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## **Bilingual Narrative Assessment: Evaluation of the Kindergarten Language Benchmark Assessment in Native Spanish-Speaking Children**

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Bilingual Narrative Assessment:  
Evaluation of the Kindergarten Language Benchmark Assessment in  
Native Spanish-Speaking Children

Rebecca Hunt

Eastern Illinois University

### **Abstract**

The purpose of the current study was to evaluate the effectiveness of the Kindergarten Language Benchmark Assessment (KLBA) (Preschern & Konikoff, 2013) in identifying at risk narrative abilities in English Language Learners (ELLs) whose primary language is Spanish, as well as in monolingual English speakers. In addition, the study compared the effectiveness of the KLBA scoring system with the established measure of high point analysis for Spanish ELLs, and examined the performance of English monolinguals on the same assessment. The KLBA was administered in September, and again in January. The children's narratives were scored using the KLBA measure, transcribed, and coded for elements and narrative pattern using high point analysis. Participants included nine children, three in a Spanish group and six in an English comparison group. Six of the nine participants, four English and two Spanish, passed the KLBA during both administrations. High point analysis results revealed that none of the participants in either group produced an age-appropriate narrative. The children who produced the least sophisticated narrative patterns failed the KLBA. Results suggested that the KLBA Narrative Story Retell Subtest effectively identified highly at-risk narratives, but did not consistently identify all at risk narratives. With further modification, the KLBA could be an effective screening tool for narrative language abilities in both monolingual and bilingual populations.

### **Acknowledgments**

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## Chapter 1

### Introduction

The Hispanic population in the United States (U.S.) has been steadily increasing since the 1980s. From 1980 to 2008, this population increased from 6.4% to 15.4%. This trend is expected to continue, with a projected 21% of the total U.S. population being Hispanic by 2025 (NCES, 2010). According to the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES, 2010), the number of Hispanic children in U.S. schools increased by as much as 38% in certain regions between 2000 and 2008. Approximately 23.1% of students attending American schools in 2010 were Hispanic (NCES, 2010). Also in 2010, approximately 7.2 million Hispanic children from elementary to high school did not speak English as their primary language (NCES, 2010). This increase in Hispanic population will mean that more bilingual children or English Language Learners (ELL) will be attending U.S. schools (Gildersleeve-Neumann, Kester, Davis, & Peña, 2008). These statistics suggest a growing need to understand bilingual language development.

One aspect of bilingual development that should be considered in language assessment is literacy and narratives. An oral narrative is a story consisting of at least two related independent clauses separated by a “temporal juncture” in which a past experience is retold (Labov & Waletzky, 1967). According to Labov and Waletzky (1967), a well-developed narrative will generally include orientation (e.g., setting and characters), complication or conflict, evaluation (e.g., describing the overall point of the story for the listener), resolution, and coda (e.g., transitioning to the present day, phrases such as “that’s all”).

Children’s narratives can be elicited in many ways. A child may be asked to retell a story found in a wordless picture book or one told by the examiner. Spontaneous narratives can also be elicited by asking a child to describe an event he or she has personally experienced (McCabe &



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Bliss, 2005). Narratives can also be analyzed in different manners (e.g., SALT analysis, high point analysis) and compared to developmental criteria in order to determine a child's narrative proficiency.

Typical narrative development must be understood in order to determine a child's level of proficiency or to identify the presence of a delay. Children begin to demonstrate the skills to provide consistent narratives around the age of 4-years (Miller, Andriacchi, & Nockerts, 2011). Upon reaching preschool age, typically developing children begin to utilize the past tense, include true or fictional characters, and understand the difference between types of narrative structures (e.g., personal, expository) (Shapiro & Hudson, 1991). A child may begin attempting to provide more complicated narratives, including such elements as an established plot and an initial reaction, by the age of 6-years (Shapiro & Hudson, 1991).

In order to accurately assess a bilingual child's narrative abilities, the examiner must be aware of cultural and linguistic differences between the child's primary language and the assessment language. There are many differences between narrative production in Spanish and English. For example, narrative instruction for children in Spanish speaking cultures emphasizes the importance of continuous conversational flow, while English American instruction focuses on the grammatical elements of storytelling (e.g., conflict, resolution) (McCabe & Bliss, 2005). There are also grammatical differences between languages, such as different verb forms, that are used to describe past events.

In the school setting, the Response to Intervention (RTI) approach is used to identify children who may be in need of early intervention for academic achievement (Fuchs & Fuchs, 2006). Using a tiered organization, children are observed and assessed over time. Each tier

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intensifies the intervention; if a child does not respond to the intervention, he may be recommended for more direct special services (Fuchs & Fuchs, 2006).

In order to accurately determine an oral language difference, delay, or disorder in bilingual children, oral narratives must be efficiently evaluated. The Kindergarten Language Benchmark Assessment (KLBA) is a recently developed screening tool, which includes a narrative story retell subtest. The current study investigated the effectiveness of the KLBA in identifying at risk narrative language skills in bilingual kindergarten children whose primary language was Spanish, and compared those bilingual children's narrative performances to a comparison group of monolingual English-speaking kindergarten children. In addition, the study examined how results of the KLBA compared to a more in-depth high point analysis of personal narrative.

## Chapter 2

### Review of Literature

#### Response to Intervention

The purpose of Response to Intervention (RTI) is to effectively identify at-risk children in schools and respond to observed deficits with evidence-based intervention (Fuchs & Fuchs, 2006). Within the first month of the school year, a student's academic performance is observed and evaluated. If a child is observed to be below a specific level predetermined by the school, he or she is identified as at-risk. Once identified, the child will be observed during general education over a short period of time, which is known as first tier instruction. At the end of this period, the child will again be assessed for improvement. If no improvement has been made, the child will receive more rigorous education in what is referred to as a second tier. Second tier instruction may be inside or outside of the classroom. After a determined amount of time, the child is again evaluated. If the child again demonstrates no improvement, he or she will be placed in a third tier, in which instruction is more intensive and may include a smaller group or one-on-one intervention outside of the classroom. Thus, as a child progresses through the tiers, the intervention becomes more rigorous in its frequency, the sessions become longer, and the number of students in a group decreases, giving children in the higher tiers more individual attention. Each higher tier also includes more specialized and qualified professionals providing the intervention (Fuchs & Fuchs, 2006).

RTI is a dynamic assessment process. Through continuous observations and tracking of progress, the professional decides whether adjustments need to be made in the instruction or intervention. This assessment also provides potential diagnostic information. RTI focuses intensely on reading deficits, particularly in early developing reading skills. This is because RTI

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was developed to be compatible with No Child Left Behind (2002), which focuses on the importance of reading and effectively distinguishing students who need more focused intervention (Fuchs & Fuchs, 2006).

### **Emergent Literacy and Narrative**

Oral language includes vocabulary and narrative skills, which are necessary precursors for reading (Uccelli & Paez, 2007). These skills, known as emergent literacy, start to form in early childhood and progress as a child observes and takes part in events related to literacy in a decontextualized social setting (Pence, 2007). There are five areas of emergent literacy, which, if fully developed, can lead to advanced reading abilities. These five areas include vocabulary knowledge, narrative abilities, phonological awareness, print knowledge, and literacy motivation (Pence, 2007).

Emergent literacy is imperative in both monolingual and bilingual communicative development, as the precursor to future reading skills. The basis for emergent literacy is decontextualized language, i.e., speaking about objects or events that are not immediately present or occurring in the moment. Narratives are, because they are decontextualized, an effective tool in the assessment of a child's emergent literacy and reading skills (Curenton & Lucas, 2007).

### **Narratives**

As defined by Labov and Waletzky (1967), an oral narrative is at least two independent clauses that are related or separated by a temporal juncture. Informally, a narrative can be described as the manner in which a past event is recounted by linking an arrangement of spoken clauses to the chronology of the actual event. Although not always identical in structure, narratives generally share a similar overarching form which includes orientation, complication, evaluation, resolution, and coda. Orientation includes elements such as the setting and characters,

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which help the listener to understand the context of the story to come. The complication is the conflict that presents an obstacle for the characters to overcome. Evaluation provides the listener with relevance; the speaker uses information that emphasizes the overall point of the story that may be inferred by the listener. An evaluative statement does this by providing an internal or emotional response from the character of the story. The resolution typically comes after the evaluation, in which the conflict is resolved. The coda may be added after the resolution, in which the speaker transitions to the present day by continuing the story into the current time (Labov & Waletzky, 1967).

According to Shapiro and Hudson (1991), a narrative at its most basic level includes a beginning and end, setting, character depiction, dialogue, and action. There are also several elements that are integral to narrative telling: goals, internal responses, obstacles, repairs, cohesion, and coherence. Goals are the end desires of the characters and are often grouped within internal responses, which are the characters' reactions to the conflict of the story. Obstacles are any conflicts that arise during the story. Repairs refer to the resolution of the narrative (Shapiro & Hudson, 1991). Coherence and cohesion are also important elements of a narrative, which are shaped by the knowledge and skill level of the speaker (Shapiro & Hudson, 1991). Coherence refers to the ability to convey every element of the narrative in a structured manner so that these elements are significantly related to each other. Cohesion refers to the linguistic reference devices used to connect the elements of the story, such as interclausal connectives (e.g., conjunctions). These devices of cohesion are an integral component in the narrative structure, as they serve as part of the temporal juncture connecting the two independent clauses.

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### **Eliciting and Assessing Narratives**

There are different methods for eliciting a narrative sample. The first method is asking the child to retell a story he or she has been told by the examiner. Another method is using a wordless picture book. The child is shown a series of pictures in a wordless book, and he or she is then asked to tell a story according to those pictures. A third method is a spontaneous narrative, in which the child is asked to recall a personal experience. McCabe and Bliss (2005) argue that the spontaneous narrative is the truest representation of a child's narrative and language abilities because the clinician has not provided any phrases or words for the child to use. The child must generate the narrative from his or her own experience and abilities.

Systematic Analysis of Language Transcripts (SALT) (Miller, Andriacchi, & Nockerts, 2011) is a software program used as a tool in the evaluation of elicited language samples. SALT includes a number of normative databases that can be used as a comparison. According to SALT analysis procedures, narrative elicitation must be in one of two forms: both the examiner and the child know the content of the sample, or the child knows the content while the examiner does not (Miller et al., 2011). When the clinician chooses the topic of the sample, he or she is able to follow specific vocabulary and content in more detail. When the child is completely responsible for generating the content, he or she may be motivated to use more specific vocabulary and extensive utterances. Miller et al. (2011) believe that an event narrative, which is description of a life experience, may be an effective type of narrative for analysis.

The materials used to elicit the narrative may influence event narratives. One study found that problem-based booklets (i.e., a series of related pictures forming stories) facilitated production of a more coherent narrative than a booklet without a problem. Shapiro and Hudson (1991) conducted a study in which two types of event booklets were used to elicit narrative

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samples from preschool and first grade children. When given the event-based booklet, the children did not generally include obstacles or repairs. Also, more dialogue and actions were used by children who viewed the event-based pictures and by children who were able to preview the pictures beforehand. This indicated that the children concentrated more on the action of the story and described the characters in fuller detail with an event-based story or a previewed story, as compared to a problem-based story. Although not all of the children in the study were able to provide a conflict and resolution element, they did create an interesting and entertaining narrative through descriptions, many of which were taken from real-life events experienced or observed by the children. In assessing the episodic components (e.g., goals) of the narrative samples, the first graders provided more goals than the preschoolers, but both age groups were able to explain internal responses of the characters in the problem-based story. This demonstrated that younger children were capable of providing an effective narrative, even though the structural elements were not yet developed.

In addition to the SALT databases, high point analysis may be used to assess personal narrative samples. High point analysis utilizes the categories laid out by Labov and Waletzki (1967), in addition to those defined by Shapiro and Hudson (1991). Expanding on this work, Peterson and McCabe (1983) explained that clauses within the narrative sample are separated into one of the six categories: abstract, complicating action, orientation, evaluation, resolution, and coda. The abstract is a short summary of the narrative as an introduction. A complicating action is any event arising within the story from its outset until reaching its climax, or high point. Orientation is the description of the story's setting (e.g., place, time, and characters). Evaluation is the explanation for telling the story, or the narrative's point or significance. Resolution is the event that follows the high point of the story, resolving the conflict. The coda is the story's

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conclusion, often connecting the story's key points together. A skilled speaker may bring the listener from the past and back to the present in the coda. Independent clauses (i.e., a clause consisting of a subject and a verb) may fall under any of the six categories, while dependent clauses (i.e., a clause consisting of either a subject or a verb) will always be orientation or evaluation. There are two manners in which the narrative may be organized: the sequential order in which the event happened, and the sequence of events as retold by the speaker. It is acceptable for the sequence of the story to deviate from the actual chronology of events in order to bring suspense to the story.

There are seven patterns of organization described in high point analysis: classic, ending-at-the-high-point, leap-frogging, chronological, impoverished, disoriented, and miscellaneous patterns. In a classic narrative pattern, high points are identified when the action of the narrative is suspended in order to place emphasis on the climax of the story (Labov & Waletzky, 1967). However, high points can be found in many sections of a narrative, depending on the organization the speaker has chosen to use in the storytelling. Another manner of narrative organization described by Peterson and McCabe (1983) is the ending-at-the-high-point. In this pattern, the high point is reached and emphasized, as in the classic pattern, but the story immediately ends. These two patterns are considered to be complex in nature; however, other patterns are categorized as simpler (i.e., the leap-frogging, the chronological, the impoverished, the disoriented, and the miscellaneous patterns).

The leap-frogging pattern occurs when a child skips from section to section in the story, leaving out important parts, making it difficult for the listener to understand what originally happened. In the chronological pattern, a simple description of chronological events is given, using only a simple a-b format (i.e., simply stating the events as they successively happened).



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The impoverished pattern may include the two consecutive clauses as required to formulate a narrative, but contain so little description that a subject matter or arrangement cannot be identified. The speaker will then continue to repeat these two ideas several times. The disoriented pattern occurs when the narrative structure is befuddled and confused to the point where the listener simply cannot comprehend the story. Any narrative sample that could potentially fit into one or more of these categories would be described as miscellaneous. Narratives that are completely fiction are also included in the miscellaneous category (Peterson & McCabe, 1983).

### **Typical Narrative Development**

According to Miller, Andriacchi, and Nockerts (2011), children accrue skills that are needed to begin engaging in conversation through the age of 4 years. Although narratives begin to take shape between the ages of 3 and 4 years, children's narratives are not typically consistent until the age of 4 (i.e., preschool). After this, a variety of narrative types begin to appear, manifesting in different forms, such as personal narratives, retelling of stories, and expository narratives. Preschoolers can start to use other structures (e.g., expositions) along with narratives, use the past tense, non-real or fictional characters, and traditional language used in the telling of fairy-tales (Shapiro & Hudson, 1991). Although not generally successful, children begin to make an effort to establish plot in narratives by the age of 6; they also start to describe a relevant setting, develop goals for characters, and provide initial action (Shapiro & Hudson, 1991).

Within high point analysis, the two-event structure should occur between the ages of 3 and 4-years, the leapfrog at 4, ending-at-high-point at 5 years, and classic at 6. The chronological structure may occur at all ages. The impoverished, disoriented, and miscellaneous structures do not occur at any particular age (McCabe & Rollins, 1994; Peterson & McCabe, 1983).

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Shapiro and Hudson (1991) created a four-level organizational system for describing the narratives elicited. The first level was composed of a simple story with action, orientation, or both. The second level consisted of the utilization of one episodic component, and the third level contained two. Level four consisted of the elements described in the first three levels. The results of the study indicated that the first graders were able to better organize the story than the preschoolers, as well as include more episodic components. However, the preschool group had the skill to use some of these components when the pictures in the event booklet were organized more sequentially. The study demonstrated that preschoolers had the ability to use the conflict and resolution structure in their narratives when given sequential pictures. In addition, they were able to provide inner thoughts and feelings of the characters, and provided the listener with the context of the story by offering a setting and character description.

### **Narrative Language in Bilingual Development**

Proficiency in both the native language (L1) and the second language (L2) may be difficult for the bilingual child, who is simultaneously attempting to learn two different languages. A bilingual child may also face challenges if he or she is not proficient in the primary language when the second language is being developed. In addition, linguistic or cultural differences might prove to be an obstacle for learning the second language. Cultural and linguistic differences must be identified before proper diagnoses of oral language deficits can be made. Grammatical differences can change the manner in which the same story is told in two different languages. A child's narrative may reflect his or her individual culture, rather than what is expected of a typical story told in American English (McCabe & Bliss, 2005). For example, mothers who are Spanish speakers tend to emphasize a continued and fluent conversation from

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their children, rather than specific narrative components, such as an initiating event or a resolving event (McCabe & Bliss, 2005).

Decontextualized oral language (i.e., language used in everyday situations) is also an important factor in bilingual development. When primary language skills in decontextualized environments are poor as a result of lack of vocabulary exposure in the primary language, children may not be able to translate from L1 to L2 in oral or written language. It is far easier for a child to comprehend a new name in L2 for an already existing concept in L1, rather than understand an entirely unfamiliar concept (Cummins, 1979). In addition, narratives may vary depending on elicitation procedures used (Gutiérrez-Clellan, 2002).

McCabe and Bliss (2005) advocate that personal narratives, rather than narratives elicited by picture books, should be used in assessment of a bilingual child. As with English speakers, a picture book may mask a child's true discourse level; the child could exhibit advanced discourse skills during assessment by simply highlighting what is in the picture. A personal narrative comes from the child himself, and will be a more accurate depiction of the child's language and discourse abilities (McCabe & Bliss, 2005). Therefore, it is important to consider a bilingual child's length and type of exposure to L1 and L2, cultural variations, and linguistic differences.

**Exposure to L1 and L2.** Hammer et al. (2012) found that the length and timing of exposure to L1 and L2 was a significant contributor to bilingual development. In the study, 191 Latino families completed the Background and Language Questionnaire, which provided information on the children's exposure to both Spanish and English, as well as parental status and demographic characteristics. Subtests in the Woodcock-Muñoz Language Survey – Revised, which included vocabulary and story recall in both English and Spanish, were administered to the participating children to gauge their vocabulary and story recall abilities in both Spanish and

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English. Performance on the subtests depended on many factors (e.g., age of exposure, conversational partners) which affected the children's oral language proficiency in either Spanish or English.

The results of this study found that the longer a child lived in the United States, the higher his or her English vocabulary, substantiating that residing in a primarily English-speaking region helped increase English vocabulary and proficiency. Exposure to only Spanish during infancy and to English once in school also appeared to provide a foundation for a child's Spanish proficiency. On a larger scale, the study revealed the potential importance and timing of exposure to the secondary language in bilingual children and the level of impact the exposure may have on the development of both L1 and L2 (Hammer et al., 2012).

Gutiérrez-Clellen (2002) found that sampling a child's oral narrative production may reveal academic preparedness in language, as well as measure progress in expressive language in bilingual children. The study included 33 typically developing 7 and 8-year-old children of Mexican-American or Puerto Rican descent. The participants were prompted to produce spontaneous narrative samples from two different wordless picture books and recall two stories. Twenty-eight of the 33 participants were being educated in both Spanish and English, while the remaining children received instruction only in English. All but one child was born in the United States, and parent education ranged from less than 6 years to more than 13 years.

The wordless picture book *Frog, Where Are You* (Mayer, 1969) was used to elicit the English narrative, while *Frog Goes to Dinner* (Mayer, 1974) was used for the Spanish narrative; both samples were used to assess each child's proficiency in English and Spanish. The students were then asked to recall two stories: *The Tiger's Whisker* (Stein & Glenn, 1979) in English, and *El Naufragio*, or *Shipwrecked* (Verdick, 1973), in Spanish. Factual questions (e.g., who or what),

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and inferential questions (e.g., why and what if), were asked in a story comprehension task. Transcriptions of the story recalls were completed in the SALT program and segmented into events: setting, initiating event, internal response, attempt, direct consequence, and reaction (Gutiérrez-Clellen, 2002). Story comprehension answers were also transcribed.

The study found that all participants struggled more with the comprehension and recall of the Spanish stories than with English stories. However, the students providing Spanish samples generally performed age-appropriately. Seven of the students who had previously appeared to be fluent in both languages performed below average in both English and Spanish. The greatest differences across languages were found in the narrative recall task. Most children tended to perform better in English than in Spanish. Most of the children were able to produce coherent narratives that included important events and consequences. Many children struggled in recalling a story, focusing so much on remembering all of the elements and the complex grammar that they tended to omit important elements of the story. Common errors included the omission of the important events, effects from the story's conflict, and the addition of superfluous information.

Differences were not as prominent in the narrative production. When the children were asked to spontaneously provide a narrative sample based on the wordless picture books, important events and consequences were included. Most of the participants exhibited better narrative recalls in English than in Spanish. Thus, Gutiérrez-Clellen (2002) found that children who are bilingual may not perform equally on a narrative proficiency task in both languages. Most of the children were able to generate adequate grammar, even at the most limited level of proficiency, in both languages. This demonstrated that the children were able to transfer their knowledge of one language to successfully use the second. A majority of the students performed

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better in their second language, English, which could be because English is the greater focus in bilingual classroom programs.

**Linguistic and cultural differences.** According to Melzi (2000), the goals of discourse between a child and parent are particular to the “cultural beliefs, values, and expectations of a community.” Latino mothers place a considerable amount of emphasis on helping their children become *bien educados* (Melzi, 2000). Although this term is literally translated as “well educated” in English, Latino mothers place another meaning on the term. *Bien educado* does not only mean well educated, but it also means well versed in conversation and social expectations. Therefore, Latino mothers place more importance on effective discourse skills, while European American mothers place more emphasis on the actual organization of a narrative. In addition, Hammer et al. (2012) found that mothers appeared to be influential in recall tasks. Mothers and teachers who read to their children in English helped to build a basis for the child’s developing narrative skills. However, children tended to believe that fathers and teachers valued speaking English more than mothers. Therefore, the child’s conversational partner played a role in the development of L1 and L2.

Melzi (2000) conducted a study with 31 mothers and their preschool children born in Central America who spoke predominantly Spanish in the home and their preschool children, and 15 native-born European American mothers who spoke only English in the home, none of which had any known communication disorder. The participants were visited in their homes by a bilingual researcher and mothers were asked to converse with their children, discussing recent events in the children’s lives. A total of four events were discussed: two about shared experiences between the mother and child, and two experienced only by the child. The researcher

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asked the mothers to start a conversation about one particular experience at a time, and to refrain from drawing from films or stories.

The narrative samples were analyzed using four different categories: quantitative narrative measures, types of prompts, conversational functions of prompts, and types of narrative information (Melzi, 2000). The quantitative narrative measures analyzed the mothers' conversation using number of words and mean length of utterance (i.e., the average number of words utilized in one utterance). Types of prompts used by the mothers included closed-ended questions (i.e., a question receiving a yes or no response), open-ended questions, (i.e., wh questions), memory prompts (e.g., reminding the child that something happened in the recent past and asking about it), statements (e.g., giving the child specific information), and other, which included elements of the discourse that were non-narrative. Conversational function of prompts included initiations, elaboration, maintenance through repetition, maintenance through other devices (e.g., using interactional markers) and other functions, or guiding the child through the conversation. Narrative elements included description, event, evaluation, reported speech, and generic (e.g., an utterance that continued discourse, but did not fit into any other category for the mothers' speech).

Melzi (2000) discovered no significant differences in the length of discourse between the mothers of the two cultures. In discussing shared events, both the Central American and the European American mothers utilized more statements. To continue a narrative, however, the Central American mothers tended to use open-ended questions, while the European American mothers chose to use closed-ended questions when discussing an event only the child had experienced. A cultural difference in the construction of a narrative was demonstrated when the European American mothers emphasized a chronological, single event in their children's

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narratives, while the Central American mothers asked their children to transition from event to event to create a whole narrative. This indicated that the European American mothers were more active in building the narrative, while Central American mothers were less directly involved in building the child's narrative. Overall, the Central American mothers placed more emphasis on listening to their children's narratives than constructing them. (Melzi, 2000). In effect, the Central American mothers, unlike the European American mothers, played a minor part in construction of the narrative. Melzi (2000) explained that European American mothers participated as co-narrators, while Central American mothers were active listeners. A factor in the different narrative structures was family size. Latino households were generally larger, including extended family members.

**Bilingual impacts on elicitation and assessment.** Narrative sampling that targets vocabulary in assessment may provide the speech-language pathologist with clearer evidence of a monolingual or bilingual child's emergent literacy skills (Uccelli & Páez, 2009). Obtaining a narrative sample of spontaneous language can complement and justify the diagnosis suggested by standardized measures (Rojas & Iglesias, 2009).

Uccelli and Páez (2007) administered standardized tests to 24 typically developing kindergarteners from Spanish-speaking homes of low socio-economic status (SES). Each child was tested in both Spanish and English at the end of kindergarten, and again at the end of the first grade. Assessments were administered in both English and Spanish to each participant. Because two different languages were being assessed, only the language being tested at the time was spoken to the participants to discourage them from code switching (i.e., shifting from one language to the other in a single utterance). The study examined narrative skills by eliciting a spontaneous narrative sample from sets of pictures. While the pictures did convey a broad theme



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or plot, they were general enough so that the children were encouraged to expand upon the plot with spontaneous details. Each child was asked to look at the pictures, and then describe a story related to the pictures. These narratives were analyzed using a scoring scheme in both Spanish and English. The Picture Vocabulary subtests of the *Woodcock Language Proficiency Battery – Revised* (WLPB – R) were also administered in both Spanish and English.

Results of the study indicated that children with “higher story scores in Spanish tended to have higher story scores in English” (Uccelli & Pérez, 2007, p. 231). All vocabulary scores also increased from kindergarten to first grade in English. While code switching did occur, it was infrequent and the majority occurred when switching from Spanish to English. The bilingual subjects in the study performed lower than average on all assessments during both the kindergarten and first grade sessions. In addition, vocabulary and narrative stories in Spanish can impact later English development. Uccelli and Pérez (2007) found that “Spanish story structure predicted first-grade English vocabulary and English narrative productivity” (p. 232). Telling stories and participating in Spanish conversations with family and friends can be beneficial to the bilingual child’s English language development. Because kindergarten and first grade are a critical time for literacy development, results suggested that problems with reading could occur in later grades (Uccelli & Pérez, 2007). The study found a positive, but moderate, relationship between vocabulary and narrative skills in typically developing bilingual children. This research suggests that, although developing at different rates, vocabulary and narrative skills may affect each other’s progress.

This study raises a question regarding whether monolingual measures for narrative sampling were appropriate for bilingual children. Because the method of eliciting the sample

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may affect the child's narrative itself, Uccelli and Páez (2007) suggest that further research needs to explore the accuracy and efficiency of bilingual narrative assessment.

### **Rationale**

Coherent and meaningful oral narratives are expected at the kindergarten level. Oral narratives reflect a child's ability to convey ideas and events in an organized manner, and are indicative of the child's language proficiency. In addition, narratives are effective tools to predict later literacy skills. The ability to accurately screen and assess bilingual children is integral to their academic success. Diagnosis of a communication difference, delay, or disorder cannot be effectively determined if the clinician does not understand a child's proficiency in both his native language (L1) and secondary language (L2). A narrative produced by a bilingual child may also be a product of one's own cultural standards for storytelling, rather than the standards of the language in which assessment takes place (McCabe & Bliss, 2005). Remaining unaware of these cultural and linguistic differences could result in an inaccurate diagnosis of a communication delay or disorder in a bilingual child.

School clinicians must effectively and accurately assess a large number of children within each tier of the RTI system. It is also important to screen numerous students in a short period of time, so as not to interfere with classroom time. The Kindergarten Language Benchmark Assessment (KLBA) is a screening tool that may be administered in a short amount of time as compared to others, and therefore, may be an efficient assessment for the school setting. Although pilot data has suggested that the KLBA is an effective progress-monitoring tool (Preschern & Konikoff, 2013), the KLBA narrative story retell subtest has yet to be validated in regard to its effectiveness in identifying bilingual students with difficulties in narrative production. Thus, the purpose of the current study is to evaluate the effectiveness of the KLBA

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in determining at risk narrative abilities in English Language Learners (ELLs) whose primary language is Spanish, as well as in monolingual English speakers. In addition, the study seeks to compare the effectiveness of the KLBA scoring system with the high point analysis system for Spanish ELLs, and to examine the performance of English monolinguals on the same assessment. The following research questions will be examined:

- I. Does the KLBA narrative story retell subtest effectively identify at risk children in narrative ability, when compared to high point analysis for:
  - a. English-speaking kindergarten children?
  - b. Spanish-speaking kindergarten children?
- II. What are the relative strengths and weaknesses of the KLBA narrative story retell subtest?

## Chapter 3

### Methods

#### Research Design

This descriptive study included between and within-subjects comparisons of kindergarteners' performance when telling a personal narrative. The between-subjects analysis compared narrative skills of a group of ELLs whose primary language was Spanish, to a comparison group of English monolinguals. The within-subjects comparison examined two methods of analyzing participants' narrative skills, the KLBA narrative story retell subtest and high point analysis.

#### Participants

All kindergarten students attending an elementary school in a Chicago suburb were screened during September 2013 and January 2014. In order to be included in the Spanish group of the current study, children needed to be ELLs with Spanish as a primary language, while also demonstrating some level of proficiency in English. Typical cognitive abilities were also required, assessed using teacher report and previous school records. Participants in the comparison group were randomly selected from the English monolingual kindergarten population. The English monolinguals also needed to exhibit typical cognitive abilities. Nine children participated in the study, six girls and three boys. Three were placed in the ELL group, and six were placed in the monolingual comparison group. The average age of the participants was 5 years, 6 months. Within the English group, three participants identified as White, two as Black/African American, and one as Asian/Pacific Islander. Malayalam was the primary language spoken in the home of the Pacific Islander participant, but the child identified as a monolingual English speaker. The three Spanish group participants identified as ELL with a

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primary language of Spanish. Five of the nine participants qualified for free or reduced lunch, including all three of the Spanish group participants. All students were placed in regular kindergarten classrooms.

### **Procedures**

Approval was granted by the Institutional Review Board at Eastern Illinois University. Before screening commenced, consent was obtained from kindergarteners' parents or legal guardians. Consent forms were provided in Spanish for parents who were not sufficiently proficient in English. All participants were assessed using the Kindergarten Language Benchmark Assessment (KLBA) in September 2013. Performance on the KLBA narrative story retell subtest was examined in this study. To elicit the narrative, the clinician used one of two prompts: "I want you to tell me a story; Can you think of a time when...." Themes prompted included: a time you or someone you know got hurt, being stung by a bee, needing a Band-Aid, or getting a new pet. If the child responded that he or she had experienced one of these events, the clinician prompted, "Tell me what happened." One prompt was permitted during a retell: "Tell me more." When the child finished his or her story, the clinician reviewed a series of "wh" questions about characters, setting (i.e., time and place), conflict, and resolution (i.e., who, when, where, what, and ending). One point was awarded when the child's narrative answered that question, while a question unanswered received a score of zero. For this study, narratives were considered appropriate if they scored at least four out of the five on the subtest. A subsequent analysis analyzed using five out of five as the requirement for an age appropriate narrative.

Each narrative sample was audio recorded, transcribed using the SALT program, and then coded based on high point analysis. Each utterance within a child's narrative was coded according to narrative elements (i.e., introduction, orientation, complicating action, evaluation,

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resolution, and coda). The narratives were then categorized by pattern of structure (i.e., disoriented, impoverished, leapfrog, two-event, chronological, ending-at-the-high-point). Classic structure was not included because this type of narrative is not typically expected until first grade. An ending-at-the-high-point narrative pattern was considered age-appropriate for the purposes of the current study.

### **Reliability**

All samples were transcribed by an undergraduate speech-language-pathology student, and then reviewed by a certified speech-language pathologist to evaluate inter-rater reliability. The same student and speech-language-pathologist also independently coded each narrative sample, and then compared codes to resolve any discrepancies for 100% of the samples.

### **Data Analysis**

Scores from the KLBA were summarized for English speakers and Spanish speakers. Scores from the Spanish group were compared to scores from the English group to examine similarities and differences in performance on the KLBA narrative story retell subtest. Qualitative analysis was used to examine items missed on the KLBA by English and Spanish speakers to determine whether items were more frequently missed. In addition, individual performance for each student was examined to compare KLBA scores to results of high point analysis. Indications of delay, difference, or disorder were also examined based on developmental criteria for high point analysis.

## Chapter IV

### Results

The purpose of the current study was to examine the effectiveness of the KLBA narrative story retell subtest in identifying both monolingual English speaking and Spanish speaking ELL children at risk for narrative language difficulties. Subtest scores were compared to high point analysis narrative patterns to examine the KLBA's effectiveness in screening narrative ability. A certified speech-language pathologist or graduate student in speech-language pathology collected data during two separate testing sessions in September 2013 and January 2014. Each participant's narrative was scored using KLBA measures, transcribed, and coded using high point analysis. Results are presented by language group, as well as by individual performance on the KLBA and high point analysis.

#### **Kindergarten Language Benchmark Assessment Group Results**

Narratives were analyzed with the KLBA by determining whether the narrative addressed a series of 'wh' questions (i.e., who, where, when, what, ending). The narratives of six out of the nine participants met the criteria of including narrative elements that addressed four out of five questions. The narratives of two out of the three Spanish participants met the KLBA narrative story retell subtest criteria, while four out of the six English participants met the criteria. When the criteria were raised to five out of five questions, none of the participants met the criteria. All participants in both groups answered the 'what' question. All three Spanish participants' narratives answered the 'who' question, as did all but one narrative in the English group. Elements fulfilling the questions 'where,' 'when,' and 'ending' were used by approximately half of the participants overall. Only one Spanish participant and three out of the six English

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participants fulfilled the ‘when’ response. Similarly, half of the English participants’ narratives addressed the ‘ending’ response. Two out of the three Spanish participants fulfilled the ‘ending’ response. Table A provides summary results of KLBA data elicited in the fall (i.e., September 2013).

Table A. Fall Number of Participants Who Met KLBA Narrative Story Retell Subtest Criteria

|         | WHO | WHERE | WHEN | WHAT | ENDING | Criteria Met (4/5) | Criteria Met (5/5) |
|---------|-----|-------|------|------|--------|--------------------|--------------------|
| TOTAL   | 8/9 | 5/9   | 4/9  | 9/9  | 5/9    | 6/9                | 0/9                |
| ENGLISH | 5/6 | 3/6   | 3/6  | 6/6  | 3/6    | 4/6                | 0/6                |
| SPANISH | 3/3 | 2/3   | 1/3  | 3/3  | 2/3    | 2/3                | 0/3                |

At the winter testing (i.e., January 2014), the number of participants who met the criteria of the KLBA narrative story retell subtest remained constant; four out of six English participants met the criteria by fulfilling at least four out of five responses, and two out of three Spanish participants fulfilled at least four responses. However, only one English-speaking participant met the five out of five criteria. All participants in both groups answered the ‘who’ question (i.e. an increase of one English participant from the fall). All English group participants answered the ‘what’ with their narratives, as did two out of the three Spanish group participants (as compared to all participants meeting criteria in the fall). Overall use of the ‘ending’ response increased from five to seven out of nine included a resolution was included by all participants except one in the English group and one in the Spanish group. Use of ‘where’ and ‘when’ remained constant. Table B provides summary results of winter KLBA data.



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Table B. Winter Number of Participants Who Met KLBA Narrative Story Retell Subtest Criteria

|         | WHO | WHERE | WHEN | WHAT | ENDING | Criteria Met (4/5) | Criteria Met (5/5) |
|---------|-----|-------|------|------|--------|--------------------|--------------------|
| TOTAL   | 9/9 | 4/9   | 4/9  | 8/9  | 7/9    | 6/9                | 1/9                |
| ENGLISH | 6/6 | 3/6   | 3/6  | 6/6  | 5/6    | 4/6                | 1/6                |
| SPANISH | 3/3 | 1/3   | 1/3  | 2/3  | 2/3    | 2/3                | 0/3                |

**High Point Analysis Group Results**

Narratives were transcribed and coded using high point analysis as a comparison for the KLBA results. Each utterance of a narrative sample was coded according to narrative elements (i.e., introduction, orientation, complicating action, evaluation, resolution, and coda). The overall narratives were then categorized by structure pattern (i.e., disoriented, impoverished, leapfrog, two-event, chronological, ending-at-the-highpoint). None of the children produced an age-appropriate narrative pattern (i.e., ending-at-the-highpoint) during the fall or winter testing sessions. The most sophisticated narrative pattern produced was the chronological pattern, which does not occur at any particular age, but includes a simple description of successive events. During the fall testing session, four of the nine participants produced a chronological narrative. The monolingual English group produced three of the four chronological narratives. The least sophisticated pattern produced by two participants in the English group in the fall was impoverished; these narratives did not include enough utterances to establish a high point, or they repeated two events multiple times. One Spanish participant produced the least sophisticated pattern for the group, which was a two-event pattern. This indicated that the narrative consisted of only two different narrative elements (McCabe & Rollins, 1994; Peterson

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& McCabe, 1983). The remaining narrative by a Spanish participant was classified as a leapfrog pattern. Table C provides summary results of fall high point analysis narrative pattern data.

Table C. Fall Number of Participants Using Narrative Patterns

|         | Disoriented | Impoverished | Two Event | Leapfrog | Chronological |
|---------|-------------|--------------|-----------|----------|---------------|
| TOTAL   | 0           | 2            | 2         | 1        | 4             |
| ENGLISH | 0           | 2            | 1         | 0        | 3             |
| SPANISH | 0           | 0            | 1         | 1        | 1             |

During the winter testing session, five of the nine participants produced chronological patterns, the most sophisticated pattern produced by any of the participants. Of those five, four were in the monolingual English group. The least sophisticated pattern in the winter session, produced by one Spanish and one English participant, was disoriented. This indicated that the narrative was not coherent enough to establish any meaning or point. The English group generally improved narrative pattern or produced consistent patterns from fall to winter. The Spanish group generally produced poorer narrative structures from fall to winter, with one participant decreasing from a two-event to a disoriented pattern, and one decreasing from a leapfrog pattern to a two-event pattern. Table D provides summary results of winter high point analysis narrative pattern data.

Table D. Winter Number of Participants Using Narrative Patterns

|         | Disoriented | Impoverished | Two Event | Leapfrog | Chronological |
|---------|-------------|--------------|-----------|----------|---------------|
| TOTAL   | 1           | 0            | 2         | 1        | 5             |
| ENGLISH | 0           | 0            | 1         | 1        | 4             |
| SPANISH | 1           | 0            | 1         | 0        | 1             |

The narrative elements of orientation and complicating action were consistently present in both groups' stories during the fall testing session. All three Spanish participants used a

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complicating action. None of the participants used all six elements. A resolution was included in approximately half of the narratives, and used by two out of the three Spanish participants. Introduction, evaluation, and coda were the least included elements, with only one English participant using an evaluation and no participants using a coda. Table E provides summary results of fall high point analysis narrative element data.

Table E. Fall Number of Participants Using Narrative Elements

|         | INT | ORI | COM | EVA | RES | COD |
|---------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| TOTAL   | 2/9 | 6/9 | 8/9 | 1/9 | 5/9 | 0/9 |
| ENGLISH | 1/6 | 4/6 | 5/6 | 1/6 | 3/6 | 0/6 |
| SPANISH | 1/3 | 2/3 | 3/3 | 0/3 | 2/3 | 0/3 |

In winter testing, all participants except one in the Spanish group included a complicating action. All participants except one in the English group provided a resolution to their narratives. Similarly, all participants except for one in the English group and one in the Spanish group included an orientation statement. Overall use of orientation and resolution elements improved from fall to winter testing. All three Spanish participants included a resolution in their narratives. No introductions were included, and only one English participant used an evaluative utterance. The use of complicating actions remained constant overall. One English participant used a coda. Table F provides summary results of winter high point analysis narrative element data.

Table F. Winter Number of Participants Using Narrative Elements

|         | INT | ORI | COM | EVA | RES | COD |
|---------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| TOTAL   | 0/9 | 7/9 | 8/9 | 1/9 | 8/9 | 1/9 |
| ENGLISH | 0/6 | 5/6 | 6/6 | 1/6 | 5/6 | 1/6 |
| SPANISH | 0/3 | 2/3 | 2/3 | 0/3 | 3/3 | 0/3 |

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### **Individual Comparison Results**

According to high point analysis measures, none of the children produced an age appropriate narrative. However, using four out of five as a passing score, six out of nine children met the criteria to pass the KLBA Narrative Subtest at each testing time. All children who produced a chronological pattern using high point analysis met the KLBA criteria for an age appropriate narrative. All children who produced disoriented, impoverished, or leapfrog narratives failed the KLBA. In the fall testing session, two participants, one English and one Spanish, produced a two-event narrative, which is expected at 3 to 4 years of age (McCabe & Rollins, 1994; Peterson & McCabe, 1983), but still met the KLBA criteria for an age appropriate narrative. In the winter testing session, an English participant failed the KLBA Narrative Subtest with a two-event narrative, but a Spanish participant passed the KLBA with the same pattern. This suggests some discrepancy in outcomes of the high point analysis and KLBA measures.

If the KLBA narrative story retell subtest criteria require five out of five responses fulfilled by a child's story, then all participants in the Spanish and all but one in the English group failed the KLBA. These results coincide more closely to the results from high point analysis. However, the English participant whose narrative did fulfill all five responses produced a chronological narrative, which is still considered to be below age expectations. Table G provides a comparison of individual results of KLBA and high point analysis pattern data.

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Table G. Individual Narrative Patterns and KLBA Scores

| Participant ID | Group   | Fall Narrative Pattern | Fall KLBA Fulfilled Responses | Winter Narrative Pattern | Winter Fulfilled Responses |
|----------------|---------|------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1001           | English | Chronological          | 4                             | Chronological            | 4                          |
| 1003           | English | Impoverished           | 1                             | Chronological            | 4                          |
| 1005           | English | Chronological          | 4                             | Chronological            | 5                          |
| 1007           | English | Two-Event              | 4                             | Leapfrog                 | 3                          |
| 1008           | English | Impoverished           | 3                             | Two-Event                | 3                          |
| 1011           | English | Chronological          | 4                             | Chronological            | 4                          |
| 1090           | Spanish | Two-Event              | 4                             | Chronological            | 4                          |
| 1098           | Spanish | Chronological          | 4                             | Two-Event                | 4                          |
| 1103           | Spanish | Leapfrog               | 3                             | Disoriented              | 1                          |

## **Chapter V**

### **Discussion**

The current study examined the effectiveness of the KLBA narrative story retell subtest measures as a screening tool in identifying both monolingual English and Spanish speaking ELL (with Spanish as L1) kindergarteners at risk for narrative language difficulties. Participant narratives were also analyzed using the established measure of high point analysis for comparison.

#### **Kindergarten Language Benchmark Assessment**

None of the participants who produced an impoverished or disoriented narrative pattern met the KLBA criteria. All of these participants received a score of three or less, which indicated that the Narrative Story Retell Subtest was successful in identifying narrative language difficulties that are highly at risk. During both the fall and winter testing sessions, six out of the nine participants' narratives received a passing score in the current study (using four out of five responses as the passing criteria). However, as previously stated, all of the children produced a narrative pattern below age appropriate expectations when assessed using high point analysis, and included, on average, three or fewer narrative elements during both testing sessions. This indicates that although the KLBA can identify narratives that are significantly below age expectations, but does not identify all narratives below expectations. This could result in children not being identified as at risk for narrative language difficulties, therefore failing to receive necessary services.

When the passing criterion for the KLBA was modified to require five out of five fulfilled responses, only one participant in the English group met the criteria, and none of the

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Spanish participants met the criteria. This indicates that using a more stringent scoring system increased accuracy of the KLBA in identifying narratives that were not age appropriate.

However, one English participant passed the KLBA with a chronological pattern, suggesting that the KLBA does not consistently identify children at risk for narrative language difficulties.

Most of the children's narratives established a basic character and conflict.

Approximately half of the narratives established a specific time and/or place in which the story occurred. However, the majority of the narratives did not include aspects beyond the more superficial elements of orientation, conflict, and resolution. This could indicate that, although the KLBA criteria require crucial narrative elements (i.e., character, setting, conflict, resolution), the KLBA measures do not assess statements that introduce the story, evaluate characters, or connect the story to the present. Shapiro and Hudson (1991) found that preschoolers could include feelings of the characters in a story, although consistency of inclusion was not fully developed. By kindergarten, children should be able to reflect on a personal event and connect an emotional response to it. The KLBA did not account for deficiencies in these more advanced narrative language abilities.

If five out of five responses must be fulfilled in order to meet the criteria for an age appropriate narrative, only one English participant passed the KLBA narrative story retell subtest. This would suggest that the KLBA is effective in identifying at risk narrative language abilities in kindergarteners. However, the English participant who met the KLBA criteria did not produce an age appropriate narrative according to high point analysis; therefore, the KLBA did not identify all children who might be at risk for narrative language difficulties.

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This is also problematic because of a ceiling effect for scores on the narrative story retell subtest. Several participants received four out of five points during both the fall and winter assessments. This allows little room for demonstration of narrative language growth over time. In addition, if children are meeting KLBA criteria without demonstrating age-appropriate narrative elements, the KLBA scoring does not allow for children to demonstrate growth to an age-appropriate level. For example, if the English participant who scored a five on the KLBA during the winter of 2014 did improve from a chronological pattern, the KLBA would not reflect that improvement. Therefore, the KLBA may not accurately depict growth in children's narratives over time.

### **High Point Analysis**

None of the participants produced an age-appropriate narrative pattern (i.e., ending-at-the-highpoint) during the fall or winter testing sessions. In addition, no individual participant included all six narrative elements. One participant in the English group included four elements in the fall, as well as one in the English group in the winter. Generally, participants used three or fewer elements when producing the narrative.

Spencer, Clegg, and Stackhouse (2012) found that low socioeconomic status negatively impacted vocabulary development for children. This could be a contributing factor in the below average narrative productions from participants as a whole. The impact of socioeconomic status could contribute to both the English and Spanish groups performing below age expectations.

In addition, the Spanish group may have had more difficulty forming narratives in English because of structural difference between English and Spanish narratives. Children from Spanish speaking homes are generally taught to tell a story without emphasizing the inclusion of



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all narrative elements (Melzi, 2000). For example, two out of the three Spanish group participants only used two different elements in the fall. One Spanish group participant only included a complicating action and a resolution, while the other used a series of orientation and complicating action statements. Similarly, two out of the three Spanish group participants used only two different elements: orientation and resolution, and complicating action and resolution. In contrast, three out of the six English group participants included at least three different elements in the fall, and five English group participants included at least three different elements in the winter.

The linguistic differences in English and Spanish could have negatively impacted the bilingual participants' awareness of English story structure. The amount and time of exposure to English could also have influenced the Spanish participants' knowledge of English vocabulary, impacting narrative production in English (Hammer et al., 2012). Only one Spanish participant produced a chronological pattern during either the fall or winter session. Narratives produced by the two remaining Spanish participants during either session were leapfrog, two-event, or disoriented. All three of these narrative patterns are described as leaving out critical elements or using a limited number of elements. This coincides with the concept of Spanish speaking children learning to tell a story without emphasizing the inclusion of as many elements as possible (Melzi, 2000). All three Spanish participants, in either fall or winter assessment, told a narrative lacking in narrative elements. It is also possible that the high point analysis over-identifies ELL's due to cultural differences.

Although participants included more than one element in a narrative, often the elements were not combined in a cohesive or coherent manner. For example, one child during the fall testing session stated, "I cut myself at home because I didn't watch, and I got hurt." This

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narrative is not coherent, as the listener cannot infer a clear idea from it. One child's narrative included, "I put a bandage on. I was painting." This narrative is neither coherent nor cohesive, as the components are not connected to an overall point, nor are they connected by any interclausal connectives to smoothly transition between components.

### **Limitations and Future Research**

The small sample size in the current study, particularly in the Spanish group, did not allow for a complete representation of the monolingual English and bilingual Spanish-English kindergarten population. A larger sample size would better represent the population and yield results which could be more widely applied. Testing was only completed in English, which may not have allowed the bilingual Spanish-English students to demonstrate their complete language abilities. Testing bilingual students in their native Spanish would provide a more complete representation of the bilingual Spanish-English children's language and narrative skills. This would better assess if a bilingual student was at risk in both L1 and L2, or if the difficulty was due to acquisition deficits in L1. Considering the level of English proficiency of bilingual students could also be beneficial to future research regarding the effectiveness of KLBA.

In addition, because the KLBA was designed as a brief screening tool, the elicitation method of elicitation limited use of prompts in order to maintain short test duration. If extensive prompting was allowed, participants might produce more developed narratives.

Requiring five out of five fulfilled responses on the KLBA would more accurately identify children who are at risk for narrative language difficulties. Further modifications should also be considered to improve sensitivity of the KLBA measure. For example, the KLBA should include stricter passing requirements, possibly by including more responses that must be

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fulfilled. Assessing narrative pattern would also be beneficial. Additionally, scoring criteria for the KLBA could be expanded to require more complete, cohesive expression of ideas in order to pass each item in the subtest. This might allow for documentation of performance change and growth in its scoring. Future testing should expand the subject pool to represent a larger kindergarten population and varied demographics.

### **Conclusions**

The KLBA is a quick and efficient measure of overall language ability in kindergarteners. The Narrative Subtest of the KLBA assesses storytelling skills in the English language, measuring the narrative elements of character, time, place, conflict, and resolution. The KLBA consistently identified children who were highly at risk for narrative language difficulties that might need to be addressed through RTI services. However, revision of the scoring system should be considered to increase the sensitivity of the measure. Further investigation involving both the bilingual and monolingual population could better identify all children who are at risk for narrative language difficulties, rather than only those at significant levels of risk.

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- Uccelli, P., & Páez, M. (2007). Narrative and vocabulary development of bilingual children from kindergarten to first grade: Developmental changes and associations among English and Spanish skills. *Language, Speech & Hearing Services in Schools*, 38 (3), 225-236.
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## Appendix A

### Tables

#### Population Demographics

| Study ID | Birthday | Gender | ELL Screener Score | Native Language | Race                   | ELL Identifier | F/R Lunch Identifier | SpEd Identifier |
|----------|----------|--------|--------------------|-----------------|------------------------|----------------|----------------------|-----------------|
| 1001     | 12/28/07 | Male   | N/A                | English         | Black/African American | 0              | 1                    | 0               |
| 1003     | 12/5/07  | Female | N/A                | Malayalam       | Asian/Pacific Islander | 0              | 0                    | 0               |
| 1005     | 6/19/08  | Male   | N/A                | English         | Black/African American | 0              | 0                    | 0               |
| 1007     | 8/6/08   | Female | N/A                | English         | White                  | 0              | 1                    | 0               |
| 1008     | 10/21/07 | Female | N/A                | English         | White                  | 0              | 0                    | 0               |
| 1011     | 12/3/07  | Female | N/A                | English         | White                  | 0              | 0                    | 0               |
| 1090     | 10/22/07 | Male   | 3                  | Spanish         | Hispanic               | 1              | 1                    | 0               |
| 1098     | 2/20/08  | Female | 4                  | Spanish         | Hispanic               | 1              | 1                    | 0               |
| 1103     | 2/26/08  | Female | 3                  | Spanish         | Hispanic               | 1              | 1                    | 0               |

## Fall Total KLBA Data

| ID         | FA | FB | FC | FD | FE | FT   | Fmet-4 | Fmet-5 |
|------------|----|----|----|----|----|------|--------|--------|
| 1001       | 1  | 0  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 4    | Yes    | No     |
| 1003       | 0  | 0  | 0  | 1  | 0  | 1    | No     | No     |
| 1005       | 1  | 0  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 4    | Yes    | No     |
| 1007       | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 0  | 4    | Yes    | No     |
| 1008       | 1  | 1  | 0  | 1  | 0  | 3    | No     | No     |
| 1011       | 1  | 1  | 0  | 1  | 1  | 4    | Yes    | No     |
| 1090       | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 0  | 4    | Yes    | No     |
| 1098       | 1  | 1  | 0  | 1  | 1  | 4    | Yes    | No     |
| 1103       | 1  | 0  | 0  | 1  | 1  | 3    | No     | No     |
| Total      | 8  | 5  | 4  | 9  | 5  | 31   | 5      | 0      |
| Total Eng  | 5  | 3  | 3  | 6  | 3  | 20   | 4      | 0      |
| Total Span | 3  | 2  | 1  | 3  | 2  | 11   | 2      | 0      |
| Avg Eng    |    |    |    |    |    | 3.33 | 66.67% | 0.00%  |
| Avg Span   |    |    |    |    |    | 3.67 | 66.67% | 0.00%  |

## Winter Total KLBA Data

| ID         | WA | WB | WC | WD | WE | WT   | Wmet-4 | Wmet-5 |
|------------|----|----|----|----|----|------|--------|--------|
| 1001       | 1  | 0  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 4    | Yes    | No     |
| 1003       | 1  | 1  | 0  | 1  | 1  | 4    | Yes    | No     |
| 1005       | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 5    | Yes    | Yes    |
| 1007       | 1  | 0  | 0  | 1  | 1  | 3    | No     | No     |
| 1008       | 1  | 1  | 0  | 1  | 0  | 3    | No     | No     |
| 1011       | 1  | 0  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 4    | Yes    | No     |
| 1090       | 1  | 1  | 0  | 1  | 1  | 4    | Yes    | No     |
| 1098       | 1  | 0  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 4    | Yes    | No     |
| 1103       | 1  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 1    | No     | No     |
| Total      | 9  | 4  | 4  | 8  | 7  | 34   | 6      | 1      |
| Total Eng  | 6  | 3  | 3  | 6  | 5  | 23   | 4      | 1      |
| Total Span | 3  | 1  | 1  | 2  | 2  | 9    | 2      | 0      |
| Avg Eng    |    |    |    |    |    | 3.83 | 66.67% | 11.11% |
| Avg Span   |    |    |    |    |    | 3    | 66.67% | 0.00%  |



## Fall Total High Point Analysis Data

| ID       | F-INT | F-ORI | F-COM | F-EVA | F-RES | F-COD | F-Total | F-Pattern | F-Met |
|----------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|---------|-----------|-------|
| 1001     | 0     | 1     | 1     | 0     | 1     | 0     | 3       | CHR       | No    |
| 1003     | 0     | 0     | 3     | 0     | 0     | 0     | 3       | IMP       | No    |
| 1005     | 2     | 0     | 4     | 1     | 7     | 0     | 12      | CHR       | No    |
| 1007     | 0     | 1     | 1     | 0     | 0     | 0     | 2       | TEV       | No    |
| 1008     | 0     | 1     | 0     | 0     | 0     | 0     | 1       | IMP       | No    |
| 1011     | 0     | 1     | 2     | 0     | 2     | 0     | 5       | CHR       | No    |
| 1090     | 0     | 2     | 2     | 0     | 0     | 0     | 3       | TEV       | No    |
| 1098     | 1     | 1     | 3     | 0     | 1     | 0     | 6       | CHR       | No    |
| 1103     | 0     | 0     | 2     | 0     | 3     | 0     | 5       | LPF       | No    |
| Total    | 3     | 7     | 18    | 1     | 14    | 0     | 40      |           |       |
| Average  |       |       |       |       |       |       | 4.4     |           |       |
| Avg Eng  |       |       |       |       |       |       | 4.33    |           |       |
| Avg Span |       |       |       |       |       |       | 4.67    |           |       |

## Winter Total High Point Analysis Data

| ID       | W-INT | W-ORI | W-COM | W-EVA | W-RES | W-COD | W-Total | W-Pattern | W-Met |
|----------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|---------|-----------|-------|
| 1001     | 0     | 1     | 3     | 0     | 3     | 0     | 7       | CHR       | No    |
| 1003     | 0     | 2     | 5     | 0     | 7     | 0     | 14      | CHR       | No    |
| 1005     | 0     | 3     | 2     | 0     | 4     | 0     | 9       | CHR       | No    |
| 1007     | 0     | 0     | 2     | 3     | 1     | 4     | 10      | LPF       | No    |
| 1008     | 0     | 1     | 2     | 0     | 0     | 0     | 3       | TEV       | No    |
| 1011     | 0     | 1     | 3     | 0     | 1     | 0     | 5       | CHR       | No    |
| 1090     | 0     | 1     | 3     | 0     | 2     | 0     | 6       | CHR       | No    |
| 1098     | 0     | 0     | 3     | 0     | 1     | 0     | 4       | TEV       | No    |
| 1103     | 0     | 1     | 0     | 0     | 1     | 0     | 2       | DIS       | No    |
| Total    | 0     | 10    | 23    | 3     | 20    | 4     | 60      |           |       |
| Average  |       |       |       |       |       |       | 6.67    |           |       |
| Avg Eng  |       |       |       |       |       |       | 8       |           |       |
| Avg Span |       |       |       |       |       |       | 4       |           |       |

## Appendix B

### Consent Form Cover Letter

Dear Parents,

We would like to invite your child to participate in a short study. This study will be conducted by Angela Anthony (a faculty member at Eastern Illinois University), Rebecca Hunt (a student at Eastern Illinois University), Jennifer Preschern, and Naomi Konikoff (both speech-language pathologists at Madison Elementary School).

Last year, all Kindergarten students at Madison Elementary completed the Kindergarten Language Benchmark Assessment (KLBA) for the first time. This year, we would like to gather more information about how well this assessment works, and would like your assistance in helping us. We are asking for your permission to:

- Use the results of your child's KLBA for our research study.
- Evaluate your child's language skills using another screening tool. This will take about 15 minutes during one testing session.
- Collect some background information about your child from school records.

No names or identifying information will be used when reporting results of this project. We will summarize results for all children in a group, and will not be looking specifically at any one child's performance. If you would like a summary of your child's results, and/or the summary of findings for the group, we would be happy to provide this for you.

Please sign the final form in this document and return to your child's teacher within 1 week. You may agree to allow your child to participate in this study or decline participation, but we ask that you please return the form regardless of your decision.

If you have questions about this study, you may contact Naomi R. Konikoff at 847-982-6292.

Sincerely,

Angela Anthony, Ph.D., CCC-SLP  
Assistant Professor

Rebecca Hunt  
Undergraduate Student

Jennifer Preschern, M.A., CCC-SLP  
Speech-Language Pathologist

Naomi R. Konikoff, M.S., CCC-SLP  
Speech-Language Pathologist

## Appendix C

### Consent Form

## CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

### Validating the Kindergarten Language Benchmark Assessment

Your child is invited to participate in a research study conducted by Angela Anthony and Rebecca Hunt from the Communication Disorders and Sciences Department at Eastern Illinois University, and Jennifer Preschern and Naomi R. Konikoff, speech-language pathologists from Madison Elementary School. Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary. Please ask questions about anything you do not understand, before deciding whether or not to participate.

#### • PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study is to examine the effectiveness of the Kindergarten Language Benchmark Assessment (KLBA) for screening Kindergarten children's language skills. This study will compare the results of the KLBA with results from the Clinical Evaluation of Language Fundamentals – Fourth Edition Screening Test (CELF-4 Screening), a longer screening tool frequently used by speech-language pathologists. Results of this study will be used to determine how effectively the KLBA measures language skills, how it compares to results of the CELF-4 Screening, and whether it is effective for children with varying levels of English proficiency. It will also help us understand how well the KLBA measures Kindergarten children's progress over the course of the school year.

#### • PROCEDURES

If you volunteer to participate in this study, your child will be asked to complete two brief language screenings. During these screenings, your child will answer questions about pictures, follow simple directions, and tell a short story. One screening, the KLBA, will take about five minutes, and will be administered three times (September, January, and May) during the 2013-2014 school year. This screening is part of the Kindergarten language screening process that all Kindergarten children at Madison Elementary School will participate in. The second screening (CELF-4 Screening), necessary to complete the research study, will take about 15 minutes, and will be administered one time in January 2014.

The total amount of time for all assessment sessions will be about 30 minutes during the 2013-2014 school year. All assessments will be conducted at Madison Elementary School in a quiet room with minimal distractions.

Some of the screenings will be audio recorded. The teacher or speech-language pathologist who gives the assessment will record a code number at the beginning of the session instead of using your child's name. This system will be used to protect your child's confidentiality. The digital recorder will be placed near your child during the screenings to ensure the best sound quality.

The researcher will also obtain information about your child's English language proficiency and whether or not your child qualifies for free or reduced lunch. This information will be gathered by school administrators and given to the researcher with any identifying information removed.

- **POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS**

The potential risks and discomforts of this study are minimal. Over the course of the school year, your child will be removed from his or her regular classroom for a total of 30 minutes (5 minutes each in September and May; 20 minutes in January). During this time it is possible he or she might miss some instructional activities. Efforts will be made to minimize what your child misses by consulting with his or her classroom teacher.

There will be no compensation for participation in this study.

- **POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO SUBJECTS AND/OR TO SOCIETY**

Results of the language screenings will be used to identify your child's the language abilities, and used by classroom teachers to improve instruction for your child. Your child's participation will also allow the researcher to study the effectiveness of a language screening that will potentially benefit other children in the future. If this screening is found to be effective, it will be used in future years to screen Kindergarten children in a shorter amount of time.

- **CONFIDENTIALITY**

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with you will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission or as required by law.

Confidentiality will be maintained by means of assigning an identification number to your child, and using that number to identify any data (e.g., test forms, digital audio recordings). Any data given to the researcher will use this identification number. Only the researchers and the speech-language pathologists collecting the data will have access to the audio recordings. Digital files will be saved on password-protected drives at Madison Elementary School or Eastern Illinois University.

- **PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL**

Participation in this research study is voluntary and not a requirement or a condition for being the recipient of benefits or services from Eastern Illinois University or any other organization sponsoring the research project. If you volunteer to be in this study, you may withdraw at any time without consequences of any kind or loss of benefits or services to which you are otherwise entitled.

There is no penalty if you withdraw from the study and you will not lose any benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

- **IDENTIFICATION OF INVESTIGATORS**

If you have any questions or concerns about this research, please contact:

Dr. Angela Anthony  
Assistant Professor  
Eastern Illinois University  
Telephone: 217-581-2712  
Email: abanthony@eiu.edu

• **RIGHTS OF RESEARCH SUBJECTS**

If you have any questions or concerns about the treatment of human participants in this study, you may call or write:

Institutional Review Board  
Eastern Illinois University  
600 Lincoln Ave.  
Charleston, IL 61920  
Telephone: (217) 581-8576  
E-mail: eiuirb@www.eiu.edu

You will be given the opportunity to discuss any questions about your rights as a research subject with a member of the IRB. The IRB is an independent committee composed of members of the University community, as well as lay members of the community not connected with EIU. The IRB has reviewed and approved this study.

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I hereby consent to the participation of \_\_\_\_\_, a minor/subject in the investigation herein described. I understand that I am free to withdraw my consent and discontinue my child's participation at any time.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Minor/Handicapped Subject's Parent or Guardian      Date

I, the undersigned, have defined and fully explained the investigation to the above subject.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Investigator

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## Appendix D

### Institutional Review Board Approval

From: "EIU IRB" <eiuirb@eiu.edu>  
To: abanthony@eiu.edu, rmhunt@eiu.edu  
Sent: Thursday, August 22, 2013 3:49:33 PM  
Subject: IRB Study Approval - Anthony, #13-126

August 22, 2013

Angela Anthony

Rebecca Hunt

Communication Disorders and Sciences

Thank you for submitting the research protocol titled, "Validating the Kindergarten Language Benchmark Assessment (KLBA)" for review by the Eastern Illinois University Institutional Review Board (IRB). The IRB has approved this research protocol following an expedited review procedure. IRB review has determined that the protocol involves no more than minimal risk to subjects and satisfies all of the criteria for approval of research.

This protocol has been given the IRB number 13-126. You may proceed with this study from 8/22/2013 to 8/21/2014. You must submit Form E, Continuation Request, to the IRB by 7/21/2014 if you wish to continue the project beyond the approval expiration date.

This approval is valid only for the research activities, timeline, and subjects described in the above named protocol. IRB policy requires that any changes to this protocol be reported to, and approved by, the IRB before being implemented. You are also required to inform the IRB immediately of any problems encountered that could adversely affect the health or welfare of the subjects in this study. Please contact me, or the Compliance Coordinator at 581-8576, in the event of an emergency. All correspondence should be sent to:

Institutional Review Board

c/o Office of Research and Sponsored Programs

Telephone: 581-8576

Fax: 217-581-7181

Email: [eiuirb@www.eiu.edu](mailto:eiuirb@www.eiu.edu)

Upon completion of your research project, please submit Form G, Completion of Research Activities, to the IRB, c/o the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs.

Thank you for your assistance, and the best of success with your research.

Richard Cavanaugh, Chairperson

Institutional Review Board

Telephone: 581-6205

Email: [recavanaugh@eiu.edu](mailto:recavanaugh@eiu.edu)