Exploring Formative Reading Assessments from a Biliteracy Lens
CABE
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Session Overview
The importance of oral language in learning to read
Language approximations in English reading
Language approximations in biliterate students
Practical applications in Dual Language settings

Clay’s Research
Clay’s studies of oral language revealed that control of sentence structure is very important in early stages of learning to read. When teachers of early readers choose texts that are close to a child's oral language, the child can anticipate and self-monitor using what he or she knows about language.

From oral language, children learn to anticipate...

- words
- phrases
- sentences
- paragraphs or episodes of stories
- story structure

The importance of anticipating structures at the word, phrase, paragraph, sentence and story level...

“children are unable to anticipate what may happen next in the sentences of their reading texts.”

Clay’s, Biks and Gutches, page 8, 2007

All readers anticipate up-and-coming text, and therefore children who do not control some of the simple rules of grammar (for using verbs, plurals, and possessives in their speech) will be slower to solve these simple problems in their reading and in their own attempts to write.
Many Sources of Information

Sources of Information

- Sense, Meaning: Does it make sense?
- Visual Clues: Does that look right?
- Structure/Sound: What can you hear?
- Structure/Grammar: Can we say it that way?


Sources of Information in Reading

Meaning/Significado

Structure/Estructura

Visual/Visual

Reading

Oral Language Development

“I am encouraging teachers to understand that learning in one language area enriches the potential for learning in the other areas. Therefore, if we plan instruction that links oral language and literacy learning (writing and reading) from the start--so that writing and reading and oral language processing move forward together, linked and patterned, from the start--that instruction will be more powerful.”

Clay, Becoming Literate, 1991

“Language is a child’s most powerful learning tool. Within all of the instructional contexts that are part of a comprehensive language and literacy curriculum, learning is mediated by oral language.”

Fountas & Pinnell (2011)

The Triangulation of Processing Systems

Oral Language

Syntax

Reading

Writing

Interpretative and Productive Language Acquisition

Reading

Writing

Listening

Speaking

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ANALYZING RUNNING RECORDS FROM A BILITERACY LENS: LANGUAGE RELATED APPROXIMATIONS

The Problem to Solve ...

- How does a Spanish-speaking student’s language influence their English reading?

All readers anticipate up-and-coming text, and therefore children who do not control some of the simple rules of grammar (for using verbs, plurals, and possessives in their speech) will be slower to solve these simple problems in their reading and in their own attempts to write.

Clay, Biks and Gutches, 2007, p. 8

When a child says ‘bleeded’, ‘builded’, and ‘singed’, every bit of every word has been learned, including the past tense suffix –ed. The very existence of the errors comes from a process of learning that is, as yet, incomplete: the mastery of the irregular forms ‘bled’ and ‘sang’.

Pinker, 1999, p. 233

Language Related (LR) Approximations

- LR approximations are attributable to the reader’s language—the way they speak, the language structures they use, the vocabulary they know—and how similar or different their language is from book language
- LR approximations differ from errors due to difficulty with interpreting print
- This is the first study to look at LR approximations for ELs

Language Related Approximations

- 95% of ELs’ running records contained LR approximations
- 54% of all the “errors” ELs made were LR approximations
- 5 types of approximations comprised 93% of all the LR approximations ELs made
  1. Tolds
  2. Verbs ...
LR Approximation 1: Teacher Tells

- Most tells (2/3) due to unknown vocabulary
  - E.g.: sea, drawer, parrots, naughty, island
  - Multiple meaning words (e.g.: pool)
- Other tells (1/3) due to tricky language structures
  - Question words at the beginning of a sentence
  - The use of the conditional “would;”
  - Sight words such as “come” or “here” at the beginning of a sentence and page; and
  - The uncommon word “shall”

LR Approximation #2: Irregular Verbs

- Irregular past tense verbs tend to be difficult (Hakuta, 1976; Rumelhart & McClelland, 1985).
- Students may overgeneralize rules, saying “singed” and “swimmed” instead of “sang” and “swam” (Rumelhart & McClelland, 1985)
  - Young ELs tend to acquire irregular verbs that vary significantly from the root verb sooner than regular verbs that take inflectional endings or irregular verbs that are not very different (e.g., come & came) (Ionin & Waxler, 2002).
  - “was,” “were,” “am” and “is” differ from the verb “to be”
  - An EL may control “I am” and “he was” before “I came” and “he ran.”

LR Approximation #3: Inflectional Endings

- Regular verbs - In most cases, ELs left off the ending, usually the past tense -ed
  - Look/looked; like/liked; shout/shouted
- “-ing” is often acquired before “-ed” & “s” on verbs (Brown, 1973; Hakuta, 1976; Larsen-Freeman, 1975)
- Plurals – the -s ending was left off plurals
  - Flower/flowers,

LR Approximation #4: Contractions

- 3 stages to learning contractions
  - Affirmative term: do
  - Two words: do not, I am
  - Contraction: don’t, I’m
- Some students didn’t read contractions (it/it’s)
- Some students seemed to ignore the contraction (I will / I’ll)
- Read the contraction instead of 2 words (won’t/ will not)
- Read the opposite (can/can’t; will/won’t)

LR Approximation #5: Prepositions

- Prepositions tell: With whom? Where? When?
  - With my mom, at the park, in the morning
- ELs commonly mixed prepositions that shared visual information (in/on, at/to, for/of)
- Sometimes students monitored but were unable to fix it
- Prepositions can be very difficult for ELs
- The choice of preposition often seems arbitrary (e.g., why do we get on a plane or bus but in a car?)

Language Related Approximations

Types of LR Errors as a Percentage of Total LR Errors

- Tolds, 31%
- Constructions, 13%
- Verbs, 31%
- Prepositions, 12%
- Plural -s, 7%
- Other, 7%
“So if a running record is a result of careful observations it will tell us how close a child’s language predictions are to those of an author. Over time there is likely to be a slow change toward the standard dialect of the books ... I think a problem arises when you think of a running record as an assessment, with a score (% correct), or yielding a ‘pass’ on a book level.”

Clay, quoted in Rogers & Mosley Wetzel, 2014, p. 126-127

Syntactical Development
based on Clay’s Theory of Literacy Development

Change in grammar takes time, and I doubt if we know why. The child reads easy grammars well, reads more, and has more exposure to alternative ways of varying the construction of sentences. Talking and writing alone may not introduce enough exposure to literary variations of language use.

Clay, Taking, Reading and Writing, JRR, Spring, 2004, p. 13

Analyzing Running Records for Language

• Find a partner
• We are going to give you two running records
  – Person 1 analyze running record #1
  – Person 2 analyze running record #2
• Consider whether you think each student is an English learner and why
• Find another pair and discuss as a group of 4

Registroes progresivos en español y inglés en doble inmersión

The Problem to Solve ...

• Dual language classrooms have students from very diverse language backgrounds. Students are expected to all learn to read and write in the same language at approximately the same pace.
  – How does their language background influence their reading development in each language?
  – How can we differentiate our instruction based on their language backgrounds?

Close Observation of Bilingual Readers

• This analysis is about native Spanish speakers (NSS) and native English speakers (NES) in TWBI
  – Second grade students selected
  – All were at or above grade level in reading in both languages
• Goal: to learn what effective readers were doing well
### Complex Sentence Structure
- Long, complex, or unexpected sentences were difficult for both NSS & NES, in both languages
- All students stopped mid-sentence; probably interfered with comprehension

| Text: Summer begins on June 20th for people who live in the United States. June 20th is the longest day of the year for us. |
| Student (NES): “Summer begins on June 20th. For people who live in the United States June 20th is the longest day of the year. For us.” |
| Student (NES): “Summer begins on June 20th. For people who live in the United States. June 20th is the longest day of the year. For us.” |

### End Punctuation
- Both groups of students tended to skip ending punctuation, which interfered with comprehension

| Text: Todos los seres vivos crecen y cambian. La manera en que un ser vivo crece y cambia se llama ciclo de vida. |
| NSS: Todos los seres vivos crecen y cambian la manera en que un ser vivo crece y cambia se llama ciclo de vida. |

### Punctuation & Comprehension

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Text:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>¡Hola! –gritó Lía. ¡Buenísimo disparó!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>David –le dijo Andrina al entrenador ...</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student (NSS):</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>¡Hola! –gritó Lía. ¡Buenísimo disparó David le dijo Andrina al entrenador. (ignores change in speaker; inserts period)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Students often mixed types of approximations

| Text: A cat’s tongue has many uses. Because it is rough with little bumps on it, it can be used as a spoon. A cat drinks milk by lapping it. Because of the bumps, the milk stays on the tongue until the cat can swallow it. If you feel the top of a cat’s tongue, it is rough. This makes the tongue good for brushing the cat’s hair. (Leslie & Caldwell, p. 224) |
| Student (NES): “A cat’s tongue has many uses because it is rough with little bumps on it. It can be used as a spoon. A cat drinks milk by lapping it because of the bumps. The milk stays on the tongue until the cat can swallow it. If you feel the top of a cat’s tongue, it is rough. This makes the tongue good for brushing. The cat’s hair.” |

### Cognates
- Both groups of students used cognates when reading in their L2 but not in their L1
  - Students initially said that knowing one language didn’t help them read in the other.
  - Idea of cognates did not appear to be conscious
  - More in non-fiction than in fiction
  - Some identified when words sound alike, look like, or both
    - restaurante – “all you have to do it take off the ‘e’”
    - ilustraciones/illustrations – “sound different but are spelled the same”
  - existian/exit – “sound and are spelled a little the same”
- Cognates not always helpful; vocabulary often unknown in both L1 and L2

### Cognates
- Concept of cognates was unclear, not a known reading strategy
  - All identified “conceptual cognates”
  - Didn’t differentiate between real and conceptual cognates
    - E.g., para/para; size/tamaño; verde/green; casa/home, etc.
Verbs & Tenses

- Spanish verb conjugations were tricky for ALL students; impact on comprehension is unclear & probably case-by-case
  - Llevaron/llevaban
  - Pregunto/pregunta (NSS)
  - Juntarán/juntarán (NSS x2)
  - Preocupé/preocupa (NSS)

Verbs & Tenses

- Visually similar verbs caused confusion in Spanish for ALL students
  - Ver/venir; encontró/entró; participar/practicar
  - Ponerse/posponer (posponer was unknown vocab)

Verbs & Tenses

- English verbs were tricky for NSS
  - regular (look-ed, save-ed, pick-ed) and irregular (thought, come/came, etc.).

Agreement: Gender & Number

- Spanish gender and number agreement were tricky for NES & some NSS
  - “Los animales pueda ayudar”
  - “los crías” (NSS; 3x on one page)
- Impact on comprehension unclear ... probably not significant

Vocabulary

- Vocabulary was challenging in both languages all students; potential for significant impact on comprehension
  - Harder in the L2
  - Ex: posponer, cómoda (dresser), desbordarse, muletas, fracturado (cognate unknown), coiled, begged
    - Coiled – “coil-led” – Spanish breaking applied to English word
    - Cognates can’t help when they’re unknown!

Vocabulary

- Unknown vocab in Spanish was easily decoded; difficult for a teacher to tell when comprehension might be affected
A Surprising Finding

• Few instances of language interference occurred (using phonics or syntax of one language in another)
  – e.g., /h/ospital in Spanish; “the people is” (la gente)

Key Take-Aways

• What are 3 key take-aways from today’s session that apply to your setting or classroom.
• Write them down then share them with your elbow partner
• We welcome comments from the group after you’ve had a change to share

Selected Sources


THANK YOU!