



UNIVERSITY OF  
COPENHAGEN



## **7th CBLA SIG**

**Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> May 2015 - 13.30-17.30**

*Building 27, ground floor, room 9*

### **13.25-13.30 Welcome**

*(20 min. presentations followed by 5 min. discussion)*

13.30-13.55 **Olga Kvasova** 'A Pilot Module on Training University Teachers in Constructing Classroom Reading Test Tasks'

13.55-14.20 **Asli Lidice Gokturk Saglam** 'A study of the washback effects of a Theme-Based Language Proficiency Test on teaching and learning English at tertiary level in Turkey'

14.20-14.45 **Raphaëlle Beecroft & Karin Vogt** 'Improvisation theatre task cycles for formative and summative assessment'

### **14.45-15.15 Coffee Break**

15.15-15.40 **Ana Maria Ducasse** 'Engaging with Spanish L2: self-evaluation in higher education'

15.40-16.05 **Monique Yoder** 'Can Formative Assessment of Vocabulary at the Prose Level Strengthen Learners' Self-editing of Academic Essays?'

16.05-16.30 **Lucilla Lopriore** 'Balancing assessment theory and practice in the CLIL classroom'

16.30-16.50 **Dina Tsagari & Trisevgeni Liontou** 'Integrating Corpus Linguistics & Classroom-based Assessment: Evidence from Young Learners' Written Corpora'

**16.50-17.00 Closing remarks and planning of future SIG activities**

# **A Pilot Module on Training University Teachers in Constructing Classroom Reading Test Tasks**

**Olga Kvasova**

**Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv, Ukraine**

The paper presents a module designed as part of a course on LTA literacy of FL teachers piloted in seven universities in Ukraine. The module included 1) pre-training assignments in home-reading and constructing reading test tasks, 2) a training session consisting of two subsequent workshops intended to empower teachers in constructing reading test items/tasks and establishing their content and concurrent validity, 3) post-session work of collaborative construction and trialling of test tasks in real classroom practice followed by item/task statistical analysis. The data on module efficiency were obtained from multiple sources (test on LTA literacy of the trainee teachers done before training, expert judgements of teacher-made test tasks constructed before and after the training, observation and analysis of procedure and outcomes of post-session task completion, questionnaire and reflective comments written by trainee teachers, questionnaire completed by testee students). The evidence of content and concurrent validity of teacher-made test tasks was collected and interpreted by trainees themselves, their work further evaluated by external experts. The piloting proved the overall effectiveness of the designed module in terms of addressed content area, module structure, training techniques and research tools employed, as well as the heightened level of trainees' assessment skills.

Olga Kvasova, PhD is Associate Professor at Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv. She lectures in methodology of FL teaching, supervises PhD students' research and teacher-training placements. She has conducted a series of workshops on developing LTA literacy, published numerous articles on theoretical and practical issues of LTA in the national journals and several books including *Fundamentals of Language Testing (in Ukrainian)*. Her research interests lie in the field of classroom-based assessment and INSET teacher training in LTA, course and materials design.

## **A study of the washback effects of a Theme-Based Language Proficiency Test on teaching and learning English at tertiary level in Turkey**

**Asli Lidice Gokturk Saglam**

**Özyeğin University, Turkey**

A part of a large scale study, this presentation will report findings from an on-going research which aims at examining potential washback effect of a theme based integrated language proficiency test called Test of Readiness of Academic English (TRACE) in an EAP context at the tertiary level. Inclusion of integrated tasks of listening, reading and writing in a proficiency test which provides test-takers with opportunities of incorporating content from and across audio, print and visual forms can better cater for the demands of authentic communication and reflect the test-takers performance. In an attempt to explore different perspectives of some key stakeholders, this study surveys the perceptions of 136 EFL learners and 20 instructors via questionnaires focus group and one-on-one interviews alongside classroom observations. Findings will be discussed in relation to analysis of qualitative and quantitative data as well as an extensive review of literature. Findings are expected to have implications for validity decisions, materials development, teacher training and resourcing, and test development processes.

Asli Lidice Gokturk Saglam has been an English teacher in EAP settings for 15 years. She is a doctorate candidate. Her research interests include: teacher education, educational technology and testing and assessment. She shares her reflections about teaching in her blog at <http://aslisaglam.edublogs.org/> and on Twitter (@aslilidice)

# **Improvisational Task- Sequences for Formative and Summative Assessment**

**Raphaëlle Beecroft and Karin Vogt**

**University of Education Karlsruhe & University of Education Heidelberg, Germany**

The use of improvisational theatre methods in the foreign language classroom to promote, amongst other things, spontaneous speaking and sustainable discourse skills has been recently embraced in foreign language teaching methodology. However, little to nothing has been done on researching their potential not only for teaching but also for assessment. At the same time, in Germany, oral exams have, in recent years, become part and parcel of classroom-based language assessment, final and high-stakes exams included. This poses a challenge for foreign language teachers who need to prepare their learners, particularly the weak ones, adequately for these exams, which often include a dialogical component.

Bringing these aspects together, the proposed paper will present parts of a longitudinal, mixed-methods action-research study which investigated the use of improvisational theatre methods in the lower secondary EFL context in Germany, with participants, which included 4 teachers and 130 students, spanning 5 different year-groups. The aim of the study was to research whether improvisational theatre methods can be fully integrated into day-to-day teaching and assessment, with the goal of empowering teachers to develop a repertoire of improvisational tasks to promote and formatively assess oral skills as well as prepare students for summative oral assessment in a holistic and authentic manner.

The paper will highlight the potentials of developing an improvisational task-sequence (a didacticised form of improvisational games adapted to curricular requirements) for classroom-based-assessment by demonstrating the different ways in which the improvisational-task-sequence model was used to this end in the various year-groups with their differing requirements. This will include, for example, a demonstration of how holistic assessment criteria were developed to create an assessment scale relating to the communicative skills required to carry out improvisational tasks.

Raphaëlle Beecroft is a doctoral student at Heidelberg University of Education and a lecturer in English Language Teaching at Karlsruhe University of Education, Germany. Her research interests in the field of Foreign Language Teaching include the use of drama methods and translation to promote intercultural communicative competence, Classroom Based Assessment and Classroom Pragmatic Development. Karin Vogt is a Professor for Teaching as a Foreign Language at the University of Education Heidelberg. Her research interests include vocationally-oriented language learning, classroom-based language assessment, the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages and media and telecollaboration in the foreign language classroom.

## Engaging with Spanish L2: self-evaluation in higher education

Ana Maria Ducasse, RMIT University Melbourne, Australia

Learners in higher education are increasingly involved in shaping learning and teaching processes through their contributions to course exit questionnaires. With this in mind it would be unreasonable to exclude them from assessment processes linked to their own performance (Little, 2005). If one accepts that it is the pedagogical rather than the reporting function of assessment that really matters (Kostopoulou, 2010), then it follows that we are progressing in the right direction as language educators when we award marks self-evaluation.

This study reports on such a case. A cohort of lower intermediate Spanish language students in a higher education course are awarded marks for participating in self-evaluations for a percentage of their course work assessment. The curriculum and textbooks follow CEFR levels so “can do” statements form part of the self-assessment task. In this way, self-evaluation is used in the second language classroom to promote students’ critical analysis of their learning in two parts. Firstly students complete in class tasks to self-assess against ‘can do’ statements whether they think they have met the intended learning outcomes of the unit of work. Secondly, after self-correction from a response sheet, students are required to complete an online survey for reflection and self-evaluation.

Findings from the online survey data show an increased self-awareness and plans for improving language skills beyond the classroom. The increase in motivation constitutes a key feature demonstrated by successful learners (Ushioda, 1996).

Kostopoulou. S. 2010 Learner self-assessment and the European Language Portfolio in *Advances in Research on Language Acquisition and Teaching: Selected Papers GALA*

Little D. (2005). The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages and the European Language Portfolio: Involving learners and their judgements in the assessment process. *Language Testing* 22: 321-336.

Ushioda E. (1996). *Learner autonomy 5: The role of motivation*. Dublin: Authentik.

Ana Maria Ducasse is senior lecturer in Spanish at RMIT University Melbourne, Australia. She graduated with honours in Spanish and a Dip. Ed from Monash University then gained experience in teaching Spanish, Italian and English as a Second Language. This kindled her interest in Second Language Acquisition, in particular spoken language which has been a research focus. Teaching Spanish background speakers sparked her interest in advanced learners and the treatment of culture and identity in the language curriculum. She was an IELTS assessor for ten years and is now a DELE assessor. She is currently completing a TOEFL project with Dr Annie Brown on speaking skills in different disciplines in higher education.

# **Can Formative Assessment of Vocabulary at the Prose Level Strengthen Learners' Self-editing of Academic Essays?**

**Monique Yoder**

**The English department LCC International University in Klaipėda, Lithuania**

Despite L2 English learners' interactions with new content vocabulary (e.g., vocabulary logs, sentence-writing, gap-fill exercises, matching, etc.), learners still cannot successfully monitor themselves for lexical accuracy when editing their own academic essays between drafts. What would happen if students were given a formative assessment that required them to engage with new vocabulary at a prose level, as opposed to words in isolation? Would this help strengthen learners' ability to edit an essay for lexical accuracy? Currently, 24 students in a pre-sessional academic writing course have been exposed to predetermined vocabulary from a unit within their textbook. Students have interacted with this set of words with regards to semantic, orthographic, and linguistic features. To assess semantic understanding of these words, students will be divided into three groups and receive a different formative assessment. Group A: a paragraph-level gap-fill; Group B a sentence-environment vocabulary test task type (Cain 1958); and Group C a paragraph-environment vocabulary replacement task type (the author's proposed task type). As a post-test, students will receive an essay filled with unmarked lexical errors and then edit for semantic accuracy. Correlations between post-test results and formative assessment type will be made to determine whether prose-level interaction strengthens self-editing written work.

Monique Yoder received her MA TESOL degree from Michigan State University (2008) and has taught English for Academic Purposes second language writing in the United States, Lithuania, Saudi Arabia, and the Sultanate of Oman. She is currently an IEP writing instructor within the English department at LCC International University in Klaipėda, Lithuania and is a free-lance item writer.

## **Balancing assessment theory and practice in the CLIL classroom**

**Lucilla Lopriore**

**Roma Tre University, Rome, Italy**

Around the world today the growth of English-mediated instruction in content areas at all levels of education is a well-documented phenomenon. This change has created a pressing need to prepare teachers--who frequently have already been successfully teaching content in languages other than English--to work in new linguistic environments. In Italy recent projects aimed at training teachers of different subject matters in teaching content through English have witnessed an unprecedented number of subject teachers participate and face the new challenges posed by CLIL. The acknowledged role of language as a means to sustain cognitive reasoning as well as content learning has been the underlying notion introduced in the in-service courses on CLIL methodology. Among the components of the training courses the assessment and evaluation module has been for both teachers and trainers one of the most challenging ones since it highlights different problematic issues related to assessment in CLIL in terms of its dual focus on language and content, its theoretical framework and subject teachers' traditional evaluation practices.

This presentation is aimed at presenting how a group of subject teachers participating in 3 different CLIL methodology courses have faced, discussed and designed new forms of assessment and evaluation revising their theories about classroom based assessment, their current practices in subject classrooms while adopting a new perspective in the CLIL classroom practice. Implications for classroom based assessment will be presented and discussed (232 words)

Lucilla Lopriore, Associate Professor teaches English language and translation at Roma Tre University, Rome. MA in TEFL, Reading University, UK, PhD in Italian as a Foreign language, Siena for Foreigners University, she is a teacher educator in pre- and in-service training courses for both foreign language and subject teachers. Her main fields of interest are: assessment and evaluation, early language learning, ELF & World Englishes, CLIL, translation studies and Italian as a foreign language. She has published extensively: language manuals, articles on methodology and teaching materials.

## **Integrating Corpus Linguistics & Classroom-based Assessment: Evidence from Young Learners' Written Corpora**

**Dina Tsagari & Trisevgeni Liontou**  
**University of Cyprus & Greek Ministry of Education, Greece**

Analyzing writing development as a function of grade level is important in elementary school children because the developmental patterns are strongest at a young age when successful interventions are needed (Haswell, 2000; McNamara et al., 2010; Perfetti & McCutchen, 1987; Witte & Faigley, 1981). Motivated by the above literature, this presentation reports on a one-year longitudinal study that aimed at investigating the development of ESL young learners' writing proficiency as a function of grade level. A total of 70 ESL students aged 9 to 11 years old took part in the study from whom 700 written essays were collected. The purpose of the study was to examine, via a range of advanced Computational Linguistics and Automated Machine Learning systems, the degree to which essays written at different grade levels can be distinguished from one another using a number of linguistic features related to propositional density, lexical sophistication, syntactic complexity and cohesion. The results showed statistically significant differences between the linguistic features identified at different levels of language competence. The findings support the notion that linguistic development occurs in the later stages of writing development and is primarily related to the production of more elaborate texts with more sophisticated words, more complex sentence structure and fewer cohesive features in text as a function of grade level. The findings of the study have important implications for educational standards and frameworks for the development of tests and assessments of writing for young learners as well as ESL classroom curricula and writing skills textbooks.

Dina Tsagari is Assistant Professor in Applied Linguistics/TEFL at the Department of English Studies, University of Cyprus. Her main interests are EFL/ESL testing and assessment, teaching/learning, teacher training, materials design and evaluation. She has conducted research in Hong Kong, Cyprus, Greece and other European countries and is the author of several edited volumes, articles and book chapters. She is also the coordinator of the Classroom-based Language Assessment SIG – EALTA.

Trisevgeni Liontou is and EFL teacher, researcher and test-designer for the Greek Ministry of Education. She holds a Ph.D. in *Linguistics* with specialization in Language Testing from the Faculty of English Studies, National and Kapodistrian University of Athens. She has worked as an expert item consultant for AvantAssessment, USA, a research assistant at the Research Centre for Language Teaching, Testing and Assessment (RCeL) and as a freelance item writer, oral examiner and script rater for various EFL examination boards. She has made presentations in national and international conferences and has published papers in the aforementioned fields. Her current research interests include theoretical and practical issues of EFL reading comprehension, corpus-linguistics and classroom-based language assessment.