English Language Components and Literacy Development

English is a morphophonemic language that includes both sound and meaning. Language proficiency and the achievement of grade-level literacy skills are strongly correlated to one another. Explicit teaching of all language components during English Language Development (ELD) instruction is crucial to the attainment of English proficiency in listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

**Language Components**

**Phonology** - the rule system within a language by which phonemes can be sequenced, combined, and pronounced to make words

Phonemes must be taught in context. Familiarize English learners with sounds and sound combinations through read-alouds, participatory chants, poems, rhymes, call and response, children and folksongs.

When English learners can hear and attend to these sounds, they are ready to match them with graphic representations.

**Examples**
The /th/ of thank and /th/ of this
The /j/ of jello, edge, giant
The /z/ of zero, has
The /v/ of voice, very

**Morphology** - the study of the structure of words, particularly the smallest units of meaning in words: morphemes

**Examples**
Nat- is a root. Nature is a noun; natural is an adjective; naturalist is a noun; naturally is an adverb.

**Orthography** - the writing system of a language

Spelling supports literacy instruction. It is important for English learners to understand how the spelling system works and see how some spelling rules are predictable.

**Examples**
Every English word ending in /v/ is spelled with - ve.

For more information...

- American Speech and Hearing Association
  - [Phonemic Inventories in Multiple Languages](#)

- Colorin Colorado
  - [What Does Research Tell Us About Teaching Reading to English Language Learners?](#)

- Echevarria, Dr. Jana and Bear, Donald
  - [Language Transfers: The Interaction Between English and Students’ Primary Languages](#)

- The Mini-Matrix Maker provides support in visualizing word structure.

- Kieffer, Michael J., Lesaux, Nonie K. [Breaking Down Words to Build Meaning: Morphology, Vocabulary, and Reading Comprehension in the Urban Classroom](#) - how to incorporate instruction on word structure to improve reading comprehension and speed language development.

- Moats, Luisa [How Spelling Supports Reading](#) - explores the nature of the English language’s writing/spelling system to understand the sequence in which we need to teach orthography. This crucial information is needed to map ELD instruction to match grade level requirements.
<table>
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<th>Semantics</th>
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| The meaning of words and the relationships among words as they are used to represent knowledge of the world. To know a word means knowing it in the following dimensions:  
- The ability to define a word  
- The ability to recognize when to use that word  
- Knowledge of its multiple meanings  
- The ability to decode and spell that word.  
**Examples**  
The word **table** has multiple meanings. The words **order** and **sequence** have similar meanings. | The system of rules governing permissible word order in sentences. Grammar is an important component in the development of literacy skills and language proficiency.  
**Examples**  
Our district recruits new teachers” is a sentence; “New teachers our district recruits” is not a sentence. | Organizational conventions in longer segments of oral or written language.  
**Examples**  
Paragraph structure; cohesive ties; genre; conventions such as story structure. | The social and cultural contexts in communication and its influence on language interpretation.  
**Examples**  
To one person I say, ”That is my seat!” To another, I say, ”Excuse me, my ticket has that seat number.” |