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Zoom by request to gradstudies@wsu.edu

Faculty, students and the general public are encouraged to attend

THE IMPACT OF PARENT-MEDIATED NATURALISTIC INTERVENTIONS WITH THE ADDITION OF SPEECH-GENERATING DEVICES ON VOCALIZATIONS OF INDIVIDUALS WITH AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER AND COMPLEX COMMUNICATION NEEDS

Chair: Michael Dunn

This dissertation links three manuscripts that explore the impact of language interventions with the addition of speech generating devices (SGD) on the natural speech production of children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) and complex communication needs. The first manuscript provides a systematic and quality review of the literature related to the effect of SGD interventions on vocalizations of children aged 3-13 years old who have ASD and limited expressive language. The results indicate that SGD-infused interventions combined with evidence-based practices can lead to increases in children’s vocal language and social communication utterances. Optimal speech outcomes are associated with some of the participants’ prelinguistic predictors as measured before the interventions. The second manuscript is an empirical study using single subject research design to investigate the language outcomes of three children aged 3-6 years old who progressed in parent-mediated interventions with the aid of SGD after their parents received caregiver training and coaching on naturalistic developmental behavioral interventions with the involvement of SGD. The results of the study showed a positive functional relation between parents’ implementation fidelity of intervention strategies and children’s speech gains. The third manuscript provides practical recommendations to stakeholders who work with ASD-affected children who have severe speech impairment while they implement naturalistic interventions to promote children’s expressive vocabulary. These stakeholders could be children’s caregivers and
clinicians who actively participate in the care and interventions of children with ASD and limited functional speech.

*Keywords:* vocalizations, natural speech production, speech generating device, naturalistic intervention, parent-mediated intervention, primary caregiver training, parent coaching.