THE EFFECT OF THE ADDITION OF A SEMANTICALLY MEANINGFUL CONTEXT AND LANGUAGE ON THE VIDEO DEFICIT EFFECT

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Abstract

Young children typically demonstrate a video deficit, learning less from video than live presentations. Both semantically meaningful context have been demonstrated to enhance learning in young children. In this present study we used the magnet imitation task to examine the role that semantically meaningful context and demonstration method (live demonstration vs. video demonstration) plays on imitation and learning in 24- and 30-month olds. One hundred and twelve 24- and 30-month olds participated in a puzzle imitation task to examine learning from live and televised models. An experimenter demonstrated how to assemble a three piece puzzle to make a fish or a boat. In Experiment 1, for half the children the puzzle was depicted against a semantically meaningful context (context of the sea) and for the other half there was only a yellow background (no context). Experiment 1 showed that the addition of a semantically meaningful context did not help nor hinder imitation of either the gesture or goal. In Experiment 2 half of the children saw the demonstration on video and the other half saw a live demonstration. Experiment 2 provided some evidence to the video deficit effect, for participants in the video condition performed significantly worse than participants in the live condition in gesture and goal. However, both groups score equally in emulation. We also found a significant positive correlation in the video group between the ability to label the fish or boat and goal score as well as a negative correlation between the hours of TV watched and goal score. These results suggest that in regards to imitation and learning 24- and 30-month olds do not benefit from the positive effect of semantically meaningful contexts. These results also suggest that the video deficit effect is no an all encompassing deficit; for it negatively effects imitation of gesture and goals but it does not negatively effect emulation, and these effects may be intensified with increased television watching.