

ALTE NEWS

THE ASSOCIATION OF LANGUAGE TESTERS IN EUROPE

AUTUMN 2003 – WINTER 2003

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Broadening European Assessment Horizons at the Instituto Cervantes, Brussels

On 27 March over 50 people attended a reception sponsored by ALTE and hosted by the Instituto Cervantes at their impressive location, built in 1913, on Avenue de Tervueren in Brussels. This beautiful building was an apt location to highlight the main theme of the evening: Harmonising Language Assessment across Europe.



Ramon Parrondo, (seen above) from the Instituto Cervantes, welcomed the guests and made a brief presentation on the origins of ALTE in Spain; its first meeting, hosted by the Generalitat de Catalunya, was held in Barcelona in 1990. He also described recent developments with the Basque and Catalan members and the incorporation of the Galicians as observers. These, along with representatives of other less widely spoken languages form an important part of the ALTE membership and are central to its *raison d'être*.

Nick Saville, on behalf of ALTE members, presented an overview of the history of ALTE. He then went on to describe ALTE's goal of achieving common levels of proficiency, the various working groups and code of practice ALTE has initiated. He also outlined ALTE's research, which has an important impact on the testing of European languages, and the EAQUALS/ALTE language portfolio for adults, which aims to help increase greater mobility within an expanding Europe.

Attendees were from a wide variety of backgrounds. Besides the generous hosts, the Instituto Cervantes, representatives came from the British Council, the Alliance Française, the Centre International d'Études Pédagogiques, the Goethe-Institut, and local language teaching institutions.

All guests were treated to food and wine that was second to none. Guests from the European Commission and local education authorities were particularly welcomed. Both ALTE and the EC share the same goals of promoting plurilingualism, encouraging lifelong language learning, the sharing of best practice, and raising standards in European language teaching and assessment. This reception was an example of ALTE partners coming together to explore opportunities for closer collaboration between all European stakeholders who share common goals. The accession of new member states to the EU and the need to support less widely spoken languages in Europe are issues which all European partners have a common interest in promoting. By working together and pooling our resources we can strengthen linguistic diversity and better serve European language teachers and learners.

ALTE to be a Non Governmental Organisation

ALTE submitted an application for Non-Governmental Organisation consultative status with the Council of Europe in May 2003. This application was examined by the departments of the Secretariat General in accordance with the Committee of Ministers' Resolution (93) 38 concerning relations between the Council of Europe and international NGOs. ALTE has now been informed that the Secretary General has recommended that consultative status be granted to the organisation. In the absence of any objection from the Committee of Ministers and the Parliamentary Assembly. ALTE's name will be added in the near future to the list of NGOs enjoying consultative status.

Associate Members

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Test Deutsch alfa

Language Testing and Citizenship

In the UK a language requirement has been part of nationality law for many years but until recently was relatively undefined. However, the Nationality Immigration and Asylum Act 2002 now requires that UK residents seeking British citizenship be tested to show a sufficient knowledge of English, Welsh or Scottish Gaelic and to have a sufficient knowledge about life in the United Kingdom. One of the effects of this new legislation is that applicants for citizenship will have to 'supply certification from approved professional sources of proficiency in language and also in understanding of society and civic institutions in the United Kingdom.' (www.ind.homeoffice.gov.uk). This situation is now a familiar one right across Europe so it is vital to know what testing bodies are doing in other European countries and what issues testing for citizenship raises. The following article describes a test of German developed for migrants.

'Test Deutsch alfa' – a German as a foreign language test for people who cannot read or write

Heinrich Ruebeling WBT Weiterbildungs-Testsysteme, Frankfurt. Based on a paper given at Language Assessment Ethics Conference Pasadena, California, May 2002

Introduction

In the last few years various governments in Europe have introduced stricter regulations, particularly with regard to language ability, for people migrating to Europe. Migrants who wish to obtain citizenship in a European country now have to demonstrate a certain language competence. These regulations differ greatly among European countries and in the case of Germany even between the regional federal states. In most cases the language competence of migrants is assessed by government institutions or by educational institutions operating on behalf of governments.

In Germany a new system of applying for citizenship was introduced in January 2000 which included language tests for those applying for citizenship. In the past there had been certain forms of language assessment when applying for citizenship, but with the new citizenship law official language tests were set up in the various German federal states. Applicants for citizenship would thus have to prove that they had passed a German educational test (school leaving certificate, vocational training certificate, university degree etc.) or that as a minimum requirement they had at least passed the standardised German as a Foreign Language (DaF) test 'Zertifikat Deutsch' which is institutionally run by WBT and Goethe-Institut.

Among language experts it was felt that 'Zertifikat Deutsch' might be difficult to administer for the purpose of assessing the language competence of migrants and might also be too demanding as a requirement for most applicants for citizenship since 'Zertifikat Deutsch' is placed at B1 on the CEF. In most cases migrants would need to attend approximately 300 to 450 full hours of teaching before being advised to sit for a level B1 language examination.

As a result of these misgivings, streamlined versions of the standardised 'Zertifikat Deutsch' test were developed and introduced into a language test system administered by government institutions in Germany, mainly in Berlin and Bavaria. The 'slim' version of the 'Zertifikat Deutsch' was given the name 'Test Deutsch.'

WBT was contracted by a number of federal state governments to supply local authorities and municipalities with the language tests.

'Test Deutsch' as run by WBT has been operational for over two years now. More than 15,000 applicants have had to sit the test which has had to be arranged in order to comply with the local and regional government conditions. This involved limiting the test to only 45 minutes in which the four major skills Listening Comprehension, Reading Comprehension, Writing and Speaking had to be assessed.

Most applicants for German citizenship are people who have lived in Germany for many years and are thus eligible to apply. However, the situation became problematic when government institutions realised that some of these applicants could neither read nor write German although they managed to speak German for their routine daily requirements (at the workplace, in shops, in municipal offices etc.) The reasons why these people could not read or write varied widely, but it was generally accepted by government institutions that this should not make it impracticable to assess their language competence when applying for German citizenship. It was also felt that these applicants should be able to understand and interact in spoken language situations at the same level of language competence as the other applicants who had to take the slim version of the standardised test 'Zertifikat Deutsch'. Thus, the idea of creating a language test for migrants and applicants for citizenship who had difficulties reading and writing in German was born. The test was given the name 'Test Deutsch alfa'.

Since 'Test Deutsch alfa' was launched in spring 2001 a few hundred applicants for German citizenship have taken the test which is a Test of Speaking and Listening only. According to the results computed by the test centres, a large percentage of applicants did not pass the test. Applicants soon found out that the Test of Speaking was no easier than the ordinary test which includes Reading and Writing. The number of applicants for 'Test Deutsch alfa' fell and only those applicants with real problems - as far as reading and writing in German was concerned - were registered for the test. That is when the real difficulties with 'Test Deutsch alfa' arose.

Outline of language test 'Test Deutsch alfa'

When setting up a language test for those who can neither read nor write in that language, a major consideration is avoiding confronting the applicants with too much written language. Hence the test does not include the skills of 'reading' and 'writing' at all. The language skills included in the test are 'listening with visuals', 'listening and talking', 'casual talking' (small talk) and 'talking about a certain topic'. However, experts in the field of literacy in urban societies pointed to the fact that people who cannot read and write properly are in most cases in the long process of moving towards recognizing written language since they live in a world surrounded by words and letters. People who cannot read and write properly are hardly ever found at point zero on the learning scale. They are often on the road towards acquiring the skill of recognising letters and words. In the team of test developers it was decided not to make use of any letters, but at the same time it was decided not to instruct the examiners in the language test to hide any letters and words from the candidates. But, topics and themes for the two conversations during the language test had to be offered in the form of speaking activities and by showing some form of visuals to the candidates so that s/he might choose from among several topics to talk about.

Developing 'Test Deutsch alfa'

Before starting the development work, the WBT selected a team of advisers and experts who had experience both in German as a Foreign Language and in working with people with basic literacy problems. The next step was to take stock of what was already available in the area

of testing German as a Foreign Language at lower levels of language competence. Then the team decided on which elements of the ordinary standardised language tests could be adapted for 'Test Deutsch alfa'.

As expected the team opted for the skills *Interactive Speaking* or *Conversation* and certain forms of *Listening*.

The four parts of 'Test Deutsch alfa'

The test consists of interaction between examiner(s) and candidate. Hence, 'Test Deutsch alfa' is a test of Spoken German. The interaction between examiner and candidate takes about 30 minutes. The examiners are given instructions to deal with the following parts:

- Listen and match pictures (example: loudspeaker announcements at the station, in a department store, etc.) The Listening situations are played one by one on a CD player.

Examiners are instructed to stop the CD player when necessary according to the perceived needs of the candidate.

- Listen and decide what is true or not true (example: Examiner asks: Can you buy fresh fruits here? Are the trains running today? etc.) Listen to two short everyday stories and report what you have understood (example: brief anecdotes like 'Do you know what happened to me this morning? I was going down the High Street when all of a sudden ... etc.) Guided conversation on a topic which can be chosen from among the 4 topics offered (for example: food, children, TV, traditional festivals, family, mobile phones, etc.) Free conversation about a topic which can be chosen from among the 4 topics offered (for example: birthday parties, TV, housing, spare time, fashion.

Marking

Marking the language competence of the applicant according to standardised marking criteria is the central issue in 'Test Deutsch alfa'. Thus the training of examiners is more important than setting the tasks and suggesting possible questions for the test. The marking criteria focus on:

1. expression
2. task management
3. language
4. pronunciation

Criterion 1: Expression

Assessment is based on the extent to which the language used (vocabulary and functional exponents) is appropriate to the task and the role relationship between the two candidates.

Criterion 2: Task Management

Assessment is based on

1. the degree of active participation in the discourse;
2. the use of strategies (discourse strategies and, where necessary, compensation strategies);
3. fluency.

Criterion 3: Language

Assessment is based on syntax and morphology.

The candidate makes

- A. no or only occasional errors.
- B. a number of errors without impairing communication.
- C. errors that considerably impair communication.
- D. so many errors that communication is (almost) impossible.

Criterion 4: Pronunciation and Intonation

Assessment is based on pronunciation and intonation. Divergences from standard pronunciation and intonation

- A. do not impede comprehension.
- B. may occasionally impede comprehension and require extra concentration on the part of the listener.

- C. considerably impede comprehension.
- D. make comprehension (almost) impossible.

Examiner training

Experienced teachers and examiners for German as a Foreign Language in adult education were involved in the project to assess migrants' language competence. They were approached by the test developers and asked whether they would be prepared to act as examiners for the new tests. Training the examiners was crucial for setting up the test. In a number of sessions the examiners were involved in the test design and in final modifications of the test.

Item analysis

Analysis was conducted with the ordinary 'Test Deutsch' based on the first 3,000 candidates. This analysis showed that most candidates managed to cope with the tasks given in the language test and that most examiners rated the candidates within the expected scale. As far as the analysis of the 'Test Deutsch alfa' is concerned, only the first 100 candidate assessment sheets were analysed. The number is still too small to draw any conclusions. In addition, a number of telephone conversations with the examiners for 'Test Deutsch alfa' were conducted. Most examiners reported that they had had to adjust the standardised instructions and task sheets slightly in order to suit the individual candidate. This feedback from examiners is taken into consideration when updating the existing test and when constructing newer versions.

Feedback from examiners

Despite the system of training and licensing examiners, complaints show that examiners do find it difficult to cope with the target group who may come from many different parts of the world. For instance, from Iraq, Morocco, Pakistan, Bosnia, Turkey or Chechnya and candidates all have one thing in common: they have not attended regular German language classes, nor, in most cases, any classes at all. Hence, any form of standardised language test forces the candidates to adapt to the structures of school or classroom learning. In contrast to this situation, their skills in understanding, speaking and interacting in German stem from a totally different setting: among family members, friends, colleagues and neighbours and their skills are oral skills.

Ethical considerations

Quite often during meetings of the team of test developers concerns were voiced whether the experts should carry out this development at all. As far as the German situation was concerned this was an absolutely new venture: language tests for those who cannot read or write. The members of the test developer team often had reservations about doing something most of their colleagues might not really welcome. Up to the year 2000 teachers of German as a Foreign Language, test developers, examiners had not drafted a test by which to assess language competence for people with problems in reading and writing German. WBT and its associated school centres (mainly the German Volkshochschul centres / municipal adult education centres) will have to be engaged in a larger analysis of the tests for citizenship.

Update Summer 2003

In Summer 2003 'Test Deutsch alfa' continued to be offered by WBT and organised by local adult education centres in close co-operation with municipal authorities in Germany. No more than 500 candidates have so far sat the test. There are various versions of the question paper for 'Test Deutsch alfa' and a recently re-edited mock examination for 'Test Deutsch alfa' can be downloaded free from WBT's webpages. Current analysis shows that the most crucial part of organising and running this particular language assessment test lies with the examiners and the training of examiners.

Test Deutsch alfa



The Diplomas in Spanish

The Diplomas in Spanish

Ramon Parrondo Instituto Cervantes

1. A brief history.

The Diplomas de Español como Lengua Extranjera (DELE) were originally established by the Spanish Ministry for Education in 1988. The examinations were first administered in 1989 in 8 countries outside Spain through the network of Education Advisers attached to the Embassies of Spain. Test development and grading were entirely carried out from ministerial headquarters in Madrid. Initially, only one examination was available – the Diploma Básico de Español (B2).

In 1991 the Ministry for Education signed an agreement with the University of Salamanca, which involved contracting out the tasks of test development, rating of examination papers and research to the university. In the same year, the Diploma Superior de Español (C2) was administered for the first time.

The Instituto Cervantes was also created in 1991 and the following year it became a ministerial partner in the Diplomas; legislation was changed to bring in the Instituto Cervantes, which became responsible for test administration, the management of examination centres, and finance. The Ministry for Education retained the ownership of the examination system, and remained responsible for the issue of the Diplomas, acted as Central Board of Examinations and published annual administrative regulations.

The Certificado Inicial de Español (B1) was introduced in 1994. The three examinations then constituted the suite of exams of the Diplomas in Spanish certification system.

Between 1992 and 2002 the growth and dissemination of the Diplomas in Spanish ran apace with the increasing interest in the study of Spanish all over the world. Seven thousand candidates took the tests in 32 countries in 1992 and by the end of 2002, twenty-five thousand had entered the examinations in 70 countries.

2. The new Diplomas in Spanish.

In November 2002 the Spanish Government passed new legislation concerning the Diplomas in Spanish which effectively made the Instituto Cervantes fully responsible for the examination system: academic and financial management and issue of the Diplomas on behalf of the Ministry for Education. The new legislation (Real Decreto 1137/2002) introduced other important changes in the system such as new denominations:

Certificado Inicial de Español (CIE) became

Diploma de Español (Nivel Inicial)

Diploma Básico de Español (DBE) became

Diploma de Español (Nivel Intermedio)

Diploma Superior de Español (DSE) became

Diploma de Español (Nivel Superior)

The relationship of these examinations with the common European framework is illustrated in the table below

Common European Framework	A1	A2	B1	B2	C1	C2
	Break through	Waystage	Threshold	Vantage	Effective Operational Proficiency	Mastery
Diplomas de Español como Lengua Extranjera			Diploma de Español (Nivel Inicial)	Diploma de Español (Nivel Intermedio)		Diploma de Español (Nivel Superior)

New entry conditions were also established and they are now the following: The Diplomas in Spanish are no longer available only to candidates who are nationals of countries where this language is not official. Candidates can apply for access to the tests if Spanish is their second language, regardless of their nationality, as long as they fulfil at least two of four pre-conditions:

- Spanish is not the native language of either of the candidate's parents.
- Spanish is not the first language that the candidate has acquired.
- Spanish is not the language that the candidate uses in everyday situations.
- Spanish has not been the language of instruction of all or part of the candidate's primary and secondary education.

A written statement is required in this instance and forms are available from examination centres. The purpose of the introduction of these changes was to lend the Spanish examination and certification system greater flexibility and efficiency with a view to sustaining growth. In order to fulfil this remit, the Instituto Cervantes relies on a number of important assets and resources:

- The University of Salamanca. The university's department of Cursos Internacionales continues to be involved in test development, rating of examination papers and research in accordance to guidelines provided by the Academic Directorate of the Instituto Cervantes.
- The Spanish Ministry for Education and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The Instituto Cervantes will continue to rely on the network of Spanish embassies and consulates to deliver the tests in some countries or areas.

Both ministries will continue to lend their support in two main capacities: endorsing the official nature of the certifications and seeking their recognition by education authorities and government officials outside Spain.

- ALTE. Both the Instituto Cervantes and the University of Salamanca will continue to take part in ALTE projects and initiatives as an integral part of their activities in language testing. The collaboration in validation research projects, the establishment of strategic alliances in partnership with other ALTE members and the adoption and implementation of common standards (Common European Framework, Quality Management Scheme, Portfolio, etc.) are of special importance.
- The Instituto's own resources: As well as running a network of cultural and language learning centres, the Instituto Cervantes manages a much extended network of DELE examination centres and makes use of its own teacher training infrastructure to deliver examiner training courses. From the Instituto's Madrid headquarters, the Oficina de Diplomas, which comprises an Exams and Diplomas Unit and a Finance and Administration Unit, is the nerve centre of the examination system.

The Diplomas in Spanish in Spanish

The new Diplomas in Spanish were launched under a new corporate image and logo:



3. Present and future projects.

It is now the Instituto Cervantes' responsibility to take executive decisions on issues such as new product development or the format and content of the existing suite of examinations.

Current examinations are now undergoing a process of revision and renovation, particularly in the light of the Common European Framework. Several validation projects have been conducted with a view to fine tuning the scales and the ability descriptors; exam specifications are being re-written; piloting of experimental tests is taking place throughout the network of Instituto Cervantes centres and the revised tests are expected to be administered live in the spring of 2004.

In line with the revision of the existing tests, new examiner training programmes have been developed. About a thousand examiners are in the process of being retrained using audiovisual materials prior to the administration of the new tests. The existing suite of examinations is no longer regarded as insufficient for current demands. It is fast becoming a priority to extend the range of levels of certification available: exams at levels A2 and C1 have considerable usefulness for official educational systems (primary and secondary education) and for universities. Teacher certification and work-oriented tests are also in demand from individuals and institutions alike, both in and outside Spain.

The Instituto Cervantes is committed to the provision of new and improved services in Spanish language testing: Internet-based administration tools, publications, computer-based placement tests and the rigorous implementation of ALTE's quality management system are some of the projects that are currently under way.

The range, volume and nature of the projects that have been described can only herald times of hard work ahead, but both the Instituto Cervantes and the University of Salamanca regard these challenges as exciting opportunities for improvement and development. In the context of ALTE, we are both keen to contribute to the prestige and reputation of the association and to obtain the necessary assistance to carry out the tasks in hand successfully

ALTE Conference Athens

November 5-7 2003

The Association of Language Testers in Europe (ALTE) held its twenty-seventh meeting in Athens on 5th, 6th and 7th November. The meeting was hosted by the University of Athens, Interdepartmental Programme for Modern Greek as a Foreign Language. Workshops were held on the following: Language corpus – can it help your testing process? Patrick Gillard Senior Commissioning Editor, ELT dictionaries Cambridge University Press. Pauline Rea-Dickins, University of Bristol explored Understandings of Classroom-embedded Assessment and the ALTE Language Assessment and Citizenship special interest group held a workshop in which one of the keynote speakers of the ALTE conference, Professor Dr. Rita Suessmuth took part.

Friday 7th November was the ALTE Conference Day, a day which ALTE has generally opened to a wider public audience, with presentations on The Teaching and Testing of Greek as a Foreign Language in Greece; Assessment

of language proficiency in the Elementary Schools of the Muslim Minority; Specialised Modern Greek Corpora in the Teaching and Assessment of Vocabulary; From Can-do statements to test items; Corpus, language research and language testing; Assessment Frameworks and Classroom Assessment: Risk and benefits; Languages for all citizens? The challenge of diversity and communication. The National University of Ireland, Maynooth, was welcomed as a new Observer and Sofia University, Bulgaria as a new Associate Member.

Start Deutsch 1 and 2 New German Exams at A1 and A2

Michaela Perlmann-Balme Goethe-Institut

After the federal Ministry of Employment had commissioned the Goethe-Institut to develop an examination system for immigrants to Germany, the Goethe-Institut and WBT joined forces. They extended their cooperation to develop two German examinations below the Zertifikat Deutsch at level A1 and A2 called Start Deutsch 1 and 2.

In 2002 these A1 and A2 exams were published in the z-Version or 'Zuwanderer'. This version is to be administered only in Germany once new immigration legislation has been implemented. An international version of Start Deutsch will be available worldwide as of 2004. Since WBT had planned to revise its A2 examination Grundbaustein, this exam will be replaced by Start Deutsch 2. The work of ALTE has been a major source of reference to the development of the two new German exams. The description of the Breakthrough level by John Trim, which is being sponsored by ALTE, has supplemented the description of levels in the Common European Framework (CEF) and formed the basis of Start Deutsch 1. The CEF and ALTE Can do statements have also been another source of reference. Last but not least, a valuable contribution has been made by the ALTE members from Norway and Sweden in reviewing the draft versions of the Start Deutsch.

Events where ALTE will be represented

Expolangues January 28, 29, 30, 31 and
1st February, 2004, Paris

16th Annual EAIE Conference
(European Association for International Education)
15 -18 September 2004
Torino, Italy

ALTE has submitted a presentation entitled:
Comparing quality: What do language exam
stakeholders need to ask language exam providers?

Future ALTE meetings

Future ALTE meetings and Conference Days will be held as follows:

April 21-23 2004	Krakow
November 10-12 2004	Bilbao
May 19-21 2005	Berlin
November 2005	Cardiff

For further information about ALTE Conference Days, please contact the Secretariat.

Web site update

The ALTE web site can be found at www.alte.org
It is now possible to access the ALTE Newsletter on the web site. Information about ALTE leaflets in all languages and other ALTE publications is now available on this site.

Special Interest Group News

ALTE Young Learners Special Interest Group

Testing children

Two years ago a group of five ALTE members (Alliance Française, Cambridge ESOL, the Goethe Institut, the University of Lisbon and the University of Salamanca) set up a new partnership. *The Young Learners special Interest Group*. Working within the framework of ALTE's ongoing research on testing, the primary concern of this group is the testing of children in the present international context.

Which children should we test – and why?

The idea of testing children is, first and foremost, a response to the following factors.

1. Changes in the international context.

These can be divided into:

- geopolitical and economic changes within Europe,
- research carried out by the Council of Europe - the production of new reference documents; these are:
- the Common European Framework, which includes reference to teaching languages to children;
- the portfolio for children – a variety of national political contexts, within which education authorities aim to lower the age at which children start to study foreign languages and need some form of external certification to validate learners' skills.

2. Requests from institutions and teachers.

People in both of these groups are frequently confused by the administrative decisions imposed on them and baffled by descriptions of teaching materials, and the strategies used in teaching and teacher training.

3. The concerns of parents.

Parents sometimes view language teaching (which they may consider a subject of subsidiary importance) as something which takes time away from the teaching of more basic subjects – and with no means of verifying either goals or results. And we have not even mentioned the question of how to motivate children – for whom the approval of their parents is crucial – to want to study a foreign language.

How do we test children?

Within the context of the situation outlined above, Cambridge ESOL began to develop tests for children at three levels in 1993. These tests had their first live administrations in 1997. Cambridge ESOL has since been joined by the Alliance Française (2001), the University of Lisbon and the University of Salamanca.

Two other ALTE partners (the Goethe Institute and the University of Athens) take part in the ongoing discussions and work aimed at the future production of tests.

The objectives of the ALTE project go beyond mere test development:

- The aim is to provide teachers with materials (communicative and linguistic learning objectives) which are suited to the needs of the children in question (7 to 12 year-olds) both in terms of topics which interest them and in terms of language.
- The tests are also a means of putting over an attractive and motivating communicative methodology, which is based on pictorial support and game-like tasks of a kind with which children are familiar through their everyday life both at school and at home.
- At the same time, they may constitute the children's first experience of serious formative evaluation. Although the tests are primarily aimed at motivating candidates - because everybody succeeds, and only the degree of success varies - they help to prepare candidates for future, adult test-taking experiences.
- When producing the tests, the group has taken into account language teaching text-books which are already used by teachers. The tests must remain linked to the learning process and be based on materials and documentation that provide the means for everyone involved to move forward - and in the same direction!
- Tests have been developed in an atmosphere of close collaboration between the partners, which takes the Cambridge ESOL suite of Young Learners Tests, Starters, Movers and Flyers, as a starting point. The process of linguistic and cultural adaptation to the different languages (English, French, Spanish and Portuguese) has been carried out by several experts representing each partner. Test materials have been rigorously pre-tested in a variety of contexts (in Asia and America as well as Europe), in order to validate their content.

The final, and in some ways most important, stage of the project is taking place at present. This stage deals with the development and production of Can Do Statements at Level A1. Existing Can Dos do not seem to take into account the needs of children (whose areas of activity differ markedly from those of adolescents and adults!). This work is being undertaken at a time when the Council of Europe – in particular Dr John Trim – is engaged in writing a description of Breakthrough /Level A1. Synchronicity between these two areas of research will undoubtedly allow new light to be shed on this first European level of language learning and evaluation.

The Young Learners Group, ALTE, 2003

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