Vocabulary Profiling of Oral and Written Discourse: An Assessment Tool for Working with ELLs in K – 12

Hetty Roessingh
University of Calgary

Introduction

The demographics of the school-going K-12 population is rapidly shifting in Canada and across North America generally (Goldenberg, 2008) to include increasing numbers of young arriving immigrants or the children of immigrants subsequently born in the new homeland. These youngsters are identified in the research literature as English language learners (ELLs) or Generation 1.5. They may speak another language at home, or English may be the only language they know – it being the only common language between their parents who might speak different first languages of their own. Increasingly, these children arrive in kindergarten with little, if any, developed English language proficiency, and may only be in the early stages of acquiring basic literacy concepts and skills that would be typical for a 5-year-old (Roessingh & Elgie, 2009).

The research community has only recently begun to pay attention to this profile of learner. There is an urgent need to focus research attention on the assessment of oral language development of young ELLs and to track their unfolding written discourse (Biemiller, 2004; Esquinca, Yaden, & Rueda, 2005; Goldenberg, 2008). This article describes and explains the use of an online tool

for vocabulary or lexical profiling and provides illustrative examples that may entice practitioners to begin using this tool for classroom planning, action research, and longitudinal tracking that can inform program planning and instructional priorities over time.

Further background information is provided so that the reader may have a rationale for considering vocabulary as the key variable for early detection and intervention for promoting reading comprehension and academic writing skills in upper elementary and beyond. A short discussion of the promises and pitfalls of oral and written language sample analysis (LSA) follows. Then the development of an online tool for vocabulary profiling is described and explained, and illustrative examples are provided. Implications for classroom instruction, particularly in the early literacy program and at flashpoints along the way are offered.

Background

It has been assumed by many parents, teachers and researchers that simple exposure to English on the playground, the TV, and the shops and through incidental interaction with native English-speaking (NS) youngsters, that ELLs will acquire sufficient basic interpersonal communication skills (BICS) to launch into early literacy. They may not be wrong. There is mounting research evidence that ELLs acquire enough oral language to develop basic literacy concepts and skills with relative ease and within a short period of time, even outperforming their NS peers by the end of grade 2 (Lesaux & Siegel, 2003; D'Anguilli, Siegel, & Maggi, 2004; Kelly, Gomez-Bellenge, Chen, & Schulz, 2008; Roessingh, 2008). What is not as readily recognized is that these early gains and apparent strengths fade or "wash out," often by grade 4 (Geva & Verhoeven, 2000; Biemiller, 2003; Senechal, Ouellette, &

Rodney, 2006). Long term academic achievement depends on reading comprehension based on much more than BICS level vocabulary and decoding skills associated with "learning to read." Cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP) builds on a strong foundation of vocabulary knowledge that is built gradually, over time and involves the ability for children to "read to learn" independently. Scarborough (1998) notes that developed vocabulary size in kindergarten is an effective predictor of reading comprehension in the middle elementary years. Cunningham and Stanovich's (1997) work finds that orally tested vocabulary at the end of first grade is a significant predictor of reading comprehension 10 years later. Biemiller (2003) extends these findings to make the link between reading comprehension and long term academic success. He suggests that early language delays are frequent predictors of reading comprehension that is lower than anticipated for a particular age or grade level, and this points to lesser academic achievement. It would seem that gaining insights into children's vocabulary knowledge and use from an early stage would provide direction for early and ongoing intervention.

Talkativeness – often measured by way of total number of words (TNW) and simple measures of lexical diversity such as the number of different words (NDW) and the type-token ratio – TTR (i.e., the ratio of the number of different words to the total number of words produced) can mask an underlying deficit of *richness* of lexical output or the distribution of words from high frequency use to low. This is a key understanding that lies at the heart of lexical profiling and has been noted as a prime area for research, emerging from the efforts of others who use children's language samples as their data source (Biemiller, 2004; Hewitt, Hammer, Yont & Tomblin, 2005).

Language sample analysis (LSA) has long been recognized in the research literature as a useful strategy for gaining insights into preliterate children's vocabulary knowledge and use (Reich & Reich, 1977; Hopkins, 1979; Hadley, 1998; Fiestas & Pena, 2004; Hewitt, Hammer, Yont, & Tomblin, 2005). Tools for analyzing narrative data to date have taken into account quantitative measures such as the total number of words (TNW) in the sample, the number of different words (NDW) in the sample, the type-token ratio (TTR) and the mean length utterance. The research findings emerging from the use of these analytic measures reflect mixed and contradictory results (Hewiit, Hammer, Yont, & Tomblin, 2004), with NDW showing the most promise as a means for measuring lexical development in the preschool years and beyond (Watkins & Kelly,1995; Uccelli & Paez, 2007). Thus, while LSA is widely supported as a strategy for gleaning insights into the oral productivity of pre-literate children, challenges remain in identifying other measures of lexical diversity that might offer additional insights in LSA. A measure of lexical richness or the distribution of language use from high frequency to low frequency would be a candidate measure. This would produce a profile of children's language use that would establish a baseline, and could be tracked over time to note the changing shape of the profile as children's language develops to reflect vocabulary choices of lower frequency, yet greater variety (e.g., moving from the word "mad" to words such as "angry" and "furious"). Children acquire hundreds of new words a month between the ages of 4 ½ and 6 ½ years. Lexical richness as a measure of lexical diversity may be sufficiently sensitive to be visible in the changing profile of a child in, perhaps, 3-month increments.

Advances in computational linguistics and software applications over the past few years have made it possible to develop an online tool that takes into account all of the variables discussed here: TNW, NDW, TTR, and perhaps most importantly, the distribution of the words used across 10 "bands" organized from high frequency to low, each consisting of 250 root words. The profiler tool is available online at www.lextutor.ca/vp/kids

Promises and pitfalls of language sample analysis: Brief review of the literature

LSA is a deceptively simple technique for generating data that can reveal many features of children's oral language production specifically related to vocabulary knowledge and use. Essentially, generating a language sample can be as simple as taping the conversations of children. Such an approach respects many of the tenets of good data collection for youngsters (McKay, 2006). Authentic language use in naturalistic contexts may be collected by way of a small nonintrusive recording device and subsequently transcribed and analyzed by the researcher. This technique is inexpensive, efficient, usually nonthreatening to the child, and requires no special training of research assistants. Indeed, this is a favored approach that has been taken by many researchers working in this area since Murphy et al.'s (1957) seminal study on the spontaneous speaking vocabulary of children in primary grades. However, it is crucial to recognize that generating a corpus of only naturally occurring communication exchanges does not necessarily elicit the child's optimal use of language available. The child's linguistic resources must be taxed or "stretched" by way of more challenging task demands if the goal is to glean an understanding of the nature of and relationship between the child's vocabulary

knowledge and use. Corson (1984) refers to this relationship as the *lexical bar*. He explains that language use denotes knowing the meaning of a word is knowing how to use it in original utterance.

Hadley (1998) emphasizes the importance of sampling a range of discourse types among children who may have specific language impairment (SLI). It is no different in the world of ELLs, where understanding the English language learning trajectories of young ELLs is the objective. Hadley describes three broad discourse types: 1) *conversational discourse* which can generally be understood as "chat," or, in the English as a second language literature, basic interpersonal communication skills (BICS); 2) *narrative discourse* which involves storytelling and personal recounts; and 3) *expository discourse* which is characterized as discourse that conveys factual or technical information. Expository discourse is reflective of more cognitively demanding uses of language including predicting, hypothesizing, inferring, and explaining.

It follows from this discussion that the tasks used to elicit representative samples of children's talk must align with the goals for the data collection. Hadley (1998) notes that as much as 82% of the research involving language sampling is limited to conversational discourse and may thus be missing the intended research goal of gleaning insights into the range of children's linguistic capabilities. *Raising the lexical bar* can be achieved by attending to the following questions in designing the elicitation task: Is the child's language authentic? spontaneous? constructivist and engaging? developmentally appropriate? culturally sensitive? cognitively challenging? contextualized? scaffolded? ecologically whole and extended (generates at least 200 - 400 words of discourse)? interesting? motivating and fun? (Senior, 2010). In

sum, the goal is to elicit enough extended talk (or written work, in the case of older children) that is not too adult directed or prompted, and that represents the child's optimal vocabulary that can truly be considered "his own."

The wordless picture book *A boy, a dog and a frog* (Mayer, 1967) or its sequel *Frog, where are you?* (Mayer, 1969) has been used in a plethora of research studies including the baseline study reported here by the author (Roessingh & Elgie, 2009), with a variety of research goals in mind (e.g., observing the development of story grammar) in a variety of different languages, as well as in bilingually developing children (Berman & Slobin, 1994; Strong, 1998; Gutierrez-Clellen et al., 2000; Fiestas & Pena, 2004; Uccelli & Paez, 2007). The book is comprised of 29 black and white sketches that tell the story of a young boy and his dog out to catch a frog. He is frustrated time and again as the frog eludes capture. The boy, upset and angry, goes home. The frog, actually wanting to befriend the boy, follows his footsteps to his home. The frog finds the boy in the bath tub with his dog. The frog jumps in and the three new friends are happy together at last.

In the section that follows the profiler tool is described and illustrative examples from the writer's baseline study are provided. Transcribed language samples can be submitted for analysis to the online tool following simple procedures and prompts from the website.

The vocabulary profiler for kids www.lextutor.ca/vp/kids and illustrative examples

There is general consensus in the research literature related to frequency, coverage percent, and cumulative percent for vocabulary use among 5 - 6 year old NS (Murphy, 1957; Hopkins,

1979; Moe, Hopkins, & Rush, 1982). These are displayed in Table 1 below.

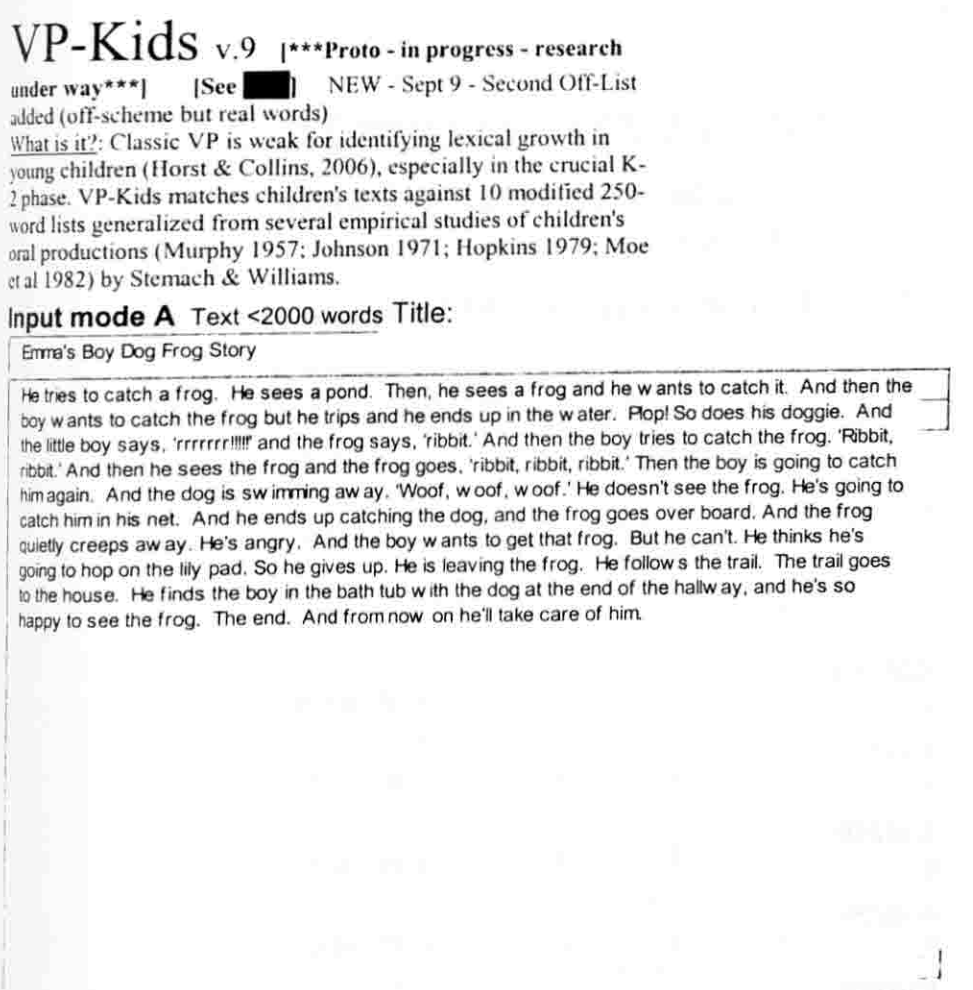
Table 1: Frequency, coverage and cumulative % of 5 - 6 year old children's oral vocabulary in root words

Frequency level in root words	Coverage %	Cumulative %
First 250 words:	78 – 80%	78 – 80% of words spoken
Second 250 words: (500 words)	5 – 7 %	85% of words spoken
Third 250 words: (750 words)	2 – 4 %	87 – 89% of words spoken
Fourth 250 words: (1000 words)	2 – 3 %	91 – 92% of words spoken
Next 1500 words: (2500 words)	Only 8%	100 % of words spoken

The tool developed for the purposes of profiling children's lexical output (Cobb & Roessingh, 2008) is based on the frequency lists generated from the foundational studies noted above, among others. The 2500 word families children are generally expected to know at age 5 – 6 are organized into 10 word bands of descending frequency. Words beyond the parameters of these 2500 word families are recorded as "off list - known" (e.g., "root"), meaning that they appear on the adult version of the tool (based on the British National Corpus), also available online. Words that are beyond the 2500 word family threshold and that do not appear on the adult version of the profiler tool are coded as "off list – unknown" (e.g., "woof," "ruff," "plop," "whoosh," "ribbit").

The data entry page of the tool presents the user with a window where the language sample may be inserted, as seen below:

Figure 1: vp kids data entry page (http://www.lextutor.ca/vp/kids/), with NS language sample inserted (female, aged 60 months)



VP-Kids v.9 [***Proto - in progress - research under way***] [See [redacted]] NEW - Sept 9 - Second Off-List added (off-scheme but real words)

What is it?: Classic VP is weak for identifying lexical growth in young children (Horst & Collins, 2006), especially in the crucial K-2 phase. VP-Kids matches children's texts against 10 modified 250-word lists generalized from several empirical studies of children's oral productions (Murphy 1957; Johnson 1971; Hopkins 1979; Moe et al 1982) by Stemach & Williams.

Input mode A Text <2000 words Title:

Emma's Boy Dog Frog Story

He tries to catch a frog. He sees a pond. Then, he sees a frog and he w ants to catch it. And then the boy w ants to catch the frog but he trips and he ends up in the w ater. Plop! So does his doggie. And the little boy says, 'rrrrrrrr!!!!!' and the frog says, 'ribbit.' And then the boy tries to catch the frog. 'Ribbit, ribbit.' And then he sees the frog and the frog goes, 'ribbit, ribbit, ribbit.' Then the boy is going to catch him again. And the dog is sw imming aw ay. 'Woof, w oof, w oof.' He doesn't see the frog. He's going to catch him in his net. And he ends up catching the dog, and the frog goes over board. And the frog quietly creeps aw ay. He's angry. And the boy w ants to get that frog. But he can't. He thinks he's going to hop on the lily pad. So he gives up. He is leaving the frog. He follow s the trail. The trail goes to the house. He finds the boy in the bath tub w ith the dog at the end of the hallw ay, and he's so happy to see the frog. The end. And from now on he'll take care of him.

***Boy-Dog-Frog* story [PDF]: S1 4yr-11mo | S2 5yr-6mo | S3 5yr-8mo | S4 6yr-4mo |** Submit_w indow

Exceptions: Words to recategorize as 1k (e.g. proper nouns). [Dbl-click in textarea items]
[↑ Shared by both input modes ↓]

None

VP concept - Laufer & Nation; lists - Stemach and Williams *Word Express: The first 2500 words of spoken English* (Novato, CA: Academic Therapy, 1988); Frog story - Mercer Mayer (NY: Dial, 1967)

Submitting this sample then generates a vocabulary profile, as illustrated in Figure 2.

Figure 2: Vocabulary profile of NS language sample (female, aged 60 months)

Freq. Level	Families	Types	Tokens	Coverage%	Cum%
Kid250 - 1:	43	50	171	79.53	79.53%
Kid250 - 2:	3	3	3	1.40	80.93%
Kid250 - 3:	5	5	5	2.33	83.26%
Kid250 - 4:	1	1	13	6.05	89.31%
Kid250 - 5:	4	4	4	1.86	91.17%
Kid250 - 6:	2	2	3	1.40	92.57%
Kid250 - 7:	1	1	1	0.47	93.04%
Kid250 -	2	2	2	0.93	93.97%

Words in text (tokens):	215
Different words (types):	74
Type-token ratio:	0.34
Tokens per type:	2.91
Pertaining to onlist only	
Tokens:	204
Types:	70
Families:	63

8:						Tokens per family: 3.24
Kid250 - 9:	1	1	1	0.47	94.44%	
Kid250 – 10:	1	1	1	0.47	94.91%	Types per family: 1.11
Off-List known:				0.00	94.91%	
Off-List unknown:	?	4	11	5.12	100.00%	
Total	63+?	74	215	100%	100%	

Figure 3, below, provides an example of a vocabulary profile of an ELL, female, also aged 60 months (5 years).

Figure 3: Vocabulary profile of an ELL sample, also 60 months

Freq. Level	Families	Types	Tokens	Coverage%	Cum%	
Kid250 - 1:	50	61	233	86.30	86.30%	Words in 270 Different 76 Type- 0.28 Tokens 3.55
Kid250 - 2:	7	7	11	4.07	90.37%	
Kid250 - 3:	3	3	6	2.22	92.59%	*Pertaining to* Tokens: 268
Kid250 - 4:	1	1	14	5.19	97.78%	
Kid250 - 5:	2	2	3	1.11	98.89%	
Kid250 - 6:	1	1	1	0.37	99.26%	
Kid250 - 7:				0.00	99.26%	

Kid250 - 8:				0.00	99.26%	Tokens:	268
						Types:	75
Kid250 - 9:				0.00	99.26%	Families:	64
Kid250 - 10:				0.00	99.26%	Tokens per family:	4.19
Off-List known:				0.00	99.26%	Types per family:	1.17
Off-List unknown:	?	1	2	0.74	100.00%		
Total	64+?	76	270	100%	100%		

Table 2: Comparison of the features of lexical diversity of the two samples.

Learner:	Words in text (total number of words, or tokens)	Different words	t-t ratio	% in band 1: first 250 words	'stretch' to band —
Native speaker	215	74	.34	79.53	10
ELL	270	76	.28	86.3	6

Table 2 illustrates that the ELL sample used more words (270 vs 215) and approximately the same number of different words (76 vs 74) as the NS. The t-t ratio indicates that the ELL repeated her 76 words approximately 4 times over in her story telling, whereas the NS only repeats each word 3 times. The ELL also over-whelmingly used the first 250 word band in telling the story (86.3%), and she stretches to just band 6, although the tipping

point in this sample is seen at band 3. Band 4 in her sample consisted of 14 repetitions of the word "frog." The NS sample used only 79.53% of her words from band 1 and "stretches" to band 10. Finally, it is important to note the point at which 95% vocabulary coverage is reached: For the NS this "stretch" is reached at band 9, while the ELL reaches this threshold at band 3 (discounting band 4 which consisted of 14 repetitions of the word "frog"). The tipping point for the ELL learner is at only 750 word families (i.e., band 3), a clear indicator of the linguistic vulnerability of this youngster as she moves into grade 1. The NS speaker sample is understood to represent a strong profile, mirroring the data presented in Table 1. Appendix 1 provides a transcript of the children's language samples.

ELLs use a variety of strategies to compensate for their lack of vocabulary for providing an efficient, precise and nuanced story telling. Repetition to convey amplification of feelings is one example. Thus, "The little boy is mad, mad, mad!" or "The little boy is really, really, really mad now!" as opposed to the NS speakers' explanation, "He's angry he didn't catch that frog!" "Mad" is a high frequency word found in Band 3; "angry" is found in Band 8, but the majority of NS have this word in their lexicon by age 5. Another example is the use of gestures and body language: "The little boy goes like this (frowns), and the dog goes like this (laughs)." Both "frown" and "laugh" are lower frequency words that are not yet in the oral productive vocabularies of many ELLs in the beginning stages of learning English, but they are common in the story renderings of NS. In the sample presented here, the child indicates, "He's going to here (points)." A third strategy ELL youngsters resort to involves the use of circumlocutions or using other words to describe the one word they

don't have: "Then he fall down the tree when running like this." The NS simply says, "He trips." Repetitions and circumlocutions account for the increased talkativeness and lengthier language samples of many ELLs.

Language samples and profiles can readily be collected over time, and tracked for their evolving shape in the direction of lessening the vocabulary gap. Indeed, as children age and become more aware of their language use, they can be encouraged to make independent use of the profiler tool to set personal goals for more precise, nuanced vocabulary use. But in the case of young learners, teachers must be sensitized to the needs of young ELLs and to plan instruction for direct and explicit vocabulary instruction.

Implications for the early literacy program k-2

The foregoing information leaves many questions unanswered and at the same time raises many more. It also points the way to where change can be initiated in the k-2 classrooms. It becomes clear that what NS youngsters *acquire* from staggering amounts of exposure to their first language (Hart & Risley, 2003) and the scaffolds provided by way of "motherese input" must be made directly and explicitly available to ELLs through instructed support so that they will *learn* the language, especially vocabulary associated with academic uses of language (Corson, 1997). In order to accelerate early language development, learning experiences and tasks must be carefully structured because language knowledge cannot be assumed for ELLs in the same manner that most classroom practitioners assume that NS know about 5000 words (2500 word families) upon their arrival in kindergarten. Lesson planning must reflect a language learning

focus to all the learning activity in the k-2 program. Language and early literacy concepts and skills need to be taught simultaneously in a balanced approach. Vocabulary should be contextualized by way of loosely organized thematic units, encouraging the children to make more natural connections among semantic categories of vocabulary (e.g., "Family Treasures" includes names of things, color, size, and shape words) and natural recycling and practice through careful task design. Mini-projects can be embedded within the structure of the theme unit; these present ideal opportunities for meaningful engagements with language learning (Roessingh, 2010). Interested readers are invited to visit Roessingh's dual language book website where the thematic overview, lesson plans, learning resources and the children's book gallery are available. See: http://homepages.ucalgary.ca/~hroessin

Secondly, families who speak another language at home need to be invited to engage with home literacy practices that can enhance the child's first language knowledge and use. A child's first language can provide a strong foundation for learning the second, but families often need to be reminded of this valuable resource. Telling true family stories, social remembering and reading to children in the first language are all ways that parents can contribute to growth in the first language. A striking finding in a recent study (Uccelli & Paez, 2007) undertaken with Spanish/English bilingual children suggests that "if children hear, engage and tell stories in Spanish with friends, family, or at school, the learned set of skills required to structure a story in Spanish could positively contribute to children's English narrative quality" (p. 234). In addition, parents can help to reinforce and extend the work their youngsters do at school. The school day is simply not long enough. Technology can be exploited for its motivational

value to engage children in their after school hours in learning English, even if parents are not highly proficient in English themselves. The dual language book project, mentioned above, provides a platform for making the connections between home and school (Roessingh, 2010). A note received by the author from one of the parents whose child participated in the dual language book project illustrates this point:

Dear Hetty,

I can see Alend's booklet. I am so sorry I could not make it to the school I was tight up all day. But I am very happy with the good work you have done with this unique booklet project online. Alend was reading his booklet yesterday and he was excited about his booklet.

Best regards,

Taher

Third, careful monitoring of language development is crucial. Research evidence to date suggests that language development will be a gradual and uneven process for these children, leaving them still two years behind, on average, by grade 6. However, with a more balanced approach to the early literacy program, it may be that accelerated learning will be possible for ELLs. Teachers need to be sensitive to children's readiness for "just right" input and the potential of fast mapping of new linguistic data. If a concept is already in place (e.g., "He fall down the tree when running like this"), it is critical that the teacher provides the precise word needed ("He trips"). Even one exposure is sometimes enough for the word to "set" in the child's lexicon. Data are needed to indicate what kinds of interventions are most likely to produce strong and robust language learning among these children. Goldenberg (2008) concludes from his survey of the literature that little is known

about "what works." Vaughn, Linan-Thompson, Polland-Durodola, Mathes and Hagan (2006) write: "There is little or no guidance for providing effective reading interventions for bilingual students at risk for reading problems" (p. 185).

Fourth, it is important that young ELLs be grouped heterogeneously, and as much as possible have opportunities for interacting with other children who are more competent users of English. Ideally, smaller class sizes and adult volunteers reading to the children and engaging them in small group work will provide more talk time for these children, and also offer more challenging language input that may not be available within the confines of their kindergarten class. "Next words to know" may be chosen from lower frequency bands of vocabulary (see "Lists" on the vpkids interface page, Figure 1) and strategically targeted for exposure and instruction.

Conclusion

Lexical profiling using online tools, though only in its infancy, offers opportunities to researchers and practitioners to glean detailed insights into children's vocabulary use. Parents and teachers are easily misled by these children's facility with basic interpersonal communication skills, their native-like pronunciation and their ease in developing early literacy concepts and skills associated with decoding (i.e., phonemic awareness, phonics). Too late, it is realized that these measures are not sufficient for making the shift from "learning to read" to "reading to learn" – a threshold that requires a critical mass of some 12,000-15,000 words (or approximately 5,000-7,000 word families) or approximately a grade 4 reading level (Biemiller, 2003).

Future directions include expanding the research potential of the vocabulary profiling tools to delineate benchmarks over time for each grade placement for excellent, proficient, satisfactory and limited language use. Of particular interest is the changing nature and the dynamism that might be visible in the profiles over time as children choose words from the lower frequency bands. Time series data would be most useful in modeling the trajectories of different learner profiles to distinguish patterns of language growth and, consequently, to design instructional interventions (Francis et al., 1996). The efficacy of these interventions must be evaluated for their potential to accelerate language development at identified flashpoints where children might have reached the critical mass required to move ahead quickly. Appendix 1 offers a list of writing prompts for k-12 that can elicit expository modes of writing.

Classroom practitioners and colleagues in all areas of research endeavor associated with children's language development are invited to consider the approach to LSA described here, and to experiment with the online tool developed for the purposes of profiling children's vocabulary. This would be an outstanding professional development endeavor, as well as research that can contribute to a school jurisdiction's overall ability to provide systematic programming for ELLs.

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Appendix 1: Children's language samples

NS youngster

A Boy, a dog and a frog story

He tries to catch a frog. He sees a pond. Then, he sees a frog and he wants to catch it. And then the boy wants to catch the frog but he trips and he ends up in the water. Plop! So does his doggie. And the little boy says, 'rrrrrrr!!!!!' and the frog says, 'ribbit.' And then the boy tries to catch the frog. 'Ribbit, ribbit.' And then he sees the frog and the frog goes, 'ribbit, ribbit, ribbit.' Then the boy is going to catch him again. And the dog is swimming away. 'Woof, woof, woof.' He doesn't see the frog. He's going to catch him in his net. And he ends up catching the dog, and the frog goes overboard. And the frog quietly creeps away. He's angry. And the boy wants to get that frog. But he can't. He thinks he's going to hop on the lily pad. So he gives up. He is leaving the frog. He follows the trail. The trail goes to the house. He finds the boy in the bath tub with the dog at the end of the hallway, and he's so happy to see the frog. The end. And from now on he'll take care of him.

ELL youngster

A Boy, a dog and a frog story

He wants to get a butterfly. A bucket. Net. Dog. He wants to come here and here he find a butterfly. Then he sees a frog and then he catch. He catch the frog. Then he fall down the tree when running like this. And then he came to the tree and bucket fall down and the boy falls. He do again like that and he fall in the water and the bucket. And then he took the bucket and he's sad. He want to catch the frog and he can't see anything. And he sees the dog and he sees the frog. He can't catch the frog, the frog is higher.

He didn't catch the frog. And he couldn't eat. Now he ... he is going. He hit the frog. He catch the dog and he throw him in the water. Frog says, 'Why you put him in the water?' and he's really scared. The boy says, 'Why you come here again?' The frog says, 'You can't eat me.' He took the dog and he's going somewhere. He's going to here, and he's going somewhere. A frog. He said, 'I want to find the boy.' Dog and boy make the shoeprints and the boy can't see what happen. Now the boy do that and the frog follow. He saw the two together and they're washing. And the frog see shoeprints. The frog said, 'How do you do that?' and he knows how to jump. And then he jump higher. And then all together come, and they are friends.

Appendix 2: Some prompts for eliciting expository modes of discourse

1. Why is it important to go to school?
2. Should physical education be an important part of the school day?
3. Why can you learn on field trips?
4. What can you learn from going to the zoo?
5. If you could change one thing to make the world a better place, what would it be?
6. What are the benefits of having a pet?
7. Describe a hobby or interest you have and why it is?
8. When is it okay to tell a lie?
9. Is it important to always tell the truth?
10. What can you do to help your community?
11. Is it possible to forgive people who hurt you?
12. What is the best way to say you are sorry?
13. What is the best way to control your temper?

14. What is the best way to solve your problems?
15. Should boys and girls go to school together or apart?
16. What are the most important characteristics in a teacher?
17. Why are computers useful?
18. Why is it important to study math?
19. What kinds of food are the most healthy?
20. What is the best way to spend the summer vacation?
21. Among all our possessions, we usually consider one or two objects to be very precious. Choose one possession that is very precious and write to describe the object and explain its meaning/significance to you.
22. People in Canada seem to have, collect and keep a lot of things. Choose one thing you have that is important to you, describe it and explain its importance to you.