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Promoting speaking in the young learner classroom through task-based digital storytelling via online technology: a case study

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Abstract: In the young learner (YL) foreign language (FL) classroom, oracy is more important than literacy, but teaching speaking is still primarily repetitive in many contexts. Free speaking activities are difficult to create for teachers and accomplish for learners. This research investigated the ways in which imaginative digital storytelling (DST) tasks can improve oracy and the prior knowledge needed to negotiate meaning. The main data of this study, which were collected over one academic year, comprised a questionnaire of 19 Swiss Year 4 students, video and audio recordings of two dyads working on four collaborative oral DST tasks and a semi-structured interview with the four children and their class/English teacher. The results revealed that collaborative end-of-unit tasks enabled the children to creatively recycle the language learnt. Scaffolding and language support provided on the task sheet allowed a creative and personal approach to DST, which was a motivating experience. Clear guidance for classroom talk fostered collaboration and personal, social and problem-solving competences. These findings have implications for YL FL pedagogy and highlight the need for further theoretical insights into task-based DST.

Keywords: digital storytelling; young learners; oracy; task-based teaching and learning; online technology

1 Introduction

Although children in many parts of the world grow up using digital media at home, their use in primary school remains limited: the COVID-19 lockdown revealed that in the German-speaking world, the use of online technology in the young learner (YL) classroom advanced slowly due to device insufficiency (Huber et al., 2020). In Switzerland, this process changed tremendously with the COVID-19 lockdown

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(BKD, 2020) and the recent introduction of a new curriculum, which called for the embedding of digital media into other subjects up to Year 5.

Learning foreign languages (FLs) has played an important role in Switzerland, which is a multilingual country with four national languages. In the 1990s, the cantonal ministers decided to have two FLs in primary school to promote multilingualism (D-EDK, 2014). This is in line with the language policies of the European Union, which promotes functional multilingualism, that is, the ability to speak a first language and two FLs (Europäisches Parlament, 2022). In Switzerland, the first FL is introduced in Year 3 (nine-year-olds) and the second in Year 5. Furthermore, in most Swiss cantons, English was prioritized (Stotz, 2009) among other things (Stotz & Meuter, 2003).

In primary FL teaching and learning, it is important to start with what the children are familiar with (Pinter, 2017) and then gradually expand from there. As the children's first language literacy is still developing, oracy becomes the focus of learning an FL. In terms of speaking, Pinter (2017) argues that children's perception of sound and intonation is high and that they like imitating the sounds and rhythms of FLs, especially as they are less inhibited than older learners (Kolb & Schocker, 2021). However, only repeating words or chunks (Legutke et al., 2009) limits their learning; therefore, teachers should provide opportunities to experiment with the language and use it in a playful and motivating way in meaningful activities and tasks. This can be exploited by using digital media that offer meaningful forms of communication; and children are familiar with such media as they play an important role in their lives and free time (Kolb & Schocker, 2021; Pinter, 2017).

Nevertheless, innovative approaches to fostering the use of both digital technology and oracy are needed. Chong and Reinders (2020) examined a substantial body of general task-based digital storytelling (DST) research but found a dearth of research addressing technology-mediated task-based teaching and learning (TBLT). They surmised that there was an urgent need for the development of an effective theoretical framework that permits the design of potent pedagogical DST tasks with the potential to enhance language learning.

This article seeks to shed insight on the way in which online technology can be used to promote oral expression through the DST method. The focus will be on TBLT and the framing of tasks by relating them to children's lives, taking into account their prior knowledge and supporting them throughout the process.

2 Literature review

In the literature review, I will first focus on the relevant research on TBLT and DST. I will then move to important concepts used in this research: the use of chunks in the

YL classroom, a framework that fosters oracy holistically and an approach that supports collaborative DST-based TBLT.

2.1 Task-based learning and teaching

In the 1980s, TBLT was developed through communicative language teaching (Keller, 2013); however, besides having an outcome and focussing on meaning, its definition remains vague (Foster, 2009). For children, a task needs to include real-world communication (Kolb & Schocker, 2021), have a purpose, engage learners cognitively (Cameron, 2001) and activate them playfully and creatively (Legutke et al., 2009).

There are few real-world or authentic tasks that are especially appropriate for YLs' cognitive development in the FL classroom (Cameron, 2001). Therefore, a sophisticated task design is needed for YLs: meaningful end-of-unit tasks repeat the content, lexis and structures learnt, can be personalised and need to include language support and scaffolding that help YLs master the work cognitively (Foster, 2009; Willis, 2005). However, insufficient support can result in YLs losing interest or failing to improve their FL through TBLT (Cameron, 2001).

As a result of the range of task definitions mentioned above and the various means of task design (Thomas & Reinders, 2012), the various task demands and technological features (Chong & Reinders, 2020), clear guidelines for digital TBLT remain wanting (Kukulska-Hulme & Viberg, 2018). I will propose some guidance that may help teachers design more effective digital tasks for their learners.

2.2 Digital storytelling in TBLT

The increased availability of computers has had an impact on teaching all subjects and FL classes, and despite the accessibility and flexibility of mobile technology, which can facilitate interaction and collaboration (Alhinty, 2015), behaviourist programmes that supplement textbooks (e.g., practising vocabulary and grammar) still dominate. They are easier to implement for FL teachers who might not be very tech-savvy (Toohey et al., 2012), which means that they need more support in terms of tools (Chwo et al., 2018) and task design (Alhinty, 2015). DST, which draws on online technology, is one possible approach.

DST combines the spoken or written word with pictures or videos, music or sound effects to create a short film (Frazel, 2010; Kervin & Mantei, 2017). These films can easily be shared on the Internet (Frazel, 2010; Nguyen, 2017), which has raised the popularity of DST (Macleroy, 2020). This has occurred through platforms such as YouTube and TikTok, including among children, therefore making it a valid

approach in the YL FL classroom. Whilst most DST studies are based on literacy (Hwang et al., 2016), the focus here is on oral task-based DST in FL among primary-aged YLs.

In several studies, the children chose the DST tasks on their own/in their dyad; for example, Pellerin (2014) conducted qualitative and interpretative action research with sixteen Year 1–4 teachers in two immersive schools in Canada. The students worked individually, in pairs or in groups and orally told or retold stories – sometimes, they even set their own tasks. Even though the tasks appeared to be clear, Pellerin's definition of TBLT is somewhat ambiguous because interaction appeared to be missing in the individual tasks, despite being a key task feature (Willis, 2005). In another study in Luxembourg, open tasks were negotiated between the children and their teacher (Kirsch, 2016). Even though this resulted in genuine and meaningful language learning (Kirsch, 2016), creativity was limited when, for example, retelling a story. In contrast, Sun et al. (2017) and Hwang et al. (2016) set activities. The Chinese beginners in Sun et al. (2017) had to complete a sentence as homework (e.g., “My best day is __ because __” (p. 310)) during twelve weeks, but it is unclear what had been practised in class. In Hwang et al. (2016), Year 6 students in Taiwan, China talked about their daily life to enhance student engagement.

Despite a relatively weak theoretical grounding of DST tasks, open projects promote natural differentiation (Pellerin, 2014) and enable children to perform on their level. Furthermore, the open productive applications or software allow learners to successfully work on language tasks appropriate to their capabilities (Dausend, 2017). Other types of differentiation such as quantity, quality and level has not been discussed.

In a short-term action research in Germany involving Years 1–4, Dausend (2017) studied how the children structured their written and oral DST tasks and concluded that the apps used offered flexible ways to conduct the task, which was highly motivating, as it promoted creativity. Thus, DST seems to be a motivating approach to reducing anxiety (Chong & Reinders, 2020; Sun et al., 2017) because the use of the app made speaking less embarrassing. Pellerin (2014) found that DST enhanced students' motivation, as it enabled them to take “controlled ownership over their learning” (2014, p. 11).

As motivation boosts learning, DST-based task studies have reported oracy development. Kirsch (2016) found general language improvements in collaborative DST and concluded that using DST can help students learn a FL; however, her data did not explicitly address the type of progress. Sun et al. (2017) integrated mobile social networking sites (SNS) into Year 1 EFL classes in Beijing, China, with the aim of determining its effects on the students' speaking skills. Two classes were recruited, one as a control group that did not use the SNS and the other as the experimental group, which did. While the speaking skills of both classes improved between the

pre-test and post-test, the gains in English fluency by the experimental group were significantly larger. Nevertheless, progress in accuracy and pronunciation was similar across the two groups. These findings were discussed in relation to specific characteristics of SNSs and mobile learning that enable learners to speak in low-stress, situated contexts. Also, Hwang et al. (2016) argued that the experimental group improved their oracy significantly more than the control group: they remembered more vocabulary items because of repeated practice. However, the authors warned that progress in learning a FL appeared to be true only for individual storytelling because of the greater levels of focus and individual practice. Therefore, it is necessary to investigate whether children also make progress in collaborative DST involving meaningful tasks and being guided on how to work together successfully.

As an important feature of TBLT, collaboration also supports children's language achievement. Kirsch and Bes Izuel (2019) and Pellerin (2014) maintained that meta-cognitive processes facilitated children's collaborative planning, recording and assessment of text. Conversely, Hwang et al. (2016) reported that their students were distracted in collaborative DST. Dausend (2017) noted that her students were also arguing over the tablet, the storyline or multimodal options, although they finally reached a solution. Collaboration can be promoted by teaching ground rules for accountable talk, for example, drawing on Mercer's (1995) concept of collaboration. In longitudinal studies with bilingual YLs, Kirsch and Bes Izuel (2019) and Kirsch (2016) drew on this concept, but only to analyse collaboration. Their studies offer contradictory results: Kirsch (2016) found that the YLs' interaction resulted in a great deal of exploratory talk, that is, critical and constructive talk that fostered mindful listening and language learning; however, Kirsch and Bes Izuel (2019) reported that the children mostly drew on cumulative talk, that is, they agreed with one another and stayed on task. There was no explicit instruction about how to collaborate well – the children might have been too young to cognitively implement the rules, but their impact on collaboration could be vital for collaborative DST tasks.

When conducting DST, learners also need scaffolding and support. Hur and Suh (2012) and Pellerin (2014) argued that in their studies, the software used provided scaffolding in terms of planning the story and task conduction. It seems that the children supported each other by scaffolding both the text and task. Therefore, while meaningful and authentic learning can be enabled by technology, language support, such as chunks or sentence starters, seemed lacking. Few studies have provided some sentence starters (Sun et al., 2017) or word lists with audio files (Hwang et al., 2016). Not having supplied language support, Dausend (2017) discussed the need for it and discovered the unresolved problem of correcting errors during DST tasks, something I attempted to do by implementing Goh and Burns's (2012) teaching speaking cycle.

2.3 Chunking in oracy for young learners

Chunking (or chunks) is a combination of words or lexical items that often occur together (Thornbury, 2005). Rather than learning and producing isolated words, chunking lowers cognitive load (Sweller, 1988), as groups of familiar units can be stored and reused to speed up language production (Pinter, 2017), itself based on previously encountered language learnt in its entirety and without analysis (Cameron, 2001; Lewis, 1993). Because of this repeated formulae of oracy (Biber et al., 2011), speaking skills are developed (Cameron, 2001).

Pinter (2017) argued that in comparison to adults, YLs make greater use of chunks without considering grammar. They learn chunks from songs, chants, rhymes, stories and dialogues. As a result, chunking empowers YLs to create grammatically correct sentences without knowing the respective rule, and YLs have the ability to break the chunks down and combine the individual parts in new ways (Cameron, 2001). Furthermore, chunks can offer scaffolding and effective language support.

Chunking is important in teaching beginners and YLs, especially as YLs might not yet be proficient in speaking their first language (L1) (Pinter, 2017) and mainly imitate and reproduce the FL (Kolb & Schocker, 2021). Despite the importance of drilling these chunks to develop speaking (Thornbury, 2005), such drills can become boring because of the lack of interaction (Nunan, 2011), and the “productive use of language may be encouraged from the start” (Kolb & Schocker, 2021, p. 88).

Goh and Burns (2012) claimed that this puts high cognitive demands on learners in terms of conceptualisation (the preparation, staging and targeting of speech), formulation (the strategic organisation of a syntactically accurate sentence) and articulation and monitoring (the self-reflective metacognitive processes of these steps).

According to Goh and Burns (2012), advice on how to teach speaking is needed as teachers have to provide input, support and feedback and must comprehensively prepare the phases, tasks and information required. They developed a framework grounded in theoretical and pedagogical concepts to help teachers maximise speaking lessons and design tasks and materials. This framework, which develops through seven steps (which I adapted to my research), can be used individually or for several lessons. Based on Goh and Burns’s (2012) illustration, after introducing the topic, learners receive plenty of valuable language and planning support that aids them in carrying out the speaking task. While most lessons end here, the teaching speaking cycle provides additional scaffolding to advance students’ understanding of speaking abilities and communication techniques. Once their areas of weakness and potential improvements have been identified, students receive feedback and repeat the task. They then reflect on it and receive feedback from their teacher or peers.

While typically only two of these steps are covered in FL instruction, Goh and Burns's (2012) model allows for holistic language learning and can lower the cognitive load (Sweller, 1988).

2.4 Fostering collaborative tasks to develop young learners' oracy

Monologic or discursive tasks could be overwhelming for children because of their cognitive development, but realistic dialogues that draw on real-world or imaginary situations and repeat the lexis and structures learnt are feasible for YLs. As these are done collaboratively, I intended to support teamwork by adopting Mercer's (1995) framework of guided construction of talk, which is grounded in Vygotsky's theory, where language is a psychological (construction of thinking, analysing, planning and evaluating), communicative and cultural (collaborative development of understanding) tool (Mercer, 2000). Based on these presumptions, Vygotsky (1978) created the zone of proximal development (ZPD), which illustrates how learning can be facilitated through the use of language for intellectual interaction. By decreasing the mental load, a person with more knowledge can assist another in producing better results.

Mercer (2000) studied the effects of teamwork on individual thought and concluded that effective teamwork in the classroom is a precondition for effective teamwork in the workplace (Mercer, 2015). Furthermore, collaboration frequently fails because students have only informally learnt language strategies for collaboration (Mercer, 1995). As a result, they are unable to support others in dialogue because their comprehension is restricted to their social and intellectual understanding. Therefore, teachers must explicitly teach YLs how to collaborate while also giving them the linguistic resources they require (Mercer, 2000) so that they can have clear guidelines and objectives (Mercer, 1995) to collaborate more willingly and effectively (Mercer et al., 1999). Mercer developed a three-step method: first, the teacher and class collaboratively discuss ground rules for collaboration, upon which they agree. Second, these rules are rehearsed and practised. Third, the students apply them and reflect on their usage.

Mercer examined collaboration qualitatively and quantitatively and discovered three types of talk. First, disputational talk consisting of disagreements, individual decision-making and brief exchanges of affirmations and denials. Second, cumulative talk consisting of constructive but unquestioning additions, restatements and agreements and, third, exploratory talk, which is critical and constructive interaction with ideas, supporting them with arguments and presenting alternatives. While the first two do not foster collaboration, the latter shapes students' individual

thinking, which helps them with individual work (Hardman, 2019). In reference to the ZPD, Mercer coined the phenomenon of the intermental development zone (IDZ), “a continuing event of contextualized joint activity” (2000, p. 141) of two equal peers. In a similar vein, collaboration should be encouraged in DST tasks to maximise children’s oral skills in EFL classroom learning.

3 Materials and methods

This small-scale case study was conducted in a Year 4 class in a small town in the German-speaking part of Switzerland. It was the children’s second year of learning English. This section will cover the research questions and the justification for the case study design, elaborate on the selection of the participants and software, the task and instructional design and the research instruments (i.e., the observation of tasks, a questionnaire and interviews) and conclude with the data analysis.

3.1 Research gaps and questions

The above-reviewed studies all claim to have done task-based DST, but their concept of TBLT is ambiguous. This is not surprising, as Chong and Reinders (2020) argued that the creation of a strong theoretical foundation for task-based DST is lacking, especially in terms of task sequencing and learner support or scaffolding. Task-based collaborative DST needs careful planning in terms of a task design that relates to the children’s lives and triggers their creativity and cognition. The reviewed studies only partly considered these factors and did not base their task design on the curriculum and learning outcomes. Therefore, the aim of my research is to narrow this knowledge gap.

Furthermore, the predominantly short-term studies identified some aspects of how DST tasks can improve oracy. However, further insights and justification are needed, especially regarding how oracy can be supported in terms of language support and guided instruction: Little to no language support was provided, and a theoretical teaching framework seemed missing.

Moreover, collaboration, vital for success in collaborative DST, was taken for granted, which is a misconception for the YL classroom (Mercer, 1995). Thus, following Mercer’s framework could promote collaboration and success in inter-thinking processes.

To fill these gaps in the literature and improve teaching and learning, I will propose a DST backward task design based on the curriculum and learning aims of a unit that factors in the learner group, task type and software and that fosters the

children's learning in a holistic manner. I will implement it in a YL English as a FL case study. My research aims to answer the following research questions (RQs):

RQ1: How can oral DST tasks promote students' perceived improvement in their oracy?

RQ2: What prior knowledge is needed for the negotiation of meaning in collaborative DST? How can this prior knowledge be supported?

3.2 Case study

According to Bassey (1999), research is critical inquiry intended to advance understanding, while education aims to promote individual and social development. Therefore, it is possible to think of educational research as a type of critical inquiry that produces knowledge and findings to enhance instruction and inform policy. The case study approach can yield rich data as researchers obtain in-depth insights into the lived experiences of participants within a specific context (Hamilton, 2011) as well as thick descriptions of results.

Small-scale case studies cannot be generalised because of lack of rigour but aim for particularisation, for which a detailed account is crucial (Bassey, 1999). Such an honest and meticulous narrative can level out reliability. However, this is contingent on the case, and therefore, the outcome is not always predictable. Nevertheless, according to Cohen et al. (2007, p. 133), "validity can be achieved through the honesty, depth, richness, and scope of the data achieved". This intervention was tentatively evaluated and will hopefully contribute to the professional discourse about YL collaborative oral FL DST by drawing on the students' opinions (Nunan, 2004a).

3.3 Participants and contexts

The small-scale case study took place in the German-speaking part of Switzerland. Swiss German is the vernacular language and Standard German the language of instruction. English as a FL is taught from Year 3 onwards. The participants were from a Year 4 class (ten-year-olds) in a progressive school in a wealthy part of a small town. The class/English teacher Ms Marple (self-chosen pseudonym) was thirty years old and had taught for seven years. All nineteen students in her class (10 boys and nine girls) were fluent in (Swiss) German. Eight students agreed to participate in the research, and Ms Marple selected four children whose linguistic abilities allowed for wider generalisation and representation: Hansli, Momo, Fritzli and Tina (all self-chosen pseudonyms). The students, whose L1 was Swiss German, were raised monolingually.

As I taught other classes at the same school, I was an insider researcher. For me, it was important to conduct research *with* my YLs rather than *on* them (Flewitt, 2005). Furthermore, Flewitt's (2005) research and other readings, such as BERA (2018) and Waller and Bitou (2011), informed my ethical considerations. In order to acknowledge the children's reactions, I ensured ongoing consent and built dialogic relationships with them and the other children in the class by talking to them and helping them (Flewitt, 2005). This rapport allowed cooperation and joint construction (Waller & Bitou, 2011) and helped me pursue other viewpoints from the students and Ms Marple.

3.4 Software

When I decided to embed oral DST in my English lessons, I had to find a suitable and simple software that worked on our laptops. Adobe Express (former names Adobe Spark and Adobe Voice) met these expectations: it is an online software that is easy to use to create and design webpages, flyers, posts and videos and offers "a wide variety of modern templates, images, fonts, and uses" (van Arnhem, 2017, p. 61). The video option has been used to research pronunciation instruction (Yoshida, 2018) and the speaking progress of adults (Arispe & Burston, 2017; Schenker & Kraemer, 2017). As it has not been used in the YL context and has been recommended as "one of the most user-friendly" (Chung & Wang, 2020, p. 7), I decided to adopt it for my research.

Figure 1 depicts the video application interface of Adobe Express. Videos, text, photos and icons can be inserted, and the menu on the right allows the user to choose from different layouts, themes, sizes or music tracks. The purple button in the middle (bottom) of the current screen needs to be pressed for recording. This easy-to-use interface makes Adobe Express Video especially attractive for YLs.

3.5 Research design for DST tasks

As mentioned above, tasks can be variously defined (Ellis, 2003; Foster, 2009; Nunan, 2004b). Ellis (2003) emphasised authentic communication as that which is cognitively challenging and leads to an outcome. For him, a task can be form-focused or meaning-focused. For Willis (2005) and Nunan (2004b), meaning is more important than form. Willis (2005) argued that more than one skill is practised in a task and that there is always an outcome. While digital TBLT lacks basic rules (Kukulska-Hulme & Viberg, 2018), its cornerstones for YLs are purposeful and cognitively engaging tasks (Cameron, 2001) involving real-life communication (Kolb & Schocker, 2021), playfulness and creativity (Legutke et al., 2009). These facts complicate the task

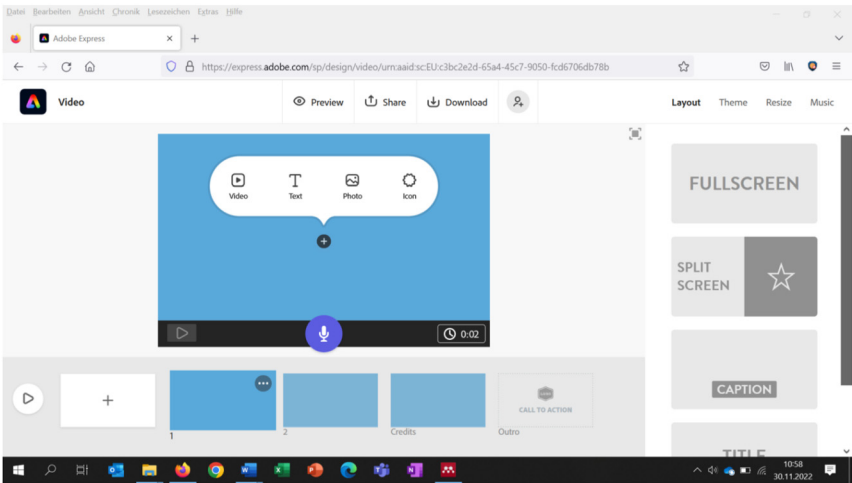


Figure 1: Adobe Express video.

framework, which might be the reason that a theoretical task framework has hitherto seemed absent (Chong & Reinders, 2020). With my backward design, I hope to provide useful guidance for other teachers and researchers because its flexibility means that it can be applied to other contexts. Consequently, the task design must go back to the roots. For this research, I embedded the tasks into the curriculum and teaching unit, provided the learners with meaningful real-world dialogues that recycled the subject matter and considered the requirements of the software.

To achieve this, I drew on a backward design suggested by Wiggins and McTighe (1998). The backward design begins with learning objectives and looks for ways to accomplish them, which enables instruction and assessment (Figure 2).

I started with the differentiated learning aims of the dialogic speaking section of our curriculum because differentiation gives students real choice and engages their higher-order thinking, important for student progress (Tomlinson, 2012). Combining these learning aims with knowledge of the topic and context is crucial for YLs, and real or imaginary dialogues can be motivating (Cameron, 2001) as they stimulate creative collaborative processes that can lead to student agency and ownership.



Figure 2: Backward design of Adobe Express tasks.

As monological or discursive tasks would overstrain YLs due to their cognitive development, I opted for a creative dialogic task design (Ellis, 2003) in which the children collaboratively worked on a given topic to produce a video. Dialogues or role-plays are suitable for YLs, and an affective and meaningful dialogue should foster imagination and collaboration.

The task needed to be modified in accordance with the affordances of the Adobe Express software. For the example presented in this study, I transformed the unit “Five sensational senses” – in which the children learnt about the senses in the context of a fun fair – into a dialogue: The children planned a visit to the fair and selected the stall or attraction they wanted to visit first and gave reasons for their choice. To translate these requirements into a video, the software also enabled interaction (Tomlinson, 2012).

The linguistic requirements of the end-of-unit tasks (i.e., recycling what has been learnt) were clear from the nature of the task. Upon introducing a task, I directed the students’ attention to the language support that I had provided on the task sheet to personalise their task (Appendix III) and provided input and learning. The task sheet served as a guideline and contained all the information needed to complete the task. Ms Marple, the class/English teacher, agreed to participate in my research, which lasted an academic year, under the condition that I conduct all the teaching and administration involved. All the teaching was conducted in English, apart from discussing the ground rules for talk. At the beginning of the academic year, I introduced the software and the ground rules for talk; afterwards, I administered the software. For each of the four DST tasks, I adapted the framework by Goh and Burns (2012) to my needs: I introduced the learning aims, task and language support, helped the students during the lessons, which lasted from 2:00 to 4:00 p.m., wrote down feedback during the 15-min break and explained it to them afterwards in order to improve their digital story, downloaded the Adobe Express videos and visited the class to celebrate their success and watch their videos.

3.6 Research procedure

Table 1 presents an overview of the research design and data collection methods. I had originally intended to measure oral progress with a control group, and in September 2019, before creating the first digital story, I conducted a pre-test with my four participants and comparable participants of the parallel class as the control group. However, because of six weeks of homeschooling during the Swiss COVID-19 lockdown from 16 March to 10 May 2020, I had to change my initial plans. Furthermore, the original design consisted of the observation of five oral DST end-of-unit tasks. When in-school data collection was impossible, the students were assigned an

Table 1: Overview of data collection methods and instruction.

August 2019	Introducing the research
September 2019	Discussing rules for collaboration; introducing the software and the first DST task; performing the first DST task
November 2019	Introducing the second DST task; performing the second DST task
January 2020	Introducing the third DST task; performing the third DST task
April/May 2020	Performing the homeschooling DST task; online questionnaire
May 2020	Introducing the fourth DST task; performing the fourth DST task
June 2020	Interviews with the four participants in their dyad; interview with Ms Marple

individual DST homeschooling task and asked about their experience with DST in an online questionnaire. These preliminary findings were the basis for the interviews with the four participants and their class/English teacher, Ms Marple.

3.7 Research instruments

3.7.1 Observation of tasks

Table 1 shows that four collaborative DST tasks were observed to get a thorough understanding of the children’s language use and FL learning in a social context (Nunan, 2004a) as well as the ability to see situations from different perspectives (Cohen et al., 2007). I video- and audio-recorded the children because video recording enabled me to get a holistic picture of their meaning-making (gestures, body language...) while the audio recorder reproduced their speech more clearly.

Video/audio recording may influence students’ behaviour (Wragg, 2011). Thus, to minimise this impact, I embedded myself in the class as a participant observer and assistant in the DST lessons, as mentioned above. Furthermore, encouraging the students to look at and through the camera and check the voice recorder made them feel more at ease.

3.7.2 Questionnaire

Because of the impact of the COVID-19 lockdown on my initial design, I included an online questionnaire (Appendix V), which enabled me to gain some preliminary insights on collaborative and individual DST. An online questionnaire seemed

preferable because of the situation during the lockdown. It contained qualitative and quantitative questions, as open-ended questions are known to yield new insights (Dörnyei, 2003), and together with the closed questions, a semi-structured questionnaire can develop into a powerful tool (Cohen et al., 2007). I piloted the questions with other students who had created other DST tasks beforehand and altered them according to the children's feedback to make them as self-explanatory as possible and feasible for homeschooling, which resulted in 18 of the 19 students answering the questionnaire.

3.7.3 Interviews

The preliminary findings of the analysis of the observation of the tasks and the questionnaire guided the interview questions of the semi-structured interviews. A semi-structure was selected because it allows the exploration of topics on the agenda and gives the participants the opportunity to elaborate on their answers (Cohen et al., 2007).

I spoke with the four participants Hansli and Momo and Fritzli and Tina in their dyads because group interviews are more suitable for children (Cohen et al., 2007) and provide more interaction. I interviewed Ms Marple on her own. I adhered to the advice of Cohen et al. (2007) and Nunan (2004a) and used simple language, made it brief, listened carefully and audio-recorded the interviews as this was less intrusive than video recording.

3.8 Data analysis

All the data were analysed by drawing on the six phases of reflexive thematic analysis (TA) because of its adaptability and accessibility in analysing different data sets (Braun & Clarke, 2006) and that it engages the researcher to reflect on “theory, data and interpretation” (Braun & Clarke, 2020, p. 330). I followed the six steps by Braun and Clarke (2006) to analyse the interview and task observation data:

Phase 1 Familiarisation with the data: this happened through reflection on the DST lessons, watching video recordings, listening to audio recordings, initial note-taking, and transcribing. The four task observations and three interviews generated approximately 15 h of audio/video recordings, which I transcribed for analysis, despite the fact that transcription involves data loss due to the absence of the visual (Cohen et al., 2007) and, thus, is already an interpretation (Jenks, 2011). Reflexive TA transcripts do not need to be overly detailed but should be appropriate and useful for the analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2019). The speech was transcribed and coded in the language in which it was spoken and in standard punctuation that helped in

interpreting its structure (Mercer, 2004), and information relevant to the analysis (e.g., gestures, movements) was added in brackets. For presentation, I put *Swiss German* in italics, and English in normal print.

To investigate the questionnaire data, the Jisc software used to administer the online questionnaire was also used to analyse the numerical data and transform them into charts. As most responses were positive, the items above the middle category were added, and the middle category with the lower category were added.

By drawing on different data sets and methods, I employed triangulation to increase credibility and trustworthiness (Twining et al., 2017). Furthermore, to verify my qualitative findings about collaboration, I applied a corpus technique, key word in context (KWIC) search, that is, I searched for language patterns grounded in context (Mercer, 2000) in all the four DST tasks to validate my qualitative findings regarding collaboration. Mercer et al. (1999) identified key terms of exploratory talk; I translated them into Swiss German and searched for them in all the transcripts of the collaborative DST lessons. To count the key words that fit the definition of exploratory talk, I manually compared the KWIC results in my Microsoft Word search with their surrounding words. To compare the data for the individual tasks, I converted the number of times they occurred per 10,000 words.

Phase 2 Generation of initial codes: I first coded deductively by drawing on relevant theoretical frameworks, which I had defined (Appendix I). Patterns that were relevant to my research questions (Braun & Clarke, 2006) were recognised, defined and coded inductively (Appendix II). I applied these codes to the open-ended questions of the questionnaire, then compiled the codes in a Microsoft Word document and added some preliminary analysis and ideas.

Phase 3 Generation of themes: I divided the codes I had collected into themes, which is a “creative and active process” (Braun & Clarke, 2020, p. 343), to generate themes from the data of significance for the research questions (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017).

Phase 4 Review of themes: I checked whether the themes occurred in all the data collection sets.

Phase 5 Definition and naming of themes: I clarified the themes, named them, and allocated them to my research questions.

Phase 6 Reporting: I wrote the qualitative report.

4 Results

This section illustrates and elaborates on the findings regarding the research questions. To facilitate presentation, only the English translation of the students’

collaboration is displayed here. The original language along with the translation can be found in Appendix IV.

4.1 How can oral DST promote students' perceived improvement in their oracy?

4.1.1 Perceived improvement in language learning

The children perceived progress in their oral language learning, with 77.8 % (14/18) of them indicating in the questionnaire that their oral English had improved as a result of the tasks. The remaining four children who perceived less or no progress may be native or fluent English speakers. The children said that the tasks made them speak more confidently; they were better at using the computer; and they knew and used a wider vocabulary.

In the interviews, the dyads claimed progress in speaking in general and pronunciation in particular because of their repeated recordings. They also mentioned that DST was very motivating. Their class/English teacher, Ms Marple, confirmed this statement and argued that DST was like a game: The children were comfortable and spoke freely, which raised their self-confidence.

4.1.2 Increased motivation to speak the FL

Motivation is an important factor in FL learning. The studies reviewed, most short-term, mentioned the motivating elements of working with computers, and the motivation levels were constantly high in my research throughout the academic year. More than 83 % (15/18) of the students thought that DST was fun and attributed their motivation to the fact that they liked choosing pictures and collaboratively designing their own videos within the requirements.

The software assisted their learning because it only allowed them to audio-record short dialogues of a maximum of 30 s – a manageable period of time for children in their second year of FL learning. This soon made them feel a sense of accomplishment that kept them interested.

The students were responsible for their individual learning, worked independently on their story, drew on the language support but also selected their expressions. They collaboratively discussed the text they wanted to audio-record and paired their knowledge to improve their presentation. While doing so, they also drew on the language support provided (I would like to.../Why don't we.../We could.../I suggest that...) (Appendix III) and simplified the structure on the task

sheet to meet their needs and make the conversation manageable (*Swiss German*, English, * non-standard formation):

-
- Tina *And then we say.* **“Oh, yes, we go on the hotdog stand. It’s so, it’s so... I love, it’s my favourite food, hotdogs.”* OK, *say here*, ‘Can we go to (inaudible, must be candyfloss)?’
And then you say, “Oh, no, it’s so sticky.” OK.
- Fritzli *No, I’ll just say*, “Oh, no, it’s so [sweet.]”
- Tina [No,] sticky, *that’s funny*. (laughs) sticky.
- Fritzli Stick-y. (plays with the word, laughs)
- Tina *Say sticky.* (presses the record button) Can we go on, uhm. No, it s –o-k. (presses the record button)
 Can we go to the candyfloss stand?
- Fritzli Oh, no, it’s so sticky. (exaggerated pronunciation)
- Tina (laughs, presses the play button)
- Fritzli (laughs too) *No*. sticky (parrots himself, then the recording is played).
-

4.1.3 Targeted practice based on audience design

In the example above, Fritzli played with the word sticky and explored the pitch, lengthened and shortened the vowel sound and finally exaggerated it. This playfulness happened in both dyads as the children were given control over their language use and encouraged to stretch their knowledge and produce a better presentation, a presentation that was tailored to a special audience: their peers. In the interview, Momo discussed the audience design used:

-
- Momo *And we also knew how to work with the software. And that meant we could put a lot of effort into making it funny.*
-

Momo and Hansli always added humour to their stories. They considered themselves to be “big boys” but refused to ride on the rollercoaster because it would make them sick (a lie) and, instead, chose the merry-go-round (for which they were too old), but they jokingly justified their decision as relating to its cool music:

-
- | | |
|--------|---|
| Momo | <i>Let’s do something merry-go-round.</i> |
| Hansli | (slaps his left hand on his forehead) |
| Momo | <i>Then everyone will (die) laughing, you know, that’s so daft.</i> |
| Hansli | They’re all from above. (commenting on pictures) |
| Momo | <i>They’ll totally die laughing. Wanna bet?</i> |
| Hansli | (laughs) (inaudible) |
| Momo | <i>You know, us two going on the merry-go-round. That’s so funny.</i> |
-

This demonstrates how their autonomy encouraged a sense of ownership of the task and product and an awareness of their intended audience. They set their goals high

and repeatedly practised the dialogue until it met their standards, and they practised the vocabulary and structures without realising it. What could have been a dry drill became a lively performance.

4.1.4 Differentiated end-of-unit tasks with language support

As the task was based closely on the curriculum and the learning unit, it recycled the lexis and structures, allowing the children to draw from the full range of resources. Both the differentiated learning aims and the differentiated language support consisting of words, chunks, sentence starters, etc. were provided on the task sheet (Appendix III). As demonstrated by Tina's example below, the students benefited from this flexibility:

Tina *OK, I'm going to ask, "Hey, let's talk about the fair." Look here. "Shall we go there together on Sunday? Oh, yes, that's a great idea. *Who should we go to?" Yes, and then we're going to start our discussion.*

Tina started drawing on the model presented in the language support on the task sheet (Appendix III) and laid the foundation for the task by including her partner Fritzli and his ideas. They then both organised the speech for their DST, drawing on the language they were familiar with and the language support, which stretched their knowledge, added variety, and allowed them to create a personalised video. This combination of drawing on prior knowledge and providing extended language support was effective, and language learning became more than just teaching lexis and structures.

Even though in the interview the children claimed that they had hardly ever used language support, the audio-/video-recording revealed that the task design forced them to build on it:

Momo	<i>Now you have to say this, "Oh, no..." You have to say that now.</i>
Hansli	OK, OK * "Can we go, uhm, to the deathrider? It's so fast and fun."
Momo	*Oh, no, on the deathrider, I'm
Hansli	I get sick.
Momo	I get sick.
Hansli	OK, <i>then</i> .

Ms Marple, the class/English teacher, valued the language support, which she felt was lacking in the textbook, and claimed that the children benefited a great deal from it. The data highlight the value of language support in FL teaching. The students were able to combine language support and their prior FL knowledge as a meaningful tool to personalise their presentations and express their needs and even emotions.

4.1.5 Guided instruction

Drawing on all the seven steps of the teaching speaking cycle by Goh and Burns (2012) enabled maximum support. As seen above, the end-of-unit task empowered the children to flexibly plan their story, include what they had learnt and draw on the language support provided and practised. Furthermore, I was able to correct any significant errors by giving them detailed feedback: having watched all the videos during the break, I left a note and made sure to explain it to each dyad later to ensure that they had re-recorded the slide, which they were sometimes reluctant to do because of the additional work required. I even practised crucial sentences or lexis with them to enhance their videos. They were proud of their newly acquired lexicon and sometimes even used it as a greeting in the next lesson to show what they had learnt. We then watched their videos, provided feedback, and reflected on the learning.

The class teacher appreciated the interim feedback, which enhanced the children’s story, and the audience design revealed that the children also benefited from the metacognitive processes and feedback. Their digital story became more elaborate in terms of tailoring it to their audience and orchestrating the spoken text onto the pictures, icons, written text, and sound effects.

4.2 What prior knowledge is needed for the negotiation of meaning in collaborative DST? How can this prior knowledge be supported?

4.2.1 Students’ understanding of the task requirements

The task sheet provided all the information needed: learning outcomes based on the curriculum and unit, task instructions, language support and the KWIC, which supported collaboration. As an end-of-unit task, it recycled the lexis and structures practised. These preconditions lowered the children’s cognitive load and assisted in planning their digital story. They then began filling in the worksheet:

Tina	<i>We need to fill in the sheet first.</i>
------	--

However, since the task sheet was introduced one week prior to the DST afternoon and the children were familiar with what to do, they sometimes planned orally, decided spontaneously, or added further components. Instead of suggesting that they

should visit three stalls, as prescribed on the task sheet, Tina and Fritzli even suggested four, or, as seen above, Hansli and Momo changed their story underway, added humour and went to the merry-go-round instead of the rollercoaster. Although the structure was clear and explicit, it allowed a great deal of leeway.

The task itself appeared to be more important than the differentiated learning aims, which Momo claimed they had not noticed. This might have been due to the fact that Ms Marple emails the learning aims to parents at the beginning of each term. In the interview, she confirmed that the learning aims were rather unimportant in her classes:

Ms	<i>Uhm, yes, I don't know if the children really use them for orientation. I am, I have the feeling they</i>
Marple	<i>just get on with it.</i>

Collaboration seemed to be more of a driving force for understanding the task requirements and successful DST, and instead of external expectations from the task, the children’s joint construction and negotiation were driven by the internal dynamics of their friendship. Tina clearly stated in the interview that collaboration was easier for them. This is not surprising; it confirmed the result from the questionnaire comparing collaborative DST in school with individual DST at home: 44.4 % of the class (8/18) preferred teamwork, compared to 27.8 % (5/18), who preferred working alone, and another 27.8 % (5/18), who were undecided. The children reasoned that working together was more enjoyable and simpler because they could support one another; however, focussing at home was easier due to the quiet environment.

4.2.2 Requirements for effective collaboration

As collaboration played an important role in the DST co-construction processes, I tried to support the children’s collaboration with Mercer’s (1995) framework. At the beginning of the academic year, I elicited ground rules for talk with the children. The rules were quickly collected on a poster, but despite their formal understanding, the students did not have the necessary resources for collaboration because the poster did not play a major role in the lessons, and the rules were neglected. Thus, I translated the KWIC to indicate the exploratory talk identified by Mercer et al. (1999) into German, taught them and added them on the task sheet (Appendix III).

Since my qualitative analysis of the audio-/video-recordings indicated that, besides the post-COVID-19 task, the students’ reasoning (exploratory talk and inter-thinking processes) had improved, I conducted a quantitative analysis of the KWIC:

Table 2: KWIC occurrence in 10,000 words of data of audio/video recordings of the tasks.

KWIC occurrence per 10,000 words in the data	1st task September 2019	2nd task November 2019	3rd task January 2020	4th task May 2020 (after the COVID-19 lockdown)
<i>will</i> (because)	3,160	7,590	9,420	4,219
<i>ech dank/glaub/find</i> (I think)	0,632	3,125	7,177	11,076
<i>du</i> (you) in questions	5,056	4,464	5,383	14,241
<i>werum/wieso</i> (why)	3,792	5,804	8,972	8,966
<i>wie</i> (how)	3,792	8,036	13,458	12,131
<i>was</i> (what)	12,640	9,378	23,776	19,515

Table 2 indicates that reasoning supported the students' collaboration as they asked more questions using question words and that their use of "because" increased three times and "I think" ten times. This is consistent with Mercer's (1995) results regarding teaching ground rules.

However, after the lockdown, the use of these words did not increase further, but the words "I" and "you" became more important. The students involved their partner by posing questions and justifying their thinking. Hansli reflected on this focus on the person in the interview that upon returning to school, he enjoyed seeing his friends the most. This is also consistent with the claim in the literature that students missed their peers during homeschooling (Huber et al., 2020).

4.2.3 Understanding of software and digital literacy

As I administered the software and Ms. Marple and I booted the computers and logged into Adobe Express, the children could immediately commence the DST task; however, the biggest problem at home seemed to be logging in. Once the children managed to log into Adobe Express at home, they worked independently, with 83.3 % (15/18) of them indicating that the software was (very) easy to use.

During the interview, Momo validated this finding from the questionnaire and suggested that my initial introduction regarding how to insert a photo and record oneself was enough, as the software was self-explanatory. At the beginning, they needed assistance due to issues with the built-in microphone and poor Wi-Fi. Then the students gradually incorporated what they had learnt into their general knowledge of how to use a laptop, for example, touch typing and checking the battery.

5 Discussion

In this section, I discuss the significance of the findings. I will explore them in light of an affective design to promote oracy and understand how it impacts and supports prior knowledge for task achievement.

5.1 Affective design to promote oracy and learning motivation

5.1.1 Improvement of oracy because of increased motivation and an audience design

An affective design can increase motivation, which is the driving factor of language learning (Kukulska-Hulme & Viberg, 2018; Nunan, 2011). The end-of-unit tasks were based on the curriculum and the learning aims of the respective unit to recycle the language and structures. As the aims were tailored to the children's lives, they had to be realistic, purposeful, communicative and provide the children with a good reason to talk. It turned out that such a task design had a game-like effect, which Ms Marple and the participants confirmed. Games are important for children in terms of engaging them and helping them learn (Nunan, 2011). The collaborative and playful DST tasks had a positive effect on the children's motivation, which in turn increased FL learning. Apart from including affective and mental elements, storytelling fosters language and cultural learning by strengthening personal identity (Kirsch, 2016). This compelling mixture encouraged motivation, made it easier for the children to identify with the real-world tasks and ensured meaningful FL learning, thereby contrasting with teaching drills in the YL classroom.

My tasks were innovative because the students practised the text freely before recording it. The language was then edited and re-edited until the recording met their standards. Their high level of motivation resulted from the fact that they had a real audience, their classmates and teacher, they had clear aims and a language focus, and they took ownership of their language practice (Pellerin, 2014). My findings show that a meaningful context and affective practice can promote FL learning and are more effective than rote learning (Ziegler, 2016).

Motivation remained high throughout the year. Affirmative elements such as talking to me about the tasks on their playground or their happy faces when they saw me in the classroom also support this; the students' online questionnaire responses during the lockdown and the interviews with the participants and Ms Marple confirmed my observation. Therefore, this DST research proved that the "novelty effect" proposed by short-term studies with YLs in FL (e.g., Sun et al., 2017) is

debatable. Kirsch and Bes Izuel (2019), Kirsch (2018) and Kirsch (2016) found increased commitment and long-term motivation in DST but did not explicitly describe how intensively they worked with the children, who were a few years younger than those in my sample.

5.1.2 Effects of differentiated tasks on oracy

The differentiated and open task design enabled all students to experience success because they could draw on what they had learnt to achieve a common goal: their digital story. The students also took advantage of the affordances of the software and the language support. As a result, they had control over their learning (Legutke et al., 2009) and produced a personalised story. They also learnt words that were important for their story or drew on me as a resource; for example, Momo and Hansli wanted to meet each other at the fair and wanted to know how to communicate this. The sentence “Let’s meet at the fair in Baar on Sunday morning.” was challenging for Hansli, and he needed my backchaining to be able to say it. Once he had mastered it, he was very proud, recorded it and beamed at the feedback session one week afterwards when his peers told him that they liked this ending, as he had referred to a fair that had recently taken place in a nearby town. These findings demonstrate that the individualised learning context and the creation of personalised DST tasks inspired the students as personalised learning can maintain YL motivation (Nunan, 2011). The multimodal collaborative process kept their attention high because they could easily see their progress and were pleased with the results. Such a successful result can improve students’ performance and motivation (Kukulska-Hulme & Viberg, 2018), especially if the lexis and task are child-oriented (Gardner, 1968) and significant for later use.

5.1.3 Effects of guided instruction on oracy

Whilst oracy in the YL classroom often depends on imitation and reproduction (Legutke et al., 2009), creative production should be promoted from the start (Kolb & Schocker, 2021). However, this is easier said than done, as teaching speaking as a linguistic communication ability is frequently unsatisfactory (Goh & Burns, 2012). By applying their framework, the participants not only received language support but also practised it and the language generally, which can be beneficial for future productive use, as my results show. The task sheet (Appendix III) also enabled planning; however, this planning was not set in stone and allowed flexibility and the personalisation of the story.

During the task work, learning was facilitated by giving interim feedback. As far as I am aware, such explicit feedback has never been provided in YL FL DST. My

feedback on the students' digital story was based on the learning aims and task requirements as well as helping them understand my written note, which I also clarified orally. This feedback led to an improved video, and Ms Marple very much appreciated this step. My research highlights the value of open, explicit instruction: when students can see the benefits of the teacher's decisions and understand why they are being made, they are more likely to accept them.

In addition to guiding the speaking process, I instructed collaboration by collecting rules for collaboration at the beginning of the academic year and asked the children to apply them during the task work. However, as the poster containing the rules played a minor role, I added the KWICs on the task sheet. Collaboration allowed the children to metacognitively regulate their development, as they evaluated and assessed their speech or digital story (Kirsch & Bes Izuel, 2019). This increased their linguistic competence, as what they had learnt during the negotiation processes (other-regulation) could later be applied individually (self-regulation) (Vygotsky, 1978). A positive experience of successful collaboration within the IDZ, proven by the presence of exploratory talk and a successful video, can be empowering to students, enhance their learning and raise their metacognitive awareness of the learning process. These include crucial personal, social, and problem-solving competences, which are key components for life in general. Moreover, collaborative planning and analysis of speech increased their language awareness (Kirsch & Bes Izuel, 2019).

Furthermore, collaborative DST encouraged creativity and fostered the students intellectually through social interaction, crucial in the YL FL classroom where "it is often helpful to pool one's resources and work jointly on a product" (Kolb & Schocker, 2021, p. 174). In her research, Ziegler (2016) noted that collective planning had an effect on the complexity and correctness of the language produced. These points should be considered when designing DST tasks for YLs.

5.2 Impacts of prior knowledge

5.2.1 Knowledge of lexis and structures to support DST

The tasks had clear language aims, which were based on the competences of the curriculum and textbook. They also recycled the main lexis and structures of the respective unit and allowed creativity and personalisation. This differentiated and open task design proved favourable, which I observed in the audio-/video-recordings and the participants' interview confirmations: using resources that the students were already comfortable with (lexis, structure, software) made the tasks interesting and encouraged collaboration and imagination. Furthermore, relating tasks to real-world contexts made them meaningful for the children.

It is important not only to plan good tasks for children but also provide language support before and during the DST task. Differentiated language support can aid as scaffolding, provide mental support and inspire students' DST dialogue. As far as I know, the use of language support in YL FL DST has received relatively little attention, with the exception of some lexis, content (Hwang et al., 2016) and sentence starters (Sun et al., 2017). Although my participants claimed that they did not use the language support, their DST video showed that they had drawn on the language support provided to fulfil the task. This indicates that the language support lessened the cognitive load (Chen & Chang, 2017).

5.2.2 Support for collaboration and joint construction

In multimodal DST, the role of the teacher changes. The teacher gives all the necessary instructions that the children need prior to the task, but during DST, they become a coach or advisor and support the children whenever needed, and students are given the responsibility for learning and communication (Gilead, 2018). Guided construction on collaboration can support these processes, as children need help for effective cooperation (Littleton et al., 2005; Mercer, 1995). As the rules did not play a major part in the class, I wrote the KWICs on the task sheet and encouraged the children to use them, resulting in increased application. Thus, my findings demonstrate that even KWICs can support collaborative processes.

5.2.3 Use of a simple software

Software can foster creativity, improve interaction and communication (Kukulska-Hulme & Viberg, 2018), enabled beginners to “communicate interesting content and their own ideas” (Kolb & Schocker, 2021, p. 174) and create new teaching and learning methods (Blake & Scanlon, 2013). This is particularly true for DST for YLs who simultaneously learn and use their FL and gain new skills in digital literacy (Kolb & Schocker, 2021; Macleroy et al., 2021).

A simple and stable software and a good Internet connection are key to working successfully with computers. My findings substantiated prior results that Adobe Express is easy to use (e.g., Chung & Wang, 2020), even for YLs. The students quickly became familiar with the online software, which required them to collaborate to achieve a good story. They were able to increase their understanding of the potential of the software and customise their presentation to suit their needs, which made learning engaging and personally relevant (Kukulska-Hulme & Traxler, 2019). This developed their agency and motivation to independently create a story for their peers.

Furthermore, by using an appropriate software that allows multimodal representation, YLs can be supported in terms of autonomy, engagement and motivation.

The simplicity of Adobe Express enabled the students to concentrate on the language rather than the software, which is consistent with Kirsch's (2016) results, thus fostering their oracy.

6 Conclusions

This section summarises the research, presents the implications and limitations and demonstrates pathways for future research.

6.1 Summary and implications

This research investigated collaborative oral DST in the YL FL classroom, which is an innovative approach that embeds digital technology in FL teaching and learning and fosters digital skills, FL learning and interdisciplinary competences such as collaboration. In order to facilitate these outcomes, an affective task design was fundamental. It should be based on the curriculum, the learning aims and the content (including lexis and structures) taught as well as draw on real-life or imaginary situations and be child-oriented. Therefore, repetition does not have to be boring and irrelevant drills; it can also be a creative recycling of lexis and structures that leads to positive outcomes and real learning in which students can take agency and ownership. To benefit from oral DST, support (i.e., language support taught prior to the tasks and scaffolding) is essential to foster the students' learning. Without realising it, the children drew on the language support taught prior to the DST task and provided on the task sheet (Appendix III), allowing them to tell a more elaborate story, which they addressed to a real audience. Moreover, the teaching speaking cycle by Goh and Burns (2012) assisted the holistic process and ensured that speaking was taught and supported throughout the process to promote learning. The children benefited from teacher guidance and explicit feedback during the lesson and reflection and feedback afterwards.

The findings demonstrate that the individualised learning context and the creation of personalised DST tasks inspired the students as personalised learning maintained their motivation. Having "the option to make choices in terms of language and content" (Kolb & Schocker, 2021, p. 177) motivated them throughout the year-long study. The software Adobe Express was also a motivating force as it was user-friendly and allowed individualised and personalised representations.

As the children created their digital stories in dyads, Mercer's (1995) talk lessons could strengthen collaboration and develop interdisciplinary competences. As the poster with the rules did not play a major role in the class, I demonstrated that the

provision of KWICs, which I wrote on the task sheets, could promote collaboration and interthinking processes, though it is still desirable to cognitively understand the rules and apply them.

These findings suggest that explicit teaching in YL FL oral DST is crucial in terms of teaching speaking and collaboration. The foundation for this is a sound task design. My task design could contribute to the theory of FL instruction as Chong and Reinders (2020) emphasised the importance of an effective theoretical approach to technology-mediated TBLT that enables the design of powerful pedagogical DST tasks with the potential to enhance language learning.

6.2 Limitations and future research

My small-scale case study was conducted in a wealthy catchment area, and because of a lack of rigour in such studies, the findings cannot be scientifically generalised. As generalisation in case studies can be problematic, I offered particularisation and a careful subjective narrative. Subjectivity was addressed as a result of my methodology, analysis and insider research. I did this by quoting the participants and conducting validity checks, such as ensuring that the data were consistent, coded, analysed correctly and then triangulated.

Nonetheless, these findings have implications for teaching and learning and YL FL pedagogy in general in terms of providing YLs with meaningful speaking tasks related to their lives, supporting them with resources that enable task achievement and catering for their emotional, physical and cognitive needs. Moreover, the results are significant with regard to the need for further theoretical insights into task-based DST.

Future research could seek to confirm the results gained in my small-scale case study in other social contexts and with a larger sample. As the participants claimed that they benefited from oral DST and I have illustrated that the task design played an important role, it would also be desirable to trial the task design in other contexts and with younger or older learners. This type of research could prove its validity.

While I think that from a pedagogical background, collaboration is best instructed directly, my study has demonstrated that providing KWICs also facilitated it. A follow-up study could explore the extent to which KWICs could support guided instruction to promote collaboration.

Appendix I: Deductive codes

Preparation for recording, analysis/evaluation of recording, use of task-related language support, disputational talk, cumulative talk, exploratory talk, the intermental development zone (IDZ), recording, English, looking up words.

Appendix II: Inductive codes

Germanic construction, key/critical incidents, correcting themselves, fun with language, chunks, understanding of Adobe Express, camera/video/audio-recording, teacher use of language, other observation, teenage slang/swearwords.

Appendix III: Unit 1 five sensational senses

☉	Ich kann mehrere Attraktionen auf einem Jahrmarkt auf Englisch benennen.	😊 😐 😞
☉	Ich kann begründen, warum ich eine Attraktion auf dem Jahrmarkt (nicht) mag.	😊 😐 😞
☉	Ich kann mit meinem Lernpartner/meiner Lernpartnerin einen Dialog entwerfen, bei welchem wir zwei Attraktionen vorschlagen und uns fürs die dritte entscheiden.	😊 😐 😞
⚡	Ich kreierte einen interessanten und eventuell lustigen Dialog, auch mit anderen Textteilen (→ language support).	😊 😐 😞
⚡	Meine Aussprache ist natürlich.	😊 😐 😞
🌟	Ich kann etwas Zusätzliches zur Attraktion sagen.	😊 😐 😞

Task: You are going to the fair, and you need to decide where to go first.

Stall	Reasoning (why)	Reasoning (why not)
Agreement		

- Who's going to be A, and who's going to be B? ☉
- Read through the dialogue and complete it. ☉ ⚡ 🌟

A	Hey, let's talk about the fair. Shall we go there together on Sunday?
B	Oh, yes, that's a great idea. Why don't we go to ... I love ... because ...
A	I don't want to go to ... I think it's ... We could go to ..., it's ... and ... What do you think?
B	Oh, no, I don't like ... because it's ... Where else could we go? I really like ...
A	My friend likes ... and I like ... I suggest we go there.
B	It's a great idea. I would love to go there because I ...
A	All right. So let's go there first.
B	Fine, let's go there. I can't wait to go.

Useful phrases

To make a suggestion	To make a statement	To work together:
I would like to...	Hello./Hi.	because (weil)
Why don't we...	I'm great, thank you.	I think (ich denke)
We could...	I don't think so.	you (du)
I suggest that	Yes, and I need a/an	why (warum)
I agree with you.	Thank you.	where (wo)
To make a choice	Let's go.	how (wie)
All right, let's...	Useful adjectives exciting, interesting, boring, fantastic,	what (was)
Okay, so let's...	awesome, sweet, sticky, fast, slow, high, loud, soft, salty, good,	when (wann)
Fine, so let's...	hot	who(wer/wen)
Great, let's...		

3. Practise the dialogue. ☺ ☛ ☞
4. Start with your Adobe Express video. Look out for your name. Use the language support on this sheet and on laminated sheet. ☺ ☛ ☞

Log-in details:

Username
Password

Appendix IV: Examples drawn on in this article

The different languages are depicted as follows: *Swiss German*, English.

Tina	<i>Also, ech fröge:</i> ‘Hey, let’s talk about the fair.’ <i>Da chasch du luege.</i> ‘Shall we go there together on Sunday? Oh, yes, that’s a great idea. *Who should we go to?’ <i>Ja, und denn tüemmer so afa diskutiere.</i>	<i>OK, I’m going to ask,</i> ‘Hey, let’s talk about the fair.’ <i>Look here.</i> ‘Shall we go there together on Sunday? Oh, yes, that’s a great idea. *Who should we go to?’ <i>Yes, and then we’re going to start our discussion.</i>
Tina	<i>Ond de säged mer nachher:</i> ‘*Oh, yes, we go on the hotdog stand. It’s so, it’s so... I love, it’s my favourite food, hotdogs.’ OK, <i>säged mer da:</i> ‘Can we go to?’ <i>Ond de seisch du:</i> ‘Oh, no, it’s so sticky.’ OK.	<i>And then we say.</i> ‘*Oh, yes, we go to the hotdog stand. It’s so, it’s so... I love, it’s my favourite food, hotdogs.’ OK, <i>say here,</i> ‘Can we go to (inaudible, must be candyfloss)?’ <i>And then you say,</i> ‘Oh, no, it’s so sticky.’ OK.
Fritzli	<i>Nei, ech säge eifach:</i> ‘Oh, no, it’s so [sweet.]’	<i>No, I’ll just say,</i> ‘Oh, no, it’s so [sweet.]’
Tina	<i>[Nei,] sticky, das esch luschtig.</i> sticky.	<i>[No,] sticky, that’s funny.</i> (laughs) sticky.
Fritzli	Stick-y.	Stick-y. (plays with the word, laughs)

(continued)

Tina	<i>Säg da sticky. Can we go on, uhm. No, it s –o-k. Can we go to the candyfloss stand?</i>	<i>Say sticky. (presses the record button) Can we go on, uhm. No, it s –o-k. (presses the record button) Can we go to the candyfloss stand?</i>
Fritzli	<i>Oh, no, it's so sticky.</i>	<i>Oh, no, it's so sticky. (exaggerated pronunciation)</i>
Tina		<i>(laughs, presses the play button)</i>
Fritzli	<i>Nei, sticky.</i>	<i>(laughs too) No. sticky (parrots himself, then the recording is played).</i>
Momo	<i>OND mier händ au gwüsst, wie s Programm gaht. Ond mier händs denn au mit vill Mueh luschtig chönne mache.</i>	<i>And we also knew how to work with the software. And that meant we could put a lot of effort into making it funny.</i>
Momo	<i>Tüemer so öppis merry-go-round.</i>	<i>Let's do something merry-go-round.</i>
Hansli		<i>(slaps his left hand on his forehead)</i>
Momo	<i>De lached sech alli, weisch, wie esch das doof.</i>	<i>Then everyone will (die) laughing, you know, that's so daft.</i>
Hansli	<i>Die send eifach alli voll obe.</i>	<i>They're all from above. (commenting on pictures)</i>
Momo	<i>De lached sie sech weisch wie voll tot. Wette.</i>	<i>They'll totally die laughing. Wanna bet?</i>
Hansli		<i>(laughs) (inaudible)</i>
Momo	<i>Weisch, mier bem merry-go-round. Ja, weisch wie luschtig.</i>	<i>You know, us two going on the merry-go-round. That's so funny.</i>
Tina	<i>Mier müend zerscht das Blatt mache.</i>	<i>We need to fill in the sheet first.</i>
Ms Marple	<i>Uhm, ja, ech weiss ned, öb sech, d Chind sech jetzt extrem a däm orientiered. Also, ech be mängisch, ech ha s Gfühl, sie möched eifach.</i>	<i>Uhm, yes, I don't know if the children really use them for orientation. I am, I have the feeling they just get on with it.</i>
Momo	<i>Jetzt muesch du no du das säge, ,Oh, no...,' das muesch du da no säge.</i>	<i>Now you have to say this, 'Oh, no...' You have to say that now.</i>
Hansli	<i>OK, OK *Can we go, uhm, to the deathrider? It's so fast and fun.'</i>	<i>OK, OK *Can we go, uhm, to the deathrider? It's so fast and fun.'</i>
Momo	<i>*Oh, no, on the deathrider, I'm</i>	<i>*Oh, no, on the deathrider, I'm</i>
Hansli	<i>I get sick.</i>	<i>I get sick.</i>
Momo	<i>I get sick.</i>	<i>I get sick.</i>

Appendix V: Letter to the parents explaining the aims of the online questionnaire (translated into English)

Dear parents of Ms Marple's students,

From the bottom of my heart, I hope that you are all doing well.

At school, I got to make three videos with your child using Adobe Express Video. Your child created great presentations. I would be happy to send you the videos at the end of the school year.

Because of coronavirus, I had to rearrange my doctoral study. Instead of an assignment in school, the children solved the *homeschooling* task at home. In these videos, they again did a super job and gave exciting accounts of their day at home. For my slightly restructured study, I would like to compare the work done in school with that done at home. For this purpose, I have created a **questionnaire**. It will take about 15 min to fill out. I would be very happy if your child would fill out the questionnaire at the following link by **09 May 2020**: <https://tinyurl.com/asv-Fragen>.

Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions or uncertainties.

Thank you very much for your trust and support.

Best regards,

Andrea Lustenberger

Online Questionnaire *Jisc* (Translated into English):

Dear children of Ms Marple's class,

You created mega cool presentations with Adobe Express Video. I'm happy that I get to work with you. Working with you is totally exciting for me and my project "Promoting Oracy in the English Classroom with Adobe Express Video".

Because of coronavirus, I had to modify my project. You have now made a video at home. This is why I'd like to hear more from you about working with Adobe Express Video in school and at home. Your participation in this questionnaire is voluntary. However, with your answers, you would help me tremendously to understand my work better.

This is why I'd really appreciate it if you could take the time to answer the following questions. There are no right or wrong answers, and you will not be rewarded for your answers.

By participating, you give me permission to use your answers for my work. All data will be collected anonymously. They cannot be assigned to your person and will be treated with strict confidentiality.

Thank you very much for your participation.

1. How much did you enjoy working with Adobe Express in school?

😊 😊 😊 😊 😊 😊 😊

I liked...

I did not like so much...

2. How difficult was the task (animal party, fairground, interviewing someone about their job)?

very easy, easy, medium, difficult, very difficult

I liked...

I did not like so much...

3. How difficult was it to work with the software Adobe Express?

very easy, easy, medium, difficult, very difficult

The easiest thing was...

The most difficult thing was...

4. To what extent did you enjoy working with Adobe Spark at home?

😊 😊 😊 😐 😞 😞 😞

I liked...

I did not like so much...

5. How difficult was the task (home-schooling)?

very easy, easy, medium, difficult, very difficult

The easiest thing was...

The most difficult thing was...

6. How difficult was it to work with the software Adobe Express at home?

very easy, easy, medium, difficult, very difficult

The easiest thing was...

The most difficult thing was...

7. How many people did you send the link to your video (apart from Ms Marple and myself)?

0 – 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5 – 6

More:

8. Who did you send the link to? How did the people react? Would you send me a screenshot of their answers, please?

9. Which work with Adobe Express do you prefer?

Working in pairs in school.

Alone at home.

I don't mind.

Why?

10. Did working with Adobe Express help improve your English?

Yes.

No.

11. What I would like to say:
 - a. I speak the following language(s) with my family:
German – English – French – Russian – Japanese – Chinese – another language
Another language, namely:
 - b. I speak the following language(s) with my friends:
German – English – French – Russian – Japanese – Chinese – another language
Another language, namely:
 - c. I speak the following language(s) with my neighbours:
German – English – French – Russian – Japanese – Chinese – another language
Another language, namely:
Thank you very much for your answers. You have helped me a lot.

[Correction added after online publication on October 24 2023: Chinese Taiwan has been changed to Taiwan, China]

[Correction added after online publication on October 24 2023: China has been changed to Beijing, China]

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