TEACHING ENGLISH TO YOUNG MULTILINGUAL LEARNERS

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OVERVIEW

This collection features chapters on teaching English to young multilingual learners from the "Global Research on Teaching and Learning English" series, co-published by The International Research Foundation for English Language Education (TIRF) and Routledge. There are five chapters included in this FreeBook from four different volumes in the series mentioned above.

ABOUT THE SERIES

The "Global Research on Teaching and Learning English" series, co-published by The International Research Foundation for English Language Education and Routledge, showcases research by scholars from around the world, whose research has been funded by grants from TIRF, awarded through a carefully vetted international competition. Since 2002, TIRF, an independent foundation started by the TESOL International Association (TESOL) in 1998, has commissioned and/or funded research on a range of topics associated with the teaching and learning of English worldwide. This series offers a collection of previously unpublished empirical studies conducted by grant recipients throughout the world, as well as chapters from invited scholars. Volumes in the series report on issues of current concern to the applied linguistics community and the language teaching profession, and present a wide variety of research topics investigated through a range of research procedures.

Most chapters appearing in volumes in this series cover issues that motivated the research, the context of the research, research question(s) addressed, data collection and data analysis procedures, findings and discussion, and implications for policy, practice, and future research. This chapter structure helps to achieve consistency and coherence across the volumes, while at the same time allowing individual authors to report on the unique contents of their own studies. The authors and editors forego any honoraria so that all the royalties from the sales of this series can be used to support TIRF's programs.

SERIES EDITORS

Kathleen M. Bailey is Professor Emerita of Applied Linguistics at the Middlebury Institute of International Studies at Monterey. She is a past president of TESOL, AAAL, and TIRF, and continues to serve as a TIRF Trustee.

Ryan M. Damerow is the Chief Operating Officer of The International Research Foundation for English Language Education (TIRF), USA.

INTRODUCTION

Given the extreme importance of the topic -- *Teaching English to Young Multilingual Learners* -- and its international relevance, we are pleased to offer this "FreeBook." It is a collection of five research reports previously published in the TIRF-Routledge series, "Global Research on Teaching and Learning English." We believe this book will be particularly helpful to teachers and parents of young children, as well as to researchers, policymakers, and language teacher educators.

The first chapter of this FreeBook is "Learning English through Educational Media: Drawing from Children's Linguistic Repertoires" by Kevin Wong. It is based on research with four five-year-old children of Chinese immigrant families in an afterschool in the United States.

The children viewed brief educational video cartoons which introduced English vocabulary. In the first viewing, the vocabulary support was in English. Then, the researcher interviewed each child, using both English and Mandarin. The second viewing of the video had vocabulary meanings of the targeted English words expressed in Mandarin. The children were then interviewed a second time.

The interviews revealed that the pupils were aware of and felt they benefited from the Mandarin support in the second video. Even with such very young learners, the author concludes, the use of the home language supported their understanding of the content in the videos. He urges policymakers to "consider English language learners as linguistically dynamic individuals rather than as categories in census datasets" (p. 17).

In Chapter 2, "Creating Multimodal Design Spaces for Language Learners through Global Digital Storytelling" by Rui Li, we learn about the experiences of 11 underprivileged English learners in northwestern China. They were part of a large international project involving children in Mexico, Uganda, and the United States. These students created digital videos about their lives and shared them with the learners in other countries, who responded with comments and questions.

The children in the various sites viewed one another's video stories on the program website, and asked many interesting questions based on their observations, to which the Chinese children responded. The author notes that these "transnational communications challenged and expanded the students' linguistic, social, and cultural imagination of the world through encountering the differences with one another" (p. 30).

Chapter 3 is also about digital storytelling. Entitled "Digital Technologies and Storytelling for CLIL in a Primary School in Italy," it describes the experiences of a fifth-grade teacher and her 20 students in a bilingual school. The teacher used digital storytelling to encourage the learners to develop their English and their subject-matter knowledge. In carrying out these efforts, she kept a teaching diary and conducted an action research project, documenting her efforts and the children's responses.

INTRODUCTION

The author, Letizia Cinganotto, was the professor of a CLIL (content and language integrated learning) course in which the teacher was enrolled. She documents the teacher's efforts and the children's enthusiastic responses. The chapter includes a very clear introduction to digital storytelling and numerous delightful quotes from the learners.

Chapter 4, by Graham Stanley, "Remote Teaching: A Case Study in Teaching English to Primary School Children in Uruguay via Videoconferencing," describes an innovative program addressing the shortage of primary school English teachers in Uruguay. Regular classroom teachers (CTs) collaborated with remote English teachers (RTs) to plan and deliver lessons to fourth, fifth, and sixth graders via videoconferencing. Students remained in their regular classrooms, while the RTs led instruction and the CTs supervised and reinforced learning.

In the lessons, the RT led the initial presentation and activities, and the CT guided grammar practice and vocabulary work. The students' written tasks were sent to the RT. The curriculum drew on Uruguayan contexts as well as other themes, and included songs, videos, and games. Designed to move learners from zero proficiency to the CEFR A2 level, the program proved to be effective, with students across all three grades showing substantial progress.

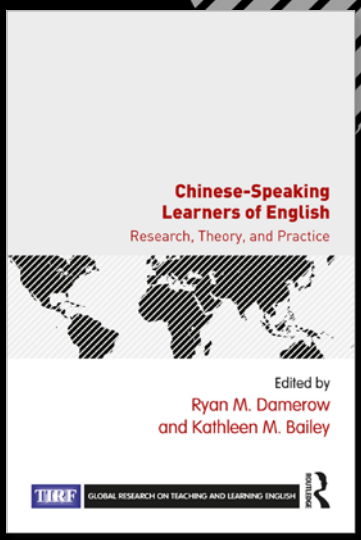
The final chapter in this Freebook is about "Metalinguistic Awareness and Multilingualism: A Case Study of Young English Learners." The authors, Diana Walla and Eliane Lorenz, investigated the relationship between children's metalinguistic awareness and whether or not they come from multilingual backgrounds. The report is based on data from a dozen 11-to-12-year-old students in Norway. Half of these students, for whom Norwegian was their home language, were referred to as the L1-Norwegian group. Norwegian and other languages were spoken in the homes of the L1-Other group.

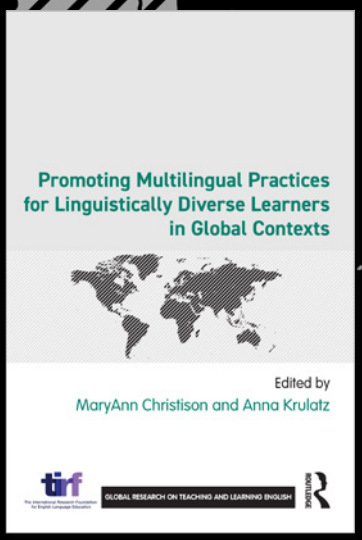
In pairs, the students did a grammatical awareness task, which focused on word order in English sentences. There were "substantial differences" between the two groups on this task, with the L1-Other pairs clearly outscoring L1-Norwegian pairs. Thus, the findings revealed that the L1-Other students, who came from multilingual home contexts, had greater metalinguistic awareness than the L1-Norwegian students with regard to grammatical knowledge. The authors share many clear examples from the students' speech to illustrate the findings.

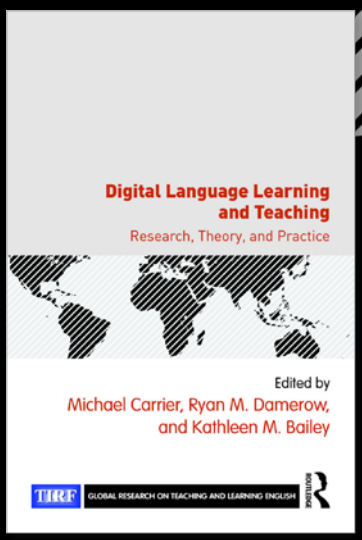
We hope you find these research reports useful in your own context. We find them to be insightful and well written, and we expect readers – particularly teachers of young children – will recognize important issues that they themselves have contemplated.

Kathi Bailey and Ryan Damerow, *Series Co-editors*

11- to 12-year-old students







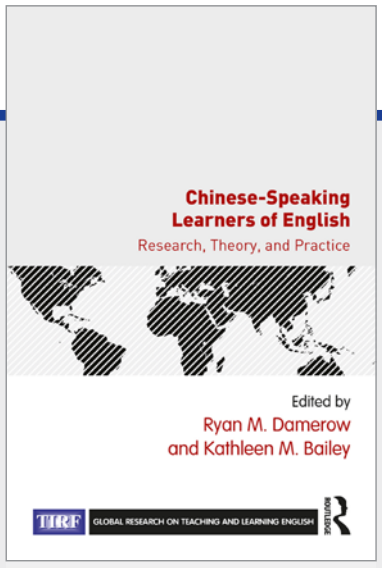
CHAPTER

1

LEARNING ENGLISH THROUGH EDUCATIONAL MEDIA

DRAWING FROM CHILDREN'S LINGUISTIC REPERTOIRES

Kevin Wong



This chapter is excerpted from

Chinese-Speaking Learners of English

Edited by Ryan M. Damerow & Kathleen M. Bailey

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LEARNING ENGLISH THROUGH EDUCATIONAL MEDIA: DRAWING FROM CHILDREN'S LINGUISTIC REPERTOIRES

Kevin Wong

Excerpted from *Chinese-Speaking Learners of English*

ISSUES THAT MOTIVATED THE RESEARCH

Children today are exposed to technology at a very early age, with educational media becoming increasingly salient in the everyday lives of young children. In the United States, for instance, at the time of this writing, the number of screened devices has doubled in the last five years (Anderson, 2015). In response, the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) issued a policy statement that recommended against television exposure for children under the age of 18 months (AAP, 2016). Despite this recommendation, national surveys of media consumption in the United States reported that 73% of two-to-four-year-olds watch television every day for an average of 1.9 hours per day (Common Sense Media, 2013; Rideout, 2014). Because it appears unlikely that the quantity of media use will decline, educators, scholars, and media producers alike have begun to focus their attention on the quality of media.

Research documenting the quality of media began with the earliest episodes of the television show, *Sesame Street*. This show is one example of educational media that are deliberately and systematically designed and marketed to enhance children's school readiness and academic development (Rideout, 2014). Scholars have investigated the influence of educational media on early literacy outcomes (Fisch & Truglio, 2014; Rice & Woodsmall, 1988). Indeed, media may reach broad audiences with opportunities for early language learning. To learn a new language, children need to build a vocabulary base in the target language to set a foundation for future L2 reading development and comprehension (Hindman & Wasik, 2015). Educational media provide opportunities for early vocabulary learning as programs may offer children broad and repeated exposure to the target language. Educational programs also offer pedagogical support that appears to scaffold word learning in a new language (Neuman, Wong, Flynn, & Kaefer, 2019; Uchikoshi, 2006; Wong & Neuman, 2019). The current study focuses on better understanding L2 vocabulary development through educational media marketed for young children, which includes both preschoolers and kindergarteners.

Dual-coding theory serves as the theoretical premise underlying L2 vocabulary learning in educational media (Paivio, 1979). This theory proposed that verbal and non-verbal information sources are processed separately in the brain. When information is simultaneously transmitted through verbal signals (i.e., speech) and non-verbal signals (i.e., visual images), the two systems support each other. In this way, information is represented more fully than when it is processed through only one system, leading to stronger comprehension and greater information recall (Mayer, 1997). Dual-coding theory is particularly applicable to young bilingual learners as educational media may provide

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dynamic non-verbal experiences that serve as scaffolds for vocabulary learning (Wong & Samudra, 2021).

Additionally, when children learn a new language, they draw from their first language (L1) to support learning in the new language (L2), a process known as cross-linguistic transfer (Cummins, 1979). Cummins (1979,1981) hypothesized that there is an interdependent relationship between a child's two languages, where children lean on their L1 to learn a second language. This interdependency, however, requires that children already have a certain degree of proficiency in a particular language. If children are more proficient in their L1s than their L2s, they will draw from their L1s to increase proficiency in their L2s. Children in this situation are known as *L1-dominant bilinguals* (e.g., Mandarin-dominant bilinguals). Likewise, if children are equally proficient in their L1s and L2s, they are known as *balanced bilinguals* and draw from both linguistic repertoires to make meaning of new situations. The notion of *dynamic bilingualism* (Garcia, 2011) moved away from the belief that multilingualism consists of parallel monolingualisms and asserted that bilingual speakers access multilingual speech from one system. For example, dynamic bilingualism suggests that bilingual learners might have the conceptual understanding of a vocabulary referent in this multilingual system, to which children can attach two overlapping labels, one in each language. It also suggests that while bilingual speakers might understand one concept (e.g., *mug*) in their L1 and not in their L2, they could also understand another concept (e.g., *stapler*) in their L2 and not in their L1. Bilingual speakers' combined vocabulary knowledge across their two languages is referred to as their *conceptual vocabularies* (Pearson, Fernandez, Lewedeg, & Oller, 1997). If bilingual children are able to draw upon their full linguistic repertoires in learning situations, the cognitive demands of linguistic processing may be lessened, suggesting that L1 use might be an effective pedagogical tool for multilingual learners.

Still, scholars have long questioned whether using a child's L1 in the classroom might facilitate the process of learning a second language (Collins, 2010; Cummins, 1979; Goldenberg, 2013). On the one hand, immersing children in a new language without using a child's L1 maximizes children's exposure to the L2 and provides ample opportunities for children to listen to and use the new language (Curtain & Dahlberg, 2004; Genesee, Paradis, & Crago, 2004; Hoff et al., 2012; Lindholm-Leary, 2001; Lindholm-Leary & Howard, 2008). However, not all students are able to navigate the demands of this *sink-or-swim model* (Cohen & Swain, 1976).

Consequently, researchers in dual-language development advocate using a child's L1 to facilitate L2 vocabulary learning (Collins, 2010; Goldenberg, 2013; Lugo-Neris, Jackson, & Goldstein, 2010), stressing the importance of strategically using a child's L1 in the process

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(Gersten & Baker, 2000; Goldenberg, 2013). One empirically tested pedagogical support for L2 vocabulary learning is to provide rich, explicit definitions of vocabulary words to young learners (Carlo et al., 2004; Lugo-Neris et al., 2010). While research suggests rich definitions support L2 development, to the best of my knowledge, no studies to date have examined how providing young children with definitions in the L1 might bolster L2 word learning. Building on research about children's conceptual vocabulary, the current study investigated how L1 vs. L2 definitions of new vocabulary in educational media might influence kindergarteners' English language learning.

CONTEXT OF THE RESEARCH

This study took place in the United States in an afterschool K-5 program for children whose families had emigrated from China. The afterschool program promotes social and economic empowerment of Chinese-American, immigrant, and low-income communities. The program served approximately 120 children annually, ranging in age from five to 11 years old. According to the education director at the afterschool program, children become increasingly proficient in English and gradually less proficient in their respective Chinese home languages as they transition through the program. This phenomenon is common in transitional programs where oral language or literacy development in the home language is not maintained (Menken & Kleyn, 2010). For this reason, the youngest kindergartners from Mandarin-speaking households were selected for this study to examine the influence of bilingual educational media on English language learning.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS ADDRESSED

This case study investigated the experiences of four children as they viewed media with and without home-language support in definitions of new vocabulary items. This study sought to answer the following research questions:

1. How do five-year-old children respond to educational media when they are immersed in a new language and when their home language is used as a support?
2. How does the language of definitional supports in educational media influence story comprehension and vocabulary knowledge?

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Excerpted from *Chinese-Speaking Learners of English*

RESEARCH METHODS

Four children (two boys and two girls) with varying levels of English and Mandarin proficiency were identified by the teacher as likely research participants, after which parent consent forms and student assent were collected. Three Mandarin-dominant bilingual children and one Mandarin-English balanced bilingual child were selected for the study. These choices were determined by a home-language-environment questionnaire completed by parents/guardians to better understand L1 and L2 language exposure at home. This assessment was adapted from the Alberta Language Environment Questionnaire (Paradis, 2011) and a bilingual questionnaire developed by Luk and Bialystok (2013). Composite English and Mandarin scores were calculated from these surveys to confirm membership of participants in Mandarin-dominant or Mandarin-English balanced bilingual groups. Although residing in the United States, Mandarin-dominant children were considered native speakers of Mandarin (L1) who were immersed in a Mandarin home environment and learning English as a new language (L2). The children were all five years old, ethnically Chinese, and came from households where Mandarin was spoken.

The educational media content selected for this study was a video clip adapted from a cartoon program called *Ni Hao, Kai-Lan*, which teaches preschool- and kindergarten-aged children English and Mandarin vocabulary words. In the media clip, Kai-Lan wants to sled down a mountain. Her friends join her and discover beautiful ice sculptures at the bottom of the mountain. The video clip was intended to teach viewers three English vocabulary words – one noun (*ice sculpture*), one adjective (*transparent*), and one verb (*carve*). These words were comparable to one another in difficulty level according to the Child Language Data Exchange System (CHILDES) database of 5,000 transcriptions of adult-child spoken interactions in home and laboratory settings (MacWhinney, 2014). In addition, these vocabulary items were recommended for instruction with young children (Beck, McKeown, & Kucan, 2013).

To ensure comparable exposure to words in the *Ni Hao, Kai-Lan* video clip, the script was rewritten and dubbed over so that each vocabulary word was repeated four times over the course of a two-minute video clip. Drawing from content analyses in media research for vocabulary learning in the early childhood years (Danielson, Wong, & Neuman, 2019; Neuman et al., 2019; Wong & Neuman, 2019), there were ostensive definitions used for each vocabulary word for two of the four target word repetitions. Aligned with the language learning literature, which suggests explicit definitions might facilitate vocabulary learning in a new language (Carlo et al., 2004; Lugo-Neris et al., 2010), two versions of the video clip were created: one with the definitions in English (L2 immersion) and another

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with the definitions in Mandarin (L1 supports). For example, in the L2 immersion condition, the word "blow" might be taught in the following way:

Monkey: **Blow** out the candles, Rintoo.
Kai-Lan: What does **blow** mean?
Monkey: **Blow** is when you make air come out of your mouth.

Using L1 supports to provide a definition of the vocabulary word, the same conversation could transpire in the following way:

Monkey: **Blow** out the candles, Rintoo.
Kai-Lan: **Blow** 的意思是什麼呢?
Monkey: **Blow** 就是從你的嘴巴把空氣推出來的動作。

DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURES

Prior to the study, participants were given an expressive and receptive vocabulary assessment to ensure they did not know the words taught in the media program in either English or Mandarin. In the expressive measure, children were provided with an image and asked, "What is that?" or "What is he doing?" In the receptive vocabulary measure, children were presented with three images and instructed, "Point to X." Each item had thematically related distractors. For example, if the vocabulary item was an ice sculpture, the children would see a stone statue and an ice cube. Assessments were then repeated in Mandarin with different images. If children knew any of the words in English or Mandarin, receptively or expressively, they were not included in the study.

After the screening, to capture children's baseline English and Mandarin vocabulary knowledge, children completed the PPVT (Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test) in English and Mandarin (Dunn & Dunn, 2007; Lu & Liu, 1998). The PPVT is an individually administered, norm-referenced test that measures receptive language skills. Children point to images of vocabulary words with three distractors. According to the reported split-half reliability from the norms of children, the internal consistency reliability of the standardized assessment ranged from .91 to .94. Raw scores were converted to standard scores according to the participant's age in months.

After completing the PPVT, the four children worked one-on-one with me in a quiet room. They watched the video in the first condition (English immersion without Chinese supports) and were interviewed. Next, they watched the same video in the second condition (English with Chinese supports) and were interviewed again. I strategically used both English and Mandarin in the interviews to better understand the children's experiences, sometimes

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code-switching and at other times using the alternate language to clarify or confirm what the children were trying to express. By aligning my own linguistic repertoire with the participants', I was able to encourage, acknowledge, and facilitate the discourse more naturally than if the interview was conducted only in the children's L2, English.

In the semi-structured interviews, I asked the children to recall the story. When they stopped their recall, they were prompted once with the question, "And then what happened?" or "Anything else?" I then asked the children to define the three English vocabulary words. Specifically, they were asked, "What does the word *transparent* mean?" The children were encouraged to use any language they preferred (i.e., English, Mandarin, or a mix of both) for the story recall and vocabulary definitions. The process took approximately 20 minutes per child to complete, including the time required to view the two video clips.

DATA ANALYSIS PROCEDURES

I listened to the recordings multiple times and then transcribed them verbatim in English and Mandarin for further analysis. Using a qualitative, inductive, and iterative approach, I systematically read the interview transcripts and coded for major themes that related to the research questions. To evaluate the children's comprehension of the story, I also scored their story recalls according to Morrow's typology (Morrow, 1988), where a point was given for each story element described, including characters, events, plot points or themes, and resolution. Vocabulary word meanings were also scored on a three-point scale (1 = correct; .5 = partially correct, where the child described a feature of the word; 0 = incorrect). Because the interviews were conducted bilingually, points were given for both comprehension and vocabulary regardless of language used to answer the question.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The first research question investigated how five-year-old children responded to the video clip when they were immersed in a new language (English) and when their home language (Mandarin) was used as a linguistic support. As a whole, the children responded favorably to both conditions. They were eager to view the two video clips and were not observably distracted by their environment. Notably, when children were immersed in a language they did not entirely understand, they did not appear to lose focus. This continued focus might be attributed to the short duration of each video clip or the novelty of viewing educational content on screen in a formal setting.

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A systematic analysis of the interviews in the following section demonstrates that the children were aware of the differences between the two language environments and were cognizant of how the home language supported their learning. They also had greater gains in vocabulary acquisition and comprehension among Mandarin-dominant bilinguals compared to the balanced bilingual when media clips used their home language.

AN AWARENESS OF HOME-LANGUAGE SUPPORTS

After the second viewing, the children were asked if they had noticed any differences between the first and second showing of the same story. Three of the four children mentioned the use of Mandarin in the second video, unlike the first video, which used only English. The video clips were intended to teach the participants three vocabulary words in English—one noun (*ice sculpture*), one adjective (*transparent*), and one verb (*carve*). These words were repeated four times in the video clips and included two explicit definitions of each word to support vocabulary development. When asked, "Did you notice anything different about this second video?", one child responded by saying, "Them said English and then them stopped and said Chinese!" (Student 2, balanced bilingual). Similarly, Student 3 (Chinese-dominant) stated in Mandarin that the second video was different "because it has a pattern: Chinese and umm English [translated from Mandarin]." Student 4 (Chinese-dominant) was less proficient in both Mandarin and English than the other students and had a relatively shy demeanor. This participant also mentioned—with prompting—that "they talked English." Although the home-language condition only included six definitions in Mandarin, representing 10% of the full transcript, kindergarteners were able to notice a difference in language.

These results are unsurprising considering the heteroglossic view of bilingualism, which asserts that the languages of bilinguals are interconnected and co-existing in a single linguistic system (García & Wei, 2014). The children in this study, with varying levels of proficiency in the L1 and L2, were able to draw from their fluid and dynamic language system to make meaning of input that utilizes two languages. In other words, bilinguals are able to draw from their linguistic repertoires to notice a shift in language patterns (Bialystok, 2006) and signal that another language is being spoken. In addition to home and classroom environments, kindergarten-aged bilingual children are able to notice language shifts on media platforms.

INSIGHT ON HOW HOME-LANGUAGE SUPPORTS FACILITATE L2 LEARNING

Building on this awareness of two languages on screen, these children also appeared to recognize how home-language support might facilitate their learning. In two of the interviews,

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the children were asked follow-up questions concerning whether they preferred the first or second video and why. All of the children indicated that they liked the second video, which contained home-language supports. Two children suggested that home-language supports helped clarify unfamiliar words in the new language, making the educational content more accessible than when the home language was not present. Student 3 (Chinese-dominant) articulated this preference for home-language support in the following exchange:

Wong: Did you notice anything different about this second video?
Student: Because it has a pattern: Chinese and umm English.
Wong: Oh, did you like it when they used Chinese?
Student: Yes.
Wong: Why?
Student: Because sometimes when they speak English I don't really know them.
Wong: What do you mean?
Student: When they speak Chinese that means I know it a little bit.
Wong: Oh, I see what you mean. So how did you feel when they spoke Chinese?
Student: Happy.
Wong: Why?
Student: Because they speak Chinese and my family speak Chinese.
Wong: Oh, what did you think when they spoke Chinese?
Student: My brain was [gasp] that's Chinese!

Student 3 asserted that using the home language helped him "know [the media content] a little bit" in contrast to not really knowing what was happening on screen. Student 2 (the balanced bilingual) corroborated this finding when asked about how Chinese supports affected her understanding of screen content. She shared that when the characters did not use Chinese to provide definitional supports, she "don't know what them are talking about." In other words, using home-language supports helped facilitate her understanding of educational content on screen.

Consequently, drawing on the students' linguistic repertoires appears to be an effective pedagogical tool in foreign language instruction (Gersten & Baker, 2000; Goldenberg, 2013). Moreover, leveraging a students' L1 in strategic ways—namely, using definitions in a child's L1 to support L2 vocabulary learning—has the potential to influence how students metacognitively use their L1 as a resource to learn in a new language (Ruiz, 1984). Students 2 and 3, who approached the media environments with different levels of L1 and L2 proficiency, benefited from explicit definitions of new English vocabulary that included definitions of these words in their home language. In mirroring a classroom environment, providing children with word definitions in their L1s in educational media appears to

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contribute to vocabulary learning from the L1 to the L2 (Carlo et al., 2004; Collins, 2010; Lugo-Neris et al., 2010).

Using the L1 may be a particularly strategic pedagogical tool because it builds on a child's conceptual vocabulary to provide a vocabulary label in the L2 (Collins, 2010; Pearson et al., 1997; Restrepo, Morgan, & Thompson, 2013). This vocabulary label builds on a concept that the children might already know in their L1, or that is less cognitively demanding to process in the home language.

VARIATION BY ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY

The second research question asked whether the language of instruction influenced story comprehension and vocabulary knowledge. There were, indeed, differences between the two conditions according to the language proficiency levels of children. More specifically, the three children who were Mandarin-dominant demonstrated greater gains in story comprehension and L2 vocabulary development when home-language supports were used than did the English-Mandarin balanced bilingual participant. Students 1, 3, and 4, who are Mandarin-dominant, demonstrated a deeper understanding of the stories when definitions were provided in Mandarin (see Table 1.1).

Student 2, however, comprehended the story equally well on both viewings. As a balanced bilingual, Student 2 may not have faced the same challenges as the Mandarin-dominant students when unfamiliar English words were defined and explained in English. Although this participant did notice that Mandarin was used in the second video, it did not appear to influence how well she comprehended the video. In other words, the participant drew from her linguistic repertoire in either English or Mandarin to make sense of new educational content. In this vein, the Mandarin-dominant students appeared to benefit from home-language supports as they could draw on the dominant language in their linguistic repertoires for sense-making in a new language (Cummins, 1991; García & Wei, 2014). Likewise, this trend was apparent in L2 vocabulary learning (see Table 1.1).

Vocabulary knowledge of new words was scored from the transcript on a three-point scale. Children who were Mandarin-dominant demonstrated greater vocabulary gains between the first and second video, while the balanced bilingual learned words equally well in both conditions. Student 3 (Mandarin-dominant) stated, "My brain was [gasp] that's Chinese!" indicating both an awareness of and appreciation for home-language use in the kindergarten years. Using the home language enabled him to "know them [the English vocabulary] a little better," suggesting that drawing from children's linguistic repertoires to better support their emergent understandings of vocabulary might be a strategic use of their L1. From a

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cognitive perspective, providing an explanation of a new vocabulary word in a child's home language might lessen the burden of translating both the meaning and word, and could lower the threshold required to understand that new word (Cummins, 1991; García & Wei, 2014). It is important to note that although children appeared to benefit from the language of instruction in video clips, other factors including the repeated viewing of the story may have also contributed to children's developing understanding of vocabulary knowledge.

Student	Language Dominance	Viewing 1 Comprehension (L2 immersion)	Viewing 2 Comprehension (L1 supports)	Viewing 1 Vocabulary (L2 immersion)	Viewing 2 Vocabulary (L1 supports)
Student 1	Mandarin dominant	3	5	0.5	1.5
Student 2	Balanced	2	2	3	3
Student 3	Mandarin dominant	3	5	0	2
Student 4	Mandarin dominant	1	2	0	0

TABLE 1.1 Comprehension and Vocabulary Scores of Participants

IMPLICATIONS FOR POLICY, PRACTICE, AND FUTURE RESEARCH

The current study examined how the language of media content can be strategically used to cultivate English vocabulary knowledge for bilingual children. Findings from the current study may give educators and parents an understanding of how bilingual media programs can benefit children as these programs provide young learners with opportunities to draw from their linguistic repertoires and make sense of new educational content. Future research might extend these bilingual learning environments from screened media to the classroom or out-of-school environments, examining specifically how using explicit definitions in a child's L1 might influence L2 vocabulary learning and story comprehension.

With a nuanced understanding of how English language proficiency differentially affects the experiences of bilingual children, this study also challenges policymakers to consider English learners as linguistically dynamic individuals rather than as categories in census datasets (i.e., those who do or do not speak English). Future research may also use these findings to design a large-scale study that examines the influence of the language of instruction on bilingual vocabulary development and story comprehension. Responding to the increasing number of dual-language school programs across the United States, a promising study might also examine how bilingual learning environments not only facilitate learning in a new language, but also promote home-language maintenance.

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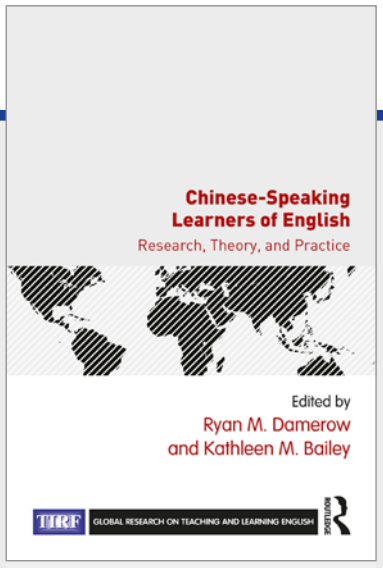
CHAPTER

2

CREATING MULTIMODAL DESIGN SPACES FOR LANGUAGE LEARNERS THROUGH GLOBAL DIGITAL STORYTELLING

Rui Li



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ISSUES THAT MOTIVATED THE RESEARCH

With the rise of modern technology and social media, sites of knowledge are shifting from traditional classrooms with print-only texts where students have been considered listeners and followers. Now there is a movement towards utilizing visual and virtual spaces that afford new ways of participation, expression, and communication in multimedia and multimodal contexts (Hull & Nelson, 2005; Jewitt, 2005; Mills, 2010). Education in today's world calls for a multimodal approach to extend a social interpretation of a range of interwoven modalities of meaning-making mediated by varied digital platforms and resources across languages, images, gestures, sounds, and the use of time and space.

This study adopted a notion of multimodality from a social-semiotics perspective that addresses a design approach in learning, which highlights the interactive features of meaning-making and the agentive role of sign makers, or students producing multimodal texts (Bezemer & Kress, 2016; van Leeuwen, 2005). The notion of design underscores the idea that "meaning-making is an active and dynamic process, and not something governed by static rules" (New London Group, 2016, p. 12). A social-semiotic perspective takes the sign as a key concept: Signs are described as "elements in which the signified (a meaning) and the signifier (a material form) have been brought together" (Bezemer & Kress, 2016, p. 9). Signs are not simply used, but "are made" (Bezemer & Kress, 2016, p. 10), designed, and interpreted in different modalities based on sign makers' interests and available resources (Kress, 2010). Because each mode has its specific affordances, or social functions, signs made in one mode in one cultural setting might not be perceived or interpreted with the same meaning in another. Thus, meanings are often negotiated through social interactions and communications.

In digital contexts, these interactions and communications are often multimodal and mediated by different online platforms, which offer learners in today's world new possibilities in learning and designing their ways of knowing by using all modes of expression and communication. In Hull and Nelson's (2005) words, a multimodal approach in education is a "democratizing force" (p. 253) to challenge the status quo of what counts as learning and educating and to embrace all "channels of expression" (p. 253). According to Hull and Nelson, when learners are producing digital multimodal texts, they are not simply composing different modes, but creatively reorganizing, or redesigning, their semiotic resources across modes. The process of design evidences transformative learning because it involves "semiotic change" (Bezemer & Kress, 2016, p. 52), which enriches and "transcends the collective contribution of its constituent parts" (Hull & Nelson, 2005, p. 225).

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Drawing on multimodality and new literacies studies, Gee (2004) states that central to 21st-century learning is "the ability to design new identities, affinity spaces, and networks" (p. 97). He conceptualizes three types of identities facilitated by modern technology and digital media: virtual identity, real-world identity, and projective identity. According to Gee, the *projective identity* is the most important because it positions learners as active social designers in learning. To do so, students must learn to recognize and draw from their available resources to project their own cultural and social knowledge onto their real and virtual worlds as they represent themselves and connect with others multimodally and digitally.

In this study, I conducted research in an out-of-school digital storytelling project: Global Story Bridges (GSB). The purpose of this study was to investigate how the use of technologies and digital media afforded the young participants' multimodal spaces for designing and redesigning their cultural stories, and how the students' design processes transformed the multi-layered digital spaces.

CONTEXT OF THE RESEARCH

In this chapter, I draw on empirical work from a long-term study of the GSB project that links underprivileged students in a site in Northwestern China called Mingtian Elementary School (a pseudonym) with English learners living in impoverished communities in Uganda, Mexico, and the US. The students created digital stories, approximately three to seven minutes in length, describing their lives and communities. They posted the stories onto a website created for the project. Next, the students at other sites watched and responded to the videos with questions and comments in an interactive forum.

This chapter addresses how English language learners from the Chinese project site participated in this global project, in which they designed "storied selves" (Hull & Katz, 2006, p. 45), or represented themselves as part of their digital stories, mediated by the digital platform. The study also demonstrates how the students' stories traverse borders and were responded to by their global audiences.

At the Chinese project site, participants included 11 elementary school students (five girls and six boys) from fourth and fifth grades, as well as two adult facilitators. All of the young participants were English language learners taking an English-as-a-foreign-language course in school. The adults facilitated group discussions to let the learners decide what they wanted to video record and how they intended to respond to other videos and the relevant online chats. With the adult facilitation, the students made a series of *design decisions* (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2001) on what modal resources they wanted to utilize to create their

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digital stories. They used PCs and a Chinese video editing tool, 爱剪辑 (aijianji.com), to edit their video clips before uploading them to the project website. Because of the Internet regulations in China, access to the project website was unstable. During the time when access was blocked, the participants communicated with other sites via emails. English was the main language used in their video stories and online communications with other sites. In an interview, the facilitators on the Mingtian site said that they also spoke Chinese during their weekly group meetings to help students better understand the content of the videos produced by other project sites.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS ADDRESSED

This chapter addresses two research questions:

1. How did the digital platforms afford English language learners interactive spaces to represent themselves multimodally and to communicate with their global peers across borders?
2. How did these transnational multimodal design spaces reshape the English learners' ways of being and knowing across time and space?

RESEARCH METHODS

Following the New London Group (1996), the process of multimodal design involves three interrelated components: available designs (as mixtures of different semiotic resources for design), designing (as transformative semiotic activities and decision making), and the redesigned (as the outcome). In this qualitative case study, I apply the constructs of multimodal design to study how the Chinese students incorporated their available resources and "sociohistorical lives" (Gutiérrez, 2008, p. 149) into their local site to design their digital participation and engage in global communication with individuals at other sites. I consider the new possibilities afforded by digital platforms for the children's social interactions and global connections.

DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURES

In my data collection process, I collected and transcribed the digital stories produced and uploaded on the project website by the Chinese students. I also collected the relevant online video chats responding to the Chinese videos and responded to by the Chinese participants. I interviewed the children and adult participants from the different project sites in China, Uganda, and the US with questions about their perspectives on students'

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learning experiences. The interviews in China were conducted in Mandarin Chinese and translated into English. The data also included video recordings of site meetings, the children's reflective written reports, and my field notes and researcher memos from multiple project sites.

DATA ANALYSIS PROCEDURES

I employed a social-semiotic approach to multimodal analyses (Archer, 2014a; Kress, 2010; Kress & van Leeuwen, 2001) using interactive coding methods (Saldaña, 2013). I analyzed both the available resources afforded by different digital platforms at the Chinese project site and the multimodal digital stories and then linked online responses across time. To gain understanding of how meanings were constructed locally, I analyzed the meeting data collected from the local sites considering both participant (emic) and researcher (etic) perspectives. The coding procedures were guided by Saldaña's (2013) *The Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers*. Data were coded using MAXQDA Analytics Pro software. In the first cycle of coding, I used NVivo coding in the analysis of the group meetings and interviews, including the participants' voices to enhance my understanding of their multimodal transnational engagement. In the second cycle of coding, I condensed the number of NVivo codes and provided a reanalysis of the initial work through cross-coding with my field notes and reflective memos. I also reordered the subcodes across different sources (i.e., youth-produced digital stories and written reports). After the second coding cycle, for further analysis in this chapter, I wove primary codes, categories, and themes of the analysis across the multiple data sources.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The digitally mediated engagement provided the students with multiple learning spaces. They became recognized as active multimodal designers and communicators mediated by digital technologies. They also commented on their own experiences. Two female Chinese students wrote the following in their project report (all youth-produced texts are quoted verbatim, as are all subsequent participants' quotes; all students' written reports are translated from Mandarin Chinese):

> When we received the task, we were very happy because our teacher only chose two of us from the whole class. This shows that our teacher thinks very highly of us. Meanwhile, we became very excited that we were shown in the video publicly. ... Through the video-making experience, we not only developed our spoken English skills, but also learned to make plans to be organized

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> when doing things. We also learned to work together as a team. What's more, we also learned some technology skills through editing the videos.
>
> *(Student Written Report, December 28, 2015)*

The quotes above reflect the students' perception and recognition of their digital participation as new ways of collaboratively developing their language and technology skills. Another student in the Mingtian site wrote in her report, "With our teachers' (the adult facilitators) help, we solved video-editing problems, such us how to add subtitles and rotating subtitles. … We not only developed our technology skills but also gained the joy of success!" (Student Written Report, June 22, 2018). The project reports show a "strong version of multimodality" (Grapin, 2019, p. 31), which supports a shift from a "deficit view of ELs [English learners] as lacking the linguistic resources" into an "asset view" (Grapin, 2019, p. 35) that embraces all modes of learning and positions learners as successful designers and producers of their cultural stories. The following section will provide a detailed discussion on the available resources, (re)designing process, and online communication mediated by the digital platforms and the transnational spaces afforded by the project.

AVAILABLE DESIGNS AS INTERACTIVE SPACES

According to the New London Group (1996), available designs are ensembles of different semiotic resources for designing processes, such as the Internet, film, language, photographs, digital media, time, place, and space. When sign makers are designing something, they are making a series of semiotic decisions based on their "particular set of interests" (New London Group, 1996, p. 13). For instance, in this project site, students used cameras or smart phones to video record what they wanted to include in their digital stories. This process involves making various decisions, for example, the way of holding the camera, the English used to explain the topic, the places for filming, and the duration of the recording. In order to make these decisions, students must draw from their interests in deciding what to represent as part of their lives, knowledge of their communities, and existing technological skills. After collecting all of the video clips, the Chinese students utilized the available designs offered by the video editing software to edit and export their videos.

The available designs in the Chinese project site include the project website, the video editing software's working space, the digital and technological devices (e.g., computers, cameras, mobile phones), and students' bilingual, semiotic, and dialectic resources. In order to edit their video stories for this project, the students used Aijianji video editing software, through which they were able to accomplish a series of actions, including typing,

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clicking, scrolling up and down, cutting, splitting, and adding sounds, images, subtitles, and transitions. Because of the design of the project website, all video files to be uploaded had to be less than 192 MB in MP4/M4V/MOV formats. This requirement meant that participants had to use the movie editing software to edit the videos into three to six minutes in length and to export them in the pre-set format through navigating the digital platforms and clicking the buttons for different functions.

The GSB project website (see Figure 2.1) is designed for participants to upload, share, and respond to video stories transnationally. The webpage offers different available design resources for the users to navigate the online spaces, and for the presenters and audiences to communicate with one another.

On the top of the webpage, there are four buttons for different social functions. By clicking on each of the buttons, users are directed to new screens to (1) add new videos, (2) view other videos, (3) interact with adult facilitators, and (4) read site introductions. Under these buttons, the webpage shows the name of the video, the content of the video, and the posting time. Figure 2.1 shows a scene from a digital story produced and uploaded by the Mingtian students, entitled "daily school life." Users can click on the *play*, *pause*, *full screen*, and *slow/fast forward* buttons. Under the video session, there is a comment field for viewers to interact with video makers by typing questions or uploading images into the designated field as it is shown in the figure. All the interactional signs on the project website constitute the available designs of the project's online spaces, which not only provide opportunities for the participants to interact with the screen, but also connect and communicate with their global peers behind the screen.

Following Halliday's (1978) metafunctions theories, Adami (2015) developed analyses of interactive sites and signs through analyzing website interactivity. According to Adami, digital platforms afford interactivity between the website users and the display, the keyboard, the mouse, and social media. They also offer users various "actional possibilities" (Adami, 2015, p. 146) to not only produce digital multimodal texts, but also connect and communicate with potential audiences. In this project, these available designs mediated by different digital devices and screens provide the participants with interactive spaces, in which students not only upload their cultural videos but also provide feedback to one another by using their preferred modes on the project website. These translocal and transnational engagements allow the young participants to act as digital participants and producers.

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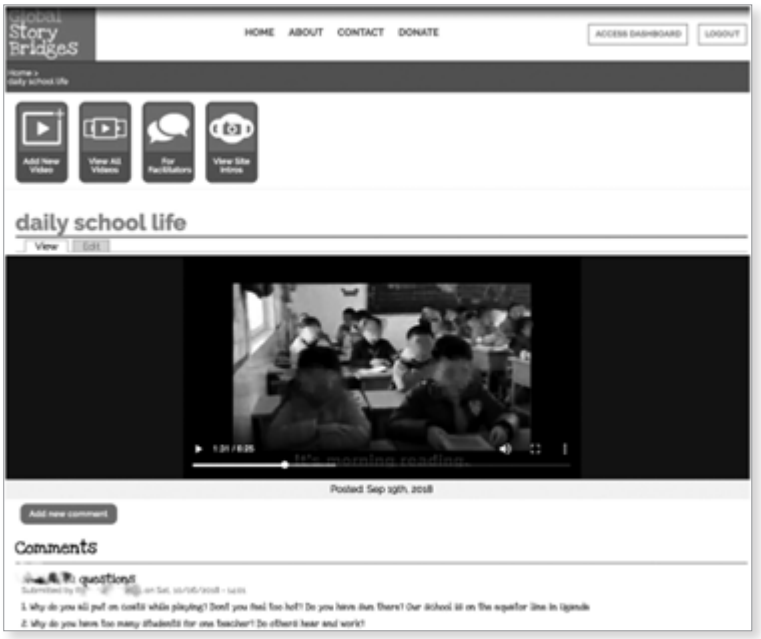

FIGURE 2.1 Screenshot of the GSB Project Website

DIGITAL STORYTELLING AS MULTIMODAL DESIGNING

The 6-minute, 25-second video created by the students at Mingtian school depicted a typical Chinese elementary school daily routine. At the beginning of the day, students came to school wearing red "on-duty" scarves and attended a "Morning Reading" (早读) session (shown in Figure 2.1). The students' day ended when they lined up to leave school. The video started with subtitles in both English and Chinese to acknowledge the Mingtian students as the video producers. The scene then moved to the school's front gate where some students showed up to check if the children came to school on time wearing red scarves. English speech and subtitles were included as the background sound to explain the video.

Then, the scene switched to a classroom sign in Chinese "三年级二班" (Translated as "Grade 3, Class 2") with the following subtitle: "It's morning reading." In the morning reading session, the video shows a whole class of students holding their Chinese textbooks on the table and reading the content aloud together, with two student facilitators leading the activity. The video then shows a Chinese class in Grade 5, Class 1 discussing the static and dynamic state of animals' lives in Mandarin Chinese. The video switches to the school playground where students were doing different sports activities in their whole-school sports meeting. The students took turns providing commentary in English. The short video ended with the background sound of school announcements being made in Chinese over the

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speaker while students were leaving school in groups. They saluted their teachers by raising their right hands above their heads when passing through the school gate.

The inclusion of the morning read-aloud session, red scarves as part of the dress code, classroom signs in Chinese, and cultural sports activities (e.g., shuttlecock kicking [踢毽子]) in the video reflected the Chinese participants' interests of representation and perceptions of their typical models of school culture. Through these representations, they wanted to draw the attention of the children at the other sites to their designed digital selves. The students chose those topics as the most apt ones to represent what their daily school lives look like, sound like, and feel like. The combination of the multimodal representations—speech, image, sound, body movement, layout, subtitles, transitions, space, place, and time—creatively showed their audiences a multilingual and multimodal portrayal of their school lives. All of these "representational resources" (Kress, 2000, p. 339) were used most appropriately to convey daily school life in their community. Decisions were made as to what to include and not include in the video, how the participants wanted to organize and edit the video content, what subtitles/speech/sound/transition elements would be put on the screen to make an explicit meaning, and how long to make the final video. In order to make these decisions, students recognized what representational resources (e.g., cultural knowledge, technology resources, and skills) were available to them when selecting the resources to create their digital stories for their global audiences.

From a multimodality perspective, these designs do not simply show what modal resources were chosen for what meanings. Instead, they also show good examples of the process of designing as "the intentional deployment of resources in specific configurations to implement the purposes of the designers" (Kress, 2000, p. 340). They also position the students as co-designers in representing their social and cultural worlds.

ONLINE COMMUNICATION AS A REDESIGNING PROCESS

The video described above showed the Chinese students'—the digital representers'—interests of what to include in their story based on their imaginations of what they thought might be interesting to their global peers. Project participants in a Ugandan site watched the video and then posted their questions and comments via the chat space on the website. The following is an excerpt from the online chat posts by the Ugandan students in response to the Chinese "daily school life" video:

> Ugandan Students: Why do you all put on coats while playing? Don't you feel too hot? Do you have sun there? Our school is on the equator line in Uganda.
>
> *(Project Website Video Chat Posts, October 6, 2018)*

CREATING MULTIMODAL DESIGN SPACES FOR LANGUAGE LEARNERS THROUGH GLOBAL DIGITAL STORYTELLING

Rui Li

Excerpted from *Chinese-Speaking Learners of English*

> Chinese Students: Because it's winter. Of course there is sun, but it's usually very cold from December to February in our country.
>
> *(Project Website Video Chat Posts, January 17, 2019)*
>
> Ugandan Students: Why do you have too many students for one teacher? Do others hear and work?
>
> *(Project Website Video Chat Posts, October 6, 2018)*
>
> Chinese Students: There are usually 45 students in one class. We have many teachers, but we only need one teacher for each course. We have class rules, when we are having classes, we sit at our desk quietly, so of course everybody can hear the teacher.
>
> *(Project Website Video Chat Posts, January 17, 2019)*
>
> Ugandan Students: What is your official language?
>
> *(Project Website Video Chat Posts, October 6, 2018)*
>
> Chinese Students: We say Chinese, Putonghua is our official language.
>
> *(Project Website Video Chat Posts, January 17, 2019)*

The above communication captures the Ugandan students' distinct interests from the audience perspective and their engagement in co-interpreting the multimodal sign complex shown in the video. For example, because of differences in climate between Uganda and China, the Ugandan students noticed the clothes students wore in the video. The Chinese students' response about the clothing and the language "of course" used in their comments reflected their imagination of the global audiences. In the Chinese site, winter comes in December and the cold weather continues until February, during which time the Chinese children wear heavy jackets to keep warm. However, there is not a cold winter season in Uganda; it is always hot. Mid-September to November is the wet season in Uganda, with warm weather.

The Ugandan students also noticed the student numbers in the Chinese classroom and the Chinese language that was used during the "morning session." They asked what the official language is in China and shared their concerns about how the students could be heard if there were "too many students" in one classroom. The Chinese students then explained their classroom features, as well as a cultural feature related to being a student in a Chinese classroom. The Chinese students stated that they were quiet while attending classes, in response to the query from the Ugandan students about the number of individuals in the classroom. The phrase "of course" was used here to confirm that they could hear the teacher clearly.

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Meanwhile, considering the difference between face-to-face and online communications in this study, the former is instantaneous while the latter can be immediate but it can also be delayed. This difference might lead to different understandings of what children watched and perceived and how they responded to the video makers over time. Therefore, time must be considered when analyzing online interactions. The Chinese students captured the clothes worn in December because it was their wintertime in China when they created the video. However, the video was watched by the Ugandan students in September when it was fall in China and summer in Uganda. Thus, the Chinese video makers replied "of course" they wore heavy coats because it was wintertime when they produced the video. The phrase "of course" was used twice in the Chinese students' responses, which signals their social imagination of their global peers sharing the same understanding of regional climate and school culture.

Questions were also asked by participants from the sites in Mexico and the US, such as, "Why you study Chinese if you are already Chinese?" (Mexican Students, Project Website Video Chat Posts, February 6, 2019) and "What time do you go to school? What time you go home?" (U.S. Students, Project Website Video Chat Posts, February 21, 2019).

All the online exchanges demonstrate good examples of the power of digital communication to contribute to learning mediated by the online platforms. These transnational communications challenged and expanded the students' linguistic, social, and cultural imagination of the world through encountering the differences with one another. All this noticing indicates the children's interest in digital engagement and global learning. Their learning was mediated by "effects of place" (Hawkins, 2014, p. 106), "where meaning making occurs through human interactions and communications" (Hawkins, 2014, p. 91) across time and space. Following sociocultural theories, learning takes place through social interactions in situated contexts. As Luke (2003) stated:

> A social constructivist view of knowledge and learning implies that learning occurs in situated sociocultural contexts and that knowledge is apprehended and appropriated in and through social interaction, dialogue, negotiation, and contestation. In the contemporary blend of 'old' and 'new' information environments, people draw on diverse sources of information, means of communication, and (virtual) community engagements, which suggests that learning and information exchange and production occur in socially interactive communities of learners. Multimodal readings and experiences of the world begin in infancy and constitute the social practices in everyday life. (p. 398)

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Analyzing the video chats across time and space revealed how the online platforms afforded the youth interactive spaces to encounter cultural differences and consider their diverse knowledge as resources. Students' perceptions of the videos were culturally and socially situated in the contexts in which they reside (i.e., weather, school culture, language) until the young learners interacted with one another and renegotiated their perceptions. On the other hand, because of the unequally distributed socioeconomic resources across different project sites, the youth-produced digital stories and online chats cannot be considered as static but need to be situated in broader social and cultural contexts. For example, comments were posted regarding living and education conditions in different Ugandan videos. One comment read, "Why do you have a hole instead of a standing toilet and why won't you have doors for the bathroom? If someone comes in and see someone in the bathroom what do you do?" (U.S. Students, Project Website Video Chat Posts, March 1, 2014). Another participant in a different Ugandan video asked, "Why do some girls have to marry early but other girls go to school?" (U.S. Students, Project Website Video Chat Posts, October 29, 2018). These online communications mirror the young learners' unequal living and learning conditions that were hidden behind the digital stories posted on the project website.

IMPLICATIONS FOR POLICY, PRACTICE, AND FUTURE RESEARCH

Analyzing these ongoing discussions among the global youth learners demonstrates how the students projected their social and cultural lives onto their digital story design but also provided feedback on their global peers' projective worlds through online communication. These design and redesign processes offered students (inter)actional possibilities multimodally and globally to convey, perceive, and negotiate complex meanings mediated by multiple digital spaces. Particularly, for English learners whose knowledge is often undervalued and evaluated in a monomodal and monolingual way (Grapin, 2019; Siegel, 2006), the GSB project highlighted students' cultural knowledge and design decisions to use their preferred modes and resources to express themselves and connect with their peers.

Research shows that when English learners use their preferred mediums (or modes) other than the mode of power (for instance, English language) to express themselves, they may be considered deficient and unsuccessful academically, and many of them may not feel safe or comfortable (Archer, 2014b; Hawkins & Norton, 2009). For example, in the context of this research, a male Latino student from the U.S. site, at the beginning of the project, expressed his concern about his participation in the project. He asked, "Is this going in a record? Will our teacher see and know if we are doing well here?" (Field notes, October 10, 2016). This example suggests that language learners, like this student, may

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fear being judged by their teachers even though this activity was an out-of-school project. However, other students might have seen the affordances given by the multimodal nature of the study as positive. A female Ugandan student, whom I interviewed at a Ugandan site, said, "This project makes us feel confident. So, briefly, it lets me not to fear anything. I can ask them questions I like, and they answer!" (Interview, June 27, 2017). These quotes urge teachers to create open and inclusive design spaces for our language learners where students can feel comfortable to project their identities using the multimodal spaces.

Based on this study, I suggest educators, schools, policymakers, and scholars create multimodal design spaces with high levels of openness and flexibility for language learners to use their preferred linguistic and non-linguistic modal resources to learn. Educators must learn to recognize learners' social semiotic resources and design "multimodal pedagogies that recognize students as remakers and transformers of the representational resources available to them" (Stein, 2000, p. 336). In order to do so, Stein suggests that educators embrace learners' multiple repertoires and ""re-resource resources"" (p. 336) of students' (re)designing practices.

Particularly in today's world of increased digitalization, students' digital repertoires should also be recognized and underscored.

I suggest that future researchers conduct more empirical studies in classroom and school contexts to further investigate how the lenses of multilingualism and multimodality, particularly in digitally mediated settings, can facilitate and afford learning and global connections for underprivileged students. In order to do so, I call on policymakers to increase educational funds for young learners who live in impoverished communities to support these students in gaining equal access to digital tools that represent their projective identities in multimodal engagement. Also, I call for increased funding opportunities devoted to educators and researchers who are working with underprivileged students and who aim to study how technologies can better serve these students, to become digital citizens for a socially just society.

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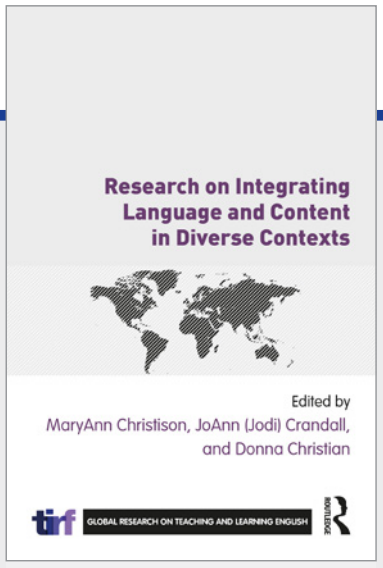
CHAPTER

3

DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES AND STORYTELLING FOR CLIL IN A PRIMARY SCHOOL IN ITALY

Letizia-Cinganotto



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Edited by MaryAnn Christison, JoAnn Crandall and Donna Christian

DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES AND STORYTELLING FOR CLIL IN A PRIMARY SCHOOL IN ITALY

Letizia Cinganotto

Excerpted from *Research on Integrating Language and Content in Diverse Contexts*

INTRODUCTION

During the COVID-19 pandemic, most schools and universities in Italy, like many educational institutions around the world, were forced to switch to online teaching and to reshape their teaching methodologies and techniques to include digital technologies. This shift, of course, included schools that were providing instruction using content and language integrated learning (CLIL). It is important to consider the impact of the shift to online learning when instruction is given in a second or foreign language, as in CLIL, and to look for techniques that may prove effective in both remote and in-person instruction.

In this chapter, digital technologies will be addressed for use in CLIL. The focus is aimed at engaging primary school students in active and interactive tasks and projects. For the study reported here, a digital storytelling project was designed by one teacher for an online postgraduate course and implemented in her CLIL classroom. The example will be described and then discussed in terms of data that were collected from the teacher's action-research project and teaching diary, as well as from an interview with the teacher and informal discussions with learners during the implementation phase.

ISSUES THAT MOTIVATED THE RESEARCH

CLIL is an umbrella term that refers to "any form of language education in which subject matter is taught in a second or foreign language. It could be called bilingual education, immersion, and multilingual education" (Van de Craen, 2001, p. 210). CLIL has been used with language learners in different educational contexts, interweaving language and content education in varied subjects, such as history, geography, humanities, and STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) fields (Marsh & Langé, 2000). In Italy, CLIL became compulsory in 2010, following passage of a reform law, which introduced it in all upper secondary schools (Cinganotto, 2016; Cinganotto, 2018). The majority of schools, except for technical schools, are able to determine the subjects they wish to deliver through CLIL, taking into consideration the teachers' competences in both CLIL methodology and in the foreign language. English is the most popular foreign language for CLIL in Italy, followed by French, Spanish, and German (Cinganotto, 2016). The desired language level for English teachers for CLIL is set at the C1 level of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), indicating "a proficient user" who "can use language flexibly and effectively for social, academic and professional purposes" (Council of Europe, n.d.). Pedagogical competence is determined by attendance at specific university courses on CLIL methodology. Although CLIL is only compulsory in Italy at the upper secondary school level, it is also strongly recommended at both primary and lower secondary levels.

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CLIL has been recommended by the European Commission and the Council of Europe as a driver for innovation, fostering the development of language competences and subject matter knowledge at the same time. CLIL methodology is also seen as a very powerful tool for enhancing plurilingualism, as suggested in the recent Recommendation from the Council of Europe (2019) for its use as a comprehensive approach to the teaching and learning of languages. CLIL provision in Italy is highlighted by the Council Recommendation as an example of a democratic and inclusive approach as CLIL lessons are delivered to all the students in the classroom, without any specific requirement for language proficiency. To cope with the diversity of language proficiency levels among students, the CLIL methodology uses a variety of teaching techniques that are aimed at providing comprehensible input in the foreign language (Krashen, 1991). The focus on comprehensible input helps learners process and elaborate on the input, while activating cognitive and critical-thinking skills relative to content concepts.

Pillars of CLIL

One of the best-known frameworks for CLIL, and one that has also guided CLIL methodology in Italy, is the 4Cs framework (Coyle, 2005). It consists of the following:

- content (subject delivery),
- culture (cultural and intercultural background),
- communication (interaction and communication about content among students and between the teacher and the students), and
- cognition (the development of cognitive and critical-thinking skills).

In addition to the 4Cs, another important pillar of CLIL methodology is scaffolding (Walqui, 2006). It is through scaffolding that teachers guide students step-by-step through the learning process. Infographics, images, and diagrams are examples of scaffolding techniques that are aimed at facilitating and supporting learners in the development of language skills and subject matter expertise. Yet another pillar of CLIL is feedback (Hattie, 2009, 2012), which is a very powerful tool that can be used to facilitate deeper learning because it can provide learners with the type of information they need to adjust their understandings and enable them to make progress. Feedback can come from the teacher, but it can also come from peers. Both kinds of feedback give important information to learners to help them direct their next learning choices.

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Benefits of CLIL

Acquiring a foreign language is a long process (Lightbown & Spada, 2006) that requires considerable exposure to naturally occurring language to ensure the achievement of a good level of competence. Young learners need exposure to spontaneous speech in an interactive context where they can experience the foreign language functioning much as it does in real-life settings. CLIL methodology can provide an interactive and meaningful learning environment as it takes advantage of a wide range of dynamic and engrossing teaching techniques and strategies, which puts the learner at the center of the learning pathway.

Scholars and researchers (for example, Dalton-Puffer, 2007; Dalton-Puffer & Smit, 2007) have pointed out additional benefits. CLIL methodology

- creates conditions for natural language learning,
- provides a purpose for language use in the classroom,
- has a positive effect on language learning by placing the emphasis on meaning rather than form, and
- increases the amount of exposure to the target language.

Teacher Effectiveness in CLIL

To implement high-quality CLIL, teacher training is crucial. Montague (1997) underscores the crucial role of teacher training for both pedagogical and theoretical aspects of language teaching. Teachers need to have high levels of proficiency in the target language, knowledge of the principles of language acquisition, and pedagogical skills (Van de Craen & Perez-Vidal, 2003) for CLIL.

De Graaff et al. (2007) identified five main indicators associated with language teacher performance in CLIL that is considered to be effective. These indicators are summarized as follows:

1. Teachers facilitate exposure to input by selecting attractive authentic materials, adapted to the level of the learners, and scaffolded by active use of body language and visual aids.
2. Teachers facilitate meaning-focused processing by stimulating learners and providing explicit and implicit types of corrective feedback.
3. Teachers facilitate form-focused processing by providing examples for modeling, using recasts and confirmation checks, clarifications, or peer feedback.

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4. Teachers facilitate output production by encouraging learners to respond through different interactive oral formats (e.g., peer presentations, round-table discussions, debates) and written formats (e.g., letters, surveys, stories).
5. Teachers facilitate the use of compensation strategies by implementing scaffolding and other techniques to help students overcome problems with both language comprehension and output.

Digital Learning Technologies for CLIL

The European Commission and the Council of Europe (European Commission, 2014) have both recommended combining CLIL methodology and learning technologies. Digital technologies are recommended to improve the quality of language learning and teaching in all content areas and to make CLIL more effective. The following options are examples of digital technologies that can be integrated into CLIL:

- authentic foreign language material, such as video clips, flash-animations, web-quests, podcasts, webcasts, and news broadcasts;
- online environments where learners can communicate with foreign language speakers, through email, text-based computer-mediated communication (synchronous and asynchronous), social media, or voice/video conferencing;
- language-learning tools (online apps or software) for phonetics, pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammar and clause analysis, which may include a text-to-speech function or speech recognition, and often include interactive and guided exercises;
- online proprietary virtual learning environments, which offer teacher-student and peer-to-peer communication; and
- game-based learning.

The potential of digital technologies has been investigated by a wide range of studies, such as in CALL (computer-assisted language learning), which highlights the use of computer and webtools as aids to support language learning; MALL (mobile-assisted language learning), which focuses on the use of mobile devices for language learning; TELL (technology-enhanced language learning), which fosters the use of technologies not so much as aids, but as an added value and augmentation of the learning process; and ICALL (intelligent computer-assisted language learning), which uses artificial intelligence (AI) for language learning.

Pokrivčáková et al. (2015) use the expression "technology-enhanced CLIL" to refer to the integration of CALL or MALL in a CLIL environment. Both CALL and MALL are aimed at fostering and improving authentic language for communicative purposes and at practicing

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language and cognitive skills, using tasks and hands-on activities (Ellis, 2003). Littlewood (2004) considers task-based language teaching as "a development within the communicative approach" (p. 304), and task-based language learning and teaching with technology have been deemed to be closely interconnected and complementary (Cinganotto, 2021; Thomas & Reinders, 2010). Using technology, learners are highly motivated in carrying out tasks, and motivation can positively impact students' learning outcomes.

A wide range of studies have focused on the combination of task-based language teaching and CALL (Doughty & Long, 2003; González-Lloret, 2005; Hampel, 2006), and CALL is increasing in popularity among teachers and learners, as it can meet the students' needs and help teachers innovate their teaching strategies. These aims can also be reached, thanks to the use of MALL, which uses mobile devices, not only as communication tools but also as learning tools: In particular, mobile learning has been especially effective in the improvement and expansion of vocabulary (Duman et al., 2015; Wood, 2001). Other studies have shown the positive effects of CALL on listening comprehension (Brett, 1997) and on reading comprehension (Murphy, 2007). The skill that is least affected by CALL has turned out to be speaking. Most CALL-based teaching and learning has tended to focus on non-oral activities, such as software or web-based reading, writing, or gap-fill type activities, whereas oral pair work, group role-plays, and discussions are thought to go with face-to-face teaching and learning.

CALL and MALL have a huge potential in language learning as they add the multimodal dimension to learning, that is, "the use of several semiotic modes in the design of a semiotic product or event, together with the particular way in which these modes are combined" (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2001, p. 20). According to Levy (2009), digitally mediated communication is creatively multimodal, including "multi-purpose, multifunctional technologies that involve layers of complexity and application in L2 learning that are unique among the technologies of the modern world" (p. 779).

The potential benefits of multimodal environments have been highlighted by scholars with particular reference to the field of language learning and teaching. Calvo-Ferrer et al. (2016) note that "[t]he widespread availability and sophistication of multimodal communication tools have captured the imagination of practitioners and scholars alike, who have identified interesting learning opportunities and fields of enquiry for language teaching" (p. 247). The explicit link between CALL and CLIL has also been highlighted in the literature (Levy, 2007; Stoller, 2008), with calls for further investigation of this combination. An example of full integration of technology into a CLIL environment is described by Gimeno et al. (2010). They used InGenio as an authoring tool and content manager to create templates and examples for producing resources and activities according to a task-based approach.

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Digital Storytelling in CLIL

Among the wide range of webtools and digital learning tools, digital storytelling can be a very effective way to foster critical-thinking skills, language skills, subject-specific literacy, and digital literacy for young learners. The practice is also useful in assessment, including self-assessment, feedback, and peer feedback.

Digital storytelling is defined as the practice of using computer-based tools to tell stories or present ideas. Unlike traditional oral storytelling, which takes advantage mainly of the power of the narrator's voice, digital storytelling uses a combination of different media and digital elements within a narrative structure. In fact, digital stories build on traditional storytelling but take advantage of a wide range of media and materials, such as digital texts, images, audio and video files, timelines, maps, and other interactive elements from social media (such as tweets). According to Alismail (2015), through digital storytelling, students can better interact and engage in the classroom than with non-digital storytelling, while developing a wide range of cognitive and thinking skills, as well as webtools and platforms (see, e.g., Allan Carrington's Pedagogy Wheel; Carrington, n.d.).

Lambert (2018) identifies seven fundamental elements that need to be present in digital storytelling. These fundamental elements serve as a guide or a checklist for CLIL teachers as they implement digital storytelling in the classroom and are listed here:

- Point of view: Identifying a clear point of view is important to facilitate the delivery of the message of the story; that is why the first person's point of view is the most popular.
- Dramatic question: A dramatic and engaging question will attract people's attention and keep them attentive from the beginning to the end of the story.
- Emotional content: An effective digital storytelling will stir emotional reactions from the audience, especially when dealing with strong and deep topics, such as death, loss, love, loneliness, and vulnerability.
- Recording one's voice: If the author can record his/her own voice in the digital storytelling, it will make the story more personal and effective, especially if it is done in a conversational style.
- Economy: It is important to reach a good combination of text, dialogue, and visuals, trying to keep the story short (from two to three minutes).
- Pacing: It is crucial to balance the digital story's pacing, mixing, soundtrack, music, special effects, etc.
- Soundtrack: Music can represent a great added value to the story, adding suspense or triggering other emotional reactions.

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In addition to making use of fundamental elements in digital storytelling, CLIL teachers also need to be aware of the digital storytelling process. The main steps of the process can be summarized as follows:

- developing a script or proposing a story, which, within a group, is called a *story circle* because it includes feedback;
- researching materials, images, texts, etc.;
- writing the script;
- planning the storyboard;
- finding images and/or or creating audio and video files;
- putting the story together;
- sharing with others (e.g., parents, peers, or the teacher); and
- reflecting on the feedback received by the audience with the aim to implement any relevant changes for improvement.

Dillon (2014) highlights some of the benefits of digital storytelling. For example, it fosters active listening and creates the ideal atmosphere for motivation and interest in both learning language and the content of the story's message. Moreover, digital storytelling can include ethical and emotional messages, so it is intended to elicit not only deep learning but also socio-emotional learning. Digital storytelling encourages young learners to work on topics they particularly like so that they can showcase what they are learning and creating. When learners share their work with peers, they act as teachers. Peer teaching is ranked by Hattie (2009) as one of the most effective strategies for deep learning. To teach peers effectively, students need to master the content and think about how they use language to make themselves intelligible to others. As they prepare for their digital storytelling presentations, they also develop technical skills with digital technology and hone their research and writing skills.

CLIL practitioners agree that working with digital storytelling can help students develop proficiency with multimedia applications, improve information literacy skills, and activate critical-thinking skills, by combining audio and visual modalities (Cinganotto & Cuccurullo, 2016). In addition, digital storytelling can be an important tool for the development of 21st-century skills for learners, fostering digital competence, language proficiency, and skills for collaboration, creativity, and critical thinking.

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RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The research questions (RQs) for this study were the following:

1. How did the teacher incorporate digital tools in the design of the CLIL module?
2. What are teachers' and learners' perceptions on the use of digital technologies for CLIL at the primary school level?
3. How can digital storytelling actively involve learners in enjoyable and engaging CLIL activities?

RESEARCH METHODS

The design of the research reported in this chapter is a case study. The case revolves around the use of digital technologies in a primary school CLIL program. The case follows one teacher through the development of the CLIL digital storytelling module in a graduate-level university course and the implementation of the CLIL module in her primary school classroom.

CONTEXTS OF THE RESEARCH

There were two contexts for the research. The first context is a postgraduate course on CLIL, which was delivered at a university in Italy and was fully online. The course was aimed at guiding practicing teachers in exploring different dimensions of CLIL, such as pedagogical frameworks, tools for planning, implementing, and assessing CLIL modules, using digital learning technologies (Marsh & Cinganotto, 2021). The course was open to teachers from any school level and was aimed at developing a wide range of competences. The different areas addressed included language competences (i.e., pragmatic, sociolinguistic, cultural, interactional), didactic competences (how to integrate content and language, organize a CLIL learning environment, and implement student-centered activities through innovative methodologies), and technological competences (how to use digital learning technologies for CLIL).

The second context is a primary school in the north of Italy. The school had adopted a model of bilingual education, delivering instruction in both Italian and English with Jolly methodology for teaching both languages and CLIL for integrating language and content in English classes that focus on science, music, and technology. Jolly methodology (more commonly known as Jolly phonics) focuses on teaching children how to read and write through the use of synthetic phonics that help children learn what letters sound like (Callinan & van der Zee, 2010). Children receive constant positive feedback and

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encouragement in this process. The teacher's research was aimed at using digital technologies, particularly digital storytelling, for CLIL with her pupils.

PARTICIPANTS

This study was carried out in an English CLIL classroom. Miss Angela (a pseudonym) was both the designer of the CLIL modules and the CLIL teacher at the primary school. She also attended the postgraduate CLIL course and devoted her final assignment to an action-research project in her own classroom that focused on the use of digital learning technologies and digital storytelling with her students. The students were 20 native Italian speakers attending Grade 5 in the primary school.

DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURES

Data were collected from multiple sources. The primary source of data was the final written report that Miss Angela created in the postgraduate CLIL course and submitted to the professor. Her project was aimed at delivering CLIL content through the use of digital learning technologies in an engaging and effective way. Miss Angela discussed the project and its documentation with the professor of the postgraduate CLIL course (the researcher and author) prior to and during implementation. Miss Angela also recorded her own reflections and made ongoing comments by contributing to an online learning journal in the form of a blog. Data from these sources were collected by the researcher to answer Research Question 1. Miss Angela also used digital tools and web apps to collect data from her learners so that she could share meaningful thoughts and remarks about student learning. Data from these sources were also collected by the researcher to answer both Research Questions 1 and 2.

Another source of data was the semi-structured interview with the teacher, which consisted of the following four questions:

1. What were the main lessons you learned from the online postgraduate course on CLIL?
2. What are your initial impressions about the effectiveness of digital storytelling for CLIL?
3. Do you think it's possible to compare digital storytelling and traditional storytelling with each other? Why or why not?
4. How did your students respond to digital storytelling? Which type of storytelling do you think they preferred, digital or traditional?

The interview was recorded and carried out in English, and, in addition, notes were taken by the researcher during the conversation. These data were collected to answer Research Question 2.

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The final source of data collected was from Miss Angela's students. The researcher met informally with the students to discuss their perceptions of the use of digital technologies, particularly storytelling. The discussion took place with the whole class (including Miss Angela) at the end of one of the lessons; it was not recorded to prevent the students from feeling anxious or embarrassed, considering their young age. Notes were taken during the discussion and revisited immediately after the discussion. Every attempt was made to create an informal and friendly atmosphere.

Miss Angela's final project took the form of action research, which followed a typical cycle of action or inquiry, using the following steps:

- identify a problem to be studied;
- collect data on the problem;
- organize, analyze, and interpret the data;
- develop a plan to address the problem;
- implement the plan;
- evaluate the results of the actions taken;
- identify a new problem; and
- repeat the process.

DATA ANALYSIS PROCEDURES

To answer Research Question 1, the CLIL teacher's final written product was analyzed by the researcher in terms of how the digital technologies were used and how the digital storytelling module was carried out in the CLIL classroom. As an action-research project, the inputs and suggestions delivered during the postgraduate course contributed to Miss Angela's experience and implementation of the project. The teacher's learning diary was analyzed by identifying and categorizing the types of instructional activities she used. Because of the high level of digital competence of the teacher, particular attention was paid to documenting her use of webtools.

The data from the interview with the teacher and from the informal discussions with the students were analyzed qualitatively to answer Research Questions 2 and 3. There are various approaches to managing and analyzing qualitative data. To manage and analyze data in the current study, the researcher adopted a framework approach for data analysis (Ritchie et al., 2013; Smith & Firth, 2011). The following steps were followed:

- familiarization with the data,
- identifying a thematic framework,

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- indexing,
- charting, and
- mapping and interpretation.

First, the researcher familiarized herself with the data by reading through her notes numerous times to obtain a broad overview of the data. Key points that emerged from the data became the thematic framework. Next, the data went through a process of indexing, which means the key points were categorized. The data were then organized into a chart or table. Finally, the data from the chart was mapped to the research questions and interpreted by the researcher. In reporting the results, each student was given a pseudonym in the form of initials.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

CLIL WRITTEN PROJECT AND THE TEACHER'S LEARNING DIARY

Miss Angela's CLIL action-research project was documented using a web-based tool named Sutori (https://www.sutori.com). Sutori is used for creating and sharing interactive timelines. It allowed Miss Angela to collect images and texts in the form of a blog or a diary, which in this case was considered to be a learning diary. Sutori assisted Miss Angela in collecting and reflecting on the different steps of the project carried out with the students. For example, in one entry, Miss Angela explained the steps she took to identify the problem, which is the starting point in the action-research cycle. For the element of empathizing, she noted that she would engage with her students in an effort to understand their experience and needs, and she illustrated the step with a photo of a student looking over some materials for the project.

It was clear that Miss Angela was skilled in using digital learning activities in her CLIL lessons. Among the CLIL activities proposed to the students using digital storytelling, the most prominent one was StoryJumper (https://www.storyjumper.com). It was used to guide learners to create their own digital stories, including creative storybook covers. For example, for a story on "Santa in the park," a student crafted a cover showing a jolly Santa dressed in a red suit next to a green pine tree, with the title of the story and the byline "A story by [student's name]." Another story, on the life cycle of a butterfly, featured a cover with a picture of five stages of a butterfly's development, from a dot on a green leaf to an adult butterfly, using cartoon-style depictions. Both stories were told as flipbooks, where clicking on a blue arrow advances the reader to the next page. According to Miss Angela's digital storytelling project and learning diary, StoryJumper provided a very

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simple way to have the students draw pictures, write short sentences in English, and share their flipbooks. In addition, digital technology made it simple for learners to share their work with peers and families. Miss Angela's learning journal revealed that she invited each student to tell his/her own story in English to an audience composed of the teacher and classmates in either a face-to-face class or a live webinar. The second option for remote teaching was becoming common due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The activity was intended to foster the development of both written and oral language development skills. Children designed the covers for their books, wrote the stories, and then presented them to peers.

Miss Angela's learning diary also showed that she managed to integrate language and content through the creation of a digital CLIL science laboratory with her students. In this digital environment, Miss Angela's students participated in activities in the lab on the topic of light. The activities included videoclips that delivered content, interactive quizzes for learning, and polls to check learners' understanding and mastery of content knowledge, as well as specific language activities with a particular focus on vocabulary development.

The webtool adopted for the CLIL laboratory is Genially (https://www.genial.ly), which is a very popular web-based tool used for visual communication. It allows teachers to create infographics using visually appealing, engaging, interactive content. Using this webtool, the teacher proposed different activities for both the face-to-face and live (real-time) online sessions. These online sessions became very frequent during remote teaching due to the COVID pandemic. Miss Angela was able to elicit the students' reactions both individually and in groups. In this way, oracy was addressed and developed using technology tools, in addition to writing skills and skills for using digital learning technologies.

THE TEACHER INTERVIEW

The focus of the interview was on the teacher's perceptions about the use of digital technologies in CLIL, as well as her perceptions of her students' reactions to digitally enhanced CLIL activities. The interview with Miss Angela was conducted following the implementation of her action-research project and was part of completing two of the last three steps in the process—evaluating the results of the actions taken and identifying a new problem or question. She stated that one of the chief benefits of the postgraduate course on CLIL was that it helped increase her expertise on how to conduct action research and improve her planning skills. She also commented on the use of a digital log, such as the one she implemented within the web-based tool Sutori, to help her reflect on her own teaching style and the strategies and techniques she used with her learners. Doing so helped Miss Angela identify possible weaknesses in her approach and targeted

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the specific and continuous professional development she needed from a long-term perspective. Miss Angela stated, "The use of digital in daily teaching is a must, in my opinion" (Teacher interview, Q1).

Miss Angela also noted that she thinks about the use of digital tools in her teaching activity continually. With reference to digital storytelling, she indicated that by using digital tools she could build in 100% interactivity, thereby facilitating cooperation, mediation, and activities that were perceived as fun among the children. Relative to her own experience with digital learning tools, she confirmed that "[o]nce you've gained all the mastery you need with storytelling (of course, it's not simply reading a book), you love the transposition into the digital" (Teacher interview, Q3). She also liked traditional storytelling, which she defined as "romantic and magical" (Teacher interview, Q2), but she felt that digital storytelling offered an added value. However, she noted that she would not opt for a comparison between traditional and digital storytelling; rather, she thought that the two forms provided different opportunities for learning. According to Miss Angela, digital storytelling can enhance creativity, critical thinking, and collaborative skills, the so-called 21st-century skills.

INFORMAL DISCUSSION WITH LEARNERS

Considering the students' young age, the researcher wanted to make the discussion very natural and informal, so she was introduced to the children as one of the teacher's friends. Learners were allowed to speak in either English or Italian. The following quotations that were originally in Italian have been translated into English. The learners' comments during the informal discussion were very enthusiastic and indicated that they loved learning new concepts in the digital world. As one learner told Miss Angela:

> Miss, I learnt better [with digital learning technologies] in English. I had fun when I opened the many links in Genially and when you taught us about London, it was beautiful. No doubt at all! London! London Calling module! I love the Queen and her role, and all around and about her, the guards, the jewels of the crown, the Prince who died when very old. And, thanks to your lesson now I'm looking forward to visiting London. I'm so curious right now. I know all the monuments by heart!
>
> *(Discussion, E. P.)*

The quote refers to an activity about London that required the use of different webtools to discover the city, answer polls and quizzes, create a story, and complete other activities. The use of digital devices and tools was much appreciated by the pupils, as the following

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comment also highlights: "I loved the theatre plays and the interactive games on the IWB [interactive white blackboard] and digital devices" (Discussion, L.A.). The following comments show how excited the children were about digital storytelling:

> But, if I have to choose one story, I would say your version of the Three Little Pigs, especially for the fun storytelling you arranged. We loved all the stories because we loved the way you rearranged them. Just think about "the real story of the three little pigs." When we saw the salami and ham we rolled on the floor laughing! Or when you performed Snow White and pretended to faint onto the ground after biting the apple! We were in Year 1, and we laughed out loud seeing you on the floor.
>
> *(Discussion, A.T.)*

The playful dimension of the teaching process conveyed through theatre plays and role-plays was also effective and much appreciated by the students. They had fun with traditional storytelling, roleplaying and acting, and with digital storytelling, as the following comments show:

R. P.: "My favorite time was the time we spent preparing the plays you wrote for us, we had a lot of fun learning with simple structures and short discussions."

S. D.: "I loved when we had to search for <Just Dance> on the WB and we danced altogether. It was so fun, because we were the ones choosing. And we were all together."

G. C.: "Miss, I really loved London Calling, I learnt better in English, I had fun when I opened the many links in Genially and when you taught us about London, it was beautiful!!! I love listening...especially when I learn and understand English!"

V. S.: "I like Miss Angela, she is nice and teaches us how to study while playing and having a lot of fun. All her lessons are interesting, she makes us interact with her and between us. We can watch videos and we sometimes study English while listening to music."

V. C.: "I love the way she speaks English so well, her lessons with IWB and songs, I love when she calls the mute dictation. And all the theatre plays we do with her."

T. C.: "Miss Angela is a teacher completely different from the other ones. She teaches us while having us playing games, singing and acting. With her learning English is great fun! I really loved the theatre plays, the works on IWB, and the lessons about London."

A. T.: "I found out new things. I loved the theatre plays and the interactive games on the IWB and digital devices!"

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The children's comments were very positive and enthusiastic about the use of digital technologies in the CLIL classroom for both learning new content and acquiring new language skills in English. The perceptions focused on how much fun they had learning in Miss Angela's classroom.

IMPLICATIONS FOR POLICY, PRACTICE, AND FUTURE RESEARCH

The use of digital learning technologies, which was crucial during the COVID-19 pandemic, should be supported and facilitated not only for fully remote teaching as happened during emergency distance schooling all over the world but in many future educational scenarios. The digital learning technologies that were included in the case study in this action-research project seemed to be very powerful in terms of the level of engagement experienced by the students, their interest, and their enjoyment, which are essential ingredients of deep learning. The CLIL activities offered by the teacher to her primary school students included numerous examples of digital technologies. As general implications for educational policies, this study suggests that a larger use of webtools, repositories, apps, and learning technologies should be fostered for enhancing language education and CLIL and for encouraging the students' participation, engagement, and better learning outcomes.

To implement these technologies successfully requires that teachers have knowledge of the digital technologies and know how to use them in the classroom. These are concerns that ongoing teacher professional development should address. To make certain that teachers get the support they need, policies concerning the use of digital technologies need to be developed. These policies need to focus on both access to the technologies and continuing teacher professional development on their use. There are teachers like Miss Angela who naturally gravitate to exploring digital technologies with their young learners and other teachers who need more direction and support.

In terms of practice, the study indicates that the use of digital storytelling and learning technologies, in general, seems to be much appreciated by the students as a powerful way to learn content and use the foreign language with fun, facilitating a multimodal and immersive learning environment and enhancing both oracy and literacy skills, which are often difficult to foster through digital technologies, especially in remote teaching. Providing teachers with guidance in the use of applications, such as the ones employed by Miss Angela (Sutori, StoryJumper, and so on), will be important for using these strategies with success. More experienced and creative teachers can share their techniques with other educators. For example, the experience that Miss Angela documented in her learning

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diary could benefit other teachers, both in her school and beyond. Adding to the inventory of applications and techniques for a wide range of content areas, language skills, and grade levels would also be helpful.

The research fields related to CALL, MALL, and the recent ICALL, which takes advantage of Artificial Intelligence, are areas of research with huge potential in terms of learning technologies for language education and for CLIL with young learners. Therefore, more studies should be encouraged, especially related to fostering the link between theoretical frameworks and practical inputs. Particularly useful for teachers of CLIL are research projects that take the shape of action research, combining research and teaching activities at the same time, such as the project described in this chapter.

In summary, a case study on digital storytelling at the primary school level that was developed within a postgraduate CLIL course showed that children are engaged and attracted by the use of webtools in their learning pathways. They like creating simple digital stories using webtools proposed by the teacher. They appreciate the switch from traditional roleplaying and storytelling to digital storytelling, which represents an added value. This study demonstrates that the use of learning technologies for CLIL at the primary level can deeply impact the teaching and learning process, fostering oracy and oral skills with enthusiasm, engagement, and fun, which are essential ingredients of deep learning.

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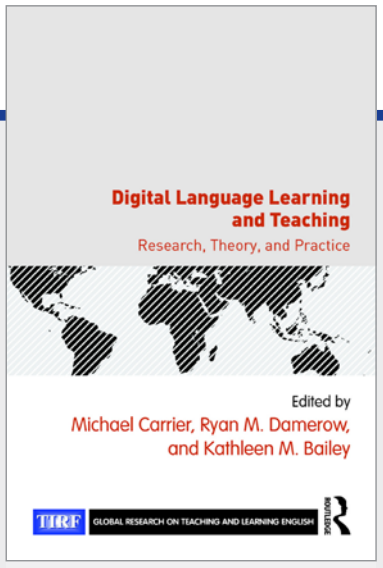
CHAPTER

4

REMOTE TEACHING

A CASE STUDY IN TEACHING ENGLISH TO PRIMARY SCHOOL CHILDREN IN URUGUAY VIA VIDEOCONFERENCING

Graham Stanley



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Graham Stanley

Excerpted from *Digital Language Learning and Teaching*

INTRODUCTION

The *Plan Ceibal en Ingles* (Ceibal English project) in Uruguay, managed by Plan Ceibal in partnership with the British Council, was developed because of a shortage of English teachers in the country. Experienced young-learner teachers from elsewhere (Montevideo, Argentina, the UK, and the Philippines) are brought into the classroom remotely via videoconferencing technology to teach once a week and to help the children's existing classroom teacher (CT), who knows little or no English, teach two follow-up lessons consisting mainly of practice activities. The classroom teachers are also learning English to enable them to better teach the children in the future.

Through research into pedagogy and practice and through evaluation and feedback from the children, teachers, and other involved parties, much is being learned about this unique way of teaching, which requires the remote teacher (RT) to present and model the language and the classroom teacher to manage the class. The demands on the remote teachers are high; they have to project themselves through the camera into the classroom, engage the learners, and manage a variety of technology, including the videoconferencing equipment and a laptop with a variety of software. The RT presents language, practices pronunciation, shows songs and videos, plays games, and so on. Despite these challenges, what has been found is that the same good practice that applies to the standard primary English classroom also applies in this setting, although many tried-and-tested young-learner activities and routines have to be adapted to fit the special circumstances. Plan Ceibal was originally founded in 2008 to implement the OLPC (One Laptop per Child) program in Uruguay (see Fullan, Watson, & Anderson, 2013, for an overview), but it has expanded considerably since then, with the teaching of English taking center stage. Brovetto (2017) provides the best introduction to the background of English teaching in Uruguay and to the Plan Ceibal English project.

The piloting and initial stages of the Ceibal English project have been fully documented by Banegas (2013). His paper has details of the project design and implementation. An update to this report, discussing the expansion phases leading to the universalization of English in state primary schooling (Grades 4–6) can be found in Stanley (2015). This case study focuses more on the practice and pedagogy of remote teaching as it relates to the project and examines how this model could be exported to other contexts.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The teaching of English is being introduced to "ever more and ever younger children" (Garton, Copland, & Burns, 2011, p. 3) and is now compulsory in primary education in

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many countries around the world (Nikolov, 2009; Pinter, 2006). Uruguay is no exception (see Brovetto, 2017, for context), with the right to study English being part of primary schooling in the country since 2008. In contrast to learning and teaching contexts in other countries, however, a shortage of qualified and experienced English teachers has led to the development of an innovative solution using videoconferencing to supplement the face-to-face teaching.

Similar to the case in many other countries, a broadly communicative language teaching (CLT) approach, as defined by Richards and Rodgers (1986), has been adopted, with its focus on proficiency rather than a mastery of structures. Because CLT was originally designed for small groups of adults being taught in well-equipped classrooms, many have pointed out that care needs to be taken when this approach is adapted to overcrowded classrooms of young learners. (See, for example, Enever & Moon, 2009; Littlewood, 2007; and McKay, 2003.)

Suggestions have been made that weak forms of CLT should be adopted and that these need to be adapted to local contexts (Nikolov, 2009; Nunan, 2003). In Uruguay, the shortage of qualified English teachers and the fact that 95% of the existing primary school teachers have a very low proficiency level in English meant that an innovative solution was required to keep the promise to make English a mandatory subject for all pupils in primary Grades 4, 5, and 6 (9- to 12-year-olds).

The solution that was developed in Uruguay was to make use of technology to help bridge the gap. Computer-assisted language learning (CALL) has come a long way since Levy (1997) defined it as "the search for and study of applications of the computer in language teaching and learning" (p. 1). Recent published research and case studies have shown that the use of technology in language teaching is supporting learners in more and more innovative ways (see, e.g., Motteram, 2013), especially in the young-learner classroom.

The use of videoconferencing was proposed as the solution in Uruguay, partly because videoconferencing was already being installed in schools and was used for a number of educational projects. Videoconferencing occurs when point-to-point communication is established between two or more computers equipped with video cameras. The use of videoconferencing means that the pupils can interact by speaking and listening to the remote teacher. Early studies examining the use of videoconferencing for language learning (Grasinger, 1999; Jacobs & Rodgers, 1997) describe both technical and pedagogical issues that need to be overcome and highlight the affordances that videoconferencing allows. With specialized equipment, for example, it is possible to control a camera remotely, to zoom in on particular students, and to clearly distinguish individuals.

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Technically, Jacobs and Rodgers (1997) stated that videoconferencing was "subject to more obstacles than its physical equivalent" such as "the number of students identifiable on a TV monitor" (p. 293) and that features such as the zoom and controlling of the camera remotely were "awkward and distracting" (p. 293). Grasinger (1999) noted that changes to the lighting and compensation for the "slight time lag between the spoken word and reception to and from the distant site" (p. 71) had to be made. Jacobs and Rodgers (1997) stress the importance of having technical support available on both ends of the call and of having at least one technician who "speaks the other's language" (p. 297). They pointed out the importance of having "an ordinary telephone link between the two teaching rooms involved" (p. 297) in case the videoconferencing link does not work.

Brovetto (2017) highlights three types of problems that have been documented by researchers related to the use of this technology (O'Dowd & Ritter, 2006; O'Dowd & Ware, 2009): delays in transmission of the sound, altered face-to-face communication, and psychological distance. The first of these issues is mainly caused by poor connectivity. The second relates to the limitations of videoconferencing technology to cater to "embodied" language learning/teaching features, such as eye contact, lip reading, gestures, and other examples of body language. As Brovetto (2017) points out, these features are often distorted or are not clear when using this technology for communication. These challenges can often lead to interruption, misunderstandings, or a lack of understanding. The third documented problem concerns the psychological distance that can occur between those participating in a lesson conducted via videoconferencing. This psychological gap, which is not present in traditional face-to-face education, is something that Moore (1989) sees as inherent in any form of distance learning. The physical distance between learners and the educator can lead to disrupted communication and misunderstanding.

In order to mitigate problems, there is a need for teachers to become familiar with equipment through training so that the experience of the students is not diminished by unnecessary waiting for the teacher to activate a feature of the equipment. Some of the problems mentioned can be minimized by using reliable, high-quality equipment, and further details of how this goal has been achieved in Uruguay can be found in Stanley (2015). This use of improved technical conditions to minimize problems and increase the likelihood of a better real-time image and sound quality in videoconferencing for language learning has been recently documented in the literature (Katz, 2001; Phillips, 2010; Pim, 2013). There are also benefits of bringing specialist English teachers into the classroom via videoconferencing for modeling language as well as direct teaching (Pim, 2013).

As far as approaches to teaching are concerned, Grasinger (1999) asked, "How does pedagogy change when two classrooms are involved and students are at a distance?" (p. 70).

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The result was that she was "greatly encouraged by the ease of use with which interactive video can be used and the positive reception ... by the students" (p. 71). She also noted that with slight modification, she could "use familiar teaching strategies that were effective and that promoted students' learning" (p. 73). Jacobs and Rodgers (1997) found that teachers "stressed the need to prepare much more than for a traditional class" (p. 300). They noted that some teachers changed the way they taught to make use of the new medium. Where motivation is concerned, Grasinger (1999) found that "although students can be motivated by interactive video conferencing, enthusiasm comes most easily in face-to-face classroom situations and in meetings with the student one-to-one" (p. 71).

More recently, O'Dowd (2006) has mentioned the great potential that exists for language learning using videoconferencing. But he mentions that there are few documented examples of good practice.

It can also be claimed that the Ceibal English project is pioneering a new form of *blended learning*, which refers to any combination of face-to-face teaching with computer technology (Tomlinson & Whittaker, 2013). Tomlinson and Whittaker (2013) also state that there are many different blends of teaching and learning. The remote teaching as used in the Ceibal English project in Uruguay can be considered a new blend of this approach.

TEACHING VIA VIDEOCONFERENCING

As stated previously, the Ceibal English project makes use of a variation of blended learning. It combines *synchronous* (i.e., real-time) face-to-face team teaching via videoconferencing using an Internet connection with follow-up asynchronous (i.e., not in real time) work using a learning management system (LMS) called Crea2 (Plan Ceibal's branded version of Schoology).

The videoconferencing in use on the project involves high-quality commercial videoconferencing equipment similar to that more commonly found in business videoconferencing contexts. The main reason for this choice is reliability. The business-grade fiber-optic Internet connection ensures that most scheduled classes are taught as planned, which means few class cancellations. The second advantage relates to quality. High-definition cameras and large screens (42 inches) mean that the remote teacher's virtual presence is as close to having the teacher in the classroom as is currently possible. On the other side of the connection, the high quality means the remote teacher can easily identify the school children and can zoom in or out on specific pupils when required.

The quality of the image helps the establishment of an affective bond between the remote teacher and the children. Although there are as yet no formal research studies available on

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the effect of using lower quality equipment on the affective bond between students and remote teachers, anecdotal evidence and teacher testimony collected during the course of the Ceibal English project do indicate that this issue can be an important factor. The British Council has had experience making do with lower quality Internet connections and/or temporarily teaching using software-based solutions (similar to Skype). Teachers holding classes in these contexts reported that the deterioration in image quality meant they were unable to identify the children by name or distinguish between them on the screen. At the other end of the connection, the children could not properly identify the remote teacher. Fewer classes were also held because of connectivity problems. In these cases, when videoconferencing equipment was finally installed and working, a considerably positive difference was noted in how the children and remote teachers felt about their English classes.

Teachers do find teaching via videoconferencing challenging, however. They are expected to "juggle using a remote control, a laptop, software and/or a white-board and a camera all at the same time as interacting with the students and trying to make it look effortless" (Alexander, 2015, p. 6). Alexander (2015) also points out that the biggest challenge of all was "recreating a 'normal' or traditional classroom" (p. 5), as remote teaching does not allow a teacher to arrange the seating or organize students easily to do pair or group work. Alexander also mentions the difficulty of remote teachers monitoring students, which a teacher would find easy to do in a traditional face-to-face classroom setting.

TEAM TEACHING

It has been stated that perhaps "the most crucial aspect of this Project and the greatest determination of success is the relationship between the classroom teacher (CT) and the remote teacher (RT)" (Kaiser, 2015, p. 8). In order for this relationship to be successful, the RT should be in contact with the CT frequently. Hindley (2015) stresses the need to do this in order to strengthen the bond between the remote and classroom teachers. She also mentions the importance of ongoing observation and communication of any "doubts regarding motivation or performance" (p. 13).

The RT and the CT work closely during lesson A, the videoconferencing lesson, where language is presented and where initial practice takes place. The CT takes most of the responsibility for classroom management, helping the RT, who presents the language and sets up initial language practice activities. In the next two lessons (B and C), the CT follows on from lesson A to further practice the language. In these two lessons, the CT works alone with the children, facilitating language practice in the classroom and helping the children with interactive grammar and vocabulary exercises. The children's written work

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is uploaded to Plan Ceibal's learning management system so the RT can see how the children are progressing, as well as correct this work.

The RT guides the program, which is driven by the content of lesson A. The CT and RT meet regularly online to coordinate classroom activities and discuss any adjustments to the lesson plan. They also share information about the students' progress, and the RT gives advice and support to the CT for classes B and C. CTs are paid extra for this remote lesson coordination, which is expected to take place on a weekly basis and which involves the RT and CT meeting outside normal classroom time. The coordination takes place in Spanish because most of the CTs do not speak much or any English themselves. Experience on the project has shown that effective coordination (either synchronous, asynchronous, or a combination of the two) is fundamental if a successful language learning environment is to be established. Feedback from teachers who establish a good working relationship through regular coordination meetings indicates that this is the case. Regular coordination, especially when synchronous, allows the teachers to build better rapport with each other and with the children and enables the two teachers to better work as a team.

Classroom teachers are the gatekeepers and can influence how pupils respond to the classes. As such, they play a crucial role in the performance of the project. Kaiser (2015) states that "the greatest variable that can affect the quality of instruction in this project … is the participation of the classroom teacher" (p. 8). When CTs actively contribute in the class, there is observably more active participation from a higher percentage of students. The key, as Hindley (2015) points out, lies in the RT creating a sense of community, which is "more difficult than in a face-to-face situation" (p. 13), but is not impossible. In order to build a sense of community, Hindley believes the RT needs to share the same objectives as the CTs and directors of the school to work together in order to "create a space where the children feel they can try to speak, listen and understand English" (p. 17).

CTs play a critical role in the classroom management. Kaiser (2015) notes that when a CT "was less involved, participation was more limited to fewer students who already had the personal motivation to learn and use English" (p. 11).

Remote English teaching in Uruguay is an example of a new and innovative pedagogical model (Carrier, Milanovic, Nunan, & Bailey, 2014). However, despite the differences between standard teaching and the technical innovations, the Ceibal English project model is centered on the idea of replicating as far as possible the best practices of teaching and learning in a face-to-face, young-learner communicative classroom. Evidence of this goal can be seen when looking at the lesson plans and materials.

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CURRICULUM, LESSON PLANS, AND MATERIALS

Although English was being taught in some primary schools in Uruguay before the Ceibal English program began, an original curriculum was developed to meet the needs of the local context and the new delivery method. There are three different levels, one for each grade of the program (4, 5, and 6), each divided into a core syllabus of 30 weeks with additional lesson plans available if needed. The curriculum has been designed to take students from A0 to A2 level on the CEFR (Common European Framework of Reference for Languages). Care has been taken to design materials that are both relevant and meaningful to the lives of the pupils, with references to Uruguayan culture, history, and natural resources embedded in the plans. As such, the lesson plans have been contextualized, which was noted by Kaiser (2015), who commended the design of the curriculum, as demonstrating that "you can successfully develop a national English language curriculum including cultural elements from English-speaking cultures, local customs, and the rest of the world" (p. 15).

The communicative nature of the methodology can be found in the lesson plans, which generally follow the established PPP (presentation, practice, and production) methodology. This approach has its advantages, in that it is one of the easiest language teaching methods to grasp, which is important because the CT is not a teacher of English.

No textbooks are provided for the children, who are expected to use their XO laptops and interact with materials, write, etc., using Crea2. As Alexander (2015) points out, when there is poor Internet service at the school or a lack of computers that work in class, then children can struggle.

The lesson plans are scripted, which helps the CTs follow because they usually have a low level of English. As mentioned previously, to counter the apparent rigidity of the lesson plans and to enable successful language learning conditions to be in place, the two teachers involved are encouraged to work as a team and need to coordinate the classroom activity by meeting on a regular basis. This means that if a lesson plan is substantially changed, then it is the RT's responsibility to ensure that the CT is comfortable with the changes to the lesson plan script for lesson A (i.e., the remote class) and to discuss what this step means for the two follow-up classes (lessons B and C). The materials that support the lesson plans are a combination of specially produced learning objects and materials that have been repurposed from existing websites, such as the British Council's LearnEnglish Kids (http://learnenglishkids.britishcouncil.org/). In particular, the materials include a variety of songs, games, and videos to help stimulate young learners of this age group.

At the end of 2014, the lesson plans and materials were substantially revised based on feedback gained through surveys of RTs, CTs, and children. A further major revision was

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also carried out at the end of 2015. This work included reducing the complexity of the instructions, thereby simplifying the lesson plans to make them easier to understand for CTs for levels 1 and 2. More thorough revision was carried out on level-3 lesson plans, where CLIL (content and language integrated learning) is featured. The focus of the revision to level 3 was on making it easier for RTs not familiar with CLIL to better understand the background to this approach to teaching. These changes were complemented by the addition of an introductory CLIL module in the online training course for RTs.

CONCLUSION

In the external evaluation of the pedagogical aspects of the project conducted at the end of 2013, it was stated that "the project has in all major respects been very successful … and there are a number of good reasons for this" (Wilson, 2014, p. 5). Also highlighted was "the scope and ambition of the project," "the innovative nature," and "addressing a big challenge with big ideas" (p. 5).

In his report, Kaiser (2015) compliments the variety of English used by remote teachers (from Uruguay and other parts of South America), native English speakers, and other world English users (from the Philippines). That variety "mirrors the use of English that today's Uruguayan school children will encounter today and in the future, both personally and professionally" (p. 10).

The project's impact is being measured by an ongoing evaluation program. The results of the first evaluation were published in Goyeneche, Coimbra, Marconi, Mendez, and Brovetto (2014). The children studying English in the program were tested in July and then again in December 2013. Particular attention was paid to a comparison of the results between those students who started in March 2013 and those who joined the project in July 2013. A distinction between children from different sociocultural contexts was also made. Ongoing evaluation of the pupils has shown that significant progress is being made in all grades (4, 5, and 6) and across all social groups (Brovetto, 2017). Particularly interesting to note is that the data showed that "rather than contributing to widening social gaps in educational achievement, the program could contribute to reducing them" (Brovetto, 2017, p. 68).

In their 1997 study, Jacobs and Rodgers (1997) found that "videoconferencing challenges the tutor more than the learner" (p. 302). They stressed the importance of the "hands-on experience of doing" and the idea that "no amount of guidance … can substitute for the actual practice" (p. 302). Despite the current indicators of success of Plan Ceibal, its organizers understand that as the project changes in scale and moves forward, new challenges will appear.

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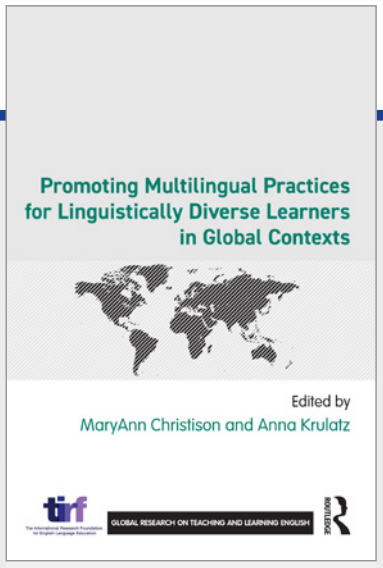
CHAPTER

5

METALINGUISTIC AWARENESS AND MULTILINGUALISM

A CASE STUDY OF YOUNG ENGLISH LEARNERS

Diana Walla and Eliane Lorenz



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Promoting Multilingual Practices for Linguistically Diverse Learners in Global Contexts

Edited by MaryAnn Christison and Anna Krulatz

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INTRODUCTION

Most educational contexts worldwide are increasingly multilingual. Many children grow up in families that speak more than one language at home and are already exposed to multiple languages before entering school. This development is also visible in Norway, whereby 2022, 19% of children between the ages of six and 15 nationally were either immigrants or children of immigrant parents (Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2022). During the first years of schooling, all children are in contact with several languages, as a minimum of one foreign language (typically English), but often even two or more form part of the schools' curricula (see, e.g., Drachmann et al., 2023). In addition, official European language policy documents put an emphasis on plurilingual education that should be characterized by respecting and valuing linguistic as well as cultural diversity (Council of Europe, 2022; Drachmann et al., 2023).

ISSUES THAT MOTIVATED THE RESEARCH

In 2020, Norway introduced a new English subject curriculum (Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2020) that recognized multilingualism as an asset at school, explicitly acknowledging that students in Norway may know languages other than the majority language, Norwegian, and that this knowledge can be a resource for additional language learning. At the same time, research has shown that while many English teachers in Norway hold positive views about multilingualism, they do not necessarily employ multilingual teaching practices in their classrooms or systematically draw on students' prior knowledge of other languages (Brevik et al., 2020; Krulatz & Dahl, 2016; Lorenz et al., 2021). Because the curriculum itself does not provide specific guidance for teachers on *how* they can help their students make use of their full linguistic repertoires, that responsibility falls to the teachers, which has implications for teacher education programs and professional development (Krulatz et al., 2023). Identifying specific ways in which multilingualism can be utilized as a resource that can be shared with teachers can benefit both teacher education and language education in schools (Krulatz & Christison, 2023).

For students with multilingual backgrounds, metalinguistic awareness has been identified as one key area that can lead to positive transfer from their first languages (L1s) or second languages (L2s) (Ammar et al., 2010; Woll, 2018). *Metalinguistic awareness* can be defined as the ability to focus and reflect on language as an object and to switch the focus between form and meaning (Jessner, 2014). In essence, metalinguistic awareness goes beyond understanding the meaning of words or utterances and adds an abstract dimension to it. Previous research has examined different aspects of metalinguistic

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awareness, such as phonological awareness, word awareness, and syntactic awareness (Sanz, 2019). Roehr-Brackin (2018) pointed out that for language users who are bi- or multilingual, metalinguistic awareness also includes the ability to compare and contrast the different languages in one's repertoire, referred to by Jessner (2014) as *multilingual awareness*. This additional quality of metalinguistic awareness might be the explanation for why bi- and especially multilinguals are assumed to possess higher degrees of metalinguistic awareness than their monolingual counterparts (e.g., Hopp et al., 2020; Jessner, 2008).

In fact, many studies have shown a positive correlation between bi- and multilingualism and metalinguistic awareness (Bialystok et al., 2014; Jessner, 2014; Tellier, 2013). While all young learners show an increase in metalinguistic awareness through childhood and adolescence, Tellier (2013) found that the difference between metalinguistic awareness in young monolingual and bilingual learners became more marked over time. More recent studies have focused on instructional methods that foster metalinguistic awareness across languages with positive results (Hopp et al., 2020; Tellier & Roehr-Brackin, 2017).

In the Norwegian context, metalinguistic awareness in young learners has largely been studied within the field of Norwegian as a second language (Kulbrandstad, 2008; Randen & Danbolt, 2018), with little research on metalinguistic awareness in the English as a foreign language (EFL) classroom. Within the EFL context, one recent study (Walla, 2024) assessed metalinguistic awareness among 120 students in Grades 5 to 7 at a Norwegian primary school using an adapted version of the MAT-2 test of metalinguistic ability by Pinto et al. (1999). The MAT-2 is a comprehensive test of metalinguistic ability, targeting a variety of different types of metalinguistic awareness. Walla's (2024) adaptation was a shortened version administered as a written test. The study found that after grade level and academic proficiency were controlled for, being multilingual was associated with higher performance on the test.

The present study contributes to further addressing the existing gap in research by examining metalinguistic awareness in young learners using meta-linguistic tasks focused on English alongside a think-aloud protocol (Ammar et al., 2010; Woll, 2018). The use of an oral task with a think-aloud protocol gave the participants the opportunity to engage in more detailed metalinguistic reflection than was allowed for in a written test.

The study examined metalinguistic awareness among 12 Grade 6 students in Norway. Half the students had Norwegian as their only home language (referred to as the L1 Norwegian group) and half spoke other home languages in addition to Norwegian (referred to as the L1 Other group). An additional aim was to identify differences and

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similarities with respect to metalinguistic awareness between the two groups. We recognize that all Norwegians can be considered multilingual based on their knowledge of Norway's two different written standards for Norwegian, their knowledge of English, and their ability to understand the other Scandinavian languages, Danish and Swedish (e.g., Haukås, 2022). However, for the purpose of this study, we considered the L1 Norwegian group to be emerging bilinguals acquiring English as an L2, and the L1 Other group to be emerging multilinguals acquiring English as at least an L3. We used the students' reported home languages (see Table 5.1) as a basis for the group assignment.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This study was guided by the following two research questions (RQ):

1. What types of metalinguistic awareness do primary school students in Norway display?
2. Are there differences between the two groups of students, that is, the L1 Norwegian and the L1 Other students?

RESEARCH METHODS

CONTEXT

This study was part of the longitudinal project, *Acquisition of English in the Multilingual Classroom* (2018–2023), which investigated the acquisition of English by multilingual learners in Norway and how they developed through the years of attending primary school. The project members collaborated closely with several English teachers at a primary school in Norway. In this paper, we exclusively focus on 12 students and how they performed on two different metalinguistic awareness tasks.

PARTICIPANTS

For the present study, we relied on data collected from 12 students, aged 11 to 12, who were attending sixth grade at a Norwegian primary school at the time of data collection. The students were selected in consultation with their teacher to ensure that the sample was heterogeneous with regard to students' home languages. Prior to the study, the parents or guardians had given written consent for their children to participate in various data collection tasks, including group activities that would be audio recorded. Six of the participants grew up with Norwegian as their only home language. The remaining six were also speakers of Norwegian but used either one or more additional languages at home. The former students were labeled L1 Norwegian group and the latter the L1 Other group

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(see Table 5.1).

ID	Gender	Group	Pair	Home Language(s)	Length of recordings per pair (min:sec)	Score 1 (adapted MAT-2 test)	Score 2 (morpho-syntax task)
4023	female	L1 Other	1	Bisaya, Norwegian	34:33:00	40	-
4037	female	L1 Other	1	Arabic, Norwegian, English	45		32
4016	female	L1 Other	2	Lithuanian	21:34	35.5	27
4032	female	L1 Other	2	Arabic, Norwegian, English		58	-
4012	male	L1 Other	3	French	20:41	-	-
4028	male	L1 Other	3	Hungarian, Romanian		53	36
4006	male	L1 Norwegian	4	Norwegian	23:24	50	31
4014	male	L1 Norwegian	4	Norwegian		58.5	23
4015	female	L1 Norwegian	5	Norwegian	16:22	42.5	26
4021	female	L1 Norwegian	5	Norwegian		42	20
4013	female	L1 Norwegian	6	Norwegian	18:56	-	26
4020	female	L1 Norwegian	6	Norwegian		42	20

TABLE 5.1 Overview of Participants

Prior to data collection, the students completed a language questionnaire in the form of an age-appropriate language passport (Morgia, 2018; see also Walla, 2023). While four of the six students from the L1 Norwegian and four of the six students from the L1 Other group reported being able to understand at least a little bit of either Swedish or Danish, they did not report these as home languages or as languages spoken by their family members. We prioritized productive skills and regular use (i.e., language use at home or for daily communication purposes) in assigning participants to the linguistic groups and chose to focus on the reported home language(s) to assign students to groups. The students were placed in pairs in consultation with their teacher so that they formed three L1 Norwegian pairs and three L1 Other pairs.

Ten of the 12 participants in this study had taken part in a previous study on metalinguistic awareness for the *Acquisition of English in the Multilingual Classroom* project (Walla, 2024). Two students (4012, 4013) were absent on the test day. The previous study took a quantitative approach by adapting the MAT-2 test of metalinguistic ability by Pinto et al.

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(1999). The scores received on this test (see Score 1 in Table 5.1) are relevant in the discussion as they are compared with the findings of the current study. In the written adapted MAT-2 test, the students could receive scores between 0 and 107. Out of all students (n = 120), 10.5 was the lowest and 74 the highest score obtained. In addition, nine of the 12 students also participated in a study that employed a test of morphosyntax (Walla, 2023). This was a test assessing knowledge of verbal grammar in English, where participants could receive a score between 0 and 42 (out of 110 participants, the lowest score received was five; the highest score obtained was 41); three participants of the current study were absent on the day the test was administered (4012, 4023, 4032). These scores (see Score 2 in Table 5.1) are also referred to during the discussion, as they may give an indication about the students' grammatical knowledge of English.

DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURES

In total, three English metalinguistic awareness tasks were administered with six pairs of students. For the current study, we only report on the first two tasks, namely (a) an activity targeting phonemic segmentation and (b) a task targeting grammatical awareness.

Task 1, the phonemic segmentation task, was adapted from the MAT-2 (Pinto et al., 1999). Each student pair was presented with six pairs of colored flash cards, each with one word written on it. The word pairs were *bound-sound*, *bound-bond*, *poppy-puppy*, *fever-forever*, *casket-basket*, and *ship-sheep*. The purpose of the task was to see whether the students could break down the individual sounds (phonemes) in each word pair to identify the common and differing sounds, and to prompt metalinguistic reflection about these similarities and differences. The word pairs were given to the students one after the other, with the following instructions: "We're going to show you some cards with words in English. The words have some similarities and some differences. Please talk about what you think is similar, and what you think is different." The script was used as a guide, rather than being read verbatim. The students read the words out loud, so that they heard the pronunciation in addition to seeing the orthographic form, for example, the words *bound* and *sound.* Depending on their initial responses, the students were further prompted to discuss how the words were alike or different (e.g., "So what do you think about the meanings? Is that sort of similar or is that very different?").

The items used in Task 2, the grammatical awareness task, had previously been employed as part of a written test (Walla, 2023). In the present task, the students were shown four different sentences each written on a colored flash card (see Sentences 1 to 4). Two of the sentences were target-like (grammatical), while the other two were non-target-like (ungrammatical). For the purpose of explaining the coding procedure below, non-target-like

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sentences are indicated with an asterisk here. The asterisks were not present on the cards shown to the students.

1 The girl with blue glasses plays a card game.
2 *After school can the sisters watch TV.
3 Last year the family traveled to Spain.
4 *The parents at the grocery store buy food.

The purpose of the grammatical awareness task was to see whether the students could identify non-target-like grammar in English, and to prompt meta-linguistic awareness on the grammaticality of the sentences. The students were given the following oral instructions: "We're going to show you some sentences in English. Some of these sentences have errors, and some are correct. Please tell us if you think there are any errors, and what you think the sentence should be in that case." The students read the sentences aloud so that they heard the sentences in addition to seeing them in the written form. As in the first task, the script was used as a guide rather than read verbatim, and the students were further prompted to discuss if the sentences were acceptable or not and how they could be improved.

The researchers used both English and Norwegian while administering the tasks, and the participants were allowed to use both English and Norwegian and encouraged to draw on any knowledge of other languages. Students in each pair were seated next to each other and across from the researcher(s). During each session, one teacher was present, sitting quietly a short distance away from the table. Occasionally, the teacher said something comforting or encouraging to the students or simply smiled or nodded to encourage them to work on the task. The teacher helped twice with translating words from Norwegian to English. The two tasks did not require any written responses from the students, but the students discussed them orally with each other and the researchers. This resulted in a think-aloud protocol. All sessions of the six pairs were audio recorded.

DATA ANALYSIS PROCEDURES

All six recordings were transcribed by the authors using ELAN (Version 6.3) (2022). Both English and Norwegian were used by the students. A native speaker of Norwegian supported the authors with the Norwegian utterances. Each task was scored based on the utterances that had been transcribed. The task scores relied on two different scoring procedures, which are outlined below.

While the word pairs for the phonemic segmentation task were taken from the MAT-2, the scoring procedure employed in this study differed from Pinto et al. (1999), which relied on the ability to define the words for the basis of the metalinguistic score. As the participants

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in this study were learners of English rather than native speakers, we chose to focus on other types of metalinguistic reflection (e.g., shifting focus between form and meaning, discussing formal features such as vowel length, and using metalanguage), as we did not expect the students to be familiar with all the words that were used. The finalized scoring grid outlined in Table 5.2 provides an overview of the three levels (Levels 0, 1, 2). The transcripts were read multiple times, relevant parts were highlighted, and a score in accordance with the scale detailed in Table 5.2 was assigned per word pair, with justifying comments added by the researchers.

Category	Score
Incorrect response	0
Correctly identifying common and differing phonemic elements	1
Correctly identifying common and differing phonemic elements metalinguistic reflection	2

TABLE 5.2 Detailed Scoring Procedure of Phonemic Segmentation Task

The range of possible scores for each word pair was 0–2, with a total possible range for this task of 0–12. While the ability to define the words in each word pair was not a factor in the score, we did note how many words each pair was able to define or translate into Norwegian, as this has some relevance for the discussion.

The grammatical awareness task was scored using an adapted version of Walla (2023) and Pinto et al. (1999). While Pinto et al.'s (1999) MAT-2 used a three-level scale (Levels 0, 1, 2) to score what they called *metalinguistic questions*, this scale does not account for whether participants can identify a sentence as grammatical or not (instead this is covered by a separate *linguistic question* with a binary score of 0 or 1). Our scale of 0–4 allowed us to assign a single score to each sentence that covered the linguistic question and metalinguistic question elements of the MAT-2. In addition, the range of possible scores differed for grammatically correct versus incorrect sentences. The transcripts were read multiple times, relevant parts were highlighted, and finally, a score in accordance with the scale detailed in Tables 5.3 and 5.4 was assigned per sentence, and justifying comments were added.

Category	Score
Incorrect response	0
Correctly stating if target-like (= good sentence) or non-target-like (= not a good sentence)	1
Correctly stating that target-like + explaining	2
Correctly stating that non-target-like + correcting/improving the sentence	2
Correctly stating that non-target-like + correcting + explaining	3
Correctly stating that non-target-like + correcting + explaining + metalinguistic reflection	4

TABLE 5.3 Detailed Scoring Procedure of Grammatical Awareness Task

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Sentence	Range of possible scores
S1 (target-like)	0–2
S2 (non-target-like word order)	0–4
S3 (target-like)	0–2
S4 (agreement error; non-target-like word order)	0–4
Total range	0–12

TABLE 5.4 Scoring Grid of Grammatical Awareness Task

In addition to the scores on each task, students' utterances in the think-aloud protocol were counted and labeled as "Norwegian" or "English," depending on the respective language used. The utterances differed in length; some consisted of individual words only (i.e., *okay*, *yes*), while others represented longer phases of connected speech. Mostly, turn-taking defined utterance boundaries. In some cases, longer stretches of speech were split into separate utterances aligning with pauses or topic changes (for an exemplification, see Examples 5 to 9 in the "Discussion" section below).

FINDINGS

TASK 1: PHONEMIC SEGMENTATION

All six pairs achieved high scores on the phonemic segmentation task. Out of 12 possible points, the highest total score was 11, while the lowest total score was eight. There was no observable difference between the L1 Other pairs and the L1 Norwegian pairs. Table 5.5 provides an overview of the total scores along with the number of words from the word pairs that each pair was able to define or translate into Norwegian (out of 11 possible words).

The students' ability to identify the common and differing phonemic elements of each word pair was expected, given that by Grade 6, their basic literacy skills are established. The metalinguistic reflection each student pair engaged in is more relevant here. Each pair showed some degree of metalinguistic reflection, at the very least showing an ability to talk about similarity of form versus similarity of meaning. Some students were able to go beyond this and discuss phenomena such as polysemy (stating multiple meanings for some of the words), rhyming, vowel length, or inflection. There was some variation in the students' use of metalanguage. There was also variation in language use (English or Norwegian) and prior knowledge of the meanings of the words on the cards, but these did not contribute to the total score on the task and will instead be commented on in the "Discussion" section below.

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Pair	Group	Total score	# of definitions
1	L1 Other	11	10
2	L1 Other	8	8
3	L1 Other	11	9
4	L1 Norwegian	11	9
5	L1 Norwegian	9	4
6	L1 Norwegian	9	6

TABLE 5.5 Total Scores of Phonemic Segmentation Task Per Pair

A more detailed look at the scoring process for this task can be seen in Tables 5.6 and 5.7, which provide the scoring for one of the highest-scoring pairs, Pair 3 (Table 5.6), and for the lowest-scoring pair, Pair 2 (Table 5.7). Both student pairs were part of the L1 Other group. A score of 2 is accompanied by a comment summarizing the metalinguistic reflection, while a score of 1 and a lack of comment indicate that the pair correctly identified the similar and different sounds/letters but that no metalinguistic reflection beyond this was observed.

TASK 2: GRAMMATICAL AWARENESS

The results of the grammatical awareness task revealed substantial differences across the students, most pronounced between the L1 Other students and their L1 Norwegian peers. The highest total score was 11 (pair 1), which was nearly the highest possible score for this task (12). The lowest total score was 2. Crucially, the three L1 Other pairs obtained the overall highest scores, whereas the L1 Norwegian students scored comparably lower (see Table 5.8).

Pair	Word pair	Score	Comment
3	1. bound-sound	2	Noted that they rhyme
3	2. bound-bond	2	"like if you have an 'O' and an 'U' (...) one after another (...) they make like a new sound"
3	3. poppy-puppy	2	Discussed the difference in meaning despite the similarity of form
3	4. forever-fever	1	
3	5. basket-casket	2	Said they rhyme, mentioned similarity in meaning, pointed to multiple meanings of "basket" (Norwegian kurv but also basketball)
3	6. ship-sheep	2	Mentioned vowel length and referred to the fact that the letters "E" and "I" have different names in Norwegian and English
	TOTAL SCORE	11	

TABLE 5.6 Detailed Scores and Comments for the L1 Other Pair 3

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Pair	Word pair	Score	Comment
2	1. bound-sound	1	
2	2. bound-bond	1	
2	3. poppy-puppy	1	
2	4. forever-fever	1	
2	5. basket-casket	2	Identified that there's similarity in the meanings: "We can put things inside of both"
2	6. ship-sheep	2	Mentioned vowel length as a difference, but without metalanguage
	TOTAL SCORE	8	

TABLE 5.7 Detailed Scores and Comments for the L1 Other Pair 2

Tables 5.9 and 5.10 provide a more detailed perspective of the scores reached per sentence for Pair 1, who received the highest scores of all pairs, and Pair 6, who received the lowest total score. Crucially, the former correctly identified all target and non-target-like sentences and also managed to provide corrections for those which were initially incorrect. The students in this pair were overall rather talkative and showed some explicit knowledge of metalanguage by justifying their responses with grammatical terms such as *question*, or *sentence* (see Table 5.9). The opposite was true for Pair 6 (see Table 5.10). These students were generally rather quiet and said very little. They exclusively used English when communicating but expressed insecurity throughout this task by repeatedly saying *I don't know*.

Pair	Sentence	Score	Comment
1	1 The girl with blue glasses plays a card game.	2	Correctly identified that sentence is target-like; still suggested an improvement: is playing
1	2 After school can the sisters watch TV.	4	Correctly identified that something was wrong; sounded like a question, but the question mark was missing; suggestion to remove can or to move can to a new position, namely after the sisters; grammatical terms used: question, question mark, sentence, period

Pair	Group	Total score
1	L1 Other	11
2	L1 Other	8
3	L1 Other	10
4	L1 Norwegian	5
5	L1 Norwegian	2
6	L1 Norwegian	4

TABLE 5.8 Total Scores of Grammatical Awareness

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Pair	Sentence	Score	Comment
1	3 Last year the family traveled to Spain.	2	Agreed that it is an acceptable sentence, nothing wrong with it, would still like to add something, but no idea what to add
1	4 The parents at the grocery store buys food.	3	Agreed that it was not an acceptable sentence; 4037 talked a lot about parents, then produced some sentences with are buying food; 4023 hesitantly said the parents and buys doesn't match; in the end 4037 said: My parents are at the grocery store. Then they are buying food. — subject verb agreement okay in this solution; lots of going back and forth and also going off topic (4037 is a very chatty student)

TABLE 5.9 Detailed Scores and Comments for the L1 Other Pair 1

Pair	Sentence	Score	Comment
6	1 The girl with blue glasses plays a card game.	2	Both agreed that the sentence is not wrong (no spelling mistake) but looks acceptable, say this in Norwegian
6	2 After school can the sisters watch TV.	0	First, both say that they don't know; one then suggests to perhaps add a preposition on (watch on TV), the other says that it looks acceptable and that nothing is wrong; responses all in Norwegian
6	3 Last year the family traveled to Spain.	0	One of them suggests saying only travel instead of traveled — basically, the correct sentence turns into an incorrect sentence, due to verb tense agreement mismatch (Last year the family travel to Spain); both agree that this new sentence is an acceptable sentence; responses in Norwegian again
6	4 The parents at the grocery store buy food.	0	Insecurity at first, they said they don't know; then one suggested to change buys into buying so the new sentence would be the parents at the grocery store buying food; i.e., the incorrect sentence remains incorrect (form of be missing); the other one suggests leaving the sentence as it was; conversation in Norwegian again
	TOTAL SCORE	2	

TABLE 5.10 Detailed Scores and Comments for L1 Norwegian Pair 6

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DISCUSSION

Whereas there were no systematic differences between the scores achieved by the L1 Norwegian and the L1 Other students in the phonemic segmentation task (although there were differences in knowledge of vocabulary), there were observable differences between the two groups in the task measuring grammatical awareness. On this task, the scores of the L1 Other students ranged from nearly twice as high to more than twice as high. One possible explanation for this difference is the content covered during the students' previous instruction in English and other languages. Phonemic segmentation has long been part of learning to read and write in the classroom context, and in Norway students work with this type of phonemic segmentation to map phonemes to graphemes in Norwegian and English classes from first grade onward (Sigmundsson et al., 2020). The previous subject curriculum for English (ENG1-03, which applied at the time the participants of this study were in Grade 2) specified that by the end of Grade 2, students should be able to "listen for and use English phonemes through practical-aesthetic forms of expression" and "experiment with reading and writing English words, expressions, and basic sentences related to local surroundings and own interests" (Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2013, n.p.). In other words, students are familiar with these processes from very early on in their schooling.

Explicit grammar instruction, on the other hand, is much less consistent, and it is introduced in older grades. While the current subject curriculum (ENG01-04) suggests that by the end of primary school (Grade 7), students should be able to identify common word classes (Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2020), previous research suggests that many students enter secondary school without being able to do this (Askland, 2020; Garshol, 2019). This lack of ability to use metalanguage is visible in our data as well.

Irrespective of the generally high scores for Task 1 and the high scores of the L1 Other students for Task 2, overall the students' use of metalanguage was low, with only a few instances of more academic metalanguage being used (see Examples 1 to 3).[1] In several instances, the students appeared to struggle to find an appropriate word to describe a phenomenon (see Examples 4 and 5) or did not use any grammatical terminology.

EXAMPLE 1

Pair 3, phonemic segmentation task:

EL: SOUND and BOUND. What do you think?
4028: They **rhyme**!

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EXAMPLE 2

Pair 5, phonemic segmentation task:

EL: BOND. BOUND and BOND, yeah.
DW: Mhm.
EL: What do you think? *Hva tenker du*? ('What do you think?')
4015: mhhh
4015: *Det er liksom litt det samme bare at dem er (...) det høres litt ut som at dem er* ***bøyd*** *på forskjellige måte*. ('It's like a little bit the same just that they're (...) it sounds a little like they're **inflected** in different ways.')

EXAMPLE 3

Pair 1, grammatical awareness task:

4037: Either you could put a **question mark** here in it
4037: or you could just
4023: this can be a **question**.
4037: "After school the sisters watch TV"
EL: Okay. that's true
4037: and a **period**.

EXAMPLE 4

Pair 2, phonemic segmentation task (discussing POPPY-PUPPY):

EL: Yeah!
4032: and the 'o'
4032: and the 'u' and it's the same it's just
4032: **it's a different (...) ehm**
4032: **alphabet**
EL: yeah. a different letter. or *bokstav* ('letter')

EXAMPLE 5

Pair 4, phonemic segmentation task:

EL: Yeah exactly. And when you (...) listen to them, SHIP and SHEEP
4014: The opposite
EL: Is that similar or is that very different?

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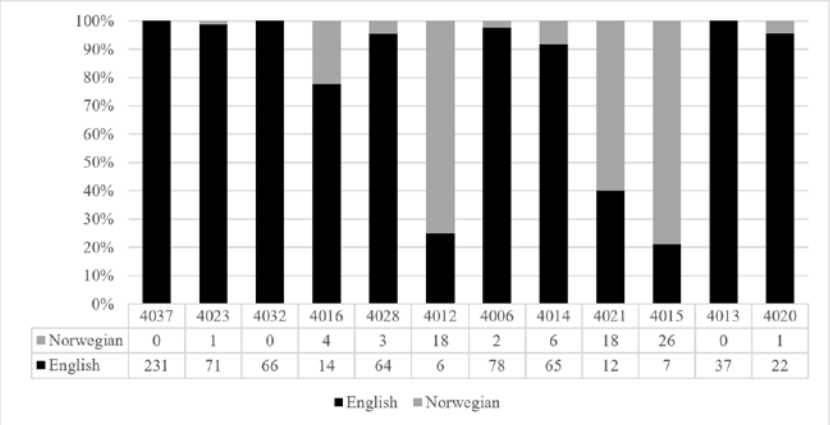
4006: They are pretty similar, yeah
EL: Mhm
EL: Could you explain what is different, perhaps?
4006: **It's like the 'i' is longer and (...)**
4006: **eh (...) has a (...) a bit different sound**

The students were explicitly told they could use English or Norwegian during the tasks. English could be considered the default language of the sessions because the authors introduced the tasks using English, the tasks focused on English words and sentences, and the tasks were conducted during the students' regular English class. Norwegian was encouraged as an option if the students found it easier for explanations, and the authors switched to Norwegian when it seemed like the students were uncertain, reluctant to speak, or struggling to find appropriate words in English.

A closer look at the students' language use during the tasks shows that the majority of the students used almost exclusively English, as seen in Figure 5.1. Three students used mostly Norwegian during the tasks (4012, 4021, 4015), with their English utterances comprised of reading the given words or sentences from the cards or presenting corrected versions of the sentences in the grammatical awareness task (or in the case of two of the utterances produced by 4012: *No* and *I don't know*).

Figure 5.1 also provides the total number of utterances produced by each student during the two tasks, which makes it clear that there was a great deal of variation in how much the students spoke. The lowest number of total utterances was 18 (4016) and the highest was 231 (4037), although the latter case was an outlier. Most students fell somewhere in between these extremes, but the students who used more Norwegian than English were among those who talked the least.



	4037	4023	4032	4016	4028	4012	4006	4014	4021	4015	4013	4020
Norwegian	0	1	0	4	3	18	2	6	18	26	0	1
English	231	71	66	14	64	6	78	65	12	7	37	22

FIGURE 5.1 Proportion and Total Number of English and Norwegian Utterances by Participant

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While personality could be a factor in how much each student spoke in each language, the choice of language suggests that proficiency in English may have played a role. Previous research has shown links between language anxiety, proficiency, and language choice (Horwitz, 2010; Sevinç & Backus, 2019), as well as a relationship between performance on metalinguistic tasks and the level of proficiency in the language of testing (Barac & Bialystok, 2012). It is, therefore, possible that the students whose English proficiency was lower may have felt less confident answering the questions about English words and sentences, leading them to share less overall and use a language they were more comfortable with, in this case Norwegian. The ability of each pair to define or translate the English words used in the phonemic segmentation task supports the idea of an English proficiency effect. For example, both participants in pair 5 (4021, 4015) spoke more Norwegian than English and had relatively few utterances (30 and 33 utterances, respectively). They also achieved the lowest score on the grammatical awareness task (two out of 12 possible points), and they were able to define or translate the fewest number of words during the phonemic segmentation task (four out of 11 words). Nevertheless, one of the participants from pair 5 (4015) correctly guessed that *bond* and *bound* are related words as seen in example (5) from the phonemic segmentation task above, indicating in Norwegian that she thought the words were similar, but it sounded like they were inflected differently. This suggests that their relatively low performance on the grammatical awareness task may have been influenced by degree of English proficiency, although in the absence of a measure of English proficiency this claim cannot be substantiated and is only a potential explanation.

Turning to the students' scores on the tests used in the previous studies outlined in Table 5.1 (Walla, 2023, 2024), Figures 5.2 and 5.3 provide a comparison of performance on the test of morphosyntax and the adapted MAT-2 test of metalinguistic ability, respectively. Students who did not participate in the prior studies are excluded from the relevant charts.

Three L1 Other students and all six L1 Norwegian students participated in the study that employed the test of English morphosyntax (Walla, 2023). The grammatical awareness task in the present study (Task 2) used sentences from the written test of morphosyntax. Overall, the L1 Other students scored higher than the L1 Norwegian students on the morphosyntax test, mirroring the results of the grammatical awareness task to a degree.

Five of the L1 Other students and five of the L1 Norwegian students participated in Walla's (2024) study of metalinguistic awareness using the adapted MAT-2. The phonemic segmentation task in the present study (Task 1) was adapted from the MAT-2 but from a section of the test that was not used in Walla (2024). The students' adapted MAT-2 scores nevertheless appear to more closely resemble their performance on Task 1.

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Due to the small number of cases, however, the comparison of the test scores from the previous studies with the performance on the tasks of the present study should be considered with a degree of caution.

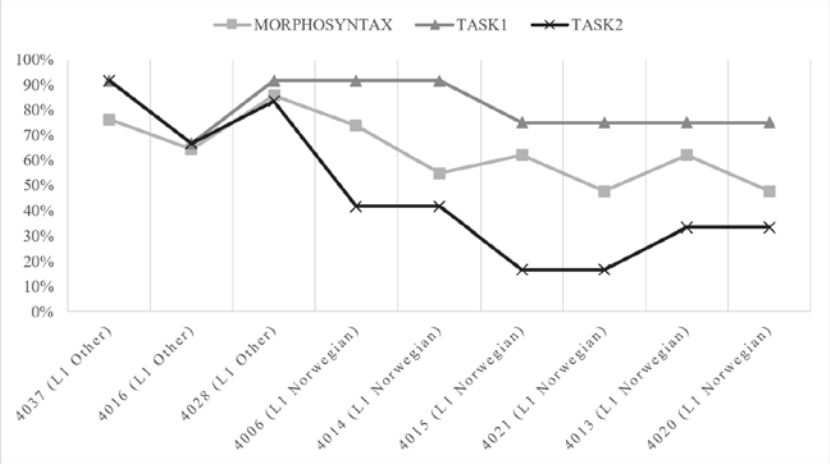

FIGURE 5.2 Comparison of Scores on Tasks 1 and 2 and Test of English Morphosyntax

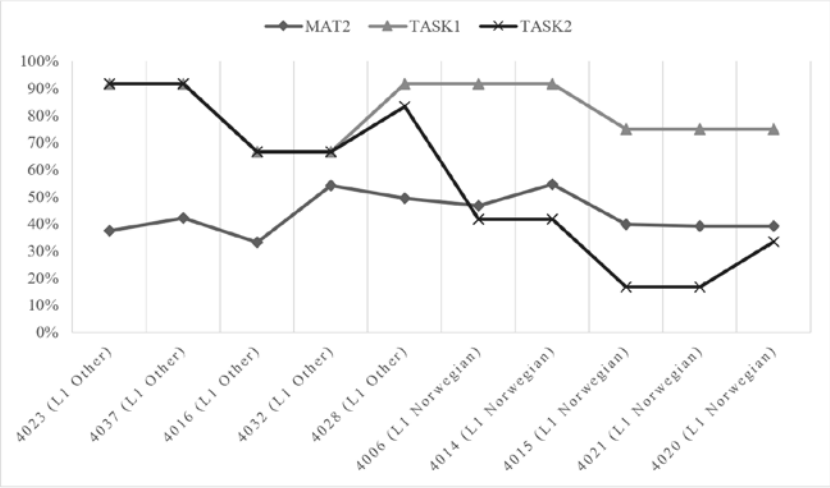

FIGURE 5.3 Comparison of Scores on Metalinguistic Tasks and MAT-2 Test of Metalinguistic Awareness

IMPLICATIONS FOR POLICY, PRACTICE, AND FUTURE RESEARCH

The current study suggests that there was a great deal of individual variation in metalinguistic awareness among the participating students, but that overall, most of them lacked the metalanguage or specific terminology that would have helped them verbalize

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their thought processes during the tasks. In addition, a generally better performance of all students was observed, irrespective of language background, in the task targeting phonological awareness (Task 1), compared with the activity requiring grammatical awareness (Task 2). This appears to be related to (1) different types of metalinguistic abilities developing at different times (Roehr-Brackin, 2018) and (2) phonological awareness being one of the first types of metalinguistic awareness that is incorporated into schooling as early as kindergarten or preschool (Roehr-Brackin, 2018; Siemund, 2023; Sigmundsson et al., 2020). The important point here is that phonological awareness is actively developed early on in the majority language of the speech community, for example, via rhyming and learning different sounds and connecting them to letters of the alphabet. Connecting and transferring this knowledge to another language, for example a foreign language studied in school, is in line with Cummins' (1979) developmental inter-dependence hypothesis (see also Cummins, 2016). The idea is that knowledge and competences in one language can be transferred to another one (Cummins, 1979), which can give bi- or multilinguals an advantage over monolinguals relative to metalinguistic awareness (Cummins, 1978). Notice that in the first task, there were no observable differences between the two learner groups; the L1 Norwegian as well as the L1 Other students all performed at ceiling, which supports the idea that their phonological awareness skills in their previously acquired languages could be transferred to English. However, they largely lacked explicit metalanguage.

This low use of metalanguage was also observed in the second task. Even though the L1 Other group scored comparably higher than their L1 Norwegian peers, explicit metalanguage was also largely missing from their think-aloud protocols. We believe that this is in line with an apparent reduced focus on grammatical terminology in language teaching in Norway (Frøisland et al., 2023). Metalinguistic skills require explicit training in order for learners to develop them and learn metalanguage (Roehr-Brackin, 2018). It is therefore imperative that metalanguage and instructions that aim at developing and enhancing metalinguistic awareness feature in the classroom (Jessner, 2006; Thomas, 1988).

This argument finds support in a recent intervention study by Leonet et al. (2020), in which pedagogical translanguaging (see Cenoz & Gorter, 2021) was employed to actively enhance and foster morphological awareness among Grade 5 and 6 students in the Basque Autonomous Community in Spain. Pedagogical translanguaging was incorporated into the teaching of the intervention group, whereas traditional teaching approaches were used in the control group (Leonet et al., 2020). By activating all three languages shared by the students, namely Spanish, Basque, and English in the intervention group, gains in morphological awareness could be observed after the intervention phase of 12 weeks (for a similar study on cognate awareness, see Cenoz et al., 2022).

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In the Norwegian context, beyond reference to English and potentially cross-language comparisons to the majority language, Norwegian other languages should be integrated and activated systematically in the English classroom in order for learners to notice connections and similarities among all languages in their repertoires, including English. This is especially important because of the linguistic heterogeneity in today's schools and classrooms. Whereas the most recent curriculum in Norway includes some reference to multilingualism and pluralist teaching approaches (Drachmann et al., 2023), its actual implementation and application in the classrooms is largely, if at all, ad hoc or only engages the learners' majority language (Brevik & Rindal, 2020; Burner & Carlsen, 2022; Haukås, 2016; Heyder & Schädlich, 2014). Multilingualism is still not regularly and systematically part of (foreign) language teaching in schools even though its importance has been established through research (e.g., Jessner, 2006; May, 2013). One reason for this is that teachers can feel insecure when it comes to bringing multilingual teaching practices into the classroom (Lorenz et al., 2021). Thus, for educators to be able to implement pedagogical translanguaging or integrate metalinguistic awareness instruction into their teaching, they need to be instructed in how to do it. This means that metalinguistic awareness training as well as other pluralist approaches to language teaching, such as pedagogical translanguaging, need to be part of teacher education programs for pre-service teachers as well as professional development for in-service teachers (Krulatz & Christison, 2023). In line with this suggestion, we believe that future research should be geared toward teachers and teacher educators and that researchers should work together with them to find manageable ways of bringing multilingualism and metalinguistic awareness to the classroom to enhance (foreign) language learning of all students (Krulatz et al., 2023).

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NOTE

1. Academic metalanguage use is highlighted in bold. Utterances in Norwegian appear in italics and are subsequently translated into English. DW and EL are the initials of the interviewers, who are also the authors of this study.

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