



The English Language Learner Can Do Booklet

Grades 9-12

INCLUDES:
Performance Definitions
Can Do Descriptors

For use in conjunction with the
WIDA English Language Proficiency Standards

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Foreword: The WIDA English Language Learner Can Do Booklet

The WIDA Consortium, from its conception, envisioned a system of standards and assessments that would assist schools in teaching academic language to English Language Learners (ELLs). This dream, now a reality, includes the development of practical tools to guide teachers when designing and implementing lessons, monitoring student progress, determining student language proficiency levels, collaborating across programs, and conveying results to ELLs and their parents.

The *WIDA English Language Learner Can Do Booklet* is a very important contribution to meeting these goals. The booklet complements the *WIDA English Language Proficiency Standards* and provides a valuable set of resources aligned to the Performance Definitions for the levels of English language proficiency. WIDA's professional development program works with these resources to assist teachers in embedding academic English into content lessons and working school-wide to ensure the academic success of our culturally and linguistically diverse learners.

The WIDA Consortium recognizes that as a teacher of ELLs, you have a challenging but crucial job within your school. We sincerely hope that this booklet and other WIDA resources help to make your work more effective and your students more successful both in learning English and mastering challenging academic content.



Timothy Boals, Ph.D.
Executive Director
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Introduction

The resources contained in this booklet are intended to support classroom instruction. As with all WIDA products and services, they address language proficiency in relation to five English language proficiency (ELP) standards:

- Social and Instructional Language
- The Language of Language Arts
- The Language of Mathematics
- The Language of Science
- The Language of Social Studies

The following table displays the major components of WIDA's standards-based system. The bold-faced components are included in this booklet and listed in the order in which they appear.

Components of WIDA's Standards-based System	
Standards-based Component	Distinguishing Feature
Strands of Model Performance Indicators as representative of the WIDA English Language Proficiency Standards	Illustrate how English language learners process and use language for each English language proficiency standard, language domain, and language proficiency level <i>by grade level cluster</i>
Performance Definitions	Outline how English language learners process and use language for each level of language proficiency <i>in grades K-12</i>
Can Do Descriptors	Describe how English language learners process and use language for each language domain and level of language proficiency <i>by grade level cluster</i>
Speaking and Writing Rubrics	Document how English language learners process and use language in the domain of speaking or writing for each level of language proficiency based on three criteria: linguistic complexity, vocabulary usage, and language control <i>in grades K-12</i>

The resources contained in this booklet are intended to support classroom instruction. The **Performance Definitions** (see page 4) provide criteria that shape each of the six levels of English language proficiency. The three bullets within each proficiency level in the Performance Definitions represent:

- **Linguistic Complexity**—the amount and quality of speech or writing for a given situation
- **Vocabulary Usage**—the specificity of words or phrases for a given context
- **Language Control**—the comprehensibility of the communication based on the amount and types of errors

The Performance Definitions provide a concise, global overview of language expectations for each level of English language proficiency. They span the spectrum of grade levels which means that educators must interpret the meaning of the Definitions according to students' cognitive development due to age, their grade level, their diversity of educational experiences, and any diagnosed learning disabilities (if applicable). For example, in level 5, “extended oral or written discourse” would probably be indicated by a 1st grade student’s ability to orally retell a story in a series of sentences using simple transition words. However, a middle school student might be expected to exhibit linguistic complexity at level 5 by incorporating a variety of sentence structures in an essay several paragraphs in



length. It is important to recognize that the Performance Definitions are the basis for use of other standards-based resources such as the Can Do Descriptors.

The **Can Do Descriptors** (see pages 6-7) are the centerpiece of this booklet, designed to support teachers by providing them with information on the language students are able to understand and produce in the classroom. What is unique about the Can Do Descriptors is that they apply to all five English language proficiency standards, which means they provide an opportunity to link language development across all academic content areas. The Descriptors are intended to be used in tandem with the Performance Definitions. This is because the quantity and quality of language expected at a particular level of language proficiency may not be fully indicated within the Can Do Descriptor for each language domain and proficiency level.

For example, the Can Do Descriptors show that students may be able to “*identify*” at various levels of language proficiency, but the language (linguistic complexity, vocabulary usage, and language control) they use will vary tremendously. At one end of the spectrum, beginning English language learners may *identify* by pointing or using short words or phrases, whereas at the end of the language development continuum, students will begin to *identify* complex themes and ideas described in detailed technical language.



Performance Definitions for the Levels of English Language Proficiency in Grades K-12

At the given level of English language proficiency, English language learners will process, understand, produce, or use:

6 Reaching	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • specialized or technical language reflective of the content areas at grade level • a variety of sentence lengths of varying linguistic complexity in extended oral or written discourse as required by the specified grade level • oral or written communication in English comparable to English-proficient peers
5 Bridging	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • specialized or technical language of the content areas • a variety of sentence lengths of varying linguistic complexity in extended oral or written discourse, including stories, essays, or reports • oral or written language approaching comparability to that of English-proficient peers when presented with grade-level material
4 Expanding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • specific and some technical language of the content areas • a variety of sentence lengths of varying linguistic complexity in oral discourse or multiple, related sentences, or paragraphs • oral or written language with minimal phonological, syntactic, or semantic errors that do not impede the overall meaning of the communication when presented with oral or written connected discourse with sensory, graphic, or interactive support
3 Developing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • general and some specific language of the content areas • expanded sentences in oral interaction or written paragraphs • oral or written language with phonological, syntactic, or semantic errors that may impede the communication, but retain much of its meaning, when presented with oral or written, narrative, or expository descriptions with sensory, graphic, or interactive support
2 Beginning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • general language related to the content areas • phrases or short sentences • oral or written language with phonological, syntactic, or semantic errors that often impede the meaning of the communication when presented with one- to multiple-step commands, directions, questions, or a series of statements with sensory, graphic, or interactive support
1 Entering	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • pictorial or graphic representation of the language of the content areas • words, phrases, or chunks of language when presented with one-step commands, directions, WH-, choice, or yes/no questions, or statements with sensory, graphic, or interactive support • oral language with phonological, syntactic, or semantic errors that often impede meaning when presented with basic oral commands, direct questions, or simple statements with sensory, graphic, or interactive support



Grade Level Cluster Can Do Descriptors

The grade level cluster Can Do Descriptors have been created by teachers, primarily for teachers, who work with English language learners throughout the consortium. During 2007-08, over 900 teachers and administrators participated in refining and validating five grade level clusters of Descriptors from the original document spanning the K-12 spectrum. These Descriptors for the four language domains—listening, speaking, reading, and writing—and five levels of English language proficiency are based on the WIDA English Language Proficiency Standards.

Interpretation of the Can Do Descriptors

To maintain the succinctness of the individual statements, some basic assumptions need to be made in interpreting the Can Do Descriptors.

1. Sensory, graphic, or interactive support are present through language proficiency level 4, Expanding.
2. English language learners can process or produce the **language** associated with the stated language functions.
3. Linguistic complexity, vocabulary usage, and language control increase incrementally as students move from one English language proficiency level to the next.

The Can Do Descriptors are a sampling of the language expectations of English language learners as they travel along the continuum of English language development. Unlike the strands of model performance indicators that scaffold across levels of language proficiency, the Can Do Descriptors function independently within a given level of language proficiency.

Uses for the Can Do Descriptors

The Can Do Descriptors are a resource, in addition to the English language proficiency standards, to use in classrooms with English language learners. As an instructional assessment tool, language teachers may:

- Share the Descriptors with classroom teachers and administrators to describe the second language acquisition process around the levels of English language proficiency
- Provide resource teachers, such as Title I or literacy coaches, additional information about English language learners
- Use to plan with tutors or mentors who work with English language learners
- Develop or co-develop lessons and units of study with differentiated language objectives
- Set language goals with their English language learners*
- Explain to parents students' progress in listening, speaking, reading, and writing*
- Suggest language goals to be incorporated into Individual Education Programs (IEPs) for English language learners with diagnosed disabilities
- Translate English language proficiency test scores (i.e., ACCESS for ELLs®, W-APT™, and WIDA MODEL™) into classroom practice
- Observe and note levels of student performance as a precursor to using WIDA Speaking and Writing Rubrics for formative assessment
- Use the Descriptors to advocate on behalf of English language learners

** For these uses, the Can Do Descriptors are also available in Spanish on pp. 8-11 of this booklet.*



Can Do Descriptors: Grade Level Cluster 9-12

For the given level of English language proficiency and with visual, graphic, or interactive support through Level 4, English language learners can process or produce the **language** needed to:

	Level 1 Entering	Level 2 Beginning	Level 3 Developing	Level 4 Expanding	Level 5 Bridging	Level 6 - Reaching
LISTENING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Point to or show basic parts, components, features, characteristics, and properties of objects, organisms, or persons named orally Match everyday oral information to pictures, diagrams, or photographs Group visuals by common traits named orally (e.g., "These are polygons.") Identify resources, places, products, figures from oral statements, and visuals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Match or classify oral descriptions to real-life experiences or visually-represented, content-related examples Sort oral language statements according to time frames Sequence visuals according to oral directions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluate information in social and academic conversations Distinguish main ideas from supporting points in oral, content-related discourse Use learning strategies described orally Categorize content-based examples described orally 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Distinguish between multiple meanings of oral words or phrases in social and academic contexts Analyze content-related tasks or assignments based on oral discourse Categorize examples of genres read aloud Compare traits based on visuals and oral descriptions using specific and some technical language 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interpret cause and effect scenarios from oral discourse Make inferences from oral discourse containing satire, sarcasm, or humor Identify and react to subtle differences in speech and register (e.g., hyperbole, satire, comedy) Evaluate intent of speech and act accordingly 	
SPEAKING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Answer yes/no or choice questions within context of lessons or personal experiences Provide identifying information about self Name everyday objects and pre-taught vocabulary Repeat words, short phrases, memorized chunks of language 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describe persons, places, events, or objects Ask WH- questions to clarify meaning Give features of content-based material (e.g., time periods) Characterize issues, situations, regions shown in illustrations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Suggest ways to resolve issues or pose solutions Compare/contrast features, traits, characteristics using general and some specific language Sequence processes, cycles, procedures, or events Conduct interviews or gather information through oral interaction Estimate, make predictions or pose hypotheses from models 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Take a stance and use evidence to defend it Explain content-related issues and concepts Compare and contrast points of view Analyze and share pros and cons of choices Use and respond to gossip, slang, and idiomatic expressions Use speaking strategies (e.g., circumlocution) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Give multimedia oral presentations on grade-level material Engage in debates on content-related issues using technical language Explain metacognitive strategies for solving problems (e.g., "Tell me how you know it.") Negotiate meaning in pairs or group discussions 	

The Can Do Descriptors work in conjunction with the WIDA Performance Definitions of the English language proficiency standards. The Performance Definitions use three criteria (1. linguistic complexity; 2. vocabulary usage; and 3. language control) to describe the increasing quality and quantity of students' language processing and use across the levels of language proficiency.

Can Do Descriptors: Grade Level Cluster 9-12

For the given level of English language proficiency and with visual, graphic, or interactive support through Level 4, English language learners can process or produce the **language** needed to:

	Level 1 Entering	Level 2 Beginning	Level 3 Developing	Level 4 Expanding	Level 5 Bridging	Level 6 - Reaching
READING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Match visual representations to words/phrases Read everyday signs, symbols, schedules, and school-related words/phrases Respond to WH- questions related to illustrated text Use references (e.g., picture dictionaries, bilingual glossaries, technology) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Match data or information with its source or genre (e.g., description of element to its symbol on periodic table) Classify or organize information presented in visuals or graphs Follow multi-step instructions supported by visuals or data Match sentence-level descriptions to visual representations Compare content-related features in visuals and graphics Locate main ideas in a series of related sentences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Apply multiple meanings of words/phrases to social and academic contexts Identify topic sentences or main ideas and details in paragraphs Answer questions about explicit information in texts Differentiate between fact and opinion in text Order paragraphs or sequence information within paragraphs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compare/contrast authors' points of view, characters, information, or events Interpret visually- or graphically-supported information Infer meaning from text Match cause to effect Evaluate usefulness of data or information supported visually or graphically 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interpret grade-level literature Synthesize grade-level expository text Draw conclusions from different sources of informational text Infer significance of data or information in grade-level material Identify evidence of bias and credibility of source 	
WRITING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Label content-related diagrams, pictures from word/phrase banks Provide personal information on forms read orally Produce short answer responses to oral questions with visual support Supply missing words in short sentences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make content-related lists of words, phrases, or expressions Take notes using graphic organizers or models Formulate yes/no, choice and WH- questions from models Correspond for social purposes (e.g., memos, e-mails, notes) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete reports from templates Compose short narrative and expository pieces Outline ideas and details using graphic organizers Compare and reflect on performance against criteria (e.g., rubrics) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Summarize content-related notes from lectures or text Revise work based on narrative or oral feedback Compose narrative and expository text for a variety of purposes Justify or defend ideas and opinions Produce content-related reports 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Produce research reports from multiple sources Create original pieces that represent the use of a variety of genres and discourses Critique, peer-edit and make recommendations on others' writing from rubrics Explain, with details, phenomena, processes, procedures 	

The Can Do Descriptors work in conjunction with the WIDA Performance Definitions of the English language proficiency standards. The Performance Definitions use three criteria (1. linguistic complexity; 2. vocabulary usage; and 3. language control) to describe the increasing quality and quantity of students' language processing and use across the levels of language proficiency.



Descripción de Habilidades: Grados Escolares 9-12

Dado el nivel de desempeño en inglés y apoyados de gráficos, apoyos visuales, y apoyos interactivos hasta el Nivel 4, los estudiantes de inglés pueden procesar o producir **el lenguaje** que se necesita para hacer lo siguiente:

	Nivel 1 Entrando	Nivel 2 Emergiendo	Nivel 3 Desarrollando	Nivel 4 Extendiendo	Nivel 5 Conectando	
ESCUCHAR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Señalar o mostrar partes básicas, componentes, características, o propiedades de objetos, organismos, o personas según indicaciones orales • Emparejar información oral de la vida diaria con dibujos, diagramas o fotografías • Categorizar y agrupar apoyos visuales según los rasgos comunes nombrados oralmente (ejemplo: “Estos son todos polígonos”) • Identificar recursos, lugares, productos, y figuras a través de declaraciones orales y apoyos visuales 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emparejar o clasificar descripciones orales con experiencias de la vida real o ejemplos presentados con apoyos visuales con contenido académico • Clasificar declaraciones orales según el periodo de tiempo • Ordenar apoyos visuales siguiendo instrucciones orales 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluar información en conversaciones sociales y académicas • Distinguir entre los puntos principales y sus detalles en discurso oral de contenido académico • Usar estrategias de aprendizaje descritas oralmente • Categorizar ejemplos con contenido académico descritos oralmente 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distinguir entere significados múltiples de palabras o frases dichas oralmente en contextos sociales y académicos • Analizar tareas con contenido académico según el discurso oral • Categorizar ejemplos de géneros leídos en voz alta • Comparar rasgos comunes basados en apoyos visuales y descripciones orales usando lenguaje específico y técnico 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interpretar situaciones de causa y efecto de un discurso oral • Inferir a partir de un discurso oral que contiene sátira, sarcasmo, o humor • Identificar y reaccionar a diferencias sutiles en el estilo de hablar (ejemplo: hipérbole, sátira, comedia) • Evaluar el intento del mensaje y reaccionar de acuerdo a lo que evaluó 	Nivel 6 - Alcanzando

Los Descriptores Can Do trabajan en conjunto con Las Descripciones WIDA de las Habilidades en los niveles de lenguaje académico de las normas de desempeño del lenguaje inglés, los cuales usan tres criterios (1. complejidad lingüística; 2. uso de vocabulario; y 3. control del lenguaje) para describir la calidad y la cantidad incremental del procesamiento y uso de lenguaje a través de los diferentes niveles de desempeño.

Descripción de Habilidades: Grados Escolares 9-12

Dado el nivel de desempeño en inglés y apoyados de gráficos, apoyos visuales, y apoyos interactivos hasta el Nivel 4, los estudiantes de inglés pueden procesar o producir **el lenguaje** que se necesita para hacer lo siguiente:

	Nivel 1 Entrando	Nivel 2 Emergiendo	Nivel 3 Desarrollando	Nivel 4 Extendiendo	Nivel 5 Conectando	
HABLAR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contestar preguntas de sí/no o de selección múltiple dentro del contexto de una lección o de experiencias personales Proveer información de identificación de sí mismo Nombrar objetos de la vida diaria y vocabulario pre-enseñado Repetir palabras, frases cortas, y partes del lenguaje que han sido memorizadas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describir personas, lugares, eventos u objetos Hacer preguntas interrogativas para clarificar el significado de algo Dar características de material de contenido académico (ejemplo: épocas en el tiempo) Caracterizar asuntos, situaciones, y regiones mostradas en ilustraciones 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sugerir maneras con las cuales se pueden resolver asuntos o proponer soluciones Comparar/Contrastar características, rasgos y patrones usando mayormente lenguaje general y lenguaje específico Ordenar procesos, ciclos, procedimientos o eventos Hacer entrevistas o obtener información a través de interacciones orales Hacer una estimación, predecir, o crear una hipótesis siguiendo un modelo 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Declararse a favor de algo y usar evidencia para defender su postura Explicar asuntos y conceptos del contenido académico Comparar y contrastar puntos de vista Analizar y compartir los pros y los contras de ciertas decisiones Usar y responder a chismes, y expresiones idiomáticas Usar estrategias del habla (ejemplo: substituir palabras cuando no saben cómo se dice una palabra) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dar presentaciones orales con el uso de multimedia sobre el contenido académico Participar en debates relacionados a asuntos de contenido académico usando lenguaje técnico Explicar estrategias meta-cognitivas para resolver problemas (ejemplo: "¿Dime cómo sabes eso?") Negociar el significado de algo en pares o en pláticas del salón 	Nivel 6 - Alcanzando

Los Descriptores Can Do trabajan en conjunto con Las Descripciones WIDA de las Habilidades en los niveles de lenguaje académico de las normas de desempeño del lenguaje inglés, los cuales usan tres criterios (1. complejidad lingüística; 2. uso de vocabulario; y 3. control del lenguaje) para describir la calidad y la cantidad incremental del procesamiento y uso de lenguaje a través de los diferentes niveles de desempeño.



Descripción de Habilidades: Grados Escolares 9-12

Dado el nivel de desempeño en inglés y apoyados de gráficos, apoyos visuales, y apoyos interactivos hasta el Nivel 4, los estudiantes de inglés pueden procesar o producir **el lenguaje** que se necesita para hacer lo siguiente:

	Nivel 1 Entrando	Nivel 2 Emergiendo	Nivel 3 Desarrollando	Nivel 4 Extendiendo	Nivel 5 Conectando	Nivel 6 - Alcanzando
LEER	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emparejar representaciones de apoyos visuales con palabras/frases • Leer señales, símbolos, horarios de la vida diaria y palabras/frases relacionadas con la escuela • Responder a preguntas interrogativas relacionadas con un texto ilustrado • Usar recursos de referencias (ejemplo: diccionarios con dibujos, glosarios bilingües, tecnología) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emparejar datos o información con su género (ejemplo: descripción de un elemento con su símbolo en la tabla periódica) • Clasificar u organizar información presentada en apoyos visuales o gráficos • Seguir instrucciones de pasos múltiples usando apoyos visuales o datos • Emparejar descripciones a nivel de oraciones con sus representaciones en apoyos visuales • Comparar características del contenido académico representado en apoyos visuales y en gráficos • Localizar ideas principales en una serie de oraciones relacionadas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aplicar múltiples significados de palabras/frases en diferentes contextos sociales y académicos • Identificar oraciones principales, puntos o detalles importantes en un párrafo • Contestar preguntas correlacionadas a información específica de un texto • Diferenciar entre hecho y opinión en un texto • Ordenar párrafos u ordenar oraciones en párrafo 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comparar/Contrastar el punto de vista del autor, los personajes, la información o los eventos • Interpretar información apoyada por visuales o representada gráficamente • Inferir el significado de un texto • Emparejar la causa con su efecto • Evaluar cuán útil es un tipo de dato o la información apoyada visualmente o gráficamente 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interpretar literatura a nivel de grado escolar • Sintetizar texto al nivel de grado escolar • Sacar conclusiones por medio del uso de diferentes fuentes de texto informativo • Inferir el significado de datos o de cierta información en material del nivel de grado escolar • Identificar cuando hay un cierto prejuicio en un texto o el grado de credibilidad de una fuente informativa 	

Los Descriptores Can Do trabajan en conjunto con Las Descripciones WIDA de las Habilidades en los niveles de lenguaje académico de las normas de desempeño del lenguaje inglés, los cuales usan tres criterios (1. complejidad lingüística; 2. uso de vocabulario; y 3. control del lenguaje) para describir la calidad y la cantidad incremental del procesamiento y uso de lenguaje a través de los diferentes niveles de desempeño.

Descripción de Habilidades: Grados Escolares 9-12

Dado el nivel de desempeño en inglés y apoyados de gráficos, apoyos visuales, y apoyos interactivos hasta el Nivel 4, los estudiantes de inglés pueden procesar o producir **el lenguaje** que se necesita para hacer lo siguiente:

	Nivel 1 Entrando	Nivel 2 Emergiendo	Nivel 3 Desarrollando	Nivel 4 Extendiendo	Nivel 5 Conectando	Nivel 6 - Alcanzando
ESCRIBIR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Etiquetar diagramas y dibujos, con contenido académico usando bancos de palabras/frases Proveer información personal en documentos leídos Escribir respuestas cortas, con apoyo visual, a preguntas hechas orales Proveer las palabras que hacen falta en oraciones cortas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hacer listas de palabras, frases o expresiones relacionadas con el contenido académico Tomar apuntes usando organizadores gráficos o formas modelos Formular preguntas interrogativas, de sí/no o de selección múltiple siguiendo ciertos modelos Mantener correspondencia con diferentes propósitos sociales (ejemplo: notas entre amigos, correos electrónicos) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completar informes usando plantillas Componer narrativas cortas o cuentos expositivos Bosquejar ideas y detalles usando organizadores gráficos Comparar y reflexionar sobre su desempeño en relación a un criterio de desempeño (una rúbrica) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Resumir apuntes de un texto o de una charla de contenido académico Revisar composiciones a través del uso de una narrativa o de una reacción oral Componer narrativas y cuentos de no ficción con una variedad de propósitos Justificar o defender ideas y opiniones Crear informes con contenido académico 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Crear informes de investigación usando múltiples fuentes de información Escribir algo original que represente el uso de una variedad de géneros y de discursos Criticar, editar con compañeros y hacer recomendaciones sobre la escritura de otros usando una rúbrica Explicar con detalles, fenómenos, procesos o procedimientos 	

Los Descriptores Can Do trabajan en conjunto con Las Descripciones WIDA de las Habilidades en los niveles de lenguaje académico de las normas de desempeño del lenguaje inglés, los cuales usan tres criterios (1. complejidad lingüística; 2. uso de vocabulario; y 3. control del lenguaje) para describir la calidad y la cantidad incremental del procesamiento y uso de lenguaje a través de los diferentes niveles de desempeño.



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