
4. The teachers who participated in the study had no previous instruction with regard to the teaching techniques the experimenter investigated.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

The overall function of language is communication, or the interaction between a speaker and listener (Anastasiow & Hanes, 1976). This intercourse is crucial in everyday classroom situations since two major functions of language, cognitive and social, are used throughout academic instruction. During this two-way communication process, a student learns from a teacher how to apply language appropriately. This requires extraordinary attention to the development of language abilities on the part of the teacher. In emphasizing this point, Wood (1976) states that "throughout their early years, children must be helped in their struggle to make sense and make decisions. The ability to communicate effectively is at the heart of the process" (p. 5).

In order to function within the classroom, children must have the ability to perform effectively in communication encounters or situations (Wood, 1976). Children should find their ability to convey information under a variety of circumstances greatly enhanced as they build a repertoire of language abilities. Tough (1977) offers guidelines for stimulating communication skills in the classroom, the foremost method being the use of dialogue during communication situations. Tough (1977) defined dialogue strategy as "referring to the different ways of commenting and questioning that a teacher can use" (p. 27).

Of all the methods usually considered for instruction, the use of dialogue may best orient a child's thinking in a particular direction.

It is Blank's (1973) impression that a vast percentage of all higher learning is an extension of the principles of dialogue. The development of earlier, more elementary interchanges of dialogue leads to more sophisticated methods of discourse. As an example, the self-initiated inner dialogue required for later thinking and problem solving constitutes a more sophisticated dialogue interchange.

When applied appropriately by teachers, the principles of dialogue benefit many children. Dialogue deliberately uses talk to achieve the aims of education. For some children who elect to disengage themselves from learning dialogue, the consequences may be severe. Blank (1973) has presented a view that children who do not develop sufficient dialogue skills will damage their cognitive development.

A child's grasp of language is his major entree into the knowledge available from his being human. And the knowledge so gained is not only the community's reservoir of factual information, but also the intricate skills needed for meaningful verbal interchange. Thus, failure to enter freely into dialogue and to initiate dialogue cut the child off from an irreplaceable sphere of human cognition. (p. 32)

In summary, the literature reviewed indicates that teachers must be properly prepared to master the art of dialogue interchange as an instructional tool. Children must also be encouraged and reinforced by teachers to participate in dialogue interchanges. This, most often, is accomplished through the use of question asking.

Question Types

Questions form an important means for initiating children's speech (Tough, 1977). Teachers spend more time asking questions than they do

using any other type of verbal utterance. "Studies have shown that teachers spend 70 to 80 percent of their time asking questions" (Weigand, 1971, p. 83). In the few research studies done on the questioning process, Seymour Sarason (cited by Shiman & Nash, 1974), summarizes that "... while elementary teachers thought they averaged between 12 and 20 questions per half hour, the actual number ranged between 45 and 150" (p. 246).

Bossing (1942) says that a question "... is an effective stimulus and is readily available to teachers..." (p. 329). Questions may take different forms and serve different purposes along with inviting and encouraging different kinds of responses (Tough, 1977). Good questions provide for different levels of thinking and can be judged by their clarity (Weigand, 1971). A good lesson does not consist of constantly asking the same type of questions (Tough, 1977). The question types should vary so as to stimulate and elicit various levels of thinking.

Questions that teachers ask children during the learning process can be classified into two basic types and further divided into subgroups. The two basic types are narrow and broad. Narrow questions require short factual answers, low-level thinking or other predictable responses including "yes" or "no." The answers to narrow questions are predictable because they are specific and allow only a very limited number of acceptable or "right" answers. This type of question requires little thought by the student. Narrow questions serve a purpose, even though they require little thought. They are used to collect information, review previously studied material, to verify ideas and understandings of material, as well as identify, group and note relationships.

Collecting information can be the first step to developing concepts. Narrow questions should be used so that the information gathering process leads to higher levels of thinking rather than to time spent giving specific answers (Weigand, 1971).

Tough (1977) concludes similarly that a series of closed questions is not a useful approach for children who do not use language readily. Closed questions may be useful in conjunction with other types of questions and comments that seek to help the child in particular ways, such as focusing attention on something so far missed.

One of the dangers in using narrow questions is in their overuse. "Too much time spent answering narrow questions deters development of higher-level thinking skills" (Weigand, 1971, p. 87). Educators may foster greater intellectual development by directing broad questions to their students.

Broad questions permit a variety of acceptable responses, with non-predictable answers. This type of question is designed to be thought provoking and cause the person responding to predict, hypothesize or infer, as well as include answers that express judgment, feeling or opinion. When a teacher asks a broad question, a longer, more thoughtful answer is expected rather than that from a narrow question (Weigand, 1971).

Broad questions are "used to motivate children to explore the subject matter more deeply or to experiment. They may lead to the development of new insights, ideals, appreciations or desirable attitudes" (Weigand, 1971, p. 88). They may also be used to stimulate or guide interests in new learning experiences or problem-solving situations.

They are a means by which the teacher can enhance the development of intellectual skills. By using broad questions, teachers encourage students to become more independent in finding and using information (Weigand, 1971).

Narrow and broad questions are further divided into subgroups. Narrow questions can be divided into cognitive-memory questions and convergent questions; while broad questions can be divided into divergent questions and evaluative questions.

Cognitive-memory questions require the lowest level of thinking. The answers are a reproduction of facts, definitions or any other type of remembered information, thus resulting in rote-memory or recalled answers. Convergent questions also call for one answer, but at the same time, require the student to compare, discriminate or illustrate in an effort to produce the "best" answer. To give a personalized explanation, the respondent must carry on a higher level of thinking than that required by cognitive-memory questions. In response to a convergent question, the child may be expected to perform the operations of explaining, stating relationships, associating and relating, or comparing and contrasting (Weigand, 1971).

Divergent questions are broad questions that allow the child to produce an original response. They are thought-provoking and to respond, the child may have to predict, hypothesize or infer. Evaluative questions require the respondent to judge, defend a position, value or justify a choice. It is the highest level of questioning and involves all three types of the other levels. In response to an evaluative question, the child must organize knowledge, formulate an opinion, and take a

self-selected position. To make a judgment the child must use evidence and make a judgment of good or bad, right or wrong, according to standards the child sets or someone else sets (Weigand, 1971).

To recapitulate, the literature suggests that teachers need to possess knowledge of the various types of questions as these four types of questions are important in the teaching of all types of children. The classroom teacher should attempt to utilize the different types of questions during daily classroom interactions. Use of the various types of questions is important in order to stimulate higher level thinking as well as to elicit various responses.

Teacher Perceptions

Due to various factors, particularly the environment, children are not equal in their language abilities. A student with delayed language ability may function below the level a teacher perceives as average or adequate. Teachers perceive competencies and potentialities of children differently and these expectancies are reflected in the interactions with differing pupils (Braun, 1976). If the teachers have a negative attitude toward a child's language it inevitably affects their general attitude toward a child (Burling, 1971).

A study by Cazden, Baratz, Labov and Palmer (1973) found that teachers actually do rate children more negatively when the speech they produce contains nonstandard forms of pronunciation and syntax. Another investigation similarly concluded that teachers demonstrate a tendency to stereotype children solely on the basis of their speech characteristics (Guskin, 1971).

Braun (1976) states that teachers develop certain expectancies of children. These are reflected in the interactions with the pupils. Differential performances are produced among the students thus fulfilling the teacher's prophesy. "'Teacher expectation,' 'self-fulfilling prophecy' and 'teacher faith' have been coined to imply this tendency for the teacher to create a reality commensurate with his perceptions" (Braun, 1976, p. 185). "There is some evidence that patterns of pupil-teacher and pupil-pupil interaction become a function of how both pupils and teachers perceive the individual child's status within the classroom microcosm" (Braun, 1976, p. 198).

Teacher Interactions

Each day a teacher and student enter the classroom interactions occur. The reviewed literature suggests that whether the interactions are positive or negative depend on the teacher's perception of a child as a high or low achiever. An investigation by McGinley and McGinley (cited by Braun, 1976), was conducted with reading groups rated as low, medium, and high. Their hypothesis was that the sociometric choices of reading group members probably reflect the principle that persons are generally attracted to successful persons, to persons sharing a successful experience, as well as to persons present in a success-reward situation. They also pointed to the possibility of reciprocal success-reward relationships between teachers and children in top reading groups. The children read well, and were rewarded and attracted to the source of reward, the teacher. The teacher, in turn, was rewarded by the children's affection. The McGinleys speculated that the lower reading groups were not rewarded by the teacher, and the teacher, in turn, was not rewarded

by the children (Braun, 1976). McGinley and McGinley revealed that teachers spend more time and interact verbally in more positive and supportive ways with high achievers than with low achievers.

A research issue examined by Willis (1970), (cited by Braun, 1976), investigated teacher-pupil interaction trends in five classes. The teachers ranked their students from most efficient to least efficient learners. After observing them in simulated classroom situations to determine possible differences in interaction, the following results were determined. Teachers ignored the comments of "low efficiency" students more frequently than comments of the "high efficiency" students. They also responded verbally more often to "high efficiency" students than to the lower group.

Another aspect of interaction, the amount of praise and support given by teachers, was studied by Brophy and Good (1970). In this study, they found that high achieving first grade children received more praise than the low achieving children. The teachers demanded better performance from the children for whom they had higher expectations, and were more prone to praise such performance when it did occur. On the other hand, they were more prone to accept poor performance from low expectancy children and less likely to praise good performance although it occurred less frequently.

In addition to quantitative interactions, there are qualitative aspects of interactions, including such parameters as questioning, opportunities for students to participate in substantive interactions, questions requiring high level cognitive skills, teacher praise as well as encouragement, teacher acceptance and use of student's ideas, and positive feedback from the teachers (Gay, 1975). These qualitative interactions, in

conjunction with quantitative measures such as teachers spending more time and interacting verbally in more positive and supportive ways with high achievers than low achievers, correlate with teachers' expectations and behaviors (Gay, 1975).

More subtle interaction variables relate to the amount of prompting and probing that teachers do for individual children. Brophy and Good (1973) indicate that a teacher's expectations clearly determine whether the child will be prompted to respond or whether impatience will stifle the student. Rosenthal (1973), in his treatise, reveals that 11 out of 12 studies support the fact that teachers encourage greater responsiveness from students of whom they expect more. They tend to call on these students more often, ask them harder questions, give them more time to answer, and prompt them toward the correct answer.

An investigation by Cornbleth, Davis and Button (1974), involving questioning techniques and interactions produced the following results; the high level students asked more productive questions than the low level students. These students received more extended teacher responses to their questions and comments. The teachers spent more time attending to the high level students, who participated more often. Cornbleth et al. (1974) also found that high level students received more direct questions than the low students in two elementary school studies. In elementary schools, the high level students received more praise and less criticism, more probing feedback and were ignored less frequently.

In the study by Gall, Ward, Berliner, Cahen, Winne, Elashoff, and Stanton (1978), an investigation was conducted to find whether student learning was affected by the teaching methods of redirection, probing

and higher cognitive questioning. Probing, as defined by Gall et al., refers to the teacher asking a follow-up or probing question to have the student improve the quality of or elaborate on an initial answer. Redirection occurs when the teacher calls on another pupil to respond to a question answered by one pupil. It was hypothesized that these actions would promote learning by providing students with practice organizing their facts and ideas into overt responses and by having responses shaped by the teacher or other students. However, the results showed that probing and redirection had no effect on learning. Rosenshine (1971), (cited by Gall et al.), identified three correlational studies relating probing and redirection to student achievement. In studies conducted by Soar, 1966 and Spaulding, 1965, (cited by Gall et al.), these behaviors were claimed to positively correlate with achievement.

Still another look at teacher expectations and interactions emerged when a program named Teacher Expectations and Student Achievement (TESA) was originated in 1971. This training program gives teachers an opportunity to learn the effects that specific teacher-student interactions have on students and their achievement and of "unconscious" signals sent by the teacher. TESA believes that if a teacher perceives a child as a low achiever, there will be a reduction in time given between teacher question and learner response. Teachers call on "low achievers" less frequently than they do on students perceived as "high achievers." The net effect of teacher interactions is that some children get a lot of teacher attention and support, while other children who are probably in greater need get less (TESA, Note 1).

Sam Kerman and his colleagues, instructors of TESA, have divided the teacher-student interactions into three major strands. The strand most directly related to this project is the response opportunities strand. This strand is divided into five subsets; equitable distribution, individual help, latency, delving, and asking higher level questions. Each strand has positive and negative interactions that are used by teachers. The equitable distribution positive interactions deal with the teacher calling on pupils in a group. The students must be called on or signaled nonverbally. The negative interactions refer to the teacher ignoring a pupil who wants to respond and scolding a pupil for calling out. For an interaction to be considered positive in the latency subset, the teacher must wait five seconds for pupil response. If the teacher allows less than five seconds, the interaction is considered to be negative. Positive interactions for delving occur when the teacher helps the pupil by rephrasing the question or providing additional information. Negative interactions occur when the teacher does not help an unresponsive student by rephrasing or giving clues. The teacher moves on to another pupil or makes disparaging remarks to the pupil. The positive interactions at the higher level question asking stage occur when the teacher asks questions that are at a student's comprehension level or above. The teacher should not have a "right" answer in mind. A negative interaction occurs when the teacher indicates to a pupil that the question is hard or the teacher does not think that the student can answer it. This gives the impression of low regard for the pupil's ability (TESA, Note 1). These various interaction strategies were used, with some alterations, in the present study.

Language Skills Affect Academic Skills

Many aspects of the environment affect a child's academic skills and classroom performance. The literature suggests that children from unfavorable environments are educationally disadvantaged. Educationally disadvantaged children in the schools are spotlighted by scanty experiences with formal language, ignorance of school culture and concomitant poor school achievement. Reports indicate that the IQ scores of disadvantaged children are lower than those of middle-class children. The disadvantaged children exhibit negative attitudes, sub-standard reading, and behavior that is annoying to teachers (Becker, 1952; Clark, 1962; Davis and Dollard, 1940; Sexton, 1961) cited by Rosenthal and Jacobson, 1968. Another explanation for the failure of the disadvantaged child is that the type of language spoken in lower class families causes difficulties in learning at school (Rosenthal & Jacobson, 1968). Loban (1964), (cited by Rosenthal & Jacobson, 1968), in identifying deviations from standard English among children, found a consistent relationship between communication and social class. Elements other than language also appear to affect learning. The lower class children have not learned to pay attention and their habits of seeing, hearing and listening have not been trained in the family environment. These incapacibilities have been demonstrated to have an effect on reading readiness and very likely on language development.

Since it is evident that language skills can affect academic skills, the importance of language cannot be belabored. An emphasis on language is important in the home environment and most certainly in school.

CHAPTER 3

PROCEDURES

Methodology

All kindergarten and first grade teachers in Avery County, North Carolina were requested, by letter and questionnaire, to rate the children in their classroom according to how they perceived their language development and overall expressive ability according to this scale: 1 = minimal, 2 = marginal, 3 = adequate, and 4 = advanced (see Appendix A for the letter to the teachers and Appendix B for the Perception of Language Abilities Scale). The information was gathered by the school speech therapist.

Upon completion of the scaling by the teachers, the investigator chose kindergarten teachers and students to participate in the study. The first graders were not selected since they did not satisfy the distribution criterion. Each kindergarten class had at least one child representing each category on the rating scale. Where there was more than one child for any category of the scale, the subject was chosen by randomization.

The film "The Bike," (Churchill Films, 1969) was shown to each class that participated in the study (see Appendix C for a dialogue of the film). This film was designed to permit spontaneous and unguided responses. Before the film began, each teacher was provided with a synopsis of the film (see Appendix D) along with the 12 questions that the teacher would

be required to ask the four children chosen from her class (see Appendix E). After the film was viewed by the children, the teacher took the four children away from the remainder of the class and asked them the 12 questions, according to the pre-determined protocol.

The teacher was instructed to ask all 12 question in the order on the question form. The questions were arranged in the same order for each teacher so that the level of complexity remained in the same order. The questions were composed according to the definition of narrow and broad questions (see Definition of Terms). There were six narrow questions and six broad questions. Three of the narrow questions were cognitive-memory questions, with one each for the yes/no, naming and recalling types. The remaining three were convergent questions, with one each for the explain, compare and contrast, and state-relationship types. The six broad questions were divided into divergent and evaluative questions. The three divergent questions satisfied the predicting, hypothesizing and reconstructing types whereas the three evaluative questions satisfied the justified choice, defending and judging types. The questions were composed so that they could be randomly arranged in an order so that one question did not supply the answer to another question.

The teacher was instructed to choose one of the four students and ask the child a question. Each question was not asked to each child. Each question was asked one time and directed to any child the teacher selected. The teacher had to name the child so the investigator could score the appropriate child as having been asked a question (see Appendix F for the score sheet). When the child was asked a question, the investigator manually recorded a slash (/) in the appropriate box under

the child's name. After the teacher asked a question, the investigator used a stop watch to determine if a sufficient latency period of five seconds was allotted to the child. During this five-second period, the teacher could not rephrase the question or say anything to the child for it to be recorded as positive. If the teacher rephrased the question or simplified it, it was recorded as negative.

The teachers were instructed before the lesson, with standardized instructions, that they had the option to instruct the child, after responding either correctly or incorrectly. If the child responded and the teacher tutored or probed (see the Definition of Terms section), a positive mark was used. If the child responded incorrectly and was not tutored, a negative mark was used.

The data collection process was completed in a period of three days.

Participants in the Study

The participants in this study were ten kindergarten teachers, selected because of the availability of children in their classroom who were perceived as being minimal, marginal, adequate and advanced in language abilities. The teachers represented six elementary schools located in rural Avery County in North Carolina.

Statistical Treatment

For the purpose of treating and analyzing the data obtained from the study, each hypothesis was examined by means of a one-way analysis of variance. The .05 level of significance was accepted for determining the level of confidence.

CHAPTER 4
RESULTS AND ANALYSIS
OF THE DATA

Results

The raw data are displayed in Table 1.

The null hypotheses were tested by analysis of variance. All analyses were calculated at the Appalachian State University Office of Computer and Management Services using Statistical Packages for Social Sciences (SPSS). The basic data are displayed in Tables 2 and 3 which represent the mean, standard deviation, F-value, and level of significance for each of the null hypotheses. Table 2 displays the data for hypotheses 1, 2, and 4, while Table 3 displays the data for hypothesis 3.

Further evaluation of null hypothesis 2 was accomplished through the utilization of the non-parametric test, the Kruskal and Wallis, to compare with the F-value resulting from the analysis of variance. Table 4 exhibits data which represents the mean ranks, chi-square value, and the level of significance for null hypothesis 2.

Raw scores, related to each hypothesis, were determined by different methods. These mean values cannot be used for comparative purposes.

The raw scores for potential tutoring incidences is an approximate calculation.

TABLE 1

RAW SCORES

	Minimal	Marginal	Adequate	Advanced
Equitable Distribution: Number of Questions Directed	29	27	32	32
Latency: Number of Sufficient Periods of Latency	13	18	29	30
Complexity Level: Number of Level 1 Questions: Cognitive-Memory	9	6	6	9
Number of Level 2 Questions: Convergent	9	3	8	10
Number of Level 3 Questions: Divergent	5	8	9	8
Number of Level 4 Questions: Evaluative	6	10	9	5
Tutoring: Potential Tutoring Incidences	659	783	691	800

Appalachian Collection
Appalachian State University Library
Boone, North Carolina

TABLE 2

RESULTS OF ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE

Criterion Variable	Group	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	F Value	Level of Significance
Equitable Distribution	Minimal	10	2.90	0.99	0.597	0.6213
	Marginal	10	2.70	0.94		
	Adequate	10	3.20	1.13		
	Advanced	10	3.20	0.91		
Latency	Minimal	10	45.83	38.73	5.726	0.0026*
	Marginal	10	72.50	35.14		
	Adequate	10	88.33	19.32		
	Advanced	10	94.16	12.45		
Tutoring/ Probing	Minimal	10	65.83	38.97	0.378	0.7693
	Marginal	10	78.33	36.89		
	Adequate	10	69.16	40.97		
	Advanced	10	80.00	22.97		

*Statistically Significant at a .05 level.

TABLE 3
RESULTS OF ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE

Criterion Variable	Group	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	F Value	Level of Significance
Question Complexity Level	Minimal	10	35.83	28.34	1.454	0.2433
	Marginal	10	20.00	18.50		
	Adequate	10	17.50	19.42		
	Advanced	10	28.66	20.30		
Difficulty Level 1: Convergent	Minimal	10	25.00	22.56	0.418	0.7411
	Marginal	10	17.50	33.43		
	Adequate	10	27.50	23.58		
	Advanced	10	29.83	23.54		
Difficulty Level 3: Divergent	Minimal	10	16.66	22.22	0.427	0.7352
	Marginal	10	26.66	27.15		
	Adequate	10	30.83	33.80		
	Advanced	10	26.16	31.44		
Difficulty Level 4:	Minimal	10	22.50	31.43	1.003	0.4025
	Marginal	10	35.83	32.40		
	Adequate	10	24.16	32.40		
	Advanced	10	15.33	22.89		

TABLE 4

RESULTS OF RANK TEST FOR INDEPENDENT

SAMPLES--KRUSKAL WALLIS

Criterion Variable	Group	N	Mean Ranks	Chi-Square Value	Level of Significance
Latency: Hypothesis 2	Minimal	10	11.55	11.757	0.008*
	Marginal	10	19.55		
	Adequate	10	24.20		
	Advanced	10	26.70		

*Statistically Significant at a .05 level.

Data Analysis

The results of the analysis of variance (ANOVA) are discussed under the restatement of the null hypotheses.

Null Hypothesis 1

There is no statistically significant difference in the equitable distribution of the questions the classroom teacher asks of the children perceived as high in language abilities and low in language abilities.

According to the data presented in Table 2, null hypothesis 1 was not rejected, indicating that the distribution of questions was equal in the students regardless of how the teacher perceived their language abilities.

Null Hypothesis 2

There is no statistically significant difference between the latency period allowed for the children perceived as high and children perceived as low in language abilities.

According to the data presented in Tables 2 and 4, null hypothesis 2 was rejected at the .05 level of significance. This indicates that there was a difference between latency periods allowed for the children perceived as high and children perceived as low in language abilities.

Null Hypothesis 3

There is no statistically significant difference in the complexity level of questions the teacher asks of the children perceived as high and the children perceived as low in language abilities.

According to the data presented in Table 3, null hypothesis 3 was not rejected, indicating that the complexity level of the questions the teacher asked did not vary according to how the child's language abilities were perceived.

Null Hypothesis 4

There is no statistically significant difference in the amount of probing a teacher employs with children perceived as high and children perceived as low in language abilities.

According to the data presented in Table 2, null hypothesis 4 was not rejected, indicating that the amount of probing the teachers employed with the children perceived as high in language abilities was equal to the amount of probing they employed with the children perceived as low in language abilities.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, DISCUSSION, AND IMPLICATIONS

Summary

The purpose of the present study was to examine the kindergarten teacher's supportive interactions toward and with the child, based on the teacher's expressed perceptions of language abilities. The procedures for implementing this study were as follows: the kindergarten teachers of Avery County, North Carolina, were asked to rate the children in their classroom according to how the teacher perceived their overall language development. Four children from each of the ten classrooms were chosen to participate in the study. They were chosen according to the number they were rated on the scale. There was one child per number per class.

A film was shown to each class that participated in the study. Before the film began, each teacher was provided with a synopsis of the film along with the 12 questions that were required to be asked in the lesson. As the teacher selected a student to answer a question, the investigator recorded the following information: which child the question was directed to, whether the teacher allowed the child a five-second latency period, whether tutoring occurred, and the level of complexity of the question that was directed to the child.

An analysis of variance was employed to examine the difference between the children perceived as low in language abilities in terms of equitable distribution of the questions, latency, tutoring, and the

level of question difficulty. Further evaluation of the latency aspect was accomplished through the use of the Kruskal-Wallis non-parametric test.

The results revealed no significant difference in terms of equitable distribution, tutoring, and the level of question difficulty. However, there was a significant difference in the latency periods allowed for the children with various language abilities.

Discussion

Previous research suggested that teachers were biased in their interactions between the children they perceived as high and low in various abilities. Researchers indicated that teachers utilized more positive and supportive interactions with the children they perceived as "high" achievers. They supposedly directed more questions to the "high" achievers. In addition to receiving more questions, the "high" achievers were supposedly given a longer latency period, were tutored more and were directed higher level questions.

The results of the present study are in opposition with the findings of previous researchers. The teachers involved in this study revealed a significant difference in only one of their interactions. Their interactions between the children that were rated as having language abilities of minimal and marginal or adequate and advanced showed no biases in terms of equitable distribution of the questions, tutoring after receiving an unacceptable response, and the level of question difficulty. The teachers seemed to be consistent in these supportive interactions across the range of language abilities. Table 1 reflects this information gathered from the study.

There was, however, a significant difference in the latency period allowed between the groups, with the children perceived as being minimal in language abilities allowed the least amount of periods of sufficient latency. The children who were rated as marginal in language abilities received more periods of sufficient latency than the minimal group but received less than the children rated as adequate or advanced. On the other hand, the children rated as adequate in language abilities received more periods of sufficient latency than the children perceived as minimal and marginal, but less than the children perceived as advanced. The children who were perceived as advanced in language abilities were allowed the most periods of sufficient latency. The data revealed that the higher the language abilities of the children were perceived, the more periods of sufficient latency they were allotted.

An interesting finding in the study was that most of the teachers, upon directing a question to the students rated as minimal or marginal, would automatically rephrase it or begin prompting the child. They seemed to automatically assume that the pupil needed help or did not understand the question. However, if the child had been allowed the five-second latency period, an adequate response may have been given.

The latency aspect of the present study, in relation to previous research, seems to be the only characteristic that coincides with what has formerly been found.

Another interesting aspect of the study was how well the teachers performed with no specific instruction on equitable distribution, tutoring, and the difficulty level of the questions. They were not told they were the ones being studied, so as not to affect their teaching

styles. The study shows that these ten teachers did not exclude the minimal level children from the lessons. They directed questions to them, tutored them, and did not ask them only low level questions.

Implications

The implications of this experiment seem to point out various factors that may have had an effect on the obtained results. An aspect of this study that may have produced different results deals with the time of the school year that this experiment was executed. The same type of investigation, at the beginning of the school year, may produce varied results. The teacher will not have had time to thoroughly get acquainted with the children, and may exhibit more biased interactions than those exhibited at the end of the school year.

The study could also be executed with the entire classroom instead of a small group of four. The children perceived as low in language development may be overlooked in a large group of children. The results of the present study may have been altered or affected by the size of the groups. With only four children participating, the teacher may have been more prone to interact with all of the children.

Another factor of the study that may have affected the results were the type of questions prepared for the teacher. The degree of difficulty or complexity of the questions that a teacher asks may be different during "routine" instruction. For example, when the teacher arranges questions for the lessons and discussions, level three and four type questions may not be included.

Further research in this area should include a duplication of the present study with a larger sample population. By using a larger population, the individual groups can be compared. There is little, if any research on this type of experiment.

Another study that warrants further research is a developmental experiment. Most of the responses given by the children in this study were incorrect or less than adequate. A study could be carried out that looks at the type of answers that children give or are prompted to give in a classroom setting. A study investigating why most of their answers were inadequate would also prove interesting.

An investigation that looks at the quality of interactions across the various academic areas also warrants further research. The type of lesson that was conducted in the present study was a language arts lesson. The quality of interactions may differ as the subject matter changes.

A study could also be executed that looks at the quality of subsequent responses and questions by both the student and teacher while engaging in conversation. As a teacher brings the class into a discussion, the quality of the questions most likely brings about a certain quality of responses. These types of questions may tend to be of the low level type as the teacher brings more and more students into the discussion. An investigation of this type would prove helpful to the classroom teacher.

Another study that warrants further research deals with the known linguistic functioning of the children, instead of language abilities perceived by the teacher. A study based on true linguistic functioning may reveal different results as opposed to the results based on teacher's perceptions.

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APPENDIX A

Letter to the Teachers

Letter to the Teachers

Dear Teacher,

The kindergarten and first grade teachers in Avery county have been chosen to participate in a study to be conducted through the speech specialist in your school. This study will take approximately thirty minutes of your time. You will be asked to rate each child in your class, according to how you perceive his/her overall language abilities. When rating each child, please consider the following aspects: how he/she expresses himself/herself in class in terms of sentence structure (grammar), vocabulary, and pronunciation, thus considering his/her total communicative abilities. A form will be provided that explains the rating scale. The speech specialist at your school will be available to answer any of your questions. Please return the scale to your speech specialist within two days. This information will enable the speech specialist to select children for the study.

You will be informed of the children who were selected from your class. A speech specialist will visit your school and show you and the selected children from your class a thirteen minute open-ended film. "The Bike" is a colorful and interesting film produced for primary grades. The children are sure to enjoy this film as well as morally and educationally benefit from it. You will be provided with a synopsis of the film along with twelve questions. Following the film, you will be asked to teach a short lesson using the questions.

The information gained about each child will be kept in the strictest of confidence. It will be summarized with only the overall results being used.

The speech specialist feels that this study will prove interesting to you and will be well worth your time. Thank you very much for your time and cooperation.

Donna Brock
Speech Specialist

APPENDIX B

Perception of Language Abilities Scale

APPENDIX C

Dialogue of "The Bike"

Dialogue of "The Bike"

Steve is cleaning his new bike. Keith watches.

Keith: Hey, where d'ya get that bike?
Steve: For my birthday.
Keith: Can I ride it?
Steve: No.
Keith: What about next Sunday?

Steve's father calls to him.

Father: Steve put the bike away and come in, we're gonna leave soon.
Your mother has something for you to carry out.
Steve: All right.

Keith still wants to ride the bike.

Keith: Sure is a neat one, can I ride it?
Steve: No, my father said nobody can ride it.
Get off my fence, you're gonna break it.
Keith: I'm not gonna break it.
Steve: Well you better get off before you do.
Keith: Why who wants to ride that stupid ole bike.

Keith leaves and watches Steve's family leave.

Eddie comes up riding a bike.

Eddie: Hey Keith. Do you want to go to the park Keith?
Keith: I can't, my bike's broken.
Eddie: Did ya see Steve's new bike?
Keith: Yeah.
Eddie: Wanta go see it again?
Keith: OK.

Keith and Eddie go over to Steve's house.

Eddie: Anybody home?
Keith: I don't think so.
Eddie: Where'd they go?
Keith: Swimming. Cool bike.
Eddie: Yeah. Wanta go over the fence?
Keith: OK. If we're gonna look at it, yeah.

They look at the bike and blow the horn.

Keith: Neat bike.
Eddie: Hey, if you ride the bike we can go to the park. C'mon
Keith. I won't be your friend.

Dialogue Continued

Keith: Well, OK. Promise me, if it breaks it's your fault.
Eddie: It won't.
Keith: How do you know?
Eddie: New bikes don't break.
Keith: Oh you're funny.

They ride off. They get to the park and eat popsicles.

Eddie: These are good popsicles.
Keith: Yeah.
Eddie: I get to ride the bike back.
Keith: Uh-uh.
Eddie: Aw c'mon Keith. I'll take care of it.
Keith: I'm gonna ride it.
Eddie: You told me I could ride it. I'll tell Steve on you.
Keith: How could you? You told me to ride it.
Eddie: C'mon. Please?
Keith: Well, OK. Take care of it.
Eddie: OK.

Eddie rides the bike.

Keith: Didn't I tell you to take care of it?
Eddie: Well yeah, I know that.

Eddie falls on the bike, hitting a garbage can and tree. Keith laughs.

Eddie: Come here, Keith. Look at the bike.

They look at the bike and discuss what is wrong with it.

Horn's broke, so are the brakes.
Stick shift too.
Look at the horn now.
It's all busted.
Hey, where's that rubber thing?
Look, the shifts won't work.
Let's get it home fast.
We'll just walk it.

They walk the bike home.

Keith: Can we fix it?
Eddie: We have to take it to my garage.
Keith: Got a wrench?
Eddie: Yeah, but you have to help me.
Keith: You're the one who broke it.
Eddie: It's not my fault, you took it.

Dialogue Continued

They fix the bike, using a wrench and scotch tape. Eddie blows bubbles while Keith "fixes" the bike.

Keith: Eddie stop playing around, we have to hurry.
Eddie: I wanta blow bubbles.
Keith: Come on.
Eddie: Does the horn work?
Keith: No. I can't get it to work.
Eddie: Come on, we better get the bike back right now.
Keith: Fix it, OK?
Eddie: Cover it up.
Keith: Steve's supposed to be back by now.
Eddie: We're not supposed to be up here.
C'mon, let's take the blanket.

They take the bike back to Steve's house and put it in the back yard. They go back to Eddie's house.

Eddie: Please say you're not gonna tell on me.
I know you're gonna tell.
Keith: I think you should tell him. You're the one who told me to bring it.
Eddie: Why should I tell?
Keith: Because you told me to bring it. It's you're fault now.
Eddie: You're gonna get in trouble, not me.
Keith: So are you.
Eddie: No I'm not.

A little boy named Bobby walks up to the fence.

Eddie: Hey Bobby, get out of here. Get outa here Bob. Hurry up.
Are you gonna really tell Keith?
Keith: No, I'm not even gonna tell. You should tell. I mean it.
Eddie: Who's gonna tell?
Keith: You.
Eddie: Not me.
Keith: Yes you are.
Eddie: Gonna make me? I won't be your friend.

Both boys are in the yard. Eddie gets out his turtle and feeds him flower petals. Eddie also gets out his stilts and walks on them.

Eddie: Hey Keith, look at me.

Keith leaves. Eddie comes up to the gate.

Eddie: Hey Keith, is Steve down there?
Keith: I better go home and eat my dinner.

Dialogue Continued

Eddie: I know what you're gonna do. Tell! Go ahead. I wanta watch you. You better not either. Hey Keith, come here. I wanta talk to you. Hey Keith. C'mon, don't tell.

Keith leaves and looks back at Eddie. The film ends with Keith walking off.

APPENDIX D

Synopsis of the Film

Synopsis of the Film

Synopsis of "The Bike"

"The Bike" is an open-ended, thought-provoking film that lasts thirteen minutes. The main characters are Steve, Keith and Eddie.

Steve gets a new bike for his birthday. Keith's bike is broken so he asks Steve if he can ride it. Steve tells him no because his father does not want anyone to ride it. Steve and his parents leave and go swimming for the day. Keith watches as they leave. Eddie approaches Keith, on his bike, and asks Keith to go to the park with him. Since Keith's bike is broken, Eddie talks him into taking Steve's bike. Keith is reluctant but is finally persuaded. Later they exchange bikes and Eddie damages the new bike in an accident. They walk the bike to Eddie's garage and try to repair it. Keith seems far more concerned than Eddie about trying to make repairs. They return the bike without being discovered.

Each claims that the other is at fault, Eddie's fault because he had the accident, Keith's because he took the bike, Eddie's because he persuaded Keith to take it. They argue about whether to tell, Eddie threatening that he will not be Keith's friend if Keith tells. The film ends with Keith pondering what to do.

APPENDIX E

Question Form

Question Form

*Name Child

**Ask The Question

***Instruction As You Feel It Is Needed

Check as the question is asked

- 1. How does pushing the pedals on a bike make it go?
- 2. What do you think might happen to the boys if their parents find out about the accident? Anything else?
- 3. If you were Keith would you tell what happened to the bike? Why?
- 4. Was Eddie able to fix the damaged bike?
- 5. What could Keith and Eddie have done to prevent damaging the bike?
- 6. How did Eddie damage the new bike?
- 7. Who tried to fix the damaged bike?
- 8. How do the brakes on a bicycle work?
- 9. How did the bike look before and after the accident?

- 10. Was taking the bike, the way they did, the same as stealing? Why?
- 11. In your opinion, what makes a "good friend"?
- 12. How would our world be different if no one respected the property of others?

APPENDIX F

Score Sheet

Score Sheet

	1	2	3	4
1. How does pushing the pedals on a bike make it go?				
2. What do you think might happen to the boys if their parents find out about the accident? Anything else?				
3. If you were Keith would you tell what happened to the bike? Why?				
4. Was Eddie able to fix the damaged bike?				
5. What could Keith and Eddie have done to prevent damaging the bike?				
6. How did Eddie damage the new bike?				
7. Who tried to fix the damaged bike?				
8. How do the brakes on a bicycle work?				
9. How did the bike look before and after the accident?				
10. Was taking the bike, the way they did, the same as stealing? Why?				
11. In your opinion, what makes a "good friend"?				
12. How would the world be different if no one respected the property of others?				

VITA

Donna Jeanne Brock was born in Laurinburg, North Carolina on October 8, 1959. She resided there until 1965 when her family moved to Charlotte, North Carolina. She attended elementary schools in that city and was graduated from Olympic High School in June 1977. The following August she entered The University of North Carolina at Charlotte, until December 1977. In January 1978 she entered Appalachian State University, and in May 1981 she received a Bachelor of Science degree in Speech Pathology. In June 1981 she entered Appalachian State University and began study toward a Master's degree in Speech Pathology. This degree was awarded in August 1982.

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