

## SOCIAL MEDIA AS A TOOL FOR USING AND LEARNING ENGLISH IN TRANSLOCAL EXCHANGES

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### OBJECTIVE:

To study the spontaneous use of social media as a language learning tool in a translocal classroom project conducted by two groups of secondary students from one school in Catalonia and one school in Greece.

### THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

- Meaningful classroom proposals create a real need to use English and opportunities for authentic communication (Dooly & Sadler, 2019).
- Learners can develop competence in the target language through mobilization of plurilingual and plurimodal resources (Llompert, Masats, Moore & Nussbaum, 2020).
- "Emoji, if used in isolation, might posit word-like properties and show grammatical patterns and orders, similar to words" (Stamatov, 2017, p. 2).

### METHODOLOGY

- Two translocal classrooms use technology to take part in a telecollaborative project to get to know another culture and lifestyle.
- Regular virtual exchanges between the two groups were carried out through Messenger.
- Teachers and students in Catalonia used WhatsApp to plan out of school time, a face-to-face meeting in Greece.
- Learners in the two countries spontaneously use Instagram chats to communicate before, during and after the face-to-face meeting. Teachers requested access to their conversations and students accepted to send them screenshots.

### CONS

- The translocal project offered students an authentic context in which to use the target language in and outside the classroom.
- Teachers, who are also the researchers, access examples of natural excerpts of talk-in-interaction occurring outside the classroom walls.

### PROS

- Exchanges are not complete, either because the students only select fragments of their Instagram chats or because the screenshots acknowledge the presence of audio and visual elements which are not available anymore due to Instagram settings
- Access to these instances of social conversations decreased over time, especially after the two groups had met and the conversations were probably becoming more personal.

### CONVERSATIONAL ANALYSIS OF TWO SOURCES OF DATA

#### Corpus Source 1:

WhatsApp conversation between Catalan students and their teachers prior the trip: Negotiation of Code.

Peer-regulation of use of the target language to "practice" for the trip.

The trip provides a need to use the target language.

[27/6/19 9:55:46] Teacher: What about meeting tomorrow morning or one day next week to talk about it?  
 [27/6/19 9:57:00] Stu1: the next week better please, at least for me  
 [27/6/19 9:57:11] Stu 2: Yes tomorrow morning  
 [27/6/19 9:57:30] Stu 2: Or as you want  
 [27/6/19 9:59:10] Stu 3: Podemos hablar en castellano que nos entendemos bien?  
 [27/6/19 9:59:45] Stu 2: No  
 [27/6/19 10:00:03] Stu 4: Yes, please  
 [27/6/19 10:00:10] Stu 5: In English better, in this way we can practice the language a bit more  
 [27/6/19 10:00:22] Stu 2: Yes

#### Corpus Source 2:

Screenshot of Instagram conversation between Catalan and Greek students on the last day of the trip: Negotiation of Code. Peer-regulation of use of the target language to include all speakers. Use of multimodal resources (emojis and photos) to convey meaning in another shared code.

Project Reference: 2016ACUP-001 (2017-2020), LCF/PR/RC16/10100003

C1		Photo not available (sent to be seen once only)
G1		Turn that triggers G2 proposal
C1		
C1		
G2		CODE-SWITCHING (to address a Greek peer): Tony, will you have time to go with them?
G3		Regulating code use by fellow peer
C1		CODE-SWITCHING: Dizzy Emoji with eyes crossed often means 'dead' or astonished (multimodal resource to show agreement with G3 or astonishment for G2 turn)
G1		

G1		LOL Slang interjection to indicate that G2's turn is surprising and/or funny
G3		Regulating code use by fellow peer
G2		Acceptance of G3 request. Self-mediation move. Paraphrasing own utterance in Greek
G1		CODE SWITCHING: Face with tears of joy. Emotional-tone marker to show amusement
G4		Acceptance of G2 proposal in the same code
C1		CODE SWITCHING: Acceptance of G2 proposal
G2		USE OF TWO CODES
		Code-switching

### CONCLUSIONS:

Social media triggers an authentic need for communicating and for learning English. Communication through a language both groups are learning is scaffolded by the use of a channel they are familiar with (Instagram) and the legitimate shared code (Emoji & multimodal resources) that accompanies it. Language negotiation serves different purposes if done in teacher-mediated formal contexts (practicing the target language) or in non-teacher-mediated informal contexts (for the sake of mutual understanding).

### PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS:

To what extent do typical pedagogical tasks allow students to engage in multimodal communication practices such as the ones they are immersed in real life?

### REFERENCES

- Dooly, Melinda, & Sadler, Randall (2019). Preparing English student-teachers with digital and collaborative knowledge: An illustrative synopsis. In Dolores Masats, Maria Mont & Nathaly Gonzalez-Acevedo (Eds.), Joint efforts for innovation: Working together to improve foreign language teaching in the 21st century (pp. 21-28). Paragon Publishing. DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.3064130
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