



4th International Conference
**Teaching English to Young Learners:
Assessment and Learning**

BOOK OF ABSTRACTS



University of Kragujevac, Faculty of Education in Jagodina, Serbia
5-6 June 2015





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**Teaching English to Young Learners:
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Keynotes

*Teaching English to Young Learners:
Assessment and Learning*

Challenges in Assessing Young EFL Learners

Marianne Nikolov

*Department of English Applied Linguistics, Faculty of Humanities
University of Pécs, Hungary*

The aim of this talk is to discuss the most important issues and challenges in the teaching and assessment of young language learners. Due to the world-wide spread of early English, recent discussions have shifted from “the younger the better” to “how good young learners are”. Thus, the emergence of accountability has moved assessment to the foreground. In the first part of the presentation I will frame the field as an innovation in order to explain how early language learning (ELL), teaching and assessment form a larger system. This approach will offer insights into how ELL works in a range of contexts around the Globe and how the classroom, institutional, educational, administrative, political and cultural subsystems interact. I will argue that a narrow focus on assessment or certain aspects of assessment practice offers only limited insights. Change requires a look at the whole assessment culture (Davison, 2013) as well as the interactions between teaching, learning, and assessment.

In the second part, I will discuss the construct of early learning and its implication. The construct is often assumed to be simple (learning starts early). However, a lot of variation characterizes models according to when programs start, how much time they allocate to ELL, what type of curriculum and method they apply, who the teachers are, and how they implement the program.

In the third part I will present how challenges were met in some recent assessment projects implemented in various contexts: (1) how frameworks and tests were developed and validated; (2) how young learners were assessed in small-scale research projects and in larger-scale national assessments: and finally, (3) how assessment *for* learning and self-assessment are gaining ground.

Affect and Assessment in TEYL

Jelena Mihaljević Djigunović
Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences
University of Zagreb, Croatia

The importance of special characteristics of children is often stressed in the literature on assessing young language learners, and mention is sometimes made of affective characteristics. Research concerning affective dimensions of assessment has mostly been done on adult language learners, while young learners' feelings about assessment have not been systematically investigated.

Based on findings of the existing studies on affect and assessing young learners (e.g., Aydin, 2012; Boyle & Charles, 2010; Hasselgreen, 2005; Mihaljević Djigunović, 2015; Nikolov, 2012), it may be fair to say that affect permeates assessment, and potentially has a considerable impact on the process as well as outcomes of assessment.

In this talk my focus will be on the role of attitudes, motivation, anxiety and self-concept in assessment of young EFL learners. I will be looking into the relationship of these affective learner characteristics and assessment policies, practices and outcomes, and will be drawing on studies carried out in different socio-educational contexts. Reference will be made to teacher beliefs, curricular aims and parents' expectations, Relying on insights from both quantitative and qualitative research data, I will try to show that in case of young learners the relationship of affect and assessment is, first of all, highly complex: it involves interaction of a number of individual and contextual factors. I will also try to show that this relationship is not stable, but changes over time and should be considered highly dynamic as well. Implications for future research as well as implementation of assessment which would take into account the affective dimensions will also be discussed.

Going Beyond the Language? Cognitive Demands and Metacognitive Opportunities in Young Language Learners Assessment

Shelagh Rixon

University of Warwick, Great Britain

In this talk I should like to explore some aspects of assessment of language learning with Young Learners that go beyond simply asking the children to reproduce, produce, create or demonstrate surface comprehension of words or sequences of words in the language in question. One important area of debate, and seeming difference among cultures, is the extent to which tests of the language attainments of children should require them to draw upon resources beyond the ability to operate with the language itself, for example the use of reasoning and real world knowledge.

Assessment for Learning

JoAnn (Jodi) Crandall

*University of Maryland, Baltimore County, (UMBC)
Maryland, USA*

There are many reasons why we assess young learners and many ways that we can assess them. Too often, however, we focus on assessment “of learning,” on how much our learners have achieved, using traditional, formal tests. We tend to forget the important role of assessment “for learning,” using alternative or informal assessments that monitor students’ progress and help us to identify students who need extra support or things that we need to spend more time on in the classroom to improve student learning. Formative assessment is just as important as summative assessment – or maybe, more so! This talk will provide guidelines for assessing young learners, identify the many types of assessments (both traditional and alternative) that can be used to assess children’s oral or written language, and focus on a number of informal, alternative assessments and rating systems that teachers can use during instruction. These include observations, conferences or interviews, story retellings, writing samples, projects, portfolios, recordings, and self-assessments, which can be rated by brief feedback, checklists, notes, or rubrics. The emphasis will be on what can be accomplished in limited time.

Workshops

*Teaching English to Young Learners:
Assessment and Learning*

Tom Sawyer's Apple: Intrinsic and Extrinsic Motivation in TEYL Assessment'

Eric Petter Sakari Bergman
Pearson Central Europe

Based on personal experiences as a teacher and/or student in the cultures and educational systems of the USA, Finland and Croatia, this lecture will compare and contrast various assessment and motivational methods. By discussing the varied ways assessment and motivation interplay in the teaching and learning of languages in each system, as well as utilizing scholarly work on intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, a discussion of methods for long-term language acquisition will take place. Each educational system has its benefits and drawbacks and, while teachers are necessarily part of a wider pedagogical and cultural context, aspects of these three education systems will be discussed in order to determine what assessment and motivational methods might benefit language learning in the classroom setting. For example, the educational paradigm in the USA relies on creativity, problem solving and individual gain; the Finnish system, while often topping the PISA survey, does not rely on homework or long hours; and the Croatian system emphasizes performance in terms of exams, grades and further education and employment possibilities. The reliance on extrinsic motivation in many education systems and extracurricular settings, such as families, as well as the need for discipline in the classroom setting will be discussed. In an attempt to go beyond a theoretical framework, the lecture will provide some practical examples of how individual teachers can endeavour to harness students' intrinsic motivation and participants will be asked to share their insights in interactive activities.

Using Assessment to Help Our Pupils to Become Better Learners

Rob Sved
Oxford University Press

The process of assessing our learners is a real opportunity to develop learning skills in our pupils. In this workshop we will look at ways of making our pupils more aware of the assessment process and discuss how

this could improve their language skills and also their ability to perform in more formal assessment. We'll look at self-assessment, peer assessment, portfolio development and conferencing and how these can help to develop more critical, communicative, creative and collaborative learners.

Paper Sections

*Teaching English to Young Learners:
Assessment and Learning*

Section One

Session 1a

Function Words and Lexical Challenge – Elicited Imitation for Study of Child L2 Oral Ability

Dorota Campfield

The Educational Research Institute, Poland

Elicited Imitation (EI) was used to assess oral production skills of 645 child L2 English learners in instructional settings. The study accompanied a large-scale investigation into effectiveness of foreign language teaching in Polish primary schools.

The Polish primary foreign language curriculum emphasises exposure to spoken language as key in its focus on oral skills. Evaluation of young learner oral production skills is challenging since learners still remain largely pre-conversational after three years of instruction. Spontaneous speech is difficult to elicit, as is response during guided interaction or interview. EI, the repetition of pre-recorded sentences, was considered best to evaluate oral production.

The task itself evokes little anxiety and is therefore preferable to narrative or interactive oral tasks for emergent production skills. Presenting young learners with pre-recorded sentences to repeat should (a) reduce processing load and free necessary space in working memory, enabling the tapping of burgeoning structures and (b) intimidate less than tasks which demand L2 communication skills. Additionally, as recently argued, even for proficient learners, EI may be preferable to communicative oral tasks to assess L2 proficiency owing to its potential in measurement of processing efficiency – a vital but generally underrepresented aspect of L2 proficiency.

The focus of this paper concerns item design, scoring, IRT and *post-hoc* analysis of the influence of cue sentence lexis on performance. The aim was to discover how *lexical and function word density, morphological complexity and sentence length* contributed to item difficulty. *Sentence length*, as the number of words, proved a better predictor than syllable count. Function words also contributed and their importance to item construction is discussed. EI proved a robust, reliable and relevant method for estimation of young L2 learning with direct classroom applications.

Répétez: Sentence Repetition as a Measure of Lexical and Grammatical Knowledge for Young Learners of French

Louise Courtney

University of Reading, Great Britain

This paper presents the findings of a longitudinal study into the linguistic development of 254 young learners of French in England, across primary to secondary school transition. The overarching research question was: ‘what is the impact at the end of primary education and in the first year of secondary school of two different teaching approaches on children’s underlying knowledge lexis and of the grammatical system of the foreign language?’ Thus the challenge was to design a battery of assessment tasks that were quick and simple to administer, but that were sufficiently sophisticated to provide a holistic view of linguistic proficiency whilst being sensitive enough to demonstrate significant progress. Two oral French assessment tasks were designed and administered: a sentence repetition (or elicited imitation) task (SR) and a photo description task (PD). Both tasks were designed to enable an analysis of grammatical and lexical knowledge, with PD task included to confirm the validity and reliability of the SR task results. The tasks were administered at three time points: at the end of Year 5 (penultimate year of primary school, aged 9–10), in the spring term of Year 6 (last year of primary school, aged 10–11) and after the first term of Year 7 (first year of secondary school, aged 11–12). The results indicate that both tasks were effective in discriminating learners across the ability range with high test–retest reliability and significant correlations between results of the two tasks. Learners made statistically significant progress year on year for both tasks although this progress was small in real terms, confirming that progress in language acquisition takes a long time and indicating that fine-grained assessment tools will be needed for schools to demonstrate meaningful progress in this context.

Assessment Very Much FOR Learning!

Shelagh Rixon

University of Warwick, Great Britain

Formative assessment is often seen mainly as a vital tool in enabling teachers to make appropriate adjustments to their originally planned teaching. A step beyond this involves helping children themselves to make adjustments by thinking about their own language learning and deciding on the next steps or the strategies that they feel would help them the most. Such an approach is closely linked with the development of autonomy and language learning/using strategies. In this presentation I will be inspired by activities and dialogue between teachers and children following the principles of the *Assessment for Learning* movement (Black & Wiliam 1998) that I have seen at work in UK primary schools. My examples will come mostly from mother tongue reading and writing development, but will be seeking to bring to the conference examples of its use in the teaching and learning of foreign languages.

Assessing Young English Language Learners in Serbia: Teachers' Attitudes and Practices

Danijela Prošić-Santovac, Vera Savić and Shelagh Rixon

Faculty of Philosophy, University of Novi Sad, Serbia

Faculty of Education in Jagodina, University of Kragujevac, Serbia

University of Warwick, Great Britain

Assessment of children's foreign language learning is nowadays seen as an integral part of teaching. As a consequence, assessment procedures should be congruent with the factors determining children as learners: their age (motor, linguistic, social and conceptual development), content of language learning (oral skills, vocabulary development and discourse level of language use), teaching methods (use of games, songs, rhymes, interactive activities), aims of language learning (communication), and theories of language learning (social interaction and scaffolding). The aim of this research was to present an overview of teachers' practices and attitudes towards assessment in EFL classes in the first four grades of primary school in Serbia. With this aim in mind, a survey questionnaire was distributed to 114 EFL teachers from Northern, Central, and Southern Serbia, in order to gain insight into the practices and attitudes of teach-

ers from different parts of the country. The research instrument was partly derived from the questionnaire developed by Rea-Dickins and Rixon (1999), and was administered during the academic year 2014/15. The results show that a great majority of teachers (93 per cent) assesses young learners on their achievements, although 14 per cent of the participants feel that children should not be assessed in EFL classes at this age. The most frequently reported purpose of the assessment was providing feedback to young learners, with oral skills and grammar being most commonly in focus. By far the most frequently used assessment tool turned out to be tests, with matching being the preferred activity. Two thirds of the participants claimed to have had no training in preparing and carrying out the assessment of young learners, while a half felt they needed additional knowledge. The survey, therefore, points to the need of Serbian teachers for more focused in-service training which would strengthen their assessment skills.

Session 1b

Assessment of Young Learners in the Pre-Literacy Period

Biljana Radić-Bojanić

Faculty of Philosophy, University of Novi Sad, Serbia

Given the fact that English is an obligatory subject in Serbian schools since the first grade, many parents opt for an early start and enroll their children in English classes while they are still in kindergartens. As beneficial as it may be for the development of children's foreign language competence, this poses a certain problem for teachers in terms of assessment. Namely, although assessment is not a school-based requirement, as opposed to primary schools, it does provide teachers with the necessary information in terms of individual development and progress of children. Since literacy is developed only after children start the first grade of primary school, the question is how the teacher can implement assessment in the pre-literacy period. This paper intends to present several solutions for this situation, all based on the competences that children in this age group already possess (their world knowledge, developing oral competences in English as a foreign language, the teacher's custom-made assessment chart, etc.). All the solutions will be illustrated with examples based on one semester of work with young learners aged 5–6 and will be contextualized in the wider scientific and professional framework.

Assessment of Communication Skills at the Beginning of Acquiring English as a Second Language

Danijela Radović

Pedagogical Institute of Vojvodina, Serbia

The focus of this paper is on formative assessment and its implications on teaching and learning process and on an English language program based on the communicative-experiential approach. The aim of the research was to assess the program and its effects on communication

skills at the beginning of acquiring English as a second language. In order to assess communication skills a four-part test has been administered twice, in March and again in June 2014, to fifty three children (thirty boys and twenty three girls) in a public kindergarten in Novi Sad where the English language program has been implemented. In the first part of the test the children were supposed to understand a question and to show objects asked for, in the second part to answer a simple question, in the third to follow the commands, that is, to understand verb phrases, and in the fourth part to create and produce a phrase in English. The obtained assessment results proved our hypothesis that children would be more successful in the repeated test after two months of everyday intensive activities in English and they can be used to enhance children language learning and teacher effectiveness.

Attitudes of Parents and Their Influence on Process Efficacy of Early Simultaneous Learning of Two Languages

Aleksandra Šuvaković

Faculty of Philology and Arts, University of Kragujevac, Serbia

The paper introduces the results of researching learning two foreign languages in early age, English and Italian, observed through attitudes of parents and pupils. Although parents are not active participants of the educational process, on basis of the results of the performed research we present their acquaintance with the educational process, as well as if their attitudes regarding the early learning develop in a positive direction regarding the elapsed time and the satisfaction with the achievements of their children. Existing correlation between the satisfaction of parents and their positive attitude regarding the early learning of foreign languages is the indicator of the importance of the need to acquaint parents in due course about all the benefits of learning two foreign languages regarding the cognitive and cultural development of children.

A Comparison of Two Different Approaches in Teaching and Assessing Young EFL Learners' Pronunciation

Danica Jerotijević Tišma

The Faculty of Philology and Arts, University of Kragujevac, Serbia

Several factors are thought to predominantly affect target language pronunciation: mother tongue interference, students' age, amount of exposure, phonetic ability and certain affective factors such as motivation and personality. However, the influence of the afore mentioned factors may be reduced by the implementation of an adequate teaching approach in a systematically applied pronunciation instruction.

The present study hence aims at investigating the effect of the application of various carefully selected techniques of the two distinct teaching approaches, Communicative Language Learning and Kagan's version of Cooperative Language Learning, in enhancing young Serbian EFL learners' pronunciation of allegedly problematic sounds such as interdental fricatives /ð/, /θ/ and approximants /r/ and /w/. In order to answer the proposed research questions we conducted an experiment in which we applied the afore mentioned techniques consistently for three months during the private English lessons to twelve nine-year-olds, who have been learning English for three years. We analysed the findings of pre-test and post-test examinations, and the results show positive effects in favour of Kagan's Structures. Based on the findings of the conducted investigation, we provide suggestions to teachers for the refreshment of the slightly marginalized segment of EFL teaching, i.e. the almost entirely neglected phonetic instruction. We further explore the possibilities for the assessment of pronunciation by examining the teachers' views regarding which applied approach facilitated more appropriate evaluation of the learners' pronunciation of target sounds. The teachers participating in the study were asked to form rubrics for the assessment of pronunciation in both approaches and we later interviewed them in order to obtain required information.

Section Two

Session 2a

Opportunities for Formative Assessment in the Storyline Approach

Sharon Ahlquist

Kristianstad University, Sweden

According to Vygotsky, a more accurate picture of what a child knows and is capable of doing is revealed when the child is working with a more able partner. Taking into account the positive effect that motivation is claimed to have on learning, we might add that the optimal context for assessment is when the child is working with more able others on a task which engages their interest, imagination and emotions and which, consequently, pushes them to work at the boundaries of their competence. The Storyline approach provides such a context.

In Storyline, a fictive world is created in the classroom, typically for a period of four to six weeks. Learners, working together in small groups, take on the roles of characters in a story, which develops as they work on Key Questions. These are open questions, linked to the curriculum, combining theoretical and practical subjects and involving the learner in meaningful, communicative language tasks which require individual, pair and small-group work. A typical comment from young – and older – learners alike is that Storyline is ‘fun’!

This paper will present the findings of a study in which a class of Swedish 11–13 year olds took on the roles of families moving into a new street in a fictive English town. As they worked through the story, taking part in a project to live in a more sustainable way, dealing with problems such as the dumping of rubbish in their street and the behavior of anti-social neighbours, and finally organising a street party, the learners developed their communicative language skills and their knowledge of vocabulary and grammar in English. As one young learner described the experience: ‘The more fun it is, the more you learn’ – a view confirmed by the teachers who assessed their pupils’ development during the Storyline.

Exploration of Classroom-Based, Formative Assessment of Early (French) Language Learners in English Primary Schools

Alison Porter

University of Southampton, Great Britain

Foreign language (FL) learning for younger learners, in instructional settings, is an international phenomenon and classroom-based assessment is often implied in primary curricula which conform to an objectives model of learning, privileging precise skill measurement and, in some contexts, formal reporting of outcomes (Shepard, 2000).

However, classroom-based, formative assessment of FLs in younger learner contexts is problematic. A dearth of empirical evidence relating to early, limited input FL settings means that FL policy (and therefore attainment objectives) are often not grounded in empirical evidence and formulated with “limited knowledge and understanding of teaching practices in the field of young learners” (Copland & Garton, 2014; Garton, Copland & Burns, 2011: 1). This is evident, for example, in England where the National Curriculum (2014) recommends targets grounded in a four skills model (speaking, listening, reading and writing) which are not informed by any evidence concerning what might be achievable in the FL in the time available. This is further compounded by awareness that assessment of early language learning in instructed settings is an under-researched area (Mackay, 2005) and the tensions which are inherent in assessment opportunities which are primarily formative but “operate in an accountability regime” (Mackay, 2005).

This paper will discuss how teachers, practising in primary school FL classrooms, might develop practical and practicable formative assessment tools. Whilst this study concerned the teaching and learning of French in English primary schools (learners aged 9–11 years; $n=45$), it nevertheless provides some evidence of short-term linguistic outcomes and classroom-based assessment in early language learning settings. Findings have the potential to contribute to the exploration of delivering classroom-based, formative language assessment in a range of FL primary school settings.

Impact of Formative Assessment on the Confidence of Young Learners in a Foreign Language Classroom

Marina Cvetković and Olja Milošević

*Faculty of Teacher Education in Belgrade, University of Belgrade, Serbia
International School of Belgrade, Serbia*

Formative assessment is beneficial both for teachers and students. Language learning experiences that are used as formative assessment tasks provide teachers with valuable information about their students' progress. The activities used for formative assessment also identify if some aspects of instruction need to change. Through formative assessment tasks students receive feedback from their teacher that helps them improve performance and perform well on summative assessment tasks.

This paper consists of two parts. The introductory part deals with theoretical background. The main part of the paper presents findings of a small scale qualitative research that was carried out with students aged 10–11. The aim of the research was to establish how formative assessment tasks can impact confidence and motivation of young learners in a foreign language classroom. Findings indicate that students perform much better if they receive regular feedback on their performance and that formative assessment tasks could contribute to enhancing student motivation and thus improving language acquisition. This research supports the idea that regular feedback from the teacher and peers will contribute to the quality of work of young learners.

Challenges of Alternative Assessment Approaches in TEYL

Tatjana Dumitrašković

Teachers' Training Faculty, Bijeljina, Bosnia and Herzegovina

Assessment tools and methods in the process of teaching are very important for teachers to evaluate student progress and achievement, but they also help in evaluating the usefulness of the curriculum and the teaching methodology. The assessment of the young learners of English as a foreign language in early primary school grades is closely related to the characteristics and principles of teaching young learners. Those characteristics and

principles are based on the ideas of how a foreign language is acquired and learned by young learners, taking into consideration their characteristics of emotional development, literacy and weakness that distinguish them from older learners. So, the assessment of young learners' progress should be done in a way that does not make students feel uneasy. Much research shows that many teachers still use traditional, more formal oral assessment through interviews or self-developed tests as mostly used assessment tools. Other types of assessment, such as language portfolios for example, are rarely used. The teachers most often assess speaking and reading skills, and they most often use assessment referring to vocabulary.

As new approaches and methodologies in teaching English as a foreign language emphasise developing communicative skills through the integration of language and content, the traditional form of testing is not an efficient tool to assess young learners whose learning and acquiring English involves communicative activities. Those activities should always be closely linked to the child's experience of the world and should involve moving, pointing, circling or colouring in a picture in order to encourage young learners to complete the task, especially for children in the early grades. The paper deals with less formal assessment techniques such as role play, self-assessment, peer and group assessment and student portfolios that can be used to successfully measure student progress and achievements.

Session 2b

Self-assessment in the Young Learner Classroom: Teacher Perspectives

Anžela Nikolovska

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The surge of interest in learner autonomy has been paralleled by an increased interest in learner-centered assessment. Among the assessment techniques which are believed to promote learners' life-long learning skills, self-assessment plays a pivotal role. It is not only used to complement other types of assessment; it is "...rightly seen as one of the pillars of learner autonomy" (Harris 1997:12).

The presentation reports the results of a study aimed at exploring Macedonian primary school teachers' beliefs and experience regarding the implementation of self-assessment with young-learners aged 10 -12. The survey investigated the following research questions: what areas of language learning are usually the focus of student self-assessment, which self-assessment formats are most frequently used, what are the benefits and problems of using self-assessment with this particular age group and whether teachers train learners to self-assess. The findings revealed that teachers have their students self-assess their speaking and writing skills more often than their reading and listening skills, whereas knowledge of vocabulary and grammar is more often self-assessed than the language skills. All of the teachers said that they train learners how to self-assess and the most commonly used self-assessment formats are can-do-statements and check-lists. In addition, all of the teachers believe that their students benefit from self-assessment, some of the benefits being: developing reflective skills, critical thinking, becoming aware of learning objectives and how to achieve them, raising student motivation and responsibility for learning, etc. Among the very few problems mentioned were finding the time to check students' self-assessment checklists and students' perceptions of self-assessment as far less important than teacher assessment. Taking into consideration the impact of teacher beliefs on shaping teaching practice, teachers' perceptions of student self-assessment as a valuable experience are likely to lead to promoting the regular use of self-assessment.

Teacher's Beliefs about Teacher Talk in a Young Learners' English Classroom

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Over the last decade, the research on teacher talk has shifted its focus from the quantity of teacher talk, that is, the amount of time a teacher spends talking during a foreign language class, to the quality of teacher talk, i.e. how effective teachers are in facilitating learning and encouraging communicative language exchange by means of speech modifications they make when talking to their students, the way they react to errors or the kind of questions they ask. Researchers found that teacher talk can be a valuable source of comprehensible input and that it may promote communicative environment in the classroom and authentic language use.

The aim of this paper is to investigate the beliefs of teachers who teach English to young learners about teacher talk. For this purpose, we conducted a quantitative research using a questionnaire constructed for this research that included statements about constructive teacher talk (direct error correction, content feedback, prompting, extended wait time, repairing) and obstructive teacher talk (turn completion, teacher echo, extended use of initiation–response–feedback). It is expected that there will be significant differences in the beliefs of the teachers with respect to the teachers' gender, age, years of teaching experience and the size of the class in which they teach.

Performance-Based and Authentic Assessment for Cambridge YLE Starters Exam

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In this paper we will present the way we use performance-based and authentic assessment with our young English learners to suit testing purposes of all four language skills in accordance with Cambridge YLE Starters Exam. This exam is the lowest level in the system of the Cambridge Young Learners English Tests and comprises of Listening, Reading/Writing and Speaking parts. It lasts for 45 minutes and assessment consists in earning

shields for each part of the test. There is no pass or fail mark, as each child gets a Cambridge English award. Being below Level A₁ on the CEFR, it is aimed to give children a good foundation for language learning, as well as show their parents and teachers how they are doing in English. The score of 10 shields indicates the minimum limit for preparing students for the next level.

Taking into account previously mentioned characteristics of this exam we, the teachers, set ourselves two goals. The first one was to minimize student-related unreliability and the second one to increase test validity, both to the maximum extent. For a starting point in this quest of ours we took the materials that the course we have been using (Oxford University Press New Chatterbox by Derek Strange) offers. It has two forms of assessment – tests and portfolio. Tests follow each three units, and are aimed to assess pupils' knowledge through testing all four skills. Portfolio contains activities which encourage students to reflect on their own learning. However, making our young students reflect on their own learning was quite challenging a task for us, as well as a lead to create ways of evaluating their knowledge through alternative assessment. Here we also present the way we design rubrics for each task and self-assessment and how we incorporate them in classroom settings.

Individualized Education Planning and Assessment

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In relevant literature on assessment and evaluation a difference is made between the two concepts. Assessment is said to relate to the process of gathering information about students' learning for the purpose of improving either the learning or the teaching process, whereas evaluation entails interpreting information gathered through assessment and making a final judgment about students. Ideally, while assessing, the teacher should consider students individually and monitor their personal progress not comparing them to other students. While evaluating, on the other hand, the teacher compares each student's achievement with the predetermined criteria that are the same for all students. However, it is quite common nowadays that a teacher has a student with special needs in his class. Not only is he supposed to know how to approach such a student, but

he is expected to create an individual education plan for the student that includes alternative goals, special expected outcomes and alternative standards. Individualized education programs, teaching students with special needs, assessment and evaluation of those students are special skills that take time to be acquired as at many faculties in Serbia there are still no formal courses that equip students with adequate knowledge and skills.

The aim of this paper, therefore, is to analyze the current situation in Serbia with respect to the obligations imposed on English language teachers regarding teaching students with special needs and their knowledge and skills to cope with this requirement. Moreover, the paper also aims at providing examples of adaptation and modification strategies that can be implemented in our schools and improve the quality of teaching and assessing students with special needs.

Section Three

Session 3a

Assessing Young Learners: Shifting from Grading to Motivation

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The assessment conundrum in young learner (YL) pedagogy may be resolved by developing a motivational evaluation scheme.

Formal assessment serves mainly administrative need to grade, certify and promote the best students to the next level. As such, it can create a devastating effect on some students, who do not fit the approved averaged standard (late bloomers, different learning style, and also advanced students). Besides, the fear of assessment creates tension in the classroom, and the need to give the expected answer kills creativity. This conflict is the most obvious in teaching YL, who are guided by emotions and do not always realise the need and the effects of formal assessment.

YLs' motivation rests not on the long-run objectives, but on their emotional satisfaction, which is largely determined by praise and support. Matching the success of the students against averaged assessment criteria undermines several fundamental principles of pedagogy: do not demand beyond the capacity, address the personal needs of every student; evaluate progress by measuring individual growth, etc. Besides, the existing assessment schemes still lack validity, as they fail to incorporate multiple intelligence tasks, personal qualities, creativity, language material learnt autonomously, etc., which leads the teacher away from the instruction purpose.

The suggested time tested in class motivational evaluation scheme makes noticeable and appreciated any effort made by the students, harnesses YL's natural desire to compete, introduces versatile encouragements and helps create enthusiastic atmosphere in the classroom. Awarding tokens, prizes, honourable titles and certificates, competing in games, role-playing, making videos, performing for parents, teaching compensatory skills and shot-cuts to success do not involve much extra labour input from the teacher, but bring YL to obviously better results.

Multilingualism and Language Awareness in a Bilingual Primary School

Johanna Schnuch

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Different studies have shown enhanced metalinguistic awareness in bilingual children. At the same time language awareness is said to promote further language learning and multilingual children are thus expected to make use of their previous experiences for the acquisition of additional languages. However, since *language awareness* is (still) not a unified construct and especially with regard to the very heterogeneous situations of multilingual children, it is questionable, to what extent findings from other contexts apply for the specific situation in German primary schools. The underlying claim of my dissertation project is therefore as follows:

Due to the very diverse language learning experiences of multilingual children, not all of them possess an equally enhanced language awareness. Furthermore, the extent to which they are actually able to draw upon it differs greatly. Differences should manifest themselves on all dimensions (cf. James & Garrett 1995). The planned explorative study aims at comparing the language awareness of approx. 40 children who attend (A) a bilingual (English–German) classroom and (B) a conventionally taught classroom and who either grow up with more than one language at home, or are raised monolingual. The motivation, beliefs and attitudes (affective and motivational dimension) will be inquired through a structured interview; while the cognitive level of language awareness will be assessed through different metalinguistic tasks.

The underlying hypothesis is that bilingual classrooms yield a special potential to support multilingualism. It could firstly have an alleviating effect and reduce the inequality between mono- and multilingual children that at least a certain amount of lessons is not taught in the majority language. Secondly, the immersive context should provide a general language-friendly atmosphere, help children to harness their language learning experience and thus support the development of language awareness.

Large-Scale Testing and a Young Learner – Lessons from a Primary School Leaving Exam in English

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To say that assessment is an indispensable part of teaching / learning process is stating the obvious. The existing body of research has helped educators to take a more critical look at summative assessment, with formative assessment, also called ‘assessment for learning’ (e.g., Black and William 1998), taking the position of the kind of assessment truly conducive to learning.

However, despite the research findings and the prominent role given to assessment in a number of books on teaching English to young learners (Cameron 2001, Halliwell 1992, Moon 2005, Rixon 1999), there is evidence suggesting that language teachers of young learners are not skilled in assessment (Edelenbos and Johnstone 1996, Enever 2011, Nikolov, 2000). This could be one of the reasons why formative assessment still prevails in mainstream foreign language education, sometimes taking the form of large-scale tests, which provide a quick way of collecting comparable data used as ‘non-refutable evidence for accountability purposes’ (McKay, 2006, p.316), but may not necessarily be an appropriate tool for young learners.

This paper will look at how appropriate is large-scale standardised testing for young learners, based on a new primary school leaving exam in English, administered to Polish 12-year olds in April 2015 for the first time. The way pupils approach exam tasks will be analysed and appropriacy of exam tasks to young learners’ developmental profile will be discussed. Young learners’ voices will also be taken into account to find out how the intended main beneficiaries of test-taking view the process.

Words Don't Come Easy: The Magic Element of Vocabulary in Primary English Coursebooks and Strategies to Develop It

*Dionysia Saratsli, Alexandros Vagenas, Thomai Alexiou
and Matthaïoudakis Marina*

Aristotle University, Greece

Vocabulary selection for the purpose of language learning has been a burning issue since the 1930s when Michael West developed the *General Service List* so as to facilitate and develop learners' reading skills. Thanks to technological advances, corpora studies have informed the relevant vocabulary research and the establishment of frequency criteria for the selection of vocabulary to be included in the materials designed for language learning classes.

The purpose of this paper is to examine the lexical items selected for two EFL coursebooks designed for Greek young learners and set out the criteria that render them a useful tool for teaching English as a foreign language. To be more specific, the study focuses on *Magic Book 1* and *Magic Book 2* that have been designed and developed for third graders in the Greek state primary schools under the programme *English for Young Learners* (PEAP project) as well as on the *New Course Book* that is currently used for English instruction in the fourth grade of the state primary school.

The aims of the present study are to: (a) examine whether the vocabulary included in *the three books* is frequent according to the first three frequency lists, developed by Nation using the frequency data of the *British National Corpus* (BNC); (b) compare the vocabulary of the *three books* with the *English Vocabulary Profile* issued by Cambridge University Press; this list contains the lexical items, words and phrases that learners use in the different levels A1–C2 of the Common European Reference Framework (CEFR).

Moreover, there will also be a separate comparison between *Magic Book 1* and the *New Coursebook* and another one between *Magic Book 2* and the *New Coursebook*. The goal of these comparisons are: (i) to identify the degree of overlap between the vocabulary items of the two books and (ii) to examine the degree and quality of transition from the coursebook of the third grade to that of the fourth grade so as to draw certain implications for further research. Furthermore, the thematic areas, which are covered in these books, will be presented in order to investigate the extent of their contiguity with the interests and needs of the target age group. Last

but not least, certain strategies developing vocabulary will be suggested for more effective learning and recall.

The Impact of Assessment on Young Learners' Motivation in EFL Learning

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Does assessment make young learners better and more motivated L2 learners? It is a known fact that assessment may be a source of motivation for young learners provided it is conducted properly. Foreign language teaching methodologies directed at young learners should take into account young learners' positive attitudes towards learning, their relatively short attention span, cognitive development, playfulness, creativity and vivid imagination. Assessment, as an integral part of L2 teaching and learning, should reflect and complement L2 teaching practices in learner-centred and child-friendly classrooms. The purpose of assessment is to aid teaching and learning by checking young learners' language-learning progress, providing thus important feedback to children and teachers alike, by encouraging a positive classroom atmosphere, and promoting and maintaining strong motivation for learning English as a foreign language.

In order for assessment procedures to have positive washback on L2 learning and teaching they need to be non-threatening to young learners. In other words, they need to arouse positive emotions in children about L2 learning, about themselves and others (peers, teachers, parents), and they need to encourage young learners by showing them what they have learned within a given time-frame and consequently give positive feedback, thereby boosting their motivation and helping them to persist in their efforts. Various assessment tasks can perform these functions: structured assessment tasks, self-assessment, language portfolios, peer assessment, observation, etc.

The aim of this paper is to investigate young learners' perceptions of the effect of assessment on their motivation for EFL learning, and the effectiveness of the existing forms of assessment on their motivation. A questionnaire reflecting quantitative research methodology will be constructed exclusively for that purpose and will be administered in some elementary schools in Novi Sad. In the same vein, the study will include elementary-school EFL teachers in Novi Sad in order to find out whether and to what extent assessment aids and complements the teaching process.

Session 3b

Reflection in Action: Strategies for Teacher Self-Evaluation

Ivana Ćirković–Miladinović

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Given classroom complexity and uncertainty, teachers face lots of challenges during their teaching experience. They face specific problems they should respond to and manage, so the world of the classroom demands that teachers have practical knowledge that enables them to negotiate the practical problems they encounter. The fact that reflection in action is a personal, spontaneous, and a tacit process, means that it limits teachers' opportunity to seek or receive feedback from others or from the reflective episode itself. Moreover, reflections in action focus on events and situations that arise spontaneously and without planning (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1990). In a real sense, reflection in action is reactive, not proactive. This kind of evaluation has one problematic characteristic: the teacher is both an evaluator and an evaluatee (Airasian & Gullickson, 1994). Having in mind the previously mentioned challenges for teachers in the classroom, it would be useful for them to be familiar with some strategies for teacher self-evaluation. In the paper, a few specific examples of self-evaluation strategies will be presented. The paper will focus on using a self-reflection tool, as well as provide some examples, whose aim is to help teachers to develop an awareness of their practice, including their beliefs, knowledge, activities, and effects.

Results of an Online Diagnostic English as a Foreign Language Vocabulary Test Battery Among Young Learners

Istvan Thekes

University of Szeged, Hungary

The aim of our study was to explore the word knowledge and the organization of English as a foreign language vocabulary of 5th graders. We had

created an online vocabulary test applicable for beginning young learners (YLS) of English on the basis of the foundations of diagnostic assessment (Vidákovich, 1990). We also intended to gain information concerning the basic vocabulary of young learners (primary school students) and to gain data concerning the characteristic features of successful word acquisition.

Meara (2009) interprets vocabulary breadth as the number of words learners know. Using visual stimulus is an efficient way of assessing breadth of vocabulary. There are validated diagnostic tools that use pictures to assess foreign language vocabulary knowledge. *The Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test* (Dunn and Dunn, 1997) is a type of such instrument. There are also other studies that reported the use of visuals (ter Doest and Semin, 2005; Farley et al., 2012). Online lexical tests have mushroomed since the early 2000s. The most oft cited ones are Lex30 (Meara, 2008) and the VORST (Laufer and Nation, 2001). As for testing young learners' vocabulary, the studies of Orosz (2005) and Yu-Cheng (2008) provide useful data on the vocabulary size of YLS.

In our research, an online diagnostic test triplet was developed for the testing of English vocabulary of 5th graders. Besides the considerations of the curriculum, we selected the words based on such corpora as the BNC (Kilgarriff, 1996) and the COCA. Each test consisted of 18 tasks, and the task structure was identical in all cases. All tasks consisted of a picture and four words. Students had to decide whether each word or phrase was suited to the picture or not. We differentiated between two types of pictures: simple and complex. Students had to apply either identification or implication to solve the tests.

We hypothesized that (1) there will be a significant difference between the knowledge of A1 level words and that of A2 level words (2) high-achievers will have better knowledge of A2 words and, (3) they will be better at knowing adjectives and verbs than average learners and (4) word class will influence test scores.

We gathered data in June 2013. 352 5th graders participated in the study. They took the tests during class time. The reliabilities of the tests are acceptable (Cronbach's alphas: 0.78, 0.78, and 0.86). Students knew A1 words significantly better than A2 words ($p < 0,05$). As for high-achievers, they had significantly better results in the knowledge of A2 words than learners with average scores ($p < 0,05$). With further regard to high-achievers, they proved to have better knowledge of such word classes as adjectives and verbs. Thus these word classes are good predictors of word knowledge. We also found evidence that the recognition of nouns is easier for learners than that of verbs, adjectives and adverbs. We gained useful data in terms of future research which are discussed.

Where There Are No Grades or Criteria: How Do Swedish EYL Teachers Assess Achievement?

Agneska Jablonska Eklöf and Thorsten Schröter
Mälardalen University, Sweden

In Swedish school, grades are generally not awarded in any subject until year 6, and official learning objectives for the subject English are not specified before that year either, despite the fact that English is one of three so-called core subjects in Sweden and that children start learning the language in school sometime during years 1–3. There are *general* guidelines for how progress is to be assessed in different subjects and communicated to guardians; however, with no grades to assign and no expected learning outcomes to relate to, assessment in English will, presumably, depend on the school's policy, the tools available, the parents' or other guardians' expectations, and the teacher's discretion. In other words, the question is not only what English teachers in Sweden think they ought to do with their pupils in class when there are no detailed requirements, but also how they deal with the issue of assessment under such circumstances.

In order to get some idea of the assessment-related practices at Swedish schools, we will carry out a study based on group interviews with at least 10–12 EYL teachers from three different primary schools, focusing on the following areas of enquiry: What is the teachers' view of assessment in English in years 1–5, and how do they do it in practice (if at all)? What problems, challenges and solutions can they report on? What, according to the teachers, are the guardians' expectations with regard to assessment, and are these expectations related to a family's background? What tools, including ICT-based ones, are available and/or used for assessment and for teacher–pupil–parent communication about pupils' progress?

The results to be shared at the conference will, it is hoped, shed some light on how EYL teachers may and do deal with assessment in a context where there is very little official guidance.

Assessment Strategies in TEYL in Lower Elementary Schools in Serbia– A Scope for Change

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The paper looks into the ways in which testing and assessment are carried out in grades 3 and 4 of lower elementary schools in Serbia. It researches and analyses different assessment strategies as perceived in class and discussed with teachers and pupils in the above mentioned grades. It further looks into the rationale behind choosing such assessment strategies and especially into their effects on the motivation of learners and the possibilities of alternative forms of assessment.

The paper points to the language areas being most frequently assessed and the ways the assessment is carried out. It discusses to what extent such forms of testing and assessment contribute to assessment goals and whether they are appropriate taking into consideration the age of the learners and the subject matter. Teachers' opinion about why they use such assessment strategies is also stated and discussed. The impact of such forms of testing and assessment on students, especially their motivation to learning English as a foreign language at a young age is explored.

Guidelines for possible and feasible alternatives to the current assessment strategies are also provided.

Session 3C

The Use of Pidgins and Creoles in Education of Young Learners

Jovana Tomić and Ana Zdravković

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It is a fact that education depends on communication, a two way education between pupil and teacher. The most obvious medium for such communication is the language. In this paper is analysed the relation between pidgin and creole languages and the standard English language. The study should answer the question whether there is the similarity between pidgin and creole languages on one side and small children's talk on the other side, in terms of restricted structure and how this similarity is reflected in the classroom. This claim is based on the "Baby Talk Theory", which is also known as the "Foreigner Theory", according to which pidgin languages resemble to the talk of small children. What we can conclude is that the small children learned to speak an imperfect version of English language or simplified their own language in terms of phonology, lexis and syntax, therefore their language resembles the pidgins and creols in many aspects.

Can Young Learners Learn from Stories

Sylvie Dolakova

Freelance, Czech Republic

Can stories teach them about the world, culture, human relations and life lessons? Do we know any strategies to maximise the potential of the stories to (very) young learners? And can we use stories as a tool of assessment of little children? At this presentation you will find some inspiration and ideas to exploit stories in areas such as language, science, mathematics, music, art and craft, action games. Strong emotional involvement helps children get the most of stories.

Practicing listening skills, communication, pronunciation, vocabulary and grammar during the lessons is included free of charge.

An Exercise in Self-Assessment in TEYL

Marija Lukač and Ivana Bobić

Grammar and Economics High School, Kovin, Serbia

The paper presents the results of a small-scale research with Year 3 and Year 4 primary school students (both in a state school and a tutoring setting), where the students were asked to create their own tests based on a course book unit. The aim of the action research is to see if children's learning and test achievements have been improved by the experiment.

The results suggest improvement in the later test, created by the teacher. Furthermore, we noticed differences in teacher-student relationship, student – studying English relationship, and student-test relationship.

We can conclude that this can be a useful method of improving student's test results and their involvement in the lessons.

English from the Very First Word

Sylvie Dolakova

Freelance, Czech Republic

Do you know how to start teaching English to (very) young learners from the first moment? You don't want to or can't translate every word, but will they understand English-only approach? And how can they learn about their progress? A few practical tips for working with young beginners the way they will enjoy (and you too).

Using Audio-recording Tools for Oral Language Assessment of Young Learners

Olivera Ilić

'Sveti Sava' Primary School, Požarevac, Serbia

Speaking is of great significance in young learner's language development as it provides the foundation for language learning and literacy development. However, there are many issues teachers and assessors have to consider in relation to oral language assessment of young learners – their cognitive and social skills, motivation to participate in the assessment and

test anxiety. The aim of this paper is to present how audio–recording can help to create psychologically safe environment for the assessment of children’s language abilities. It also explores various audio–recording tools and presents a set of activities which can be used in oral language assessment. Finally, the paper describes how students’ audio–recordings can be used after the assessment for further language development.

Motivation Is the Principle Measurement in Assessment of Children with Disabilities and Learning Difficulties

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Faculty of Law and Business Studies, Serbia

Introducing and accepting new ideas takes time. Change usually makes teachers insecure because it challenges their beliefs and attitudes in teaching. Inclusion brings new social values and equity among students. It insists on changes that must occur within groups and the environment towards specific needs of students.

Teaching young learners English as a second language is always demanding. Children bring different beliefs and abilities to class. Their motivation can be very low and oriented towards other subjects that are recognized as more important at home and in their family. Learning English is yet another area that can be besides their inborn potentials. Teaching students with sensory impairments and learning difficulties becomes a new task that has to be integrated with new styles of teaching where assessment is not only done by testing and examination. Introducing alternative measures in assessment comes in first place.

Supporting motivation of learners is the first step for the teacher in an inclusive classroom. Sensing real abilities, differentiating tasks and adjusting strategies for every learner is crucial to placing English as a second language in class. Most students can learn and follow the pace of teaching but a few of them will only be assessed through the effort that they give in class. Sometimes it is teacher’s role to include the level of motivation as the only criteria for assessment.

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