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*INTERVIEW WITH CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE*

Introduction to Language Awareness

Pädagogische Hochschule **Freiburg** University of Education  
Project JaLing „Das Tor zu Sprachen“  
ECML Graz – COMENIUS Freiburg, Germany

## **Composition of the group**

### **For each child and for all the children of a class –**

Age

Sex

Nationality

## **Methodological approach and collection of data**

- interview with open questions
- introductory activity by
  - showing pictures
  - listening to cassette speech
  - singing songs
  - listening to poems

Questions which should be asked in all of the classes:

1. *Which language or languages have you heard about?*
2. *Is (Bavarian) a language? Why or why not?*
3. *What makes languages different from one another?*
4. *Do animals have a language, why do you think so?*
5. *How do people learn languages?*
6. *What is a word?*
7. *what would you like to investigate if you were a language researcher?*

Same questions to be asked at the end of the JaLing teaching.

At the right side, there are questions; at the left side, there are *types* of possible answers.

- If the children give an answer in the sense of one of these types, please mark it by a sign. Please mark every answer of these types by a sign.
- If the children answer differently, please note the types in the free space.

## Questions for discussion

### Language varieties and comparison of foreign and second language

*What do children know about languages and language variety ?*

#### Questions

#### possible answers

|   |  |
|---|--|
| Where were you born, where were your parents born ? | Countries or towns, f.i. Finland, Belgium, Bratislava  |
| What languages do you know ?                        | Foreign languages<br>dialects<br>secret codes<br>baby talk<br>...<br>...   |
| <b>Dialect</b>                                      | (Dialect or language?)   |
| What is (name of the regional dialect or variety)?  | That's (English)<br>No distinct pronunciation<br>Pronunciation is a little different<br>An example for the accent<br>The words used are different<br>In the highlands, they speak...<br>.....<br>..... |
| Is it (English / your mother tongue) ?              | Yes                  No                  Don't know  |

Are there differences between (name of the dialect) and (name of the national language) ?

How do you know ?  
Can you give examples?

Which one do you prefer ?

Who speaks (the national language) / dialect, and when?

Can you speak a dialect ? Which one(s)?

When and with whom do you speak the dialect?

**Foreign languages / Mother tongues**

Do your parents speak (the national language) ?

When do you speak (the national language), when do you speak your mother tongue?

What language do you speak better ?

What do you call the languages that you speak ?

What language do you prefer to speak, and why?

Do you know how to read / write in your mother tongue ?

Your mother tongue and German are they similar / different ?

Are there similar words in both languages ?

What does your mother tongue sound like ? Can you say a sentence / phrase?

Are the letters in your language the same as in (national language) ?

Can you sing in your mother tongue ?

Do you sometimes dream in your mother tongue ?

### **Secret codes**

Do you have a secret language / code ?  
How does your secret code work?

With whom do you use your secret code ?

### **Baby talk**

What does baby talk sound like ?

Can you also speak baby talk ?

In what way is baby talk different from adult language ?

### **Animal languages**

Do you think animals have got their own languages ?

How do they work ?

What do animal languages sound like ?

### **Language learning**

#### **Questions**

How did you learn (national language)?

How do you think you learned your mother tongue?

How do you learn other languages ? (foreign languages?)

How do you learn a secret code ?

Do animals have to learn their languages ?

#### **Possible answers**

### **Questions about language structure**

*What do children know about grammar, phonetics, semantics, syntax, etc.*

#### **Questions**

#### **possible answers**

What is a word ?

How many words does this sentence have :

*Isn't the weather nice ?*

What is one syllable?

How many syllables are there in this word : *beautifully*?

What is a letter ?

How many letters are there in this word (f.i. the child's own name)

### **Grammatical structures**

How do you know that there are many of these ? (hold up ten fingers)

How do you know if it is male or female ?

How do you know when something happens or is happening ? (yesterday, today, tomorrow)

Is Christina a boy's name or a girl's name ? How do you know that?

Show them a rhyme or a poem : Which words rhyme here?

What sounds good / nice oder not good / not nice ?

Plural, quantity

Article, pronoun, the meaning of the word

verbforms, temporal adverbs

## **Semantics**

What does X mean ? (f.i. *apple*)

Why is it called X?

Why do you call the little finger *pinky* ?

Can you call 'a house' *a chair* ? Can you call 'an apple' *a peanut*? Why / Why not?

Do you know words that don't mean anything ?

Spunk

## **Syntax**

Is it called *Peter sees a child* or *A child Peter sees.* ?

Can you also say *A child sees Peter.* ?  
What does it mean then?

How can you tell if it is a question, a command or a simple statement ?

Can you always tell, or do you sometimes misunderstand?

## **Other topics**

### **Questions**

What do you think, how did language arise?

What would you like to investigate, if you were a language researcher ?

### **possible answers**

Do you like to talk about languages ?