



Teaching English to Young Learners – current courses offered at Carlsberg department of University College Copenhagen. Inspired by the Nordplus Project and the ‘Learning Foreign Languages at an Early Age’ project

Pre-service:

- Students, who study English as their first subject, chooses between specializing in yr 7-9 or yr 1-3 in an obligatory 4th module. Currently more students choose to specialize in older learners.
- Elective module for students, who study English, and international students

In-service:

- Diploma module developed in the context of the ‘Learning Foreign Languages at an Early Age’ project. Based on the research-based recommendations for an early start.



Developing cases for pre-and in-service training courses in a Danish context

- General discussion questions were developed in the NordPlus workshop in Copenhagen February 2017.
- For some of the questions cases were collected by teacher trainers during classroom observations in the 'Learning Foreign Languages at an Early Age' project.
- Reflection questions to be used with the cases in teacher education were also developed for some of these cases.



The general discussion questions

1. How can all students' linguistic resources support what children learn in the first year of English classes? Can children who already have multiple languages handle foreign language classes?
2. Should teachers correct students' oral production? How?
3. Should teachers be using school language in foreign language classes? When? Why / Why not?
4. Should students be using school language in foreign language classes? When? For what?
5. How should written foreign language be included in language classes? How does this differ for 6-7 year olds, vs 11-12 year olds? Why?
6. How much oral participation should teachers encourage/require? In which languages?



Example of case: ‘How can all students’ linguistic resources support what children learn in the first year of English classes? Can children who already have multiple languages handle foreign language classes?’

The teacher shows the students front covers of the storybook ‘The Gruffalo’ in different languages on the whiteboard.

A learner recognises the Spanish version, he points out the Spanish cover page, and pronounces the name of the Gruffalo in Spanish. Another learner recognises the Arabic/Pakistani version. ‘Look at the Russian version with different kinds of letters’, says the teacher. Then a learner recognises the Turkish version and says, ‘My parents say it, but not that much’. The class comments on the Arabic letters, as they do not recognize the script. The Welsh cover page also looks different and the learners show great interest in it. Is there a Japanese front page? ‘My dad knows Italian’, a learner says. Is there a French one? ‘I have a friend, who comes from France’, says another.

The learners are very involved in this conversation and keen on participating.

After the activity finishes a student asks the teacher: ‘Is it really in all languages?’ ‘Many’, the teacher answers, ‘Also in Somali?’ he mutters. The teacher doesn’t hear him.





Suggested reflection questions

How do the students, in general, respond to the different front pages?

Do you see signs of increased linguistic awareness for all students?

Do you see signs of students drawing on their existing linguistic resources?

What are your thoughts on the exchange between the teacher and the student, who has Somali background, at the end?



Example of case: Should teachers be using school language in foreign language classes? When? Why / Why not?

It's time for English in a yr 1 classroom. The teacher, who is also the Danish teacher, is preparing the room while the students are outside. The students are used to calling the teacher by her first name. She puts on a bright yellow vest used for English class and goes outside to bring them in: 'Ok everybody, find your partner, 'Ok, ready, let's go inside. The students respond in Danish and she replies in English: S: 'My drawing isn't any good! (dk)', T: 'That's ok, nevermind' At the end of the lesson a student explains to me that in English class her name isn't Karen, but 'Miss K'



Suggested reflection questions

What are some strategies that the teacher applies to maintain English as a classroom language?

What would have been different if she had spoken the school language (in this case Danish)?

How do you think the student feels when the teacher answers responds to her remark in Danish, in English?

Do you think it benefits students language acquisition that she speaks English – how?

Can you think of situations where it would be appropriate for the teacher to speak the school language during English class – when?