

Digital multilingual picture book

1. Objectives

- Foster the feeling of security of the child in an environment where he does not yet understand the language very well
- Foster entry into the language of schooling by promoting existing language skills in first languages
- Bring pupils' first languages into the classroom
- Use tools to help pupils who do not speak French to understand
- Foster the memorisation of the lexicon in French through the use of first languages and translation (translanguaging)
- Develop a multilingual consciousness (metalinguistic skills)

2. Emergence of practice and theoretical support

To awaken to languages in my class, I initially used Martine Kervran's manual " *Langues du monde au quotidien - une approche interculturelle – cycle 1*", published by the CRDP of Brittany in 2013, which includes about twenty languages. And I tried, as much as I could, to integrate my pupils' languages into the sessions.

More and more, I began to use my own resources (nursery rhymes learned from parents or found in CD...), and I started to draw up for myself lexicon tables in the different languages of the class. To do this, I asked the parents how they used to say 1 2 3 4 5 in their own language, for example, and I wrote it phonetically so that I could reuse it with the pupils.

For his part, my colleague from the nursery school section for oldest who works a lot with digital tablets, had created a multilingual picture book of the objects of the class, with the help of the parents he had recorded. Seeing the interest of this type of tool (a sound and interactive tool brings a plus for children who are not readers), my colleagues and I then decided to get some tablets, then to create and share various multilingual picture books on different themes frequently discussed in nursery school. We share these picture books between the 3 classes and make them accessible to families on the school's blog (see below).

Among the selected themes: the words and small sentences necessary to welcome the very young child when he or she arrives at school; numbers up to 5 or up to 10; colours; class material (felt, scissors,...); parts of the body; animals. This list evolves according to the themes addressed and the projects implemented. The picture books are widely used in nursery schools, in the form of books or others : in my class I use collections of pictures classified by theme. They are also widely used in classes for allophones, whatever their age: you can find ipicture books in different languages on the website of CASNAV ((Academic Centre for the Schooling of Newly Arrived Allophone Children and children of itinerant families and Travellers) in Strasbourg.

To know more :

The Strasbourg CASNAV website :

<https://www.ac-strasbourg.fr/pedagogie/casnav/enfants-allophones-nouvellement-arrivees/ressources-premier-degre/supports-pour-valoriser-la-langue-dorigine/imagiers-multilingues/> (consulted on 15/01/18)

Our school blog :

<http://mat-cologne-besancon.ac-besancon.fr/2017/01/02/contes-sacs-a-raconter/> (consulted on 27/01/18)

Language awareness

Awakening to languages is not the teaching of a particular language. It is the active discovery, through activities that bring pupils into contact with oral and written corpus in different languages, of the widest diversity of the world's languages: languages from all countries, linguistic varieties of any status present in the environment, languages of families...". The question of the affective and symbolic dimension of languages has been widely questioned by researchers and numerous studies show that a didactic approach to plurilingualism, including the languages of pupils and their families, enables pupils to establish a link between home and school and to reconcile the different languages of their repertoire. Research on a small section class in Mulhouse (Smeets, Young & Mary, 2015) shows that the inclusion of pupils' languages has the effect of improving pupils participation in class activities and interactions. We can also mention Cécile Goï for her work on pupils' languages, or Marie-Rose Moro for transcultural ethno-psychiatry. For the didactics of multilingualism, we can mention Michel Candelier, Christine Hélot, Andréa Young and Jim Cummins who explains that the language of the child and the language of the school are interdependent (2001) and that the child transfers his or her skills in a permanent back-and-forth that benefits both languages.

To know more:

A presentation of language awareness on the ministry's website:

http://cache.media.education.gouv.fr/file/Anglais/51/4/eveil_408514.pdf (consulted on 01/27/2018)

Resources on Plurilinguals, the website of the international association EdiLic:

<http://plurilingues.e-monsite.com/pages/en-savoir-plus-sur-l-veil-aux-langues.html> (consulted on 27/01/18)

ELODIL (language awareness and openness to linguistic diversity):

http://www.elodil.com/activ_prescolaire_th1.html (consulted on 27/01/18)

DULALA (from one language to another):

<https://www.dulala.fr/ateliers-dune-langue-a-lautre-pour-tous-les-enfants/> (consulted on 27/01/18)

A research paper on a classroom that practises the inclusion of pupils' languages:

Smeets O., Young A., & Mary L. (2015). « Pour une approche pédagogique plurilingue. Les enfants

bilingues émergents en petite section ». Mélanges CRAPEL (Centre de Recherches et d'Applications Pédagogiques en Langues) n°36. http://www.atilf.fr/IMG/pdf/smeets_mary.pdf (consulted on 27/01/18)

Cummins J. (2001). *La langue maternelle des enfants bilingues*.

<http://www.famillelanguescultures.org/medias/files/cummins-2001-langue-maternelle-des-enfants-bilingues-1.pdf> (consulted on 27/01/18)

Valuing the mother tongue and encouraging its use is important, because it is now known that good mastery of the mother tongue is a foundation on which to build the second language. In other words, the more comfortable pupils are with their mother tongue, the more they will be able to use their existing language skills to learn French at school.

3. Implementation

With the parents

First of all, I prepare the picture book on my tablet thanks to the book creator application that allows me to make digital books. On each page, I write and illustrate a word with a picture that serves as a referent in the class (see the fact sheet on "speaking bags") or a photo taken with the pupils. Then I ask some parents if they can devote a few minutes to me and, at the welcome moment, in the classroom, we record the words in their languages,

with around us children who come to listen to us.

The parents willingly accept, the only negative answer I had was that of a father who told me not to master the language well enough. Sometimes older siblings also play the game. Pupils are usually present when I record their parents.

With the pupils

I then use the picture book in the language corner with the whole class together during the period when we are working on the theme in question, in connection with nursery rhymes and pictures games used daily in the classroom. I only use one tablet for the whole group and yet there is a lot of attention in the class. They all feel concerned. We listen to the different languages one after the other. Spontaneously pupils start repeating the words and clearly enjoy doing so. They memorise a few and repeat them willingly.

The practice of these activities also allows phonological work: hearing and producing new sounds, comparing them to those we know.

The children recognise the person speaking, they know that this voice is that of the mother or father of such and such. And very quickly they remember the name of the language. The children are proud to hear their language and to repeat it; they are also very attentive to the languages of their friends. Very quickly, they remember the names of the languages in the class, and they become aware that they speak different languages. In the mid-section, some, in turn, become able to record the words themselves, without their parents, which means that they become able to translate, which is a remarkable skill

After a use in a large group, pupils can independently listen back to the recordings on class computers.

What languages do we record?

These are the languages of the school, that is, the languages spoken by the families of our pupils. Out of the three classes, we count each year about twenty different languages including the 3 most frequent: Arabic, Romani and Shimaoré (majority language of Mayotte). Among the recurring languages, we also have Kibushi (minority language of Mayotte) and Turkish.

Other languages are more occasional: African languages such as Wolof, Zarma (a language of Niger), Lingala, Malagasy; Asian languages such as Vietnamese, Cambodian or Tibetan, Eastern European languages (Russian, Chechen, Romanian or Polish); Creoles (Haitian or Reunionese Creole, the bushinengué tongo which is a Creole from Guyana).

We also sometimes record languages belonging to the language repertoire of teachers such as Italian, Spanish, English or German.

And of course, we also record French: often it is the teacher who does it and the whole group retells the word. Thus the French word is put in direct relation with its different translations in the languages of the class. The autonomous use of the tablet can thus be done independently by a pupil who can both listen to his native language and hear the word in French as many times as it will be necessary to memorise it, and practice its pronunciation.

4. Impact

On pupils

This is an activity that children enjoy a lot: we listen to words, sentences or nursery rhymes in different languages. We find words, we compare them from one language to another. You get used to the sounds. We discover the languages of our friends and that's where it becomes particularly interesting. When a pupil's language is heard in class, and said by

someone in his family, one can read pride on his face, and he feels then recognised in his identity.

I can tell many anecdotes that show the positive effect on the pupil's attitude in class. A small section pupil of Afghan origin had just arrived in my class during the year and I had not yet heard the sound of his voice. I was sitting with a Turkish-speaking pupil and listening to the names of the animals recorded by his mother. The little one came to sit next to me, and I then made him listen to his dad that I had just recorded the same morning. Then the child started talking to me and never stopped.

This type of anecdote is repeated with many children, and not only do they start talking, but they feel allowed to speak in their own language, which may be the only one in which they can express themselves. The main effect of this kind of activity is probably the absence in our classes of this very common silence among allophone pupils and often deplored by teachers. Pupils feel welcome in their languages, so they dare to speak even if they do not feel comfortable in French.

On the parents

These are very special moments that induce another form of relationship: here it is the teacher who asks of the parents and the parent who is in a position to teach to the teacher. It is a moment of connivence, of complicity around the common construction of a tool for their children / pupils, and this has a very beneficial effect on the confidence needed for the parent / teacher relationship. Parents feel recognised in their identity and are very touched that their language matters to the school.

So I had a particularly rich time with two moms. Each recorded her mother tongue (Spanish and Haitian Creole), then Portuguese was recorded, a language common to both, with metalinguistic discussions on words such as "Are you sure it's the singular?" And "how are we going to translate" the "(male gender)or" the "(female gender)? Or "Ah, it's the same word as in Spanish! ". Moments like these weave valuable bonds when it comes to cooperating around the child's schooling.

It has been more than three years now that the whole school has been implementing this type of "language policy" and we are beginning to see other consequences such as: a certain ripple effect or attraction for families who have heard talk about our attitude towards languages; and, above all, a remarkable effect: we now hear the languages of families within the school, in the corridors at the dressing time, between parents and their children, between parents, between parents and teachers, in the classes, and not only between children of the same language. The school is truly a multilingual place..

Two examples

The colours picture book

The cover	the first page with the following languages: French, Arabic, Romani, Turkish, Pashto, Wolof, Zarma, Kibushi and Shimaore
-----------	---



To listen to the colours book:

<https://read.bookcreator.com/L4eAnyItyQXJqnaa1X0K28jy0Ph2/qVskBSfnS6mha4IPGg5kHA>

The picture book Bonjour-Au revoir....

<http://mat-cologne-besancon.ac-besancon.fr/2017/11/16/bonjour-au-revoir-papa-maman/>