

# An Analysis of the Feasibility of Children's Acquisition of English Sentence Patterns from Picture Books --Taking the Picture Book "I Hear a Pickle" as an Example

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**ABSTRACT.** *Children's acquisition of English sentence patterns mainly depends on sufficient quantity and continuous input reinforcement. In this process, the use of children's English picture books can help children to acquire English sentence patterns. This paper will analyze the feasibility of children's acquisition of English sentence patterns from picture books from various perspectives.*

**KEYWORDS:** *Children's language acquisition, Children's english picture book reading feasibility*

## 1. Theory of Language Acquisition for Children Aged 1-2

According to the research, children aged 1.5 to 2 can master some basic daily vocabularies, such as "big, small, long, fast, good", etc. These words have the characteristics of simplicity and high frequency of daily use, which can meet the requirements of children's daily communication. At the same time, although the expression of children in this period is mainly in the form of a single word, the accumulation of such words provide a basis for the further development of children's language acquisition.

Therefore, it is generally believed in Western children's linguistics that children's language aged 1-1.5 or 2-3 is "true speech", and the early development of children's language is divided into the one word or holographic stage, the two world stage and the telegraph speech stage. They believe that the language situation in this period marks the transition of children's language acquisition from voice acquisition to grammar acquisition. Children's discourse begins with the use of one word for another. Although pure word meaning can save a lot of constraints from grammar rules, with the growth of children's age, their demand for knowledge is more urgent, and the exploration of knowledge is no longer limited to the superficial interpretation of one or two words. Therefore, it is reasonable to introduce proper grammar into the acquisition, so as to acquire reasonable sentence patterns, so as to match with children's exploration of the world and language acquisition in stages. The acquisition of simple sentence patterns is the beginning of children's grammar acquisition.

Therefore, the introduction of simple sentence patterns to 1-2-year-old children is based on the children's own vocabulary reserve and the theoretical support of language acquisition stages, which conforms to the scientific basis.

With the support of vocabulary reserve and language acquisition theory, the related ways and methods of language acquisition for children aged 1-2, especially for sentence acquisition, are also the theoretical premise. Scientific, reasonable and effective methods are the important foundation to help children acquire language smoothly. Among them, the more common and important methods are repetition, imitation, replacement and expansion.

Repetition, that is to say, the same language material is repeatedly input to children, which makes the relevant language content and material leave a considerable imprint in children's brain. This method can deepen children's memory of relevant materials to a certain extent. Imitation is not only one of the feedback ways for children to receive information, but also one of the most basic means for children to acquire and use language. On the basis of repeated input, children's imitation will be constantly optimized. However, imitation does not fully explain children's speech comprehension ability. Speech understanding is the basis of speech production, that is, the speaker's speech response based on the real understanding of the other party's words. And this needs to be tested by replacement. And replacement needs a certain language basis. So here, children's vocabulary accumulation begins to play a greater role - to become the material for children's language replacement. With the replacement of many times, children's mastery of a sentence structure is more profound. The last is the extension. Expansion, i.e. adding relevant components before or after a certain center. This is also a common way to increase the input

intensity of language. Generally, children have a strong ability of receiving and imitating in the aspect of centering structure and extending the middle structure. Of course, it is also related to children's cognitive process and psychological state.

Of course, repetition, imitation, substitution and extension are not a one-way incremental delivery process. Because children may mix these processes and “create” some interesting and even a little difficult language to express. This process often brings parents a lot of surprises, which can also reflect the innovation of children in language acquisition and the necessity of studying children's language acquisition. The application of the above methods not only improves the amount of children's language acquisition, but also improves the quality of children's language acquisition, so that children have a deeper understanding of a sentence pattern, so as to better grasp and use the sentence pattern.

## **2. Characteristics of Children's Picture Books in English**

### ***2.1 Combination of Text and Text***

Children's English picture books are usually composed of words and pictures. For example, the picture book <I hear a pickle>, which is used as an example in this paper, has only three sentences on one page, and the rest are pictures. Theoretically, the words in picture books are for the parents who read them, and the pictures are for the children who listen to them.

Children aged 1-2 know the world mainly through perceptual cognition. The pictures composed of color and shape play an important role in attracting children's attention and stimulating children's interest and creativity. Vivid painting image and rich color embellishment have a strong visual impact on children. At the same time, the drawing in children's English picture book is also not limited to one form. Various color techniques such as watercolor and oil color, as well as various creative techniques such as collage and permutation, can be used in the preparation of children's English picture book to achieve the best visual effect.

In addition, although the English picture books of children aged 1-2 are the combination of pictures and texts, the proportion of pictures in them is very large. Some of them have a sentence with a whole page of pictures, and some even have a whole page of pictures. Most of the composition of these pictures are vivid, and most of the colors are bright and gorgeous. The visual impact is great, and it is easy to catch people's eyes. Naturally, these pictures are more attractive to curious and naive children. Such works can stimulate children's interest in reading, improve children's ability to listen to picture books, be willing to quietly enjoy the charm of picture book reading with their parents, and unconsciously learn relevant English sentence patterns.

### ***2.2 Simple Vocabulary with a Sense of Picture***

Children's image thinking is developed, and they have a strong ability to understand and remember the image content. In addition, according to the research, after 16 months, children's language understanding and oral expression ability develop rapidly, and the weekly vocabulary learning amount can reach nearly 20. By 24 months, more than two words can be combined to output simple sentences. It can be seen that children's language learning ability at this age is quite considerable. At the same time, it can also be assumed that the vocabulary learned by 1-2-year-old children in this period must be the most useful vocabulary in life. Therefore, since it is a picture book designed for 1-2-year-old children to learn English sentence patterns, the selected words are mainly simple, commonly used and with strong picture sense. Among them, there are not only nominal daily necessities, names of animals and plants, but also verbal directive words, behavioral words, like adjectives.

For example, the verbs used in the picture book < I hear a pickle > are: hear, sell, see, touch. And taste, as well as the related modifiers and descriptors selected for children's better understanding of each verb, such as “bang, bang” with the beat of the ear, and the collocation of “small” and “flower”, etc., can directly show its meaning with body language and some toys or with the help of some living things. In this way, the parents who read picture books can display the meaning of words and sentences in various ways, that is, to visualize the words and sentences with single original meaning, so that children can understand the meaning of the story told by the sentences in picture books more comprehensively and deeply, and acquire sentence expression in a subtle way.

### ***2.3 Repeat the Same Sentence Pattern***

If we want children to acquire a knowledge point, we must immerse children in this knowledge point, fully

perceive and comprehend, so as to form their own understanding and memory. Therefore, the acquisition of English sentence patterns by 1-2-year-old children can not only pursue the amount of language input, but also stress the combination of quality and quantity of language input. Quality is the requirement of input content mentioned above; quantity is more emphasis on repeated input of the same knowledge point.

As the picture book "I hear a pickle" in English for children mentioned in this paper, the knowledge that this book wants to promote is the sentence pattern "I can + verb". Therefore, the book selects several common and easy ways to express and understand sensory verbs such as "hear", "see", "touch", "taste" to complete the collocation of this sentence pattern -I can smell... -I can see... -I can touch... -I can taste..." The series of sentences have simple repetition structure, appropriate number and clear expression, which can effectively meet the repetition requirements of "I can + verb" sentence pattern, and has pertinence and practicability, so that the quality of repeated input is high, and can achieve significant input effect. I believe that children's acquisition quality of this sentence pattern can also be better reflected.

#### Prediction of the effect of children's picture books on their acquisition of sentence patterns

It is said that "Interest is the best teacher". When a beautiful picture book is put in front of children, the interest of children's exploration can be aroused quickly, and the attention can be attracted quickly. Even if we just let the children sit alone to read the pictures on the picture book, we believe that they can also see and throw themselves and forget themselves in the book. When parents accompany them and read the story vividly, their learning ability can be naturally mobilized and the learning effect is more satisfactory.

Although in the eyes of many people, 1-2-year-old children are too young, the actual effect of such children's picture books is also difficult to quantify through specific assessment data. However, language acquisition has never been achieved overnight, and it will never be unrewarded after a long time.

The theory of "I + 1" put forward by the famous linguist Krashen is to increase the difficulty "1" on the basis of the current level "I" of learners, so as to promote the progress of learners. "I + 1" is the target level of learners in the next stage, and this "1" is the transition between the current stage and the next stage. The same is true for the 1-2-year-old children's acquisition of English sentence patterns. "I" is the existing language ability of 1-2-year-old children, that is to say, most ideograms are realized by words and sentences, "I + 1" is the next goal ability: to acquire the English sentence pattern "I can + verb" in the illustrated book and use it in daily life. The "1" here is the process of input and understanding of this sentence pattern, and the transition of "I + 1" is finally realized. Since it is a transition, the time and energy required is uncertain, either long or short.

Children may use it in the natural expression after receiving multiple inputs, or they may blurt it out in an unexpected moment. However, there will always be rewards for giving, no matter how long it takes. This is the joy that children's language acquisition brings to their parents.

#### 4. Obstacles and Suggestions for Children's English Picture Book Reading Promotion

Resistance of Picture Book Reading Promotion. The resistance of children's English picture book reading promotion mainly comes from two aspects: one is picture book, the other is parents themselves.

The first is about picture books. In children's language acquisition, the quality requirements of input content are particularly strict, because once the input error occurs, children will have a kind of learning style, and it is difficult to correct it, which is well known. Therefore, in order to achieve a better goal of sentence acquisition, it is necessary to use excellent children's English picture books to input children's language acquisition. The "excellence" here refers to the excellence of picture book from topic selection to drawing and writing, as well as the excellence of printing paper, pigment, cutting and binding. To ensure that the whole process is meticulous, the difficulty is really not small. For example, English picture books are naturally best written by native picture book writers from English speaking countries. Even non English speaking picture book writers must have a high level of English. At the same time, the writer must also understand children's psychology and knowledge of children's language acquisition, so that the picture books can meet the requirements. In addition, some picture books only composed of a single vocabulary can only play the role of vocabulary expansion, word sentence practice and consolidation, which is not very helpful for children's sentence acquisition in the next stage. Therefore, when choosing picture books, parents also need to pay attention to it.

Second is the problem of parents themselves. The good guidance of parents plays a decisive role in children's language acquisition. Not all parents have received systematic education of children's language acquisition. Therefore, it is a new challenge for many parents to effectively use the picture book to guide children's sentence acquisition. If the guidance is not in place or correct, it may affect the final effect of children's language acquisition.

Therefore, it is suggested that the relevant evaluation institutions expand the real-time dynamic evaluation of children's English picture book writers, and picture book publishing institutions and distributors, and publish the relevant evaluation data in a timely manner. In this way, the three parties can not only play a role of supervision and guidance, and promote a good cycle of picture book industry; at the same time, it can facilitate the expansion of parents' understanding and selection of this, and further promote the popularity of children's English picture books. And picture book writers, publishers and distributors can also increase cooperation, and then upload the language materials and reading recommendation methods of picture books after discussion, such as adding the point reading function of picture books or downloading reading voice function on the Internet. This can facilitate parents' preparation before reading and improve the quality and effect of picture book reading.

## 5. Conclusion

To sum up, it is quite feasible to help children acquire English sentence patterns with the help of children's English picture books. I believe that under the correct and reasonable use of excellent children's English picture books, children's English sentence pattern acquisition process will become more and more relaxed, methods and ways will become more diverse, and acquisition quality will be more effective.

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