

A LEVEL

Topic Exploration Pack

ENGLISH LANGUAGE

H470

For first teaching in 2015

Child Language Acquisition

Version 2



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Topic Exploration Pack

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Introduction

The Child Language Acquisition (CLA) section of Component 2 is designed to enable candidates to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of important strands of child language development, ie phonology, grammar and meaning, by applying what they know to a short transcript provided for them in the examination. There will be one question, marked out of 20, and it will assess AO1 and AO2¹ equally. Although the transcript will be new for each exam series, the focus of the question will remain unaltered; therefore candidates and teachers will be in a position to focus their preparations appropriately. Where pronunciation appears to be non-standard both an IPA version and a glossary will be supplied.

Candidates will be expected to conduct their analysis within a context of recognising the different elements of the developmental stages that have been delineated with respect to CLA, and also within the broader context of understanding a range of theoretical positions. As well as identifying specific language features within the transcript, which will comprise utterances from participants up to and including the age of seven, candidates will need to connect these to the stages of language development, such as the telegraphic stage, that have been identified in mainstream studies of CLA.

Additionally, candidates should be able to evaluate the significance of the features they identify within a theoretical context, for example they may choose to link an example of over-generalisation to Chomsky's rejection of the notion that language is learned rather than innate. Having said this, candidates should aim, particularly at the higher end of the achievement spectrum, to demonstrate a critical awareness of the strengths, weakness and implications of the technical positions they identify, and should be prepared to consider these independently in response to the material presented. Candidates should be alert to contradiction, subtlety and complexity. More sophisticated responses would, potentially, recognise features working in combination and would be able to link features together, examining texts on multiple levels.

1: AO1: Apply appropriate methods of language analysis, using associated terminology and coherent written expression.

AO2: Demonstrate critical understanding of concepts and issues relevant to language use.



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In order to tackle this section of the exam effectively, candidates will need knowledge of the major stages of linguistic development from birth to the age of seven. They should be able to identify different strands of language use within these stages; primarily focusing on phonology/phonetics, grammar and meaning. They should have the ability to identify a range of language features and concepts within each of these strands, including but not confined to:

phonemic contraction	phonology
interaction	ellipsis
object permanence	primary auxiliary formation
over-extension	irregular plurals
convergence	lexis
turn-taking	positive reinforcement
experimentation	categorisation
negatives	CDS
past-tense suffixes	LAD
grammar	LASS
pragmatics	first 50 words
diminutives	naming words
scaffolding	questions
over-generalisation	negatives
innatism	critical period
virtuous errors	proto-words
networking	

A range of information to support teachers in helping students prepare for the exam is available. Possible sources are indicated below, but new material is being generated all the time. Reference to specific theorists is not insisted upon; candidates will be given credit for what they know and can articulate rather than being penalised for putative omissions.



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Although there are no 'prescribed' theorists, it is expected that candidates would have an awareness of a range of figures. These may include but will not necessarily be confined to:

Aithchison - Berko-Gleason - Brown - Bruner - Chomsky - Crystal - Halliday - Lenneberg
Piaget - Pinker - Rescorla - Skinner - Tomasello - Vygotsky

Teaching Activities

Unit Preparation

Students should be introduced to the IPA (see attached) and should practise using it to transcribe short utterances. These could be from sources that they record themselves or from existing sources (see resource list). The three activities listed are designed to build student knowledge and understanding incrementally.

Activity 1 Building foundations

Teacher Summary

The activity consists of students producing a presentation showing a range of words represented as symbols in the IPA alphabet. This would need a brief introduction, and could be linked to CLA by representing the characteristic pronunciation by children at different ages of some commonly used words. Depending on facilities available and/or preferences, the outcome of this activity could be presented either in the form of a PowerPoint or as a poster.

The PowerPoint would allow for brief sound recordings to be incorporated and could also be emailed to others and perhaps used as a teaching tool with subsequent cohorts. Alternatively, it may be useful to consider that a poster could potentially serve as an early preparation for the coursework task, providing students with the opportunity to rehearse some of the skills needed while at the same time learning about a different topic.

Aims and objectives:

- To introduce students to IPA and to give them practice in using it
- To consolidate student awareness of phonetic development and of how children are likely to pronounce some specific examples of high frequency lexis at different ages
- To create representations of the IPA that could be used to help revise CLA and to generate resources that could be shared with other students



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Resources

- Copies of the IPA (Resource 1)
- Materials/notes showing stages of development in CLA
- Depending on whether the intended outcome will take the form of a PowerPoint or a Poster presentation, students would need access to computers or to large sheets of paper/display materials

Duration

The duration of the activity would be at the teacher's discretion. Specific symbols could be designated to different students to make the activity shorter or all could tackle a wider range of symbols if desired.

Activity 2 A day in the life of...

Teacher Summary

Students should be organised into small groups and each group assigned to a particular age or age band. This could be done either at random or else deliberately (as an instrument for differentiation). Each group would create a child-persona, and would then design a storyboard showing a day in the life of that child. The child's utterances would be represented using IPA and would have to be cross-referenced with their imagined grammatical, lexical and pragmatic development so as to render them age-appropriate.

Students would then write a commentary explaining the choices they had made in their representation of the child's language development and the reasons underpinning these choices.

Aims and objectives:

- To foster student familiarity with the IPA
- To revise the stages of phonological development
- To focus on phonological development in a way that integrates it with other aspects of CLA and encourages students to reflect on the relationship between them

Resources

- Large sheets of paper/display materials
- Copies of the IPA (Resource 1)
- Materials/notes showing stages of development in CLA

Duration



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The duration of the activity would be at the teacher's discretion, depending on how detailed the teacher wishes the students' storyboards and commentaries to be.

Activity 3 Now to apply it...

Teacher Summary

For this activity, students will have the chance to engage with the real-world application of speech therapy as a context within which to explore IPA and its usage in identifying and monitoring aspects of children's speech development. Using a stimulus text based on an information website about speech therapy, students will provide additional material in the form of their own webpage, explaining to a defined audience the nature of IPA and also the ways in which it may be utilised by speech therapists within their daily work.

Aims and objectives:

- To enable students to process their understanding of the IPA to produce a multi-modal text in light of the needs of a specified audience
- To focus on a real-world application of IPA usage, with specific reference to the CLA context
- To give students an opportunity to understand more about speech therapy, either as a potential career path for those interested in pursuing the subject beyond A Level and/or as a form of support available for those who need it – of interest, potentially, to all students of language

Resources

- Ideally students would need access to computers (although the activity could be completed on paper)
- Copies of the IPA (Resource 1)
- Resource 2
- Resource 3

Duration

The duration of the activity would be at the teacher's discretion, depending on how much preliminary research students undertake.



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Resources for Activities

Resource 1

List of Phonemic Symbols and Signs (RP)

1. CONSONANTS OF ENGLISH

/f/	—	fat, rough
/v/	—	very, village, love
/θ/	—	theatre, thank, athlete
/ð/	—	this, them, with, either
/s/	—	sing, thinks, losses
/z/	—	zoo, beds, easy
/ʃ/	—	sugar, bush
/ʒ/	—	pleasure, beige
/h/	—	high, hit, behind
/p/	—	pit, top, spit
/t/	—	tip, pot, steep
/k/	—	keep, tick, scare
/b/	—	bad, rub
/d/	—	bad, dim
/g/	—	gun, big
/tʃ/	—	church, lunch
/dʒ/	—	judge, gin, jury
/m/	—	mad, jam, small
/n/	—	man, no, snow
/ŋ/	—	singer, long
/l/	—	loud, kill, play
/j/	—	you, pure
/w/	—	one, when, sweet
/r/	—	rim, bread

3. DIPHTHONGS OF ENGLISH

/ei/	—	late, day, great
/ai/	—	time, high, die
/ɔi/	—	boy, noise
/au/	—	cow, house, town
/əʊ/	—	boat, home, know
/iə/	—	ear, here
/eə/	—	air, care, chair
/ʊə/	—	jury, cure

2. PURE VOWELS OF ENGLISH

/i:/	—	beat, keep
/i/	—	bit, tip, busy
/e/	—	bet, many
/re/	—	bat
/ʌ/	—	cup, son, blood
/ɑ:/	—	car, heart, calm, aunt
/ɒ/	—	pot, want
/ɔ:/	—	port, saw, talk
/ə/	—	about
/ɜ:/	—	word, bird
/ʊ/	—	book, wood, put
/u:/	—	food, soup, rude



Resource 2

IPA – its use in speech therapy

Introduction

Speech therapy may be offered to children whose speech develops slowly or who experience problems in learning to talk. Speech therapists normally transcribe the child's speech using IPA and then use this to assess the child's needs and also to measure progress in terms of their developing speech over a period of time.

Task

(i) Read Resource 3, which has been adapted from a website designed to provide information for parents/carers about the role of the speech therapist.

(ii) Your brief is to write a further page for this website or for one that is similar, explaining what IPA is and how a speech therapist may use it in their work. You should provide a range of examples to illustrate your account. You should explain why several assessments may need to be carried out over an extended period of time and should also offer further reassurance about variations in children's speech development.

Purpose

The purpose of your text is to provide information (about IPA and transcription) and also to provide reassurance.

Audience

Your main audience will be the parents of young children, nursery staff, teaching assistants and teachers.

Additional Guidance

You should ensure that the information is organised clearly, in a way that suits the needs of your readers.



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Resource 3



helps children
communicate

REGISTERED CHARITY 210031

the first stop for information
on children's communication



Speech and Language Therapy Assessment

I'm not sure if my child's speech matches their age. Should I get a speech and language therapy assessment?

Children all learn to talk at different rates and some children develop more quickly than others. We do know however that there are 'typical' ages by which we expect children to have developed certain skills, and most children do. There are some children that do struggle with learning to talk and understand and they will need extra help with this. If you are at all concerned about the way your child is talking or understanding, ask for a speech and language therapy assessment. A speech and language therapist (SLT) will be able to tell you exactly how your child is getting on and if there is a reason to be concerned.



I think my child needs to be assessed by speech and language therapy but I'm not sure how to ask for an assessment. Shall I go through my health visitor?

You can ask for your child to be referred for speech and language therapy by your health visitor or GP. However you can also make a referral yourself; most speech and language therapy services will take a direct referral. You can find details of your local service on the Talking Point website; click on the link on the bottom right hand side. Alternatively ask your health visitor or GP for the contact details of your local SLT service.

My child is due to be seen for a speech and language therapy assessment. What will the assessment involve?

An assessment session will typically last between 30 minutes and an hour. A speech and language therapist (SLT) will usually start by talking to you about your child's early history and development and gathering some information about your concerns. The assessment they do will look at how well your child's speech and language are developing compared to what we would expect for a child of their age.

Depending on the age of your child and the type of difficulty that they have they will do a number of different tasks and activities. For some children, particularly younger ones, the assessment may be done through the



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SLT playing alongside your child, or watching them play. This is known as 'informal' assessment. They will be looking at the way your child understands language, how well they are talking and which sounds they are able to use in their speech.

Sometimes an SLT will carry out a 'formal' assessment. This means they work with your child using a number of published assessments, many of which are standardised. Standardised tests mean that they are able to give your child a score comparing them to other children of the same age. Doing this lets them see if a child is developing as they should be, or if their speech and language is delayed. The speech and language therapist will then tell you how they think your child is doing, and whether they feel your child needs to get some extra help with their speech and language development. They will usually write a report about the assessment.

The original article can be found at: <http://www.talkingpoint.org.uk/parents/speech-and-language/speech-and-language-therapy-assessment>

Other sources of information and data you might find useful.

Online Resources

<http://www.langsci.ucl.ac.uk/ipa/>

(Website of the International Phonetic Association)

http://www.thepsychologist.org.uk/archive/archive_home.cfm?volumeID=25&editionID=210&ArticleID=1999

(A New Language, by Paul Ibbotson - article about CLA, published in 'The Psychologist')

<http://chilides.psy.cmu.edu/>

(Recordings of children's speech)

http://www.thepsychologist.org.uk/archive/archive_home.cfm?volumeID=13&editionID=39&ArticleID=110

(Article by David Messer about the controversies surrounding language acquisition)

<http://www.ed.uiuc.edu/courses/edpsy313/mtpa/mtpa.html>

(Child Language Development videos and transcripts)

<http://www.slideshare.net/sil14/first-language-acquisition-8286976>

(Link to a range of slide shows dealing with language acquisition)

<http://www.speechtherapy.co.uk/index.html>

(Website for speech and language therapists)



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<http://www.talkingpoint.org.uk/parents/speech-and-language/speech-and-language-therapy-assessment>

(Information on children's communication)

Books

Stilwell Peccei, Jean - Child Language: A Resource Book for Students

(Routledge, 2006)

You can see a preview at

<http://books.google.co.uk/books?hl=en&lr=&id=GO5qHe3AD78C&oi=fnd&pg=PR12&dq=child+language+acquisition+resources+skinner&ots=9piu6hbG7b&sig=rp06dRel9upK->

[QusKMO2MuY32c8#v=onepage&q=child%20language%20acquisition%20resources%20skinner&f=false](http://books.google.co.uk/books?hl=en&lr=&id=GO5qHe3AD78C&oi=fnd&pg=PR12&dq=child+language+acquisition+resources+skinner&ots=9piu6hbG7b&sig=rp06dRel9upK-QusKMO2MuY32c8#v=onepage&q=child%20language%20acquisition%20resources%20skinner&f=false)

[e](#)





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