

Descriptors developed under the auspices of the Nederlandse Taalunie for ISCED Level 0

(please see the [Framework of Reference for Early Second Language Acquisition](#))

The objectives are described at three levels – macro (fields), meso (language acts/tasks) and micro (elements).

Descriptors presented here at **macro level** are those for the **field of school**; “school” here means any situation occurring within the educational sphere and intended to stimulate the child’s development.

Meso and micro levels

Listening

Meso level

LISTENING (1): The pre-school child is able, at the descriptive level, to understand a verbal task or instruction (and show the fact by responding adequately to it)

1.1 The pre-school child is able to understand tasks relating to the performance of a concrete physical action in a here-and-now situation (and show the fact by performing the action).

E.g. “Walk to the cupboard and get the puzzle”.

1.2 The pre-school child is able to understand tasks relating to the performance of a mental or linguistic action relevant to him/herself (and demonstrate this fact).

E.g. “Tell all the children to pick up the brushes”.

LISTENING (2): The pre-school child is able, at the descriptive level, to understand a question intended for him/her (and show the fact by answering / responding adequately to it).

2.1 The pre-school child is able to understand questions intended for him/her concerning intentions, interests or preferences, possibly backed up by picture and/or sound (and show the fact by answering/responding adequately to them).

E.g. “Which book will you choose, this one with the bear or this one about the playground?”

2.2 The pre-school child is able to understand open questions about his own experiences and adventures (and show the fact by responding or answering).

E.g. “Ugur, where did you go with Mummy yesterday?”

2.3 The pre-school child is able to understand questions intended for him/her about his feelings or those of relevant partners in his environment (and show the fact by responding or answering).

E.g. “Karim, have you hurt yourself or are you angry?”

2.4 The pre-school child is able to understand questions intended for him/her about situations, acts or objects in the concrete environment (and show the fact by a responding or answering).

E.g. “Ahmed, where is that piece of paper now?”

LISTENING (3): The pre-school child is able to understand a verbal account, e.g. a picture book and/or story intended for his age group.

3.1 The pre-school child is able to follow and understand a story intended for him/her (and show the fact, e.g. by acting it out while the teacher narrates it, or by putting pictures in the right order afterwards).

E.g. Using the picture book “We’re Going on a Bear Hunt”: ‘We run through the forest. We swim through the water’, etc.

E.g. Using the picture book “The Hungry Caterpillar”: after the story has been read aloud, the child puts 4 pictures in the right order.

LISTENING (4): The pre-school child is able to understand informative statements intended for him/herself or his peers (and show the fact by reacting/responding adequately to them).

4.1 The pre-school child is able to understand informative statements about concrete events and facts relevant to him/her in the context of the here-and-now (and show the fact in the way he/she reacts).

E.g. “The puzzle is in the drawer”.

4.2 The pre-school child is able to understand informative statements about concrete events and facts relevant to him/her outside the context of the here-and-now (and show the fact in the way he/she reacts).

E.g. “Next week we are all going by bus to the zoo”.

4.3 The pre-school child is able to understand information about rules and regulations relevant to him/her in concrete situations (and show the fact through his behaviour).

E.g. “When you play outside you are not allowed to leave the playground”.

Micro level

The description of listening tasks at meso level implies objectives at micro level. This applies firstly at the lexical level. Certain words will keep coming up in many of the tasks described above, for words are the building-blocks of language and the basis on which information is conveyed. Words are primarily carriers of meaning, and children must know words in order to link the language they hear around them to the things and concepts referred to.

This is a matter of receptive knowledge of:

- content words (referring to the child’s environment at home, outside the home and in school);
- function words, prepositions and adverbs.

In particular, words in the following semantic fields are relevant here:

- words referring to everyday occurrences and things around them (e.g. words referring to movement (*standing, sitting, walking, turning round* etc.); parts of the body (*head, eyes, nose* etc.); surroundings (*cupboard, floor, window, sandbox* etc.); objects (*pen, pencil, book* etc.);
- main numerals;
- spatial concepts;
- main colours;

- length and size indicators;
- words relating to feelings.

There exist a number of word lists containing this vocabulary.

At the morphological level (word construction), children must be able to interpret the difference between singular and plural forms, and understand elementary verbal conjugations (e.g. the difference between present and past forms) and negation. These are rules which may induce a fundamental difference of meaning where tasks at the meso level are concerned.

At **sentence level**, the emphasis in early second language acquisition lies on:

- short (initially simple) sentences;
- interrogatory sentences (how, what, why)
- constructions which indicate tasks and instructions (requiring action)
- negation (none, nothing).

At the **phonological level**, children must master the significant differences in sound (e.g. the difference between “pen” and “pin”).

It goes without saying that knowledge at the micro level is not an end in itself, but must always be seen in conjunction with the functional communication objectives as described at the meso level.

Speaking

Meso level

SPEAKING (1): The pre-school child is able to answer questions intended for him/her at the descriptive level and in a communicatively adequate manner.

1.1 The pre-school child is able to answer concrete questions about his/her own life in the context of the here-and-now.

E.g. “What nice things have you got in your lunch box?” “AN APPLE AND A SANDWICH”

1.2 The pre-school child is able to answer concrete questions about his/her own life outside the context of the here-and-now (questions about where and when).

E.g. “What did you do in the holidays?” “WENT TO GRANNIE’S WITH MY SISTER”

1.3 The pre-school child is able to answer questions about his own feelings, intentions and interests.

E.g. “What are you afraid of?” “OH, THE MONSTER !”

1.4 If asked, the pre-school child is able to give a description of a relevant concrete object or of a person which/who is/was in a – to him/her – concrete situation.

E.g. “What’s your new baby like?” “VERY SMALL AND WITH VERY BLACK HAIR”.

1.5 If asked, the pre-school child is able, possibly with the help of gestures and pictures, to give a description of an event in his/her own life.

E.g. "What happened to your head?" "I WAS RUNNING FAST AND THEN I FELL DOWN, AGAINST THE WALL".

- 1.6 If asked, the pre-school child is able to explain, possibly with the help of gestures and pictures, how he/she acted in a concrete situation.

E.g. "So you built a big tower. How did you manage it?" "I'VE GOT BIG BLOCKS AT THE BOTTOM AND THESE (points) ON TOP. I PUT THEM ON TOP OF EACH OTHER LIKE THIS" (gestures/pretends to do it).

SPEAKING (2): The pre-school child is able to talk spontaneously, if asked, about subjects of interest to him/her in a communicatively adequate manner.

- 2.1 The pre-school child is able to announce or relate, to known peers or known adults, things which exist in the context of the here-and-now.

E.g. "LOOK MISS, I'VE DONE A DRAWING. THIS IS ME. THAT'S DADDY. THAT'S MUMMY, AND THAT'S MY LITTLE BROTHER".

- 2.2 The pre-school child is able to announce or relate, to known peers or known adults, things – his own experiences, feelings, or events from the past or in the future - which take place in a concrete situation that is relevant to him/her.

E.g. "Where did you go yesterday?" "TO THE SEASIDE"

- 2.3 The pre-school child is able to give a description, to known peers or known adults, of a concrete object or a person.

E.g. "MISS, I'VE GOT NEW TROUSERS, WITH THESE BIG POCKETS AND A BELT".

SPEAKING (3): The pre-school child is able to restate an item of information or a story intended for pre-school children in such a way that the content comes across comprehensibly.

- 3.1 The pre-school child is able to convey a simple, concrete item of information to known peers or known adults.

E.g. "Please tell Marit to tidy the jigsaw up again". "MARIT, TEACHER SAYS YOU HAVE TO TIDY THE JIGSAW UP".

- 3.2 The pre-school child is able to act out recognisable roles and situations and to (re)produce particular utterances in play situations.

E.g. "GOOD MORNING MISS...WHAT DO YOU WANT TO BUY?...THAT COSTS..." (playing shopkeeper/role playing)

- 3.3 The pre-school child is able to retell a simple story in his/her own words to known peers or known adults.

E.g. Based on the picture-book 'There's a Crocodile Under My Bed': "BABY IS AFRAID BUT CROCODILE COMES AND HE IS NICE AND NOW BABY IS NOT AFRAID ANYMORE".

SPEAKING (4): The pre-school child is able adequately to seek help from others.

- 4.1 The pre-school child is able to ask for clarification from known peers or known adults.

E.g. "OH MISS, I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO. WHAT HAVE I GOT TO DO?"

4.2 The pre-school child is able to ask known peers or known adults for (more) information that is important to him/her.

E.g. "SARE, WHERE ARE THE SCISSORS?"

4.3 The pre-school child is able to ask for help independently.

E.g. "MISS, CAN YOU OPEN THAT BOX?"

Micro level

At the micro level, it is necessary for the pre-school child to have a number of linguistic elements at his disposal to which he/she can resort when performing (or trying to perform) the language tasks described above at meso level.

At the lexical level, there is important emphasis on the acquisition of a basic vocabulary with which the child can express him/herself.

This relates to the use of:

- content words (referring to the child's environment at home, outside the home and in school);
- function words (pronouns and conjunctions).

In particular, words in the following semantic fields are relevant here:

- words referring to everyday occurrences and things around them (e.g. words referring to movement (*standing, sitting, walking, turning round* etc.); parts of the body (*head, eyes, nose* etc.); surroundings (*cupboard, floor, window, sandbox* etc.); objects (pen, pencil, book etc.);
- main numerals;
- spatial concepts;
- main colours;
- length and size indicators;
- words relating to feelings.

Here too, word lists can serve as guidelines.

At the morphological level, children must be able to express the difference between singular and plural forms, and understand elementary verbal conjugations (e.g. the difference between present and past forms) and negation. These are grammatical rules which may induce a fundamental difference of meaning where tasks at the meso level are concerned.

At sentence level, the emphasis in early productive second language acquisition lies on:

- short (initially simple) sentences;
- interrogatory sentences (how, what, why);
- constructions which indicate tasks and instructions (requiring action);
- negation (none, nothing).

At the **phonological level**, children must be able to produce the significant differences in sound (e.g. the difference between "pen" and "pin"). In order to convey meaning adequately through speech, it is necessary to be able to pronounce the words intelligibly, with the closest possible approximation to standard pronunciation (this is a minimum

objective: not all sounds have to be correctly pronounced straightaway, but the language utterance must be comprehensible).

Again, it goes without saying that knowledge at the micro level is not an end in itself, but must always be seen in conjunction with the functional communication objectives as described at the meso level.

Reading

Meso level

READING (1): The pre-school child is able adequately to link meaning to written symbols or written language intended for pre-school children (and show the fact by a verbal response or through action).

1.1 The pre-school child is able to interpret visual language (pictures) intended for pre-school children and say what the pictures represent (and show that fact by, for example, telling about it).

E.g. The child is given a picture of an action such as brushing teeth and is able to put the meaning into words or act it out.

1.2 The pre-school child is able to 'read' pictograms intended for pre-school children (and show the fact by responding to them if asked).

E.g. The pre-school child is able to select the right picture (sun, cloud or rain) for the daily weather map to indicate that it is raining outside.

READING (2): The pre-school child is conscious of various functions of written language (and shows the fact in his use of, or response to, written language).

2.1 The pre-school child understands that written language can bridge time and distance.

E.g. Write a card together and actually send it to a (sick) classmate, or to Granny, to his home etc.

2.2 The pre-school child understands that written language can be preserved and retrieved.

E.g. Read the same book again and find that exactly the same text is being read.

2.3 The pre-school child understands that written language can serve as a memory aid.

E.g. Together with the teacher, write something down so as not to forget it, such as a shopping list, item of information, date and time of a party etc., and later actually check or use it as a 'reminder'.

2.4 The pre-school child discovers the importance and usefulness of written language for him/her personally.

E.g. 'Read' name and/or pictogram on the coat-rack, on drawings.

READING (3): The pre-school child develops a basic insight into aspects of written language (and shows the fact by his responses to books, letters or short written sentences).

3.1 The pre-school child builds up insight into certain conventions relating to reading direction and book orientation which apply to written language.

E.g. A fixed reading direction – from left to right, from top to bottom; front and back of a book; the fact that letters reoccur.

3.2 The pre-school child builds up insight into the basic relationship between the formal aspects of spoken and written language.

E.g. The child links particular letters to sounds.

3.3 The pre-school child builds up insight into narrative structures.

E.g. The teacher reads the picture book aloud and the child is aware of the beginning/middle/end of the story.

READING (4): The pre-school child is motivated to find out the meaning of written texts (and shows the fact by inquisitive/positive responses to books, letters or written sentences).

4.1 The pre-school child is happy to read (or learn to read) or to be read to.

E.g. The child happily listens to texts or letters being read aloud.

4.2 The pre-school child becomes absorbed when picture books or cartoon strips are being 'read'.

E.g. The child is absorbed when a letter or book is being read aloud.

4.3 The pre-school child enjoys (picture) stories of various kinds and from different cultures.

E.g. The child lives along with the story 'Anansi the Spider' when it is read aloud.

Micro level

With reading, there are still not many language elements which can be highlighted as being necessary objectives at the micro level. At the end of the period concerned, children do not absolutely have to be capable of making particular sound-letter connections or of reading particular words or sentences.

There are nonetheless certain 'signs' that can be highlighted, which the child should be able to recognise and interpret:

- recognise certain pictograms, logos and labels intended for pre-school children;
- incipient literacy (e.g. a circle for the letter 'O', letters in his own name).

As regards lexis, the objectives at meso level presuppose a certain passive vocabulary which can be particularly functional and useful for the pre-school child, in particular a basic vocabulary relating to books and reading (e.g. page, turn pages, word, letter, sentence, title, chapter etc.)

The vocabulary which children can use to express their motivation and readiness to read can also be highlighted here as a vocabulary goal (e.g. read out, picture-book, reading corner etc.).

In terms of phonemic awareness, it is important that pre-school children:

- discover that words are made up of letters;
- are able to distinguish sounds.

Writing

Meso level

WRITING (1): The pre-school child is able, with adult help, to set down his own messages in a primitive 'written' version.

1.1 The pre-school child is able to reproduce and 'read back' an experience or account in visual terms by attaching the original intended meaning to it.

E.g. The child is able to make a drawing of a class trip to the recreation area and use the drawing to recount to someone else what it depicts.

1.2 The pre-school child is able to use his own written language in play and say what that written language stands for.

E.g. For the 'museum' project, the children can make admission tickets and direction signs for the exhibition.

1.3 The pre-school child is able to complete an incomplete story using picture language.

E.g. In a strip cartoon, draw the missing pictures him/herself or put missing pictures that have already been drawn in the right place.

WRITING (2): The pre-school child understands what the different functions of writing are.

2.1 The pre-school child understands that one can bridge time and distance with writing.

E.g. Write out invitations and send them to (grand)parents, family etc.

2.2 The pre-school child understands that one can preserve and repeat written language.

E.g. The children 'write' in their personal books (together with the teacher) particular experiences which they have had in class with each other.

2.3 The pre-school child understands that written language can serve as a memory aid.

E.g. The teacher and the children together draw up a shopping list for baking biscuits next day. The list is constantly used so as not to forget anything.

2.4 The pre-school child learns the personal importance and usefulness of writing.

E.g. The children make up a wish list for the St. Nicholas party at school by drawing and using stamps (with or without help).

WRITING (3): The pre-school child is aware of the most important conventions of written language.

3.1 The pre-school child understands that when using the written language, certain conventions on direction of script and page orientation apply.

E.g. A fixed writing direction – from left to right, from top to bottom; letter by letter, word by word and sentence by sentence.

3.2 The pre-school child is able 'write' the letters in a word (with or without an example, using stamps, Lego letters etc.) and realises that the letters are linked to the sound of the word.

E.g. The child 'writes' or stamps his own name and then 'reads' it aloud.

3.3 The pre-school child develops an understanding of text structures and shows the fact, for example by putting picture material in the right order and/or thinking up an ending or beginning him/herself.

E.g. Together with the teacher, the child writes a letter to Granny. When the teacher asks "How shall we begin?", the child dictates "HELLO DEAR GRANNY".

WRITING (4): The pre-school child is motivated to learn writing him/herself.

4.1 The pre-school child demonstrates audacity in writing, experiments with writing and thinks about it.

E.g. When colouring a picture of the zoo, the child asks the teacher how to write 'monkey' so that he/she can write the word next to the monkeys him/herself. He/she then asks the teacher whether 'monkey' is right.

Micro level

Where writing is concerned, the initial objective at the micro level is a basic ability to divide words up into sounds:

- children develop phonemic awareness; they discover that words are made up of sounds and that letters correspond to those sounds;
- children are able to react to and play with particular sound patterns in words (end rhyme and alliteration).

Writing means producing signs with a particular message attached to them. For a limited number of signs, this understanding must be well developed by the end of the relevant period:

- making pictograms, copying logos and labels;
- first stage of incipient literacy (e.g. a circle for the letter 'O', the letters in one's own name).

At the lexical level, of course, the child also relies on his own productive vocabulary when writing. So for this purpose we refer to 'speaking' skill at micro level. In addition, attention must be paid to passive knowledge of the words used in classroom language for the teaching of writing. These are function words in such semantic fields as:

- parts of the body, e.g. thumb, first finger, hand, head, etc.
- concrete spatial concepts, e.g. circle, rectangle, etc.
- concepts defining position in space, e.g. on-under, above-under- in the middle, inside-outside, etc.
- concepts indicating movement in space, e.g. forwards-backwards, far-near, towards, back, etc.