

Oral Language Sample and Analysis
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Assessment of Language Minority Students
May 2005

Student Background Information

Ana is a nine-year old student in my 3rd grade general education classroom. She has been in my classroom all year and moved into our district in the middle of last year. She currently receives half an hour of ESL services a day. Ana's parents are from Mexico, however, they came to the United States before she was born. Ana has lived in the United States all of her life. At home, Spanish is the main language spoken. She speaks Spanish with her mother, father and 5th grade sister. As for Ana's educational background, she has been in mostly bilingual education classes. Until last year, Ana was going to school in Illinois. She was in bilingual classrooms for preschool, kindergarten, first grade, and half of second grade. In these classrooms, Ana learned to read and write in Spanish. When she moved to our district in the middle of her second grade year she was placed in a transitional classroom that was taught in English. At the end of last year, her LAS scores were reviewed, and Ana was placed in a mainstream third grade classroom. Ana has been in this class all year, and is doing well academically. Her ESL instruction each day is vocabulary based because she still lacks English language vocabulary skills.

Rationale or Purpose of the Assessment

The purpose of the oral language sample was to assess Ana's continuing progress in the areas of comprehension, fluency, vocabulary, pronunciation, and grammar. The oral language sample will also be used to help assess what level ESL program Ana will be placed in for her fourth grade year.

Assessment Situation

The week before the oral language assessment, the entire class was working on a story called Lon Po Po during reading. This story is a the Chinese version of Little Red Riding Hood. We had read and discussed the story extensively the week prior to the assessment. Ana agreed to come in during her lunch recess to help me complete the oral language assessment. This was a one-on-one assessment in my classroom when the other students were outside at recess. To ease Ana's nervousness, I began with a simple conversation. I explained to her what we would be doing in the next half hour and told her that I would be taping the conversation. However, I did not start taping until after I asked Ana about her family and previous school. We also talked a little bit about the story Lon Po Po, and I asked her if she felt comfortable talking about it. She said that she remembered the story and she was excited to tell me about it. I then did a "test run" with the tape

recorder. We taped a little part of a conversation and then I played it back so Ana would feel more comfortable talking while the tape recorder was on. She then began the story retelling. About half way through the retelling, Ana was a bit distracted when a few of my students were making noise in the hallway while returning the lunch bucket. After the students moved on she was again completely focused.

Explanation of the Assessment Measure

Ana would be asked to retell the story Lon Po Po. After the transcription of the retelling was completed the SOLOM Observation Matrix was used to rate Ana's comprehension, fluency, vocabulary, pronunciation, and grammar. I used this rubric in order to see what level Ana is at in the academic domain.

Copy of the Assessment Measure and Prompts

See attached SOLOM rubric.

See attached copy of the story Lon Po Po.

The following prompt was given to Ana before the retelling of the story:

"Tell me everything you know about Lon Po Po from the beginning to the end."

After Ana was done retelling the story, I asked Ana a few questions to help guide her retelling. The questions were not thought of beforehand, but were based on where Ana was in her retelling. The questions and statements can be seen in the transcription.

Transcription of the Oral Language Sample

Teacher:

Go ahead and tell me everything you remember from Lon Po Po from the beginning to the end.

Student:

Once ago there was a mom and three girls---and--um---her mom was going to visit her grandma because it was her birthday and the mom left the girl—the three girls-um-at home----at home---at home. And told them to be safe and lock the door so nothing would happen to them and a woof suddenly saw the the mom-um-go to the grandma's house and he thought that he was going to go to the girls because the three girls because um their mom wasn't there. So he dressed up as the grandma and ---- he he knocked at the door and the girls um the woof told them that he was that he was the w—the grandma and the the smaller three, two girls in the story they though it was their grandma and they—they—they—opened the door. The and then the woof turned off the candles----- and -----and because he didn't want to to them to see he didn't want the girls to see his face how it was ---so---it was time to go to sleep. -----And----they went to the bed and one---the biggest sister said that—um—why was he so rough---and--- he said because he was gonna make them shoes and -----more stuff so they could wear—and-----then the girl the biggest girl recognized that it was a woof and----a woof----and so she was asking more questions a she told them she told the woof that has she eaten gingko nuts. And then she started saying that the gingko nuts were—um---on—on the tree outside and then she the woof said that she couldn't climb the tree----so he couldn't get the gingko nuts,

so the three girls said that they were gonna get the ginkgo nuts for him. And he was waiting and waiting until they didn't come and----- he he was saying that---he was saying that that that when were they gonna bring the ginkgo nuts down and then he went outside because he was tired of asking the girls and then the girls were up in the tree and they were saying that-----um---that if he wanted ginkgo nuts then he needed to climb the tree---and so then the biggest girl had an idea that there was a basket and and some rope behind it and she said that just pass me the rope and I would I would pull you up. And in the first time she was just went to the middle of the tree and then let him um go down and then she at the second time he/she said I'm sorry I couldn't get it---and as the she at the second time she put she-----she pushed more up and she was almost close and then he she dropped him down---and---um-----and he cracked his head and then again he tried and she went more upper and and-----and-----

Teacher:

Who helped her pull him up that time?

Student:

Um.....the three girls.

Teacher:

All three girls.

Student:

And-----and they were were all close to the tree and and the they dropped him down and he hit hard on a rock and he he he was dead, but his heart, he he wasn't dead, his heart was broken too and----then they looked at the woof and saw that he was dead and-----he was dead-----and then at that time the mom was coming to the house again. And-----and-----she went the mom came to the house back again—um—and—then the girls told told the mom all about what happened and she was scared-----

Teacher:

But she was also very _____.

Student:

mad?

Teacher:

Um, but what, how did she feel about the older girl? The older girl was very _____.

Student:

brave

Teacher:

brave and _____.

Student:

strong?

Teacher:

Strong and clever. Don't you think?

Student:

Yeah.

Teacher:

She was able to think of all the things to do what?

Student:

Um.....

Teacher:

What did the oldest sister have to do to keep her and her sisters safe?

Student:

To---um---tell the woof about the gingko nuts.

Teacher:

Yes, she had to try and trick him, right?

Student:

Uh-huh.

Teacher:

Do you think the mom was also very proud of her daughters?

Student:

Yeah.

Teacher:

She was proud because the girls were able to _____.

Student:

Get the um to be be safe.

Teacher:

What was your favorite part of the story?

Student:

When-----um-----when they talked about the gingko nuts and that he wanted to go up but that he he um got tired of ----- saying when are they coming down with the gingko nuts.

Standards of Performance

Student Oral Language Observation Matrix (SOLOM rubric)

Actual Scores on this Assessment Measure

Comprehension: 4

Fluency: 4

Vocabulary: 4

Pronunciation: 5

Grammar: 4

Other Related Assessments

The LAS test was administered to Ana at the end of her second grade year. Her scores from last year are as follows:

Oral: 5 Reading: 3 Writing: 3

This shows us that Ana was at the highest level in all areas.

Analysis

Comprehension: Level 4

Ana understood that she was to retell the story Lon Po Po from our reading series. I gave Ana a 4 because towards the end of the retelling, I had to repeat a few of the questions in order to help Ana come up with the correct answer. I had to rephrase some of the questions in order for her to comprehend exactly what I was asking.

Fluency: Level 4

I gave Ana a 4 in this area because she did have some hesitations in her speaking when searching for the correct words to use, but they did not take away from the meaning of the story. Ana also repeated a few of her thoughts throughout the retelling. I feel that this was happening for a combination of two reasons. One reason is that Ana was searching for the correct words to use and I feel another reason for this was because she was still a little nervous in this situation.

Vocabulary: Level 4

Once again, I rated Ana at a 4. We had been discussing this story for a week and had gone over the vocabulary needed to understand the story. Due to the fact that these words may not be in Ana's every day language, she may have had some trouble recalling which words she needed to use in the retelling. She used words such as "stuff and things" in order to replace more specific vocabulary words. She is still a little behind native English speakers when it comes to her vocabulary skills.

Pronunciation: 5

I rated Ana at a 5 because her tone and pitch were close to a native language speaker. She does not have a noticeable accent. One word that she did mispronounce was "wolf"; she always said "woof". I have noticed in native speakers that they also have trouble pronouncing the "lf" at the end of words, so I did not mark Ana down for this mistake.

Grammar: 4

Ana had some difficulty with differentiating between masculine and feminine pronouns. Due to the fact that she had used the proper noun directly before the pronoun, it was still easy to understand her meaning. She also did a lot of self-correcting when she was using pronouns. One other grammatical error that Ana consistently made was using the word “gonna” rather than “going to”. I find that most native speakers tend to slur these two words together when speaking.

Evaluation

Ana was able to completely retell the story of Lon Po Po. She was able to speak in coherent sentences and any native speaker would be able to understand what she was trying to say. Her score on the SOLOM would average out to be an overall 4. She sometimes struggles for the correct vocabulary words and has some trouble with pronoun usage. She was able to use many details to describe the entire story. She did have some hesitations in her story, but it was still well done.

Recommendations for Instruction

Based on this oral language assessment, I would recommend that Ana be placed in a classroom that reinforces vocabulary skills, especially in the content areas. Strategies such as the Frayer Model could be used to help Ana put the definition of vocabulary words in her own words. If she were allowed to do this, and come up with examples of the words then she would have a better chance of remembering the words. Also, it is important to use strategies such as “round robin” or “think-pair-share” in the classroom. Ana would benefit from these strategies because she would be required to use her oral language in answering questions in the classroom. If these types of strategies are not used, Ana could get in the habit of letting other students answer questions for her and she would not be able to use her oral language in the classroom. “Word sorts” and “Connect Twos” can also be very beneficial to Ana. These activities will allow her to see the different vocabulary words in different groups and allow her to verbalize the meaning of the words and why she feels they are connected. I feel that with these strategies in place, Ana will succeed in her fourth grade class and her oral language will continue to improve.