

RUBRIC-BASED ASSESSMENT OF PRIMARY PUPILS’ SPEECH COMPONENTS IN READING LESSONS: CRITERIA, INDICATORS AND LEVELS

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Abstract. Assessment of pupils’ oral speech in grade 4 reading lessons is often holistic and subjective. The thesis presents an assessment system in which pupils’ speech is evaluated by four criteria corresponding to the phonetic, lexical, grammatical and discourse components, each measured through three observable indicators on a 0–3 scale. The system includes diagnostic tasks based on a short literary text, a descriptive rubric, three levels of development and supplementary measures of reading rate and attitude to reading. Procedures for increasing the reliability of assessment are also discussed.

Keywords: speech assessment, rubric, speech components, reading fluency, primary education, diagnostic tasks, reliability.

Annotatsiya. 4-sinf o’qish darslarida o’quvchilarning og’zaki nutqini baholash ko’pincha umumiy va subyektiv yondashuvga asoslanadi. Tezisda o’quvchilar nutqini fonetik, leksik, grammatik va diskursiv tarkibiy qismlarga mos keluvchi to’rtta mezon asosida baholash tizimi taklif etiladi. Har bir mezon 0–3 ballik shkala bo’yicha o’lchanadigan uchta kuzatiladigan ko’rsatkichni o’z ichiga oladi. Tizim qisqa badiiy matnga asoslangan diagnostik topshiriqlar, tavsifiy baholash mezonlari, rivojlanishning uchta darajasi hamda o’qish tezligi va o’qishga bo’lgan munosabatni baholovchi qo’shimcha ko’rsatkichlarni qamrab oladi. Shuningdek, baholashning ishonchligini oshirishga qaratilgan usullar ham yoritiladi.

Kalit so’zlar: nutqni baholash, baholash mezonlari, nutq tarkibiy qismlari, ravon o’qish, boshlang’ich ta’lim, diagnostik topshiriqlar, ishonchlik.

INTRODUCTION

In everyday practice a grade 4 pupil’s answer in a reading lesson is usually evaluated with a single mark that combines impressions of pronunciation, vocabulary, correctness and content. Such holistic evaluation gives little information about which aspect of speech requires attention and is highly dependent on the individual teacher. If speech is understood as a system of interrelated components, assessment should also be component-based, so that teachers can identify specific difficulties and choose appropriate exercises. The aim of this study was to develop an assessment system for primary pupils’ speech components that is transparent, practical for teachers and suitable for research purposes.

METHODS

The assessment system was designed on the basis of theoretical analysis of speech quality requirements in Uzbek methodology, research on reading fluency (Kuhn & Stahl, 2003; Rasinski, 2003), studies of retelling and text coherence (Morrow, 1985; Halliday & Hasan, 1976), and criteria of reading activity proposed by D.A. Muminova (2021, 2024). The indicators were formulated as observable speech actions, and diagnostic tasks were constructed around a short literary text not studied previously by the pupils.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The system includes four criteria, each corresponding to one speech component and measured through three indicators. The phonetic component is assessed by correct pronunciation of sounds, observance of pauses and logical stress, and appropriate sentence intonation. The lexical component is assessed by understanding word meanings from context, finding synonyms and antonyms, and using a new word appropriately in one’s own sentence. The grammatical component is assessed by correct use of word forms, answering in complete and correct sentences, and using different sentence types. The discourse component is assessed by the completeness and coherence of retelling, the use of cohesive devices to link sentences, and the ability to justify one’s opinion.

Each indicator is scored on a four-point scale: 3 points when it is fully present with no or very few errors, 2 points when it is present with some errors, 1 point when it appears only partly or with the teacher’s help, and 0 points when it is absent. A descriptive rubric specifies each score for each indicator; for example, for coherence of retelling, 3 points correspond to a complete retelling preserving the order of events, while 1 point corresponds to a fragmentary retelling. A pupil can thus obtain 0–9 points per component and 0–36 points in total. Three levels are distinguished: high (28–36 points), medium (16–27) and low (0–15).

The diagnostic tasks follow the same structure. Using a short story, the pupil reads a passage aloud (phonetic), explains selected words and finds a synonym and an antonym (lexical), answers questions in complete sentences and builds a sentence from given words (grammatical), and retells the text according to a plan and expresses an opinion about the characters (discourse). Equivalent texts are used before and after an intervention.

Two supplementary measures complement the rubric. Reading rate (words per minute) is recorded separately, since Muminova (2021) identifies correct, fast, expressive and conscious reading as the main criteria of reading skill, and fluency research shows that rate, accuracy and prosody are closely related to comprehension (Kuhn & Stahl, 2003). Attitude to reading is measured by a short questionnaire for grade 4 pupils, drawing on Muminova’s (2024) criteria of reading activity, such as a positive attitude to books and willingness to share impressions with others. Notably, in Muminova’s description of reading levels a reader at the low level cannot retell the content of a work, which confirms the close link between reading development and the discourse component.

To increase reliability, pupils’ oral answers are audio-recorded and scored independently by two raters, and cases with substantial disagreement are reviewed jointly. Because the indicators are formulated as observable actions, the rubric can also be used by teachers for formative assessment, helping them to select exercises for the component in which a pupil shows the lowest score.

CONCLUSION

A component-based rubric with twelve observable indicators, a 0–36 point scale and three levels makes the assessment of primary pupils’ speech more transparent and diagnostically informative than a single holistic mark. Combined with measures of reading rate and attitude to reading, the system can be used both in research on speech development and in everyday teaching. Further work will focus on validating the rubric through expert review and pilot testing in primary schools.

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