

PROJECT PLAN FOR PART 2, 2016-2017

Research plan: BYLEC - Baltic Young Learners of English Corpus

This is a multidisciplinary study with seven universities and some twenty schools in six countries in the Baltic Region on young learners' current use and learning of the English language

Background

The interest in the present project lies in the compilation of comparable sub-corpora produced by learners with a range of different mother-tongue backgrounds in the Baltic region and the ways teachers apprehend teaching writing in EFL. The present project would bring together data produced by foreign language learners and learners of institutionalized second-language varieties of English together with teachers' experiences and reflections.

Purpose

The purpose is to invest in a corpus of international learner English with data from 12-year-olds in the Baltic Region in order to investigate their English language to identify differences in their interlanguage which are of significance for their written proficiency in English and successful lingua franca communication. The focus is on the interlanguage of Estonian, Latvian, Lithuanian, Polish, Russian and Swedish learners of English.

Possible Research Questions on the Data

What are the specific productive patterns of young learners' second language production in these five countries?

What intercultural aspects, societal factors and native language interference could explain the identified variation in learner language?

What features of spoken English and digital communication emerge in their written production such as discourse markers, emoticons, traits from texting messages, multiple causal coordination and informal vocabulary?

What are the pedagogical implications for classroom work with writing in English of these identified differences?

University Partners and lecturers

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Number of students at the primary schools

Sweden

SE-A	Norrbackaskolan, Visby	Susanne Sundstrand	
SE-B	St Hansskolan, Visby	Jenny Olsson	
SE-D	Solbergaskolan, Visby	Lena Andersson	
SE-E	Johan Skytteskolan, Älvsjö	Marianne Bechiri	

Latvia

LV-A	Daugavpils Saskanas Pamatskola	Natalija Karpenko	
LV-B	Daugavpils Basic School Nr 11	Marianna Tretjakova	
LV-B	Daugavpils Basic School Nr 11	Jelena Lucijanova	
LV-C	Daugavpils Vienibas Pamatskola	Svetlana Volosova	
LV-D	Daugavpils Krievu Vidusskola - licejs	Ludmila Lastovkai	

Lithuania

LT-A	Kaunas Senamiestis Middle School	Jolanta Petravičienė	
LT-A	Kaunas Senamiestis Middle School	Edita Šeškienė	
LT-A	Kaunas Senamiestis Middle School	Žaneta Stasevičienė	
LT-B	Kaunas Jonas and Petras Vileisiai Middle School	Laimute Zukauskienė	

Estonia

EE-A	Tartu Karlova School	Merit Harju	12 students
EE-A	Tartu Karlova School	Juta Hennoste	16 students
EE-A	Tartu Karlova School	Irene Laur	18 students
EE-A	Tartu Karlova School	Ruth Jögi	15 students
EE-B	Tartu Tamme School	Merli Leemet	15 students
EE-B	Tartu Tamme School	Sirje Paju	18 students
EE-B	Tartu Tamme School	Lenne Tammiste	17 students
EE-B	Tartu Tamme School	Siiri Salutee	17 students
Total EE			128 students

Russia

RU-A	Kaliningrad school number 21	Irina Minyakova	
RU-A	Kaliningrad school number 21	Svetlana Kolesnikova	
RU-D	Kaliningrad school number 1	Natalia Kurakina	13 students
RU-D	Kaliningrad school number 1	Anna Klimova	
RU D	Kaliningrad school number 1	Victoria Fil	
RU-E	Kaliningrad school number 6	Maria Drygina	24 students

Poland

PL-A	SP 50 w ZS 45 im. Krolowej Jadwigi, Warsaw	Małgorzata Zajączkowska	
PL A	SP 50 w ZS 45 im. Krolowej Jadwigi, Warsaw	Magdalena Matulewska	
PL-B	Zespół Szkół Ogólnokształcących STO, Warsaw	Daniel Bartkowski	18 students
PL-C	Szkola Podstawowa Nr 6, Poznan	Slawka Krenz	
PL-D	Szkola Podstawowa Da Vinci School, Poznan	Piotr Serwa	

Project plan

The number of participating learners will be at least some 100 learners per country and they are at 20 schools in six countries.

University lecturers' duties in the project

The university lectures are to provide contacts with teachers and schools in the regions and organize so that teachers submit the texts. The university lecturers have full access to the data for their own research and students' bachelor and master theses writing. The data can be the source for research and publications.

School teachers' duties in the project

The school teachers make their learners produce texts which are either written in word-documents or scanned and then sent in e-mails. If preferred, the texts can be posted by mail to the project leader.

The texts are written during lessons at school and the estimated time for writing one text is between 40 and 60 minutes. The learners will be anonymous but at the start they will be asked to provide their background data such as name, age, mother tongue, their parents' mother tongue, visits to foreign countries, attitude to English. In the project the individual learner will be identified with a code such as "LV-A-102".

Teachers are requested to get the parents' permission for the use of their children's texts in this research project. The children are guaranteed to be anonymous and that the texts will only be used for research purposes and published anonymously in a database.

The teachers are requested to write reflections after the completion of each text because it would be valuable if teachers could keep a log for reflections on what happens in their class/group in relation to the project as a whole and especially if you could make some notes after the lessons when texts are produced. This implies that teachers are kindly requested to write in a "reflection-log" at least three times during the autumn semester and three times during spring. Finally, in May 2017, when all six texts are produced, teachers will be asked to go through the reflections written during the year and write a meta-reflection of what you have seen, learnt etc.

This is a kind of collaborative work and hopefully teachers can use their reflections in discussions in your "working-team" at your school. We also hope these reflection-logs will be useful as tools for formative assessing in your classes.

When the first text is produced and sent in we would appreciate comments from you if everything worked out well, if there were any problems in any way and if you think major changes have to be considered in order to be able to continue with the project.

Some suggestions for writing in the reflection-log:

- How did you prepare the students before each lesson with text writing?
- What did you notice in the classroom or among students before, under and after the students were writing? Did you notice anything special?
- Are all students involved in the text writing? What about students with special educational needs? Would you say they are included in this? Are there any difficulties? What are the reasons?

The learners

The learners are to produce six texts; three in the autumn semester and three in the spring semester. The project does not imply an emphasis on teaching the written skill in the classrooms. Nevertheless, the learners should be asked to do their very best and that their production is important and taken into account as a whole to motivate the learners to do their very best and that the production really reflects their actual level. The teachers are simply requested to collect learners' production for research purposes. It is worth emphasizing that the conditions for production are to be similar as similar as possible in the classrooms of the six countries. This means that instructions should be clear and similar, e.g. for the permission of using and actually having dictionaries at hand. Here are the six topics for the six texts:

The topics and deadlines of the learners' texts

Autumn semester 2016

The personal profiles of the students are sent to the project leader in September 2016.

Text 1: My friend (Deadline October 16, 2016)

What is your friend's name? How old is your friend? Where does your friend live? Has your friend got brothers and sisters? Has your friend got any pets? Which? What does your friend look like? Do you see your friend very often? What do you do with your friend when you are together? Why is he/she your best friend? What else can you say about your best friend?

Text 2: My pet (real or imaginary) (Deadline: November 15, 2016)

Text 3: A place that I like (Deadline: December 15, 2016)

Spring semester 2017

Text 4: An adventure/the journey of my dreams (Deadline: February 15, 2017)

Text 5: My e-life: my favourite website/computer game/app. (Deadline: March 15, 2017)

Text 6: Me in the world in the future, (sustainability, peace, dreams) (Deadline: April 15, 2017)

Instructions

Detailed instructions for the teacher and the learners' writing of the six texts will be distributed separately.

Certificate

After the completion of the project school teachers will receive a certificate from Uppsala University, Sweden which gives information about the school teacher's contribution in the research project.

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