



The Effect of Egocentrism on Vocabulary Development

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ABSTRACT

The current study examines the effect of egocentrism on vocabulary development. When learning new information and skills, a common strategy is to make the information relatable to one's self. Thus, this study uses portraits (i.e., vocabulary self-portraits; see below) as a tool to facilitate vocabulary development.

Vocabulary flash cards, which typically contain a word and a related picture, are a common tool used to build a child's vocabulary. In this study, vocabulary self-portraits, which depict novel words and photos of the child taken in a way that reveals word-meaning are compared with line drawings that depict novel words.

The anticipated outcome of this study is that children who are taught vocabulary using vocabulary self-portraits will develop more vocabulary. The results of this study may provide implications for vocabulary interventions implemented by speech-language pathologists.



Film

BACKGROUND

According to Piaget's theory of cognitive development, egocentrism is a bias towards one's own point of view (Piaget & Inhelder, 1956). The current research attempts to facilitate language learning (i.e., vocabulary development) by utilizing the child's biased perspective. A study by Chamany, Allen, and Tanner (2008) found that making novel information relevant to a person's life is beneficial to learning. Teaching students to make connections between what they learn in the classroom and what they see in everyday life is imperative (Chamany, Allen, & Tanner, 2008).

The National Reading Panel (2000) concludes that vocabulary learning should involve active engagement. Children's learning of novel vocabulary may be influenced by their egocentrism, relevancy, and prior knowledge. Thus, the current research utilized vocabulary self-portraits to facilitate vocabulary learning in children 3 to 7-year-olds. A vocabulary self-portrait is a vocabulary card made up of a printed word and a photograph of the child depicting the meaning of the vocabulary or holding an object representing the vocabulary. According to McKenzie (2014), one way to start bridging the achievement gap is "learning new words through hands-on, engaging, and interactive, playful learning" (p. 12); continuous exposure is also effective (Mixan, 2014). It is proposed that the vocabulary self-portraits will be interactive and engaging for the child, and will provide an 'egocentric' perspective of the vocabulary prompting the child to learn the novel vocabulary more efficiently.

The purpose of the current study was to teach children novel vocabulary words using vocabulary self-portraits. It was hypothesized that children would learn and retain more vocabulary words and at a faster pace using the vocabulary self-portraits.

METHODOLOGY

- **Participants:** Four participants, (2 males and 2 females) aged 3-6 participated in the study and were given the 3-mountain task and the vocabulary naming task with 61 colored picture vocabulary cards during the initial session
- Girl 1 was 6 years old; Boy 1, Boy 2, and Girl 2 were all 4 years old. Both girls were attending Costal Plains Head Start. Both boys were attending the Child Development Center on Moody Air Force base. Girl 1, Boy 1, and Boy 2 were all receiving speech-language therapy prior to and during the study.
- Ten of the incorrectly named vocabulary words were chosen to use for the study; 5 for the experimental condition (i.e., vocabulary self-portraits and 5 for the control condition (i.e., line drawings)

METHODOLOGY continued

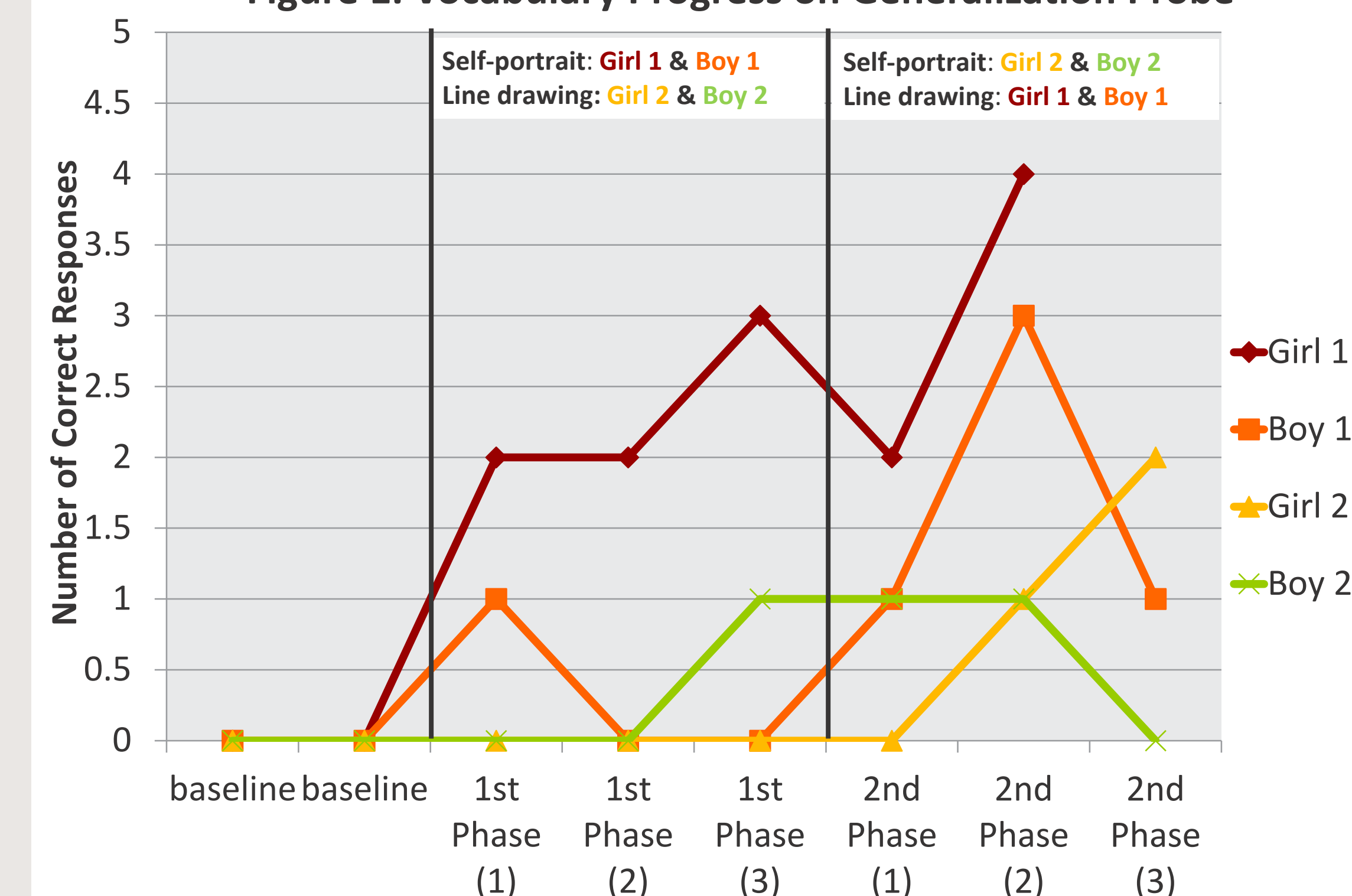
- **Intervention Sessions:** There were 2 phases of intervention, each consisting of 3 sessions for a total of 6 sessions. The conditions were counterbalanced. One child in each setting started with 5 vocabulary self-portraits and the other child started with line drawings.
- **Materials:** Materials included vocabulary cards with line drawings, colored pictures, self portraits, and the 3 Mountain Task (see below).
- **Procedures:** The procedures used to teach the vocabulary were identical across conditions. Response stimulus and generalization probes were administered following each intervention session.
- **Final Session:** administered vocabulary naming task using 61 colored picture vocabulary cards.
- **Data Analysis:** Visual inspection was used to analyze data.



RESULTS

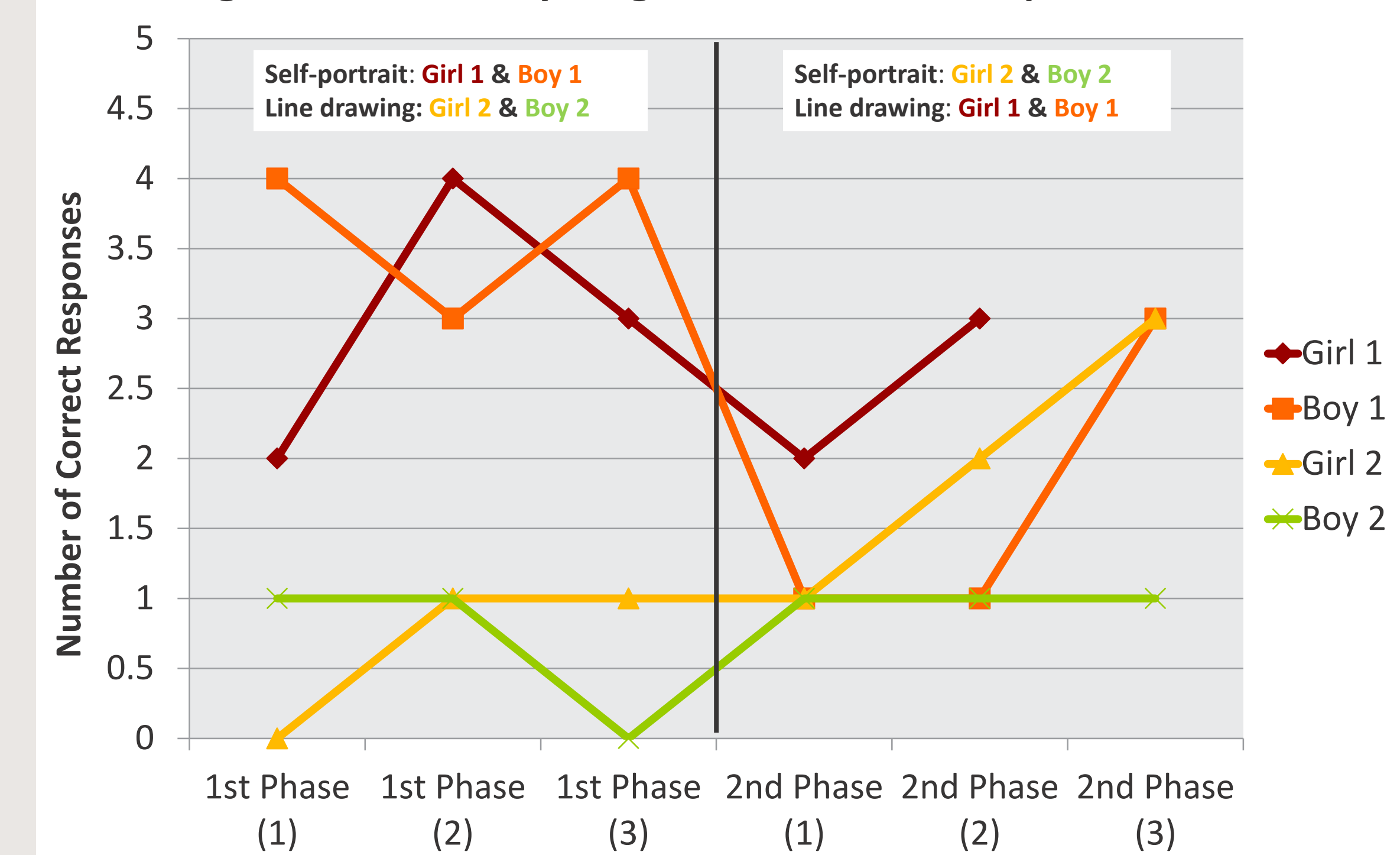
According to the generalization probe results, the participants in the first phase made more progress using the vocabulary self-portraits than the line drawings. In general, Girl 1 and Girl 2 benefitted more from using the vocabulary self-portraits. In phase 2, Boy 1 demonstrated more progress using the line drawings (See Figure 1).

Figure 1. Vocabulary Progress on Generalization Probe



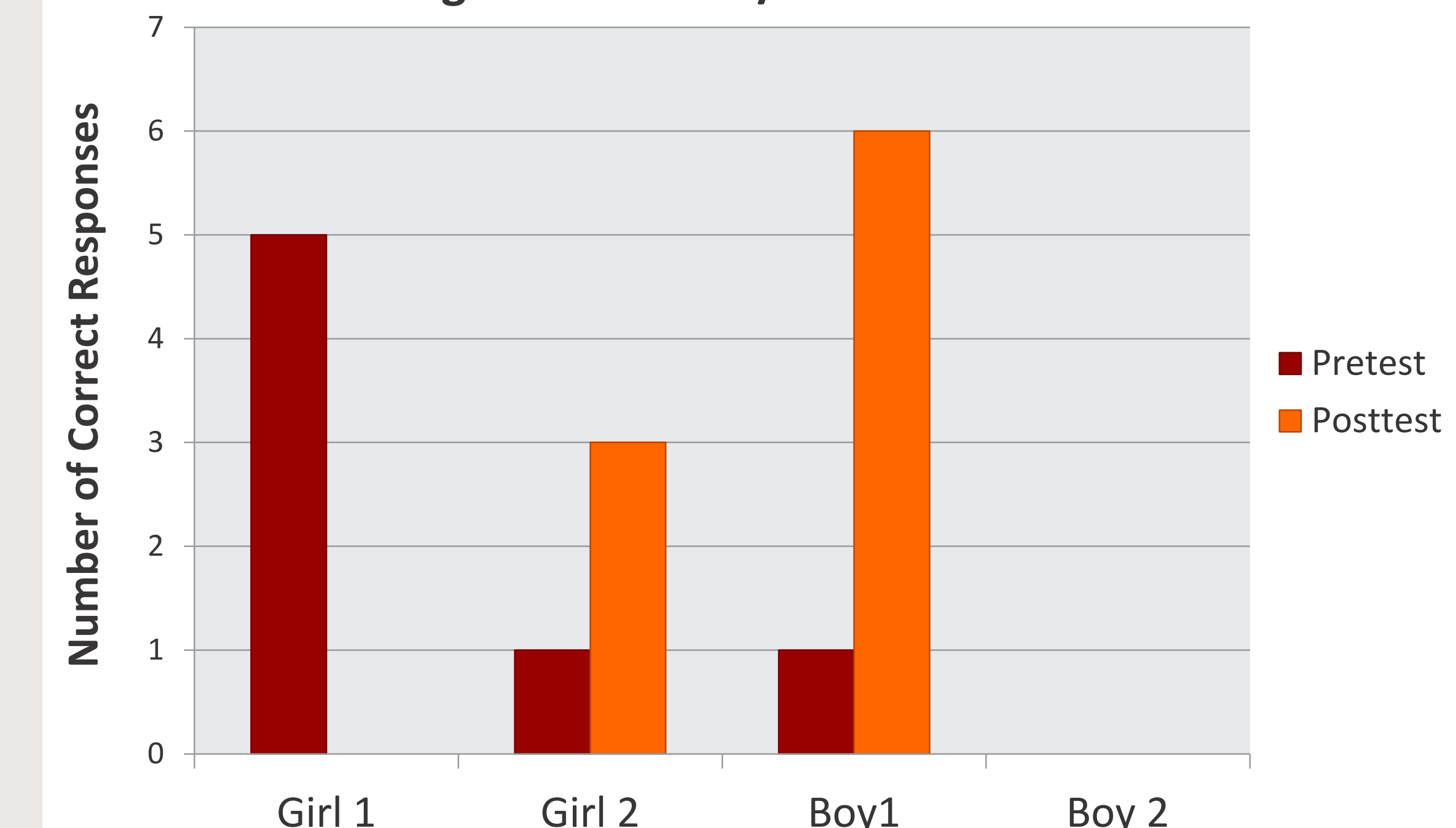
RESULTS continued

Figure 2. Vocabulary Progress on Stimulus Response Probe



Girl 1, Girl 2, and Boy 1 made better progress on the stimulus response probes using the vocabulary self-portraits. Boy 2 demonstrated a decrease in vocabulary when using line drawings (See Figure 2). Generally, all participants made progress with vocabulary skills (See Figure 3).

Figure 3. Pretest/Posttest Probe



CONCLUSIONS

- Children seem to learn more vocabulary using the vocabulary self portraits; this may be attributed to their egocentrism (Piaget & Inhelder, 1956).
- Children seem to learn vocabulary using continuous exposure as evident in the study's results (Mixan, 2014).
- Using pictures cards may facilitate vocabulary development.
- Interactive engagement (i.e., vocabulary self-portraits) appears to facilitate vocabulary development (NRP, 2000)

REFERENCES

References are available upon request.