



Using Technology to Support Oral Communication in English Language Learning

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Abstract

In Germany, the primary school curriculum for English as a foreign language (EFL) focuses on developing oral communication skills. However, achieving this aim is usually regarded as challenging, since learners' language skills in English learning vary considerably. Current language teaching methods, e.g. task-based language teaching (TBLT), identify crucial aspects for dealing with this heterogeneity, such as individualisation and collaborative learning. Moreover, various studies suggest that new technologies can facilitate learner-centred and communication-oriented approaches and enable more differentiated and personalised learning. Nevertheless, the number of studies investigating the potential of technology-enhanced TBLT in primary school is still very low. The purpose of this PhD research project is to examine how the oral communicative learning process in the heterogeneous EFL primary classroom can be supported and possibly be improved by the use of technology-enhanced TBLT. The qualitative research method follows the 'collaborative action research' (Burns, 2001) approach. Research data are gathered in three longitudinal case studies during the academic year 2020/21 through field notes, video recordings of lessons, and teacher and learner interviews. An expected outcome of the project is to develop criteria for designing technology-mediated language learning tasks that cater for authentic target language use and collaboration in the primary classroom.

Keywords: English as a foreign language (EFL); heterogeneity; primary school; speaking; task-based learning