

World Congress of the
International Association of Applied Linguistics
AILA 2008

University of Duisburg Essen, Campus Essen, 24.-29.08.2008

Symposium: Kant revisited

testing the output *and* outcomes of literacy competencies

Organizers of the symposium:

Prof. Dr. Una Dirks (University of Hildesheim),

Prof. Dr. Erika Werlen (University of Zurich-Winterthur)

Contact: dirks@uni-hildesheim.de, wera@zhaw.ch

Thematic strand:

„Language Evaluation, Assessment and Testing“

Abstract:

One of the greatest challenges within and beyond the borderlines of the European Union consists of successful negotiations aiming at a mutual understanding about socio-economic, political, and judicial affairs in spite of speakers' multilingual origins. In order to meet such multilingual demands, educational and vocational training programmes are expected to enhance a wide array of L_n literacy competencies. Evidence-based data of language assessment and evaluation are supposed to answer questions like, which program is worth being continued or which changes have to be made.

Against this background, our symposium is dedicated to one of the most controversial research issues of assessment and evaluation: whereas learners' output knowledge can be tested by all kinds of approaches, to date learners' *outcomes* have hardly been seized on. The difference to be made originates from action- and knowledge-based theories of competencies that have been framed by Immanuel Kant's concepts of education: the output corresponds to formative knowledge ("Ausbildungswissen"), which basically covers declarative knowledge features enabling its users to develop a "determinative judgementability" ("determinierende Urteilskraft"). The capability to apply formative knowledge to different (learning) situations and, if necessary, to adapt new varieties of already established knowledge structures usually is identified as orientational knowledge ("Bildungswissen"), which directly relates to the so-called outcomes and bears on a "reflexive judgementability" ("reflektierende Urteilskraft"). Naturally, such literal or figurative transfers between different domains of knowledge emerge, if ever, as mid-term or long-term effects of formative processes and individual experiences being part of life-long learning. Therefore, the oral and written literacy competencies being at issue in our symposium, will be investigated from a diachronic and synchronic perspective by taking hold of process data in connection with summative evaluations. As a consequence, the proposed presentations mostly combine qualitative methods (ethnographic enquiry, peer observations, group discussions, interviews on learning biographies, assessment dialogues,

tests of first/second language pragmatics, document/discourse analysis) with quantitative approaches (various competence models; scaling of multi-contingent perspectives).

The diachronic and synchronic research principles also reflect the arrangement of the proposed presentations: whereas the symposium starts with two talks on young learners' achievements (L1, L2) providing interesting insights into various points of transition from output knowledge to literacy outcomes, the following papers try to capture literacy outcomes from the perspective of adult learners being enrolled in BA-/MA-studies for different occupational fields (teaching, public relations, banking/business). The gap between elementary and higher education will be closed by the afore-mentioned retrospective data. Further differentiations of the proficiency levels are yielded by way of drawing comparisons between achievements in different languages (English as L1, French as L2) or as a result of having attended online or off-line courses (German as a Foreign Language), and basic and advanced literacy courses (English as L1, L2). All papers will critically outline the chances and constraints of testing skills that are required outside of institutional learning contexts (cf. outcomes).

Contributions:

Una Dirks, Erika Werlen: *Introduction*

Uta Quasthoff, Juliane Stude, Lilian Fried, Nitza Katz-Bernstein, Anja Schröder (University of Dortmund): *Children's narrative interaction: unmeasurable?*

Andrea Hänni Hotti (University of Teacher Education of Central Switzerland, Lucerne): *English at Primary Schools: Assessing Speaking Skills of Young Learners*

Marie J. Myers (Queen's University, Canada): *Looking at output and outcomes in L2 (French) through perspective taking in reaction papers*

Sonja Kuri (Università degli Studi di Udine, Italy): *Das formative Potential von Kompetenzbeschreibungsrastern in der DeutschlehrerInnen-Ausbildung (DaF/DaZ)*

Iris Jammerneegg (Università degli Studi di Udine, Italy): *Kompetenzevaluation im italienischen DaF-PR-Bereich*

Jenny Cook-Gumperz (University of California, USA): *Adult Literacy in the age of the audit culture: problems and possibilities*

Una Dirks / Erika Werlen: *Summary – future perspectives of research:*