Year 6/7 Background Language Learners/First Language Learners

**Oral — High**

**Content**

Students provide personal information individually in response to the assessor’s prompts. They give their names, the length of their residence in Australia, and information about their language use at home and their families in Korean. During the whole-class activities and small-group interactions with the assessor, they speak on familiar topics such as favourite sports/fruit/actors/food; study; daily life and study of the Korean language. Students often expand on familiar topics to likes/dislikes, Korean pop music, a famous sportsperson, or travel, prompted by the assessor in response to the picture stimuli. At other times, students expand on their topics to the broader context such as learning other languages or after-school/weekend activities without the teacher’s or assessor’s prompts/scaffolding. Topics occasionally expand to abstract opinions or very specialised phenomena. A few others succeed in expanding on topics to some extent with the teacher’s scaffolding. They elaborate their answers by contrasting (e.g., learning Korean vs. learning Chinese), comparing (e.g., with younger siblings), giving reasons or justifications for their opinions (e.g., why Friday is the favourite day), or specifying the context of their prior answer to some extent with occasional scaffolding from the teacher or the assessor.

**Vocabulary**

Students use a good range of vocabulary related to their personal, immediate context and school life. The range of high-frequency items is broad and includes kinship terms and names of food, sports, body parts, countries, the days of the week, colours, and languages (e.g., 한국어, 한국말, 중국어, 영어). Students also use vocabulary with reference to the Korean culture when needed (e.g., 고추장, 김치, 떡국). They give the number of objects/people, time, and dates correctly using both pure Korean and Sino-Korean systems and classifiers (e.g., 개, 시, 본, 살, 시간, 날, 년). They also use qualifying words to add specific meaning to the event they are talking about (e.g., 제일, 한참, 늦게). They use other common words that do not fit in the above categories (e.g., 회사, 거리, 안فاق).

Although students use high-frequency items for factual information or simple ideas/description, they also use very specific words or technical terms to convey meaning accurately and to present abstract ideas. These words are mostly loanwords from Chinese but include some pure Korean words (e.g., 대부분, 당연히, 노숙자, 맞춤법, 전통문화, 30대, 접영, 평영, 계속하다, 귀염다). Some of these words are elicited by the teacher’s or the assessor’s prompts.

Most vocabulary items, including a few low-frequency terms, are chosen correctly. Occasional errors are repaired promptly by cues from the teacher or the assessor. For example, a few students in the group used the word 나비 innovatively to refer to the butterfly swimming stroke. However, as soon as the assessor gave a cue to select another word, they retrieved the correct word ‘접영’. However, most of the time students lapse into English for a word or a short phrase during their spontaneous responses (e.g., … 있었는데 three weeks전에 RSPCA에 찔어요.)

**Forms and Structures**

Students use a good range of grammatical structures and a good range of items with reasonable accuracy. They use a range of basic particles (e.g., -이/가, -은/는, -을/를, 하고, -(이)랑, -에서, -에, 보다) and some conjunctive suffixes such as -아/어서, -고, -니가, -다가, -면, and -는데.

Sentence enders are typically in the informal polite form -아/어요, while they use the formal ending when they conduct interviews between themselves as part of a classroom activity. Students also relate events with time reference using the past tense suffix and add/change slight meanings/nuances by using some auxiliary verbs such as -고 있다, -아/어 주다, -아/어 있다,
Descriptions of Student Achievement

-어/어에 하다, -어/어 보다. They conjugate irregular verbs (e.g. 어려워요, 쉬워요) and use causative and passive suffixes correctly (막히다, 보이다).

Most students use some complex idiomatic structures (e.g. 써 본 적이 있어요, 입어도 되고 안 입어도 돼요. 넘어질 것 같아요. 힘들 것 같아요 … 같은 데에서) and typically use -수 있다 frequently. Some more able students use multiple complex structures in a sophisticated way in a sentence. For example, they often use auxiliary verbs in complex clauses connected by conjunctive clause enders and/or relativiser suffixes as in ‘이어폰 끼고 볼 수 있어서 좋았어요’. They also use other types of complex structures such as ‘열시하고 아홉 시 사야 ‘3년 정도 전’.

Fluency

Most students give an answer in a few sentences. Students’ initial responses to the assessor’s prompts with picture stimuli are usually spontaneous and made in one or two words, while those to the classroom teachers (which are on more abstract topics) take more time for them to answer. When attempts are made to further elaborate, most students have a number of hesitations such as pauses and self-talk (usually in English—‘what’s that?’). A few students are able to make a sustained stretch of utterances with a number of hesitations. In spite of pauses and hesitations, students maintain the flow of interaction reasonably well. Students often lapse into English during the spontaneous interaction.

Intelligibility

Although articulation was clear and spontaneous and pronunciation and intonation were accurate in most interactions, the last one or two words at the end of the utterance tend to fade way. In spite of occasional lapses in pronunciation, their utterances are comprehensible in the context.

Comprehension

Most students appear to comprehend the teacher’s and each other’s speech well. They are engaged in the interaction and there seem to be no communication breakdowns caused by comprehension problems among these students. One of the students says ‘맞어요’ to another student’s comment, demonstrating her comprehension. On another occasion, students nod and/or mimic the teacher’s gestures as the signal of their comprehension.

Communication Strategies

Students maintain communication using a range of communication strategies. They pre-empt the possible answer, correct the teacher’s misinterpretation of their opinions, clarify and correct their answers when problems are identified and provide additional information, and use grammatical/vocabulary items to tone down their statement on certain information they present (e.g. 엄마 아빠한테는…아, 대부분 영어로 말하고요 […]).

Students also act out the situation they describe to help understanding on the part of their interlocutor, mimic the teacher’s gestures to show empathy, and signal agreement to the assessor’s comments by saying short ‘네’ while the assessor speaks. Occasionally, when they have difficulties retrieving certain items (usually vocabulary), they make an explicit request for assistance.

Discourse

Students use register appropriate for the interlocutor who is the teacher or the assessor during the interaction. They use informal polite verb forms when addressing the teacher or the assessor and the plain form when addressing their classmates.

They maintain the cohesiveness of their utterances by using conjunctive suffixes such as -니까, -는데, -고, or -어/어서 to connect clauses, and conjunctive adverbials such as ‘그런데’, ‘그러니깐’, etc. When the utterances become long or they need to pause after such items, they typically add particle -어요 to add politeness, which is common in Korean spoken discourse.