Early Language Learning: Theory and Practice in 2014

Umeå University, Sweden
12th–14th June, 2014

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Organising committee

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Welcome from the conference organising committee

We are delighted to welcome you to Umeå University for the international research conference on Early Language Learning.

With this conference we hope to provide a stimulating environment for sharing the latest research and ideas, creating a sense of community between researchers, language teachers, language advisers and policy makers working globally.

A glance at the programme for the conference shows that we have managed to bring together many of the foremost scholars in the field to present and discuss new ideas and research directions in early second and foreign language learning. In addition, we are confident that the plenary sessions, together with five colloquiums will offer an inspiring prospect. And last, but by no means least, we hope you will enjoy the evening social events, providing you with more opportunities to connect with like-minded people from around the world.

We wish you a great conference and a wonderful time in Umea - welcome!

Organising committee
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Keynotes

ELL: Theory and Practice in 2014

Umeå University, Sweden
Thursday 12th June 09.30-10.30, Hörsal A, Lindelhallen

**Excellence in the primary language classroom**

*Gail Ellis, MBE*
*British Council Paris, France*

The teaching of foreign languages to children around the world continues to develop involving more and more children at ever younger ages. However, teaching quality varies from one country to another and often even within countries resulting in very different language learning experiences for children. But what is teaching quality and what do children think are the characteristics of the ideal foreign language teacher? What do excellent primary school teachers do that makes their practice different from good primary teachers? Drawing on a range of studies dating back to the 1970s and more recent research findings from the UK, I will present the teacher characteristics and pedagogical strategies that make this difference. These characteristics and teaching strategies can be found in good classrooms everywhere but it is the combination of them together which transforms good to excellent practice thereby benefitting all learners and impacting on learning outcomes. Teaching strategies include good organisational skills, establishing a positive classroom learning environment, personalising teaching, using purposeful interaction and using systematic reviewing techniques. I will draw on my practical experience of primary English language teaching to show how these teaching strategies can be applied to the primary language teaching classroom.

Friday 13th June 09.00-10.00, Hörsal A, Lindelhallen

**Adding new hues to the ELL rainbow**

*Jelena Mihaljević Djigunović, Marianne Nikolov*
*University of Zagreb, Croatia; University of Pécs, Hungary*

Early language learning (ELL) is currently a very active field in both education and research. According to Johnstone (2009), it has re-emerged for the third time (first in the 1960s-1970s and then again in the 1990s). This third wave is characterised by having many different stakeholders, who have vested interest in the outcomes of ELL. Emerging changes can be observed in approaches to (1) early foreign language learning, (2) teaching processes, (3) accountability and (4) research methodology.

In this talk the authors will offer a critical overview of the findings gathered in a growing number of studies that have looked into various aspects of ELL. They will consider the field of ELL from a number of perspectives. At the young learners’ level the focus will be on individual learner characteristics and language behaviour as they impact children’s foreign language development. The teachers’ perspective will be considered in terms of their contributions to classroom processes that have been shown to be most beneficial to young learners’ proficiency development. Through analysis of the existing ELL curricula, especially in terms of the set achievement targets and how the expected learner outcomes are being assessed in different contexts, the authors will discuss the currently present trends on the international ELL scene. They will argue that the findings of new empirical studies of early foreign language learning slowly but consistently demand a reinterpretation of the value of ELL, and that ELL has now become a research field in its own right.
The role of parental socio-economic status in young learners’ English learning: A case in East Asia

Yuko Goto Butler  
*University of Pennsylvania, USA*

As English has increasingly come to be seen as a lingua franca and a means towards success in the globalizing world, a substantial amount of time, effort, and resources have been invested in teaching and learning English around the world. East Asia is no exception to this trend. In East Asia, the seemingly excessive zeal for learning English has been referred to as “English fever” (e.g., Park, 2009), and in recent years this zeal for learning English appears to have spread among even young learners of the language. Wealthier parents and their children typically have access to various forms of English education that less well off families may not. Thus, we may be completely misled if we only pay attention to what is going on in classrooms, even in contexts where English has traditionally been considered as a foreign language. We can also easily imagine that young learners are highly susceptible to the influences of surrounding adults and their attitudes towards English. In this presentation, I examine young learners of English in select East Asian countries, and describe the wider social and educational contexts in which they are situated. I seek to understand how parental socio-economic status (SES) and the attitudes of parents and other surrounding adults towards English relate to their children’s motivation and their learning of English at the early stages of their English education. I illustrate my points by presenting some of the data from my research on this and other topics in mainland China. The talk concludes with policy implications for dealing with socio-economic disparities that I observed in early English education.
An overview of current themes and research on second language learning in the early school years.

- Examines past and present research evidence on bilingualism, second language, and foreign language learning in childhood.
- Explores current trends towards a younger starting age for foreign language learning.
- Highlights the similarities and differences in child L2 learning across different contexts.

Victoria A. Murphy is Associate Professor in Applied Linguistics and Second Language Acquisition at the Department of Education, University of Oxford, and leads the Research in English as an Additional Language research team.
Colloquia

ELL: Theory and Practice in 2014

Umeå University, Sweden
Colloquium 1: Research into pre-primary language learning: tapping into the learning affordances of picturebooks

Coordinator: Sandie Mourão
CETAPS, Universidade Nova, Portugal

Teaching languages to pre-primary children has been documented as becoming more frequent and yet there continues to be very little research that highlights appropriate practices or approaches. With a view to sharing grounded evidence of language learning procedures, this colloquium brings together three researchers whose work involves pre-primary language learners. Each presenter brings to the session distinct experiences of educating children through languages: ? Distinct in context - ranging from bilingual to foreign language learning. ? Distinct in language choice - English, Portuguese, Spanish and Swedish. ? Distinct in practices - ranging from target language learning only to valuing multilingualism and linguistic repertoires. The thread uniting these presentations is the role that picturebooks play in the children's language learning experience. Each presenter will provide evidence of procedures and practices and share their related results. In so doing they will show how the use of picturebooks enabled them to focus on language use and development and provided the affordances for children to develop their aural skills, a meta-linguistic awareness and a multilingual becoming. The colloquium will expound on the main outcomes and implications and provide suggestions for language education in pre-primary education.

Are there common grammatical patterns in L1 and child L2 acquisition of English?

Teresa Fleta
Alcalá de Henares University, Madrid, Spain

In many schools children start bilingual education early. However, there is a need to gain insight into the manner in which children learn and grow proficient in the additional language (L2). This paper provides information on how the English clause develops in the interlanguage of four Spanish child learners starting bilingual schooling at age 3. The main aim of the research was to document the children's spoken language development over time by delving into the morphological and syntactical systems. The study is interesting for three reasons: children's age made the subjects ideal for the study of L2 development; children were available for longitudinal observation over a period of four school years; and, it was the first time that child L2 acquisition of English had been studied in a bilingual school under the generativist framework. The data for this study were obtained from audio-recorded longitudinal samples of eighty-eight 20-minute conversation sessions between the researcher and four typically developing three-to-seven-year-old children. The material to elicit language from children was mainly picturebooks. With the same amount of exposure and with similar instructional circumstances, data show that successful English L2 learning is built upon the aural skills. The results also give evidence of the existence of common grammatical patterns for L1 and child L2 acquisition of English. These findings suggest that children seem to be making use of the mechanisms and principles that are known from first language acquisition. In order to compensate for the quantity of L1 input, quality L2 teaching can provide children with the amount and intensity of input necessary for implicit language learning at school. This paper ends with recommendations on how to assist children to build on listening skills by teaching them how to learn to listen.
Meta-linguistic development during shared read-alouds: a case of valuing linguistic repertoires

Sandie Mourão
CETAPS, Universidade Nova, Lisbon, Portugal

Within sociocultural theory the use of a learner’s linguistic repertoire in a second language-learning context is said to create connections between communicative purposes, social relationships, learning and reasoning. Few studies provide evidence of how very young children use the languages at their disposal in a foreign language context. Data from a larger empirical study, which aimed at understanding the affordances provided by picturebook illustrations for language development, will be selected to support the notion that L2 development is also the result of valuing a child’s linguistic repertoire. The study involved the filming of the repeated read-alouds of three English picturebooks with three class groups of L1 Portuguese children and the subsequent small group retells of these same picturebooks. The resulting data were transcribed, and the children’s verbal and physical responses were analysed according to a grounded theory of literary understanding. One particular category emerged which provided evidence that children were actively considering one or other, or both of the linguistic codes available to them in their linguistic repertoire, demonstrating an emerging meta-linguistic awareness. These considerations exhibited controlled reflection and evidence of phonological, word and pragmatic awareness within both languages. These findings provide evidence that young children are able to spontaneously reflect on the use and form of languages in their linguistic repertoires and naturally move between the L1 and the L2 taking into consideration a personal and collective use of both codes. The implications point towards pre-primary language teachers valuing the languages available to a group of children as well as being aware of how to support an emerging meta-linguistic stance on and in the children’s languages.

Multilingual becoming in reading

Anna Bylund
Linköping University, Sweden

What happens when you read aloud from a book in a language you don’t know with a group of very young users of that language? Choosing the path of not knowing or being in control, might create apparently disparate, immeasurable outcomes. This paper is produced with video-ethnographic material from such a book reading practice in an institutionally bilingual (Spanish-Swedish) preschool in Sweden. In Swedish preschool, institutional bilingualism is still an exception but the amount of bi- and multilingual children attending Swedish preschools has increased remarkably in recent years and the Swedish curriculum underlines the importance of enhancing children’s competence in all their languages. How bilingual education works in preschool and what practices are produced in bi- or multilingual contexts in preschool are questions that still need to be widely explored. Generally pedagogical arguments often derive from a monolingual picture of language acquisition and learning which keep different languages apart. This paper works with an understanding of language as a heterogeneous reality with endless collective connections. Putting the Deluezian-Guattarian theoretical concept of assemblage to work, the presenter will map how the presented book practice functions, highlighting the importance of, and interaction between, the multiple different parts of the research context. By doing this, the aim is to create one possible understanding of how, what might appear as disparate outcomes - like non-lexical translations of words, untimely semantic associations and nonsense/ morphological/phonetic play - can be described in terms of creative outcomes that produce diversified ways and possibilities for children to become with language(s). This opens up discussion on what might be called a multilingual becoming (as different from bi- or
multilingual development) and what significance this has in relation to language and learning in the early years.

**Colloquium 2: Learning a foreign language in the English primary school**

*Coordinator: Florence Myles*
*University of Essex, UK*

Since the early 2000s there has been revived interest in foreign language learning in English primary schools (DfES 2002, DCSF 2005). From 2000-2010 there was significant investment in teacher education and resources, and a formal decision has recently been taken for foreign language to become a compulsory subject for children aged 7-11, from 2014 onward. The initiative is partial compensation for the removal of compulsory language study from the middle years of secondary education, but is also grounded in popular beliefs that ‘younger is better’. However, very limited curriculum time has been found for FL instruction (1 hour per week according to government advice, 30-40 minutes per week in practice in many schools: Cable et al 2010). This colloquium brings together findings from recent research studies which have examined key aspects of the language learning actually achieved in the English primary school. Paper 1 addresses the role of age in L2 learning, reporting a longitudinal study of children aged 5, 7 and 11 who learned French from scratch for 38 hours through an oracy-led approach. Results showed that vocabulary learning was similar in the longer term for all age groups, but that older children had a significant advantage in grammar learning. Paper 2 reports a study which tracked the development of French vocabulary among a cohort of 10-11 year old children as they progressed from the last year of primary school to the first year of secondary school. Paper 3 reports a study of L2 literacy development among French beginners in Years 5 and 6, and relates this to overall proficiency development, to working memory and to L1 literacy. On the basis of all 3 studies, concluding discussion will reconsider the role of age, L1 literacy and working memory in instructed FL learning in the primary school.

**The younger the better? A comparison of 5, 7 and 11 year olds learning French in the classroom in the UK**

*Florence Myles*
*University of Essex, UK*

The role played by age in foreign language learning remains unclear (see e.g. Muñoz 2006, 2008). On the one hand it has often been assumed that young children are more likely to achieve native speaker like levels of ultimate attainment, as is the case in naturalistic settings. On the other hand, empirical evidence from instructed foreign language learning has shown repeatedly that older learners are more efficient and make more rapid progress at least in the short term, presumably because of their ability to draw on a wider range of cognitive strategies. This paper reports on a study comparing how children ages 5, 7 and 11 learn French in the classroom in the UK. Each group received 38 hours of instruction, taught by the same teacher following similar instruction. Children's progress in learning French was assessed at intervals on a number of dimensions including vocabulary and morphosyntactic development. Their working memory and literacy skills were also assessed, as was their motivation and attitude towards learning French. All lessons were captured on video and transcribed, thus providing a complete record of target language input and children's engagement. The data was analysed for the development of vocabulary and grammar, the role of gestures in facilitating language learning, the attitudes, motivation and learning strategies used by the children, as well as links between different aspects of linguistic development and working memory and literacy.
Lexical development in young instructed L2 learners of French: the role of individual and contextual factors across the primary to secondary school transition.

Louise Courtney
Reading University, UK

Over recent years excellent progress has been made in implementing primary language teaching in the majority of English schools. However, previous research in a range of contexts has shown that a critical success factor for the success of early foreign language learning lies in the successful transition of pupils from primary to secondary school. Transition studies related to core curriculum subjects have reported a hiatus in progression across transition and it is well documented that poor transition arrangements contributed to the failure of the last primary languages initiative in England in the 1960s. This paper presents the findings of a longitudinal study of 26 young learners of French as they transfer from primary to secondary school and is focused on vocabulary development. Vocabulary plays a central role in all current models of language competence and also figures prominently in the assessment of language proficiency (de Jong et al. 2012). Nevertheless, there is a paucity of empirical data concerning primary-aged learners. Moreover, previous vocabulary studies have tended to focus on the developmental trends between different groups of learners and therefore the effects of individual and contextual factors have not been explored in detail. Data from oral and written production tasks were transcribed and analysed alongside data from motivation questionnaires, school literacy levels and cognitive assessments. The results show that whilst the learners made progress over the 12 months, individual and contextual factors exerted a powerful influence over the learners’ development and this influence became more pronounced as the learners moved through the education system.

An early start to French literacy: learning the spoken and written word simultaneously in English primary schools

Alison Porter
University of Southampton, UK

English education policy and curricula promote reading and writing as an integral part of second language learning; yet recent evidence notes that literacy remains undeveloped in both primary and secondary school Modern Foreign Languages (MFL) programmes (Cable et al., 2010; OFSTED, 2011). Reports of limited foreign language literacy achievement (Erler, 2004; Macaro & Erler, 2008; Woore, 2009: 3) led to calls for research-based solutions and initiatives to improve the “parlous state” of foreign language learning in English schools (Macaro & Mutton, 2009: 117). This paper presents findings from a 10 month action research study exploring the teaching and learning of MFL literacy in two English primary schools with 45 beginner learners of French aged 9-11. Whilst existing pedagogical advice often tends to favour the acquisition of oral forms first (Jones & Coffey, 2006: 46, 50), this teaching intervention proposed that print and sound can be developed simultaneously with beginner learners and adopted an integrated, systematic approach to L2 literacy, combining explicit phonics instruction with meaning based activities. Learner attainment was tracked through a mix of weekly classroom-based observations and formal tests. Findings support the premise that beginner-level FL literacy and oracy can develop simultaneously and offer an insight into the role of individual differences (L1 literacy, verbal working memory) in the development of both FL literacy (reading aloud and reading comprehension) and FL general proficiency measured by receptive vocabulary and elicited imitation.
Colloquium 3: Investigating English language learning motivations of primary school learners and expectations of their parents in China

Coordinators: Lixian JIN, Xiaohua LIANG
De Montfort University, UK; Zhongnan University of Economics and Law, Wuhan, China

The L2 motivation of young learners appears to be much less enthusiastically investigated than that of older students and most published studies use more conventional research methods with questionnaires and interviews. Studying younger learners is known to be more difficult, since elicitation methods need to be appropriately designed in order to generate reliable data. This proposed colloquium reports a research project sponsored by the English Language Teaching Research Award (ELTRA) of the British Council in collaboration with Zhongnan University of Economics and Law (ZUEL) and four primary schools in China. Besides obtaining empirical data through questionnaires and interviews, more innovative research methods of elicited metaphor analysis and narrative analysis were also used with 128 primary school pupils (aged 7 and 9) and with 120 of their parents. The colloquium presents results from using three sets of data analysis: quantitative data from questionnaires on children's motivation, qualitative data from elicited metaphors through interview activities, and interviews to explore parental expectations of children's English learning - with some narrative data and further questionnaires. Each presentation will explain the particular research focus, methodological considerations, analysis and findings. The outcomes of this project may help to fill a gap of motivational studies of young English learners in China: potentially this may benefit an estimated 60 million children of this age range of English learners. These studies will enhance researchers' understanding of English learning by Chinese young learners, with insights into parental attitudes, and provide evidence-based guidance to primary school teachers of English and assist Chinese policy makers to improve the English curriculum. In addition, this project contributes to qualitative research with L2 young learners and their families by exploring more innovative research methods.

Research team: Xiaohua LIANG; Changsheng JIANG; ZHANG Jie; YUAN Yuan, Xiaoyan LUO, WEN Jia, Ailian ZHAN, Wei LIU, Qun XIE, Yuping XIE, Hongwen LUO, Tianshun LI, Yu ZOU, Rongfang ZHANG. Zhongnan University of Economics and Law, Wuhan, China, China.

Paper 1

Changsheng JIANG (Bruce)
Zhongnan University of Economics and Law, Wuhan, China

In order to capture the L2 motivation profile of young language learners, this study adopted a 3-point Likert scale questionnaire adapted from Ryan (2008). The respondents (N=128) were pooled from Years 1 and 3 (7 to 9 year olds) in four primary schools (2 key schools and 2 non-key schools) in one city in Mainland China. The analysis showed two main types of motivations: intrinsic and functional, indicated by their preferences: (1) most participants believed that English learning is interesting, (2) they consider learning English is helpful for their future study, (3) the peers, relatives and parents of these young learners believe that English learning is important, (4) these primary school learners will try their best to learn English well, and (5) learning English is useful for future traveling. However, it was found that (6) these participants held ambivalent attitudes regarding English learning as one of top priorities in their primary school period and whether it is an easy task; 7) learning English is for talking with foreigners in English and for passing various tests. By means of the mean score comparisons, it was found that (1) students with different levels of exposure to English seemed to be similar in terms of their L2 motivation profile except that those students who had more contact with English cultural products are more likely to communicate with
foreigners in English; and (2) even though the motivation profiles of Years 1 and 3 largely resembled each other, Year 1 students tended to believe that learning English can help them to become more knowledgeable persons

**Paper 2**

*Xiaohua LIANG (Susan), ZHANG Jie (Jenny)*  
*Zhongnan University of Economics and Law, Wuhan, China*

Metaphor is an important way of using language to explain abstract ideas or to find indirect but powerful ways of conveying feelings and views. Metaphor analysis is here based on Lakoff’s studies of metaphors in cognitive linguistics (Lakoff, 1993; Lakoff & Johnson, 1980), where research reveals that metaphors can be conceptual representations of deeper thoughts. This innovative method of elicited metaphor analysis has been developed and applied to many fields by Cortazzi and Jin (e.g. 1999, 2001) and Jin and Cortazzi (e.g. 2008, 2010) and proves to be particularly effective to yield insights into young learners’ thinking and feelings which a standard interview method may not reveal (Jin et al., 2013). The participants for the metaphor data collection are 128 Year 1 and Year 3 pupils who had studied English for six months from four Chinese primary schools with different social backgrounds, traditions and teaching features. A total of 361 metaphors with entailments were generated. The analysis of these elicited metaphors shows how these learners are highly positive about English learning, influenced by interactive teaching methods, learning through play, with affective factors of happiness and love, and attaining, they think, useful and purposeful outcomes. Some Year 3 students indicated their dynamic awareness of difficulties in English learning, but they believe they will nevertheless achieve desired outcomes.

**Paper 3**

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Education is regarded as one of the most important factors in economic well-being for individuals in today’s society. Most Chinese parents pay close attention to their children’s education, especially to English language learning. Researchers have suggested that, of many family variables that contribute to children’s school achievements, parental expectations are the most salient. Whereas much scholarly inquiry on parental expectations has focused on European and American middle-class families, little attention has been paid to the contexts outside developed countries (e.g. Davis-Kean, 2005, Yamamoto & Holloway, 2010). Although a few studies can be found on Chinese immigrant families in the West, it is very rare to see published research in mainland China on the parental expectations of English learning of Chinese young learners. This leads to the research question of the current project: What are the parental expectations of English learning of primary school learners in China? This study investigates 120 parents of Chinese young learners from four city primary schools. Data are collected through questionnaires and open-ended interviews. Two main themes emerged from the interview analyses: (a) a remarkable difference between short term and long-term parental expectations: short term expectations converge on learners’ academic level, while long term expectations show more diversity and divergence; (b) parental expectations are strongly related to, and determined by, how the parents perceive English and English learning process. The knowledge generated from the project is crucial to help primary school English teachers in China to understand their learners and the effects of parental expectations on students’ academic achievement. Finally, improved understanding of the expectations of young English learners and their parents will provide some evidence to policy makers to improve the planning and management of English teaching in Chinese primary schools.
This colloquium will draw on empirical classroom research to highlight distinctive challenges for foreign language pedagogy in Anglophone contexts. The policy background in England has seen government-supported primary FL initiatives in the 1970s and again in the 2000s followed by periods of inaction and decline, though a revival is currently in view, with primary FL instruction to be compulsory from 2014. Rationales for primary FL instruction in Anglophone settings have also been variable, drawing at different times on popular beliefs about young learners’ supposed special aptitude for languages, and on arguments about language awareness and its potential impact on L1 literacy, as well as on general educational arguments concerning the intrinsic value of language learning and related intercultural understanding. Among practitioners, a key argument has been motivational, with younger children demonstrating much more positive attitudes toward languages than Anglophone teenagers. Past research has shown however that even strongly committed schools in England can find only limited curriculum time for languages. The papers presented in this colloquium will report studies of how languages are currently taught, in the run-up to compulsory instruction from 2014. Paper 1 describes the oracy-based approach most commonly observed in a 40-school longitudinal survey of classroom practice, and evaluate its strengths and limitations. Paper 2 reports a quasi-experimental study which compares oracy- and literacy-based approaches to primary languages instruction, and investigates the learning outcomes of each. Paper 3 reports on the teaching of intercultural understanding and evaluates how far this lives up to the aspirations expressed by teachers and other stakeholders for the attitudinal impact of languages. In concluding discussion the overall viability of primary FL instruction in anglophone settings will be reviewed and guidance proposed for sustainable practice.
of creative writing. In discussion, the paper identifies mismatches between the observed pedagogy and the ambitions of the Framework document, and accounts for pedagogic decisions and choices in terms of a) inherited audiolingual practices; b) staff preoccupations with learner motivation and enjoyment; and c) sustainability in terms of teacher expertise, time and available resources. Finally, consequences for children’s FL learning are discussed.

The impact of teaching approaches on foreign language development in primary schools in England

Suzanne Graham
University of Reading, UK

Research on foreign language teaching indicates that oracy (listening and speaking) receives more attention in many primary schools in England than literacy (reading and writing) (Cable et al, 2010), even though both oracy and literacy are given as learning objectives in national curriculum documentation. However, there is very little research-based evidence about which teaching approach is more effective regarding learning outcomes for young language learners, particularly regarding grammatical development, although Macaro & Mutton (2009) indicate that a focus on reading strategy development may have a positive impact on vocabulary acquisition. This presentation will report on an investigation conducted in England into the relationship between teaching approaches and the acquisition of grammar in primary-school children learning French. Two different approaches were investigated across nine schools: 1) a general ‘competence model’ that focuses primarily on developing oracy skills; 2) a more literacy-based approach, where reading and writing activities are integrated alongside oracy skills. 240 learners of French completed a sentence repetition and an elicitation task assessing the acquisition of gender, adjectival agreement and simple present tense in Year 5 children (age 10, in the penultimate year of primary schooling), with the same tasks repeated in Year 6 and Year 7 (first year of secondary schooling). Details of the children’s language history were gained through a parental questionnaire and data on their English reading and spelling performance were gathered through a teacher questionnaire. Learners’ motivation and self-efficacy for learning French were explored through a questionnaire in Years 6 and 7, and through self-efficacy questions before and after the language tasks. The presentation will report key findings from the study which will have important implications for curriculum design, policy and pedagogy in primary foreign language teaching.

Integrating intercultural understanding into foreign languages in primary schools: myth or reality?

Tricia Driscoll
Christchurch Canterbury University, UK

This paper explores the learning and teaching of intercultural understanding (IU) within the foreign languages curriculum in primary schools. It is argued that language and culture is entwined (Kramsch, 1993) and that without an understanding of the culture(s) where a language is spoken the nuances of L2 cannot be fully understood (Byram, 1989). From 2005, IU featured as a central strand in the policy framework for primary languages (DfES, 2005) and the new National Curriculum in England clearly states that ‘learning a foreign language is a liberation from insularity and provides an opening to other cultures’ (DfE, 2013: 1). The data presented in this paper were collected from 40 schools over three years using a mixed method research design, including observation of lessons and interviews with headteachers, teachers and focus groups of children (Cable et al., 2010). Over 550 children across Key Stage 2 completed a short questionnaire. Findings indicate that over half of the
teachers interviewed reported a firm commitment to developing IU and promoting children's curiosity, openness and empathy, but there was limited evidence of systematic planning or opportunities for exploration, reflection or analysis about the cultural dimension. In some schools, however, cultural awareness and IU formed an integral part of the school's wider curriculum and teachers found ways to interweave a broad conception of cultural knowledge, skills and behaviours into whole school events, visits, exchanges and cross curricular activities. These integrated experiences did not rely on an in-depth knowledge of one specific culture, rather primary teachers made holistic connections between foreign language learning and the international and global dimension in the school. This paper discusses the implications of these finding for children's cultural development and the relevance of IU for foreign languages as the subject becomes a statutory part of the curriculum in 2014 in England.

### Colloquium 5: Introducing English in preschool: Experiences from Iceland, Norway and Russia

**Coordinator: Elena Tkachenko**

Oslo and Akershus University College, Norway

The European Commission emphasizes a policy of plurilingualism in European educational systems which aims to ensure proficiency in two foreign languages in addition to one's mother tongue, and calls for the introduction of foreign language teaching at the primary school level. There is a trend in many European countries to begin teaching English as a foreign language even earlier. This development is not surprising, since in today's society English is a dominant feature of the linguistic landscape surrounding children. Many children have their first experiences with English very early in their lives through e.g. the media, advertising and children's entertainment culture. This trend for an early start calls for a re-examination of language instruction methods, systematic evaluation of early language teaching experiences, as well as discussion of implications and challenges. In this colloquium we will discuss and compare experiences of introducing English in the preschool curriculum from the context of three different countries-Iceland, Norway and Russia. Three talks planned in the colloquium will summarize the experiences from projects where English was introduced as part of the curriculum for children aged 1-6. The talks are expected to demonstrate different methods of early language teaching, examples of good practice, and discuss the benefits of introducing English in a preschool linguistic environment. After the introductory talks the participants will be invited to discuss and share their own experiences. Among the questions for the discussion will be: What are the similarities and differences in teaching English as a foreign language for very young learners in different cultural contexts? What factors contribute to positive experiences with early language learning in different countries? What are the methodologies used for early language instruction in different countries? What consequences does the early start with English have for the children's learning?

### Introducing English in Norwegian Preschools

**Elena Tkachenko**

Oslo and Akershus University College, Norway

English is taught in Norwegian primary schools from the 1st grade, and during the last years it has become a trend to start even earlier. In my talk I will summarize the results and experiences of a three-year project in Oslo where English was implemented in the ordinary curriculum for children in the preschool age. The project was carried out in over 30 pre-schools in Oslo, comprising over
1000 pre-school children aged 1 to 6. I first explain the reasons for choosing English as part of the preschool curriculum, and describe the main principles the work with English was based on. The focus of the presentation will be on the benefits from early start with English and on important factors that lead to positive features of this early English language learning. A number of practical and pedagogical points relating to very early leaning of a foreign language will be discussed. Our findings show multiple positive effects for pedagogical work in the pre-schools with regard to language stimulation in general, development of metalinguistic awareness, children's growing interest in other cultures and languages, and promoting linguistic and cultural diversity in the preschools' pedagogical environment.

**Connecting with English: Teaching English to preschool children in Iceland**  
*Samúel Lefever*  
*University of Iceland, Iceland*

There is growing interest throughout Europe in introducing foreign language instruction to ever younger learners. In schools in Iceland the official starting age for English instruction is in grade 4 (age 9), however, many schools begin to teach English in earlier grades. Additionally, a growing number of preschools include English instruction in their curriculum. This trend calls for a re-examination of the objectives of language instruction and teaching approaches that suit young learners. This talk will summarize the findings of a study that looked at the teaching of English to children aged 2-6 in three preschools in Iceland. Data was collected through interviews with the principals and teaching staff and video recordings of the language learning sessions. The talk will focus on key aspects of the teaching approach which include theme-based instruction, songs, and guided play. I will show video clips of the lessons which show how the teaching engages the learners and encourages interaction through English in an active learning environment. I will conclude my talk with a discussion of the positive outcomes of the program as seen by the principals and teachers in the preschools. The benefits are both personal and pedagogical: the children develop an interest in learning English and other languages and gain self-confidence as language learners, and the integration of English teaching into the pre-school curriculum strengthens cooperation between teachers and enhances the focus on creativity and active learning.

**Teaching Foreign languages to Preschool Children in Russia**  
*Victoria Pogosyan*  
*Herzen State Pedagogical University of Russia, Russia*

Teaching English to children of preschool age started in Russia in the 1960s, the period of Thaw in the Soviet Union with its aspirations for democratization. At that time, the time the first textbooks for young learners were published, and even a TV series of English classes was launched. This experience was not lasting due to the political reasons, and for many years of the period of stagnation, foreign languages (English, German, French) were taught at schools starting with grade 4 (to 10 year old pupils). In 1990s, with the fall of the Soviet Union and the Iron Wall and with the consequent freedom of movement, learning foreign languages, especially English, became one of the priorities in Russia and many parents wanted their children to start learning English in kindergartens. Responding to this demand, Herzen State Pedagogical University of Russia (Saint Petersburg) opened the Department of English and Teaching English to Preschool Children which started not only training teachers of English to preschoolers, but also of researching the whole range of issues related with that and developing didactic materials and approaches. In my presentation I will highlight the current state of art of teaching foreign languages to preschool children in Russia.
and also present some of the didactic materials and textbooks, approaches and the issues of training teachers in the field of early foreign language education.
Research Papers
ELL: Theory and Practice in 2014
Umeå University, Sweden
Use of strategies by Greek young EFL learners: developmental, gender and instructional effects

Thomai Alexiou
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Language learning strategies (LLSs) constitute an important factor in the development of L2 knowledge and use (Brown et al. 1989, O’Malley & Chamot 1990) and have thus attracted the interest of many researchers during the last thirty years (Garvriilidou & Psaltou-Joycey 2009). Nevertheless there has not been adequate research concerning the use of LLSs by young Greek learners or the possible influence of instruction in the use of LLSs (cf. Vrettou 2011). The main research question in the present study is which LLSs Greek primary school learners claim they employ when learning English as an L2. We also investigate whether age and/or gender may affect LLSs as well as how LLSs introduced in the English language classroom and whether they promote certain types of LLSs. 114 fourth and sixth graders of primary school (aged 9-11 years) filled in a questionnaire which traces LLSs claimed to be employed in L2 (cf. Second Language Strategy Inventory, Oxford 1990). Possible instructional effects on LLSs were investigated through the examination of the coursebooks used by our participants. The findings indicate (a) medium use of LLSs and preference for metacognitive and affective LLSs, (b) overall significant developmental effects, (c) few gender effects and (d) a correspondence between the L2 strategies promoted in the English coursebooks and the pupils’ reports of their preferences. Finally, we propose activities and teaching practices that may further develop L2 strategies and may facilitate L2 learning in a foreign language context.

The development of narrative skills in Basque L2

Margareta Almgren, Ibon Manterola
University of the Basque Country (UPV/EHU), Spain

This presentation analyses the development of narrative skills in oral story retelling in a group of Basque L2 children at ages 5, 8 and 11. They all acquire Basque in a school immersion programme in a Spanish-speaking environment. The data are contrasted with the same stories produced by Basque L1 children from a Basque-speaking environment educated in Basque. On this occasion two aspects are looked into: the lack of narrative autonomy due to lexical limitations and the production of temporal organisers which mark story phases. Lexical limitations in L2 often make children interrupt themselves and ask about the missing lexical item (Gajo, 2009). However, L2 children may also use the bilingual speech (de Pietro, 1988) integrating items from their L1 when addressing bilinguals they know will understand them (De Houwer, 2009). This is a feature that clearly distinguishes them from L1 speakers. Previous studies show that at age 5 temporal organizers are hardly produced, independently of L1 or L2 (Akinci 2002; De Weck, 1991; Vion & Colas, 2005). The arch-connector and / and then is repeated massively, reflecting a simple linear chain of actions. With increasing age, children are able to provide their stories with temporal nuances that are marked by text organizers linking the different phases. Results will be discussed from age-related as well as language-related points of view. The lexical aspects analysed show a clear acquisitional development in L2. Lexical gaps and integrations are frequent at age 5 but diminish at age 8 and are practically inexistent at age 11. The gradual increase in the use of temporal organizers, however, seems more age-related in both L1 and L2. These results confirm that immersion programmes in minority languages such as Basque offer good possibilities for the acquisition of an L2.
Experiencing Extensive Reading: the L2 Reading Awakening with Young Learners

Aurora Varona Archer
University of Veracruz School of Languages, Mexico

This study contributes to both reading research and the L2 acquisition process of young learners. Reading has been widely studied, however mainly in developed countries. Since the educational environment in developing countries can be vastly different, it behoves us to conduct research in these areas, as well. Mexico has been designated as an area with a low literacy rate, (PISA, 2009) with only a slight improvement in recent years (PISA 2013). This study is aimed at discovering the effect of the extensive reading approach, particularly the aspect of “reading for pleasure”, Day (2011) in L2 learning with young learners.

A study was carried out with a group of 10 children (9-11 years-old) to observe and analyze their reactions to L2 reading. The researcher analysed the students’ reading through a cyclic process. Through the analysis of the different cycles, the benefits and limitations of the extensive reading model were observed using field notes, a teacher’s journal and students’ diaries. In this particular context, the experience of implementing this reading approach helped the researcher to identify the children’s reactions to L2 reading as well as evaluating the teacher-researcher pedagogical actions.

EFL vs. CLIL learners in oral-task based interaction

Agurtzane Azkarai, Ainara Imaz Agirre
University of the Basque Country, Spain

Studies framed within the interactionist framework (Long, 1996) have shown that interaction provides second language (L2) learners with opportunities to negotiate for meaning, receive feedback on their production and modify their output (Swain, 2000). These studies have mainly focused on adult L2 learners and little attention has been paid to young L2 learners. Only a few studies have focused on the benefits of child L2 interaction, mainly in English as Second Language (ESL) settings (see Oliver 1998, 2000, 2002), but research in English as Foreign Language (EFL) settings, where learners receive fewer hours of exposure to the target language than ESL learners, is scarce. Some European schools are adopting different English instructional methods, such as Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL), where learners receive an average of 8-10 hours of weekly exposure to the target language. CLIL learners seem to outperform mainstream learners, who receive 3-4 hours of exposure per week to the target language, especially regarding their oral skills (Dalton-Puffer, 2007). The present study analyses the oral production of 9 CLIL and 9 mainstream EFL young pairs in a Spanish school setting (age range: 9-10) when they completed a guessing game and a picture placement task. All their conversational interactions were transcribed verbatim and the data were analysed on the basis of the amount of conversational adjustments, repetitions and use of Spanish in each pair. The preliminary results pointed to clear differences between the two instructional settings: mainstream learners produced more conversational adjustments and repetitions and made more use of Spanish than CLIL learners. Task-differences were only present in the amount of conversational adjustments produced by mainstream learners only in the guessing game task. These findings shed more light on the potential benefits of interaction between young learners in different foreign language instructional settings.
Diagnosing Young Learners’ English the development of a national tool for Swedish schools

Ann Bjerkland Larsson, Gudrun Erickson  
University of Gothenburg, Sweden

The start of English instruction in Sweden varies between school year one and three. Grades are not awarded until the end of school year six, but teachers are obliged to monitor their pupils’ learning from the beginning and to discuss it continuously with each child. Furthermore, the progress of individual pupils is summarized and discussed at least once a term in developmental dialogues with the pupil and his/her guardians. The outcome of these dialogues is an individual development plan, including a written report. Thus, assessment is explicitly intended to have a formative as well as a summative function. In order to enhance this, and also to concretize the action oriented national syllabus for languages, a diagnostic tool of English for learners aged 7 to 12 has been provided and offered to all schools since 2011. In 2013, a number of receptive tasks were added to the material, which is now available on the webpage of the National Agency for Education. In our presentation we will discuss the development of this material, its contextual and conceptual basis, structure, content and intended use. Examples of components to be focused on are models for self and peer assessment, oral tasks and benchmarks, profiled descriptions of results, and links to the European Language Portfolio. The collaborative nature of the development process is discussed, with particular attention paid to contributions by pupils and teachers.

Picture books in EFL: vehicles of culture and visual literacy

Anna Birketveit  
Bergen University College, Norway

Despite the fact that picture books offer new and exciting texts for all competence levels, picture books seem to be a largely undiscovered treasure trove in English as a foreign language (EFL). Drawing on recent developments within the teaching of foreign languages, this paper discusses the potential of picture books in teaching culture and visual literacy to young language learners of English as a foreign language (EFL). Furthermore, learner motivation is considered to be of increasing importance (Dörnyei, 1998), and the paper discusses various aspects of picture books which can contribute to learner motivation for reading such as extensive visual support in decoding of meaning and shorter but complete stories. Through a thorough examination of the iconotext of four picture books, this paper discusses how the interaction of pictures and words work together to bring across cultural messages. In The Stinky Cheese Man and Other Fairly Stupid Tales by Jon Scieszka and Lane Smith cultural myths are subverted and interrogated. In Rose Blanche by Ian McEvan and Roberto Innocenti, a child’s experience of the Second World War is explored, and in The Man who Walked between the Towers by Mordicai Gerstein, telling the true story of Philippe Petit who walked between the twin towers of the World Trade Center on a tightrope, one of the most significant political symbols of our times is memorized. The iconotext in Zoo by Anthony Browne explores human nature and addresses both the child and the adult reader on the serious themes of animals held in captivity. Additionally, drawing on a recent research project in a class of Norwegian 11-year olds (Birketveit and Rimmereide, 2013), this paper will argue that extensive reading of picture books and illustrated books develop pupils’ narrative skills.
Picture books for a spectrum of competences with 10-12-year-old young learners

Janice Bland
University of Vechta, Germany

I will present with this paper a framework for the challenging primary / secondary transitional years, using carefully selected multimodal texts. Introducing selected picture books suitable for 10-12 year-olds, I will demonstrate how they can support the learning of Communicative competence, Language awareness and learning strategies, Literary competence, Intercultural competence, Media, visual and critical literacy, Global issues. Stories can encourage good language learning characteristics, which include (Saville-Troike 2006): imagination, empathy, tolerance of ambiguity, self-confidence, risk-taking and adventurousness. Moreover stories can activate learning across cognitive, sociological, multisensory and affective dimensions, encouraging deep processing of language and mental representations. I maintain meaningful classroom discourse can be achieved in several senses: (1) genuine classroom interaction based on information gaps rather than using display questions; (2) sensory-anchored interpersonal communication (using physically present pictures as anchor); (3) interaction on meaningful (global) issues. I will illustrate my argument with picture books on children and adults crossing borders: Garland, Sarah (2012) Azzi In Between. London: Frances Lincoln; Greder, Armin (2007) The Island; Crows Nest: Allen and Unwin. Kyuchukov, Hristo, illus; Allan Eitzen (2004) My Name Was Hussein. Honesdale: Boyds Mills.

According to research in Germany (Harmgarth 1999), the majority of children under the age of 12 enjoy reading, but no longer once they reach the age of 12. I suggest, therefore, that it is highly important that teachers select books carefully in order to model pleasure in reading for 10-12 year-olds and older.

How can we use educational television to promote English language development and literacy in young learners?

Jennifer Book
University of Sussex, UK

A lot of research has been conducted into children's TV, language development (Close 2004, & Fisch, Truglio, Cole 1999) school ‘readiness’ and social behaviour, leading to debate about whether TV viewing is beneficial or harmful for young children's language development and wider literacy. I will look at the importance of educational TV viewing and English language development in very young learners, and suggest ways in which the current theory on TV and children learning language can inform the design, creation and production of TV programmes. The medium may be particularly well suited to the introduction of new words and their meanings to young children, leading to ample opportunity for familiar and novel words to be introduced in a way that attracts young viewers’ attention. Children can also access these programmes interactively and get immediate feedback on tasks and activities associated with them through their phones, IPADs, and SMART TVs. TV is such a major part of Western culture that it is imperative to know which programmes are suitable, how they can be exploited, and how children can learn not only their first language but also a second, as well as promoting literacy. For second language learners, the effects of using subtitles along with the original soundtrack, rather than dubbing on TV, as a means of acquiring new language, will also be reviewed (d’Ydewalle & Van de Poel 1999). I will also be looking at research findings, which suggest that educational TV content is crucial for cognitive skills and academic achievement (Kirkorian et al 2008). Young children exposed to age-appropriate programmes created around an educational curriculum are more likely to have better cognitive skills and higher academic achievement than children exposed to non-educational and/or violent content. Finally, I will suggest how current
The second language classroom in Poland - does it stimulate young learners’ acquisition of oral production skills?

Dorota Campfield
National Educational Research Institute, Warsaw, Poland

This paper reports on an in-depth analysis of the experiences of very young learners (aged 3-5) as they first encounter a foreign language in their pre-school classrooms. Specifically, we draw on theories of language awareness (Garrett & James, 2000) in order to answer the questions: What awareness of language develops among young children as they engage in foreign language learning for the first time and how is awareness-raising interactionally achieved? Employing a micro-ethnographic research design, we generated a corpus of video-recorded interactions from seven classrooms in which children learned Chinese, Korean or Spanish twice a week from a ‘language partner’ (a language-teacher-in-training from the local university). This collection of video data allows for analysis of the ways in which children showed developing awareness of particular languages, of what language is in general and of what linguistic diversity is. Our analysis of the interactional processes through which children came to these awarenesses complements the existing literature which focuses more on policies and program models, development of linguistic proficiency and development of (bi)literacy among young language learners (Nikolov & Mihaljevic Djigunovic 2011).

Through our analysis of 169 video-recorded classroom interactions collected over the course of several months for each language partner, we identified contesting patterns and negotiating patterns in our interactional data. That is, while some interactions show uncontested uptake and use of the new language or outright rejection of it, others show a much more layered and complex negotiation process. We draw on and stretch the notion of language awareness to account for the interactions we observed in the early foreign language program and to discuss, at the end of our presentation, pedagogical, curricular and policy-related implications of our work.
these interactions (“intention reading”) and the establishment of the form-function relationship (form-function mapping). The activities generate the themes through which the children exchange and in turn determine their language acts. During their implementation, spontaneous interactions occur between peers. Exchanges between peers are often richer, longer and more complex than with the teacher. They are the privileged field where the child acquires, consolidates and organizes knowledge and develops his/her multilingual repertoire.

**Writing Progress of 9-11 year old students through Content-Based Instruction**

*Barbara Cartford*

*Wayzata Public Schools, Minnesota, USA*

The past two academic years, 2011-13, I conducted a study which documents the progress of students’ writing skills in Spanish from the beginning of 4th grade to the end of 5th grade in Minnesota, USA. The students start learning Spanish in 4th grade when they are 9-10 years old. Spanish class meets once a week for an hour. By the end of 5th grade they have 70 hours of Spanish. There are 137 students in the study. The approach I use is called Content-Based Instruction which is the concurrent teaching of subject matter and second language skills. The instruction is content driven vs. language driven. As I plan each unit, the language focus is secondary to the learning of the content. Some of my stories include geography, legends, folktales, and biographies of the Spanish-speaking world. For example, The Flag of Mexico, The Secret of the Llama (the flood story of the Inca), The Legend of Yerba Mate, (the Argentine tea), The Barking Mouse (the Cuban folktale) and the story of the Cuban boy Elián González. When Elián was only five years old in 1999, he was found tied to an inner tube near Miami. He later became the center of an international custody battle before his return to Cuba six months later. There are three steps: Pre-reading, Reading and Post-reading. The first step is establishing the meaning of the words and acting out the story. The second step is reading the story and doing activities to understand its meaning. After the summative assessments, the writing and speaking retells are in the third step. The students had ten minutes to write the story. They could look at the vocabulary list and pictures that illustrated the story. I kept track of how many words they wrote each time and documented their progress.

**Text complexity and differentiation of EFL reading texts: Analyzing texts used in Norwegian primary schools using the text analysis tool, Coh-Metrix**

*Rebecca Charboneau*

*University of Stavanger, Norway*

This paper presents a quantitative study of texts used in teaching EFL reading in Norwegian primary schools. Textbooks are still the predominant text source used in Norwegian primary schools (Charboneau, 2012). Additionally, some schools have started using graded readers either to supplement the textbook, or in a small number of schools, as the primary reading texts. The aim of this study is to compare the linguistic differences of the texts using the computational text analysis tool, Coh-Metrix (McNamara, et al., 2013). This tool incorporates developments in computational linguistics and discourse processing to allow for investigation of text difficulty and comprehension. This study is important as research on second language reading refers to linguistic features, syntax, and discourse structures as essential elements of readability (Grossley, et al, 2007). The findings of this study will provide a more thorough understanding of the linguistic features that construct the textbook text and graded readers. The research may support reading researchers, teachers and materials developers in judging the linguistic qualities of texts, as well as aid in matching readers to texts.
Supporting incidental vocabulary learning in young learners through strategy training and online resources while reading e-storybooks

Angela Maria Charria Gomez, Claudia Patricia Alvarez
La Sabana University, Colombia

The number of digital resources can provide digital scaffolding that allow young learners to enjoy e-storybooks autonomously, while enriching the development of basic language skills and the learning of incidental vocabulary, (Nation, 1990) that can be encouraged when learners are trained to use strategies for vocabulary learning. Particularly, strategy training by explicit modelling (Macaro, 2001) can be combined with the strategic use of online tools to help learners take greater control of their own learning (Benson, 2011) at a young age; gains that might facilitate the acquisition of learning skills and trigger the improvement of language proficiency. Accordingly, with this qualitative study (which took place at a traditional British-model institution located in Bogota, Colombia with a population of 28 learners aged 7-8), it was observed that although the participants were exposed to reading in English at school, they reported not finding the necessary words to convey meaning. Moreover, they showed low awareness of strategies for learning new vocabulary. Therefore, the researchers sought to establish the impact of instructing vocabulary-learning strategies on the autonomous learning of incidental vocabulary when reading e-storybooks. The analysis of data, collected principally through learner and parent questionnaires, learner interviews, and field notes, followed the grounded theory approach. Results suggested that instruction on vocabulary learning strategies supported by means of digital resources encouraged learners to be responsible of their learning process occasioning the enlargement of incidental vocabulary knowledge and the raising of awareness on the adequacy of the strategies that trigger individual learning processes and life-long learning skills. As for teachers, the adoption of explicit modelling of strategies in daily teaching practices becomes an influential tool for enabling learners to become more autonomous in their path of learning.

Measuring the short and long-term impact of a primary teacher training course

Gail Ellis, Carol Read
British Council Paris, France; Independent teacher educator/President IATEFL

This paper reports on a study to measure the impact and sustainability of an intensive, one-week Primary Teaching Training Course that has been running annually for 20 years in France. The study uses an evaluation framework that draws on quantitative and qualitative data from five perspectives: relevance, scale, learning, action and wider benefit. The paper starts by briefly outlining the diverse participant profile and goes on to discuss the challenge of establishing the principles that inform the design of the course to meet their varied needs. This is followed by a discussion of key competencies that are developed within specific topic areas during the course and the methodology used to achieve desired outcomes. The study is based on immediate end-of-course evaluations as well as an online survey and two focus groups which were conducted in 2013 to measure long-term impact. The end-of-course evaluations provide feedback on participant satisfaction and features of the course which are perceived as positive as well as indicating to trainers areas for improvement and change. The online survey and focus groups explore how the course had influenced participant's professional lives years later. The study shows that the course has immediate benefits in equipping teachers to work effectively with children as well as a significant long-term impact on individuals' professional practice and motivation, but it has more limited impact in bringing about wider systemic educational change. The data provides evidence of features which make the course memorable and effective for participants, aspects that could be improved in the future, and conditions that would need to
be replicated for delivering the course elsewhere. The evaluation framework used also provides a flexible tool that can be used to measure the long-term impact of other teacher training courses.

**Awareness of multilingual resources: EFL primary students’ receptive and productive code-switching during collaborative reading**

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Multilingual children formally studying a foreign language at school, have a variety of linguistic resources at their disposal they can make use of for their further language learning process. In many classrooms, though, foreign languages are taught to an idealized monolingual speaker, i.e. foreign language teachers do not take additional linguistic resources of multilingual children into consideration (Hu 2010). However, foreign language learning theorists (e.g. Hu 2010, Elsner 2011) as well as the CEFR (Council of Europe 2001) suggest the integration of prior languages in foreign language classrooms. Yet, this demand raises the question of, how multilingual children react when pedagogic material encourages the use of multiple languages in foreign language classrooms? This talk looks at productive and receptive code-switching (Elsner & Lohe 2013) of Turkish-German bilingual children when working with multilingual virtual talking books (MuViT, Elsner 2011). It seeks to discuss the following questions on the basis of first results of a larger research project “LIKE”: Does the inclusion of multilingual materials encourage receptive and/ or productive code-switching? How do children decide whether to switch to German or Turkish when changing the language of the MuViT story they work with?  
In short: How do these children view the roles and functions of the different languages in their repertoire in the context of formal foreign language learning at the primary school level?

**English in primary schools - Chance(s) and Challenge(s). A closer look at experiences at German primary schools in NRW**

Gaby Engel  
Ministry for Education, North Rhine Westphalia, Germany

Although early English language learning has been an issue in some German primary schools for many years, it has only recently been implemented as a proper subject in the curricula of all primary schools in most German states. In North Rhine Westphalia, English was introduced into the 3rd and 4th grades of primary education in 2003 with two lessons a week. Two years later the government commissioned an evaluation of the state of affairs of English teaching in primary schools. From 2005 to 2007 the research project ‘Evening’ (Evaluation English in der Grundschule) was carried out in the schools using different research methods: teacher questionnaires, observation of lessons, testing of learner of competences. As one of the project managers, I will give an overview of our experiences of introducing English at the primary level in NRW, the results of the research and the consequences for a new curriculum for English teaching and learning in NRW primary schools. With English now starting in the 1st grade, and having been established as a proper subject in the primary curriculum, other challenges have emerged. One of the biggest challenges the Ministry and schools have to face is the transition to secondary schools, which means accepting that learning English is a continuous and cumulative process, as opposed to starting from scratch when entering the secondary schools.  
The research, as well as our experiences over the last ten years, shows that early language learning offers young children the chance to use certain phases of development (mental evolution) which are especially receptive for foreign language learning, thus providing them with a solid foundation for life-long language learning. However, the impact of early language education depends on highly
professional teachers in terms of target language use and as didactic experts of teaching young learners a foreign language.

What is good (about) language assessment?  
Gudrun Erickson  
University of Gothenburg, Sweden

The aim of my presentation is to focus on Good Practice in Language Testing and Assessment, from practical as well as conceptual points of view. In this I will place special emphasis on assessment as a pedagogical phenomenon with a clear potential to promote learning, for learners as well as for teachers. Furthermore, I will pay attention to the important function of assessment as an activity to control and promote quality, thereby enhancing fairness and equity both locally, in individual classrooms, and generally, at the societal level. Six fundamental questions that help guide the planning and analysis of all types of assessment are briefly addressed, namely Why? What? How? When? Who? & And? Throughout the presentation, the value of clarity and cooperation at different levels is emphasized, not least in relation to students. To illustrate this, I will present some experiences and examples from the development of national formative and summative language assessment and testing materials in Sweden, especially focusing on considerations regarding, and contributions by, young learners. Examples of questions addressed are what types of assessment students enjoy, what they think is easy and more difficult, and also how well they think they manage different tasks. In this, some similarities and differences between different categories of students are discussed, in particular regarding boys and girls. Reference will be made to a pan-European survey focusing on the same type of issues. Finally, the concept of Good Practice is discussed in relation to guidelines developed within EALTA (European Association for Language Testing and Assessment), currently available in 35 different languages.

The effect of assessment for learning techniques on young learners’ awareness of vocabulary learning strategies  
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Driestar Educatief University for Teacher Education, The Netherlands

Researching the development of English language proficiency with young learners (YLs) has gained currency as a younger age of learning English has been introduced in a range of countries around the world (cf. Cameron, 2003; Enever 2011; Eurydice 2005; Nikolov 2010). While the use of assessment for learning (AFL) is reported to have profound effects on learning outcomes in mainstream education (Black and Wiliam 1998, Wiliam et al 2004), there is little research investigating the impact AFL would have on the development of a second language among YLs. A recent mixed-methods study in the Netherlands aimed at filling this gap. The quantitative study used a quasi-experimental design to examine the effects of AFL on learners’ perceptions of their use of L2 vocabulary learning strategies. The 97 participants were Dutch native speakers in four matched classes in the first form of secondary education (age 12). They filled in a questionnaire on their use of vocabulary learning strategies, before and after their teacher was coached in using selected AFL techniques, including: communication of shared purpose and criteria, doing self-assessment and giving peer-feedback. The teacher used the AFL techniques, in two of the four classes (intervention group, 46 pupils), while the other two classes (51 pupils) formed the control group. This quantitative data was corroborated with qualitative data gathered through learner diaries and the teacher’s reflective journal. Preliminary results of the study suggest that young learners are able to use AFL techniques and that it benefits their development of English. Learners in the intervention group indicated an increased
awareness of vocabulary learning strategies, willingness to learn these strategies, and ability to use them. These findings have significant implications for classroom teachers and for teacher training programmes.

**Using authentic storybooks to teach English in an early years classroom: A Case Study**

*Nicky Francis*

*British Council Paris, France*

Storybooks have been recognised as providing an acquisition-based methodology for teaching English to young learners. The benefits are numerous including authentic, rich language in chunks, and images making it easier for children to learn, understand and remember. Stories are motivating and therefore help create positive attitudes to learning a language at an early age. The actual choice of storybook is important in terms of appropriate language and content and the activities created need to take into account the motor skills and pre-literacy stage of the children's development.

In France an increasing number of parents want their children to learn English at a younger age. The purpose of this case study is to determine the extent of language acquisition in terms of comprehension and production using materials based on a picture book with 3 and 4 year olds both inside and outside the classroom, as well as balancing parents’ expectations of the course outcomes.

I carried out a personal case study of a group of 3 and 4 year olds during a 15-hour course. The paper is based on real time learner observations to discover how the learners responded to the materials that had been created, the impact and effect of the teacher’s approach and ultimately the development of language acquisition over the one-week period. Questionnaires for parents pre, during and post course highlight the impact of using storybooks to enhance learning and confidence at home.

Initial findings imply that using authentic storybooks is cognitively stimulating for very young children learning English and has a positive effect not only on communication and language but also on personal, social and emotional development.

**Children and communicative tasks: Interaction at work**

*Maria del Pilar García-Mayo, Ainara Imaz Agirre*

*University of the Basque Country, Spain*

Numerous studies to date have recognized the crucial role of interaction in SLA. During interaction learners have the opportunity to negotiate language input, receive feedback and modify their output (Pica, 2013). Research has focused on adult ESL populations and little attention has been paid to the process of child interaction (but see Oliver (2002)), much less in foreign language (FL) classrooms.

In some European countries, two approaches to FL teaching coexist these days: mainstream programs, where learners are exposed to the target language for about 3-4 hours per week, and Content and Language Integrated (CLIL) programs, with about 8-10 hours of exposure. A major claim is that learners in CLIL programs outperform their peers especially regarding their oral ability (Dalton-Puffer, 2007). This paper examines the oral interaction of 80 Basque-Spanish children in 3rd and 5th year of primary education (ages 8-11), all beginner learners of English. They completed two communicative tasks, a picture placement and a guessing game, and their production was assessed in order to (i) document whether they were able to use conversational adjustments (CA) similar to those of their ESL counterparts and (ii) establish if differences were found depending on educational context. The following CA were coded in the oral interaction of 40 age-matched dyads (20 EFL, 20 CLIL): clarification requests, confirmation and comprehension checks and self- and other-repetition. Findings show that both EFL and CLIL children do use CA but much less that their ESL
counterparts. Besides, statistically significant differences in the use of these CA were found between the EFL and CLIL contexts. On the contrary, non-significant differences were found between the two primary school levels (3rd vs. 5th) in each of the learning contexts. These findings will be discussed in connection to the benefits of interactive tasks for children in FL contexts.

Teaching the very young learners: An alternative to kindergarten textbooks

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Lebanese American University, Byblos, Lebanon

Teaching English to young learners (TEYL) is rapidly spreading around the world to ever younger groups of learners. In some countries English is introduced as early as in preschool and nursery school. In the wake of this trend, publishers are producing textbooks to these very youngest of learners. In a 2012 language teachers’ conference, an international publisher was promoting textbooks for 2- and 3-year-olds. Some local publishers have followed with their own kindergarten textbooks. Yet, teaching 3-year-olds using a structured textbook is not necessarily the ideal approach. The presenter shares findings from an analysis of two sets of kindergarten textbooks, one produced internationally and one produced locally in the Middle East. The books were analysed for scope and sequence, and three units in each were examined in detail, one from the beginning, one from the middle and one from the end of each book. Teachers’ books were examined for suggested approaches and strategies. The books and the proposed activities were examined for their developmental appropriateness, their adherence to what is known about young children as learners in general and language learners in particular, their potential motivational appeal and factors supporting learner confidence. The findings raise some serious concerns about the use of structured textbooks in nursery and kindergarten classes. The presenter then proposes an alternative approach based on nursery rhymes, songs and chants, and illustrated over-sized storybooks and related games and other, developmentally and pedagogically more appropriate activities. Participants receive a complete handout packet with theoretical notes and lesson plans with step-by-step suggestions for ages 3-6.

Language learning in African Primary Schools, a comparison across countries and settings

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SIL International, Africa Area, Kenya

Africa is the home to about one third of the world's languages and most people use more than one language in different domains and setting. The rich linguistic environment of most countries in Africa has been a challenge to people involved in education and as a result, the choice of language in education is a hotly debated issue. Should it be mother tongue or 'other tongue'? Should children directly be exposed and learn through the former colonial language? What is better: the 'earlier the better' or postpone the use of the other language as medium of instruction till later on in education? In many countries in Africa a significant portion of the children who enter primary school end up in classes where their language is not spoken. They have to learn the new language as they are being taught in it. However, nowadays a growing proportion of children do have the opportunity to learn in the mother tongue for 1 up to 6 years before they are transition to English, French, or Portuguese. This paper examines some of the research which has emerged from Cameroon, Ethiopia, Kenya and Tanzania in the last 4 years comparing different situations of language learning and how well children in primary school are able to learn the additional language. It analyses and discusses reading results in the different educational settings and compares how children across different language groups, contexts and countries are coping with the change of medium of instruction (from
mother tongue to additional language). From the data, a number of interesting insights emerge about multilingual education models and their effectiveness in the different contexts. Based on the analyses of the data several recommendations are made with regard to learning additional languages in the African context.

**Who needs to change? The complexities of primary English language curriculum change in Vietnam**

Laura Grassick  
University of Leeds, UK

2010 heralded the start of implementation of a new English language curriculum at primary level in Vietnam. This education policy shift to include English in the primary school curriculum from Grade 3 for all learners in all state schools across Vietnam follows the trend of many governments around the world (e.g. Baldauf et al. 2012). Current change policy in Vietnam focuses on the primary teacher and the perception that curriculum change requires rational, technical changes in teachers' classroom behaviour and practices. In this paper I will argue that such a view ignores the complexities of the reform process and that it is not just teachers who need to change. I will show, through some initial findings from my current case study research in Vietnam, how teachers' understandings of and responses to change (how they make sense of change) is influenced by their interactions and interconnections with other people at different levels of the education system. Although there has been much research on how teachers make sense of curriculum change, (Coburn, 2001; 2005; Spillane, 2000; März and Keltchermans, 2013), there still seems to be little known about how different actors in the implementation process make sense of change and how their sense-making may influence teachers’ interpretations and understandings of new curriculum policies. In this paper I will draw on data gathered from three separate but interconnected cases in one province in Vietnam; a primary teacher, their district administrator and a teacher trainer. I will show how these three actors in the implementation process are interrelated and how implementation of the new primary English language curriculum is not simply about the teacher changing teaching methods, but rather requires all actors to be involved in parallel change and learning.

**Bi-literacy development in primary school: Bilingual education in the Mexican indigenous-language context**

Cynthia Groff  
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Linguistic minorities often enter school with the double challenge of learning a language and learning basic literacy skills through that language. Although Mexican language policy affirms the right of indigenous children to education in their mother tongue, the implementation of this policy is weak, with most schools still favouring the national language, Spanish. My research is based at two unique bilingual schools in rural Michoacán, Mexico, where the mother tongue, Purhepecha, is in fact favoured as the main medium of instruction throughout the six primary school years. Preliminary findings from student assessments show evidence of the connection between first and second language literacy skills, supporting the hypothesis of a common underlying proficiency and providing evidence for the success of mother-tongue based bilingual education. Besides presenting results from student literacy assessments in the two languages, I will discuss findings from a qualitative analysis of language-learning processes at these bilingual schools. In teachers' meetings, the educators discuss the difficulty of implementing the bilingual practices outlined in the school's curriculum. They also express concern about the large disparity in skill levels within particular
grades. These issues arise as the local sociolinguistic context shifts, and primarily Purhepecha-dominant students are joined by students with more influence of Spanish in the home. I explore with the indigenous teachers some reasons behind the differential success of advanced and struggling students, and of students with different levels of Spanish support from home, searching for practical strategies for advancing their students’ academic skills in both the home language and the national language.

### Classroom discourse perspectives on the application of child imagination in teaching English to young learners

**Ewa Guz**

*University of Warsaw / John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin, Poland*

Imagination plays a central part in children’s learning and has its manifestation in their creativity and willingness to participate in imaginative play (Brewster et al 1992; Cameron 2001; MacKay 2006; Pinter 2006; Philip, Olivier and Mackey 2008; Cameron and McKay 2010). Imaginative play involves a shift from reality-based reasoning to assuming an ‘as if’ perspective towards objects, actions, and other people (Bjorklund, 2012). Children's inclination to engage in this kind of play can be explained in terms of their incomplete overall knowledge of the physical world which forces them to distort the reality to match their own ends (Piaget, 1945/1962). As Vygotsky (1978: 102) put it, imaginative play allows a child to think and act ‘as though he were a head taller than himself.’ Through fabricating and sustaining imaginary scenarios and endowing objects and people with imagined identities, the child learns how to mediate new situations by the use of symbols, which allows it to deal with intellectual and educational challenges more successfully. An imaginative child requires an imaginative teacher who is capable of providing engaging, developmentally appropriate lessons in which the acquired knowledge and skills are used and retained (Egan, 1992, 2005; Egan and Madej, 2010). Our primary goal in this paper is to investigate classroom applications of child imagination from classroom discourse perspective. The analysis is based on the selected transcripts of video recordings of thirty lessons by trainee teachers of English recorded during their teaching practice in Polish primary schools. In particular, we look at teacher instructions, teacher and student initiations and responses, teacher feedback as well as the pedagogical context in which these came about (elements of task design and the didactic aids used) with the view of identifying to what extent participants rely on and activate their pupils’ imaginations during English lessons.

### Explicit grammar instruction and the young foreign language learner

**Rowena Hanan, Emma Marsden**

*University of York, UK*

Young second language learners are often considered to have access to implicit learning mechanisms. However, within the foreign language classroom, very limited exposure means that learners may not be able to tap into these mechanisms. The classroom experiment reported here investigated the extent to which explicit grammar teaching is effective for the development of explicit and implicit knowledge amongst young L1 English learners (aged 9 to 11) of German as a foreign language. To date, research in this area has largely been with older learners, or in second language or laboratory contexts. 120 participants were randomly assigned to one of three groups: either ’Processing Instruction’, ’Explicit Information + Enriched Input’, or ‘Test-Only’. The Processing Instruction activities made attention to the meaning (i.e. function) of the target forms essential (Marsden & Chen, 2011; VanPatten, 2002), whereas the Comparison Intervention did not. The target feature was nominative-accusative case marking on masculine nouns in German, and the processing problem
predicted by the First Noun Principle, whereby the first noun is (mis-)interpreted as the subject. Pre, post and delayed post-tests measured the learners’ explicit and implicit knowledge, using elicited imitation, act-out comprehension, oral production, gap fill, sentence matching and a metalinguistic test. Preliminary findings suggest that both interventions were beneficial on all measures, compared to the test-only group, with greater benefits on the ‘more explicit’ measures. These findings have practical implications for whether, and how, foreign language grammar should be taught within the primary classroom, of heightened relevance given the addition of foreign languages to England’s primary school curriculum from 2014.

The role of paraprofessionals in teaching ESOL to young learners in New Zealand primary schools

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The global increase in the movement of people as a result of migration and displacement has meant that New Zealand primary schools (ages 5-10), particularly in urban areas, are some of the most culturally and linguistically diverse in the world. Evidence suggests however that in New Zealand more than in other western jurisdictions (but on a par with the United States), having a home language different from the school language (English) is a significant risk factor for achieving lower levels of English literacy as well as for lower school achievement in general. As part of a wider response to improving English language support programmes for multilingual students the New Zealand Ministry of Education has for some time been allocating special funding for resourcing ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) provision in New Zealand schools. One of the targets for this funding is the employment of ESOL paraprofessionals, also known as teacher aides and language assistants. This paper draws on a larger ethnographic study that examined the practices of ESOL paraprofessionals in their support of ELLs (English Language Learners) in initial reading programmes in New Zealand schools. In this paper we focus on how ESOL paraprofessionals work with ESOL and mainstream teachers to accomplish planning for their work with young ELLs. We consider planning from the perspectives of: paraprofessional education and training, the settings children and paraprofessionals work in, the selection and deployment of materials, the lessons paraprofessionals are called on to develop, and liaison between teachers and paraprofessionals.

French schoolchildren’s first steps in learning English: a comparison of results in phonological discrimination and oral comprehension and production

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This paper presents the first results of a two-year project on learning English in primary school in France aiming at measuring the knowledge and skills acquired by children in early elementary school (CP: 6 to 7 years of age) and at the beginning of cycle 3 (CE2 : 8 to 9 years of age). The goal is to examine the process of learning in auditory perception, listening and speaking simultaneously, considering two different periods in language (L1), cognitive and social development of the children. The pupils’ progress was measured using oral comprehension tasks, auditory discrimination and simple production or reproduction tasks, selected in relation to the teacher’s input and the teaching method used. Oral comprehension, for example, was measured by word identification tasks and simple statements related to images. The tasks were carried out three times during the school year 2012-2013: in December, February and May. Our research is guided by two fundamental questions: - What is actually learned in English class over the first months at school? - What are the
Early Language Learning Theory and Practice

Individual differences in two primary English classrooms

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In a year-long study of two beginning-level primary English classrooms, a Paris-based research team looked not only at methodology and classroom interactions, but more particularly at individual differences, and their possible contributions to the different language-learning pathways observed. Twenty-five first-graders (all aged six) and twenty-nine third-graders (all aged eight) completed a battery of tasks and questionnaires designed to reflect individual differences at the cognitive, verbal, motivational, and socio-affective levels. They also completed four tasks in English, each administered twice during the year (in December and May, or in February and May): listening, phoneme discrimination, speaking, and sentence imitation. English lessons in both schools were recorded during three different weeks of the school year, yielding four hours of footage for each classroom (currently being transcribed and coded). Classic statistical comparisons (non-parametric correlations and group comparisons) showed interesting differences and sometimes unexpected similarities between these six- and eight-year-old beginning language learners. Both groups performed equally well on the English listening tasks; differences are observed on the production tasks, with the older children producing longer utterances (following classic developmental patterns). Correlations were found between metalinguistic competence and performance on the listening task, and between problems with phonological memory and error rates in spoken production. We will examine these effects more closely, focusing on case studies and learner profiles, and what they illustrate about emerging L2 competence and classroom behavior.

Identity in diverse primary language learning contexts: children’s narratives on person, place and experience

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In today’s globalised world children are catapulted into diverse language contact situations from a young age. They have mother tongues and learn foreign languages; they speak heritage languages at home while picking up an additional language at school; they start learning English in primary or even pre-primary settings. Research has shown that these multilingual experiences develop children’s linguistic skills, raise intercultural awareness and increase intellectual flexibility, but how do they impact on children’s developing sense of self, their understanding of their place in the world, their identity? In this session, I investigate how young children, aged 5 to 11, mediate the construction of their identities across different languages, cultures and literacy experiences. I explore how children, who move between distinct primary school settings, appropriate and display their multilingual identities across multiple educational contexts: the mainstream French classroom; an out-of-school English literacy course; and diverse community-based heritage language programmes, crucial for maintaining a cultural and linguistic bond with their families. Based on interviews with the children, their parents and teachers, observations of one learning context, children's drawings or written
narratives and symbolic objects, this study gives children a voice in exploring their sense of place in the world. Initial findings suggest that children mediate their identity construction through real people, tangible places, and lived experiences, which have value for the children. Finally, this paper explores the importance of these linguistic spaces in building children's self-esteem, cementing a positive relationship with their languages, and creating an emerging linguistic and literate identity. It looks at the implications for classroom practice and teacher responses in primary contexts and examines the role of the parents in nurturing children's multiple literacies and identities.

ICT in English for young learners

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The accelerating development of modern technology has led to problems regarding Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) in education. Schools seem to lag behind despite their responsibility to educate future citizens. In Sweden, the new Education Act of 2010 and the National Curriculum of 2011 both introduced modern technology as a natural element of education (though there is no official Swedish document concerning teachers' professional development with regard to ICTs or providing guidance as to how ICTs should be implemented in schools). As a result, a number of municipalities invested in the introduction of ICT in schools, but focused mainly on equipment. This often led to the simple substitution of tools instead of a redefinition of teaching methodology. The aim of my study is to analyse teachers' usage of ICTs in English teaching in classes 1-3 of primary school. The research combines both quantitative and qualitative methods. Phase one aims at creating an overview of ICT accessibility in schools. Based on the results of the overview, a number of schools were chosen for further investigation, where class teachers will be observed during English lessons and interviewed afterwards. The observations focus on the practical side of ICT usage in English teaching: what hardware and software programs are used, in what way and for what purpose? The aim with the interviews is to find out what factors teachers take into account when planning for their use of ICTs, e.g. gender issues, the students' social background, their digital competence and digital literacy, or enhanced collaboration and creativity. The results of the study will be used to discuss to what extent the implementation of ICTs in schools has been successful so far, and whether professional development for teachers is needed with regard to ICTs, and if yes, what kind. Keywords: ICT, early EFL teaching, digital competence, digital literacy.

Quantitative and qualitative analysis of parents' views on early English language learning in Cyprus: Ideological and pragmatic perspectives of a new educational policy

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The educational reform implemented by the Ministry of Education and Culture in Cyprus since September 2011 includes the early introduction of English as the first foreign language. Instruction begins at Grade 1 of primary schools (six-year-old students) and some basic exposure to English is provided in pre-primary education. The reform has offered a fresh testing-ground for a funded research project that investigates the parents' attitudes towards this language policy. The results stem from a questionnaire-based study, which took place in eight pre-primary schools and eight primary schools of urban Nicosia, Cyprus, in January 2013. Three different types of questionnaires (about 1,000 questionnaires) were distributed to three groups of parents (pre-primary school parents, Grade 1 and Grade 2 primary-school parents). A quantitative analysis of Likert scale data shows the overall
attitudes among the three parental groups. Unlike previous presentations on this project, this presentation will include a qualitative analysis of the parents' comments on open-ended questions. The issue is approached from two perspectives: an ideological perspective and a pragmatic perspective. In terms of the ideological perspective, the investigation examines whether parents perceive English as an ideology-laden and an identity-laden language. More specifically, it investigates whether parents associate English with political authority deriving from the former British colonial ruler on the island and whether there are any concerns about retaining the students' linguistic heritage (Standard Greek, Cypriot-Greek dialect). In terms of the pragmatic perspective, the study examines if parents perceive English as a neutral language possessing a purely functionalist role indispensable for a global lingua franca. It shows parents' expectations about their children's future competence in English and their future ability to meet intelligibility needs through English both within and outside the E.U.

**Contesting and negotiating new languages: Young children's initial experiences with foreign language learning**

*Erin Kearney, Amanda Barbour*

*University at Buffalo, USA*

This paper reports on an in-depth analysis of the experiences of very young learners (aged 3-5) as they first encounter a foreign language in their pre-school classrooms. Specifically, we draw on theories of language awareness (Garrett & James, 2000) in order to answer the questions: What awareness of language develops among young children as they engage in foreign language learning for the first time and how is awareness-raising interactionally achieved? Employing a micro-ethnographic research design, we generated a corpus of video-recorded interactions from seven classrooms in which children learned Chinese, Korean or Spanish twice a week from a 'language partner' (a language-teacher-in-training from the local university). This collection of video data allows for analysis of the ways in which children showed developing awareness of particular languages, of what language is in general and of what linguistic diversity is. Our analysis of the interactional processes through which children came to these awarenesses complements the existing literature which focuses more on policies and program models, development of linguistic proficiency and development of (bi)literacy among young language learners (Nikolov & Mihaljevic Djigunovic 2011). Through our analysis of 169 video-recorded classroom interactions collected over the course of several months for each language partner, we identified contesting patterns and negotiating patterns in our interactional data. That is, while some interactions show uncontested uptake and use of the new language or outright rejection of it, others show a much more layered and complex negotiation process. We draw on and stretch the notion of language awareness to account for the interactions we observed in the early foreign language program and to discuss, at the end of our presentation, pedagogical, curricular and policy-related implications of our work.

**Multilingual-multicultural challenges in the kindergarten**

*Arianna Kitzinger*

*University of West Hungary, Hungary*

The presentation gives an account of research into multilingualism and multiculturalism in a kindergarten attended by children from families working at a local NATO air base. The setting is exceptional as NATO bases establish more usually their own international schools in the world. The town of Pápa, Hungary is, however, a first NATO example of a pre-school where 23 foreign families' children from six different countries are trying to adapt to the local community. Apart
from Hungarian, the mother tongues of the children are Swedish, Bulgarian, Norwegian, Dutch and, in the case of American families, English, Filipino and Spanish. My interdisciplinary research aims to explore the main question, i.e. How can kindergarten teachers, children, parents and educational specialists form the common linguistic, cultural and pedagogical basis in this very complex setting?

This presentation outlines the background to the study and reviews the research methods employed during the study, including interviews, lesson observation and document study. A rationale for the interview procedures and interviewee selection will be discussed, with reference to the layered complexity of the analysis. Observations were made in the kindergarten groups where, besides the language pedagogical methods, actors’ linguistic and social behaviour and the actual setting were examined. The desktop research includes the analysis of official documents of the institution as well as the several types of notes made by kindergarten teachers themselves. Findings shed light on linguistic, cultural and pedagogical questions such as how and to what extent the mother tongue and the foreign language appear in kindergarten activities, how the languages relate to each other, how different cultural identities are manifested under institutional circumstances and what the actors’ attitude is to early childhood multilingual-multicultural education.

**Teacher preparation for teaching foreign languages to young learners: various models and alternatives**

*Maria Kropacheva Sobolevskaya*

*Herzen State Pedagogical University of Russia, Russia*

The paper presents the information about various educational models of preparing teachers for teaching foreign languages to young learners in different countries around the world. This aspect is becoming more and more relevant in terms of changing the general concepts of teacher education today. The research topic is developed in the context of interaction between three components: linguistic, methodological and intercultural. It is also essential to investigate how theoretical and practical parts of teacher education are organized in different educational institutions. This information reveals the strong and weak points of the system, helps to understand whether present models meet social expectations. Developing such personal qualities and global competences as tolerance, ability to act in multicultural and multi-confessional reality in our young students we come to the idea that all these important factors must be relevant to the teachers themselves. Accordingly, the intercultural component is significant in the preparation process for teachers who further present the mentioned qualities through their own experience. Intercultural communicational skills in turn give a rise to the linguistic competences which can be acquired in a more natural way with implications into the professional field. Special approaches to teacher preparation for teaching foreign languages to young learners as the research shows can be reflected in all aspects of methodological training process becoming the starting point for the development of new teaching forms and programmes, international cooperation and experience exchange. The findings demonstrate that the complete study of the teaching preparation models variety leads us to better understanding of what the well-qualified teacher of foreign languages is going to be like concerning the future of our young learners.

**The effects of using a picture book with Norwegian 2nd grade EFL learners in a lesson study context**

*Deborah S. Larssen, Ion Drew*

*University of Stavanger, Norway*

This paper presents a study of how a group of four student teachers of English at a Norwegian university, during teaching practice, used lesson study in connection with the planning, teaching and
assessments of an EFL lesson in a 2nd grade class (aged approximately 7). The focus of lesson study is on pupils' learning rather than teaching. A group of teachers or student teachers are collectively responsible for the planning of a lesson, which one of them is randomly chosen to teach and which the others observe. On the basis of the experiences of this lesson, the group revises its plans of the same lesson and one of them is randomly chosen to teach the lesson a second time to a new class of learners at the same level. In this case the aim was to research the effectiveness of lesson study in connection with the use of a picture book in the 2nd grade EFL class in Norway. The study is part of a larger research project, TasS (Teachers as Students), which aims to compare the quality of teaching practice in a ‘normal’ situation with that in a lesson study intervention context. The current study is part of the lesson study intervention. Data collection was through video recordings of pre-, mid- and post-supervision sessions between the students and their supervising teacher, video recordings of the lessons, and the students' reports and reflective notes. Lesson study enabled the students to conduct a more effective second lesson in terms of pupil engagement and learning than had been the case in the initial lesson. It therefore has the potential to enhance the quality of teaching practice for EFL student teachers in connection with young language learners.

Teaching English to young learners: An action research study

Samuel Lefever
University of Iceland, Iceland

This talk will discuss an action research project undertaken by a teacher of English to young learners (age 6-12) in which she explores her personal and professional development. She is a young teacher with 10 years' experience of teaching English to young learners under her belt, and she is constantly looking for ways to challenge herself, explore new areas and improve her teaching. Some of the areas she has ventured into are integrated teaching (CLIL), teaching with tablet computers and writing teaching materials aimed at young learners. Networking with other teachers is also important to her and she has begun to share her experience and expertise at teacher workshops and seminars. In this talk I will draw attention to her vision for working with young learners and her beliefs about effective teaching. These include a focus on fun and active learning, TL use in the classroom, theme teaching, and the use of technology in language teaching. I will share key experiences and reflections from the teacher's CPD journey which illustrate how ideas emerge and teaching practices develop in interaction with self, students, teachers, and others. We will see how her venture has benefited not only the teacher but also her students, colleagues, and the school. I will end by discussing how challenges and benefits she has encountered through teaching English to young learners has helped her to grow and develop personally and professionally.

Aural comprehension development in early language learning

Lucilla Lopriore
Roma Tre University, Italy

In early language learning, oral language (speaking and listening) provides the basic input for literacy development: it is through oral language that the foundation for learning a new language is established (McKay, 2006). Research on aural comprehension processes in FL learning suggests that listening, more than any other skill, is a neglected ability in learners’ mother tongue as well as in foreign language learning, and it is particularly so in the primary classroom. Listening in a foreign language is, on the contrary, a highly engaging cognitive activity that requires on the part of the teacher careful monitoring of task types, of learners’ emotional and cognitive engagement during the whole listening process as well as learners’ self-assessment (Vandergrift, 2002, 2003; Goh, 1997,
1999; Goh & Taib, 2006; Vandergrift & Goh, 2012). Young learners may contribute to better understanding their aural comprehension process by being engaged in self-monitoring protocols (Goh & Yaib, 2006). This contribution is aimed at presenting the emerging results of a research study on the development of aural comprehension skills of a group of young Italian learners monitored using self-assessment protocols first during five years of the primary cycle (age 6-10) and later on, during the last year of the middle school (age 13). The study is partly derived from the Early Language Learning in Europe Project (ELLiE, Enever, 2011). Specific listening tasks were developed and administered at the end of each school year in order to measure learners’ listening comprehension. Classroom listening practice and listening assessment procedures have been the object of specific interviews with the teachers involved in the study. Learners’ self-assessment was considered against their teacher’s assessment of their language aptitude and performance. First results and findings will be presented.

French pre-service primary teachers’ feelings of self-efficacy and confidence in teaching English to young learners

Latisha Mary
Université de Lorraine, France

Despite debates on the benefits of early language learning (ELL), research has pointed to various advantages (Edelenbos, Johnstone & Kubanek, 2006; Nikolov & Djigunovic; Nikolov, 2009). However, the competence, confidence and practices of the teachers providing language instruction for young learners appear to be crucial to the success of ELL programmes. The requirement in France for all primary school teachers to teach a foreign language to their pupils from age 7 and up raises many questions regarding the skills which are most important for student teachers to acquire during their training and whether these teachers feel confident enough to teach a foreign language to their young learners. This paper addresses these questions and focuses in particular on initial primary teacher education students’ feelings of self-efficacy regarding their competence to teach English to young learners. The data presented is taken from a qualitative study conducted in 2013 with 1st and 2nd year students (N=31) enrolled in the Masters in Education programme at one University Teacher Education Institute in France. Data collection comprised a set of semi-structured questionnaires administered to two cohorts of teacher trainees in their second semester of a two-year Masters diploma in primary education as well as a set of semi-structured interviews. The results show that while many of the students feel that a high level of mastery in English is not required to teach English in primary school, over half of them question their ability to provide an accurate oral model in English for their pupils. Despite gains in confidence in foreign language pedagogy, many students feel apprehension and anxiety regarding their communicative competence. The paper will address the question of adequate provision of foreign language training in teacher education and will discuss possible means of building the self-efficacy of future primary school teachers.

Teaching English to Young Learners- Theories and Practices for 21st Century Global Society Needs and Challenges

Marijana Matic
University of Kragujevac, Serbia

The paper reports the study of the teaching and learning methods of English to young learners of elementary school learners in Serbia (aged 9 to 11), giving information about typical characteristics of teachers, learners and teaching methods and techniques. It further discusses if and to what extent the teaching and learning practices as such cater for young learners’ needs and provide the learners
with the basis for independent use of English and communication in the modern globalised world. The study included 1316 learners and 71 teachers and the data was obtained by mixed quantitative and qualitative methods. It included questionnaires, class observation, focus-group interviews, semi-structured interviews. The data analysis methods included descriptive quantitative analysis and causal quantitative analysis, content analysis, focus-group discussion analysis and narrative analysis. The results show a gap between the learners’ needs and preferences and out-dated practices which are not in line with modern TEYL methodology guidelines. Moreover the practices observed show the lack in instruction more appropriate to children's developmental abilities, that focuses on contextualised language, and as such are not likely to result in independent language users skilled in communication and ready to be a part of the Global society. The comprehensive account of the observed situation is given in this paper as well as the possible areas of improvement. Key words: young learners, approaches, methods, techniques, mixed methods research, contextualization, communication.

**English as a Foreign Language for Young Learners in Sweden – Practices and Possibilities**

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This paper describes a pilot study on young learners’ EFL classrooms in a Swedish municipality. A survey of the research in early foreign language learning shows that many scholars advocate a consistent use of the target language, particularly in the case of young learners, who will benefit from developing useful guessing strategies by being exposed to language where not every word is translated (cf. e.g. Pinter 2006 and Lundberg 2007). As regards learning activities, there seems to be a wide consensus about the benefits of contextualized language use, e.g. communication based on songs, stories, and other types of literature, broadly understood (cf. e.g. Hadaway et al., 2002; Krashen 2004, 2008; Georgopoulou & Griva 2012; Håkansson & Sundberg 2012). According to Hadaway et al., for example, contextualized language is more meaningful than skill-oriented materials (p.41), while Håkansson & Sundberg point out how successful learning depends on active participation in a situated and contextualized manner (p.154). In our study, we observed and video filmed five different English classes with pupils aged 6-9. We adopted a broad perspective. Among other things, we considered how the teachers communicated with their pupils: the extent to which they used English vs. Swedish in class, whether and how they provided corrective feedback (e.g. recasting, repetition or clarification requests), and their communicative practices and activities general. Another focus area was what learning activities and materials (e.g. course books, stories, songs, videos and interactive programs for Smartboards) were employed and how. The observations revealed a surprisingly large share of Swedish in the classrooms, and of activities that focus on single words rather than contextualized language. Our paper will detail the findings and discuss them, partly in relation to the teachers’ avowedly limited background in English teaching and learning.

**Predictors of L2 writing skill in children with English as an Additional Language**

*Victoria Murphy*

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Children with English as an Additional Language (EAL) tend to under-perform both linguistically and academically relative to native-speaking (NS) peers. Despite these gaps however, relatively little research in the UK has focused on this population with respect to their English language and literacy development. Consequently, the study reported in this paper was developed to enhance our understand-
standing of developing English language literacy skills in children with EAL, with a specific focus on writing. To that end, 74 nine year old children (EAL and NS with 37 in each group), were recruited to participate in two writing tasks; one narrative, one expository. The groups were matched on both a chronological (CA) and language age (LA) comparison, as well as on nonverbal IQ. Baseline tasks measuring their English receptive and expressive language skills, receptive vocabulary, decoding and reading comprehension were administered. The children prepared written compositions at the beginning and end of the school year to identify whether and/or how their writing changed over time. Finally, a comprehensive language background questionnaire was administered which tapped into a range of both home and L2 language experiences of the sample outside of the school context. The results in this paper focus on the outcomes of a series of multiple regression analyses aimed to identify the explanatory power of English language and home language predictors of L2 writing performance on both narrative and expository compositions. There were significant group differences on a range of language factors including the finding that expressive vocabulary is a significantly stronger predictor of English writing in children with EAL than with NS children, across both genres. These findings are discussed within the context of the role of vocabulary in L2 writing across genre types and educational provision for minority language learners in the UK and elsewhere.

National Testing of English in Year 6 in Sweden

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In the spring term 2013 the national test of English in Year 6 supported grading on the new Swedish grading scale F-A for the first time. The test comprised three parts, Speaking, Reception and Writing, and to ensure equivalent assessment, two of the parts, Reception and Writing, were administered on specific dates while the oral test could be carried out any time between January and May. Teachers were provided with extensive guidelines and rated and graded their own pupils' performances, but with a strong recommendation from the Swedish National Agency for Education to collaborate with other teachers when assessing the tasks. In addition, the teachers were asked to complete a questionnaire in connection with the administration of the test about e.g. the level of difficulty of the different tasks, the assessment guidelines, whether the test had been a support for their grading of pupils' competences at the end of the sixth year and their pupils' reactions. In this presentation the outcome of the national test of English in 2013 will be discussed with a special focus on teachers' reactions to and experiences of the first English test that supported grading in Year 6. A majority of the primary school teachers in Sweden have little or no experience of grading, because grades have only been awarded from the eighth school year since the 1980s. The presentation will also include a short presentation of the assessment training material for teachers available on the National Agency's website. It consists of films, test tasks and graded samples of pupils' oral and written performances, as well as reflective materials and questions that can be discussed on in-service training days.

Bumper Cars, Zoomers and Monkeys: Core Vocabulary in Textbooks for Young Learners

Cathrine Norberg, Marie Nordlund
Luleå University of Technology, Sweden

Despite the centrality of vocabulary in language learning, research on vocabulary appears to have had limited impact on what words are included in textbooks for young learners of English. For instance, there seems to be a general lack of agreement as to what words are regarded important to learn
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and what words are understood as constituting a basic core vocabulary (Carter & McCarthy 1988; Cameron 2001; Nation 2001). Few extensive studies so far have analysed the content of textbooks in relation to core vocabulary, and no such study has been conducted in a Swedish context. This study comprises the analysis of seven commonly used textbooks in Swedish elementary schools (grades 3-4, pupils aged 9-10 years), focusing on: (i) What words are beginners expected to learn? Are they relevant (age-wise, frequency-wise, etc.), (ii) Is there a common vocabulary in the seven books? If so, what words are included? and (iii) Since the Swedish language syllabi are based on the Common European Framework of Reference for Language, to what extent does vocabulary included in the books correlate with the domains identified in the framework as particularly relevant for language acquisition and teaching? Preliminary results indicate that, in general, variation in vocabulary is considerable, but there are also a few semantic domains which are represented in all the books.

Young Learners’ Vocabulary Acquisition: How Helpful Is the Textbook?

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In many classrooms around the world, the textbook is a central element in the teaching and learning of foreign languages. It is often seen as the authority as regards what constitutes a good lesson (Abello-Contesse & López-Jiménez 2010: 96) because teachers simply do not have the time and not always the competence needed to analyse teaching materials and evaluate their suitability (Council of Europe 2001: 141). It is, thus, the textbook and, consequently, the textbook writer(s) that decide what is happening in the classroom, e.g., what vocabulary is treated. The Council of Europe states that methods used in language teaching should be those considered most effective (ibid: 142). Hence, it is also important that textbooks are designed in accordance with results from SLA research. The question is whether this is always the case. Developing a vocabulary is a vital component of learning a new language. Without words it does not matter how thorough one’s knowledge of grammar is. To build up a vocabulary in a new language is a daunting task and learners need as much help as possible from teachers and from teaching materials used. This is especially true for young learners, even in a country such as Sweden where English teaching starts from an early age and learners are exposed to English every day. This study compares two textbook series, Good Stuff and New Champion, written specifically for use in school years 4-6 (pupils aged 10-12 years) in Sweden. The purpose is to shed light on variation in the vocabulary presented. Results from a previous analysis of Good Stuff (Nordlund 2013), indicate that it to some extent helps vocabulary acquisition, but also that it could be even better in that respect. There is reason to believe that Good Stuff is not unique in this respect.

Learners’ awareness and understanding of vocabulary strategy use

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Language learning strategies are an integral aspect of becoming an autonomous and life-long language learner. An essential component of effective strategy learning and use is metacognitive awareness (Cohen, 2007) which forms a basis for autonomous learning (Oxford, 1990; Macaro, 2006). Lack of metacognitive awareness may lead to confusion about perceived and actual strategy use among learners (Cohen, 2011), infelicitous strategy choices (Macaro, 2006) as well as inaccurate conclusions about their own and others’ strategic competence and performance level (Kruger & Dunning, 1999). Research so far has concentrated on the teaching of cognitive and metacognitive strategies without addressing the learners’ own understanding and awareness of them. This paper
presents initial findings from within a project in progress in which the awareness and understanding of strategy use among young learners are studied. Learners’ overt strategy use and the reasons behind these strategies are also investigated. The study is directed towards vocabulary use as vocabulary is fundamental in the development of the skills needed for communicating in a second language (Erler & Macaro, 2011). The context of the study is English as a Foreign Language education among learners aged 10-12 in Sweden. Open-ended interviews and verbal reports are the methods that will be used. The data collected are analysed from a phenomenographic perspective in order to present collective variations in awareness and understanding among young learners. The project will shed light on the little recognized issue of learners’ own awareness and understanding of vocabulary learning strategies and will provide a starting point for further research into both the teaching and learning of metacognitive and cognitive strategies with the learners’ understanding as the basis. As this project is a work in progress, this paper presents findings from a pilot study.

Peppa Pig and Very Young Learners: Exploiting Consumerism to the Children’s Advantage

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When teaching foreign languages to very young learners, motivation is an issue that needs to be taken into account even more than in the case of any other age group. Teaching materials used in schools, however carefully crafted, more often than not fail to cater for the genuine interests of children, and to invoke intrinsic motivation for learning, which, in the case of very young learners is not usually high, since the decision to start learning a new language is not their own but rather that of their parents. Therefore, this paper aims to examine whether centring teaching around authentic media material, such as popular cartoons which children can relate to because of their daily exposure at home, affects the level of motivation for learning. By using one series aimed at 3- to 5-year-olds, Peppa Pig, a theme-based approach was adopted in this case study instead of a grammar-based curriculum. This series has been chosen because it recreates a variety of real life situations, which were later recycled in the form of role play, using the branded toys associated with cartoon characters, thus taking advantage of the prevalent consumerist culture. The case study focuses on the learning progression of one 4-year-old during the period of twelve months, who was daily exposed to 20-minute sessions of cartoons, as well as to a variety of thematically connected activities which supported learning by catering for different learning styles. Vocabulary gains investigated showed that individual words were acquired at the highest rate, followed by formulaic and chunked expressions, which were actively used in situations recognized as adequate based on the content presented in the cartoons. The results concerning intrinsic motivation also speak in favour of using this approach both in kindergarten settings, exploiting role play with playschool character-toys from the series, as well as in home settings, where family characters can be used to connect home and preschool environments.

Súil, súil eile - Observations of second language acquisition in Irish medium preschools

Laura Rawdon
Forbairt Naíonraí Teoranta, Ireland

With an increased emphasis on observational methods and tools in early years’ services, Forbairt Naíonraí Teoranta (FNT) recognised the need for the development of Irish language observational tools and resources. Research began in late 2012 with the purpose of developing readily available
observational resources in English available through Irish. It quickly became apparent that this would not be sufficient as the total early immersion model did not feature in these templates. We also recognised the importance of second language acquisition specific tools to support the holistic development of each child in total early immersion (Irish language - L2) preschool services (naíonraí). Therefore the focus of the work changed and observations of Irish language acquisition (L2) took priority in developing the templates. To this end FNT developed a pilot scheme during 2013 whereby various Irish language templates, focussing on second language acquisition in the context of the overall development of each child, were trialled in four naíonraí, each with differing levels of experience including child observation skills and language ability. The pilot highlighted a number of changes needed to the templates along with the need for a revised implementation plan, to include direction and training on the use of the templates. Our initial purpose evolved as the need for supporting documentation, including theory, best practice and evidence-based learning, for the templates developed - Súil, súil eile - was born. Súil, súil eile is now a central part of the training resources used by FNT with naíonra leaders in relation to implementing and documenting policy and regulatory frameworks such as Aistear, Siolta and Pre-school Regulations, 2006.

Pre-primary foreign language learning in Poland: the kindergarten head teachers’ perspective

Joanna Rokita-Jaskow
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The paper is going to present the state-of-the art of very early foreign language teaching in Poland, which is beyond the supervision of the Ministry of Education, and yet foreign languages are commonly taught at kindergartens on parental demand, often as an extracurricular fee-paying class. Therefore kindergarten head teachers are the major persons responsible for the organisation of FL teaching in their institutions. Effective and motivating FL teaching will to a large extent depend on their knowledge, beliefs, engagement etc. In the paper I am going to present the results of the survey research conducted among 54 head teachers of kindergartens in the Cracow region, both private and public ones. The general aim of the study was to find out what measures they take in order to foster the development of multilingual citizens of the future and to what extent they are aware of the organizational demands of such early instruction. The issues considered are: awareness of the European language policy, the choice of languages offered for instruction, motives for introducing early L2 instruction, opinions on the teaching methodology and learning results. The aim of the study was also to find out if early foreign language instruction is limited to the English language or the other languages are offered as well, in other words whether an early start promotes bilingualism, or is a pathway to multilingual development.

L2 request development in young Norwegian EFL learners

Milica Savic
University of Stavanger, Norway

With the introduction of the notion of communicative competence to second language learning and teaching (Canale & Swain 1980), and the recognition of the role of pragmatic competence within it (Bachman 1990; Bachman & Palmer 1996; Alcón 2000; Usó-Juan & Martínez-Flor 2006), interlanguage pragmatics (ILP) research has gained in popularity. However, with a few notable exceptions (Achiba 2002, Barón Parés 2012, Ellis 1992, Rose 2000, Walters 1980), ILP research has almost exclusively focused on adult learners, and even with that learner group, studies of L2 pragmatic development have been comparatively rare (Kasper & Rose 2002). The present study, to be conducted
in the spring 2014, sets out to address a generally neglected area in ILP research: developmental patterns in L2 speech acts, more specifically, the development of L2 requests in young Norwegian learners of English. Since the ability to use context-appropriate polite expressions is one of the competence aims for spoken communication for grades 1-7 in the recently revised national English subject curriculum, the aims of the study are to identify specific request strategies that emerge at different stages of development and to explore learners’ sensitivity to social power as a contextual factor. Three age groups of pupils 8, 10 and 12 years old (grades 2, 4 and 6) will participate in this cross-sectional study. The data will be collected through a series of short role-plays and analysed in terms of the frequency and types of request head acts, supportive moves and lexical/ phrasal downgraders (Blum-Kulka, House & Kasper 1989). The present study is conceived as exploratory, and its results will be used in the design of a follow-up study focusing on the effects of instruction on young learners’ request development.

Investigating reading skills of Serbian young learners learning English as a foreign language

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The paper presents the results of investigation of Serbian-speaking young learners’ achievement in EFL reading skills. The focus is on comprehension strategies used in reading of the text where unfamiliar words appear, investigated by administering the 2011 ELLiE Study reading research instrument to a sample of 502 fifth-grade students (mostly aged 11, the fifth year of English study and the third year of reading skills development) in six state primary schools in five towns throughout Serbia in November 2013. A more in-depth insight into the reading strategies used by more competent readers was obtained by conducting a think-aloud protocol interview with twelve focal learners, using the reading task of Cambridge Young Learners English Test: Flyers sample paper. A multi-method approach was used in the survey and both quantitative and qualitative data were collected. Quantitative data included achievement of the sample learners in seven ELLiE Study reading research test tasks, results of administering a smiley questionnaire of students’ attitudes (to learning English, learning new words in English, reading in English, and reading in English aloud/silently/on the internet), a range of strategies used in reading new words and in making sense of the text where new words appear, and a range of reading difficulties experienced by the sample learners. Qualitative data involved the sample learners’ explanation of choices in the seven ELLiE Study reading research tasks, and transcripts of focal learners’ prompted think-aloud protocol interview. The analysis of collected data is on-going and it is hoped that findings will indicate the set of (comprehension) strategies used by more competent readers, and reading difficulties experienced by less competent readers. It is also believed that findings will indicate the most influential factors contributing to success in young learners reading in English as a foreign language, relevant for improving the reading programmes.

Keeping secrets: Motivation in early foreign language learning in Sweden

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The present paper focuses on motivation for learning foreign languages among young learners in Sweden. During one year, several sets of data were collected from three groups of children (N = 176) in preschool class (5 years old), grade 3 (9 years old), and grade 6 (12 years old). This study is specifically based on interview data. For each interview, the learners were in pairs or small groups
and, in total, 77 interviews were carried out. A semi-structured format was adopted using material and questions from the European Language Portfolio accompanied by additional questions about involvement in extramural English activities and motivation for learning languages in general and English in particular. Dörnyei’s (2005, 2009) L2 motivational self-system is used as a theoretical point of departure and with the help of its key concepts, the Ideal L2 Self, the Ought-to L2 Self, and the L2 Learning Experience, results are presented and discussed. As expected, results show that both in- and out-of-school factors function as motivators. In line with previous research, the teacher is found to be very important for motivation. Among out-of-school factors, the desire to be able to use various tools or programs offered on the Internet is highly motivating for language learning, particularly so to the 6th-graders but also to the younger learners. Another frequently mentioned out-of-school motivational factor across all three learner groups is the possibility of becoming able to speak a foreign language in order to keep secrets away from younger sisters or brothers. In this regard, parents often function as Ideal L2 Self-role-models, such as when they initially use English between one another to keep secrets away from their children and later on, when a child has basic understanding of English, the parents switch to another foreign language for the same reason.

Validation and evaluation of YLV AT: a vocabulary test for young learners of English

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Generally, formative assessment is preferred for young language learners (McKay, 2006), while summative assessment is introduced at a later stage. In Sweden, English formal instruction begins in 1st grade and English grades are awarded from 6th grade. This paper presents a validation and evaluation of the Young Learner Vocabulary Assessment Test, YLV AT, which attempts to assess young learners’ English L2 vocabulary proficiency. The YLV AT is made up of 37 items carefully selected from the Productive and Vocabulary Levels Tests, originally designed for adults (Nation, 2001). The YLV AT consists of three parts: (A) 13 “recognition” items, (B) 12 word-combination items, and (C) 12 productive items. In the pilot test, students (N=52, age 12, 6th grade) were tested during regular school hours and in addition to taking the test itself, they filled out an evaluation form. Test results point to a good spread of scores (max = 37, M = 18.9, SD = 6.5, high = 34, low = 7), indicating that the YLV AT indeed serves the intended purpose of discriminating between learners. Evaluation results suggest that the students consider the YLV AT to be difficult. One third considered it fun, and two thirds found it boring. Chi-2 testing revealed a statistically significant relation between scores and perceived test difficulty; students who found the YLV AT easy or very easy scored significantly higher (26.1) than those who found the test to be difficult (18.3) or very difficult (12.9). We argue that the YLV AT is a reliable, valid tool for assessment of young learners’ L2 English vocabulary proficiency. In spite of its summative characteristics, the YLV AT can be of formative use in the classroom, facilitating for teachers to initiate individualized intentional vocabulary learning among their students, such as suggesting suitable tasks for learners depending on whether they scored low, medium, or high on the test.

From learner research to teacher training

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In 2008 compulsory foreign language instruction was introduced from the onset of schooling (age 6/7) in Poland. The implementation and the effects of language learning at this level have since been investigated in two research studies: Early Language Learning in Europe (ELiE, 2007-2010), with 6
other participating European countries and a Polish national study into primary school effectiveness (2011-2014). This paper focuses on how the Polish ELLiE results from a convenience sample of 7 state primary schools were endorsed by the national study on a representative sample of 172 state primary schools. The comparison shows that factors for Polish children's performance in English as a foreign language for the ELLiE sample were also identified as indicators of language achievement (Lindgren & Munoz, 2011; author, 2013) in the national study. The in-depth quantitative approach to classroom observation (Pianta et al., 2008) used in the national study exposes the classroom practice of language teachers as urgently needing improvement. The results from both studies have clear implications for Polish higher education and in-service training. The benefits from intensive and extensive classroom language practice on sustaining learner motivation need to be reinforced in the delivery of teacher training to guide teachers to work effectively to boost children's achievements. The second part of the presentation describes how teachers and teacher trainees should be helped to find ways of addressing this challenge.

**Young Language Learners’ views on learning a foreign language**

*Malgorzata Tetiurka*

*John Paul II University of Lublin, Poland*

In recent years there has been a global trend towards lowering the age at which children start learning a foreign language. This phenomenon has led to a growing interest in research into Teaching English to Young Learners, most of which concerns bilingual education and is theoretical in nature, with rather limited practical application to classroom procedures. Classroom teaching remains, to a great extent, based on common sense and relies heavily on primary teachers experience of mainstream primary education. However, times are changing rapidly, and so are young learners. This raises the question of whether the approaches that are commonly in use are best suited to the changing profile of a primary learner. This paper is based on a small scale qualitative study into how Polish primary school second graders see learning English as a foreign language, how they perceive themselves as language learners and whether this self-concept has any direct bearing on the overall quality of L2 learning. It also aims to investigate how 8-10 year old children's preconceptions about learning a foreign language might inform the choice of tools for language teaching. It is expected that well developed self-awareness may be a predicator of success in L2 mastering.

**Linking assessment for learning to raising achievement in young learners’ classrooms**

*Agnieszka Turek*

*University of Reading and Nord Anglia Education, UK*

This paper presents findings from the newly emerging research field of assessment for learning (AFL) in relation to the teaching of English to young learners (EYL). Although AFL has been widely researched in mainstream education, it has been minimally investigated in EFL contexts in general and in teaching EYL in particular. AFL has been reported to significantly contribute to raising achievement but there is limited empirical evidence to support these claims. This paper uses evidence from 26 lesson observations in an EYL context to show that using AFL increases on-task child-to-child and child-to-teacher interactions and decreases teacher centeredness in lessons. There is ample evidence in the data that AFL facilitates situations during which learners can negotiate meaning, interacting with each other meaningfully and purposefully in L2, allowing them to modify the input received from teachers. This provides opportunities for interactional modification of input, which has been shown to play an important role in effective language learning. Furthermore, existing definitions of AFL admit a wide representation of practices, and limited attention is given to domain considera-
tions in its conceptualisation. Analysing the data collected through semi-structured interviews, this paper reports a teacher-generated definition of AfL, specific to an EYL context. The findings not only provide an EYL specific conceptualisation of AfL but more importantly this research confirms how AfL can be empirically linked to raising achievement levels in a language classroom. These findings have significant implications for EYL professionals and researchers.

**Teaching EFL to very young learners in France: a new approach**

*Anne-Marie Voise*  
*University of Bourgogne, France*

This paper presentation will first relate the extension of the implementation of foreign language teaching in French primary schools which are now mandatory from the age of six. It will secondly give an account of a research which studies the effects of a holistic approach on, respectively, children in kindergarten (age 5) and children in elementary schools. In the past decade, the teaching of a foreign language in primary education in France has been rapidly generalized down from the last two years of elementary schools (age 9-11) to the first year of elementary school (age 6). The French national curriculum nonetheless still offers the same content for the five years of compulsory elementary education and aims at reaching the A1 level of the CEFR. Some of the main issues of this generalization are the notions of continuity and progression throughout the curriculum. Indeed, French primary school teachers do not always take into account the cognitive characteristics of their students while learning a foreign language and particularly the age factor. The experimental research that we would like to present is a comparative study of children aged 5-6 and 6-7 who are being taught by non-native speakers of English but are experts in primary school teaching. All the primary school teachers involved in the study use a new method called « Roxy and Me » which is based on a multi-sensory and multimodal approach and which suggests language activities across the curriculum. We shall give the first results of the analysis of the similarities and differences in the learning process of EFL by, on the one hand, children who attend nursery school and are accustomed to projects that combine various school subjects and, on the other hand, by children who are studying English while in the process of learning how to read and write in their native language.

**Dual Roles - Double Demands: How a train-the-trainer programme for English Primary Teacher education in Viet Nam has (and hasn’t) responded to participants needs**

*Mai Trang Vu, Thanh Thuy Thi Pham*  
*Umeå University, Sweden; ULIS, Vietnam National University*

In 2010 Viet Nam National Foreign Language 2020 Project was created as an initiative by the government to improve the foreign language learning and teaching system nationally. One of the tasks of the project is to successfully introduce English at grade 3 (previously grade 6), which in turn requires significant re-training for the country’s 24,000 primary English teachers both in terms of English proficiency and methodology. In realising the goal of providing in-service training for this amount of primary English teachers throughout the country, train-the-trainer programmes, a cascade model of trainer training, have been adopted as an option. A small number of participants taking this type of course and receiving the training (from master trainers) will become trainers and come back to their own context to train other teachers. Train-the-trainer (TTT) has been applied in professional training including for example health and medical care, economics, youth education and teacher education. It has been claimed to be an effective and cost-efficient way to multiply the impact of a particular approach. Participants in such a programme are expected to be able to cascade
what they have learnt to a wider audience. Given the nature of this training, participants on the programme are often expected to fulfil different roles: on completing the course they should be able to acquire the knowledge and demonstrate the skills targeted, while taking a lead role in passing on this knowledge and skills to other individuals. In other words, they play dual roles of both a learner and a trainer. Drawing from a case study of a recent TTT programme for primary English language teachers in Viet Nam which has been conceived to be successful, the presentation discusses the needs of the participants on that programme, and analyses how the programme has and has not responded to these needs.

Children's receptive EFL competences at the end of primary education. Evidence from the German Ganz In project

Eva Wilden, Raphaela Porsch
Universität Bielefeld, Germany

Do primary school children achieve better listening and reading skills when they start learning EFL in year 1 instead of year 3? In this talk the design and results of the empirical study relating to the EFL achievements of more than 6,500 primary school children in the German context will be presented to find an answer to this research question. Data was collected in 2010 and 2012 as part of the interdisciplinary longitudinal research study Ganz In allowing for the comparison of two cohorts who differ in the length and quantity of early EFL instruction due to curricular changes: Whereas the 2010 cohort learned EFL for 2 lessons per week over 2 years (beginning at the age of 8) the 2012 cohort learned EFL for 2 hours per week over 3.5 years (beginning at the age of 6). This talk intends to give an answer to the question – relevant throughout Europe and beyond – whether ‘more’ early EFL instruction at primary level leads to ‘better’ learning outcomes. Aside from the underlying theoretical concepts the context and design of this study will be sketched out. This is followed by presenting the test results comparing the receptive skills of both cohorts as well as a more fine-grained analysis differentiating between mono- and multilingual children. These results will be critically discussed in light of the research question and in comparison to other relevant studies such as the European ELLiE study.

Developing intercultural education in Iran: starting with young foreign language learners

Samaneh Zandian
University of Warwick, UK

Globalization has brought a wider range of cultures into close contact than ever before, making intercultural interaction a pervasive feature of modern life. Recognizing the importance of fostering intercultural sensitivity and solidarity, many countries have introduced intercultural learning into their educational curricula and language classrooms have proved a fertile site for developing key skills, attitudes and understanding (Doyé 1999). This is not the same in Iran, and it is important to find ways in which change might be promoted. The first step in this involves understanding current levels of awareness of children in this country and the potential for building on this. This paper reports on a research project to explore how Iranian children make sense of/understand cross-cultural interactions. To this end, 294 child-friendly questionnaires were administered in five primary schools in Tehran, and five follow-up group interviews were carried out with 27 participants between 10 to 12 years of age. The paper will describe the research design and the innovative participatory research methodologies used in the study as well as sharing some of the findings, focusing specifically on children's hopes and worries about living in a new linguistic and sociocultural context.
Findings of this study provide unique and vital data relevant to educational development in Iran and suggest ways of raising awareness amongst families, teachers, schools and policymakers about the need for intercultural education in the Iranian educational system. The paper will conclude with some practical guidelines for how foreign language teachers can develop critical cultural awareness and intercultural competence in primary pupils.
‘I learnt more than I thought I could!’ Storyline and the young language learner

Sharon Ahlqvist
Högskolan Kristianstad, Sweden

The Storyline approach was developed in Scotland in the 1960s and is well-established in many parts of the world in first language teaching contexts, but less so in second language teaching. A fictive world is created in the classroom, with learners playing the parts of characters in an unfolding narrative, collaborating on tasks in small groups - a method which combines the use of language skills with practical work. The story develops as learners work on so called key questions devised by the teacher on the basis of the curriculum content. A word often used by participants in a Storyline topic is ‘fun’. This presentation is based on a research study, Storyline, Our Sustainable Street, in which a class of Swedish 11-13 year olds created families who moved into a new street in a fictive English town. During the course of the Storyline, the families took part in a project to live in a more sustainable way, and also had to deal with the problems of illegal rubbish dumping and anti-social neighbours. The study concluded that the Storyline approach offers significant benefits for the development of communicative competence, not least because, in the words of the learners, ‘it’s fun!’

Topic Books – a tool to get, keep, store and retrieve knowledge

Sylvie Dolakova
Freelance teacher trainer, Czech Republic

Topic (project) books enormously increase children’s interest in working with (not only) foreign language and facts. It is a wonderful way of attracting your students for new forms of work with information, facts, knowledge and manual skills. Any topic can be covered in topic books, which suits many ideas of CLIL, science, history, storytelling, intercultural matters etc.

Some art techniques enable children to deal with vocabulary, structures, functions and grammar together with attributes such as co-operation, organization, multiple intelligences, presentation skills and many others. In this workshop you will see a few examples of those project books.

Readers Theatre workshop

Ion Drew, Deborah S. Larssen
University of Stavanger, Norway

Readers Theatre (RT) is a rehearsed group reading aloud activity of a text that has been divided into small segments. Each reader reads one segment at a time until the group has completed reading the text. Both fictional and non-fictional texts can be used. In some RT variants, reading can be combined with dramatization. For younger learners the principal genres used have been stories and fairy tales. RT has primarily been practised with young learners in mother tongue contexts, especially in the US. The research shows both cognitive and affective benefits, especially for struggling readers (Millin & Rinehart, 1999; Peebles, 2007, Rinehart, 1999; Tyler & Charard, 2000). Although on a lesser scale, the research on RT in L2 contexts has supported the findings of L1 research (Chan & Chan, 2009; Drew & Pedersen, 2010; 2012). RT has a potential with young language learners, irrespective of the language being used.

The workshop will provide a brief introduction to the principles of RT. The participants will then be able to try out RT with some texts suitable for young language learners.
The power of music to enhance creativity and language learning

Teresa Fleta, M. Luisa García Bermejo Complutense
Alcalá de Henares University, Madrid; University of Madrid, Spain

Starting foreign language learning early has spread widely in many schools and accordingly, the methodologies to present a new language to young learners need to be age-appropriate. This presentation seeks to meet the needs of the new language learning contexts by experimenting with music to create resources to teach English as a foreign language. For many authors, music is a universal language that has a power beyond words. It appeals to learners of all ages and language levels and it is a vehicle that integrates all skills in foreign language teaching (Mithen, 2006; Schon et al., 2008; Patel 2010; Brandt, Gebrian & Slec, 2012; Ludke, Ferriera & Overy, 2013; Koelsch, 2013). This talk presents the outcomes of two creative processes involving young learners and pre-service teachers. The young learners were stimulated by music to draw pictures and use oral and written language actively. The future teachers created and adapted songs, chants and rhymes for daily routines and transitional times to be used in the young learners’ classroom. In doing so, we attempt to answer questions such as why teachers should consider integrating music in their lesson planning. Here, the pedagogical experiences will be fully justified by showing how to make teaching and learning more interesting by taking music as a springboard for inspiration. Then, the talk will describe how music contributes to language learning and how teachers can design resources to meet cross-curricular goals for young learners. The bulk of the presentation will report on what teaching materials and resources can be developed to promote language, literacy and culture through music addressed to young learners. Finally, the talk will conclude by evaluating where the outcomes lead us in terms of pedagogical implications for using music to design teaching resources in English as a foreign language.

Speaking and listening: classroom activities for young language learners

Sharon Keaveney
Kokkola, Finland

Since its publication in 2001, the CEFR has had a major impact on language education and the globalization of language education policy, and a great number of countries in Europe have incorporated the language descriptor scales in their national or regional curricula and syllabi for language education. Unfortunately, the CEFR is not very user-friendly. With a compact layout and sometimes complicated terminology teachers have found it difficult to translate the document into a working model. In the classroom the impact of the CEFR can be said to be more evident in theory than in practice so far.

With a focus on developing speaking and listening skills in the young learner’s classroom, this workshop will guide teachers to use the CEFR as a tool for planning and assessing language learning activities. The workshop will demonstrate how to use the CEFR descriptors for A1 and A2 to define learning outcomes and assessment criteria when planning classroom activities. Participants will take part in a number of activities designed to be used in the classroom before working in small groups to develop their own speaking and listening activities.
Words, Sounds and Movements: Storytelling for the Very Young!

*Natalia Malkina*

Freelance teacher trainer, textbook writer, early language learning, St. Petersburg, Russia

This workshop is aimed at EFL teachers working with pre-school children and all those interested in storytelling for early language learning. The workshop demonstrates the storytelling approach developed by the presenter and used with pre-school and primary school children in EFL learning situations in Russia.

This workshop will engage every participant in hands-on practical and interactive storytelling experiences. By ‘doing’ storytelling participants will learn to appreciate the power and importance of single words, sounds and movements for the success of storytelling with pre-school children.

Supporting transition with play activities

*Sandie Mourão*

Letras & Linguas, Lda, Portugal

Transition between different cycles of education is recognised as being essential in contributing to the success of a second language programme. This interactive session will look at the role of play in language learning with a view to highlighting the importance of affording both adult-led and child-initiated opportunities for play in English. Participants will engage in, and reflect upon, a number of game-like activities that can begin as adult-led play during circle time and then move into child-initiated play with the creation of English learning areas. The ideas presented will be discussed in relation supporting transition between pre-school and primary language learning contexts.

How to use the mother tongue as a tool for learning Swedish as a second language

*Mirna Nasser, Anna-Lotta Fahlström, Marie Karling*

Hedlundaskolan, Umeå, Sweden

This session is a hands-on workshop where participants get to try different tools that educators use for language development with newly arrived migrant pupils. During the session we will focus on three main abilities: reading, writing and speaking and what methods we use for language development. The methods are based on the idea that the learning of Swedish as a Second Language should be supported by the use and development of the pupils’ mother tongues.

The delegates will have the opportunity to try out various tools for language development through digital learning such as useful apps on the iPad, tools for translation and recording.

Developing intercultural competence with children

*Carol Read*

Independent teacher educator/President IATEFL

Intercultural competence has been described as a combination of knowledge, skills, attitudes and awareness. But what does this mean in the context of working with kindergarten and primary school children who learn English as part of their compulsory education and have only a limited concept of their own identity and culture? In this session it is argued that in many classrooms there tends to be too much focus on knowledge about culture (the four F’s – food, fairs, festivals and facts) and that this by itself does not necessarily lead to positive attitudes or reduction of stereotypes, and may even reinforce them. When integrating the development of intercultural competence into foreign language lessons with children, it is suggested that we need to go further than knowledge about another culture (although this is also valid) and systematically and progressively build up skills, attitudes, awareness and values that are in synchrony with children’s cognitive, emotional, social and...
psychological development and will lay solid foundations for developing more mature intercultural competence in the future. During the session a three-phase model and rationale for integrating culture with different ages of children will be presented. This includes citizenship and socio-cultural themes as well as attitudes and values which are appropriate to each phase, such as personal initiative, autonomy, collaborating with others and protecting the environment. Each phase of the model is described in terms of specific curriculum objectives and illustrated with examples of practical ideas and activities which bring the notion of culture alive in the foreign language classroom.

An approach to creative speaking activities in the young learners’ classroom

Jana Roos, Carmen Becker
University of Paderborn; Leibniz University of Hannover, Germany

The primary goal of foreign language learning in primary schools is the development of communicative competence, with an emphasis on the oral skills of listening and speaking. In the classroom, young learners develop a repertoire of vocabulary and fixed expressions that are used in role-play and topic-based situations and serve as a basis for further learning and language use. In this context, speaking is usually reproductive and imitative. Opportunities for the learners to experiment with the language and to use it productively outside of fixed dialogues are often rare. This is also reflected in English course books for young learners, in which the majority of speaking activities aim at the production of closely guided accurate output. Classroom observations show that these types of speaking activities are very motivating, because they allow young learners to actively participate and use the language from lesson one on. However, developing fluency and basic speaking competencies requires more than just producing memorized chunks of language. In order to progress in their acquisition of the target language and to become truly communicatively competent, learners need to be able to use language spontaneously under what Thornbury (2005: 13) calls ‘real operating conditions’. In this paper we will propose an approach to creative speaking activities. It promotes autonomous speaking in activities that stimulate learners’ imaginations, engage them in improvising with the language and allow them to experiment with the linguistic material that is available to them. Examples of possible activities that can be used in such a context will be discussed in relation to their potential to initiate language use that transcends formulae and reproduction. Finally, using spontaneous speech data from 8 to 10-year-old German learners of English, arguments will be put forward in favour of creative language use at a very early stage in the young learners’ classroom.
Posters

ELL: Theory and Practice in 2014
Umeå University, Sweden
Vocabulary acquisition and concept formation in early EFL

Grit Bergner
Grundschule Stadtroda, Germany

The suggestion that learning concepts were the building up of successive approximations, of coming closer to the knowledge structure of experts (Fisher 1995) seems to indicate a steady development in a given direction. However, breaks and regression in concept formation have been observed in the classroom. It was found that in some cases the young learners’ concepts are far from being completed. A project was designed to investigate the process of concept formation in the EFL classroom. The participants of the project were 68 first and third graders, native speakers of German at the beginning of their EFL learning. For the project, words were chosen which most of the children had acquired as a whole from their environment without being aware that these were English words. Before the beginning of the course, the conceptual knowledge of the children was recorded. They were asked to make riddles for their classmates in German, with the intended solutions: chicken nuggets, cheeseburger, sandwich and chips. After ten lessons of English, mainly on food vocabulary, the children were asked again to make riddles as described above. In this second round, more children named essential features, such as the German word for cheese in cheeseburger or for chicken in chicken nuggets. Through learning new vocabulary, their concepts had become more complex and more precise. However, some of the children seemed to be confused or made mistakes they had not made in the first round. In the second round, children seemed more confident at speaking than in the first round. Some children who did not use a particular word in the first round, did so in the second. Some children who had commented on a word in the first round, did not in the second. This evidence suggests that there seems to be no straightforward development. Possibly, concept formation in early EFL can be seen as part of an on-going spiral, with some children taking a longer route from spontaneous concepts via confusion and blocking.

German children's productive knowledge of English words

Grit Bergner
Grundschule Stadtroda, Germany

Playing games, going shopping, watching TV - we are surrounded by English words. Young children seem to absorb these words as an element of their mother tongue. If children's knowledge could be utilised in EFL lessons, learning might become more efficient. A project was designed to find out which and how many English words 6-7 year olds use in their everyday communication. In one-to-one interviews 250 German children were asked to name items from their environment which were provided in a toy box and as pictures, with target words such as: basketball, jeans or sandwich. Afterwards the children were asked whether they already knew some words in English. It was found that 6-7 year olds produce a variety of English words mainly related to the fields of food, toys and games, clothes, sports, TV and cinema. Children seem to produce these words without recognising them as a foreign language. Some of the words can be assumed to be common knowledge amongst the children and therefore to have the potential to be utilized in EFL lessons. However, in some cases children used an English word with an incomplete or even wrong understanding of it's meaning which might lead to a number of further questions.
Bilingual learning in Turkish kindergarten (Italian/Turkish)

Valentina Carbonara
University for Foreigners, Siena, Italy

The educational context can provide opportunities for the development of bilingualism because children spend most of their time at school (Baker 2007). This is the case of Italian programs in some schools, in particular in kindergarten, in Turkey, which we analyzed according to variables of “Continua of Multilingual Education” (Cenoz 2009).

The aim of this research is to investigate the early stages of the emergence of morpho-syntactic structure of Italian language learners of 4.6 and 5.6 years old. We conducted a series of experiments in a kindergarten in Istanbul, Turkey, where Turkish and Italian languages are used as media of instruction and to deliver curriculum contents as the result of the gradual project of integration of the two languages subjects in syllabus design and lesson planning. In Experiment 1 we compare how children judge the grammaticality of predicative adjective and article gender agreement with the subject, reconsidering the stages of development of Italian language acquisition (Giacalone Ramat 2003). In Experiment 2 we examine how children evaluate sentences that are ungrammatical in one language but acceptable in the other language about word order and transitive construction, referring to the studies of Abbot-Smith and Serratrice (2013, 2009). In Experiment 3 we analyze the presence of copula be in the speech of children comparing the results with Geçkin and Haznedar (2008) about Turkish-speaking children learning English at the same age and in a similar context.

We will relate theoretical findings to actual classroom practice in order to design a suitable task-based curriculum.

The status of multilingual phonological awareness in the development of multilingual communicative competence: A case study in the Greek Primary School

Eftychia Damaskou
University of Thessaly, Greece

Influenced by the natural language acquisition, where spoken language comes before the written one, many foreign language teaching approaches give priority to oral skills. In fact, it is extremely difficult to read a language that is incomprehensible to the ear. Thus, our study draws on the status of the multilingual phonological awareness as part of the multilingual communicative competence's development. In specific, our sample included 117 5th and 6th graders in the Greek Primary school, while one of the classes served as a pilot group, in order to check the quality, as well as the suitability of the material used. The initial goal of our study was to examine through a sequence of 6 activities the possibilities offered by the cross-linguistic influences in the development of multilingual communicative competence. However, the first two activities assessed pupils' multilingual oral receptive skills, such as the auditory discrimination of four foreign languages totally unknown to our sample (Dutch, Hungarian, Swedish and Portuguese). As regards their content, it consisted of the same oral linguistic content in the four languages, created by a text-to-speech software available on Internet. The data received led us to some remarkable conclusions regarding multilingual phonological awareness. During the first activity, pupils were invited to recognize the language they were listening to, whereas in the second one, they had to match each recording to the relevant written elements. These elements consisted of a sequence of nouns related to the theme of 'city places', and their meaning was exactly the same in all four languages. According to the data collected, the difference between right and wrong answers is unexpectedly not remarkable. Parent languages are more difficult to distinguish, whereas less known languages such as Hungarian are easier to detect. As regards the second activity, the data collected have no relation with the first one, as the printed words help the
phonological recognition and matching. Progressively, the pupils' performance improves, as they get accustomed to the accent of the four languages. Our experience leads to the conclusion that in spite of the known elements, such as similar nouns in mother tongue or the known foreign languages, the pure auditory contact with non-taught languages cannot favor the phonological awareness. While learning to read, the oral speech helps the written one, however, as regards the multilingual awareness, this is very hard, as the languages are plenty and very difficult to be distinguished from one another.

**Formulaicity in the oral language production of young foreign language learners**

*Parvin Gheitasi*

*Umeå University, Sweden*

Vocabulary as an essential component of competence in a foreign language is a term often used to refer to individual words of a language, differentiating it from lexis, which covers both single words and word combinations (referred to as formulaic sequences) (Lewis, 1997). Although the identification of the main issues related to formulaicity have been under investigation in a number of research studies (Wood 2002; Wray 2000), the present study is different in investigating the oral production of young learners in an EFL context.

In order to accomplish the purpose of the study a classroom with students in the age range 9 to 11 years will be observed and video recorded for about 10 sessions (90 minutes per session). The observations will be accompanied by 3 elicitation tasks at the beginning middle and the end of the data collection to provide baseline interim and final measures of vocabulary and formulaic sequences production.

The collected speech samples will be transcribed chronologically and the lexical items (words and sequences) produced by each learner will be analysed with regard to the type of input they receive in the classroom. Through a qualitative analysis of the transcripts, the process of producing vocabulary items and formulaic sequences will be analysed parallel to the analysis of the input provided in the classroom.

**Redefining Possibilities for the Teaching and Learning of Languages**

*Janice Kittok*

*In-service educator (freelance), USA*

The presenter will share insights and specific teaching strategies from training world language teachers in the United States and China and from 25 years as a classroom teacher. Teaching practice is transformed when educators reflect on two areas of professional inquiry, rethinking what we teach (the content) and rethinking how we teach (the pedagogy). How are we preparing our young students for their roles as global citizens? The ability to communicate with their global counterparts is essential. However, language skills are not enough. Students also need to be knowledgeable about the world. Language educators can meet both of these needs by integrating global content knowledge into language instruction. Content-based Instruction (CBI), also known as Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL), can be done from the very first language lessons with learners of any age. What is the content of the language curriculum? What are learners hearing about, talking about, reading about, writing about, thinking about and LEARNING about? Global content knowledge is learning about the areas of the world where the target language is spoken. This is the background knowledge that they need to understand cultures: physical geography, human geography, historical events, biographies, current events, social issues, etc. Students are fascinated to learn about real
lands and real people. Living a different life stirs the imagination. How are we alike? What makes us unique? What would my life be like if I lived someplace else or at a different time in history?

Teaching strategies that align with neuroscience and language acquisition research fully support the teaching of nonfiction: target language use, comprehensible input, interaction and scaffolded output practice. Nonfiction engages young learners when presented using the language learning tools of movement, music, and story. These are powerful combinations that redefine possibilities for the teaching and learning.

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**English as a Lingua Franca in early language learning**

*Lucilla Lopriore*
*Roma Tre University, Italy*

Perceptions of the value of an early start in foreign language (FL) learning in Europe have been related to the benefits of plurilingualism and of the emerging multilingual and multicultural identity of the primary classroom population (age 5-10), where English is most widely taught and predominantly by non-native teachers (Graddol, 1997, 2006; Hoffmann 2000; Edelenbos et al, 2006; Grzega & Schöner, 2007; Berns et al., 2007; Enever, 2011; Lopriore, 2010, 2012; Nikolov & Mihaljevic Djigunovic, 2011). The naturally emerging variety of English de facto used and taught at this age level is English as a Lingua Franca (ELF), even if this issue has rarely been investigated (Seidlhofer 2004). The early and widespread diffusion of English within non-native contexts requires a shift in perspective in the investigation of early second/multi-language acquisition (SLA/MLA) and L1 transfer processes as well as in terms of implications for the FL curriculum. Research studies have highlighted how, in using another language, children stretch their communicative capability and use their L1, L2, L3 schemata to communicate, particularly if engaged in meaningful interactions or in the study of content through English (CLIL) (Nikolov, 2009; Klimpfinger, 2009; Cummins, 2010; Lopriore, Mihaljevic Djigunovic, 2011; Lopriore, Ambroso, 2012). This is particularly true in ELF exchanges. This contribution intends to illustrate ELF variations emerging in the SLA/MLA and L1 transfer processes occurring in the primary classroom as well as learners’ and teachers’ perceptions of and attitudes to ELF. Data are drawn from recent longitudinal research studies on early language learning in European contexts (Enever, 2011; Lopriore, Mihaljevic Djigunovic , 2011; Lopriore, 2012a, 2012b). Implications in terms of ELF teaching materials development, primary teacher education programs, language policies, continuity, progression and achievement in the FL curriculum will be presented and discussed.

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**iGeneration issues: Tracing pre-schoolers’ English receptive vocabulary though interactive media. Mission impossible?**

*Alexiou Thomai, Alexander Michail Vitoulis*
*Aristotle University of Thessaloniki; Technological Educational Institution of Thessaloniki, Greece*

Technology affects all aspects of education changing the way we teach and learn (Paulsen, 2001). Research evidence supports the view that educational technology can facilitate language learning (see Felix, 1999; Warschauer, 1995; Warschauer, Schetzer & Meloni, 2000) and has positive outcomes for children (McCarrick & Li 2007; Penuel et al. 2009). The present study investigates the impact of EFL interactive media on early receptive vocabulary acquisition. The case study took place in state nursery schools in Thessaloniki, Greece. 40 Greek children aged 3-5 took part in the study. The control group was instructed in a set of English words in a playful way through traditional teaching practices and the experimental group were introduced to EFL educational sites of the same set of words. The two groups’ receptive vocabulary was measured during and at the end of instruction.
Therefore, rate of learning in the two methods was examined while we also investigated differences according to age and gender. Furthermore, children's attitudes were explored through group interviews. The research findings indicate a considerable amount of words gained at an early age rather effortlessly and quickly through interactive media and showed pre-schoolers' positive attitudes to learning through ICT. Gender and age differences are also noted and will be discussed. The results are in line with previous studies which have shown that there are gains in integrating technology, especially in early vocabulary acquisition and phonological awareness especially with children ages 3 to 5 (Chiong & Shuler 2010, see also (Primavera, Wiederlight, & DiGiacomo 2001; Nir-Gal & Klein 2004). Teaching the 'digital natives' today is a challenge and integrating interactive media in early childhood programmes can open the way for unprecedented learning opportunities and promising educational experience.

Bilingual Education in Sweden: Language Development in Young Learners

Jeanette Toth
Stockholm University, Sweden

In recent years English immersion education has become a topic of some controversy in Sweden. While some advocates of content-based language instruction argue that such methods promote general language acquisition skills in addition to improved communication skills in the target language, an increasing number of researchers have begun to question the wisdom of the unqualified expansion of English immersion. Many challenges associated with acquiring the various aspects of a foreign language, while at the same time learning subject content in that language, are similar for English immersion students and Swedish language learners in Swedish mainstream schools, yet there has been little focus on this issue in research. Immersion students receive increased exposure to the target language from a young age as a result of English being the medium of instruction for several subjects, compared to traditional foreign language programs where English instruction is limited to a few hours per week as its own subject. Meanwhile, immersion students are exposed to and use less Swedish in various academic subjects than their peers in the aforementioned traditional foreign language programs. It is therefore of interest to explore the implications of English-medium instructional contexts for young learners language development in Sweden. Data will be collected longitudinally over a period of three years from students beginning in year four and will consist of classroom observations, interviews and learners' written production. Development of grammar and lexicon in oral and written production will be analyzed qualitatively and quantitatively. Results from the study are expected to yield an improved understanding of the conditions for language development for young learners enrolled in Swedish-English bilingual programs in Sweden.
ELL 2014 focuses on early second and foreign language learning in school contexts, reviewing contemporary challenges for young children, aged 3-12 years, learning languages in many different school contexts worldwide.

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