

# Bilingual Spanish/English Unique Story Databases

Database	Context (Subgroup)	Age Range	Grade in School	# Samples	Location	SI, NSS, ESS
Bilingual Spanish/English Unique Story	Nar (OFTM)	5;0 – 9;7	K, 1, 2, 3	475	TX & CA	SI, NSS

## Participants

The Bilingual English Unique Story and Bilingual Spanish Unique Story databases consist of English and Spanish story **tell** (not retell) narratives from native Spanish-speaking bilingual (Spanish/English) children. These English language learners (ELLs) were drawn from public school ELL classrooms in urban Texas (Houston and Austin), border Texas (Brownsville), and urban California (Los Angeles). The children reflect the diverse socio-economic status of these areas. Age, grade, and gender data is available for all children, and mother's education is available for many.

## Additional Inclusion Criteria

1. The children were described as “typically developing” as determined by normal progress in school and the absence of special education services.
2. All children were within the following age ranges.

Grade	Age Range
K	5;0 – 6;9
1	6;0 – 7;9
2	7;0 – 8;9
3	8;0 – 9;9

3. All children were able to produce both English and Spanish narratives containing at least one complete and intelligible verbal utterance in the target language. Although the language samples may contain code-switched words (*English words in the Spanish samples or Spanish words in the English samples*), at least 80% of the words from each sample were in the target language.

## Elicitation Protocol

### 1. General Directions

This task is a story **tell** (not retell) using the picture book *One Frog Too Many* by Mercer Mayer and Marianna Mayer (1975). The protocol assumes that the child has had experience **retelling** at least one of the frog stories from the Bilingual Spanish/English Story Retell databases. This is important because the story is not modeled for the child in this protocol. The child is simply shown the pictures and then asked to tell the story.

The examiner silently looks through the book with the child. The child is then given the book and asked to tell the story. All instructions and prompts are given using the target language.

Ideally, you should first assess the child in his or her native language. However, we are clearly aware that for many speech-language pathologists, assessing the child in his native language will be impossible since the majority of clinicians do not speak a language other than English. This can also be the case for

clinicians who may be bilingual, but do not speak the native language of the client. Thus, we suggest that clinicians first assess the child in the language in which he or she is most comfortable. If the child's performance is below average compared to age and grade-matched peers, then elicit a second sample in the other language. You may elicit the second language sample shortly after the first sample, or you may prefer to wait several weeks in between.

## 2. Steps

- a. Sit next to the child at a table. The book *One Frog Too Many* should be on the table. The audio/video recorder should be checked and ready to be turned on.
- b. Look at the pictures in the book.

Directions to the child (Spanish sample):

Examiner: *Aquí tengo un libro que no tiene palabras. Vamos a mirar las fotos en este libro. Cuando terminemos, quiero que me diga el cuento en español. Okey? Vamos a mirar el primer libro. Este libro nos cuenta un cuento sobre un niño, un perro, y una rana.*

Directions to the child (English sample):

Examiner: *Here is a book that doesn't have any words. We are going to look at the pictures in this book together. When we finish, I want you to tell the story to me in English. Ok? Let's look at the book. This book tells a story about a boy, a dog, and a frog.*

You control the book while you silently look at each page together.

- c. Leave the book with the child and move away – either at an angle facing the child or across the table. Moving away from the child helps promote language and minimize pointing. Turn on the recorder and instruct the child to tell the story to you in the same language.

Directions to the child (Spanish sample):

Examiner: *Ahora, cuéntame lo que pasó en este cuento.*

Directions to the child (English sample):

Examiner: *Okay, now I would like you to tell me the story.*

Refer to the following section for a list of prompts which may be used while the child tells the story. Remember, all prompts should be in the target language.

- d. After the child finishes telling the story, turn off the recorder and thank the child for telling his/her story.
- e. Repeat these steps to elicit the sample in the other language. You may elicit the second language sample immediately after the first, or you may prefer to wait several weeks in between.

## 3. Prompts

Use minimal open-ended prompts when eliciting the samples. Using overly-specific questions or providing too much information to the child compromises the process of capturing the child's true language and ability level. Open-ended prompts *do not* provide the child with answers or vocabulary. They *do* encourage the child to try or they let the child know it is ok to move on if needed. Use open-ended prompts/questions as necessary.

- Use open-ended prompts when the child:
  - is not speaking
  - says “I don’t know.”, “Cómo se dice?”
  - starts listing (e.g., “boy”, “dog”, “jar”)
- Acceptable verbal prompts (*in the target language*) include:
 

<i>Tell me more.</i>	<i>Dime más.</i>
<i>Just do your best.</i>	<i>Haz lo mejor que puedas.</i>
<i>Tell me about that.</i>	<i>Dime sobre eso/esa.</i>
<i>You’re doing great.</i>	<i>Estás haciendolo muy bien.</i>
<i>I’d like to hear more about that.</i>	<i>Me gustaría oír más sobre eso/esa.</i>
<i>Tell me what you can.</i>	<i>Dime lo que puedas.</i>
<i>That sounds interesting.</i>	<i>Eso/Esa suena interesante.</i>
<i>What else?</i>	<i>¿Qué más?</i>
<i>Keep going.</i>	<i>Siguele. Dale.</i>
<i>Mhm. Uhhuh.</i>	
- Acceptable nonverbal prompts include:
  - Smiles and eye contact
  - Nods of affirmation and agreement
- Unacceptable prompts include:
 

<i>What is he doing?</i>	<i>¿Qué está haciendo (él)?</i>
<i>Where is he?</i>	<i>¿Dónde está (él)?</i>
Pointing at scenes in the book while prompting	
<i>What’s this?</i>	<i>¿Qué es esto?</i>
<i>What’s happening here?</i>	<i>¿Qué está pasando/ocurriendo aquí?</i>

Avoid asking the “wh” questions, who?, what?, when?, where? These often lead to obvious and limited responses/answers.

*What if the child code switches?*

If the child uses an occasional Spanish word in the English sample, just ignore it. However, if the child uses a lot of Spanish words or phrases, prompt the child with “*in English, please*” or “*tell it to me in English*” or “*tell me the story in English*”. Similarly, if the child uses a lot of English words in the Spanish sample, prompt the child with “*en Español, por favor*” or “*dimelo en Espanol*” or “*dime el cuento en Español*”. Direct the child to use the target language with minimal interruption of his or her story. But keep in mind that at least 80% of the words should be in the target language in order for the sample to be valid.

## Transcription Notes

The Spanish samples in the reference database were transcribed by fluent Spanish speakers. The English samples were transcribed by fluent English speakers.

Utterances were segmented into Modified Communication Units (MC-units) which were developed specifically for these samples to account for the pronoun-drop nature of the Spanish language.

The underscore was used for repetitious words or phrases within utterances. This prevented inflation of the MLU due to repetition used to provide emphasis, e.g., C dijeron|decir rana\_rana\_rana dónde estás|estar.

All transcripts have timing markers at the beginning and end of the sample. The initial marker indicates the child's first utterance. The final timing marker indicates the end of the child's narrative.

### Coding Notes

- [EO:word] marks overgeneralization errors.
- [EW: word] marks other word-level errors.
- [EU] marks utterance-level errors.
- [CS] is a word code attached to all code-switched words (Spanish words in English transcripts or English words in Spanish transcripts).
- [I] is a word code attached to all imitations of vocabulary provided by the examiner.

The following codes were created to mark Spanish-influenced English:

- [WO] is an utterance-level code signifying words or phrases within an utterance which are out of order in Standard English. The content (semantics) of the utterance is correct; however the word order is awkward, e.g., C And then fall down the dog and the boy [WO].
- [EW] marks an extraneous or unnecessary word in the utterance that, if omitted, would make the utterance syntactically correct, e.g., C And he shout/ed and[EW] to the frog. As a general rule, do not mark more than one extraneous word in an utterance; instead, mark the utterance using the [EU] code.
- [F] was placed at the end of each utterance lacking a stated subject as a result segmenting utterances using MC-units.

### Subordination Index (SI) and Narrative Scoring Scheme (NSS) Coding

SI and NSS coding were applied to all the samples in the Bilingual Spanish/English Story Retell reference databases.

SI is a measure of syntactic complexity which produces a ratio of the total number of clauses (main and subordinate clauses) to the number of C-units. A clause, whether it is main or subordinate, is a statement containing both a subject and a predicate. Grammatically, a subject is a noun phrase and a predicate is a verb phrase. Main clauses can stand by themselves. Subordinate clauses depend on the main clause to make sense. They are embedded within an utterance as noun, adjective or adverbial clauses.

NSS is an assessment tool developed to create a more objective narrative structure scoring system. It is based upon early work on story grammar analysis by Stein and Glenn, 1979, 1982. This scoring procedure combines many of the abstract categories of Story Grammar, adding features of cohesion, connecting events, rationale for characters' behavior and referencing. Each of the scoring categories has specific explicit examples to establish scoring criteria, reducing the abstractness of the story grammar categories.

### Acknowledgements

Language samples for the Bilingual Spanish/English Story Retell reference databases were collected and transcribed as part of the grants HD39521 "Oracy/Literacy Development of Spanish-speaking Children" and R305U010001 "Biological and Behavioral Variation in the Language Development of Spanish-speaking Children", funded by the NICHD and IES, David Francis, P.I., Aquiles Iglesias, Co-P.I., and Jon Miller, Co-P.I.

