

## World Ambassador Dolls Proposal: A Toy to Advance Linguistic Development within Children

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### Abstract

This paper presented the concept for a toy that would advance linguistic development within young children. Linguistic development and its' different phases are discussed in order to provide a better understand of what each phase entailed. World Ambassador Dolls would not only advance language development within a child's native language, but would also help them learn a second language as well. Design, function, and benefits of toy were discussed. Potential benefits of the toy include improvement of phonology and semantics within the vocabulary of children as well as expansion of their vocabulary in both their native language and second language. Concept for toy was thoroughly detailed in order to avoid much bias as possible. However, further improvement and revision is required as bias towards children with hearing impairment resulted in such that they would not be benefited equally as others by this toy due to the lack of the use of sign language. Further research and discussion would be required in order to see if this toy concept would truly benefit young children in regards to linguistic development.

**Keywords:** Language Development; Linguistic Development; Semantics; Children; World Ambassador Dolls; Bilingual, Multilingual

### Introduction

According to Boyd and Bee [1], *The Developing Child*, language development within children occurs through different phases as a result of experience and maturation ([2], p. 388). At first, children go through the prelinguistic phase in which language development actually begins months before an infant speaks their first word ([1], p. 192). Within the prelinguistic phase, children produce early sounds, such as cooing, babbling, such as "dadadadada," and gestures that demonstrate the beginning of expressive language, such as stretching and/or reaching for a particular toy ([1], p. 192-193; [3], p. 258). Eventually, children demonstrate their understanding of the words spoken to them, which is known as receptive language ([1], p. 193). Soon after, children tend to speak their first word by the age of 12-months-old or 13-months-old, and continue on to learn more words as well as their meanings ([1], p. 194).


However, after the first 6 months of speaking, which is when children are between the ages of 12-months and 18-months, they are only able to learn and speak as little as 30 words and their vocabulary increases relatively quickly as they grow older, which is known as a naming explosion ([1], p. 194-195). In addition to this, there are many different theories about language development within children, which are environmental theories, nativist theories, and constructivist theories ([1], p. 202-206). Also, there is a great possibility that there are critical periods within language development as particular types of children demonstrate great difficulty acquiring language after a certain age and/or point within their life, which is demonstrated through the examples of bilingual (or multilingual) children, feral children (such as Genie), deaf children who use sign language, deaf children whose hearing are restored after receiving cochlear implants, and recovery from injuries to areas of the brain that are related to language ([3], p. 258). Due to this, educational programs and toys have the ability to benefit language development within children by introducing them to things, such as language skills, letters, and numbers,

which they will later on learn within school [4]. Learning such things while having fun helps children preserve what they have learned as well as be reinforced to continue to learn from and play with the educational toy [4]. As a result, my group and I have come up with the idea of an educational toy that will help children acquire and develop languages efficiently as well as increase their vocabulary at a faster rate.

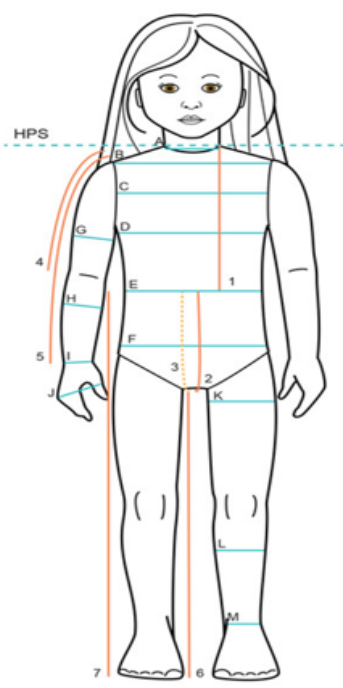
**The characteristics of the world ambassador dolls**

World Ambassador Dolls, which is the toy that we have created, is a robotic figure, or doll, that appears as either a young boy or a young girl. However, these robotic figures appear to be young girls or boys around the age of 5-years-old from a number of different countries, which also speak different languages in addition to English. Our robotic figure, whether boy or girl, wears traditional clothing from the country it is representing and speaks English as well as the native language of the country that it represents. So far, our robotic figures represent 11 different countries, which are the United States, Mexico, China, Japan, France, Spain, Italy, Canada, England (and/or the United Kingdom), Germany, and India. Thus, our robotic figures are able to speak Spanish, Chinese, Japanese, French, Italian, German, and Hindi. However, our robotic figures will soon represent more countries and thus will offer more language options for children to learn. Lastly, if a parent purchases a specific robotic figure for their child and want their child to learn another language in addition to the language the robotic figure speaks, then chips are available to install within the robotic figure so that it may download onto the doll and speak that language as well.

To continue, the dimensions of our toy are based off of the measurement of the Modern Era American Doll, which you can see below in appendix A [5]. The height of our toy measures out to be 18" (1' 6") [5]. The neck width of our toy measures out to be 1 3/4" [5]. The shoulder width of our toy measures out to be 4 3/8" - 4 3/4" [5]. The front mid armhole of our toy measures out to be 4 1/2" - 4 3/4" [5]. The chest of our toy measures out to be 10 1/2" - 11 5/8" [5]. The waist of our toy measures out to be 10 3/8" - 10 7/8" [5]. The hips (at the fullest part) of our toy measures out to be 12" - 12 3/8" [5].



### MEASUREMENT SHEET



© 2014 Liberty Jane Clothing

**Fit Notes:** This doll clothes sewing pattern has been designed to fit an 18-inch doll with these specific measurements. If you have a doll with similar measurements, use this chart to see where to make adjustments to achieve the perfect fit.

**DOLL BRAND:** Modern Era American Girl\*

Height: 18"

<b>A</b>	Neck Width	1 3/4"
<b>B</b>	Shoulder Width	4 3/8" - 4 3/4"
<b>C</b>	Front mid armhole	4 1/2" - 4 3/4"
<b>D</b>	Chest	10 1/2" - 11 5/8"
<b>1</b>	Waist position from HPS	4 1/4"
<b>E</b>	Waist	10 3/8" - 10 7/8"
<b>F</b>	Hips (at fullest part)	12" - 12 3/8"
<b>2</b>	Front Rise	3 5/8"
<b>3</b>	Back Rise	4 1/2"
<b>4</b>	Sleeve length (shoulder to elbow)	3 1/2"
<b>5</b>	Sleeve length (shoulder to wrist)	5 5/8"
<b>G</b>	Bicep	4"
<b>H</b>	Forearm	4 1/8"
<b>I</b>	Wrist	3 3/8"
<b>J</b>	Hand width (at widest part)	4 1/4"
<b>K</b>	Thigh	5 3/4"
<b>L</b>	Caif	5 1/4"
<b>M</b>	Ankle	4 1/8"
<b>6</b>	Inseam	6 1/2"
<b>7</b>	Outseam	9 1/4"

\*Note: We measured five different modern-era AG dolls. Where there was a significant variation between dolls, we noted the range of sizes we encountered.

**Appendix A:** Dimension of world ambassador dolls.

The bicep of our toy measures out to be 4" [5]. The forearm of our toy measures out to be 4 1/8" [5]. The wrist of our toy measures out to be 3 3/8" [5]. The hand width (at the widest part) of our toy measures out to be 4 1/4" [5]. The thigh of our toy measures out to be 5 3/4" [5]. The calf of our toy measures out to be 5 1/4" [5]. The ankle of our toy measures out to be 4 1/8" [5]. Finally, the screen on the chest of our toy measures out to be 3" by 3".

### The contribution of world ambassador dolls to linguistic development

The function of our toy is to foster linguistic development in order to help children learn their native language as well as a foreign language as well as increase their vocabulary quicker. Our toy fosters linguistic development by carrying out a sequence in which it speaks as well as displays a specific word within English as well as within a foreign language. The way that our toy works is that it will speak a specific word within English first, say the word in a foreign language next, and then repeat the word once again in English. For instance, the Mexican robotic figure may say "ball" within English first, say "pelota" next as it is the Spanish word for "ball," and then repeat "ball" once again within English. While doing this, the screen on the chest of our toy will show the spelling of the specific word within English and within the foreign language as well as its' meaning by showing a simple picture.

However, there will be multiple variations of the meaning of the word that will be shown. For example, when the Mexican robotic figure is saying "ball" both with English and Spanish, its' screen will be showing the spelling for ball and pelota as well as many simple images of different types of balls, such as a beach ball, a basketball, and a regular bouncy ball. According to the Association for Psychological Science [6], toddlers who played with a broader variety of objects as an example for a word were able to learn words twice as fast than toddlers who played with similar objects. In addition to this, this has been found to combat "shape bias" as children who played with a broader variety of objects, such as bowls with different features, materials, and size [6]. "Shape bias," which is not noticed until later on, is attention to shape as the most distinguishing feature when learning the names of objects [6]. Finally, in order to ensure that a child learns and/or is able to say the word correctly and properly in the foreign language, our toy requires the child to repeat the word at the end of its' sequence so that it may move on to performing the sequence for the next word. If a child says the foreign word correctly, then a tune will play while an animated version of the robotic figure will do a dance on the screen. If a child is unable to say the foreign word correctly after three tries, then the sequence for the same foreign word will repeat so that they can try again.

Thus, this toy targets a population of young children of both genders, females and males, ranging from the ages of 3-years-old and older from all types of ethnic, racial, and cultural backgrounds. Therefore, our toy enhances certain aspects of linguistic development by teaching children the phonology and semantics of a foreign language. It accomplishes this through stating the word in English before and after the particular word is spoken in the foreign language. And so, our toy enhances phonology by teaching children a foreign language's sound patterns and how they should be combined according to particular rules ([1], p. 192; [3], p. 257). Also, our toy enhances semantics by teaching children a foreign language's system of meaning and expressing meaning according to particular rules ([1], p. 192; [3], p. 258).

Due to this, our toy could be proved helpful for linguistic development, because it helps children improve the phonology and semantics of their vocabulary within English as well as within the foreign language they are learning. In addition to this, not only does this toy help children expand their vocabulary, but it also helps children learn a foreign language in addition to their primary and/or native language. Our toy does fill a void within the toy market as it teaches children words within English and foreign languages efficiently through the use of auditory, visual, and kinesthetic learning styles. This is a huge advantage as this appeals to all types of preferred learning styles, and so no child would struggle more than another as they all are able to learn in the manner most comfortable for them. Furthermore, children who speak more than one language benefit cognitively as they tend to have more linguistic tools available to them for thinking as well as prevent them from experiencing cognitive decline later on in life ([3], p. 264). In addition to this, children that are bilingual (or multilingual) tend to be more creative and flexible when it comes to problem-solving ([3], p. 264).

Moreover, the toy is an improvement over existing models already on the market, because it offers children to learn from a variety of foreign languages in a way that it is easy to understand. Majority of the other toys currently offered within the toy market do not offer children the ability to learn French or German in such a simple, interactive manner. To continue, in regards to marketing, Benson [7] explains that boys tend to be greatly influenced by particular by the gendered aspects of advertisements on the television. In fact, boys tend

to avoid playing with a toy if they saw an advertisement in which only girls were playing with that particular toy, even if they were given a chance to play with that toy [7]. Due to this, any and all advertisements, especially television advertising, regarding our toy would depict both boys and girls playing with it in order to encourage both boys and girls to want their parents to purchase it for them to play with. It seems that television advertising would be particularly best, especially on cartoon and/or children channels during daytime hours, such as Disney and Nickelodeon.

Furthermore, in regards to bias, there is only one aspect of our toy that is associated with bias. There is no bias at all related to culture or gender as our toy represents both genders as well as individuals from different ethnic, racial, and cultural backgrounds. However, there is bias related to abilities/disabilities within our toy. Despite the fact that our toy can speak as well as display words, their meanings, and pictures, it does not display what a word would be in sign language. Therefore, the bias associated with our toy is that it does not display sign language for deaf children to learn and acquire. Due to this, the toy could be modified in order to meet the needs of deaf children that are learning and/or using sign language by displaying English words and words from a foreign language within sign language. To continue, a limitation of this toy is that it has neither been created nor tested in order to determine whether it's hypothetical benefits are proven to be factual or not. Therefore, creation and testing of a prototype can help begin the process in gaining insight as to whether or not this toy would prove to be beneficial, and thus deserves the investment to be further improved and manufactured.

### Conclusion

Overall, our toy will benefit children immensely in regards to their language development as our toy will help them to begin to learn and develop language skills before they start school. Also, the more fun that they have while learning, then they better they will preserve what they have learned and be encouraged to continue playing and/or learning [4]. Not only will our toy help children learn a foreign language, but it will help improve their phonology and semantics both within English and within the foreign language that they are learning. In addition to this, our toy will help children become bilingual, and thus become more creative and flexible in regards to problem-solving due to having more linguistic tools available to use for thinking ([3], p. 264). In conclusion, our toy will help children develop and improve their language skills as well as expand their vocabulary.

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