**Introduction**

- Children from low-income backgrounds score lower on tests of early language development (Walker, Greenwood, Hart, & Carta, 1994).
- This early delay is closely tied to long-term academic outcomes and suggests that the achievement gap begins well before the start of school.
- The oral language environment of children from low-income backgrounds differs substantially compared to children from middle- and upper-income background.
- By the age of 3, children from low-income backgrounds hear an average of 30 million words fewer than children from high-income families (Hart & Risley, 1995).
- Understanding how participation in an early language intervention affects children from low-income backgrounds may inform future research and practice in this area.

**Research Questions**

**Question 1:** Does income predict language outcomes and growth during a parent-implemented communication intervention?

**Question 2:** What is the effect of the home language environment on children’s response to a parent-implemented intervention?

**Methods**

**Participants**

- Participants were included in an RCT examining the effects of Enhanced Milieu Teaching (EMT) for children with language delay (Roberts & Kaiser, 2015).

**Intervention**

- EMT focused on teaching parents four key language support strategies to promote early language interactions in everyday routines and activities.
- 28 total sessions over 12 weeks.
- 24 child intervention sessions.
- 4 individual parent workshops.

**Measures**

- Measured the oral language environment of parents.
- The intervention, conducted by researchers (EMT), focused on teaching parents four key strategies.

**Data Analysis**

- Latent growth curve analysis:
  - Two group piecewise model (knot point at end of intervention).
  - Intercept at the end of intervention to analyze the main effects of intervention.

**Results**

**Question 1:** Income as a Predictor of Intercept and Growth

- Chi-square difference test indicates no significant difference of income ($p=0.92$) between intervention and control groups.
- Income alone was not a significant predictor of NDW immediately following the intervention period, or of growth during the intervention period.

**Question 2:** Conversational turns as a time-varying covariate, and income as a predictor of intercept and slope

- Chi-square difference test indicates no significant difference of conversational turns ($p=0.08$) between intervention and control groups.

**Conclusions**

- Early language interventions that train parents in high-quality language input may reduce the relationship between income and language outcomes more than the quantity of language input alone.

**References**