

Sam Dowd

EDUC-998

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Language Sample Assignment

Child's Name: Patrick

Chronological Age: 4 years 3 months

Scene of the sample: This sample was taken at the child's home, playing outside while in conversation with the examiner and other family members (mother, father, brother, grandmother). The child was shy at first but became comfortable and conversed easily after a few minutes.

1. I'll go see Brian. (5)
2. Daddy likes to run. (5)
3. Can you rip these things off? (7)
4. I like being fresh. (5)
5. Let's do it to the driveway. (7)
6. Can we race? (3)
7. I like to slam dunk. (5)
8. I crushed him. (4)
9. Will you play? (3)
10. I am on no training wheels. (8)
11. Chris likes football. (4)
12. I hate cheese. (3)
13. Too high for me. (4)
14. It's a thunderbike. (4)
15. Take a run. (3)
16. I went down Meadows before. (6)
17. Oh, the guy running. (4)
18. Did we really start there? (5)
19. We went all the way to that circle. (8)
20. Mommy goes to football. (5)

100 total morphemes, 20 utterances: MLU= 5

An MLU of 5 would put Patrick in Stage V according to Brown.

Linguistic structures of Stage V that appear in Patrick's sample:

1. Patrick has begun to put simple sentences together.
2. In utterance 9 Patrick correctly inverted the auxiliary.
3. In utterance 1 & 14 Patrick correctly used a contractible copula: "I'll" & "It's".
4. Patrick correctly used third person regular conjugation in utterance 11 & 20: "Chris likes" & "Mommy goes".

Patrick's Age Appropriateness:

From my observation, Patrick, at 4 years and 3 months, appeared to be age appropriate when it comes to his expressive language. Certain utterances were even a little more advanced than Stage 5 like utterance 19: "We went all the way to that circle."

My Learnings and Reflections:

In studying Patrick's language sample I learned several important things. First, it was useful to get to know Brown's stages. To be able to understand the rate at which language tends to develop, and how to determine if a child is behind in language development is key. In Patrick's case there was no need to intervene with any special therapy, but I could see how a test like this would be very helpful in identifying potential issues. I am a very data-oriented person, so to be able to calculate Patrick's MLU's and compare them against a reliable benchmark was invaluable.

Second, In my line of work I do not generally come across speech issues or at least speech issues that can be treated. I work in a Higher Education IT department, so dealing with speech issues is not something we handle. Generally, any speech issues that could have been resolved are resolved long before one enters the workforce. However, I work with many foreign immigrants who don't speak English very well. As they learn the English language I see some of Brown's stages present. For example, I find that there is difficulty with English Language Learners to understand contractible and uncontractible copula. Where that is fairly intuitive, even second nature for me, some of my colleagues from India, Pakistan, or China have difficulty with understanding what to contract and when not to contract copulas. By understanding Brown's stages I can identify where they are in their language learning and either help them, or at least be more understanding of their situation and struggle.

Third, and finally, I found the whole process by which Brown developed this system to be very interesting. I think this type of speech measurement is so important in today's society because it is imperative that speech difficulties be identified and treated as early as possible. The longer a student suffers with a language deficiency the more their brain begins to accept it as correct. Therefore early intervention is necessary, and that is exactly what Brown is trying to do here. His study of where children should be at various ages, and identifying the particular stages with measurable criteria is critical to early intervention and remediation. The stages, along with the MLU test make it easier to identify and begin to treat language difficulties.