

INTRODUCTION

Previous research based on archival data suggests that children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) learn new skills in fewer trials if the skills require visual or auditory discriminations that they already possessed (Roy-Wsiaki et al., 2017). We examined this relation prospectively in this study by teaching children with ASD new tasks that require various visual and auditory discriminations.

PARTICIPANTS

A 5-year-old girl (P05) and a 4-year-old boy (P07) participated. Both had a diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder and were non-verbal.

On a discrimination skills assessment (ABLA-R, 2011), both children were able to perform the simple visual discrimination task (Level 3) and the visual identity matching-to-sample discrimination task (Level 4), but not the non-identity matching-to-sample discrimination task (Level 5).

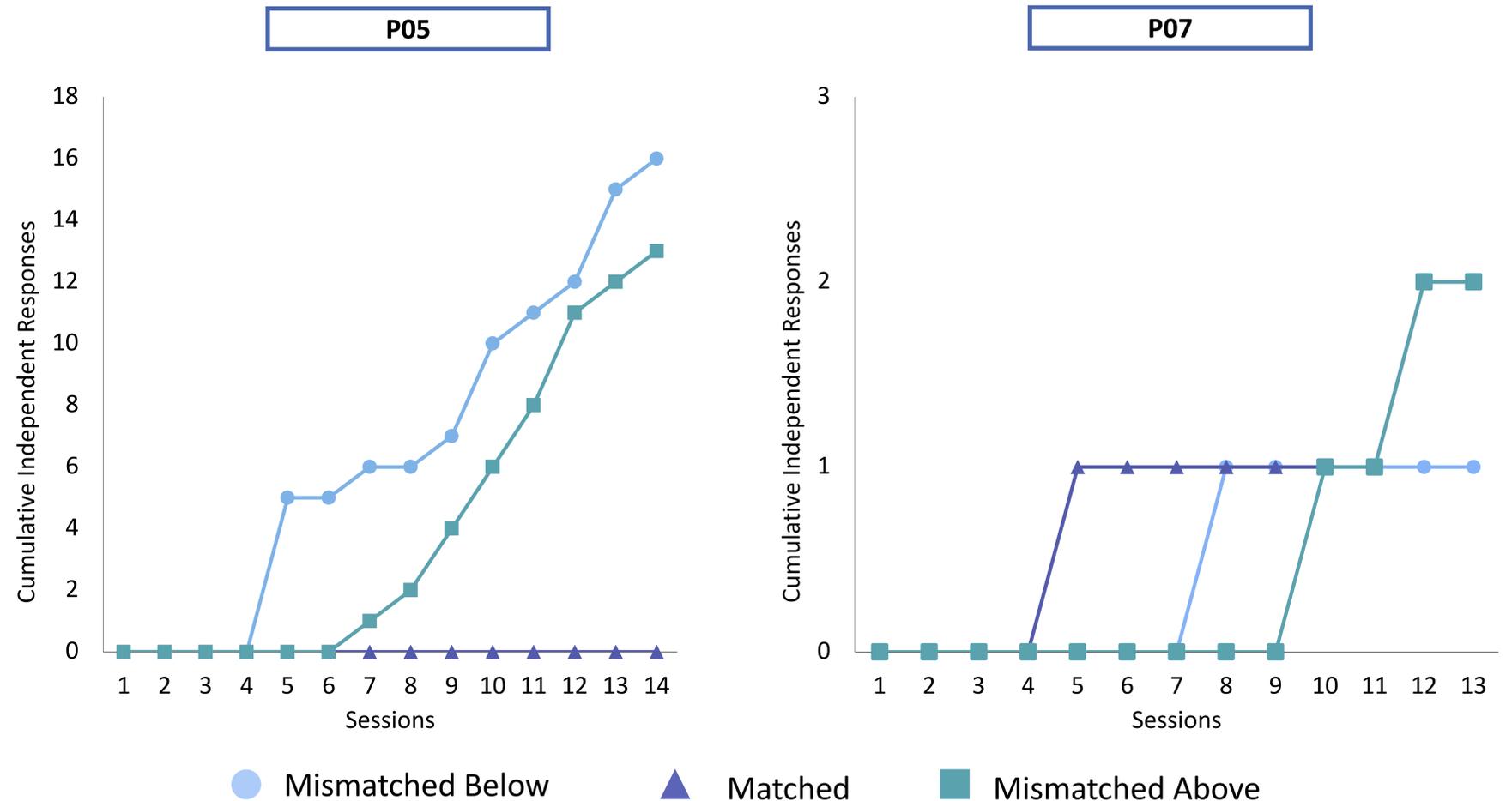
METHOD

In a single-case multi-element design, each child was taught to perform new tasks in three conditions:

(1) **MISMATCHED BELOW**: tasks that require discriminations one level below the highest passed level on the ABLA-R.

(2) **MATCHED**: tasks that require discriminations at the highest passed level on the ABLA-R.

(3) **MISMATCHED ABOVE**: tasks that require discriminations one level above the highest passed level on the ABLA-R.



RESULTS and DISCUSSION

Results

- **P05**: mastered one teaching task in the **BELOW** condition, obtained highest rate of independent responding in the **BELOW** condition followed by the **ABOVE** condition, and had no independent responding in the **MATCHED** condition.
- **P07**: Did not master any teaching tasks in any condition and obtained the highest rate of independent responding in the **MATCHED** and **ABOVE** conditions

Limitations

- Limited number of teaching sessions
- Limited knowledge of child's current teaching environment (e.g., most effective prompting strategies, modified teaching materials, etc.)

Although the results were inconsistent with existing literature, this study expanded on previous research by examining matched and mismatched training tasks, it used a stronger experimental design, and allowed for interobserver and procedural integrity checks.

REFERENCES

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