

5th SIG Meeting: Classroom-Based Language Assessment

Ramphal Building, Pamphal R0.14

Thursday 29th May 2014, 13.30-17.00

Programme

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13.40-14.10	Linking foreign language teaching materials to the CEFR – mission impossible? Karin Vogt
14.10-14.40	Process writing and criterion-oriented peer-assessment in teacher education Claudia Mewald
14.40-15.10	Adaptation of dynamic assessment (DA) in CLIL classrooms Shigeru Sasajima
15.10-15.40	<i>Coffee Break</i>
15.40-16.10	Seeking opportunities for a learning orientation in the context of a large-scale speaking test Tony Green & Liz Hamp-Lyons
16.10-16.40	Reading assessment in the secondary classroom: washback by a national exam Doris Frötscher
16.40-17.00	Young learners' progress in time: classroom based assessment and learners' self-concept Lucilla Lopriore
17.00-17.15	<i>Closing remarks</i>

Abstracts

13.30-13.40 Welcome and Introduction

Presentations

13.40-14.10

Karin Vogt (University of Education, Heidelberg, Germany)

Linking foreign language teaching materials to the CEFR – mission impossible?

The CEFR has had a considerable (sometimes normative) impact on foreign language teaching and learning throughout Europe, in particular on testing and assessment. Although the CEFR levels and, at times, their descriptors, have been embraced by educational authorities far and wide, it is far less obvious whether the teaching material used and competences to be acquired are linked to the CEFR level to be achieved in the foreign language classroom. As a follow-up to a research project on the CEFR, adapted descriptors have been used to design teaching material that is more clearly linked to the CEFR than commonly available course books are. The report will briefly summarise the research project (Vogt 2011) and then explain the procedure of creating teaching materials for English as a Foreign Language starting from adapted CEFR descriptors.

14.10-14.40

Claudia Mewald (University College of Teacher Education, Austria)

Process writing and criterion-oriented peer-assessment in teacher education

This paper looks at ongoing research at the College of Teacher Education in Lower Austria where process writing and peer-assessment based on a negotiated criterion-referenced assessment scale are implemented in literature courses at the trainees' EFL level of B2 - C1. Moreover, the same process writing strategy and another scale at A2-B1 level are implemented at the teaching practice school with 10-14 year-old EFL learners. The teacher trainees experience process writing and criterion-oriented peer-assessment in their own learning and implement both in their teaching practice. Thus, a loop-input strategy of making classroom-based assessment visible is used in an attempt to integrate the teaching about classroom assessment with its implementation and practical experience.

Data from writing a comparative literature analysis from a group of 28 teacher trainees and from a creative writing task with a group of 24 pupils in a heterogeneous setting that have been analysed and discussed with the teacher trainees in terms of the formative process of both interventions will be presented. Moreover, a video recording of a series of process writing lessons co-taught by one of the trainees with his mentor is available to demonstrate and reflect on the implementation of process writing and classroom-based assessment.

14.40-15.10

Shigeru Sasajima (Saitama Medical University, Japan)

Adaptation of dynamic assessment (DA) in CLIL classrooms

Dynamic assessment (DA) is a ‘future-in-the-making model’ (Valsiner, 2001), where learning, teaching and assessment are complexly integrated as the means to move towards an emergent or self-organized future rather than its fixed goal. This paper thus explores how DA can be active in CLIL classrooms. CLIL, as well as the application of the CEFR, is of wide concern in Japan, and has the potential to change the culture of the test-oriented language teaching. The key point of the successful CLIL implementation is not just English-Medium Instruction (EMI), but teachers’ and students’ mindsets about what to learn and how to learn English. It is therefore important to consider learning, teaching and assessment concurrently. The purpose of the research is to develop DA as a part of classroom-based teacher assessment (CBTA) using 6 CEFR levels (Sasajima, 2010) for CLIL classrooms in the Japanese context. In terms of learners’ language proficiency, students assess themselves and are assessed by their teacher based on the CEFR 6 scales. To incidentally assess students’ learning in formative ways, the traditional static or standardized assessment is not sufficient, so that the aspects of DA, which is originated from Vygotskian sociocultural principles of learning, are useful for CLIL assessment.

15.10-15.40 Coffee Break

15.40-16.10

Tony Green & Liz Hamp-Lyons (The Centre for Research in Language Learning and Assessment, University of Bedfordshire, UK)

Seeking opportunities for a learning orientation in the context of a large-scale speaking test

This presentation reports on a small-scale study¹ exploring whether greater pedagogical validity might be brought into a large-scale ‘formal’ speaking test and its wraparound teacher support material. There is a general movement in educational measurement and in language testing and assessment towards assessments which involve cognitive engagement by both learners and teachers, and an emphasis on strategies to support *assessment for learning* [AfL] (Black & Wiliam 1998; Stiggins *et al* 2004; Wiliam & Thompson 2007). In line with this movement, our work draws on recent developments in formative assessment and concepts of *learning-oriented assessment* [LOA]. To date studies of LOA have been located in classrooms (see Carless, Joughin, Liu *et al.* 2006, and Carless 2011); however, we have sought to identify ways in which the formal speaking test context can be moved closer to the classroom and yield direct benefits for learning by drawing on and introducing into the speaking assessment (and consequently, we believe, into the preparation courses and materials) teaching and learning strategies associated

¹ This project was funded through the Cambridge ESOL Funded Research Programme, Round 4, 2013.

with the second language classroom and with normal conversational interaction. We have chosen to look at these issues in the context of *Cambridge English: First* (FCE).

We present a concept model for *learning-oriented language assessment*, consider how far this is reflected in materials currently offered to teachers engaged in FCE preparation, discuss our pilot application of the model to a small sample of FCE Speaking test events, and invite consideration of whether and how LOA opportunities might be revealed in, or inserted into pre-existing formal speaking tests.

References

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16.10-16.40

Doris Frötscher (Lancaster University, UK & BIFIE, Austria)

Reading assessment in the secondary classroom: washback by a national exam

This presentation reports on a study investigating the effect of a standardized national school-leaving exam introduced in 2008 on how assessment in the classroom has changed as a result, thus addressing the research gap regarding washback of external tests on classroom-based assessment. It specifically focuses on the washback of the exam's reading paper on the assessment of reading in classroom-based tests.

To investigate this, 173 class test tasks from the periods pre and post the introduction of the new exam were collected. These tasks were analysed regarding their text, task and item characteristics. A qualitative task analysis instrument was specially designed for this study and has yielded high inter- and intra-rater-agreement in pilot studies.

Results indicate that there exist clear differences between pre- and post-2008 class test on all levels: text, task and items. Moreover, influences from the school leaving exam were found in the post-2008 data. The presentation also aims to link washback effects and possible mediating background variables such as teacher experience and assessment literacy, which were collected through a questionnaire. In terms of methodology, the presentation will offer recommendations regarding the systematic analysis of actual classroom tests.

16.40-17.00

Lucilla Lopriore (Roma Tre University, Italy)

Young learners' progress in time: classroom based assessment and learners' self-concept

In most European countries where early foreign language (FL) learning has been introduced descriptions of curriculum outcomes and specific research projects have been developed by educational authorities in order to monitor both the innovation and young learners' achievement. While researchers are investigating the rate and order of children's second language acquisition and the effects of early language learning, teachers are being faced by the challenge of measuring their learners' progress in the FL as well as in other disciplinary areas, through forms of assessment that are valid, reliable and consistent with their teaching approach. Since children grow physically, cognitively, socially and emotionally, teachers are well aware that a special approach to assessment that takes into account learners' age and the specificity of their learning is needed.

This contribution is aimed at presenting the emerging results of a longitudinal study on the progress and achievement of young learners of English as a foreign language in Italy. The cohort of learners has been monitored for 8 years (age 6-14) and specific listening tasks were developed and administered at the end of each school year in order to measure learners' aural comprehension. Classroom assessment practice has been the object of specific interviews with the teachers involved in the study and assessment procedures used for research purposes have been compared with teachers' assessment and evaluation of individual children. Learners' self-assessment was considered against their teacher's assessment of their language aptitude and performance. Results showed that learners' skills improved significantly over the years and their self-assessment was in most cases close to that of their teachers'. Their explanations about their performance were particularly informative, especially in the last phase. Children were articulate; they referred to previous performances and self-reports thus providing their teachers with valuable information complementing their evaluation.

(296 words)

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