Purpose

• The purpose of this study is to investigate the semantic and syntactic skills of young children learning Hmong as a first language (L1) and English as a second language (L2).

Objectives

• Develop a series of tasks to elicit grammatical forms and structures relevant to language acquisition in English.

• To develop a Minimal Competency Core of grammatical forms critical for success in kindergarten classroom.

Subjects

• Approximately 8 Hmong children
• 3-5 years old
• Hmong as L1*
• English as L2*
• Equal ratio of male and female

* L1 is first language, L2 is second language

Materials

• A series of tasks developed by student researchers
• A book developed by student researchers
• Toys

Procedures

• Determine that subjects meet eligibility requirements
• Obtain consent from parents of subjects
• Administer elicitation tasks
  o Testing takes approximately 20 minutes per child

Conclusions and Future Direction

• Children exposed to English at home and school have a better chance of succeeding versus children only exposed to English at school.
• As children approach school age, more appropriate use of grammatical morphemes develop.
• Test should be used with children older than 4-years; younger children lack linguistic skills to produce correct grammatical morphemes
• Change subject-age criterion to 4-6 years instead of 3-5 years
• Make sure children are exposed to English for at least 1 year.
• Create a comprehension test in addition to the production sections to ensure subjects understanding of tasks

Acknowledgements

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Special Thanks to:

• The University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire’s Children Center
• The Eau Claire YMCA’s Headstart Program
• Stephanie Shaddick

Results

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* The parents of these children speak both Hmong and English in the home.
** Although a score of 0% was recorded; these children still responded to the task but with an incorrect answer in Hmong.