

**PICTURE BOOK READING IN A NEW ARRIVAL CONTEXT:
A MULTIMODAL PERSPECTIVE ON TEACHING READING**

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Abstract

This thesis is a case study of one teacher's approach to teaching reading in an upper-primary new arrivals classroom context. The aim of the study is to document and examine her use of multimodal picture books, with particular emphasis on her exploitation of the visual and verbal modes. More specifically, the thesis examines the meaning configuration in a range of picture book texts used in the lessons and the teacher-student interactions around these texts. The analysis is, thus, a semiotic exploration of the practices involved in the teaching of reading to a group of New Arrivals Program (NAP) students in order to inform understandings of the teacher's processes and practices.

The research design comprised three complementary sub-studies. The first adopted a multimodal approach to the study of the picture books, where it was demonstrated that varied meanings were constructed from the integration of the verbal and visual resources. It also identified how these two modes combined in linear and non-linear ways that posed demands and challenges to young beginner readers. Analysis of teacher-student talk, which characterised the second sub-study, revealed that the interactions were largely teacher-led. Emphasis was placed on the verbal mode more so than on the visual images, with the teacher focusing on developing students' decoding skill and awareness of the written language. The third sub-study, which examined the use of questions, illustrated the differences in the nature of interactions between the teacher with the higher-literate and with the lower-literate groups.

The implications, particularly in relation to developing NAP students' experiences with multimodal texts, draw on both theoretically- and pedagogically-influenced aspects dealt with in this study. Theoretically, the multimodal investigation of this text-type demonstrates the meaning-making processes involved in the construction of picture books. Application of the Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) theory to the study of the written and visual resources illuminates on these processes. The use of a 'visual grammar' developed by Kress and van Leeuwen (1996, 2006) and combined with the framework of visual-verbal complementarity (Royce 1998) highlighted the importance of the images in depicting both independent and integrated meanings in this form of text. This contributes to an understanding of the reading process and suggests pedagogic implications for the teaching of reading to NAP students. An understanding of the meaning affordances of the verbal and visual resources may help picture

book users to better comprehend and interpret meanings, and the teacher's role will be significant for mediating and strengthening such student experiences with texts. The findings reveal that the teacher's intervention and use of questions in spoken interactions are crucial for facilitating student engagement with and interpretation of the texts. The study concludes with some comments on the contributions for new arrivals' education. One of the major pedagogic goals has been to draw attention to the emerging field of multimodal research to the existing trend of teaching reading to this student cohort.

Declaration

This work contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university or other tertiary institution to Celine Chu Poh Yoke and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference has been made in the text.

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List of Abbreviations

ESL	English as a Second Language
NAP	New Arrivals Program
DECS	Department of Education and Children's Services
TENA	Teaching English to New Arrivals
SFL	Systemic Functional Linguistic
CaLD	Culturally and Linguistically Diverse
BSSOs	Bilingual School Support Officers
SACSA	South Australian Curriculum Standards and Accountability
THRASS	Teaching Handwriting, Reading and Spelling Skills
VALBEC	Victorian Adult Literacy & Basic Education Council
DSP	Disadvantaged Schools Program
I-R-F	Initiation – Response - Feedback
VMEs	Visual Message Elements
(S)	Synonymy
(R)	Repetition
(H)	Hyponymy
(M)	Meronymy
(NSR)	No Sense Relation

Transcription Conventions

T	Teacher
S1, S2, etc.	Individual Students Identified by Numbers
S	Unidentified Student
SS	Multiple Students
R	Researcher
...	Brief Pause Less Than 2 Seconds
()	Researcher's Notes
<i>italic</i>	Verbalising of Written Text from Book or Whiteboard
(())	Overlap Utterances
[xxx]	Unrecognisable Word