

F1 – TESTING YOUNG AND ADULT LEARNERS OF ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE

Elnök: *Marianne Nikolov*
Universit of Pécs

Opponens: *Benő Csapó*
Institute of Education, University of Szeged

Symposium Presentations**The development and validation of a diagnostic efl vocabulary test for 6th graders**

István Thékes

Doctoral School of Education, University of Szeged; Türr István Training and Research Institute

Hungarian 6th and 8th graders' proficiency in english and german at dual-language schools

Marianne Nikolov

Universit of Pécs

Cognitive contributions to young efl learners' listening comprehension performances

Éva Bacsa

Kiss Bálint Reformed School, Szentes

Developing and validating vocabulary tests for english for academic purposes

Magdolna Lehmann

Universit of Pécs

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SYMPOSIUM ABSTRACT

The presentations discuss findings of 4 testing projects, all representing important international trends in assessment. First of all, with the world-wide spread of early language learning (*Nikolov & Mihaljević Djigunović, 2006, 2011*) the need to assess what learners can do has moved to the fore (*Jang, 2014; McKay, 2006*). Three talks discuss results of early learning testing projects. The first one aimed to develop and validate a new English vocabulary test battery for sixth graders, the second one developed and applied English and German proficiency tests to survey achievements in grades six and eight at dual-language schools against curricular standards at CEFR (2001) levels A2 and B1. The third one inquired into the extent to which young learners' listening comprehension skills in English were impacted by aptitude and other variables, thus testing a model of foreign language learning. These three projects document how new constructs are aligned to age appropriate methodology and allow teachers and stakeholders to work towards accountability (*Rixon, 2013*), as well as the extent to which a previously validated model works in the Hungarian context.

Secondly, the projects offer insights into the development and uses of various tests for formative, diagnostic and summative purposes (*Alderson, 2005; Csapó & Zsolnai, 2011; Nikolov & Szabó, 2011*), allowing teachers to get feedback on their learners' development and to better tune their teaching to their learners' levels and offering decision makers data on how different programs fulfill standards and also for quality control and gate keeping purposes. The first talk discusses diagnostic perspectives, the second and fourth ones offer insights into the latter functions, and the third study, the only one using mixed methods, tested a model of the development of sixth graders' listening comprehension skills development.

Thirdly, over the past two decades computer-assisted corpus linguistic studies (*Biber, 2004*) have inspired exciting new research on text analyses, chunks, collocations and the mental lexicon in general, and new ways of developing materials for learning and testing vocabulary, in particular. This recent trend in corpus linguistics has coincided with a renewed interest in learners' vocabulary at all proficiency levels (*Laufer & Nation, 2005; Meara, 1989; Schmitt, 2010; Schmitt & Schmitt, 2011*), and this is the domain two of the talks set out to discuss in connection with English: the depth and width of vocabulary knowledge of young EFL learners at the lowest proficiency levels and of Hungarian English majors' at the C1, native-like level, integrating focus on Academic English.

Findings of the large-scale testing projects are expected to offer teachers at public schools and universities useful ideas and assessment tools for their daily practice with their students and policy-makers new insights into recent developments and issues in language testing.