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SECOND LANGUAGE LEARNERS' SELF-INITIATED TOPIC CHANGES DURING BOOK-RELATED ACTIVITIES IN PRESCHOOL AND THEIR IMPACT ON LUXEMBOURGISH PROFICIENCY

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Second language learners' self-initiated topic changes during book-related activities in preschool and their impact on Luxembourgish proficiency

ABSTRACTS

English abstract

The present research traces the second language learning process in Luxembourgish during book related activities by 4- to 5-year old pre-schoolers with Portuguese, Cap Verdean and Brazilian origins. With 47,2% of the preschool population being of foreign origins, the Lusophone community forms the largest group with 24,1%. This salient fast growing multilingual and multicultural population learns Luxembourgish for integration and everyday interaction and, hence, challenges public education with its diverse and altering demands.

The present study enlarges second language research in the Luxembourgish context and links to previous investigation on topics, however, by taking a pragmatic stance towards topics. Through the foregrounding of the local topic management as well as its impact on activities, which are less teacher controlled, the study pictures second language learning as a product of co-constructed interaction. The focus lies on the negotiation of story meaning through self-initiated topic changes during three book related activities: Joint reading, storytelling and play. The data consists of video recorded lessons and on stimulated recall interviews with the teachers. A multi-method framework is used to investigate pupils' interaction and language learning processes. From a quantitative point of view, the study analyses how pupils' utterance length varies according to the openness of the lesson by allowing self-initiated topic changes as well as the design of the book activity (1) led by teachers or (2) by the pupils. From a qualitative stance, a sequence-by-sequence analysis of the jointly constructed narrative identifies the interactional dynamics of the collaborative storytelling activities and the use of self-initiated topic changes which children draw upon to express themselves more freely.

The results show that children's utterances vary according to the activity type. Pupils produce longer utterances, when they can self-initiate a topic hereby boosting their second language proficiency – either because the teacher is withdrawing or because the

participation framework is open enough for them to make creative use of the language. The children also show their capability of successfully managing topic changes without the presence of the teacher while at the same time co-constructing the meaning of the story and paying attention to lexical details. The interviews reveal the teachers' astonishment for the degree of pupil participation as well as their pedagogical practices. Implications from the analysis are gathered in a theoretical model that links opportunities for self-initiated topic changes to language proficiency. Recommendations for a more active pupil participation during book related activities point to sense-making, joint topic negotiation and story enactment.

Keywords: preschool, second language learning, book-related activities, self-initiated topic changes, topic, proficiency

Resumo em português

O objetivo do presente estudo que utiliza vários métodos, consiste em investigar o processo de aprendizagem do Luxemburguês de crianças entre 4 e 5 anos de idade de ascendência portuguesa, cabo verdiana e brasileira durante atividades com livros de leitura na educação infantil. 47,2% da população do jardim de infância são de origem estrangeira e a comunidade de lusófonos forma o grupo maior com 24,1%. Essa população multilíngue e multicultural, que vem crescendo rapidamente, aprende o Luxemburguês para a integração e a interação quotidiana e como resultado desafia a educação pública com suas necessidades diversificadas e alteradas.

Essa pesquisa alarga estudos de luxemburguês como segunda língua e combina investigações sobre temas, mas adota uma perspetiva pragmática. Ao analisar a gestão local de tema tal e o seu impacto na atividades menos controladas pelas professoras no primeiro plano, o estudo descreve o processo de aprendizagem de luxemburguês por

essas crianças como uma interação co-construída entre crianças e professores? O foco é em crianças que negociam o sentido de uma história através de trocas de temas iniciados pelas próprias crianças durante atividades com os livros de leitura: leitura conjunta, contação de histórias e brincadeira. Os dados consistem em aulas filmadas e em entrevistas de lembrança estimulada com as professoras. Vários métodos foram utilizados para investigar a interação e o aprendizado da segunda língua dos alunos. Com uma abordagem quantitativa, o estudo analisa como a extensão dos comentários das crianças varia conforme o grau de abertura da atividade que permite trocas de temas e o design da atividade do livro que é guiada 1) pelas professoras ou 2) pelos alunos. De um ângulo qualitativo, uma análise das sequências das narrativas construídas em conjunto identifica a dinâmica da interação das contações de histórias conjuntas e o uso de trocas de tema usadas pelas crianças para expressarem-se mais livremente.

Os resultados apontam para a variabilidade dos comentários infantis nos dois tipos de atividades. Os alunos produziram enunciados mais longos quando iniciaram autonomamente uma troca de tema alargando o seu conhecimento linguístico com isso – ou porque a professora deixou de conduzir a tarefa rigidamente ou porque a estrutura de participação é bastante aberta que os permitem usar a língua criativamente. As crianças também revelaram a sua capacidade em fazer trocas de tema com sucesso na ausência da professora enquanto construíam conjuntamente o sentido da história e atentavam para detalhes linguísticos. As entrevistas com as professoras revelaram a sua surpresa com o grau de participação dos alunos e com a sua própria prática pedagógica. Implicações da análise juntam-se num modelo teórico que liga oportunidades para trocas de tema auto-iniciada à proficiência. O estudo sugere que uma maior participação dos alunos durante as atividades com livros de leitura pode ser otimizada pela produção de sentido, negociação de tema conjunta e brincadeira de histórias.

Palavras chave: educação infantil, segunda língua, atividades com livros de leitura, troca de tema auto-iniciada, tema, proficiência

PREFACE

Before being a scientific researcher, I am above all a teacher. Dedicated to the development of all these young individuals who are entrusted to me every day, I aim at finding the best possible ways to support them in their striving to grow-up. It is the motivation of understanding them in their complexity that pushes me on new paths of exploration. By considering the multilingual landscape of Luxembourgish preschools, I became fascinated with language learning and here I am today with a dissertation on how Lusophone pre-schoolers acquire Luxembourgish as a second language.

Five years of researching and writing have nourished my learning process considerably – both on a scientific level and on a personal plane. Although I faced prolonged phases of loneliness, I am extremely grateful for every help that I got on my way.

First, I would like to thank my supervisor, Charles Max, for having me as his PhD student. He saw my study developing, from the very first trial to the final stage of the dissertation. His guidance and support throughout the data collection process, his insights into methodological frameworks, his valuable feedback on the contents and his ability to embody theory in abstract models have been cornerstones of the finalisation of the whole process.

My appreciation also goes to Marília Mendes Ferreira and Peter Gilles, members of my scientific committee, who looked in regular intervals on the progress I made and contributed with valuable suggestions to my continuation.

Special thanks go to Gudrun whose passion for second language learning has been contagious and it is through her that I found my way to this exciting field of study.

Moreover, her knowledge and expertise in this area have helped me with many concepts in my thesis.

My gratitude is expressed to Jun and Nathalie who checked on my early transcripts and reassured me that I was not completely going off-track in my observations. My thanks go to Natalia as well who read some of my first analysis and triggered my interest for topic hijacking. Moreover, Marnie supported me with her prior work on the mean length of utterance and I am grateful for her contribution with the counting grits. Some know-how about graphs and statistics was needed to display many of my findings. I thank Eric and Patrick for their contribution to the quantitative side of my work. To Anne goes my appreciation for patiently correcting all my writings as well as to Marília Mendes Ferreira, Naiara and Philippe for monitoring my Portuguese abstract.

To the members of DICA-lab, a former hub for scientific discussion and creativity, where we only agreed that we disagreed, I present my recognitions for sharing their knowledge on how to be a researcher. They helped me to see beyond the end of my teacher's nose and look at phenomena in a more scientific and objective way.

The children and the teachers who cannot be named here made this research possible with their participation. They endured my video cameras and accepted me as a part in their intimate classroom life. Several times, I had to get back to the teachers with more questions and even more requests, which they answered without delay. I am indebted to all of them.

Eventually, I offer my deepest thankfulness to my family and closest friends. Never did they lose faith in the successful outcome of my work, even when I did. They understood how to distract me for a few pleasant hours whether by walks, catering or dances.

Finally, I also want to declare that this submission is my own work and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person nor material, which to a substantial extent has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma of the university or other institute of higher learning, except where due acknowledgment has been made in the text.

Delia Wirtz

Imbringen, March 21, 2017

ABBREVIATIONS

In-text abbreviations:

Sitc	Self-initiated topic change
MLU	Mean length of utterance
SLL	Second language learning
L1	First language
L2	Second language
GT	Grounded theory
SR	Stimulated recall
ZPD	Zone of proximal development
IRF	Initiation-response-feedback

Abbreviations in graphs and transcripts:

T-led	Teacher-led activities (teacher reads the story)
C-read	Child-reading activities (children read the story)
C-play	Child-play activities (children play the story)
T_1	Topic 1
+ T_1	Agreement with topic 1
- T_1	Disagreement with topic 1
Self-initiated topic change:	sitc
- initiated via speech	$sitc_{(S)}$
- initiated via speech, action	$sitc_{(SA)}$
- initiated via speech, gesture	$sitc_{(SG)}$
- initiated via gesture	$sitc_{(G)}$
- initiated via gesture, action	$sitc_{(GA)}$
- initiated via action	$sitc_{(A)}$
- initiated via action, gesture, speech	$sitc_{(AGS)}$

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Part I

Interactional topic management in second language learning processes during book reading activities

1. Language learners in transition between home and a new community

People who speak more than one language and move in several cultural contexts struggle in their learning process to negotiate and mediate between those. As the product of several interlocking histories and cultures, they have to manage the transfer of difference (Ragazzi, 2009). Their children reflect this diversity and the understanding of such backgrounds has become more and more politically relevant. Complex encounters between different language skills and cultural imaginations are thus a rising challenge (C. Kramsch & Whiteside, 2008). Varying school success as well as an ever growing disparity in cultural backgrounds between teachers and students have created a strong need for action (De Haan & Elbers, 2005) and the acquisition of the social and cultural capital of the community has become vital for the newcomers (Vásquez, 2003). In light of the Luxembourgish context of the present study, children with different backgrounds face obvious language challenges while competing with the native speakers in respect to academic and literacy language skills. They still need to acquire a basic fluency and phonological competence that their peers already master and, at least for pre-schoolers, alphabetisation in yet another language, German, is imminent.

The young children, with all their aforementioned diversity, are the heart of this study. As learners, they are social beings in interaction with their environment, a perspective that is increasingly spotlighted by the research. Being part of a community, they gradually learn how to successfully participate and as such, we think about their learning as changing participation (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Melander, 2009; Melander & Sahlström, 2009). Hence, interaction is seen as the elementary spot of organised activity and social interaction, as a place for development, places the learner in an active position for the co-construction of joint activities (L. Mondada & Doehler, 2004). Our study is about the collaborative learning practices of young students as they make meaning of stories to empower their language learning process and, to a lesser extent, about the teachers who accompany them along the way. We approach the phenomenon of second language learning from a pragmatic stance and consider any learning in the light of growing expertise at the participation in the community. Although we are not

analysing literacy in general and home literacies specifically, we stay aware of the fact that these considerably influence the pupils' management of book situations. As such, we pay particular interest to the autonomous utterances, children voice during book related activities in the pre-primary classroom to change the topic of the conversation and thus integrate their personal point of view. In line with Zhengdong, Davison, and Hamp-Lyons (2008), we consider this ability to handle topics to be at the core of communicative competence and hence, to contribute to greater proficiency in the target language, which ultimately contributes to the students' success in the Luxembourgish school system. Not only do we enlarge the research in the Luxembourgish context but we also try to provide a detailed description on how topic is locally being managed by pre-schoolers learning Luxembourgish as a second language in activities that are less teacher controlled. With difference from studies focusing on linguistic growth in terms of vocabulary or grammatical structures, we emphasise the dimension of topic management and its impact on interaction with a micro analytical approach. Influenced by a socio-cultural understanding on learning as the product of locally co-constructed interaction between different actors, namely adults as well as peers, we foreground a pragmatic stance in the domain of second language learning.

The next subchapter traces the aims of our study in the light of the aforementioned reflections and gives the outline of the dissertation. Then follows a more detailed description of the peculiarities of the Luxembourgish linguistic context to set the scene for the theoretical considerations relevant to this study.

1.1. Study aims and outline

Our study of self-initiated topic changes is carried by an interest in second language learning processes of migrant preschool children in the specific context of Luxembourg. The objective of our study is to uncover the role of self-initiated topic changes during preschool book reading activities. We believe that the joint turn-by-turn construction around a topic gives insights into the second language learning process. The focus lies hereby on how the participants use different communicative and material resources to orient to, establish, and change topical orientation. The teachers' handling of topics

during joint reading sheds light on the book reading routines as they are enacted in school. The contribution of a substantive theory to such creative language use during book reading activities emphasises the impact of self-initiated topic changes on proficiency of the learners' language.

Chapter 1 focusses on the role of Luxembourgish in society in general and in school particularly; as learning the language becomes a crucial factor of inclusion and success in public school.

In our study, we concentrate on children between 4 and 6 years old who are either in their first or second year of preschool where expertise in typical classroom discourse starts taking shape. Furthermore, these children come from various linguistic and cultural backgrounds ranging mostly in the Lusophone domain. Their interactional deployments are analysed in three different situations in groups of four students at a time: (1) During joint reading with their teacher, (2) storytelling with their peers and (3) play with their classmates.

Chapter 2 tackles the theoretical framework of the concepts used in the present study. The main focus will be on how we understand the learning process of a second language and the paradigm under which we reflect upon learning and topics. Eventually, the chapter concludes with a review on prior relevant research.

Chapter 3 exposes the chosen multi-method framework by successively elaborating on Grounded theory, ethnographic classroom observation and stimulated recall. Participants of the study and the data collection process are described. Furthermore, the chapter elaborates how the unit of analysis fits into our research design with codes and categories displaying our transcripts best are disclosed here. Issues we faced in translating child talk are explained. Then, mean length of utterance and self-initiated topic changes are sketched as analytic tools in their respective subchapters with a focus on definition and counting criteria. A description of the discourse analytic stance to the stimulated recall interviews closes the chapter.

As stipulated by the Grounded theory approach, data has been collected and analysed in respect to the research interest in the first place, building the research questions as they emerge from the on-going analysis fed by theoretical input until saturation has been reached: *"Qualitative research is emergent. We start with general research*

questions but they may lead us in new, unanticipated directions" (Charmaz, 2004, p. 991). Instead of having a set of prefixed research questions, we face a progressive development of our research questions as traced by the various analytical chapters:

Chapter 4, a quantitative analysis, explains and describes the mean length of utterance as a tool to measure proficiency of the learner's language. Progressively, it becomes clear that this entity varies according to the discourse situation and the need to form another unit of analysis, namely the self-initiated topic changes, arose.

Chapter 5 centres around the main unit of analysis, namely self-initiated topic changes, as another indicator for proficiency in classroom participation. Questions arisen after the rather quantitative look on the data are:

- Which are the conditions that foster a participation framework supporting self-initiated topic changes in teacher-led activities?
- How do the children manage self-initiated topic changes during the reading and play activities?
- What do these self-initiated topic changes, resulting from topical orientation and creative language use, lead towards?

Chapter 6 takes a qualitative stance by meticulously analysing self-initiated topic changes sequence to sequence in three types of book activity as they take place regularly in the Luxembourgish preschool with the foci on (1) topic discussion in teacher-led activities, (2) students' autonomous management of topic during storytelling and play and (3) pupils' emerging lexical understanding. By considering the importance of self-initiated topics for creative language use, we need to find out the teachers' view on topic discussions, their pedagogical goals and their management of topic changes.

Chapter 7 states the teachers' representations on second language learning in their classrooms. They expressed their impressions on the videos recorded from their joint reading lessons, discuss their pedagogical goals and their practices for second language teaching. Their stance to self-initiated topic changes and the impact on the participation framework are explained.

Eventually, we estimate having attained saturation of analysis and are ready to combine the different intermediate findings we collected in the analytic chapters.

Chapter 8 recapitulates all the findings from previous chapters and relates them to each other. In line with Grounded theory, we build our results into a theoretical model which we do in order to draw relevant conclusions for second language learning in book related activities in the preschool classroom. Also, we present limitations of the study as well as tracks for further research.

Next, we are going to present the multicultural context as reflected by Luxembourgish classrooms and consider the demographic composition as well as the role of the Luxembourgish language in society.

1.2. Luxembourgish at the intersection of multiple languages

The country of Luxembourg is situated at the heart of Europe, surrounded by Belgium, France and Germany. With an ever-growing population that reached 576.249 as of January 1st 2016, it comprises of 46,7% foreigners (Thill & Peltier, 2016). More specifically, the following table summarises the composition of the population and underlines its multicultural nature (STATEC, 2016):

Nationality of individuals according to their place of birth as of January 1, 2016

Country of citizenship	Number
Total	576.249
Luxembourg	307.074
Other countries of the EU	229.506
Portugal	93.124
France	41.671
Italy	20.276
Belgium	19.406
Germany	12.787
United Kingdom	6.119
Netherlands	4.033
Spain	5.521
Poland	4.070
Other European countries	15.209
Montenegro	3.818
African countries	8.075
Cape Verde	2.965
South American or Central American countries	3.155
Brazil	1.784
Dominican Republic	244
North American countries	2.817
United States of America	2.279
Asian countries	9.800
China	2.801
Countries of Oceania	215
Other nationalities	37
Stateless	361

Table 1: Nationality of individuals according to their place of birth

In total, 307.074 individuals were born on the territory and possess the Luxembourgish nationality. This compares with a total number of 244.715 legal residents with a European nationality who were not born in Luxembourg. If we look closer at the top three, the Portuguese are ahead with 93.124, followed by the French with 41.671 and the Italian with 20.276. North American countries display 2.817 and Asian countries represent 9.800 individuals. 8.075 individuals are from African countries, out of which 2.965 are from Cape Verde. For Central/South America, Brazilian nationals are specifically noted with 1.784 individuals. This fact is important in respect to the Lusophone focus of our study as it shows the weighting of the Portuguese, Cape Verdean and Brazilian community.

Economic development accelerated at the end of the 19th century and ever since has demanded a huge amount of workers that could not be supplied solely by the local population (Berg & Weis, 2005). Hence, 163.912 of commuters from Belgium, France and Germany are added to the diverse local population pictured in the preceding paragraph. The Portuguese community represents the largest foreign resident population with 34,6%, followed by the French, the Italian, the Belgian and the German population (Michaux, 2015). The next table analyses the use of different languages by the resident population which mutually influences the languages that the commuters use in the country (Allegrezza et al., 2014). The numbers stem from the last population census in 2011 (taking place every 10 years) and are thus giving an approximate view on the language situation at work, school and/or home:

Languages spoken at work, at school and/or at home as of February 1, 2011 (multiple answers possible)

Languages	Number of individuals	%
Luxembourgish	323.557	70,5
French	255.669	55,7
German	140.590	30,6
English	96.427	21,0
Portuguese	91.872	20,0
Italian	28.561	6,2
Other languages	55.298	12,1
Total	**458.900**	100,0

Source : STATEC - RP2011

Table 2: Languages spoken at work, at school and/or at home (our translation)

For the Luxembourgish language, 323.557 individuals declare using it at work, at school and/or at home. French is second with 255.669 users, followed by German with 140.590, by English with 96.437, by Portuguese with 91.872 and Italian with 28.561 speakers. A total of other languages is practiced by 55.298 individuals. These numbers underline the usage of multiple languages in all areas of life and hint at the importance of having knowledge in at least one of the top three, namely, Luxembourgish, French or German to take part in all domains of social life. English and Portuguese add themselves as important languages by the number of speakers (Fehlen, 2009). The average of spoken languages is 2,2 (Allegrezza et al., 2014) as a result of this multilingual reality. Gilles (2009) describes this "triglossia" through Luxembourgish being a central language of oral communication whereas German and French share complex roles in the written domain. The role of these three languages differs in degrees of intensity in daily life such as at work, in administrations, in the media or in formal

and informal communication. In the next subchapter, we are going to analyse the repercussions of the necessity of knowing multiple languages in the school system.

Territorial bilingualism has been officialised with the partition of Luxembourg into a Walloon and a German cantonment as early as 1340. New boarders had been defined at several moments in the course of the centuries (see the different occupying powers as well as the treaties of 1815 and 1831) and were traced according to territorial claims by sovereigns without considering the population's linguistic state. In 1839, Luxembourg acquired independence and its current geographical dimensions. From 1848 onwards, German and French have been anchored in the constitution; however, it was only in 1941 that the people stated Luxembourgish as their language. From then onwards, Luxembourgish raised its status from of a dialect to a national language. Since the 1950s, Luxembourg is described as a single speech community in which different languages assume various functions. In 1984, Luxembourgish was eventually anchored as a national language. French became officially associated to laws. Additionally, Luxembourgish, French and German were declared languages for the administration and the court (Fehlen & Heinz, 2016; Gilles, 2009). This obviously entails numerous repercussions on the school population and their integration into the Luxembourgish system which we are going to present in the next subchapter.

1.2.1. Structure of the Luxembourgish education system and language particularities

The Luxembourgish school system is divided into two distinct systems: the fundamental school and the secondary education, to prepare students for either professional life or university studies as shown in the subsequent graph (Gouvernement, 2013, 2015):
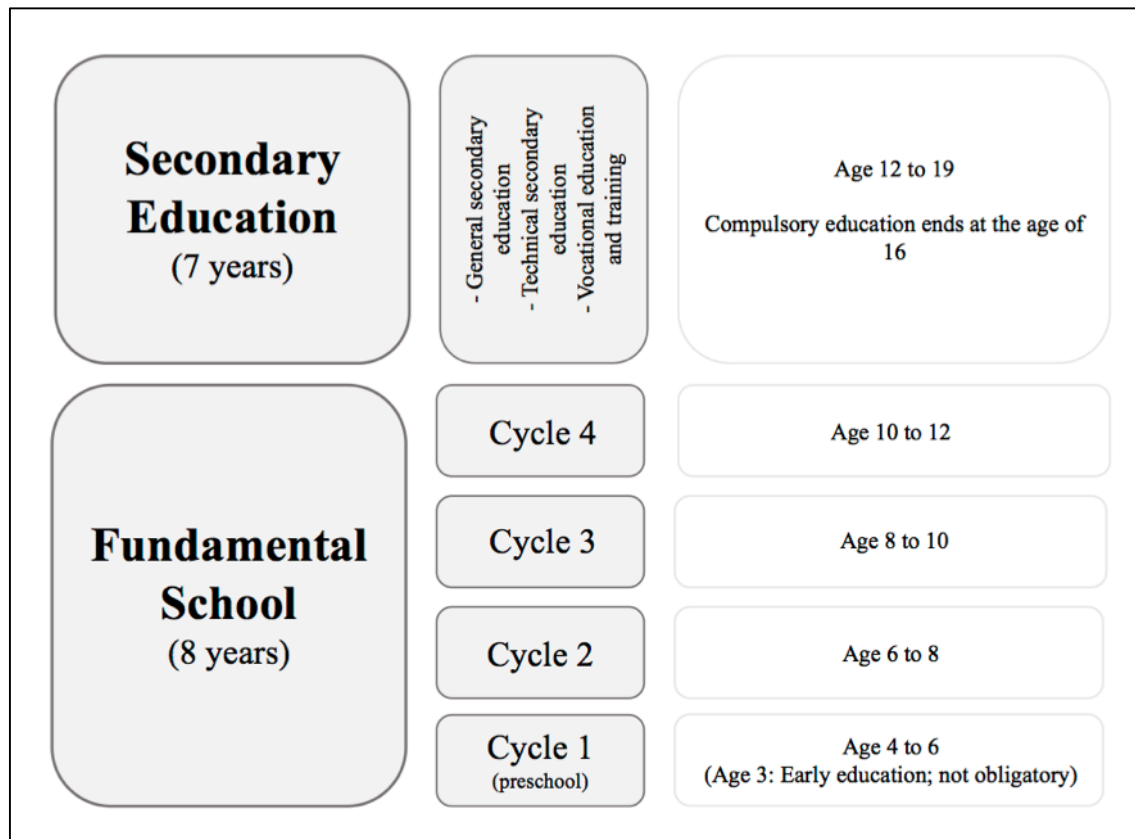
Figure 1:Structure of the national education system

Obligatory education starts with 4 years in the first cycle of the Fundamental School (also known as preschool) but there is the possibility of doing one year of preparation in the same system at the age of 3 ("précoce"). At a theoretical age of 6, children change to the second cycle, that is, primary school. Secondary education begins at the theoretical age of 12 and, in its later stages, offers multiple tracks for the young adults to prepare for their lives.

The previous description on multilingualism is obviously also mirrored by the school population. In total, 121 different nationalities are represented in fundamental school of which 51% are Luxembourgish, 25,5% Portuguese, 5,2% French, 4,8% Ex-Yugoslavian pupils and 13,5% other nationalities (MENJE, 2015b, p. 8). In terms of primary spoken languages at home, Luxembourgish ranks first with 45%, followed by 27,3% for Portuguese and the category "others" with 27,7% (Helfer, Lenz, Levy, & Wallossek, 2015).

Considering the complex language situation pupils bring from home to school, we use the following graph to give a short overview of the languages taught at public school (offers differ in private schools) and their status throughout the educational system (Gouvernement, 2013, 2015):
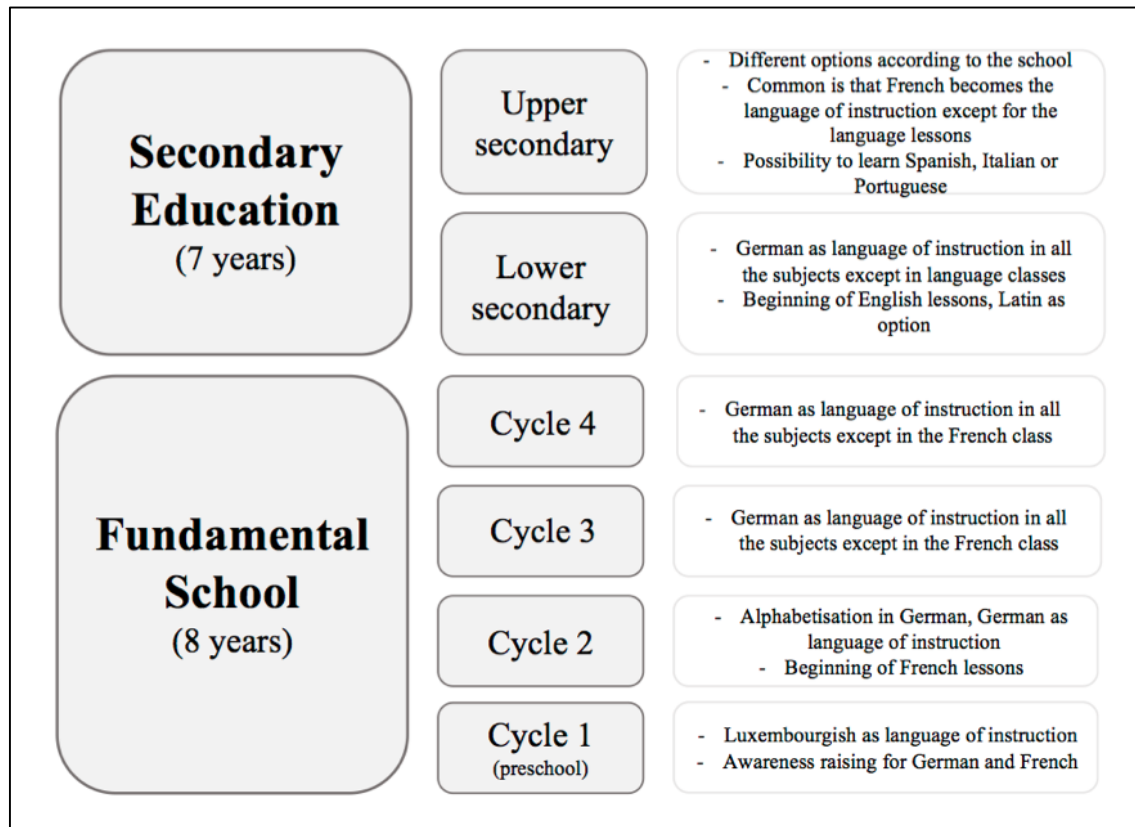
Figure 2: Short overview of the language situation in the Luxembourgish public school

Every cycle in fundamental education comprises two years. In high school, the inferior cycle has a duration of three years and the superior one of four years. Languages are gradually built up starting in fundamental school and no language is dropped until the superior cycle of high school where different options are available to the students in view of their professional orientation. Along the first cycle of fundamental school, Luxembourgish is the "language of communication" (Gouvernement, 2013) and it is considered to be the only common language of all the children in the school system. Therefore, it is taught on an informal but mandatory basis throughout preschool (art. 3 of the law regulating the curriculum, 11 August 2011, *"la langue d'enseignement employée est le luxembourgeois"*). Furthermore, because of its Germanic roots, it serves as a steppingstone for the German alphabetisation in primary school where it

then becomes an unofficial medium of communication and German becomes the language of instruction. At the end of the second cycle, students start to formally learn French. Secondary education is split into different branches with a respective system. In a nutshell, students start learning English during the inferior cycle (with Latin as an option). German is still the language of instruction of all the subjects except for the language classes, however this is replaced by French in the superior cycle. Other possibilities are the classes in Spanish, Italian or Portuguese depending on the choices the students make in terms of specialisation. For the baccalaureate, they drop some of the languages to focus on those serving them best in their future academic or professional career. Our focus lying upon 4 to 6 years old children, we are going to describe the cycle 1, or preschool education, in further detail.

1.2.2.   Multilingualism in preschool

Referring to the latest statistics on the student population in preschool, we found that 10.748 pupils have been registered of which 52,8% of Luxembourgish, 24% of Portuguese, 5,9% of French, 4% of Ex-Yugoslavian, 1,9% of Belgian, 1,8% of Italian, 1,6% of German and 8,1% of other nationalities (MENJE, 2015b, p. 27, subsequent figure). Interestingly, 37,8% of pre-schoolers do not speak any of the three official languages of the country (Andersen et al., 2015).
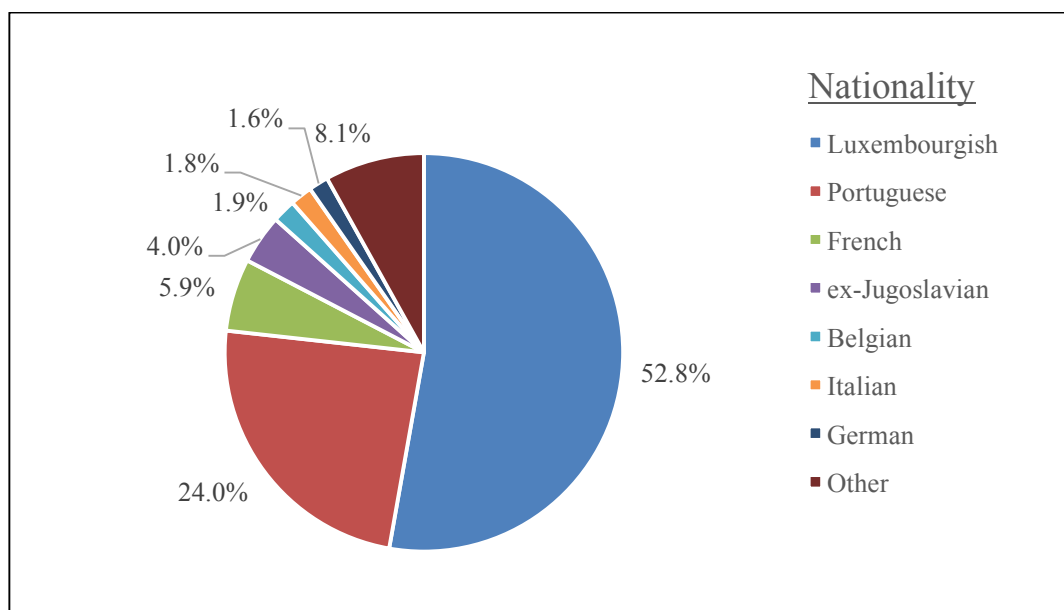
Figure 3: Repartition of nationalities in preschool

At one glance, the Portuguese present themselves as the biggest community that does not speak Luxembourgish as a first language. In the category of "others" (French "autre"), consisting of 8,1%, we find Brazilian and Cape Verde students who also participate in our study. Given their related language roots, we refer to this group as the Lusophone students. In chapter 3.4.1, we are going to expose the choice of our participants as compared to the local distribution of nationalities in our target school.

As obligatory education starts at the age of 4, the primary goals of preschool are to familiarise the children with the institution "school" and to socialise them into larger groups of peers. Another objective is the development of linguistic competencies through the familiarisation with the "unifying" Luxembourgish language and culture to obtain a successful integration at school and later in society (MENFP, 2000). Although there is no scheduled weekly amount of lessons to teach Luxembourgish, the language has its solid position in every activity in preschool: Greetings, activities, breaks, routines and communication are done in Luxembourgish. Also, teachers and pupils gather at different moment of the day for circle time, meaning that they sit together in a circle to sing, listen to stories, play small games, report on family happenings or discuss upcoming/past events at school. Even if there is a certain awareness raising for German and French (e.g. songs, poems), Luxembourgish occupies a dominant position: According to the national curriculum issued by the Ministry of Education (2011), students need to acquire the following skills in Luxembourgish before leaving preschool:

- Express oneself in a comprehensive way on familiar subjects and answer with short sentences and simple expressions at questions (p. 4).
- Reformulate essential elements of a text treated in class and narrate personal anecdotes with short sentences and simple expressions (p. 4).
- Use, to express yourself freely, an elementary repertoire of words, expressions, syntactic structures and memorised formulations (p. 4).
- Understand a short text in a global way (a story, an explanation…) and extract the main message. Follow the central theme of a conversation on a familiar topic (p. 6).
- Follow the central theme of a text (the succession of the events), identify the main actors and their actions (p. 6).

More generally, awareness for languages in a transversal manner has to be fostered with different subjects. The main objective is to develop a metalinguistic conscience as well as a plurilinguistic and pluricultural sensitivity. Linguistic knowledge, in languages that are not on the curriculum, have to be valorised (p. 59).

To reach these goals, the teacher is free in his/her choice of content. The only didactic recommendation concerns the usage of different types of text, such as narrative texts (with or without pictures), rhetoric texts (songs, poems, counting-out rhymes…), explicative texts (authentic comments of the students on their productions), conversational texts (discussions, plays, dialogues…) and mandatory texts (classroom rituals, cooking receipts, simple directions, game rules…). In contrast to lessons on grammatical structures and systematic vocabulary, teachers rather focus on students' communicative skills by mediating sentences, by formulating the correct pronunciation or by suggesting a more native-like formulation. Activities should not concentrate on the explicit and formally structured teaching of the language but Luxembourgish is learnt by immersion in the familiar context (p. 61). In a special publication, the Ministry informs the teachers on the importance of such awareness in languages and describes examples of best practices on how to foster plurilinguism (Tonnar, Krier, & Perregaux, 2010). Also, students bring their home languages – be it to play with a peer fluent in that same language or because they use it to bridge gaps in the Luxembourgish language. The teacher has then the delicate role to mediate between his/her mission to foster Luxembourgish on a solid and intensive basis as well as to valorise home languages in order to boost the self-esteem of the migrant children and plurilingualism for the whole class.

In spite of all these recommendations for teaching Luxembourgish as a preparation for the alphabetisation in German, numbers about school success give a critical picture. De facto, languages are assumed to be one of the reasons of failure in the school system. As expressed in the most recent figures for the school year 2012/2013, there are 779 students (11,6%) who dropped out of school without a diploma (MENJE, 2015a). In an extensive study about the reasons for school failure, the authors identify, next to socioeconomic status and gender, a migration background as a hazard factor (Andersen et al., 2015): Students who do speak Luxembourgish or German at home perform better in every tested subject (comprehension of reading and hearing, written and oral

production as well as mathematical competencies) than their peers who do not have access to one of these languages at home. Similarly, the PISA study, which compares school competencies in reading, mathematical and science skills on an international basis, concludes that students with a migration background speaking a Romanic language at home differed significantly in their competences from their peers who have access to Luxembourgish or German at home (UL & MENFP, 2012). Therefore, it is important to investigate into the understanding on how students with a migration background learn the Luxembourgish language in preschool as a prerequisite for the later alphabetisation. The next subchapter is focusing on the aims of our research in relation to the aforementioned thoughts about Luxembourgish as a second language.

Having identified our study objectives, we will then go into the theoretical concepts regarding the process of second language learning and the socio-cultural context under which such learning takes place.

2. The role of topics in second language learning activities around picture books

The present study is situated at the intersection of three disciplines - namely socio-cultural theory, linguistics and pragmatics. Referring to Rogoff (1995), we use the technique of foregrounding to combine the different epistemological planes in our study.
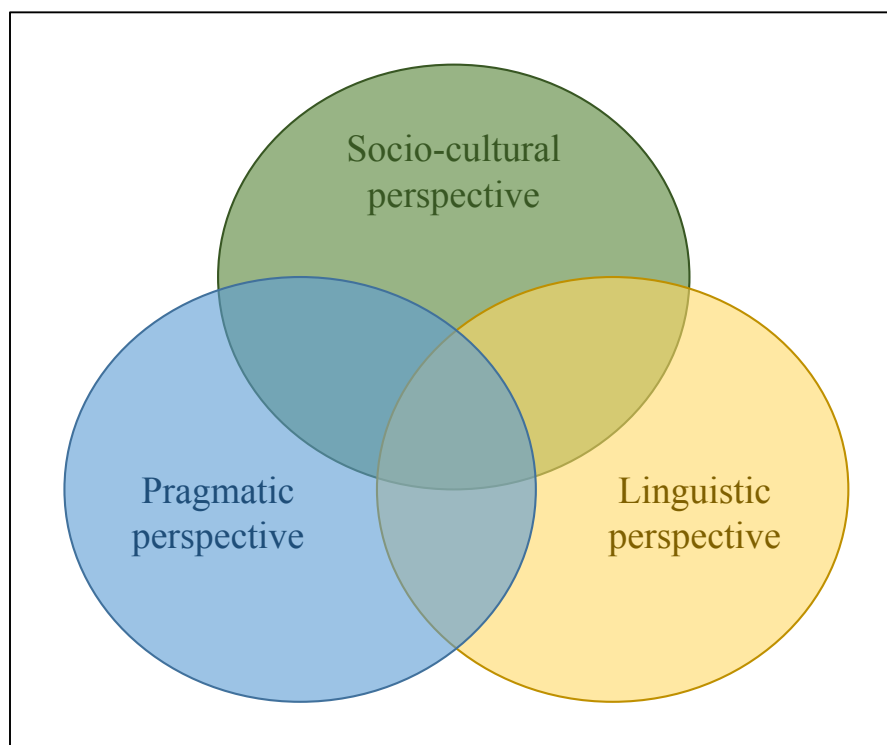
Figure 4: Intersection of three disciplines

Sociocultural theory is the backbone of the study as it pinpoints understanding of the context in which the book related activities take place. This contextual comprehension covers the multilinguistic backgrounds of the students, the description of the preschool curriculum (as already established in chapter 1) and the representations of the teachers which sustainably influence their practices in the classroom (see analysis in chapter 7). Furthermore, socio-cultural theory helps us understanding how development takes place (see forthcoming chapter). Second language learning has a linguistic tradition and we draw on basic notions of grammar and lexical learning as reflected in the individual learner's language (see forthcoming chapter) to describe how each students' understanding of lexical items and their construction emerges (see analysis in chapter

6.3). Proficiency and its evolution in a) overall utterances and b) self-initiated topic changes is tackled by the unit "mean length of utterance" (see analysis in chapters 4 and 5). Furthermore, and this leads us to a pragmatic perspective on second language learning, we consider conversation between students and teachers in its interactive context of a joint construction during book related activities. To this end, we highlight the topics that are self-initiated and co-constructed while centring on the stories (see analysis in chapter 6.1) and describe the students' management of these same topics (see analysis in chapter 6.2). Again, the notion of topics originates from linguistics and has been re-interpreted under an interactive viewpoint (see forthcoming chapter).

2.1. Co-construction of topics and their role for second language learning

Research on second language learning has a multidisciplinary tradition. It was originally evolved from linguistics and psychology to myriad theories on how a second language is learnt. Linguists proposed models such as Universal Grammar; contrastive analysis or error analysis. Psychology has looked into Information Processing Model; connectionist approaches, competition model and so on. Social approaches have investigated amongst others input; interaction; feedback and communicative competence (not just knowing vocabulary, phonology, grammar and linguistic structures but also when to speak or not, what to say to whom and how to say it suitably). Discourse oriented research has analysed rules for turn-taking; contextualisation cues or backchannel signals for instance. In this chapter, we are going to define second language and its terminology. Then, we will describe the dynamic nature of learner's utterances. Next, we introduce the pragmatic perspective with the understanding of second language learning that we affiliated with. This social aspect of language learning is crucial as it goes beyond the mere linguistic performance: It is not sufficient to only acquire vocabulary, grammar, phonology and other aspects of linguistic structure but knowing when to speak and how to speak appropriately in the given community is equally important (Kim & Hall, 2002). Last but not least, we define topic as the

competence of second language learners to actively engage in ongoing activities and how we approach the concept in the forthcoming analysis.

2.1.1. Learning a second language in a multilingual environment

Although the term of **second language** (L2) apparently refers to a specific order, it may actually be the third or umpteenth language that is being learnt. The scope of second language research ranges from informal learning, such as interaction with peers in everyday situations to formal learning taking place in classrooms or a mixture of both. L2 demarcates itself from first language, native language or mother-tongue (L1 in short), which is acquired in early childhood, taking place mostly before the age of three, and is part of the growing stages among people who speak the same language. Obviously, there can be more than one L1 that is acquired simultaneously, which is referred to as bilingualism or multilinguism by the literature. The labelling of L2 is appropriate when the target language is spoken by the community the child belongs to, as opposed to a foreign language that would only be studied in the classroom without many applications in the immediate social context. The multilingual person has long been described as deficient in terms of language proficiency compared to a monolingual speaker but over the years, the coexistence of two or more languages has been acknowledged to be a complete system in its own right (Claire Kramsch & Whiteside, 2007; Lengyel, 2009). Errors appear in the experimentation of newly learnt chunks of sentences in different settings based on internal cognitive processes and prior knowledge giving way to the learner's language as a developing system (Lightbown & Spada, 2006). This also explains why multilingual learners have metalinguistic competences as they experience multiple designations in different languages for one and the same object, triggering facilitations to learn further languages (Tracy, 2008).

The concept "***multilingualism***", which mirrors the social realty of the participants in our study, stands for social and cultural practices that are created and shaped through speech in interaction (Baquedano-López & Kattan, 2007; Franceschini, 2011). It has turned into a highly political issue since it has become the norm in society as opposed to a more homogeneous view that prevailed centuries ago (e.g. the European Union's promotion of two languages in addition to the first language (High level group)). In his work, Weber (2009) states that that *"[…] language ideologies are the cultural systems*

of ideas and feelings, norms and values, which inform the way people think about languages in a stereotypical manner" (p. 115). Thus, the way in which society and school consider language, impacts on the children's feeling about the valorisation of their home languages. Bourdieu (1977) already recognised this power of language policies when he stated that linguistic politics can attribute either a reproductive character to school or a changing role of language practices. The students themselves construct meanings in creative ways by using various languages and, linked to those, different cultural identities. García, Skutnabb-Kangas, and Torres-Guzmán (2006) therefore recognise language hybrids and stress the importance of *what* is said (as opposed to *ho*w) by rejecting the deficit view of L2 learners who have to achieve native competency. In this respect, multilingual settings are complex interactional and linguistic environments in which the children constitute their own language norms, appropriate and negotiate institutional norms for language use, orient to and exploit features of multiple language varieties (Cekaite & Björk-Willén, 2012). Not only do they acquire the linguistic forms of the other languages but they also learn the socialisation to the rules and expectations that go with them (Auer & Wei, 2007). This leads to the conclusion that the growing multilingual and multicultural nature of social interaction raises questions on the traditional monolingual and mono-cultural nature of language education (Claire Kramsch & Whiteside, 2007). For the Luxembourgish context, the same deficit view of migrant children is determined in a school system that does not consider cultural and linguistic richness sufficiently (Weber, 2009; Ziegler, Sert, & Durus, 2012) (see also chapter 1).

There is general consensus upon children's natural predisposition to learn a first language - although there is disagreement whether this still holds true for the learning of additional languages beyond early childhood. The **acquisition of a L1** is different from the process of **learning a L2** outside the family and in a growth environment such as day care or school. For a L2, however, there is said to be a crucial limit as expressed by the critical period hypothesis based on the idea that there is only a limited number of years, children can learn their L1 flawlessly. This perception has been extended to SLL considering that only children can achieve native or near-native proficiency in a L2. Whether a child grows up in an English or Chinese context, they all start learning at the same age and in the same way, mastering phonological and grammatical operations by the age of six. They are able to create novel utterances and have a sense

for ungrammatical sentences without anyone telling them (or it would take many more years for them to learn the L1) (Goldin-Meadow, 2003). The learning of regular and rule-based as well as the more arbitrary and idiosyncratic constructions of the language give way to the construction of more abstract categories and schemes (Tomasello, 2006). The boarder from L1 to any other language is drawn by the people surrounding the child and who speak the L1; therefore, the social aspect of language learning plays a crucial role. Learning a L2 is different than learning a L1 in terms of resources to draw from: The learner already has an idea of how languages work and use this metalinguistic knowledge by making guesses about the functioning of the L2. Characteristics influencing L2 learning are intelligence, aptitude, learning styles, personality, motivation, identity, group affiliation, beliefs and age (Edmondson & House, 2006). To conclude, it depends on the importance research attributes to an innate capacity for language learning or to the role of the environment, to determine the process as learning or as acquisition. The participants of this study are in a transitional stage between being sufficiently cognitively mature and having enough metalinguistic awareness from their L1 so that the distinction between implicit acquisition and conscious learning is hard to trace (Lightbown & Spada, 2006). In light of our socio-cultural basis and the importance of interactions in the social context, we opt for a terminology of second language *learning* (henceforward SLL) that sees the children as active participants in their learning process.

2.1.2.   The development of learner language

SLL has put extensive efforts in tracing the linguistic systems that L2 learners construct at different stages of their development. In our study, we describe such systems as learner utterances under various aspects: proficiency in overall utterances, see chapter 4; proficiency in self-initiate topic changes, see chapter 5 and topical construction, see chapter 6.

Selinker (1972) coined the notion of "*interlanguage*" to define the learner's system of drawing on his L1 to produce L2. However, this notion is heavily influenced by the conviction of the L2 learner who should achieve native-like competency and ergo is always seen as deficient. In more recent publications, interlanguage is interpreted in a less strict error perspective and the learning of lexical items and grammatical structures

is considered more in the sense of being competent to participate as an active member in the community (Claire Kramsch & Whiteside, 2007). In their research on "*learner language*", Ellis and Barkhuizen (2005) distinguish between **explicit and implicit knowledge** in SLL: The first is conscious and declarative, while the second type refers to what the learner already knows from the L1. Therefore, it is unconscious and ready for automatic use in spontaneous utterances such as the use of formulaic chunks. This learning of formulaic phrases or chunks is part of the vocabulary growth. It is a continuous process of adding new words on the one hand and building the meaning of already known words on the other (Dauster, 2007a). Through frequent encountering of the same word, the child deepens the understanding about it which results in connections called "schemas", "scripts" or "frames", which are ready to be used (Cameron, 2001). In order to express these precise meanings, grammar is needed. Being pragmatic, learners use words and chunks tied together to transmit meaning, then they attend more and more to the conventional patterns of grammar to construct their utterances (Edmondson & House, 2006; Klein & Perdue, 1997). Once those words and chunks are better known, cognitive capacity is freed to attend to grammar issues, which helps splitting up these chunks to assemble them into new combinations (Dauster, 2007a). Cheatham and Yeonsun (2010) observe a nonverbal period during which children listen to the target language and try to understand how it works before developing an interlanguage based on the rules learnt in their L1 and what they observe in the L2. According to Ellis and Barkhuizen (2005), *"what learners know is best reflected in their comprehension of input and in the language they produce"* (p. 21). Thus, learner errors are considered valuable efforts to acquire new linguistic forms and, in that respect, to be a window on the dynamically changing learner language.

Closely linked to the learners' performance in their L2 is the notion of *"proficiency"*. This refers to: a) daily life communication and b) academic contexts in a sense that students need to learn the language of instruction while at the same time they learn academic content through the language of instruction. This academic register of language defers from everyday communication in its decontextualized nature which makes it a crucial issue for language learners (Cummins, 2000). In line with Bachman and Palmer (1996), we explicitly reject the definition of proficiency into the four skills, namely speaking, listening, reading and writing as these neglect the **situatedness of language** used in favour of a two-folded definition of organisational knowledge and

pragmatic knowledge. In fact, organisational knowledge comprises of grammatical knowledge such as vocabulary, syntax and phonology skills as well as textual knowledge, which covers cohesion, coherence and conversational organisation of speech. Moreover, pragmatic knowledge refers to functional knowledge, for example the use of language to exchange ideas or to create an imaginary world and sociolinguistic knowledge on dialects, registers or figures of speech to name only a few. This explains as well why we do not assess the participants of our study in terms of linguistic competencies such as vocabulary or grammar, as we take a pragmatic stance to language claiming that such tests are artificially constructed and do not reflect the actual communicative skills children need to successfully interact in their environment. The notion of learner language, stemming from the linguistic construct of interlanguage, is thus interpreted in a pragmatic sense in our work.

2.1.3.   Second language learning as a social activity

Our study functions under the premise that human beings are, first of all, social beings acting in socially organised and regulated activities. For any individual to be successful in these lived spaces, realistic estimations about others' intentions and goals have to be made: Observation of actions, orientations, gaze… but foremost the interpretation of speech helps in this endeavour (Goffman, 1981). Thus, **meaning is constructed** in the situation by all the participants forming a community. For the child as a novice in a situated context, participation is a crucial prerequisite to become an expert. Lave and Wenger (1991) label this social form as *"communities of practice"* in which new members are gradually introduced: At first, their participation is peripheral but progressively they develop their skills to eventually become experts. Knowing is hereby defined as something dynamic, while learning is dialectic in the sense that it happens in interaction and also influences it. Rogoff (1990a, 1990b) coined the concept of *"guided participation"* and *"apprenticeship"* to explain the joined effort of an "old-timer" and a novice to gradually turn into a competent member. Strategies used by the expert are assisting the learner in his tasks and breaking them down into easier parts. The latter observe and imitate (Tomasello, Carpenter, Call, Behne, & Moll, 2005). In terms of language learning, this facilitation, varying in terms of levels, is known as *"scaffolding"* (Bruner, 2002). Stone (1993) expanded Bruner's concept of scaffolding

by adding semiotic characteristics such as gestures or eye gazes for example (in Ferreira, 2008). Frequently associated to scaffolding, although not the same, is the notion of the *"zone of proximal development"* or ZPD (Vygotsky, 1978) in which a more capable person, adult or child, is assisting the learner:

> The zone of proximal development [...] is the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem-solving and the level of potential development as determined by problem- solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers. (p. 86)

A learner is thus capable of solving a problem with the help of an expert peer and, some time later, will be able to do so in autonomy. It is important to note that learning in the ZPD means that maturing psychological functions have developed sufficiently so that the learner can participate in collaborative actions through imitation although these functions are still insufficient to support autonomy. Successful assisted participation is hence an indicator for the maturing of these psychological functions (Chaiklin, 2003). In this sense, learning occurs when lower mental activities are transformed into complex mental functions of higher order and previous forms of thinking are reorganised; learning thus leads development (Vygotsky, 1978). Ferreira (2008) underlines the necessity of analysing the contextual features that allow scaffolding to take place as an activity in the first place (such as motivation, experience in how to collaborate) before linking this concept to guaranteed learning in ZPD. As any other activity, language is learnt through socially mediated enterprises and it is impregnated with the specific concepts mediated by each community. The frameworks of interpretation available to the learner reflect the organised consciousness of the environment (Bruner & Haste, 2011) in a sense that knowledge is seen as socially distributed (Schutz, 1970). The learner is thus considered as a social being acting within different contexts with their particular social and situated practices influencing what is learnt, the tools needed to do so and who is learning from whom (Vásquez, 2003). This notion of learning is reflected in the concept of "participation" (Sfard, 1998; Sfard & Lavie, 2005) and mirrored in the following statement by Lave (1993):

> There is no such thing as ''learning'' sui generis, but only changing participation in the culturally designed settings of everyday life. Or, to put it the other way

around, participation in everyday life may be thought of as a process of changing understanding in practice, that is, as learning. (pp. 5-6)

Meaning is constantly renegotiated in an interactive relationship between understanding and experience. For Lave and Wenger (1991) *"participation dissolves dichotomies between cerebral and embodied activity"* and *"persons, actions and the world are implicated in all thoughts, speech, knowing and learning"* (pp. 51-52). Cognition therefore, is no longer seen as something taking place exclusively in the learner's mind but is socially distributed meaning that it takes place in the interaction between people and the context (Goodwin, 2000; Melander & Sahlström, 2009). Socially acquired knowledge is conveyed in everyday language and displays language as a site for construction, negotiation and renegotiation of the learner's identity in its specific community (Owodally, 2011). Our study focusses on children who already speak at least two languages before entering the school system. Their origins are mostly Lusophone and they partially clash with the representations of the Luxembourgish environment happening daily in school and enacted through the teachers as representatives of the system. Diversity is locally produced as these pupils interact with others, appropriate themselves as well as rework the institutional norms of the classroom (De Haan & Elbers, 2005). In that sense, we see classroom as an arena for reshaping meanings which may be different from the domestic environment of the children.

Prior research with a pragmatic orientation has reported the following results for which we found overlaps with our study. Björk-Willén and Cromdal (2009) examined how second language learners reacted when the instructional talk was somehow modified or suspended. In their ethnographic study, they came to the conclusion that children literally "read" the educational routines surrounding them and depend on them for the understanding of the lesson. Similarly, Van Compernolle (2010) points to the collaborative construction of an object of learning between young students and teacher. His conversation analytic study showed that learning and development are rooted in social action and hence second language teaching should be a joint endeavour between teacher and pupils. For Hayes and Matusov (2005), there is no other way to teach language other than teachers' refraining from "teacher talk". In a dual-language kindergarten, they were looking for cues on how the teacher and children were able to

negotiate alternative ways of engaging each other in a conversation. Concerning second language peer interaction, Pallotti (2005) observed a five-year old girl in a longitudinal case study where she moved from mere observation, over peripheral participation to active involvement in peer interaction by pointing at the necessary progression in participation competencies. Brock (1986) analysed second language learners' answers to display questions and to referential questions. She found out that questions engaging the learner in more open discussions would significantly increase the mean length of response compared to display questions and so she pleads in favour of more referential questions in classrooms to engage the learners in meaningful language production. In a qualitative study about first graders learning French, Dauster (2007b) investigated the use of autonomous learner utterances compared to imitated utterances and counted the mean length of utterance for each type. She concludes that at the beginning of the language learning process, imitative utterances tend to be longer but over time, autonomous utterances gain in length and become longer. All these aforementioned studies assume that SLL means participation in cultural practices where the learner gradually gains in expertise and transforms into a more skilled participant of the community.

2.1.4. The co-construction of topics

The trivial question of "What is it about?" reveals much more than the only need for identification of a conversation theme. The constructional work done by the speakers all along the conversation complicates the finding of an ever floating and developing notion. The basic definition of *"topic"* can be seen in the most known but least informative element of an utterance, or what one speaks of, in opposition to the rheme bringing new and essential information, that is, what one says about the topic (Nowakowska, 2009). The way in which the speaker sees reality is closely tied to this theme (McCabe & Belmonte, 2001). According to Grobet (2002), intricacy lays in the three-fold nature of a topic: Semantic, syntactic and pragmatic factors of such a heuristic informational structure are interrelated and justifiable for a multi-method framework. The analysis of topics, be it on a sentence, utterance or discursive level, has generated and still does produce so many publications even though there is no common

consensus on what topic actually is and despite the fact that it has been widely used in research (Galmiche, 1992).

To explain the origins of topic, we have to go back to **linguistic** research. Daneš, a representative of the Prague School distinguishes three levels of *"information structure"*: Grammatical structure of sentences, semantic structure of sentences and organisation of utterance (Lambrecht, 1994). Lambrecht (1994) defines *"information structure"* as the components in sentences, in which grammar is pairing propositions carrying an information with lexicogrammatical structures produced and received by interlocutors who interpret them in a discursive context. Some researchers distinguish between old and new items in the information structure. On the same token, Halliday (1967), defines thematisation systems as the ordering of elements in a clause with the theme being the topic, a speaker talks about as the first part in the sequence. He also points at *"intonation"* as being the new part of the utterance where the speaker puts focus on (in Goodenough-Trepagnier & Smith, 1977). Similarily, Nowakowska (2009) considers *"dislocation"* to be a dialogic marker, a syntactic construction which detaches a group at the beginning or at the end of a sentence to take it up again by an anaphoric or cataphoric pronoun. Topic, if defined as a given information, characterises the mutual knowledge of a subject between interlocutors. By referring to the proposition about which the speaker is giving or asking new information, it is classified as a semantic representation of discourse (Grobet, 2002, pp. 22-27). It can be highlighted by accent, intonation and stress (Lambrecht, 1994). The linguistic distinction into *"theme"* and *"rheme"* splits an utterance into two parts: One part, containing the theme, connects to the overall discourse whereas the other part, the rheme, is the comment that advances the theme (Calhoun, 2012). The opposition of *"types and token"* is less used nowadays. Although "token" is still applied, the notion of "type" has been enriched considerably with the sentence now being an object appearing in more than one context (Galmiche, 1992). Lambrecht (1994) defines *"focus"* as the element of information that cannot be taken for granted at the moment of the conversation.

On a more **pragmatic** side, topic can be considered to be the *"aboutness"* of an utterance, in which case a proposition (what a speaker wants the others to know) and a theme (the motive serving to announce the proposition) are identified. Many researchers centre on the aboutness of topic and then use operational criteria to locate topic in discourse. In order to capture it, a topic has to be contextually available, which means that it has to be discussed by the participants putting their focus on it (Polinsky, 1992). In line with Berthoud and Mondada (1995), we privilege the definition of topic as "aboutness" in our study to avoid the above mentioned couples such as theme/rheme or types and tokens. Topic is hence not cut into dual parts but characterised by what is said and upon which next utterances may be constructed as conversation dynamically unfolds. Topics always suggest subtopics and therefore Grobet (1999) discourages the study of isolated topics in favour of topic combinations and their management in interaction. As a notion in constant movement, topic is adjusted, negotiated and co-constructed in interaction and can be refused, modified and ratified by all the interlocutors (Doehler, 2004).

In the analysis of a conversation, two aspects are distinguished: content and function. So far, there has been an accentuation on the study of function at the expense of content albeit meaningful interaction cannot exist without a topic (Todd, 1998). Similarly, Kellermann and Palomares (2004) point at the extensive research about how a topic is introduced, maintained, reintroduced and inhibited rather than looking at what is really talked about in a conversation. Defining topic as being the content one talks about brings forward a major problem for any researcher: Defining what exactly a topic is and how participants orient towards it, proves to be very complex (Button & Casey, 1985; Hinkel, 1994). In fact, topics are not easily to track (Stokoe, 2000) and during interaction, they shift neatly to the next one, a procedure that has been analysed by Schegloff and Sacks (1969) as *"mentionables"*, also known as the concept of *"topic shading"*.

In that sense, Goodwin and Goodwin (1990) advised researchers to look for topics that are at the centre of participants' attention instead of considering them as a monolithic whole. As a matter of fact, topics do not arise randomly and thus their occurrence and management are consequential that means their construction happens in the interaction between participants who structure them in relation to conversational routine,

communicative functions and interpersonal agendas (Kellermann & Palomares, 2004). For Lambrecht (1994), it is, therefore, crucial to consider the discourse context in which an utterance has been placed in order to determine the topic. Topics draw on cultural understandings to aliment power balances – e.g. who has license to speak to whom about what a fact that is especially true between teachers and young students (Baxter & Akkoor, 2011; Brinton, Fujiki, & Powell, 1997). Chen (1995) argues that topics can be shared by participants if it is of interest to all of them and if they contribute considerably to construct it further. Topics are not defined once and for all but they need to be explicated, reshaped and defended constantly against concurring topics (Berthoud & Mondada, 1995). From a conversation analytic perspective, this topical orientation is a "*member's phenomenon*" and researchers need to carefully analyse the content and action orientation as an outcome of interaction instead of putting pre-defined analytic categories upon them (Martin, 2009). Thus, Melander (2009) tries to bridge the gap between the "what" and "how" in her work upon learning trajectories by concentrating on topic as a constituent part of interaction and its dynamic nature as it is constructed with the ongoing interaction. Moving away from this pure sequential view of topic is the key to resolve this dichotomy of the "what" and the "how" (Melander, 2007; Sahlström, 2009).

In language learning, the initiation of a topic has long been considered to be a stylistic or performance-oriented issue, however the opposite is true as it is literally at the heart of language activity (Berthoud & Mondada, 1992). In the same vein, Zhengdong et al. (2008) affirm that *"the ability to stay on topic, to move from topic to topic and to introduce new topics appropriately is at the core of communicative competence"* (p. 331). Communication is not limited to linguistic actions such as asking a question or making an assertion for example, but the learner also needs to have the competence to introduce and hold them (Berthoud & Mondada, 1992). Coherence is therefore a main concern in any conversation and is achieved through the relation from previous turns. The right interpretation in terms of topic is then crucial for the formulation of the next utterance and is considered to be an interactional achievement (Morris-Adams, 2016). Although the learner is drawing on his topical knowledge in L1, linguistic devices may still vary in the target language. Early on, learners develop sensitivity for discoursive dimensions and although they still have to stabilise the linguistic resources to do so, they handle the organisation of references quickly (Doehler, 2004).

In previous research, **linguists and sociolinguists** have focused on topics on a semantic level. Studies included classrooms as well as experimental settings with adults. One strand of analysis for instance is about feedback from native to non-native speakers, open-ended versus closed questions and their impact on topic continuation, gender differences in topic changes, appropriateness of topics or topics and their relation management (Crookes & Rulon, 1988; de Rivera, Girolametto, Greenberg, & Weitzman, 2005; Edvardsson, 2007; Hinkel, 1994; Kellermann & Palomares, 2004; Orsolini & Pontecorvo, 1992). Another research thread concentrates on topic changes and their development according to a theme-rheme logic, topic dislocations in the grammatical L2 learning process, accentuation of the topic in the theme-rheme construction, disjunctive relative clauses and their role in topic dialogism or the role of additive particles for topics to name only a few (Calhoun, 2012; Salvan, 2009; Schimke, Verhagen, & Dimroth, 2008; Todd, 1998).

The **pragmatic** paradigm on topics centres extensively on the systematics of topic changes in turn-taking as done by pre-schoolers, adolescents and students at university level (Goodwin, 2000, 2007; Goodwin & Goodwin, 1990; Stokoe, 2000; Zhengdong et al., 2008) as well as adults in various every-day situations (Button & Casey, 1985; Campion & Langdon, 2004; Maynard & Zimmerman, 1984; Mc Kinlay & Mc Vittie, 2006; Morris-Adams, 2016; Schegloff, 1968). Common to all these conversation analytic approaches to topic analysis is the focus on conversation devices that are built sequence-to-sequence by all the participants such as the juxtaposition of different semiotic resources to coordinate joint action, ratification of topics, openings of conversations to get down to the actual topic, off-topic talk, disagreement on topic or topic shifts to name only a few. Morris-Adams (2016) investigated how adult native and non-native speakers negotiated topic changes. In a micro-analysis, she showed that non-native speakers competently helped managing topic moves via "marked topic changes". Noteworthy is also the work of Melander and Sahlström adding the nuance of "topicalisations" (Melander, 2009; Melander & Sahlström, 2009), a notion associated with movement, as they not only explored the mechanics of topic changes in a conversation between pre-schoolers and first graders but also the relevance of the topic as a content for discussion. For our study, the aforementioned pragmatic research

on topic is the most relevant. Departing from a socio-cultural understanding of learning, we cannot but consider every action in its interactive context and hence topics are seen in their co-constructional nature between interlocutors.

In line with the sociocultural paradigm described in chapter 2.1.3, we adopt a pragmatic approach to topics as the aboutness of an utterance in conversation that is co-constructed as an ever-floating notion between the speaker and the hearer in the same way as learning processes are jointly negotiated in the on-going interaction embedded in the defining context of a community. Our study aims at showing how linguistic means are used as resources to organise verbal interaction and, the opposite being true as well, how this interactional organisation structures the deployed linguistic tools (Doehler, 2004).

2.2. Picture book activities in the preschool classroom

The previous subchapter focused on the social nature of learning and SLL in particular. Through the joint negotiation of meaning in interaction, children gradually build their language capacities. Peers are valuable resources in the learning process as they mediate the language. Not only does the learner acquire new lexical or syntactical structures but they build up important communication competence as well, to familiarise themselves with the pragmatic aspects of the L2: When to speak, how to speak, what to say to whom etc. In this regard, topic symbolises the "what" to speak. However, content of talk is strongly organised by the teachers inside the classrooms. They also organise the activities to foster L2 learner's skills in the target language. As a result, we would like to study the impact of teacher talk and the nature of the interaction with the pupils on successful L2 learning. Then, we concentrate on the teachers' most prominent tool for L2 teaching, the picture books which lead way to key activities, such as joint reading, storytelling and play.

2.2.1. Teacher talk and interaction with pupils

Numerous research focussed on describing features of teacher talk and its impact on classroom interaction. During classroom interaction, teachers' questions occupy a prominent place. Mehan (1979) points at teachers' *display questions* as a rigid device to keep classroom talk within predefined boundaries although the gain of this type of questions turned out to be deceiving. Zucker, Justice, Piasta, and Kaderavek (2010) have shown in their ethnographic study on preschool teachers' use of *literal and inferential questions* that the latter encourage children to participate in complex conversation. In his work on *contingencies*, Van Lier (1996) has extensively described IRF schemes which by their initiation-response-feedback sequencing give little room for pupils to bring in their own creative ideas and a reduction of contingency that is a meaningful connection between young students' and teachers' utterances. In an ethnographic and conversation analytic study on classroom talk, Lee (2007) looked at third turn positions in classroom talk and found the *feedback* to be crucial in the creation of local contingencies. Geoghegan, O'Neill, and Petersen (2013) went into a similar direction in their qualitative research on teacher talk and, more specifically, on shared *pedagogical practices and metalanguage* to exemplify learning and pupils' engagement in opposition to the confined IRF framework. Through making learning intentions explicit and modelling metacognitive strategies in a constant interactive process with the young students, teacher talk became more meaningful. This involvement of the learner in the *negotiation of meaning* is also studied by Cancino (2015). Through conversation analytic devices, interactional features were identified that helped managing contingent learner utterances. Results showed that teachers have great impact on these features and, therefore, they help increase opportunities for learning. S. Walsh (2002, 2003, 2006b) largely studied teacher talk in terms of obstacles or triggers for language learner's contributions. Next to the IRF pattern, he also analysed different features relevant for learner contribution such as clarification requests, form- or content-focused feedbacks, repair or scaffolding and so on. The teachers' ability to set the framework for pupils' participation is clearly linked to *authority and power*, which makes classroom conversation a very particular type of talk. Therefore, Oyler (1996) pleads for *students as producers* and not consumers of knowledge. She investigated primary school students' initiations during teacher-led

read-alouds and the findings stress that teachers should withdraw in favour of more child led interventions. J. K. Hall (1998) argues in a similar direction in her ethnographic research with ninth graders where she observed the differential treatment in terms of teacher attention. When the teacher recognises *students as knowledgeable*, allowing them to take over other's turns and making their contributions cooperative, learning opportunities arise. The *"funds of knowledge"* are another attractive approach on how to integrate children's resources into the lessons to make learning more meaningful to them and to engage them more actively (Gonzalez, Moll, & Amanti, 2005; Moll, Amanti, Neff, & Gonzalez, 1992). Of interest to our study then, is research that sees teacher talk in context with pupil interaction and investigates how teachers can trigger increased learner involvement through their input and verbal prompts.

2.2.2. Language activities with picture books

Stories are recommended for language teaching because they deploy a whole imaginary world through language that children can enjoy in a playful manner. Cameron (2001) sees the advantage in stories that introduce themes being broader than what could be found in everyday classroom instruction. In general, the picture book can be seen as a cultural tool or artefact that mediates psychological action (Vygotsky, 1978). According to its structure, the book materially and symbolically designs the activities done in interaction with it (Vásquez, 2003). It provides cultural information about the context of the story, it shows how language and culture are intertwined. They also describe cultural situations through language and provide samples for language structure (Morgan, 2011). Stories occur in a temporal sequence that follows a chronological order. Its thematic structure centres around the resolution of a problem, such as the fight between the good and the bad. With their defined architecture, stories usually start with the presentation of a problem, then develop in episodes and finally end in a settlement. Once children understand these patterns, they can focus on the linguistic contents. In this respect, stories can help learners familiarise themselves with the sounds, the rhythms and the sense and format of the target language. Thus, they can be models for learning contextualised language use. As specific activity types linked to story books, we are focusing on the following three cases in our study which are introduced subsequently: Joint reading, storytelling and play.

1) <u>Joint reading</u>

The activity of joint reading can be found both at home with parents reading to their child in privileged moments as well as in school where group size characterises the shape of reading. We briefly review the importance of reading at home for child development, point at the difference in the interaction style at home and at school to finish with a description of reading activities in the classroom and prior research in this area.

In their study about an intervention on picture book day care and home for children from low-income families, Whitehurst et al. (1994) showed that interactive joint book reading **between parents and their children** increased language skills. Fekonja-Peklaj, Marjanovič-Umek, and Kranjc (2010) have similar findings: Through joint reading and their manner of reading, parents have an impact on children's storytelling and reading skills. They learn language and typical elements constituting a story so that they are able to tell their own stories or talk about the book they have been read to. Although it is not our goal to analyse parent-child book behaviour in this study, we would like to point out to the enormous influence book reading at home has on children as they draw on these experience to make sense of what happens at school. We would also like to attract attention to the importance of joint reading for literacy development, print concepts and emergent reading (Fletcher & Reese, 2005) – an aspect we did not investigate in our study. Thus, acquiring word and phonological awareness (the ability to isolate words in a sentence; the skill of identifying sounds), recognising embedded and contextualised print, understanding form and function of print as well as the relationship between speech and print constitute elementary prerequisites for reading (Justice & Ezell, 2001).

One major transition point to the home context is the participation in planned, routine or transitional school activities as well as free play which have a different structure and contrast in their goals. Thus, the use of language is different from what children have learnt at home. In her ethnographic study about the development of children's language as affected by the community in which they grow up, Heath (1983) deduces that children do not have enough practice in responding to teachers' utterances in

interrogative form or questions about information from books unless it is a common practice in the household. In an additional part of their study, Fekonja-Peklaj et al. (2010) conclude that joint reading at preschool has a positive effect on children's storytelling skills only if it is high quality in the sense that it may include (for example) discussion involving the book, asking open-ended questions and seeking various ways to present literature. Characteristic of joint reading is the asymmetric power balance between young students and teachers (Aukrust, 2004; Buzzelli & Johnston, 2001), the latter holding the exclusive rights on when to stop or continue the narration, what questions to ask or answer, which pictures to show and for how long or what details to focus on to name only a few. Teachers generally train two kinds of skills around books: Talk about the book and demonstrate comprehension by summarising or retelling (Yusun Kang, Young-Suk, & Pan, 2009). Oyler (1996) distinguishes two aspects in her study about teacher-led read-alouds in the elementary classroom: process authority and content authority. The first element represents the control of traffic and talk in a classroom and the second is about the validation of utterances. This dual authority is above all attributed to the teacher but Olyer affirms that young students turn from passive consumers into active producers once allowed to contribute to classroom process and content. Although she was studying the interaction with information books, her research pointed to some interesting facts that are valid for storybooks too: Not only do the pupils' questions about the content produce valuable language outcome, but their initiations to interpret the text – that is a remark introducing a different topic than the turn of talk preceding it – take different shapes. Personal experience initiations often trigger other experience related narrations of peers, intertextual initiations to connect other stories (poems, songs, movies etc.) to the current one, claims of expertise such as relating elements of the story to knowledge collected outside the classroom and affective responses that emotionally link the initiator to the story.

Previous research in joint reading has been done in an either qualitative or quantitative perspective: A qualitative approach has been prevalent in studies about primary school students' responses during joint reading (Hickman, 1981), preschoolers' spontaneous reactions to story narration (Kraus, 2008; Young-Suk, Kang, & Pan, 2011) or parent-child interaction (Devescovi & Baumgartner, 1993; Wolf, 1991). This approach was used to analyse the content of children's utterances in respect to storytelling activities. Especially relevant is the longitudinal work of Applebee (1978) who explored

children's concept of stories as it develops from early childhood to adolescence. Along a similar vein is the research of Fox (1993) who concentrates on *story structuring* in peer-to-peer narration. From a quantitative perspective, researchers investigate the *gain in vocabulary or syntax* after the exposure to joint reading activities in school and at home. Isbell, Sobol, Lindauer, and Lowrance (2004) and Pollard-Durodola et al. (2011), for instance, studied the *vocabulary increase* in young children by using the mean length of utterance amongst other quantitative techniques. Another vast research domain in joint reading is about *literacy* with research foci such as literacy development over the childhood years, gender issues, culturally different approaches in families and the importance of early literacy in preschool (for an overview see for instance N. Hall, Larson, & Marsh, 2003).

2) Storytelling

Storytelling takes different shapes according to the context in which it is performed. At home, the form resembles a relatively free narration while it takes a more formatted shape at school. Then, we highlight the co-constructional nature of storytelling and the importance of retelling for language development. We conclude the section with previous research in this domain.

The narrative language that is used for storytelling differs from daily language use in its explicit use of vocabulary and the application of complex sentence structures (Stadler & Ward, 2010). Language is the medium of any storytelling activity (Morgan, 2011). The ability to tell a story touches upon several other domains:

> [Storytelling] enhances visualization, imagination, and creativity. Storytelling introduces children to literature and the beauty of language. It develops a student's sense of story and the knowledge that stories have a beginning, a middle, an end, characters, a setting, a problem, and a resolution. (Norfolk, Stenson, & Williams, 2006, p. 1)

Children are confronted to stories early on, be it during reading sessions with their parents, dramatic plays or media-broadcasted narratives. The more children are exposed to the prototype of a story, the better they can reproduce it while respecting important

steps such as introduction, development, ending, problem solving or protagonists. According to Wright, Bacigalupa, Black, and Burton (2008), stories reveal how children see and think about the world based on their previous experiences. Sacks, Schegloff, and Jefferson (1974) consider stories not only as a discursive unit but also a record of what they do, what is done with them and through them. This portrays storytelling as a co-construction and an interactional achievement (Schegloff, 2003). The children orient to the different pictures of the book, not the text, and thus create stories in relation to these visualisations. The focus is then on establishing joint attention on the story by using both verbal and embodied resources (Melander & Sahlström, 2009). In this regard, the listeners' role, as the addressee of the story, can become an active one by asking clarification questions, making suggestions or supporting mentally (Holmes, 2003).

Retelling stories helps children to refine their understanding about it. They can reorganise the chronology of the story and apply the core vocabulary (Tsou, Wang, & Tzeng, 2006). According to Fox (1993), words children use in their storytelling are evidence of their vocabulary but words that they use in a creative and experimental way show transformation from one grammatical function to another and account for risk-taking with language that is still in the process of being acquired. Sylla, Coutinho, Branco, and Müller (2015) highlight the creative and playful way of linguistic exploration during storytelling fostering creative thinking, social interaction skills and more sophisticated language structures. Finally, storytelling with its decontextualized language resembles classroom talk and requires a macro-structure organising the discourse unit and, with this, opposes itself to the more negotiating nature of everyday conversation that moves from topic to topic (Paul & Smith, 1993).

Prior studies on storytelling focus either on the gains in terms of language learning or on the development of narration structures. Stadler and Ward (2010) for instance observed 5 to 7 year old children while they used *props* to retell a story to observe their effect on the descriptive language of the children. Kirsch (2016) investigated 10 to 11 year-old German learners' story comprehension and understanding of new *vocabulary* via semi-structured interviews and post-test during which the students retold a story their teacher narrated before. Isbell et al. (2004) recorded 3 to 5 year-olds while they retell a story. Their language samples were analysed under the perspective of language

complexity and story *comprehension* to check the potential gains in oral language. In a study on fictional narrative skills, Lever and Sénéchal (2011) analysed 5 to 6 year-old children's language structure and context measures as well as their use of *cohesive ties* while renarrating a story to see whether narrative constructional knowledge can be learnt from interactive book reading. Devescovi and Baumgartner (1993) at their turn asked 3 to 5 year olds to retell a story from an already known book while interacting with a peer to determine the *social roots of narrative structures*. In a similar manner, Fekonja-Peklaj et al. (2010) investigated 6 year-olds narration skills such as *coherence* and *cohesion* in respect to family's social status.

3) <u>Play</u>

Play can either happen spontaneously or inspired by a previous story. In the following section, we trace a picture of the activity and its importance for child development; in respect to story plots, social interaction management as well as language development. We conclude with previous studies in the area of preschool play.

The concept of "play" refers to children's spontaneous pretend play during which they imitate everyday situations or process all kinds of stories (books, movies…) or to other-initiated play after story narration such as in school contexts. Although play often has the connation of unseriousness, children accomplish important developmental stages via this activity. According to Björk-Willén and Cromdal (2009), play is neither inconsequential nor disorganised but *"an arena in which children explore concepts, language and develop a whole range of mental as well as social skills"* (p. 1496). For Paley (1990), the above described storytelling skills are at the heart of any play. Through play, children elaborate story plots while being thoroughly attentive to each other and react appropriately to the story line (Blum-Kulka & Snow, 2004). This established *"intersubjectivity"* is the basis of their play in which they create imaginary situations to explore cultural meanings, social roles or rules (Vygotsky, 1978; Zaporozhets & Elkonin, 1971). Apart from the interactional aspect on how to create the play together, the children also need to attend to managerial issues such as distribution of roles, choice of topic or usage of material, labelled as metacommunication (Lengyel, 2009; Verba, 1993). Rydland (2009) argues that such metacommunication, or *"out-of-*

frame talk", offers the children the possibility to practice decontextualized and coherent language such as they will find in oral and written texts throughout their school career. In their study, Leseman, Rollenberg, and Rispens (2001) concluded that with limited teacher involvement in play activities, children were interactively and verbally more implicated than in teacher guided lessons. Once given the chance to play, children deploy *"scripts"*, that is knowledge about stories, facts, situations, actions and people, to establish a structure around which to build their plot (N. Hall & Robinson, 2003). These scripts give an insight into what they have come to understood about the world. Aukrust (2004), for instance, investigated pre-schoolers explanatory discourse and how this is related to the development of language skills. Blum-Kulka and Snow (2004) concluded that peer talk promotes SLL in a more effective manner than instruction relying entirely on a teacher. In their study about preschoolers' storytelling, Fekonja-Peklaj et al. (2010) found that symbolic play led to the highest developmental level of a story, followed by talk about the story. Socially speaking, play gives young students the opportunity to negotiate roles and plot whereas linguistically, a logical narration had to be transferred into words. Also, play offers the children the opportunity for *other-repetition*, a pervasive feature in SLL allowing the children to move from the simple to the more complex utterances in the L2 (Rydland & Aukrust, 2005). In her studies about preschool children's play and SLL, Piker (2013) retains as a general conclusion that pupils develop their second language skills regardless of special intervention programs during social interaction in peer play.

Concerning research on children's play, we found a focus on language learning on the one hand and on social development on the other as the line between a told story and its enacted plot is very thin. However, play is also considered as a window onto children's thinking and should be used as such by the teachers who surround them. Piker (2013) concentrates on 4 to 5 year-olds play: Observations and videotapes of L2 learners' social interactions were done to determine the impact of increased language understanding to *join play* with their peers and to *support the plot* throughout the pretend play. Rydland and Aukrust (2005) also centred on pre-schoolers learning an L2 during play but emphasised the role of self and other-repetitions in relation to the frequency of verbal participation and *academic language skills*. From the same videotaped corpus, Rydland (2009) used the data to investigate the link between *managerial talk*, vocabulary skills and story comprehension to show the ultimate

importance for an L2 learner to get to know how to regulate his peers via speech during play activities. In their ethnographic case study on language assessment in preschool, Kenner, Wells, and Williams (1996) analysed bilingual children's play and how the produced talk can be used to give insights into *fluency*, *vocabulary range* and *grammatical accuracy*. Notably is also the work of Paley (1990) who as a teacher investigated preschoolers' play in her own classroom with a focus on *creative expression of ideas and feelings*, on the building of *social skills and experience* and on how teachers can use this to understand their pupils in a better way. In the Luxembourgish context, the study of Ludwig (2009) analysed the role of sociodramatic play to develop resources and strategies for negotiating interaction. Wright et al. (2008) conducted storytelling activities and their dramatizations with pre-schoolers while leaving them the control on the enactment process via *prompts* that left the children's original ideas intact. The researchers investigated the connection between children and adults (parents or teachers), the developing literacy and social skills as well as the unveiling *insights into children's thinking*. In the longitudinal investigation of children's peer discourse during play, Blum-Kulka, Huck-Taglicht, and Avni (2004) observed and interviewed preschoolers and the 9 year-old in their development of *thematic frames and genres* during story enactments. Their focus was on peer talk as the opportunity to listen in, to practice and to display conversational skills and academic talk. In sum, storytelling and play in preschool are showing children's understanding of their environment, which is a window onto their thinking.

The current chapter revisited theoretical considerations about SLL while emphasising a pragmatic approach. This view on language learning as jointly negotiated meaning-making between learners and experts of the community has been extended to the specific conditions under which teachers and young students design book-related activities and how mutually mediated topics fit the framework of such an interactive preschool classroom. Prior research on these same concepts confirm our stance towards an interrelation of semantic, syntactic and pragmatic factors on topic negotiation and hence justify a multi-method attitude in our study which we are going to explain in the next chapter.

Part II

A multi-method framework to approach children's meaning-making with books

3. A multi-method framework to approach children's meaning-making with books

In the previous chapter, we have covered prior research that is relevant for our study in the areas of SLL in preschool, of book related activities in the classroom, of topical research and of teacher talk. As research on SLL in the Luxembourgish preschool is still a very young field, we had to relate to studies from other countries whereas simultaneously being critical whether these research projects were applicable to our context. Now, we reflect on the implications for the methodology of our study.

We have identified two major strands in research about SLL: A linguistic approach that focusses on the learning of language structures from a quantitative point of view and a pragmatic approach that sees language learning in the context of social interaction which we have discussed in chapter 2.1.4. For the purposes of our study, we reject such a purely linguistic approach as not rooted sufficiently in the context of social interaction and because it privileges cognitive learning aspects. Going beyond the linguistic performance of acquiring vocabulary, grammar, phonology and other aspects of linguistic structure we emphasise the skills required to knowing when to speak to whom about what in the community the child functions in. This interactional stance is also the reason why a mere teacher perspective on the research subject would bias our study by excluding the joint interactional work young students undertake to make sense of their environment. However, focusing solely on the interactional aspect of SLL would lead us to the other extreme and would impede every insight into development. In a first part, therefore, our research follows a more quantitative approach to measure the mean length of utterances produced by children in different classroom activities. These insights are then compared to the development of the mean length of utterance in the context of self-initiated topic changes. This leads us to the next concept relevant in our study, topics. As they stem from the linguistic field, it is not astonishing that we made out a linguistic and pragmatic division once again. In this respect, we would like to point out the previously mentioned research of Melander (2009); Melander and Sahlström (2009) whose methodological approach seems the only appropriate one to us to investigate the phenomena of our study. Linguists treat topic as a mechanic device to analyse conversation or they focus on the development of content which topic brings

to a conversation ignoring the implications for the on-going interaction. Pragmatic studies on topics solely analyse the turn-by-turn negotiated development of a topic and ignore its content. Melander and Sahlström combined the "what" and the "how". In this same vein, our research aims to analyse self-initiated topic changes both as a device for language development and its impact on the interactional level.

In the forthcoming chapter, we are presenting our approach to data collection and analysis as well as the methods through which we collected our data. Grounded theory guided our study through the data gathering as well as the analytic processes. Upcoming questions in the analysis were considered in a next phase of data collection whereas the newly collected material had an impact on the next step in the analysis. As discussed in chapter 2.1.4, the complex nature of topics in the second language learning process demands a multi-method framework: A linguistic approach would neglect the interactive nature while learning a second language. On the other side, only considering pragmatic aspects would impede us from drawing conclusions about the children's development. Moreover, an exclusive focus on the teachers in the classroom would bias our study by only reflecting one view on the phenomenon. To get a more complete picture on the pre-schoolers Luxembourgish learning process, we applied two methods to collect the data - ethnographic classroom observation and stimulated recall interviews. Firstly, ethnographic classroom observation helped us to immerse in the classroom events and pay close attention to the three activity types under focus in this study. Secondly, stimulated recall interviews allowed us to integrate the teachers' post-reflections on chosen extracts of their lessons. After these methodological explanations, we proceed to the description of the collection process itself: Participants, procedures and ethical considerations.

3.1. Grounded theory for the mutual enrichment of data collection and analysis

Grounded theory (henceforward GT) is an appropriate choice of methodology when the creation of theory is the aimed at the outcome of a study. As Birks and Mills (2012) state, *"grounded theory is the preferred choice when the intent is to generate theory that explains a phenomenon of interest to the researcher"* (p. 18). As a method of qualitative inquiry, iterative data collection and analysis mutually advise and determine each other (Charmaz, 2011). GT was first designed by Glaser and Strauss in 1967. Over the decades, it underwent several transformations, for instance Corbin and Strauss added a more interactionist and pragmatic turn to it in their work of 1990 (Corbin & Strauss, 2015), whereas Charmaz supplemented GT with constructivist notions (Charmaz, 2006). These new ontological and epistemological perspectives contributed to GT being a very "dynamic" method (Ralph, Birks, & Chapman, 2015). In the following sections, we are going to describe the GT methodology as used in our study.

Originally, GT generated theory out of the construction of categories seen in the data. The outcome of such a category served as evidence to describe a basic social process which remained true as a concept over time. Hypotheses could then be tested by checking the relevance of the categories through comparative means (O'Connor, Netting, & Thomas, 2008; Ruppel & Mey, 2015). However, critics addressed that such research designs lack **context** of results. Therefore, we follow Charmaz' augmented method by applying an interpretative turn, that is, instead of focusing on testable theoretical creations, we aim a contextualised understanding of participants' lived experiences by relying on a more heuristic data collection and analysis (Charmaz, 2011; O'Connor et al., 2008). In line with symbolic interactionism, Charmaz considers giving an interpretation of social interaction which leads her to multiple realities and local complex situations (H. Hall, Griffiths, & Mc Kenna, 2013). Furthermore, context is an important notion in a sense that it influences people who, at their turn, actively shape their knowledge through the experience of reality. This has an impact on the meanings of the analysed phenomena (O'Connor et al., 2008; I. Walsh et al., 2015). Hence, our study follows Charmaz' interpretative paradigm of GT by acknowledging the fact that

there is no one unique reality and that the chosen methodology therefore cannot focus on an absolutist view but needs to be concerned with what is individually distinctive and constructed (Bryant, 2003; W. A. Hall & Callery, 2001; O'Connor et al., 2008; Patton, 2002). Denzin and Lincoln (2003) refer to this as *"bricolage"*, that is representations of reality that are put together as a puzzle to fit a complex situation. The created theory is substantive, that is, developed through sociological inquiry in the educational sector (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) and displays the researcher as the author of a dialogue between himself and the participants of the study (Mills, Bonner, & Karen, 2006). In opposition to positivist theories aiming at explaining the phenomenon, GT theories are interpretivist because they are emphasising understanding, seeking causality and showing patterns (Charmaz, 2006; Corbin & Strauss, 2015).

In our opinion, GT is suitable for our study because it approaches a phenomenon in a holistic and comprehensive way: Theoretical conclusions are derived from data and not the other way around. Data collection and analysis inform each other mutually in a continuous process (Corbin & Strauss, 2015) enabling the researcher to discover the meanings that young Luxembourgish learners construct throughout interacting with a story. GT also preserves flexibility and openness throughout the whole collection and analysis process while giving way to an examination from different angles (Corbin & Strauss, 2015). These procedures lead to a theoretical model of self-initiated topic changes, thus letting the data reach higher levels of abstraction (Timmermans & Tavory, 2007, p. 496).

3.2. Ethnographic classroom observation

To research a child's social situation, the researcher needs to participate in the child's everyday life (Hedegaard, Fleer, Bang, & Hviid, 2008) which is done best by an immersion in the classroom through ethnographic methods. Furthermore, our study reunites ethnography with a GT approach as both *"share the constructivist principle that truth and reality relate to the perceptions of an individual which means that, although some of the practical mechanics of each methodology differ, they form a*

potent methodology when used in combination" (Bamkin, Maynard, & Goulding, 2016, p. 216). Ethnographic researchers collect data by participating in the everyday life of people and observing them as they go about their business. In that respect, reality is a construction of these individual's and researcher's view of the world (Williamson, 2006). In our eyes, the added value of GT for our study consists of raising the ethnographic description to an abstract set of categories and theoretical interpretation (Charmaz, 2006; Pettigrew, 2000). Conceptualisations become connected through a combination of data collection and analysis, thus drawing attention on social processes (Timmermans & Tavory, 2007). Corbin and Strauss (2015) advise researchers to focus on these processes as well as their purpose and intervening conditions in their context.

In ethnographic research, **video recording** is a common instrument enabling the researcher to capture a huge amount of data that can be replayed over and over again. Departing from the representation that participants construct meaning in a sense-making and constantly on-going interaction process, it is of crucial importance for us to access the fine details of this proceedings as often as needed for the analysis until becoming totally immersed in the data. "Context mapping", as described by Harte, Leap, Fenwick, Homer, and Foureur (2014) hints at our procedure to observe the particular classroom routines, as well as to establish trustworthiness with the participants. Ellis and Barkhuizen (2005) add a further interesting aspect to video recording:

> Video recording has the obvious advantage of providing detailed visual information relating to the context of an utterance, including important paralinguistic information such as gesture and facial expression […]. (Ellis & Barkhuizen, 2005, p. 27)

Interaction in general, and with children specifically, is fast-paced and video recording is an appropriate method of creating a rich and detailed picture of what is happening during our teacher-led and child-led activities (Farrington-Darby & Wilson, 2009). However, as Pink (2013) points out, *"reflexive ethnographic video makers need to be aware of how cameras and video recordings […] become elements of the relationships between themselves and participants, and how these are interwoven into discourses and practices in the research context"* (p. 107), meaning that whoever is filming needs to be attentive to the effect he or she produces with the camera on the participants.

Using two cameras for this research allowed catching the activities at two different angles being aware of the fact that any perspective always includes and excludes details at the same time (Lorenza Mondada, 2006). For our study, it was important to see both the teacher and the children from the front to make their communication practices more visible: Most of their pointing, their body movements, the approximate gaze direction as well as the content of the book page could be caught by either one of the two cameras.

3.3. **Stimulated recall interview**

The method of stimulated recall interviews (from now on SR) is an introspective technique that was first used by Shavelson, Webb and Burstein in 1986 as a thinking-aloud method to investigate cognitive processes. As collected by Carayon et al. (2014), the methodology has been used in many domains such as farming, health care, education and consulting because of its strengths on the ecological validity, the assessment of non-observable cognitive processes and the enhancement of worker knowledge regarding their own practice. Considering our educational context, the two last arguments are particularly important as for obvious reasons of classroom organisation, a teacher cannot reflect aloud on his/her practice (Bao, Egi, & Han, 2011). According to Calderhead (1981), SR can be used to make much of teachers' "tacit" thinking explicit and elicit cognitions underlying their observable actions, that is teachers' interactive cognitions (as quoted in Meijer, Zanting, & Verloop, 2002, p. 410) although some authors suspect that teachers might not always recall their exact reflections at the moment of the recording – especially if the activity dates already back some time (Dempsey, 2010; Samar & Moradkhani, 2014). Calderhead also points to visual limitations such as the subject not seeing the activity from his/her perspective, as not being able to verbalise tacit knowledge or as consciously censoring certain bits of information (as quoted in Lyle, 2003). Lyle (2003) himself sees the main risk of the method in the possibility that participants create explanations, or a priori theories, about the cohesion between the prompted actions and intentions. However, this method enables us to go beyond the "how" of teaching to the "why"(Meijer et al., 2002) by

generating accounts from particular points of view such as those of the teachers in our case (Charmaz, 2006; Reitano & Sim, 2010). W. A. Hall and Callery (2001) note:

> However natural the context within which they occur, interview and observational data must be created during the process of data collection. Interviews require the active involvement of investigators who respond to statements made by participants with questions that invite clarification about or elaboration of some aspects of communication and participants who are more or less receptive to investigators' efforts. (W. A. Hall & Callery, 2001, p. 260)

The method of SR therefore fits our constructivist paradigm as it takes into consideration that we build the data together with the interviewees: Through the types of questions, through the reactions we (un-)consciously display towards the teachers' answers, through our personal background, through the institutional constraints, the teachers themselves function under... Knowing the everyday business of preschool, we therefore focused on complex prompts leading to high-level thinking (Meier & Vogt, 2015) as we are going to explain in greater detail in chapter 3.4.3.

With its introspective stance, SR interview suits the research design of our study. Departing from the principle that individuals enact themselves and their socially constructed knowledge through language, such a sociolinguistic method is adequate for the later analysis (Olsen, 2006). The teachers' perspective about their representation and goals during joint reading is needed to reach a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon of self-initiated topic changes and their impact on language learning in the classroom (Schepens, Aelterman, & Van Keer, 2007).

3.4. Description of the data collection process

The following subchapters centre on the description of the participants in our study, the procedures for a) the ethnographic classroom observation and b) the stimulated recall interviews to conclude with ethical considerations on the data collection process.

3.4.1.   Participants

There were a total of twelve children and three teachers participating in our study. The pupils were aged between 4 and 5 years and were mostly of Lusophone origins, meaning that they learn Luxembourgish as a second language. In order to prevent a narrow recruitment of young students, we paid attention to reflect the same ratio of speakers with Luxembourgish as first language and speakers without Luxembourgish as first language as present in the whole class (Mc Cann & Clark, 2003): In the city of Luxembourg, the Portuguese represent 12,1% of the residents and hereby, rank third (Luxembourigsh 30,15%, French 16,78%). To this group of Lusophones are added 0,52% of Cape Verdeans and 0,46% of Brazilians (VdL, 2015, p. 58). Given its important number, we saw the necessity of including them as a majority in our study sample. Each group of 4 children was composed by an equal number of boys and girls except for the second one for which there was only one girl whose parents gave consent for research participation.

The following table gives an overview of the participants split into three groups according to the classes they were in. L stands for Luxembourgish, P for Portuguese, Cz for Czech, F for French and Br for Brazilian.

	Name	Gender	Year of birth	Preschool year	Nationality	First language	Second languages	Nationality of parents
Group of T1	Benito	male	2007	2nd	L	P	L	Portuguese parents
	Lídia	female	2007	2nd	L	P	L	Portuguese parents
	Leticia	female	2008	1st	L	P	L	Portuguese parents
	Jacob	male	2007	2nd	L	Cz, L		Luxembourgish father, Czech mother

	Sergio	male	2007	2nd	P	P	L, F	Portuguese parents
Group of T2								French speaking nanny
	Salomão	male	2007	2nd	P	P	L	Portuguese parents
	Ugo	male	2007	2nd	P	P	L	Portuguese parents
	Isa	female	2007	2nd	L	L		Luxembourgish father, Italian mother
Group of T3	Michele	female	2007	2nd	P	P	L	Portuguese parents
	Magda	female	2008	1st	Br/P	Br	L	Brazilian parents
	Trevor	male	2007	1st	P	Creole, Br	F, L	Cap Verdean father, Brazilian mother, French speaking nanny
	Nícolas	male	2007	1st	P	P	L	Portuguese parents

Table 3: Overview of study participants

3.4.2.   Procedure for the video recordings

According to Ellis and Barkhuizen (2005), language is best studied in the natural setting where it is acquired, that is, where learners communicate in context. This means to *"stay close to the data, analyzing them from a members' perspective, paying attention to the details of the unfolding interaction as the participants orient to different aspects of it"* (Melander, 2009, p. 36). Although one can never be sure of the impact that a researcher and his camera have on the participants' behaviour, a phenomenon named "the Observer's Paradox", that was introduced by Labov to hint at the influence of the researcher on the very situation, he is observing (Labov, 1972). Our study draws on a

particular type of book reading activities taking place in any Luxembourgish preschool, meaning they are typical learning situations as teachers regularly design them. In this perspective, *"language is seen not as an abstract set of potentialities but as situated action, organized in the temporal and sequential unfolding of its uses, mobilized with other multimodal resources such as glances, gestures, bodily postures and body movements"*(Lorenza Mondada, 2008, p. 54). Unlike other more informal natural language learning situations such as free play or recess conversations, the story activities analysed by this study reflect the pedagogical impact of the activity design and the teachers' reactions.

The three preschool teachers had been invited to a debriefing on all the given material and the focus of the data collection. Additional handouts with all the relevant information, containing technical specifications as well as pictures showing how to set up the cameras, were distributed. After the first data collection period, a second meeting was organised for the purpose of evaluation. One teacher experienced difficulties in handling the material (blurred picture, bad sound quality) but insisted on handling the video-recording on her own. Then, another document was created to show step by step and via pictures how to manage the different settings of the cameras. Overall, the teachers were satisfied with the procedure that allowed them to handle the collection autonomously.

In line with Glaser and Strauss (1967) and their procedure of "theoretical sampling", data collection happened at three intervals during the study to meet the needs of a progressive analysis:

> Theoretical sampling is the process of data collection for generating theory whereby the analyst jointly collects, codes, and analyses his data and decides what data to collect next and where to find them, in order to develop his theory as it emerges. (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p. 45)

After a tentative analysis of the collection in December 2012, many questions arose with respect to the children's interaction with storybooks and gave way to the second data collection in May 2013. Combining the analysis of these two entities eventually moved the focus on the teachers and resulted in stimulated recall interviews in December 2015.

Before starting the data collection, formal permission was given by the parents of the participating children, the involved teachers as well as the head of the "Service d'Enseignement" governing the schools on behalf of the City of Luxembourg and the school inspector, representative of the Ministry of Education. Furthermore, the concerned children have been confronted to the video camera several times before the actual recordings took place. In this way, they gradually lost their interest and timidity from this device that is considered to be "highly intrusive" and raises participants' awareness of its presence in a way that it may be *"difficult to obtain clear to obtain clear samples of speech"* (Ellis & Barkhuizen, 2005, p. 27). Occasionally, the pupils held the book up, "to show the camera what's going on", hereby demonstrating their awareness of the video device.

Our study picks up three types of activities that are related to language learning with picture books.

1) *Joint reading*: The teacher is reading the story from the book. There may be questions from the teacher or the children at different moments of the narration. The young students have the habit of throwing in comments here and there. Overall, we label this activity as teacher-led because the pedagogue stays in charge of the participation framework.

2) *Storytelling*: The pupils renarrate a story, which they have heard before, in their own words. Some parts may be shortened, while others are elaborated in greater detail. Guided by the book, the children respect the structure of an introduction, a development and an ending. We term this activity as child-led since the teacher steps into the background and only interferes punctually (e.g. when the noise level exceeds a certain maximum).

3) *Play*: The children enact a known story. They distribute roles and negotiate the plot as they go. Again, introduction, development, ending and protagonists need to be shaped. The line to "symbolic play", doing as if, is very thin. The children are in charge of the play; the teacher does not intervene in principle.

As discussed in chapter 2.2.2, all these terms are used quite miscellaneously in the literature: Joint reading, joint book reading, book reading, picture book reading, reading aloud, story book read-alouds, storybook telling, story retells, narration, storytelling,

play, socio-dramatic play, symbolic play, pretend play, peer play… but in this study, we use the above mentioned terms with their distinctive meanings.

Collection period 1 – December 2012

Period 1 (Nov.-Dec. 2012)					
T1		T2		T3	
Total of t-led	Total of c-read	Total of t-led	Total of c-read	Total of t-led	Total of c-read
00:37:08	00:13:55	01:17:14	00:18:19	00:27:21	00:11:29
Total: 00:51:03		Total: 01:35:33		Total: 00:38:50	
Total for collection period 1: 03:04:26					

Table 4: Overview of data collection period 1

During the first data collection period in December 2012, two types of activities have been recorded: During teacher-led activities, the pedagogue read a storybook to a group of four children (henceforward labelled as teacher-led activity, teacher reading activity or joint reading). Afterwards, as a second activity type, the children were asked to reread the book (from now on referred to as child-led activity, child reading activity or storytelling). As they are not yet able to read written texts, the "reading" consists of looking at the pictures, commenting on them and recapitulating the story, the teacher read to them before. Blum-Kulka and Snow (2004) see the advantage of child-led activities in the unfolding of peer talk as *"unhindered by the inherent asymmetry of adult-child interaction"* (p. 298). This allows for a more natural insight into the language practices of the young students.

Collection period 2 – May 2013

Period 2 (May 2013)					
T1			T2		
Total of t-led	Total of c-play	Total of c-read	Total of t-led	Total of c-play	Total of c-read
00:16:11	00:10:47	00:09:17	00:43:37	00:16:40	00:13:22
Total: 00:36:15			Total: 01:13:39		
Total for collection period 2: 01:49:54					

Table 5: Overview of data collection period 2

The analysis rose many questions in respect of the pupils' interaction with the picture book. Hence, during the second data collection period in May 2013, a third activity type was added during which the young students played the story. The children were asked to enact parts of or even the whole story that was read to them before. Instead of commenting on the pictures, the pupils then took the roles of the characters of the story:

> However, in an open role play the participants are not instructed to achieve a specific outcome nor are they told how they are to achieve their communicative purposes. This creates a space for the learners to negotiate and thus helps to foster interaction that is "real". (Ellis & Barkhuizen, 2005, p. 32)

The sessions of two teachers had been recorded when we discovered that the sound was missing due to a maladjustment of the microphone connection. The concerned teachers repeated the collection by reading new stories but unfortunately, the third teacher was not able to redo the session and this explains why there is less data for the third group of children.

Period 3 (December 2015)	
T1	T2
Stimulated Recall Interview	Stimulated Recall Interview

Table 6: Overview of data collection period 3

Extensive analysis followed this second data set. As data analysis should never be done at the completion of data collection (Mc Cann & Clark, 2003; Scogin, 2016; I. Walsh et al., 2015), teachers were interviewed in a third phase, in December 2015. In order to get a better understanding of their pedagogical goals and to integrate their perspective on children's interaction during joint reading, SR interviews have been conducted as a third data collection measure.

3.4.3.   Procedure for the stimulated recall interview

After extensive analysis of the recorded reading activities, open questions in terms of pedagogical aims remained. To be in line with the principles of theoretical sampling, the stimulated recall interviews have been conducted as a third phase of data collection to shed light on the teachers' pedagogical motivations during their activities. Of particular interest are the teachers of the two first groups, whereas teacher 3 has not been interviewed due to the smaller amount of data.

The date of the single semi-structured interview was arranged at the convenience of the teachers and was scheduled to last about 30 minutes. The language of the interview was Luxembourgish. The participants gave their consent for audio recording and were explained the procedure of viewing the video extract and the subsequent questioning.

The goals of the interview were the following:

- Include teachers' perspective on the joint reading activity,
- Make visible the pedagogical goals the teachers had in mind while doing the activity,

- Learn about the view the teachers have on the interaction and,
- Discuss the teachers' concept of language learning.

Each teacher was presented with a chosen extract of the video data:

- Teacher 1 (T1):
  Video: 8a_020513_T1_Krokodil – Minute 06:50 to minute 08:30 (1 minute, 40 seconds)
- Teacher 2 (T2):
  Video: 10a_160513_T2_KazHond – Minute 07:15 to minute 08:46 (1 minute, 31 seconds)

Both video extracts chosen by the researcher depict a situation in which the teachers interrupted their story narration to accept a topic change of their pupils and engage into a discussion. This reaction to a self-initiated topic change is of particular interest for language learning as will be discussed later in the analysis part.

Although the video extracts for each teacher were different for each individual interview, the questions remained the same. The teachers viewed the video twice before starting with the questions. The following list shows the items of the interview:

---

(1) Wat sinn Är éischt Impressiounen vun dësem Extrait?
+ What are your first impressions of the video extract?

(2) Wat sinn d'Ziler, déi Dir an dëser Aktivitéit verfollegt hutt?
+ What were your pedagogical goals in this activity?

(3) Wat ass Iech generell wichteg, wann Dir eng Sproochaktivitéit gestalt?
+ In general, what do you emphasise in the design of a language activity?

(4) Wann Theme bei de Kanner optauchen, déi net mat Ärem Thema vun der Aktivitéit iwwert enee stëmmen, wéi baut Dir dat dann an?
+ How do you integrate topics that children come up with and that are not matching your activity?

(5) Inwiewäit ass déi Sproochaktivitéit exemplaresch (wat maacht Dir soss als Sproochaktivitéit)?
+ To what extent is this language activity exemplary (which other language activities do you do)?

(6) Hutt Dir nach eppes bäizefügen?

+ *Would you like to add anything?*

<div align="center">**Table 7: Interview questions**</div>

The questions have been formulated in a semi-structured way to guide the teacher in their answers, while leaving enough room for reflection.

3.4.4.   Ethical considerations

Working with humans as object of study commits the researcher to certain ethical attitudes as well as fundamental postulates about ethnographic research:

1. Complexity: The classroom practices are too complex to be reduced to a simple study object.
2. Contextuality: To understand the classroom practices at hand, it is important to consider the socio-cultural context in which they are embedded.
3. Social reality: Constructed culturally and individually, social reality is multiple.
4. Subjectivity: The researcher is influenced by social reality too, so the impossibility to achieve objectivity should be acknowledged.
5. Interpretation and meaning: Participants and the researcher may explain a same phenomenon differently. (Bresler, 1996)

To acknowledge the complexity of the analysed classrooms, we applied a multi-method framework to the data to gather different perspectives on the observed phenomena (1). The classroom is a micro space obeying to certain rules: On the one hand, there are the educational policies and on the other hand, there are the teachers and pupils acting in this classroom that influence what is going on (2). Drawing on socio-cultural theory, we understand that the participants have different biographies, languages and literacy practices, that they come from distinct settings outside the classroom and that all this contributes to the way in which they interpret and engage in interaction (3). Moreover, as a researcher, we are not exempt from these social realities and we contribute with a personal biography, language understandings and literacy representations to a certain interpretation of the setting (4). The strive for "telling the truth" is becoming more and more complex as there are different voices of the participants (Bresler, 1996) and as a researcher we need to decide whose view to adopt. In that sense, we tried to pick up on

what the children oriented to as relevant topics in their interaction and we tried not to influence the teachers' representations during the stimulated recall interviews (Boujol, 2014, p. 49) (5).

Another ethical consideration is the obligation to keep the children's identity anonymous – a reason why the original data can never be shown in public. Before starting the collection process, every parent gave a written consent to the audio and video recording of his/her child's activities with the possibility to withdraw at any moment (Christians, 2011) – an option that has not been used. They were made aware of the intrusive nature of video recording into people's everyday practices. This was especially true for the teachers who allowed a private but valuable insight in their professional activity. Awareness has also been raised to the fact that data would be discussed within the research group of the University of Luxembourg and that only anonymised transcripts would appear in the thesis or in related articles.

3.5. Analytical approach

The following subchapter highlights our decisions on the analytical approach we took. First, describing the unit of analysis is putting the focus on the targeted plane of analysis, that is, the interactive processes taking place during SLL with books. In order to understand under which perspective, we extracted relevant data, we make our coding and categories transparent. Our corpus basing on conversation, we had to come up with transcripts to visualise our material and consequently, we had to deal with the design and translation issues. We then proceed with explanations on our main analytic tools, namely the mean length of utterance and self-initiated topic changes, and highlight definitions and counting criteria. After this, we arrive at discourse analysis, as a lens for the teacher interviews. The chapter concludes with an outlook on the upcoming analysis.

3.5.1.   The appropriate unit of analysis in a mixed-method design

In terms of analytic foci, three planes are of importance: Individual, interactional and contextual. Rogoff (1995) uses foregrounding of these different "planes of analysis'", knowing that the researcher can never grasp the whole picture but should emphasise one plane while keeping the other two on the radar as well, but more from a background perspective. The next figure shows the analytic foci of our study:
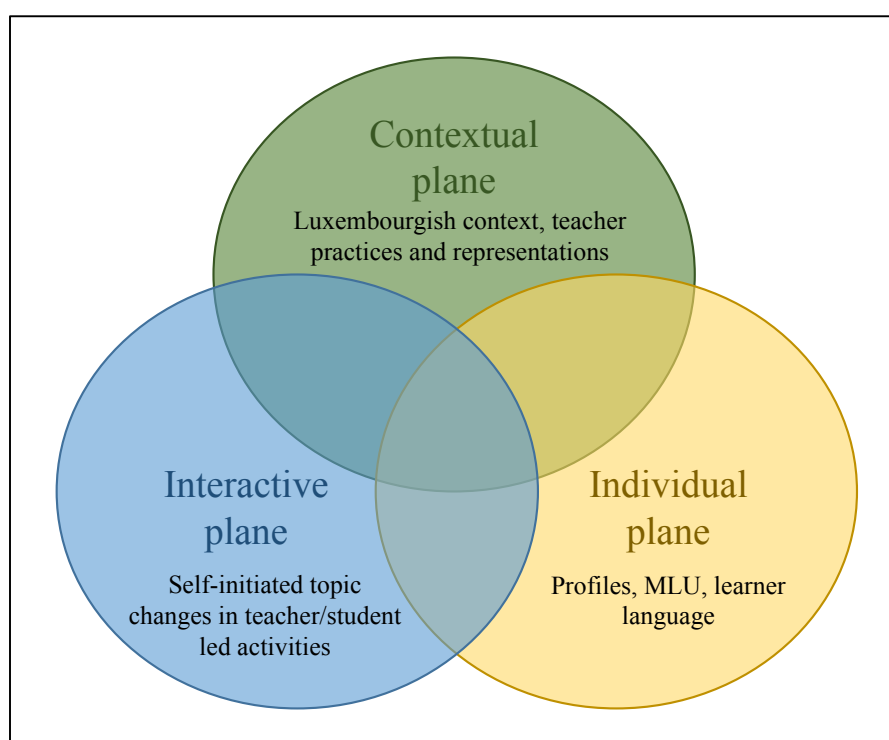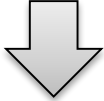
Figure 5: Analytic focus of the study based on the planes of analysis by Rogoff (1995)

Drawing on a socio-cultural understanding, the **contextual plane**, not foregrounded, builds the backbone of our study by pitching the community factors such as the superordinate curriculum and the teachers with their practices and representations who take care of the implementation in the field. Chapter 1 described the context that influences anything happening in the classroom and as the teachers are essential actors in this process, we come back to their representations in chapter 7. The **individual plane**, although not the main focus of this study either, still plays an important role in the analysis of the young students' learner language as well as their profiles in terms of language proficiency by inspiring itself from linguistic. Chapters 4 and 5 highlight the development of the mean length of utterance in overall classroom conversation

compared to the more specific talk constituted by the self-initiated topic changes. Even though, the individual has traditionally been in the foreground of qualitative research, it is a problematic unit, since sociocultural theory sees all human practices as distributed among people with particular semiotic and tool mediators, time and space constraints. Concretely, this means moving from the individual child and his/her use of utterances to the process of sociocultural activity with the active participation of all the pupils in the construction of joint reading practices (Rogoff, 1990a). Out of this reason, our study centres on the **interactive plane** with the analysis of the self-initiated topic changes and their use by the young students to design interaction during joint reading as done in chapter 6. To construct the data from the corpus of video recordings, we draw on a social, interactionist and participatory understanding of learning practices and analyse what the pupils orient to in their activities. This is also the reason, why we chose natural occurring classroom activities instead of experimental setups. On the one hand, our study is participant-centred since it focuses on the development of the individual (cf. pupil profiles). Learning is seen in the embodied talk-in-interaction. On the other hand, it is content-centred as it concentrates on a specific content, the book reading activity. The main feature of the data construction strives to pinpoint where the practice is done or where the content emerges in the talk-in-interaction, since that is when participants most probably learn (at least some of) the content or practice. (Rusk, Pörn, Sahlström, & Slotte-Lüttge, 2015).

Our study draws on quantitative and qualitative data likewise, a combination that is considered to be problematic as it reunites to conflicting standpoints of how data can be acquired and validated. From a positivist paradigm, quantitative methods have always been associated with measurement and analysis of variables such as amount, intensity or frequency with the goal to verify a research hypothesis. As opposed to this, qualitative studies emphasise the analysis of processes and socially constructed reality in order to interpret a phenomenon in terms of the meanings people bring to it (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). The following table specifies the unit of analysis of our study in terms of quantitative and qualitative analysis as well as the comparison of both perspectives to do justice to a GT mind-set:

Quantitative view	Qualitative view
- MLU count in different activity types and for each pupil (all type of utterance) - Occurrences of self-initiated topic changes in different activity types and for each pupil - Tools to self-initiate a topic change - Reactions to a self-initiated topic change	- Sequential analysis of the preponderant exchange type (IRF) - Sequential analysis of the self-initiated topic changes in each activity type and their implications for a) topic management, b) interaction management and c) joint construction of meaning

Relation between both views

- Implications for MLU count in self-initiated topic changes
- Pupil profiles according to overall utterances and self-initiated topic changes
- Consequences of specific reactions to a self-initiated topic change

Table 8: Illustration of quantitative and qualitative tools

In line with mixed method research, we claim that quantitative and qualitative oriented studies are compatible with each other. They can be combined through methodological eclecticism, meaning that the most appropriate techniques from either paradigm are selected to properly conduct a research (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2011). Thus, it is creating a third paradigm for social research based on a pragmatic as well as a practice-driven need for mixing methods (Creswell, 2011; Denscombe, 2008). Creswell (2009) welcomes the tensions that rise from such use of multiple paradigms as it contributes to new understandings in social sciences and I. Walsh et al. (2015) recognise the opportunity to use both quantitative and qualitative data, methods and techniques to create a mixed-method GT study that creates theory from different currents.

3.5.2.   Coding and categories

Following the main strength of a GT methodological approach, data has been collected at various moments of the study to explicitly address particularly interesting theoretical facets of the emergent analysis (Clarke, 2003). By moving back and forth between data collection and analysis, this theoretical sampling helped sustaining the developing theory. Processing the data means coding every segment and reviewing these codes as you go (Charmaz, 2006; Corbin & Strauss, 2015; Gläser & Laudel, 2013). Only the most persisting codes survive to form categories which are, at their turn, reviewed constantly to create the theory. The following table sums up the final codes used to mark relevant passages in the data:

Categories	Coding
Topic 1	T_1
Reactions: - Agreement with topic 1 - Disagreement with topic 1	 $+ T_1$ $- T_1$
Self-initiated topic change: - initiated via speech - initiated via speech, action - initiated via speech, gesture - initiated via gesture - initiated via gesture, action - initiated via action - initiated via action, gesture, speech	sitc $sitc_{(S)}$ $sitc_{(SA)}$ $sitc_{(SG)}$ $sitc_{(G)}$ $sitc_{(GA)}$ $sitc_{(A)}$ $sitc_{(AGS)}$

Table 9: Data coding

The different categories are going to be explained in detail in the subsequent chapters. It should be noted that they have been presented additionally for peer cross check to a

collaborator of the research group who ran through selected transcription examples to highlight the topic changes. Congruence held true for the majority of the topic changes.

As mentioned before, GT is an inductive method that does not use a predetermined research question but *"the research process itself generates the questions and the analytical process moves beyond simple description through in-depth exploration of the data"* (Birks & Mills, 2012). In our study, the core category "self-initiated topic changes" has several properties - a category standing by itself and the property being a conceptual element of the category (Glaser & Strauss, 1967): Occurrences of these topic changes, means with which they are initiated and reactions of other participants to a such a topic change. The category leads to an overview of the local interactional management of joint reading through self-initiated topic changes. This *"conceptual ordering"* classifies the data according to its properties and dimensions and gives way to analysis and emerging theory (Corbin & Strauss, 2015). The role of "memoing", a technique of writing down observations of and links between data stretches, plays an important role in discovering these categories and properties (Birks & Mills, 2012; Charmaz, 2006). As the teacher is not present in all the activities, the conditions under which interaction unfolds change and therefore "teacher" might be seen as a property influencing the main category. Similarly, differences according to their age were discovered by comparing first year and second year pupils to each other. Extensive comparison between the different activity types and pupils uncovered these altered factors and led to the saturation of concept descriptors: *"Constant comparison is an analytic process where all units of data are compared to all other units to raise questions and discover properties and dimensions in the data."* (O'Connor et al., 2008, p. 31). Once a pattern is identified, it needs to be considered critically: Is it worth of recognition? Does it bring forward the conceptual analysis and why? (Dey, 2007) In the same vein, Glaser and Strauss (1967) see saturation in the discovery of similar instances in the data over and over again whereas Berg and Milmeister (2008) confirm the necessity to stop an otherwise endless analysis once research interests have been satisfied.

The **development of categories** progressively unfolds theory. In that sense, "theoretical sensitivity" is the process of recognising relevant elements in the data

(Birks & Mills, 2012). Remaining open to the emergence of theory is one of the biggest challenges in GT (Holton, 2009). Individual representations about the world and personal experience define the pre-concept under which the researcher carries out the GT method (Dieris, 2006; Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Ralph et al., 2015) or any constructivist research (Lincoln, Lynham, & Guba, 2011). To understand the meaning participants in the study construct, the researcher has to put between parenthesis his own internalised opinions about reality and rationality (Charmaz, 2004). Similarly, culture, being multiple and dynamic, as well as language, shaping meanings, influence the researcher's interpretation of the data considerably (Charmaz, 2014; Mills et al., 2006) referring in particular to the professional education of the author of this study. Likewise, literature review does not aim at formulating concrete hypotheses that need to be (dis)confirmed. Instead, readings feed the categories that have been discovered previously (Auerbach, Salick, & Fine, 2006; Suddaby, 2006). Thus, remaining open to the emergence of theory instead of deductively testing theoretical concepts in the data constitutes the principal defiance of GT. Theoretical sampling and constant comparison prevent such extant theory (I. Walsh et al., 2015).

3.5.3. Transcription and translation

After the data collection process, the raw data needs to be transformed into a workable format. Audio data has traditionally been transcribed in order to give it a two dimensional fold (Ayaß, 2015). With the introduction of video data, new challenges have appeared, both in form of the amount of data as also with respect to the way this data can be presented afterwards. The data requires repeated viewing and listening before a phenomenon presents itself to the researcher (ten Have, 2007). Many decisions need to be taken concerning the transcript (Hammersley, 2010, pp. 556-557):

1. What to transcribe and how much of it?
2. How to present the talk?
3. If and how to present non-word elements, gestures, actions, silences...?
4. Where to begin or end an extract?

To put it differently, transcription is a *"constitutive part of the empirical research process"* and thus it is inseparable from methodology (Ayaß, 2015, p. 508). It creates

the refined data, which is the basis for analysis. Melander (2009) describes the process as making you sensitive to what is going on and Lorenza Mondada (2007b) adds that although transcribing is an analytic practice, this does not ever constitute the data.

As the analysis moves on, transcripts are not only developing in a cumulative manner. The researcher may add or subtract details as he/she explores the research questions or represents the data to a specific audience. In that sense, transcripts become *"heteronomous"*, *"reflexively accomplished in the intertwining of analytic practices, practices of data production, and practices of technologically enhanced transcription and annotation"* (Lorenza Mondada, 2007a, p. 810). Moreover, they can be seen as *"representation[s]"* that *"influence the range of meanings and interpretations"* (Green, Franquiz, & Dixon, 1997, p. 173). Therefore, awareness needs to be drawn to this constructional aspect of transcribing. Instead of simply writing down what is being said, the transcriber takes a series of choices for which there is no single rational solution; the perfect transcript does not exist (Hammersley, 2010; Mertens, 2010). Ochs (1979) underlines the following aspect:

> Ideally, we want our transcript to meet practical as well as theoretical considerations. We want our transcripts to express the relation between non-verbal and verbal behavior as accurately as possible: We want it to encode not only prior and subsequent behaviours, but cooccurrent and interoccurrent behaviours as well. We do not want a transcript that discourages the reader from integrating verbal and nonverbal acts. On the other hand, we want a readable transcript, one that displays clearly and systematically utterances and contexts. (Ochs, 1979, p. 59)

Hammersley (2010) sees transcripts as a reflection of *"substantive assumptions"* about human beings and their social institutions as well as methodological challenges of how to best describe and explain social phenomena (Hammersley, 2010). For Bucholtz (2000), transcripts are not neutral as they highlight different interests or favour given to speakers. In that respect, transcripts are always in a tight relationship with the context in which they are read (Bucholtz, 2000) and they are inevitably selective (ten Have, 2007).

For our study, a rough transcription with the program "Transana" (Fassnacht & Woods, 2004) of the entire data has been done in the first place. Over and over again, we went back to the videos to listen to and view the interaction. Then, according to the needs of the research questions, different extracts have been reconsidered and fine-tuned in their transcription. As convention, we chose the GAT-system for which we have been trained for several years at the Dica-lab of the University of Luxembourg. Moreover, a difficulty that every transcriber faces, is how to transform talk into written language or, in particular, how to turn verbal turns into lexical units without having to resort to the phonetic system (Melander, 2009). In this study, we transcribed the learners' originally employed language to give a truthful account of their linguistic use.

Readability of the data is not only done through an appropriate transcription design but the content itself, the spoken part, needs to be arranged too. *"Language shapes meanings, fosters forming different types of meanings, and clarifies or conceals connections between meanings and actions"* as Charmaz (2014) remarks. In this case, Luxembourgish dialogues had to be **translated** into English to cover a larger amount of readers while the original meaning remained as unchanged as possible. As noted by Linell and Persson Thunqvist (2003), *"translation of naturally occurring talk-in-interaction is a difficult task, and it is impossible to make the transcriptions match the originals at all points"* (p.415). Furthermore, transcription processes are not neutral as Roberts (1997) points out:

> If talk is a social act, then so is transcription. As transcribers fix the fleeting moment of words as marks on the page, they call up the social roles and relations constituted in language and rely on their own social evaluations of speech in deciding how to write it. After all, transcribers bring their own language ideology to the task. (Roberts, 1997, pp. 167-168)

As we have seen in the section before, transcriptions always reveal the context for which they have been done. Complexity increases with the challenge of translating talk, knowing that *"language is a non-neutral medium"* (Duranti, 2011, p. 3). Although the original language conveying the social action needs to be preserved, translating words includes mediating the poetics and the speech level of an utterance while at once

keeping the way utterances have been formulated in the original language (Melander, 2009).

With our analysis always based on the Luxembourgish version, the two first chapters (6.1 and 6.2) centre on content specific and managerial issues and as such, a fine-grained transcript of the language is not needed which is then the reason why we roughly translated the meaning of the conversation into English as shown in the example below:

445	T2	=mengs de dee geet dann an	+ T$_2$	=you think then it will disrupt
446		der (.) mëtt futti gerappt		in (.) the middle
447	Se	jo	T$_2$	yes
448	T2	mhum,	+ T$_2$	uhum,

Example of transcript with a rough translation

The first column indicates the line numbers. The second shows the speaker. The third represents the original conversation in Luxembourgish. The fourth contains the coding. The fifth holds the translation.

The third part of the analysis however (chapter 6.3) is based on learner language and a mere translation of the content is not sufficient anymore. A common practice is to use **three-lined transcripts**: The first line mirrors the original utterance, the second contains a word-to-word translation and the third gives a literal translation of the meaning. In our opinion, a triple transcription would overload the already long and complex data extracts. As a solution, we explain the meaning of the example in the paragraph before each transcript. Then we proceed to a word-by-word translation in the transcript itself, as shown below:

130	Li	well hie wëll kee banann an		because he wants no banana and
131		de mamm se' ((extends her		the mum se' ((extends her
132		arm) maischt esou an) de	T$_2$	arm) does like this and) the
133		mamm mécht sech suergen		mum makes herself worries
134		(i ma)		(i ma)

Example of transcript with a verbatim translation

Also, we need to underline the impossibility to "translate" certain errors, for example the Luxembourgish grammar distinguishes among masculine, feminine and neutral articles whereas the English articles do not reflect such difference.

A further challenge in video transcription is the presence of **multimodal interaction** and how to integrate this in the written format. Whereas the transcription of vocal elements has been largely standardised by different conventions, the transcription of non-verbal aspects is much less explored. Generally, written descriptions are included in the transcript, as well as grabbed images of the video whereas the issue to resolve is together put them in the transcript or on a separate place next to it. No matter what technique has been chosen, the result is a complex transcript: *"[…] as the complexity of the recorded events grows, the transcripts explode in length and begin to be hardly (or not at all) legible"* (Ayaß, 2015, p. 506).

Human interaction comprises so many details that, "when it comes to the inclusion of embodied action it is simply not possible to even pretend that the transcript is a full representation" (Melander, 2007). Nonetheless, ways need to be found in order to represent as many details as needed to suffice the research purpose.

3.6. The MLU for a quantitative view on classroom talk

The following section focuses on the quantitative aspect of the data by analysing the impact of different factors, such as type of activity and teacher questioning, on the average length of the young students' utterances.

3.6.1.   Definition of MLU

The concept of the "mean length of utterance" (henceforward MLU) is a measure for 15 to 52 months old children's first language development initially introduced by Roger Brown (1973) as *"an excellent simple index of grammatical development because almost every new kind of knowledge increases length"* (Brown, 1973, p. 53). MLU

measurement can be based on the counting of morphemes, syllables, or words in relation to sentences, utterances or turns (Dewaele, 2000). It resides in the premise that *"almost every new kind of knowledge increases length"* (Nieminen, 2009, p. 176) and is therefore described as an index of language proficiency (Johnston, 2001). Initially, it was applied in the field of first language acquisition. For the current study, we have chosen the syllable as the unit of analysis based on the fact that learners perceive language as chains of sounds and that the researcher cannot know which parts the child identifies and which do not make any sense to him/her at that stage. Words and sentence as unit of analysis do not make much sense for the current study, as it is difficult to determine words and sentences in the speech of four to six years old language learners. Hence, syllables are phonetically easier to access (Ziegler & Ehrhart, 2007) for which reason we chose it as the unit of analysis for MLU. We are aware of the critical discussions about the limits of an utterance that can be delimited by following only intonation and pauses in talk (see Dewaele, 2000, pp. 18-19). Utterances, in this study, are accordingly considered to be semantic units of speech that are not limited by the change of speaker. Indicators such as intonation and pauses are additional factors taken into account when determining the beginning and end of an utterance. As a distinction, turns potentially comprise several utterances which might falsify the MLU and therefore we did not use them as a reference for calculation.

MLU sheds light on a quantitative comparison of the mean utterance length over a predefined period of time (Ziegler & Franceschini, 2007). MLU, as a notion of complexity, has been widely used in child language research. The growth of complexity is considered as an indicator for development, however the notion itself has never been defined properly and is therefore problematic as a unique factor of language development (Nieminen, 2009). The intuitive hypothesis that an advancing language learner is producing longer and more complex utterances (Dewaele, 2000) proves to be ambiguous. Ligthtbown (1977), who transferred the concept of MLU from a L1 to a L2 context, found that utterances of more experienced learners do not necessarily grow. Hence, MLU does not mirror sufficiently the complexity of an utterance in a way that one cannot associate longer utterances with more complexity and vice versa (Ziegler & Ehrhart, 2007).

According to the convention first used by Brown (1973), MLU counting includes fully transcribable utterances, repetitions, irregular past verbs (counted as single), diminutives (counted as single), auxiliaries, catenatives, and counting inflections. Compound words and similar constructions are counted with a single meaning as a single word, whereas stuttering and fillers are excluded. This leads Brown to establish the following stages:

Stage	MLU (in morphemes)	Age (years; months)	Grammatical characteristics	Longest Utterances (Target value in morphemes)
I	1.0 to 2.0	1;0 to 2;2	Linear semantic rules	5
II	2.0 to 2.5	2;3 to 2;6	Morphological development	7
III	2.5 to 3.0	2;7 to 2;10	Development of sentence forms (subject, verb, object, etc.)	9
IV	3.0 to 3.75	2;11 to 3;4	Embedding within sentences	11
V	3.75 to 4.5	3;5 to 3;10	Joining clauses within sentences	13

Table 10: Brown's stages of MLU development in English as first language acquisition

However, children who reached stage V are producing utterances of such a great variety and complexity that the content of their saying depends more and more of the interactional context (Dewaele, 2000). Gries and Stoll (2009) point at the arbitrary nature of the MLU stages, meaning that there is no objective explanation why a first stage should be 1.75 rather than 1.74, 1.69 or 1.81. This is the reason why we are not establishing any stages of MLU development in the learning process of Luxembourgish in our study. But, MLU will be used as a tool to obtain a general view upon the quantity

of utterances produced by the children in the study, which we also refer to as proficiency.

Originally, MLU counting was designed to meet the needs of an English speaking community composed of children between 15 and 52 months old. However, the children in this study are neither babies, nor learning English as a first language. Luxembourgish is a second language for most of them and some are even in contact with more than two languages daily. This context therefore explains the need to adapt the convention to the circumstances of the present study. The criteria for MLU counting are going to be presented in detail in the subsequent section.

3.6.2.   MLU counting criteria as tailored for this study

It is usual to apply a minimum of 100 utterances with a warm up period beforehand in MLU counting. Because not all of the children produced this amount of utterances during one single activity, we started counting the syllables at the actual beginning of the pedagogical activity – often this is marked by the teacher's utterance "sou" (well). The considered elements in the counting are:

- Complete utterances, with an utterance being a semantic unit of speech that is not limited by the change of speaker:

Line	Speaker	Example 1	Translation
207	Li	*jo mee de kamera muss ons kucken;*	**yes but the camera has to look at us;**

- Utterances in overlap (1) and utterances with unintelligible portions (2) where the meaning is still understandable:

Line	Speaker	Example 2	Translation
280	T3	*mir musse jo awer déi KAddoen aus*	we have to deliver these presents
281		*[droe well soss sinn dkanner- (1)*	**[because the children** *(1)*
282	Mi	*[däerf ech meng (1)*	**[can I** *(1)*
283		*nues botzen,*	clean my nose,

Line	Speaker	Example 3	Translation
036	Ni	*(ta)* (2) *an e päerd;*	(ta) (2) and a horse;

- Exclude utterances, as well as any other elements, that are not comprehensible:

Line	Speaker	Example 4	Translation
109	Mi	*(wann tschom mo:)*	*(wann tschom mo:)*

- Do not consider false starts (1), reformulations (with or without stuttering) (2) or repetitions (exact reproductions with the same intonation, possibly used with a filler function that can also be a restart) (3):

Line	Speaker	Example 5	Translation
289	Se	*an es* (1) *(.)* **de Niko huet** (2)	**and es** (1) *(.)* **Niko has** (2)
290		*eppes sou gewëll*	*wanted something*
291		*a:n iesse de maus (i be de)*	*a:nd eats the mouse (i be de)*
292		*(---) de:* **de fuuss de**	*(---) the:* **the fox the**
293		**fuuss** (3) *(e wei) wei iesse o*	**fox** (3) *(e wei) eats also*
294		*de maus*	*the mouse*

- Short replies (1) or repeated answers (2) to a teacher's question are not seen as an autonomous linguistic achievement and hence are not taken into account:

Line	Speaker	Example 6	Translation
101	T2	*bleift hien do stoen-*	*is he staying there-*
102	Sa	**jo** (1)	**yes** (1)

Line	Speaker	Example 7	Translation
300	T2	*do kënnt (-) dee groussen*	*there comes (-) the big*
301		*décken (.) schofsBock;*	*fat (.) ram;*
302		*an de schofsbock mat de*	*and the ram with the*
303		*groussen haren dee seet*	*big horns says*
[...]			
311		*du gesäis jo guer net méi*	*you do not look anymore*
312		*aus wéi e schof (.) du*	*like a sheep (.) you*
313		*gesäis aus wi eng GEESS;*	*look like a GOAT;*
[...]			
348		*wat (.) wie ka mer na eng*	*what (.) who can tell me*
349		*kéier soe wat hat de*	*again what the ram*

350		*schofsbock gesot-*	*said-*
[...]			
361	Is	**babu du hues jo**	**babu you do not have**
362		**guer kee pelz méi du gesäis**	**a coat anymore you look**
363		**aus ewéi eng geess;** *(2)*	**like a goat;** *(2)*

- Errors are considered to be a valuable effort to acquire the language and, consequently, are included in the count:

Line	Speaker	Example 8	Translation
052	Li	*kleederen,*	clothes,

- Irregular verbs in past tense are counted as a single syllable:

Line	Speaker	Example 9	Translation
182	Ug	*de salomão **war** hei*	*salomão **was** here*

- Auxiliaries are counted separately:

Line	Speaker	Example 10	Translation
318	Is	*mee ech **Hat** dat erzielt:*	but i **have** told that

- Catenatives (verb forms that may precede a gerund or infinitive) are counted as a single syllable because we do not know whether the child is aware of the grammatical procedure:

Line	Speaker	Example 11	Translation
149	Be	***tass** klengen*	it is small
150		*keng groussen;*	not big;

- Diminutives are counted as a single syllable:

Line	Speaker	Example 12	Translation
230	Be	*ech ginn dat bei meng **mama** soen*	i will tell this to my **mum**

- Proper names (1) and abbreviations (2) are excluded from counting:

Line	Speaker	Example 13	Translation
087	Li	*mee du muss e bëssi iwwerleeë **leticia**; (1)*	but you need to think a bit **leticia**; (1)

Line	Speaker	Example 14	Translation
031	Sa	***ok** (2) da:-*	***ok** (2) the:n-*

- Noises (1), onomatopoeic sounds (2), laughing and similar productions are excluded:
  e.g.:

Line	Speaker	Example 15	Translation
330	Le	*nee du muss net dat leeën*	no do not put it
331		*esou:=**ou ououou**; (1)*	like this= ***ou ououou**; (1)*

Line	Speaker	Example 16	Translation
116	Be	***miau:** (2)*	***miao:w** (2)*

- Ritualised tags and chunks introduced by the teacher, which come back over and over again in the story, are counted as one syllable:

Line	Speaker	Example 17	Translation
136	Li	*so **GEET** et;*	**are you INSANE;**

Being conscious of the critical issues addressed to MLU and their impact on our study, we would like to elaborate on a few of them:

The methods used to calculate MLU are not standardized enough to yield comparable data (Ranalli, 2012), which makes comparison between studies unreliable. Consequently, a coherent application of counting criteria inside one study is essential (Ziegler & Ehrhart, 2007).

Another problematic issue is the variability of the context. A child's MLU is going to depend on the quality of the interaction in which the utterances are produced, e.g.

conversation partner, location, affective situation of the child (Ranalli, 2012). Spontaneous language is likely more representative of a child's actual language capabilities than language elicited in testing situations and therefore the success depends largely on the speech sample used which has to be representative of the child's language capabilities (Ranalli, 2012). In our study, three different activities give way to three separate speech situations to increase the validity of the data.

The outcome of MLU may be biased according to the number of utterances versus the number of syllables. Thus, we cannot see the difference between a child producing few utterances with many syllables or a child accomplishing many utterances with fewer syllables (Dewaele, 2000). Still, a child capable of producing longer and more elaborate utterances may choose to answer in a short manner but the opposite is not possible in a way that more extended utterances can be acknowledged as such.

Imitation is more than just blind repetition of utterances as argued by Lantolf, Thorne, and Poehner (2006). With this, they follow Vygotsky who locates human learning in the faculty of imitating intentional behaviour through goal-directed cognitive activity (Vygotsky, 1978). Before acquiring a creative usage of language, learners need to imitate, to test and to reproduce chunks that they hear in their surroundings. However, imitated utterances considerably influence MLU and it is difficult to judge whether a particular series of words indeed is perceived as segmented entities by the learner (Ziegler & Franceschini, 2007). In certain studies, imitations are altogether ignored for the counting of MLU even though the mere capability of reproducing certain chunks in a specific context can be viewed as an achievement and should therefore have a different value than zero. In our case, imitations appeared most of all as ritualised tags or chunks and were counted as one syllable to give credit to the young students' linguistic efforts without going too far away from traditional MLU counting criteria.

Recent studies in the field of MLU recognise these critical issues and combine MLU with additional analytical tools to increase the validity. For instance, Boucher and Lalonde (2015) explore MLU in combination to measures of vital capacity to investigate the increase of lexical development in speakers starting at the age of 5. Calderón (2015) looked into the development of word utterances from 1 to 6 years-old

children to search for a link between syntactic complexity of ditransitives to bilingual acquisition. Jones (2016) uses the concept of non-word repetition as a predictor for vocabulary size with 2 to 6 year old children. Khaliliaqdam (2014) works with young adults and measures MLU as well as the mean length of sentence to find out whether there is speech development as a result of scaffolding within ZPD. Mohammadi, Bakhtiar, Rezaei, and Sadeghi (2012) combine MLU and type token ratio to study bilingual children's stuttering. Given the aforementioned critiques of MLU counting, it is advisable for our study to combine the technique of the MLU to other analytic methods in order to increase validity. In the next subchapters, we are going to present additional tools that help us investigate the second language learning process in our study.

3.7. Self-initiated topic changes as a qualitative perspective on SLL

As discussed in chapter 2.1.4, topical organisation is intricately linked to conversation and children draw on their pragmatic knowledge in the L1 to communicate in the L2. More importantly, topics shape the content of such a conversation in a global way and define its beginning and ending. The continuation as well as the end of a topic are managed in the sequential deployment of the interaction (Berthoud & Mondada, 1995), meaning that once a new topic is proposed for introduction, participants need to acknowledge it. In our study, we do not look so much at linguistic markers that determine the boarders of a topic but we focus on the managerial tools chosen by the children to change the content of what classroom talk is about and what these strategies do to the on-going conversation.

3.7.1.   Definition of self-initiated topic changes

If a blurred use of concepts concerning topics is true in general, it is all the more valid for topic changes. In this section, we try to trace some of the origins of these labels and explain which ones we are going to use in the subsequent chapters.

In their analysis of conversation, Sacks et al. (1974) determine that topics mostly happen along, meaning that they are gradually introduced into the talking. Morris-Adams (2016) coins this as *"topic transition"* in opposition to *"topic change"*. This abrupt manoeuver was explored by Jefferson (1984) as a disjunctive topic shift, which then causes the participants to smooth it out to keep up the flow and *"coherence"* (Morris-Adams, 2016). Once again, we would like to point out that our analysis is not taking place in everyday conversation but in a classroom with second language learners: First, the power balance between teachers and pupils is never equalised and the distribution of speakership as well as the content of talk is defined by the teacher in the very specific language activities around books (Mchoul, 1978). Second, the young students have all different competence levels when it comes to handle topic change with a) a teacher and b) their peers. Third, some of the pupils reveal their skills in changing the topic that centres on the narration and is hereby more or less fixed in terms of content. They do so by not changing the topic radically but they use *"nuances"* of the same topic, that is, they add own ideas to the subject of talk, thus enriching the story without changing it. We think the term "nuance" is expressing this action in a more appropriate way than "transition" since the topic is not moving to something new but is enriched. This is the reason why we go with the concept of "nuance" in our analysis.

In chapter 2.1.4, we defined topic as being the "aboutness" of a conversation that is co-constructed locally by all the interlocutors (Berthoud & Mondada, 1995). Operational criteria to locate these topics become crucial then and, in this regard, a topic has to be contextually available through the participants' subjective orientation to it in order to become visible for the analyst (Polinsky, 1992). Being dynamic in nature, topics are adjusted, negotiated and co-constructed in interaction, as they can be ratified, refused and modified by the interlocutors (Doehler, 2004). In line with these reflections, we define a self-initiated change of topic (abbreviated sitc) as the change of a first topic (T_1) introduced by a speaker A to a second topic (T_2) inaugurated through a speaker B. In other words, a self-initiated topic change is a device making apparent the interlocutors' construction of a topic and their reactions to potential changes. The simplest form would then have the following scheme:

$$T_n \quad \rightarrow \quad sitc_{(x)} / T_{n+1} \quad \rightarrow \quad + \text{ or } -$$
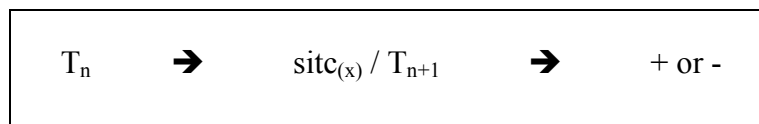
In interaction, overlapping speech, restarts, actions and so on, interrupt this straightforward representation but the different stages always appear sooner or later in the interaction. According to Sacks et al. (1974) participants constantly try to balance interaction, if something goes wrong, repair is initiated immediately to insure the on-going understanding among speakers. As mentioned before, *"topics flow from one to another"* (Button & Casey, 1985, p. 3), which makes the distinction complex.

The next example shows how we identify topics in our study:

193	Li	ech well dech NI méi a meng	T_1	i don't ever want to see you in
194		(bett) gesinn;>		my (bed) again;>
195	Be	<<f> well well>=	(sitc / T_2)	<<f> because because>=
196	Li	=<<f> do: ass net ze kucken;>	T_1	=<<f> the:re not to look;>
197	Be	well ech me:ngen (dis) du meng	T_2	because i thi:nk (dis) you will
198		bett futti maachen;		destroy my bed;
199	Li	((showing her claws) hei SOU	+	((showing her claws) there do it
200		[maachen gr::)		[like this gr::)
201	Ja	[((scratches with imaginary	+	[((scratches with imaginary
202		claws on the book) ar:::		claws on the book) ar:::

Data extract 1: 2c_091112_T1_ChildrenRead_Hex – Lines 193 to 202

Lines 193-194: **T_1**

Lídia (Li) is talking about the witch Zilly's refusal to have the cat on her bed.

Lines 195, 197-198: **sitc / T_2**

Benito (Be) is self-initiating a new aspect of the topic that is the consequence of the cat being on the bed.

<u>Lines 199-202: +</u>

Lídia is acknowledging Benito's change of topic by also focusing on the devastation of the bed through the cat's claws. Jacob (Ja) is showing his agreement by visually acting out the desctruction of the bed.

As highlighted in chapter 2.1.4, a major concern of topics is their floating nature. The local construction by the participants around a topic being key for their identification (Doehler, 2004; Grobet, 1999), we consider that self-initiated topic changes make a previous topic appearant. The way how people react to the introduction of the topic change is again another indicator for a topic change.

In the next subchapter, we are going to enumerate the conditions according to which we counted the appearance of self-initiated topic changes.

3.7.2.   Counting criteria for self-initiated topic changes as trimmed for this study

Unlike the concept of MLU, self-initiated topic changes have not been researched as extensively and so we have to come up with our own criteria on how to count the topic changes:

1) We consider the change of topic as valid when the topic is changed completely or when a nuance, a different aspect of the same topic, is introduced.
2) Ignoring or reactions by other speakers that refer to T_1 are seen as a refusal of the topic change – and not seen as a new change of topic. Reactions by other speakers relating to T_2 are marked as acceptance of the topic change.

3) Every new topic is numerated and, in case of doubt (e.g. unfinished utterance), a new number is attributed to the topic in order to valorise the child's intended contribution to the interaction.

4) A change of topic is self-initiated when the initiative comes from the speaker who pronounces the self-initiated utterance. It is not self-initiated when another speaker asks for it - e.g. in an unequal relationship between teachers and pupils during which the former usually asks the questions and leads the discussion to with a pedagogical goal.

3.8. A discourse analytic view on the teacher interviews

As our analysis is based mainly on ethnographic collection of data, we consider the discourse analytic excursion on the teachers' interviews as an important additional perspective to the exploration of classroom talk.

In this study, we assume that discourse is seen as the ways talk shapes the world, identities and social relations, which in return influence talk. As talk becomes more and more recognised as the premium vehicle of social interaction, researchers increasingly view interview data as narrations through which people describe their own world (Galasiński, 2011; Silverman, 2003). Denzin and Lincoln (2003) argue that the researcher is a *"bricoleur"* who constructs his study in an interactive process under the influences of personal history, biography, gender, social class, race and ethnicity. The representation of a phenomenon is then incorporated into a whole. Charmaz (2004) voices a similar argumentation by pointing out that the way and the type of questions, researchers ask during interviews, affect what people choose to tell us. But these concerns are true for the researcher too as their own active involvement shapes the analysis.

Our interviews are transcribed in a way to reflect the speech of the teachers as closely as possible. We include breaks in their speech, count pauses and mark restarts and

repetitions such as shown in the following example. The symbols refer to the GAT transcription system (see Appendix F). The interview being in Luxembourgish, the transcripts were roughly translated into English respecting the original meaning as best as possible. An extended discussion on translating data can be found in chapter 3.5.3.

"Ma (-) dat en se d'Geschicht verstinn ((laughs)) dat en se sech kënnen (.) äh d'Geschicht och äh weider verzielen. […] dass en se och doduercher ebe bëssen ähm de Wortschatz erweiteren."

Rough translation:

„Well (-) that they understand the story ((laughs)) that they know it (.) uhm to retell the story as well. [...] that they enlarge the lexicon through it."

Example of interview transcript

The aimed goal is to treat the interviews as "spaces of finely co-ordinated interactional work in which the talk of both speakers is central to producing the interview" (Rapley, 2001, p. 306). It is also important to keep in mind that interview talk is always a "performative speech-act" to present oneself in a morally adequate light (Goffman, 1959 in Rapley, 2001).

After completing the transcription of the interviews, they were coded for key words and, if there were, differences between the two teachers' approaches to language teaching were spotted. The emerging core categories, namely, unexpected learner involvement, language learning beliefs and management of topic changes, set the ground for the analysis (Charmaz, 2006; Corbin & Strauss, 2015; Gläser & Laudel, 2013). Having considered the above-mentioned construction of social reality, we keep in mind that ultimately correct interpretation is impossible and that arbitrariness may be reduced by grounding the analysis in the discourse itself (Wodak, 1999). Furthermore, we paid special attention to the following levels in the teachers' discourse (Jensen, 2002):

1) Generalisations: Summary statements
2) Substantiations: What supports the generalisations
3) Implicit premises: Natural assumptions
4) Implications: What follows from a statement and depends on the local community or the wider social and cultural context

These levels are of great importance when it comes to situate the teachers' reflections upon their practices as shown in the video in a larger context. Although people in general are not totally socially determined, one should never forget about their structural constraints when analysing their actions (Fairclough, 2003). Similarly to what we have discussed in chapter 2.1.3 about pupils' socio-cultural embedded learning processes, we see the same situations apply to the teachers. Their actions cannot be dissociated from their personal background, training and experience as well as from a larger point of view they cannot be isolated from the political institution "school".

3.9. Overview of the analytical strands

In the last chapter, we have exposed our methodological choices. Drawing on grounded theory, the data collection and the analytic process inform each other mutually. The progressively emerging insights on the phenomenon will lead to a substantive theory at the end of our study. We use ethnographic classroom observation to immerse ourselves in the context we are researching. Given the fast-paced interaction of pre-schoolers, video recording was suitable to capture this huge amount of data. In order to grasp the teachers' pedagogical goals and their perspective on their lessons, we applied stimulated recall interview techniques. Furthermore, we gave a detailed description of the participants in our study, the procedures for the video recordings and the interviews. At last, we discussed some ethical considerations about social research.

Now that we have cleared all theoretical and methodological concepts, we proceed to the analysis which is composed by three major strands as shown below:
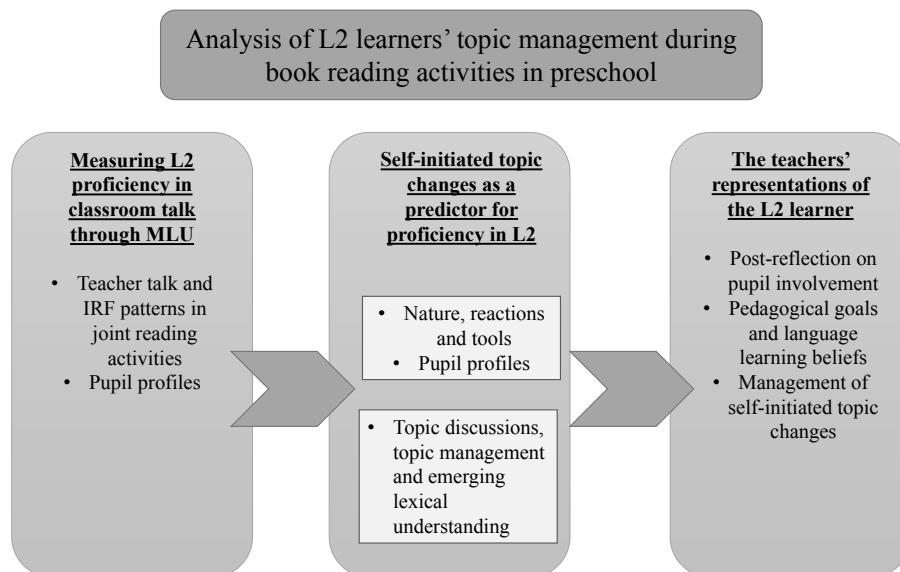
Figure 6: Overview of analytical strands

The first part **"Measuring L2 proficiency in classroom talk"** focuses on IRF patterns during joint reading activities and their repercussions on the young students' MLU. The children are grouped according to their proficiency and in view of their profiles in self-initiated topic changes. The second and most important part **"Self-initiated topic changes as a predictor for proficiency in L2"** is split up in two sections:

1) Self-initiated topic changes – nature, reactions and tools

    In this section, we concentrate on how self-initiated topic changes look like: When do they occur? What are the tools to introduce them? What are the potential reaction types and how do they distinguish each other in terms of quality? All this information leads to the establishment of pupil profiles according to their skilled use of self-initiated topic changes.

2) Self-initiated topic changes

    The heart of the analysis is the qualitative view on self-initiated topic changes. This strand is again split up in three parts: The first part focuses on topic discussions in joint reading activities. The second module stresses the children's autonomous management of topic changes. The third unit concentrates on the emerging lexical understanding, the second language learners develop through and around self-initiated topic changes.

These two analytical strands then stem from our first data set, the video recordings of the three activity types in the classroom. The third part **"The teachers' representations of the L2 learner"** tackles the teacher's view on their classroom practices and originates from the second data set, the interviews: The teachers reflect on the young students' involvement in the joint reading activities, their pedagogical goals, their language learning beliefs and their management of topic changes.

Part III

Measuring L2 proficiency in classroom talk through MLU

Analysis of L2 learners' topic management during book reading activities in preschool

Measuring L2 proficiency in classroom talk through MLU	**Self-initiated topic changes as a predictor for proficiency in L2**	**The teachers' representations of the L2 learner**
• Teacher talk and IRF patterns in joint reading activities • Pupil profiles	• Nature, reactions and tools • Pupil profiles • Topic discussions, topic management and emerging lexical understanding	• Post-reflection on pupil involvement • Pedagogical goals and language learning beliefs • Management of self-initiated topic changes

# 4. Measuring L2 proficiency in classroom talk through MLU

In this section, every child is introduced with his/her respective profile: Gender, age, languages spoken at home and proficiency during a) teacher-led activities (henceforward T-led), b) child-play activities (abbreviated C-play) and c) child-read activities (referred to as C-read). Then, we compare the pupils' performances in these different lesson types: For an easier understanding, we look at read and play activities under the label of child-led activities (in short C-led). After the description of each pupil, we look at the teachers' talk and how it influences the young students' utterances. This chapter closes with a recapitulation of the findings and suggests an outlook to the next analytical strand.

4.1. Pupil proficiency in overall utterances

We outline the MLU performance of each pupil in both teacher-led and child-led activities to shortly compare this to our observations taken when assisting the lessons during ours visits in the school.

Benito

Benito is a 5 year-old Portuguese boy in the second preschool year. He speaks Portuguese at home and Luxembourgish at school.
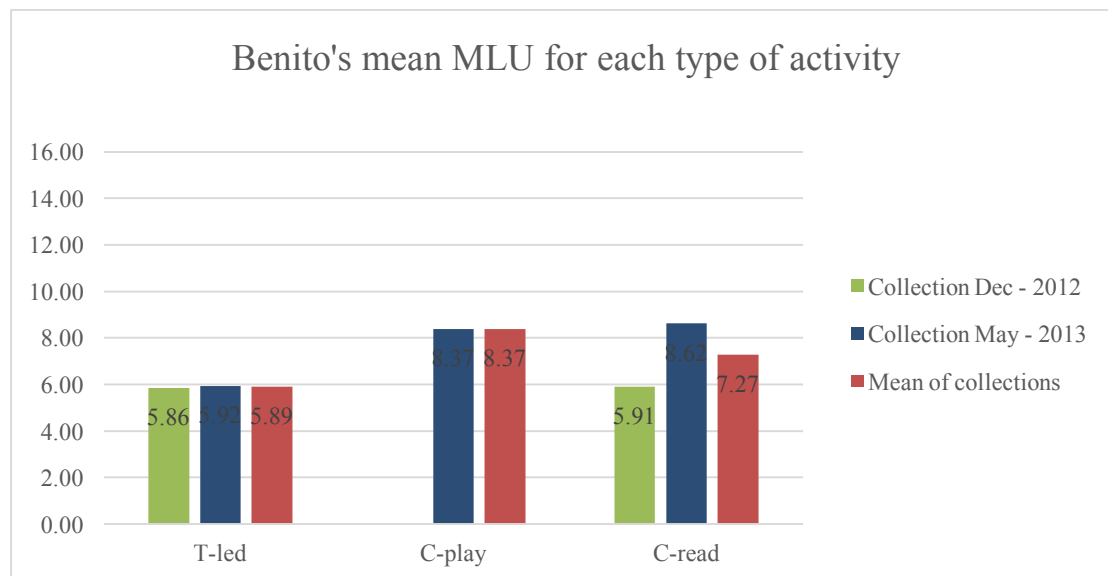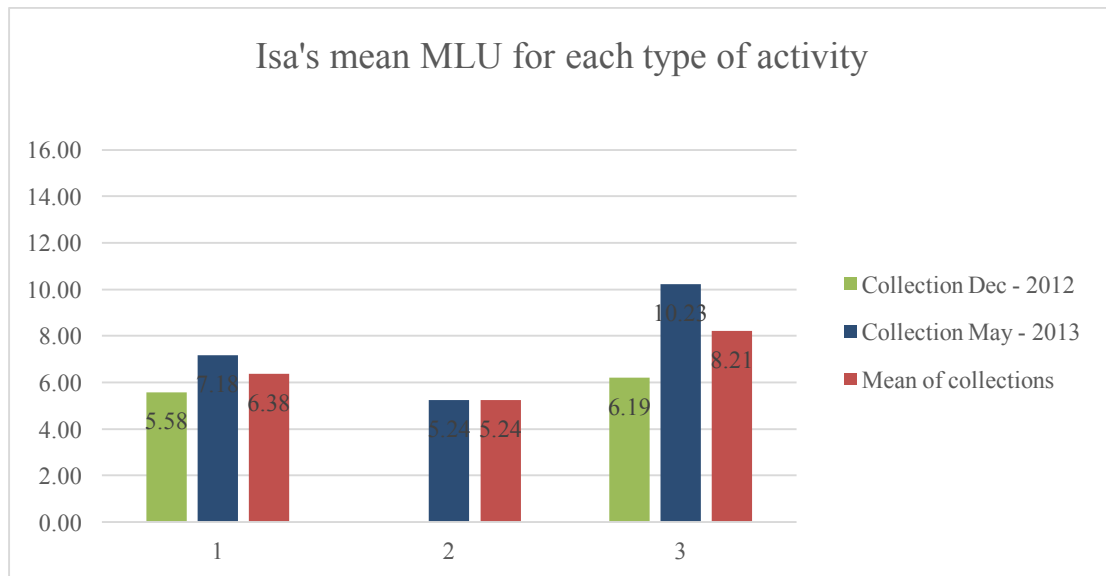
Figure 7: Benito's mean MLU for each type of activity

Overall, Benito contributes throughout the whole teacher-led activities. With his expertise gained since 1,5 years in the Luxembourgish preschool system, he rates 5.86 in the first and 5.92 in the second collection of the teacher-led activities, that is, the MLU stays more or less stable. However, his MLU is much higher in the child-led activities with 8.37 and 7.27 respectively. By only considering the child-read activity type, we can see a MLU increase from period 1 to 2. All these numbers confirm the impression, we have through observing Benito: He is a talkative young boy who likes to share his thoughts with both his teacher and his peers.

Isa

Isa is a 5 year-old Luxembourgish girl with Korean origins (she was adopted by Luxembourgish/Italian parents while being only a few months old) who is already in her second preschool year. At home, she speaks solely Luxembourgish.

Figure 8: Isa's mean MLU for each type of activity

In general, Isa makes several contributions during teacher-led activities, her mean MLU rating at 6.38, but during child-led activities, this mean climbs to 5.24 and 8.21 respectively. There is a small raise in the MLU for teacher-led and child-led activities from period 1 to 2. The field notes validate the picture of Isa as a participating girl who does not speak up all the time but, if she does, she obviously produces elaborated utterances, as Luxembourgish is her first language.

Jacob

Jacob is a 5 year-old boy whose parents are Luxembourgish (father) and Czech (mother). He speaks Luxembourgish and Czech at home and is in his second preschool year.
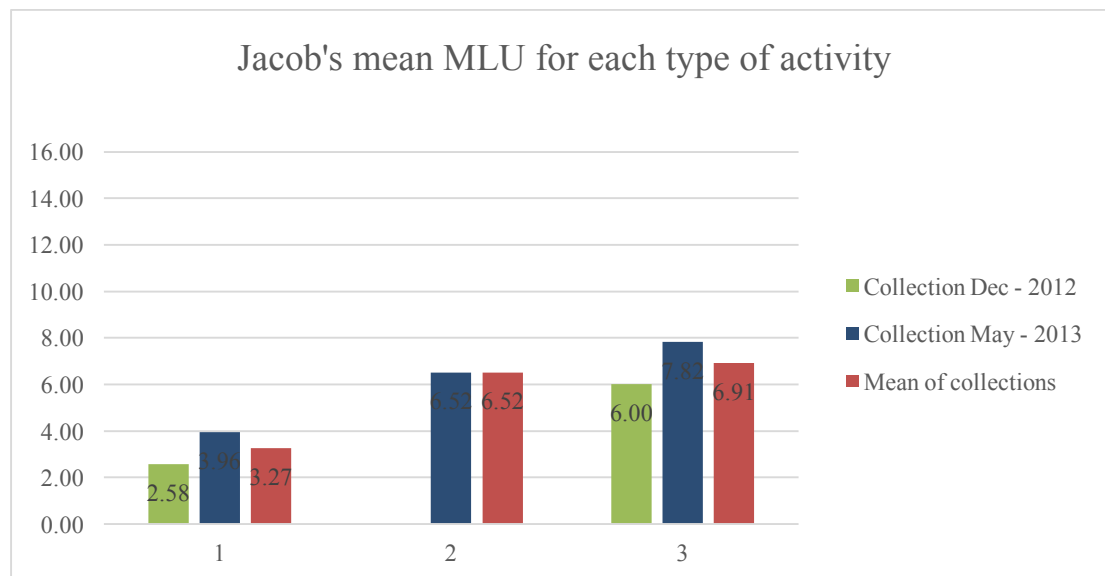
Figure 9: Jacob's mean MLU for each type of activity

Although Jacob already spent 1,5 years in preschool, he does not participate much on a verbal level during teacher-led activities. To be fair, it has to be noted that he has been sick for one activity albeit it is unlikely that this lesson would have changed totally his mean MLU considering his performances in the second data collection period. With a value of 2.58 and 3.96 there is not much difference in teacher-led activities. The peer activities give another picture with means of 6.52 and 6.91. Classroom observation of Jacob underlines his rather calm nature.

Leticia

Leticia is a 4 year-old Portuguese girl who speaks Portuguese at home. She is in the first year of preschool during which she has more intensive contact with the Luxembourgish language.
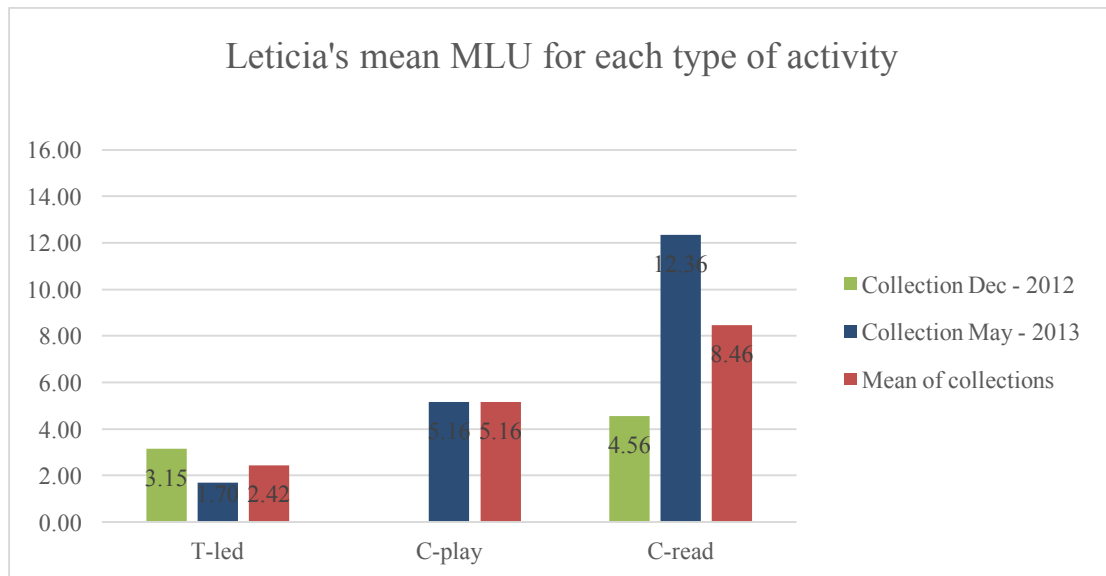
Figure 10: Leticia's mean MLU for each type of activity

During teacher-led activities, Leticia is rather silent, with a mean MLU of 2.42. Her values nearly divided half from period 1 to 2. In child-led activities, she is contributing much more as we can see from the means 5.17 and 8.46. A significant increase is observable in child-reading activities from the data collection period 1 to 2 due to one single activity (named "Krokodil"): Thus, she climbs from 4.57 to 12.36. Through observation, we could acknowledge Leticia as a very silent girl but highly involved by laughing, smiling and gesturing.

Lídia

Lídia is a 5 year-old Portuguese girl. Consequently, she speaks Portuguese at home and Luxembourgish at school where she is attending her second year.

Lídia's mean MLU for each type of activity
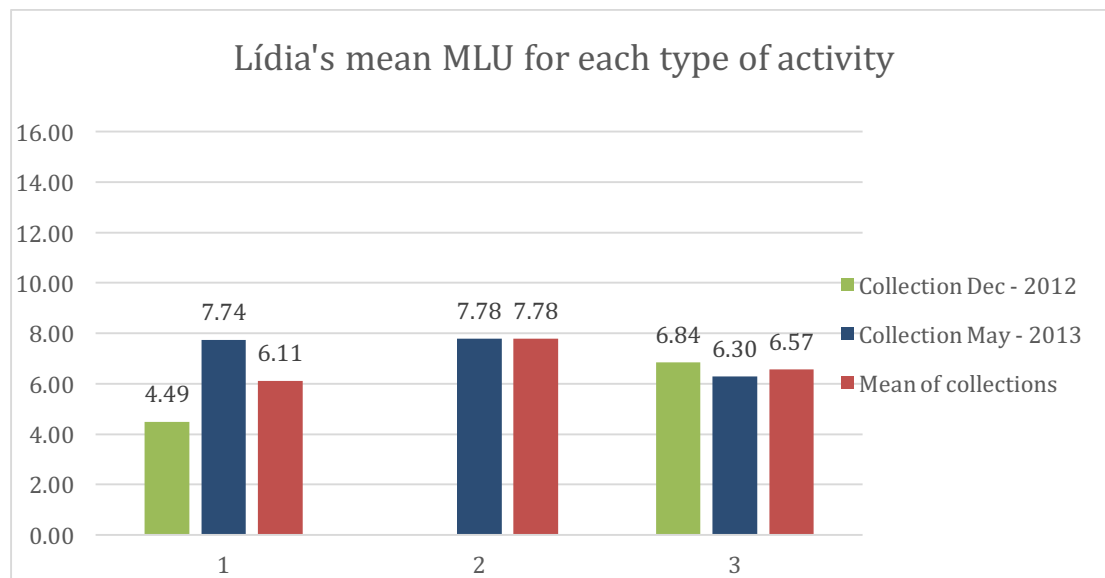
Figure 11: Lídia's mean MLU for each type of activity

Lídia's mean MLU in teacher-led activities rates 6.11 and we can see, that there has been a major increase from December to May. It seems she is already quite familiar with the teaching activities. Her performance stays more or less stable concerning peer activities, with a mean MLU of 7.78 and 6.57. Field notes confirm Lídia as a highly active girl who is interacting with teachers and peers, who likes to speak up very often with short utterances and who is often "in charge" of the situation.

Magda

Magda is a 4 year-old Brazilian girl who speaks Brazilian Portuguese at home. At school, she is in contact with Luxembourgish in the first year.
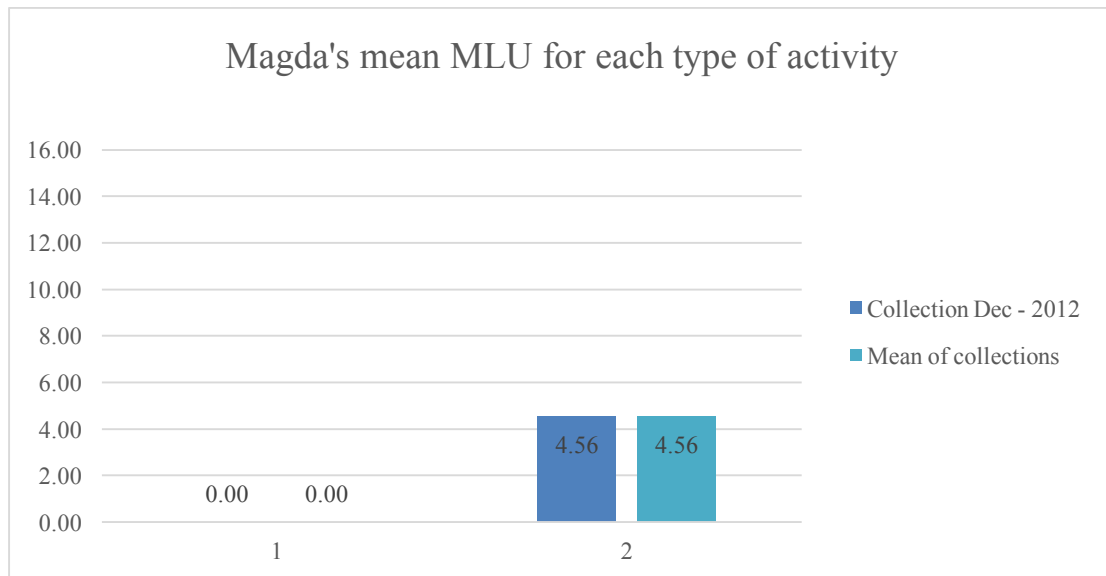
Figure 12: Magda's mean MLU for each type of activity

Magda's verbal absence in teacher-led activities strikes the reader's eye immediately. Throughout the whole data, there was no single utterance. However, in the child-read situation, Magda spoke up and her MLU rates 4.57.

Due to technical issues of the audio output, the data of the second collection period is untranscribable so that we do not have any comparison over time. child-play activities only took place in the second data collection, which means that for this activity type there is no data either.

Being present in the classroom helped us witness Magda in an unfilmed situation. She is relatively and seems to have a special affection for Michele, another girl of the study. Although Magda is not talking, she is interacting with Michele on a non-verbal level.

Michele

Michele is a 5 year-old Portuguese girl. She is in the second preschool year and, whereas speaking Portuguese (with her father) and Luxembourgish (with her mother) at home, she is communicating mostly in Luxembourgish at school.
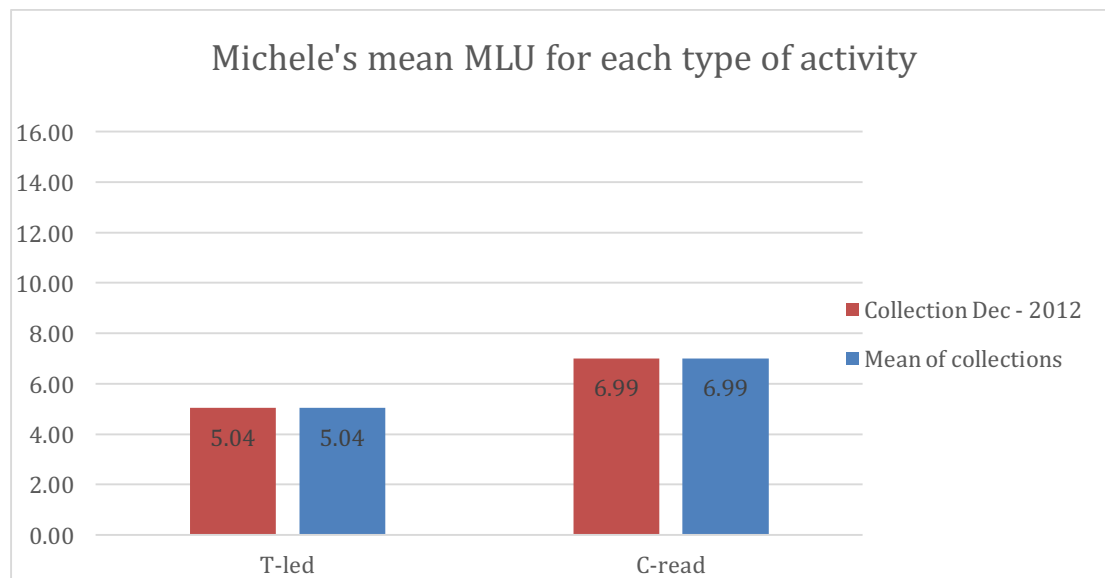
Figure 13: Michele's mean MLU for each type of activity

Michele's MLU in teacher-led activities rates 5.04 and increases for the child-reading activities to 6.99.

As mentioned before, the technical problems with the audio output impede us from transcribing the second data set for Michele.

During our observations, Michele stuck out as girl that knows how to lead an activity as if she would be the teacher. During child-led activities, she often holds the book and turns the pages.

Nícolas

Nícolas is a 5 year-old Portuguese boy. At home, he speaks Portuguese. He is in his first preschool year.
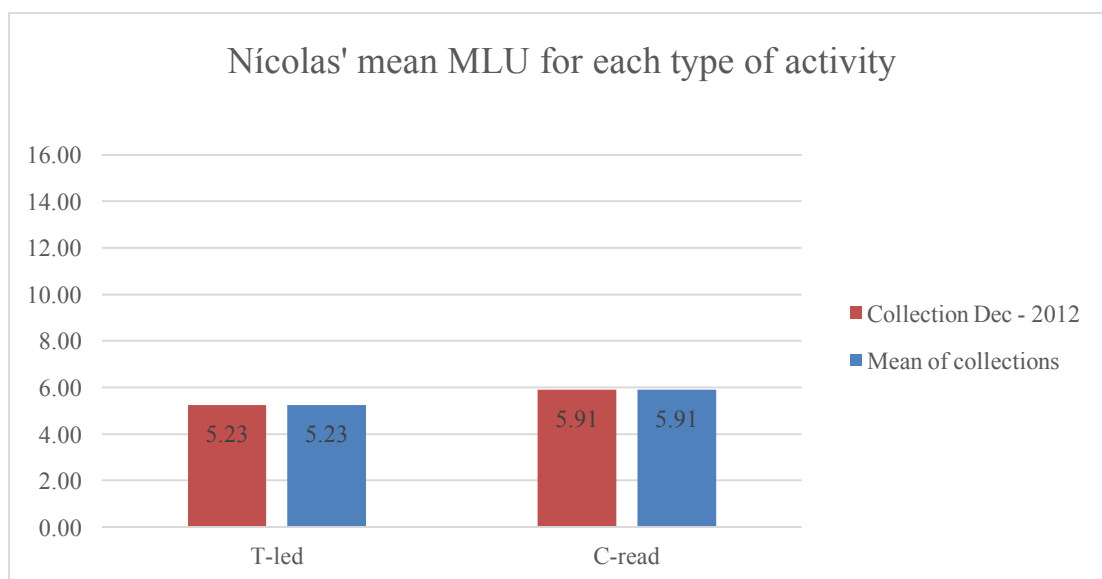
Figure 14: Nícolas' mean MLU for each type of activity

Nícolas MLU during teacher-led activities scores 5.23 and augments at 5.91 in child reading. It is fair to say that his performance remains more or less the same independently of the lesson type.

Nícolas does also belong to the group for which the second data collection has been a failure.

Throughout our presence in class, Nícolas appeared to be a communicative boy who likes to interact with his teacher as well as with his peers. Besides, he is frequently focusing on different details on the picture book to which he draws the other's attention.

Salomão

Salomão is a 5 year-old Portuguese boy who is in the second preschool year. At home, he speaks Portuguese and at school, he learns Luxembourgish.
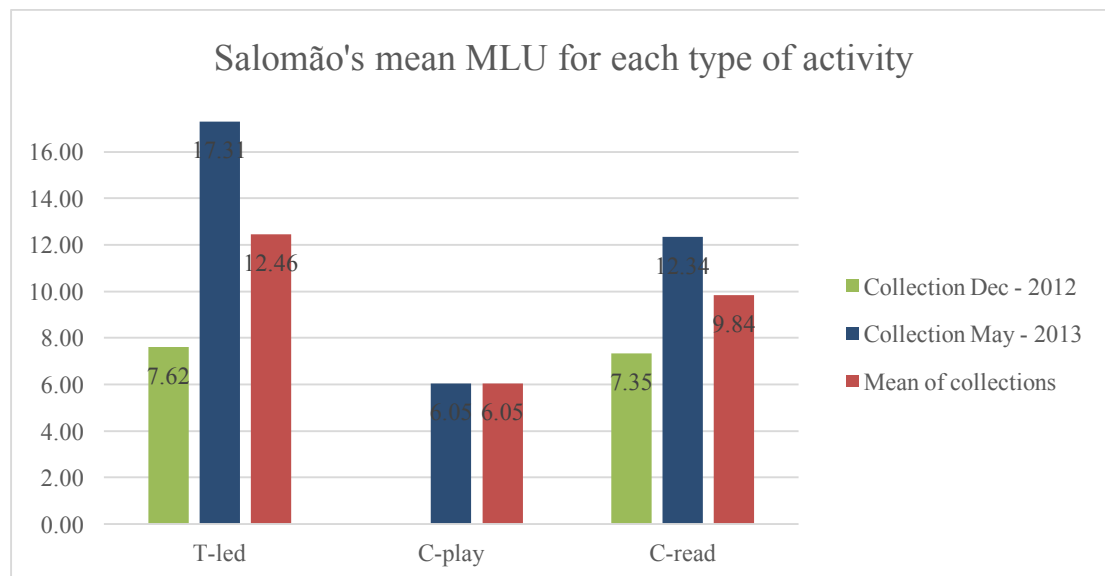
Figure 15: Salomão's mean MLU for each type of activity

Characteristic of Salomão's profile is the high mean of MLU in teacher-led activities with a score of 12.46. There is even a peak for the data collection in May as the value is climbing from 7.62 to 17.31. However, he seems less at ease in play activities, with an MLU of 6.05. In child-reading activities, he remains talkative, as his mean MLU rates 9.84. Comparing data collection periods 1 and 2, we find his MLU increasing.

Salomão always acted as a very present pupil during our stay in class. He likes to participate in all types of interaction (with a varying degree of intensity) and shares his knowledge as a "boy from the second year".

Sergio

Sergio is a 5 year-old Portuguese boy speaking Portuguese at home. A French-speaking woman is taking care of him on a regular basis. At school, he learns Luxembourgish already in his second preschool year.
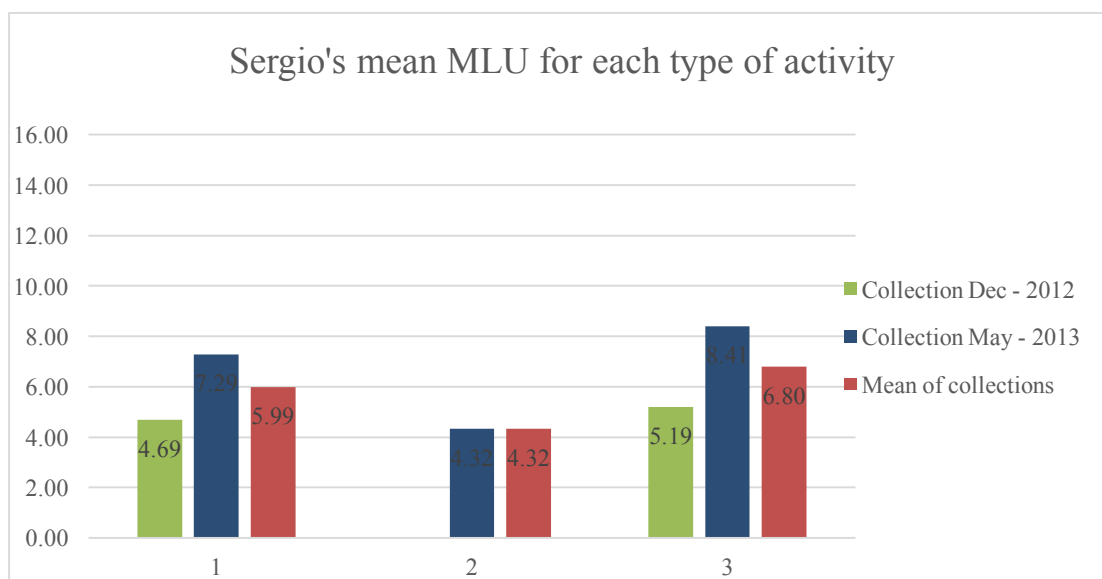
Figure 16: Sergio's mean MLU for each type of activity

In teacher-led activities, Sergio's MLU is increasing from 4.70 to 7.29 over time so that the mean MLU scores 5.99. In child-reading activities, his MLU is, with 5.20 and 8.41, also augmenting from December to May so that his mean MLU rates 6.80. In child-play lessons, he is the least active from an MLU point of view.

Characteristic of Sergio's speech are the many Portuguese words, he is still using – in contrary to the other Portuguese speakers in this study. During our observations, he appeared to look for words quite frequently and the other children did not always give him the floor to speak easily, something which he claimed then vigorously.

Trevor

Trevor is a 5 year-old boy whose father is Cap Verdean and whose mother is Brazilian. His contact languages outside school are Creole, Brazilian Portuguese and French. Being in the first year of preschool, he learns Luxembourgish at school since one year.
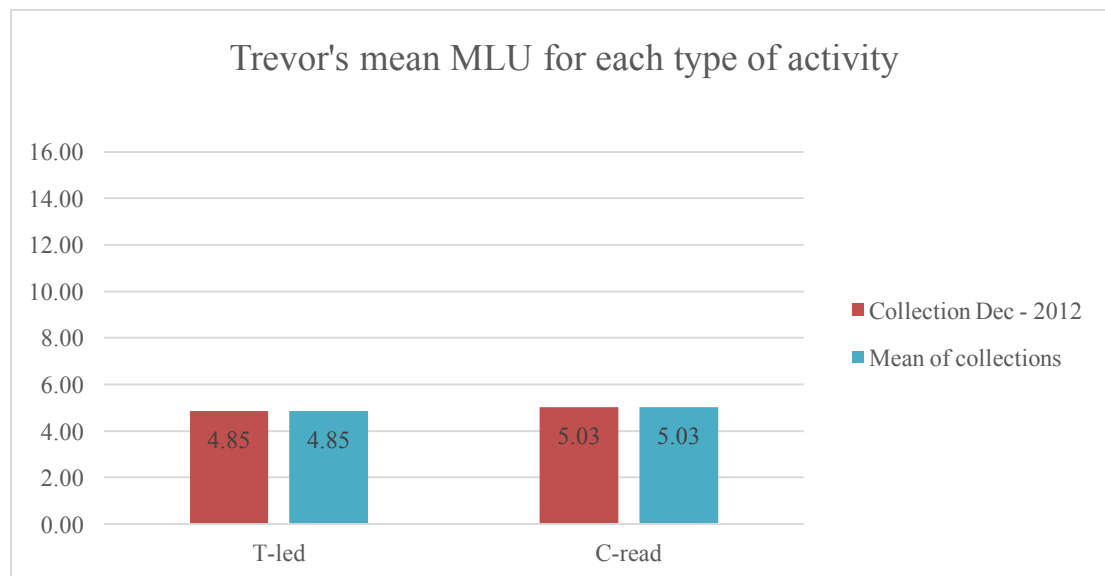
Figure 17: Trevor's mean MLU for each type of activity

Following the numbers, Trevor is contributing more or less equally in both types of lessons: His mean MLU in teacher-led activities is 4.85 and rates 5.03 for child-reading activities.

Again, Trevor belongs to the data group, which lost the second collection period due to a technical issue with the microphone.

The field observations document Trevor as participating in both types of activities. He acts as a curious young student who has a preference for details in picture books to which he often points. He is the only one in the data, who imitates actual reading by putting his finger on the text and issuing an imaginary speech.

Ugo

Ugo is a 5 year-old Portuguese boy. At home, he speaks Portuguese and at school, he learns Luxembourgish. He is in his second year of preschool.
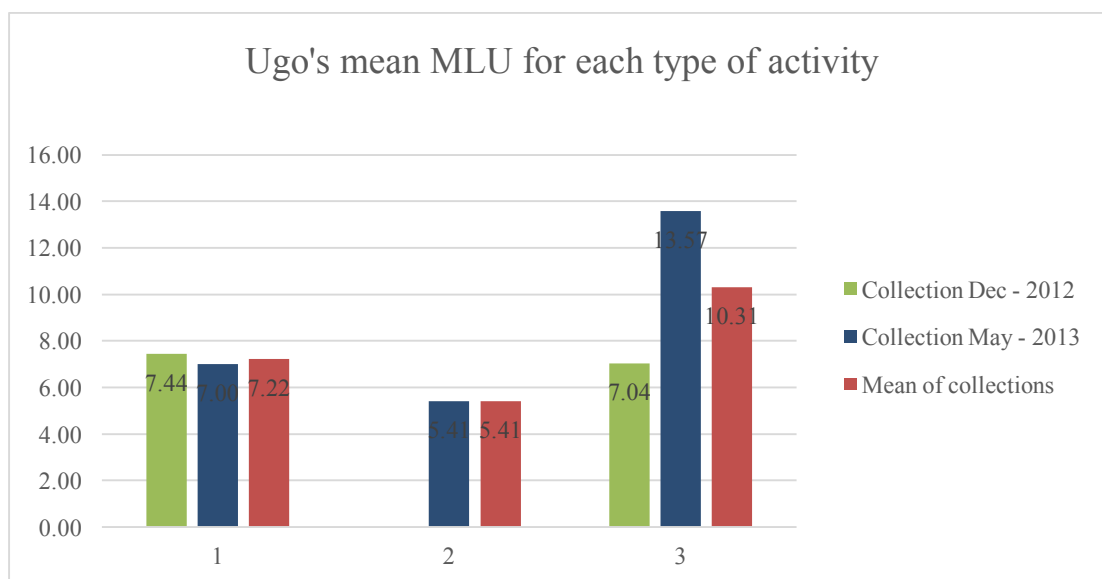
Figure 18: Ugo's mean MLU for each type of activity

In teacher reading activities, Ugo's mean MLU scores 7.22; that means staying more or less the same with 7.44 and 7.00. In child-reading activities, the mean MLU is higher than in teacher-led activities with a peak in the second data collection period so that there has been an increase of MLU, now 10.31 compared to December. In child-play activities, he seems less at ease from an MLU point of view, the value reaching 5.41.

Ugo appeared interested and curious any time we have been present in class. He is very talkative and contributes frequently. Characteristic of his speech is the articulation: Ugo often pronounces [t] instead of [k].

4.2. Teacher talk during joint reading

The following subchapter is describing the type of teacher talk found in the classrooms taking part in this study. In total, there are 10 activities, which have been led by one of the three teachers. Each time, the children gathered either on the floor or on chairs in front of the pedagogue. Then she read the story and regularly she turned the book in order to show the images to the pupils. The format stayed more or less the same. After reading a passage, the teacher asked questions or listened to the comments of the pupils.

We now present the results concerning the mean talk volume between teachers and their young students. The count is based on the number of syllables produced in utterances that are linked to joint reading, questions, answers and descriptions concerning the book (classroom management utterances have been ignored):

Distribution of mean talk volume in teacher-led activities

6%

94%

■ Mean Teacher volume (in syllables)   ■ Mean Child volume (in syllables)
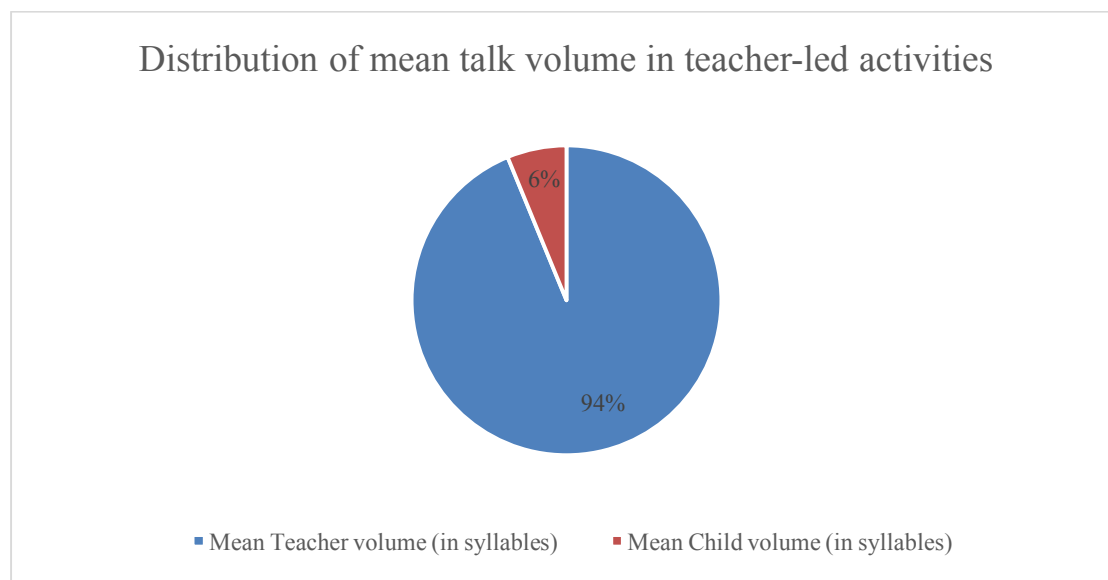
Figure 19: Distribution of mean talk volume in teacher-led activities

Obviously, the teacher is spending a huge amount of utterances on reading the story, however, the contributions of the young students after the reading remain restricted. The ratio is 6% of mean talk volume for the pupils opposed to 94% by the teachers. If we consider talking opportunities key for language learning, we can deduce that during teacher talk, possibilities to practice for the children are reduced to a minimum. Similar findings have been confirmed by J. K. Hall (2001):

> Where teacher questions are cognitively and communicatively simple and where student contributions are limited to short responses to teacher questions, the classroom interaction is not likely to lead to active student involvement and complex communicative development. Rather, student participation will be limited to simple tasks such as recall, listing and labeling. (p. 30)

It thus becomes salient that the format of teacher reading activities does not leave much room for extended student contributions although the primary goal of such activities is particularly to foster young student's language learning. Part of the problem can be

found in the nature of the teacher's interaction with the pupils or, differently put, in the way he/she asks questions throughout the lesson. This phenomenon, called IRF scheme, has been extensively explored by research (Candela, 1999; Cazden, 2001; J. K. Hall, 2001; Mehan, 1979; Seedhouse, 1996; Van Lier, 1996; Wells, 2009; Wells & Arauz, 2006).

Bellack et al. (1966) were the first to note the IRF structure under the name of "teaching cycle" (as quoted in Van Lier, 1996, p. 149). Basically, Van Lier (1996) observes the following structure:

1) It is three turns long.
2) The first and the third turn are produced by the teacher, the second one by the pupil.
3) The exchange is started and ended by the teacher.
4) As a result of 2) and 3) the pupil's turn is sandwiched between two teacher's turns.
5) The first teacher's turn is designed to elicit some kind of verbal response from a young student. The teacher often knows the answer in advance (is "primary knower"), or at least has a specific idea "in mind" of what will count as a proper answer.
6) The second teacher's turn (the third turn in the exchange) is some kind of comment on the second turn, or on the "fit" between the second and the first. Here the pupil finds out if the answer corresponds with whatever the teacher has "in mind".
7) It is often clear from the third turn whether or not the teacher is interested in the information contained in the response, or merely in the form of the answer, or in seeing if the pupil knows the answer or not.
8) If the exchange is part of a series, as it is often the case, there is a plan and a direction determined by the teacher. The teacher "leads" and the students "follow". (Van Lier, 1996, p. 150)

He criticises IRF as *"reducing the student's initiative, independent thinking, clarity of expression, the development of conversational skills (including turn taking, planning ahead, negotiating and arguing) and self-determination"* (Van Lier, 1996, p. 154).

Young (1992) goes a step further as denouncing these recitation practices as "WDPK", or "What Do Pupils Know", and "GWTT", or "Guess What Teacher Thinks".

There are many instances of IRF in this data. It is very common for the teacher to initiate (I) a sequence by asking a question. She then selects the next speaker who gives the response (R) to the question and triggers her feedback (F).

537	T2	Isa hues de eng iddi	I	Isa have you an idea
538		wiem seng patte sinn dat;		whose legs these are;
539	Is	eng ⎮ fräsch-	R (1 utt., 2 syll. = MLU 2.0)	a frog
540	T2	engem fräsch seng richteg	F	a frog's legs correct

Data extract 2: 4a_171112_T2_Zilly – Lines 537 to 540

Interesting for this study is linking the young student's response to the MLU value. In this extract, the teacher is initiating a question explicitly for Isa (lines 537 to 538). The latter only needs to give a very short answer (line 539), an article plus a noun, which would correspond to an MLU of 2 (2 syllables divided by 1 utterance) before the teacher takes up her answer and gives a positive feedback (line 540), thus closing the sequence. One more specification to the teacher's question: The correct labelling of such questions is "display question" and they constitute interrogations to which the teacher already knows the answer and which therefore seem inauthentic. By testing the pupils' knowledge, the teacher is opening up room for evaluation or is transforming a monologue into a dialogue by eliciting short items of information at self-chosen points (cf. Cazden (2001). The next two examples from the two other groups show a similar picture:

554	T1	Leticia (.) wat sees du;		Leticia (.) what do you say;
555		mengs de ((points) wann s de		do you think ((points)) if you look
556		hie sou kucks, mengs de deen	I	at him, do you think this apple)
557		apel do) en ass liicht; (2.0)		is light; (2.0)
558	Le	jo:- ⎮	R	ye:s-

			(1 utt., 1 syll. = MLU 1.0)	
559	T1	jo;	F	yes;

Data extract 3: 1a_061112_T1_Apel – Lines 554 to 559

The teacher is targeting her display question (lines 554 to 557) for Leticia and this is made explicit by the name of the child that is put at the beginning of the utterance (line 554). Furthermore, she is designing the question to a "yes"- or "no"-question by already integrating the appropriate adjective (line 557). For Leticia, it is sufficient to answer with an affirmative "yes" (line 558) which is echoed as feedback by the teacher (line 559). The single utterance, containing only one word, leaves the MLU at a minimal level, 1.0. This data example mirrors the most basic display question, which only requires a "yes" or a "no" instead of further elaboration. If the teacher would have asked about the quality of the apple, the answer of the young student might have been "light". This would not have been a longer answer in respect to the MLU but at least the teacher would not have given the answer already in the formulation of the question. J. K. Hall (1998) researched the importance of the teacher in such triadic exchanges.

017	T3	wie weess da wei ee sou e	I	who knows how you call such
018		grousst haus nennt;		a big house;
019	Tr	((puts up his finger))		((puts up his finger))
020	T3	trevor		trevor
021	Tr	fir ǀ dprinǀzessǀin; ǀ	R (1 utt., 4 syll. = MLU 4.0)	for the princess;
022	T3	jo do ke' do kann eng	F	yes a princess could
023		prinzessin dra wunnen;		live here;

Data extract 4: 5a_271112_T3_Psst – Lines 017 to 023

The teacher is initiating her display question without targeting a particular pupil (lines 017 to 018). Trevor applies the unwritten rule of claiming speakership by raising his hand (line 019) and the teacher is acknowledging this behaviour by attributing him the right to speak (line 020). Trevor then delivers his answer by 4 syllables, thus creating an MLU of 4.0 (line 021). The teacher is approving his answer and extending it into a complete sentence (lines 022 to 023). Again, the question is being asked in a manner

that does not demand a complete sentence as an answer. Making such an entire sentence would sound most weird as in real conversation you do not repeat previous utterances either. But the shortness of the provoked answer leaves a feeling of deficiency and does not foster any complex linguistic development. Instead of the pupil formulating an exhaustive answer, it is the teacher who does the job for him by elaborating the answer in her feedback.

These are only a few of many examples of IRF exchanges in the data. However, this is not the only way in which communication takes place in classroom. To complete the picture and before analysing qualitatively different exchanges in chapter 6.1, we would like to give one last example that meets the IRF scheme but which does take a somewhat different shape:

660	T2	et ass traureg firwat dann-	I	she is sad why-
661	Is	well (.) well et neg' well ǀ	R (1 utt., 10 syll. = MLU 10.0)	because (.) because she because
662		et ǀ mengt et ǀ hätt ǀ dem ǀ		she thinks she hurt
663		zingaro wéi ǀ geǀdoǀen;ǀ		zingaro
664	T2	jo::	F	ye::s

Data extract 5: 4a_171112_T2_Zilly – Lines 660 to 664

The teacher is initiating a question (line 660) to inquire about the motives of Zilly's unhappiness. Her turn is not addressed to a chosen pupil. Isa jumps into the gap and explains the reason for Zilly's sadness (lines 661 to 663). Her single utterance contains 10 syllables, raising the MLU to 10.0 (remember that restarts and names are not counted). The teacher does not need to reformulate Isa's extended utterance; she solely gives the feedback "yes" (line 664). So, what has changed in this example? The nature of the teacher's question is different as it is formulated in a more open manner. Answering "yes" or "no" is impossible in this example and that is why the child needs to think about a more explicit answer. In this sense, Zucker et al. (2010) argue that *"particular types of adult questions elicit longer child responses"* (p. 67). We also need to stay aware of Isa's proficiency as a native speaker, which gives her the capacity to elaborate such responses but even a less capable pupil could not have answered by one word. If this would have been the case, the teacher could have asked another

clarification question so that this same pupil would have had the chance to build a response.

All the above mentioned examples have the triadic exchange structure in common: The teacher is initiating a question or an impulse (I) and only then the pupil may offer an answer (R) that is eventually evaluated by the teacher (F). Calculations of MLU have shown that the length of the answers vary more or less between 1 and 4 syllables. The questions asked by the pedagogue all centre around the content of the story and are known by the teacher. Mehan (1979) reviews these questions as problematic because they are different from what one would ask outside a classroom and they place the respondent in a testing position where he/she needs to meet the questioner's predetermined knowledge, exactly or at least approximatively. Moreover, the teacher covers up 94% of all the talking volume during the activities, hereby reducing the pupils' opportunities to practice their talking.

However, we do not want to denigrate the triadic exchanges altogether. As demonstrated in the last example with Isa, much depends on the type of questions, the teacher asks: Open-ended and probing questions enable pupils to make larger contributions (Isa's MLU went up to 10.0 in the afore-mentioned example) and install an effectual learning environment (J. K. Hall, 2001). A study of classroom-based free play by de Rivera et al. (2005) concluded that preschoolers perform longer utterances in response to open-ended questions and topic-continuing questions than closed questions. Concerning the framework, some of the pupils benefit more from a fixed structure where they know how to insert their answers, whereas the teacher is holding the floor open for them. Furthermore, the pedagogue can use the power to distribute speakership to encourage pupils who need it the most. This *"differential teacher attention"*, as explored by J. K. Hall (1998), has a more qualitative exchange nature and presupposes that learning does not only depend on individual factors but puts much responsibility on the teacher.

So far, we have considered the young students in a relatively passive position: Listening to the teacher reading the story, waiting for her to ask questions then consequently bidding for the floor. The teacher appears in a dominant position as she is organising the activity, managing the book and distributing speakership. The triadic question-answer sequences starting with display questions have been analysed critically as they are keeping MLU of pupil answers on a minimum. However, this is only one side of the study and classroom interaction is not only constituted by closed reading sessions.

4.3. Intermediate findings

In the first part of chapter 4.1, we have described the MLU outlines of each pupil. If we compare them between each other, a discrepancy in performance between the pupil of the first and second preschool year becomes salient:

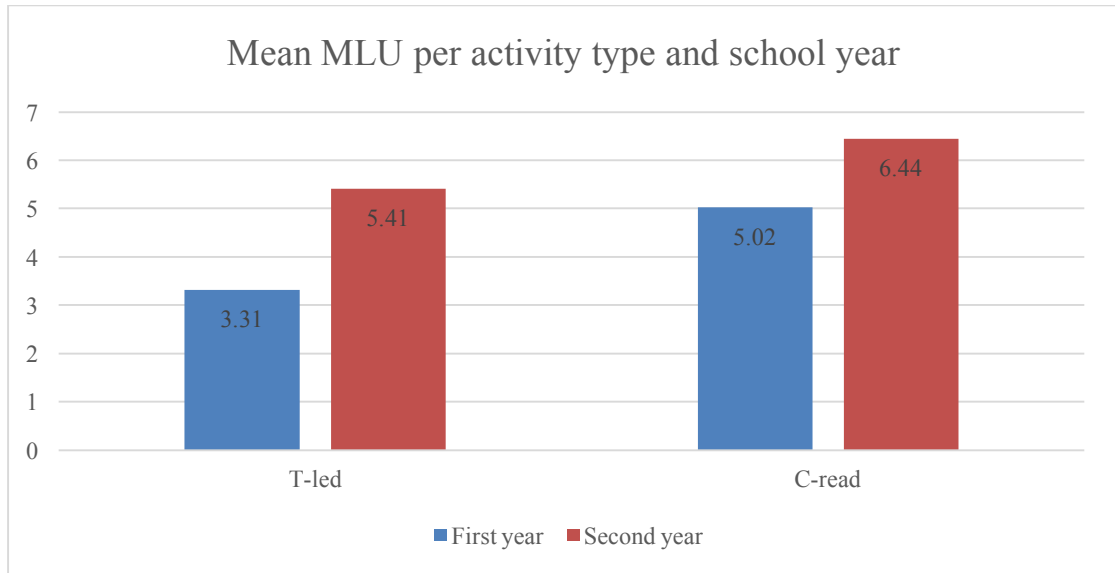**Figure 20: Mean MLU according to the pupil's number of years spent in preschool**

Firstly, the graph points at a higher MLU for second year students (Lídia, Benito, Salomão, Sergio, Ugo, Jacob, Isa and Michele) in both T-led and C-led activities, underlining the difference of experience and one year's practice. Secondly, the graph shows that the second-year pupils seem to be already more familiar with the typical

type of discourse that is taught at school compared to the first year pupils (Nícolas, Trevor, Magda and Leticia) as the values 3.31 against 5.41 demonstrate: The teacher imposes a certain format on the children within which they can move. Wells (2009) recognises the difference in the wide divergences between families and the way they use language and so in the model they provide for their children and the competences demanded at school:

> But not only do the children speak less with an adult at school. In those conversations they do have, they get fewer turns, express a narrower range of meanings, and, in general, use grammatically less complex utterances. They also ask fewer questions, make fewer requests, and initiate a much smaller proportion of conversations. (Wells, 2009, p. 95)

Wells continues that the main problem resides in the absence of an aim. Conversation, being rarely an end in itself, is done to achieve goals, share interests, obtain things etc. Parents who consider their children as equal partners in conversation, follow their lead and negotiate meanings and purposes with them in order as to support their learning to and through talk (Wells, 2009). This does not happen as such in a classroom setting where many children compete for the floor and the teacher needs to make choices between them and pedagogic agendas. Mehan (1984), in his study of cross-context comparisons of language use, confronted the language of the classroom to the language of other social situations familiar to children. He found a specialized code through which the academic curriculum is mediated and which is not transparent to the pupils.

Interesting insights arise as well from a comparison of proficiency between activity types. The next figure shows the MLU performance of each pupil in a) teacher-led and b) child-led activities:
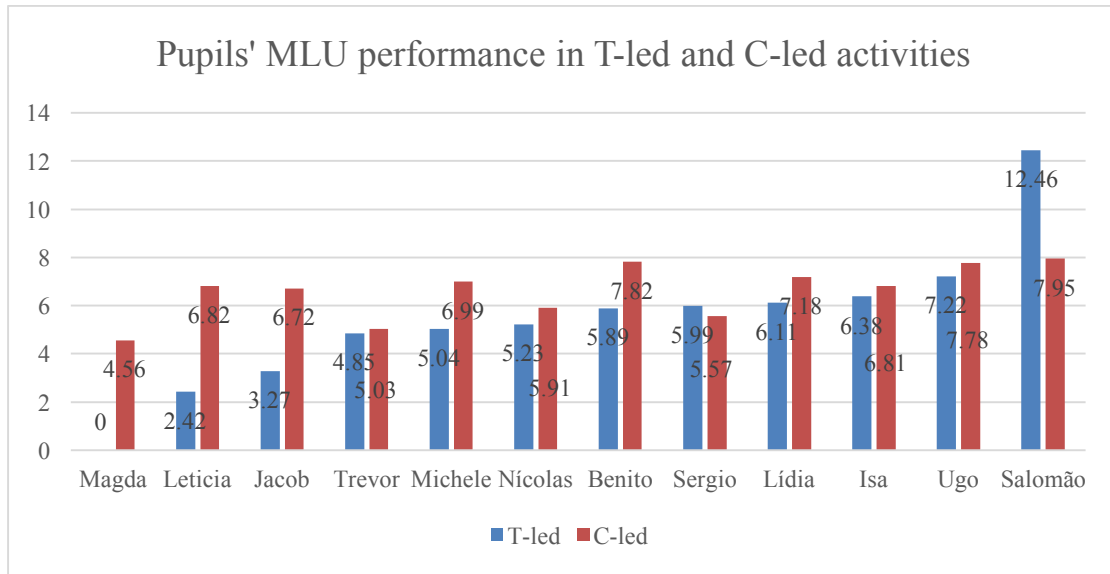
Figure 21: Pupils' MLU performance in teacher-led and child-led activities

The children are grouped according to an ascending MLU during teacher-led activities. Looking at the extremities, we have Magda with an MLU of 0.00 and Salomão with 12.46. The T-led values of Trevor, Michelle, Nícolas, Benito, Sergio, Lídia and Isa are relatively close to each other (between 5.04 and 6.38). Magda, Leticia, Jacob and Salomão range apart (0.00, 2.42, 3.27 and 12.46). Except for Salomão, all young students have a higher MLU in child-led activities. Children first seem to become proficient speakers with peers before they turn towards their teachers. Drawing on the reasoning before, this underlines the different format of teacher talk during lessons (Hayes & Matusov, 2005; Oyler, 1996; Sharpe, 2008; S. Walsh, 2002; Wells, 2009), which is not the same than the type of conversation children are used to at home. We might also argue that teacher talk is less natural so that it is easier for children, such as Magda, to interact with their young friends, as this resembles what they know from home. In order to become successful participants in teacher-led lessons, they need to learn to adapt their utterances to social appropriateness and content by staying tuned on contextual cues (Hymes, 1974, as quoted in Kumpulainen & Wray, 1997). Being sensitive to the teacher's discourse permits them to orient their utterances towards it and fulfil the expectations of the pedagogue. Concerning the C-led values in the previous graph, we notice greater variation. The measured MLU ranges from Magda's 4.56 to Salomão's 7.95 and, again, these two represent the lowest and highest value among them all. An increasing MLU in T-led activities does not go hand in hand with

an augmenting MLU in C-led activities and thus, we observe high divergences as shown here:
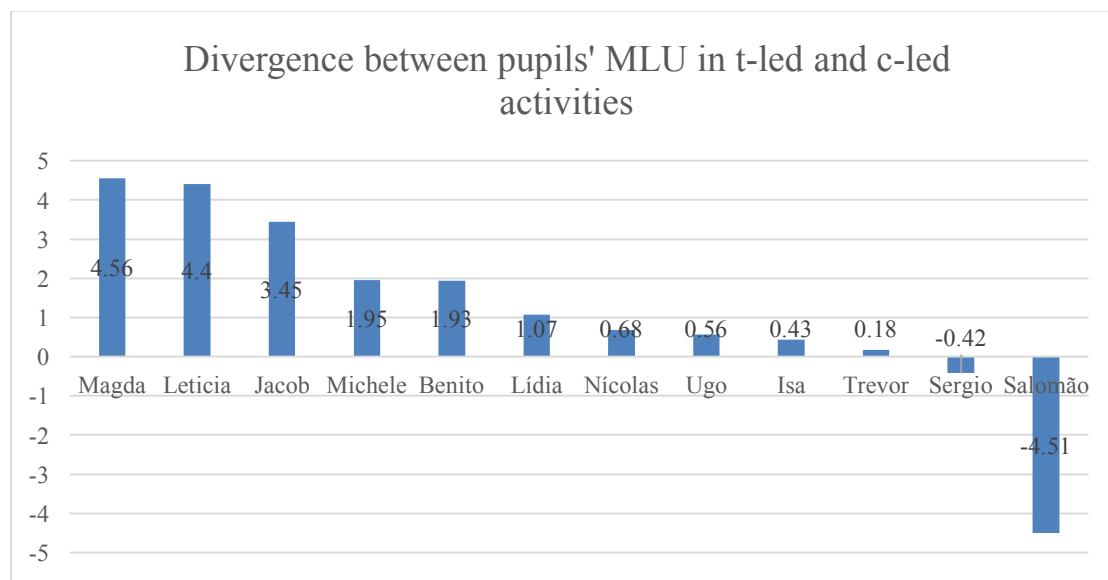
Figure 22: Divergence between pupils' MLU in teacher-led and child-led activities

Magda, Leticia and Jacob show the highest positive divergence with 4.56, 4.4 and 3.45 respectively: They seem to be the most at ease in conversations with their peers. Noticeable is Magda who does not speak at all in front of the teacher. Salomão and Sergio are special cases as they are the only ones to produce a higher MLU in presence of the teacher – which does not mean that their MLU with peers is low though. Compared to their achievements with peers, they are simply more talkative with the teacher or given more room to elaborate their utterances. Michele (1.95) and Benito (1.93) occupy a somewhat intermediate position between those who produce a high MLU only in one activity type compared to those who are balanced in their proficiency. This could hint at a dynamic transitional stage between the still unbalanced and the more proficient speakers in every activity type – a subject for further research as more analysis on the specific language quality of the two is needed. The other children, Lídia, Nícolas, Ugo, Isa and Trevor are more balanced in terms of MLU during teacher-led and child-led activities (ranging between 1.07 and 0.18). In other words, this would be the balanced optimum that should be achieved to transform the L2 learners into competent speakers in any scholar situation.

From an L2 learning perspective, Isa is the only pupil speaking Luxembourgish at home. Jacob and Michele, both speaking Luxembourgish next to another language at home, do not show a balanced MLU in both activity types. This might indicate, once again, that linguistic competence is not sufficient in school. Pupils need to learn the characteristics of classroom discourse. Lídia, Nícolas, Ugo and Trevor are L2 learners who managed to gain enough linguistic and interactive skills to meet the requirements in classroom, both in respect to interaction with their teacher and with their peers. Magda and Leticia, on the other side, are raising questions in terms of their progress in L2 by their more guarded participation in classroom life. In which other ways might they be communicating with their peers and teachers if they cannot access the verbal channel in the same way as their friends? These two considerations are analytical strands in their own right as well and constitute interesting leads for further research.

Four major findings can be drawn from the quantitative analysis so far:

Chapter 4 - Measuring L2 proficiency in classroom talk through MLU

➢ Finding 1

Children of the second preschool year seem to be more acquainted with classroom discourse than their peers in the first year as it is retrieved by a higher MLU in teacher-led activities. In child-led activities, no significant difference has been observed.

➢ Finding 2

Pupils' MLU changes depending on the activity type. Generally, MLU is higher in child-led activities. The tendency is to improve MLU performance in child-led activities before teacher-led activities.

> ➤ Finding 3

The teacher fills up 94% of the talking time in joint reading activities. The pupils are allocated the remaining 6%.

> ➤ Finding 4

During IRF exchanges and relating display questions, pupils' MLU does not score more than 3.0.

Recapitulative table 1: Findings of chapter 4

If the teacher is occupying 94% of the talking time during her activities, then the pupils remain with only 6% to practice their oral competencies. Although the teacher is reading a story and by this necessarily talking a lot, affordances for language practice stay limited. We also align with previous studies on IRF exchanges attesting a rigid framework to classroom exchange based on this triadic utterance formula. The mean length of utterances remains more or less under 3.0 when the teacher is initiating utterances via display questions, a common tool to start these triadic sequences. Again, the young students lack opportunities to practice extensive verbal outputs. We then opposed the mean length of utterance during teacher-led activities to child-led activities and pinpointed the fact that pupils' mean length of utterance increases first in presence with their peers before augmenting in teacher controlled activities. On top of this, pupils who have already passed more than one year in preschool, perform with a higher mean length of utterance in presence of a teacher than those in the first preschool grade. Thus, all the findings point to a different kind of discourse that is taking place in pedagogic activities as opposed to more naturally developing child-led interaction. The need to balance the proficiency in both child-led and teacher-led activities arises. In quest of a more detailed insight into this discrepancy, we resort to another analytic category, the self-initiated topic changes, in the next chapter.

Part IV

Self-initiated topic changes as a predictor for proficiency in L2

Analysis of L2 learners' topic management during book reading activities in preschool

Measuring L2 proficiency in classroom talk through MLU

- Teacher talk and IRF patterns in joint reading activities
- Pupil profiles

Self-initiated topic changes as a predictor for proficiency in L2

- Nature, reactions and tools
- Pupil profiles

- Topic discussions, topic management and emerging lexical understanding

The teachers' representations of the L2 learner

- Post-reflection on pupil involvement
- Pedagogical goals and language learning beliefs
- Management of self-initiated topic changes

5. Self-initiated topic changes – nature, reactions and tools

The subject of the current chapter is the self-initiated topic changes. In the first part, we are interested in the nature of self-initiated topic changes and we focus on their occurrences, the reaction types, the preferences for certain of these reaction types, the tools for self-initiating a topic and the differences according to the preschool year. Drawing on our analysis of the MLU in chapter 4, we now apply the measuring tool to self-initiated topic changes and observe possible changes. Finally, we establish the young students' profiles according to their use of self-initiated topic changes and draw first conclusions for the L2 learning process.

5.1. The nature of self-initiated topic changes

The following subchapters are going to analyse various aspects of a self-initiated topic change: First of all, occurrences of self-initiated topic changes have been counted throughout the data to look at the ensuing reaction. How many topic changes were accepted and how many were rejected? Besides being favourable or disagreeing, the reactions shape the on-going interaction according to identifiable patterns, which is called reaction type. These various schemes haven been described and classified into blueprints. Then, we relate these patterns to their occurrence during the different activity types to see whether there are preferred modes for a given lesson. Also, the self-initiated topic changes occur via different tools. Finally, we check the development of MLU during self-initiated topic changes and draw comparisons to the questioning-answering format used by the teacher.

5.1.1. Occurrences of topic changes and reactions

Amongst all the utterances of the children, it is helpful to distinguish how many of these can actually be classified as self-initiated topic changes:
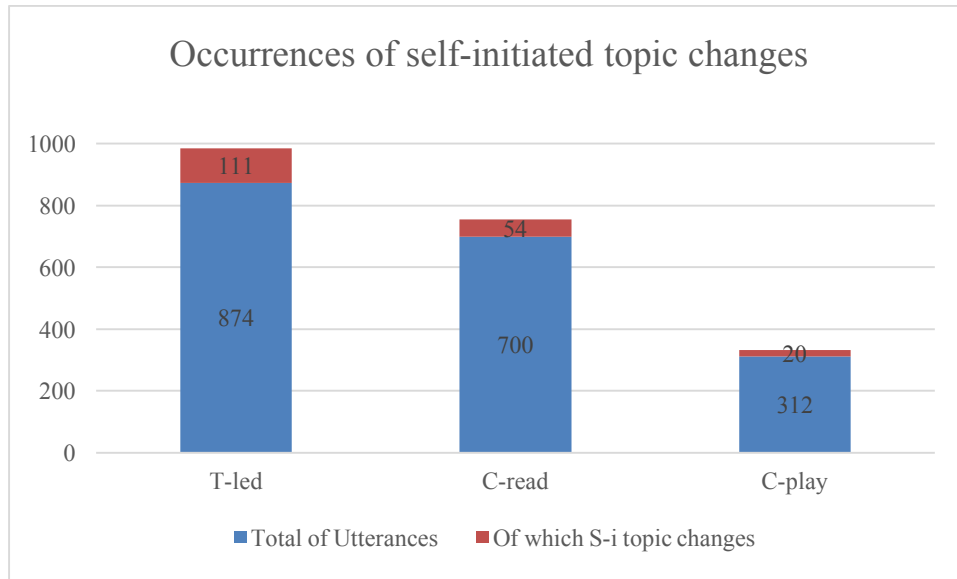
Figure 23: Occurrences of self-initiated topic changes

In teacher-led activities, there are 874 utterances from children in total. Of these 874 utterances, 111 are self-initiated topic changes. Considering child-reading activities, 54 utterances of a total of 700 are self-initiated topic changes. Concerning child-play activities, we have 312 utterances in total, of which 20 are self-initiated topic changes. Thus, we look at a very particular type of phenomenon that only occurs under certain conditions, which we are going to analyse in the next chapters.

The following graph then summarises how many instances of these self-initiated topic changes have been accepted and rejected for each activity type:
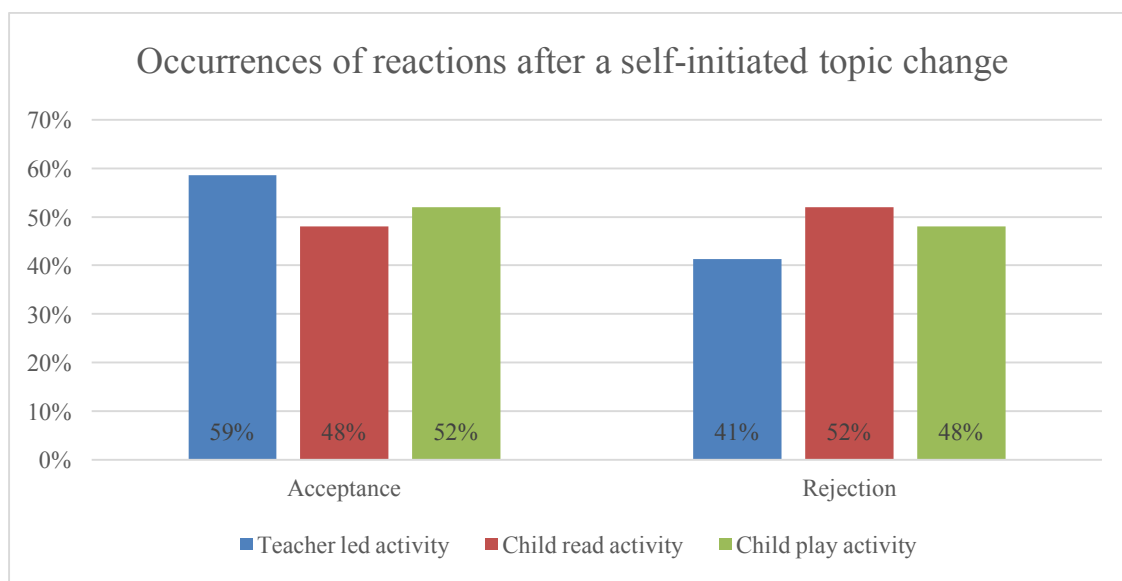
Figure 24: Occurrences of reactions after a self-initiated topic change[1]

Most topic changes are likely to be accepted in the presence of a teacher, that is, in teacher-led activities (59% against 41% of rejections). A possible explanation points to the pedagogue's effort to include the pupil's utterances and establish dialogue. In the next subchapter, we are going to have a closer look at the type of reactions as these have different qualities according to the style of language they trigger.

As for the child-reading activities, the picture is different. The majority of the topic changes is rejected (52% versus 48% of acceptances) and again we are going to find the explanation in the way, children dispatch a refusal. The pupils' rejections have a much more straightforward approach than those used by the teachers.

In child-play activities, the situation is inverted. The greater percentage are the accepted topic changes (52%; opposed to 48% of refusals). One of the reasons is the maintenance of the interaction flow. Children need to be in harmony in respect to a common topic or the play is coming to stagnation. Therefore, every topic change is analysed by all the participants and dealt with, in order to keep going the interaction. Thus, acceptances are easier to manage and they satisfy all the participants.

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[1] The percentages are calculated per time unit in each activity type. For this, a frequency of occurrences per 1 hour was calculated for each activity type.

This subchapter revealed the share of self-initiated topic changes in the three activity types, showing that this phenomenon occupies a very restricted place in the overall amount of utterances produced in school activities. Every topic change results in a reaction by the teacher or by the young students and, according to each activity type, the preponderance for acceptances changes. Next, we are going to see the different types of reactions.

5.1.2.   Type of reaction after a self-initiated topic change

After a topic change has been self-initiated, there are several types of reaction from the other participants:

- Rejecting via:
    - o Turning the page
    - o Negative feedback
    - o Ignoring
- Accepting via:
    - o Positive feedback
    - o Topic discussion
    - o Topic enactment
    - o Scaffolding

To materialise the conversation flow, we assume T_n to be the story line that the teacher wants to narrate from the beginning until the end. Clearly, the book influences the reading through its structure. The grey trapeze symbolises the developing story line with all the pedagogical adornments the teacher adds purposefully to teach language (e.g. vocabulary explanations, questions to check understanding etc.). For this reason, T_n develops into $T_{n'}$, $T_{n''}$, which could be continued ad infinitum. During the narration, the young students choose to interject a self-initiated topic change. For display reasons, we add the self-initiated topic change to the first level on the top but it could occur at any later stage of the narration as well. Also, we would like to point out that the figures are still valid for child-led interactions as they take up the narration line that was previously read to them – even if they tell the story slightly differently, they still follow the pictures in the book.

<u>Blueprint for topic rejection</u>

To reject a self-initiated topic change, teachers and pupils use three types of reactions: Turning the page, ignoring and negative feedback:
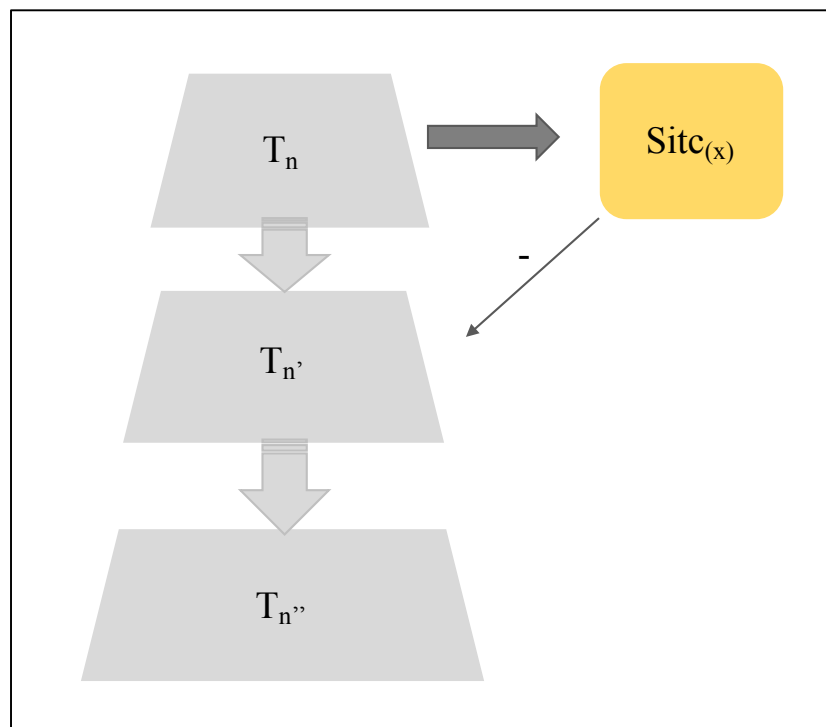
Figure 25: Blueprint for topic rejection

At some point of the narration, a child initiates a topic change which is considered as an event exterior to the ongoing narration. With a negative reaction, the reading continues as before without any added topic nuances. "Turning the page" is a very strong reaction to a topic change that one does not want to accept. Usually, the teacher is holding the book, a privilege she is not giving away throughout the whole activity. Furthermore, she is sitting in front of the children. From time to time, the children bridge the gap between their seat and the teacher to point at different details but they are rarely allowed to touch the pages. If they do so, they would have to ask for permission, verbally or by establishing eye contact and afterwards have to legitimate the turning by raising another detail. This is a topic change, we did not find in our data with the teachers. As a rejection, then, the pedagogue uses this strategy to close the narration of the current page, even though the children wanted to discuss another point.

By doing so, she takes away the visual support and opens another picture that suggests the next step in the narration. Children have adopted this same technique in their child-led activities, however, the fact to turn the page is not necessarily permanent as the young students are all located on an equal level of the hierarchy (Gosen, 2012). Reacting via "negative feedback" means to explicitly disagree with the other's initiation. In the data, there are many examples, in which the pupils are not agreeing with the content of the topic change but entering the discussion around this subject, makes it an acceptance. This is a clear distinction to be made, as a rejection through negative feedback is without any doubts centred on the action of impeding others to establish their topic change. The function is situated on an interactive level, not a pure linguistic one, as discussed in studies focusing on negative or corrective feedback through the teacher's effort in making a learner change his/her utterance on a linguistic level (Profozic, 2014). "Negative feedback" is a very abrupt reaction, in opposition to "ignoring" which is a technique that rejects a topic change in a much smoother way, helping to preserve the face of the initiator (O'Driscoll, 1996). This reaction is used both by teachers and children.

Blueprints for topic acceptance

In order to accept a topic change, participants use positive feedback, topic discussion, scaffolding and topic enactment.
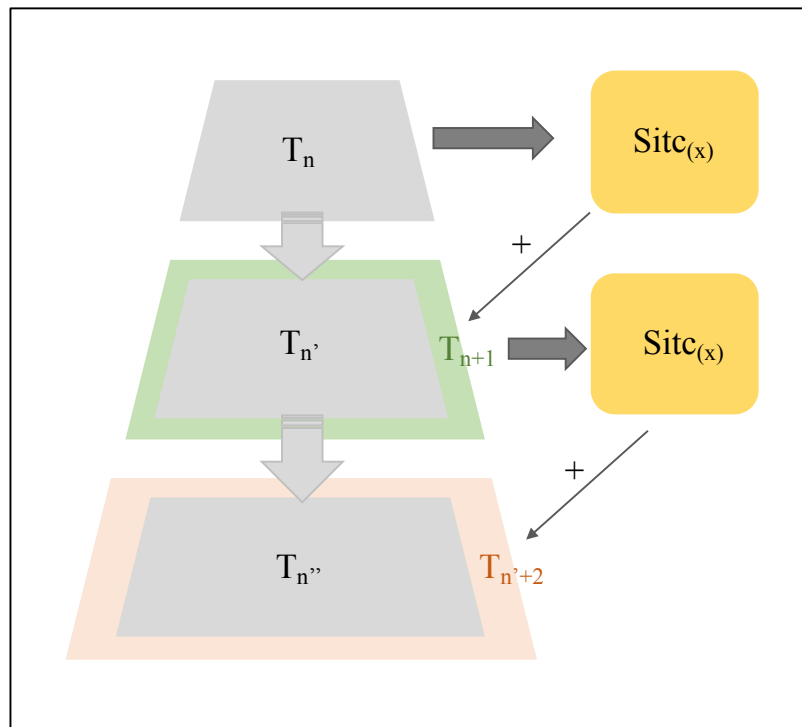
Figure 26: Blueprint for topic acceptance

Once a topic change is initiated, the story narration is put on hold and a reaction is demanded. Accepting the topic change means that $T_{n'}$ is not the same anymore. A nuance has been expressed and embellishes the resuming narration. To this, many more topic changes can be added, such as in topic discussions where the narration is built upon in a creative way. Each time, a topic is accepted, T_n is augmented, symbolised by the coloured trapeze underlying it. The more topic changes there are, the bigger the trapeze becomes and the richer the activity transforms into. "Positive feedback" is a reaction typical to teachers and their privilege to evaluate pupils. Often, it is merely a short acknowledgment of the young student's utterance. However, we decided to classify it as an acceptance, as it does not impede the pupil's eagerness to participate actively in the joint reading. Other studies have labelled this phenomenon as "backchannel feedback", that is a response by the pedagogue to signify that he/she is still listening and is not closing the communication channel (Cancino, 2015). In opposition, "enactment" is a reaction particular to pupils. It is the embodied answer to a verbal topic change and it aligns the pupil with his peer. As described by Björk-Willén and Cromdal (2009), enactment is a form of "knowing" implying working out and acting upon an element. "Scaffolding", explored by Bruner (2002) as a technique of a tutor to help a learner, is used mostly by teachers in their effort to support pupils in

building their utterances and prevent communication breakdowns: The pedagogue needs to time the intervention and feed in the missing language as highlighted by S. Walsh (2002). Notwithstanding, learners are also able to scaffold one another's utterances, as has been explored by Rogoff (1990a, 1995) in her study regarding apprenticeship and guided participation. For this, the more capable peers function as guides for the newbies who are less ahead in the learning process. Generally, a topic change that generates scaffolding, does not continue further. If the teacher is occupied with the language of the utterance, then she does not exploit the content as is true for a "topic discussion". Thus, of all these ensuing positive reactions to a self-initiated topic change, "topic discussion" occupies a vested position because it triggers other topic changes and produces language. In this sense, Hart and Risley (1995) associate the volume of talking to children's vocabulary development (as quoted in Zucker et al., 2010, p. 67) and Weizman and Snow (2001) consider it a predictor for later language and literacy skills.

Now that we understand the characteristics of the different reaction types, we are going to see their repartition in numbers throughout the three activities.

5.1.3.   Preferences for reaction types

After the definition of different reaction types, we are going to assume a more quantitative stance on acceptances and rejections. For a better viewing, we split the reaction types into two parts.

Accepting

The following the table shows the percentage of occurrences per type of positive reaction[2]:

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[2] To consider the full percentages of the different reaction types per activity, please consider also the subsequent table with the negative reactions.

		Activity types		
		T-led	C-read	C-play
Accepting via:	Positive feedback	11%	0%	0%
	Topic discussion	35%	25%	0%
	Topic enactment	0%	13%	35%
	Scaffolding	10%	16%	20%

Table 11: Type of reaction to accept a self-initiated topic change

Positive feedback appears only during teacher-led activities (11%) by the teacher herself; however, it is not her first choice. The pedagogue, not being on the same level as the pupils, is in the position to evaluate their utterances. An additional important explanation is that many other reaction types start with a positive feedback but then develop further. Hence, this category regroups only the instances, during which the teacher gave a mere praise to the young students.

Topic discussions develop in teacher-led (35%) as well as in child-read activities (25%). There was no incident of topic discussion in child-play activities. As we have explained before, this reaction type is characterised by a topic development, which stimulates pupils to explore further nuances of the topic.

Topic enactment takes place exclusively in child-to-child interactions (13% for child reading and 35% for child-play activities). A possible explanation is the agenda of the teacher during her activities: Topic enactment consists in playing a certain feature of the story, for instance, miaowing when a child self-initiates a topic change about a cat. Teachers tend not to let this happen for classroom management reasons. They prefer keeping the noise and excitement level to a minimum and focus on verbal productions. Moreover, the other pupils rarely get to accept a topic as the teacher reserves this privilege for herself and she would most likely not miaow. The reactions in this activity type are therefore mostly the reactions of the teacher and not those of other children.

Scaffolding is found in all the activity types whereas child-play interaction displays the most instances of this reaction type (20%). child-reading activities (16%) as well as teacher-led activities (10%) have less scaffolding happenings. Again, we might account

for this finding by recognising that scaffolding instances, which developed into a topic discussion, were classified under the category of topic discussions. As a consequence, the regrouping of scaffolding comprises only the cases where scaffolding focuses on the pupil's utterance without going into deeper explorations of the topic. When playing the story, children are interested in a certain flow and this is the reason why they might stop to mould the utterance of a peer to integrate it into the playing. Moreover, they do not stop too long to ensue a discussion, in order to preserve the dynamics of the interaction. During reading activities, they also scaffold the utterance of another child but again, they mostly do not enter any further discussions on the proposed topic.

Rejecting

The following table shows the percentage of occurrences per type of negative reaction[3]:

		Activity types		
		T-led	C-read	C-play
Rejecting via:	Turning the page	6%	18%	0%
	Negative feedback	14%	15%	20%
	Ignoring	26%	13%	25%

Table 12: Type of reaction to reject a self-initiated topic change

Turning the page seems to be a strategy that is used above all by the children when they read a book (18%). It is a very abrupt reaction that literally cuts the proposed topic change of the peer by taking away its visual support. Anyhow, this technique is also used by the pedagogue (6%) who is in possession of the book and therefore regulates the advancement of the story at her own pace. During child-play activities, pupils rarely access the book and this makes the strategy obsolete.

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[3] To consider the full percentages of the different reaction types per activity, please consider also the previous table with the positive reactions.

Negative feedback is used by all the participants. It constitutes a strong evaluation on a proposed topic change that is then discarded. The teacher, who is the only one using the positive feedback technique, is not the one resorting the most to its opposite technique (14%) because it symbolises a cut in the interaction and does not foster productive topic development. Often, negative feedback is depleted as the strongest verbal refusal of an aspect that does not fit the teacher's agenda. Children use it for reading (15%) and playing (20%) but it is not the preferred reaction.

Ignoring is the teachers' favourite reaction to undesired topic changes (26%) and also children resort to it during play activities (25%). An answer to this might again be the fluidity of interaction. Instead of producing a momentary cut in the activity, participants prefer to just ignore another's topic change and pursue the previous topic. In child-reading activities, ignoring plays a minor role (13%) and does not seem to be a preferred mode of rejection. Pupils often split the reading by assigning each child one double page. To disagree with the topic change of the child holding the book, the others need to be direct and explicit by trying to turn the page or declaring negative feedback.

The following figure shows a recapitulation of the occurrences of all the reaction types per activity:

Type of reaction after a self-initiated topic change
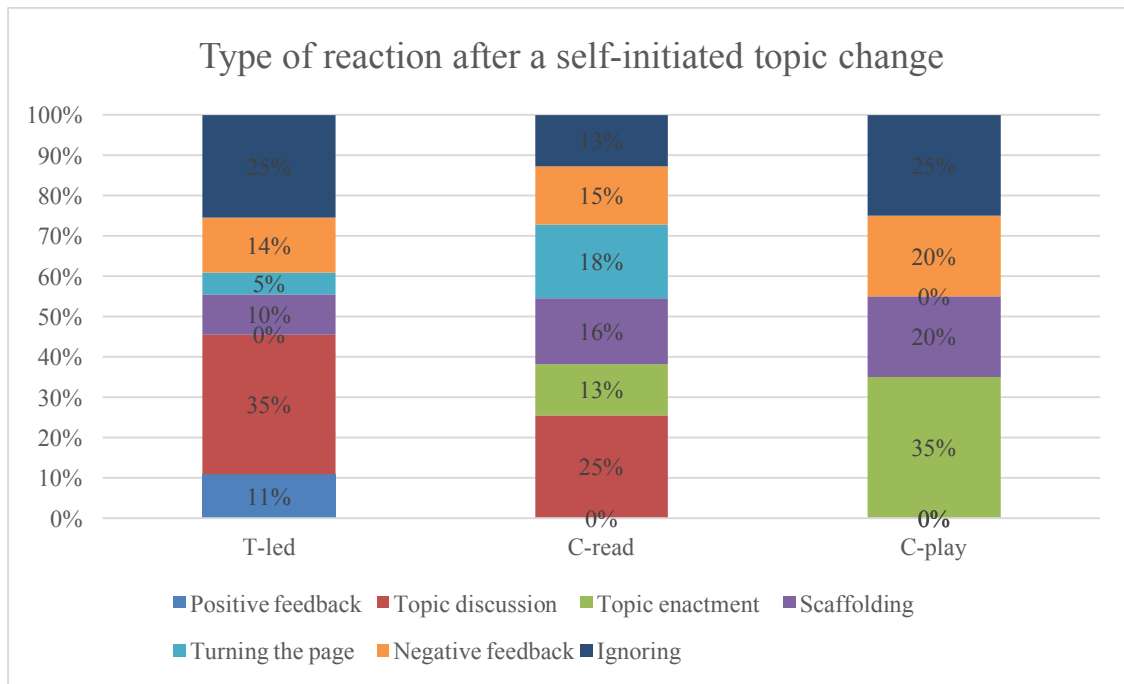
Figure 27: Type of reaction after a self-initiated topic change[4]

As teacher-pupil interactions are characterised by a not equilibrated power balance, it is not surprising that the teacher has the privilege to judge whether the pupil's topic change is relevant or not. Most of the time, the teacher chooses to accept a pupil's self-initiated topic change and engages in a discussion about this new topic which triggers a rich language exchange as we shall see in another chapter. If the teacher is not agreeing with the proposed topic change, she often simply ignores the pupil's input and continues with her own agenda. Astonishingly, the scaffolding technique is used rather infrequently but it partially disappears in the category of topic discussion when the topic is being developed further.

During child-reading activities, the children resort to topic discussion and scaffolding which shows their true interest for what their peers have to add to the conversation. As opposite to teacher, they do not follow a pedagogic agenda and, therefore, they take more time to linger on a new topic instead of simply continuing the story. When they disagree with a topic change, they often turn the page, which is a rather abrupt refusal.

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[4] The percentages are calculated in relation to the total of occurrences in each activity type

In child-play interaction, pupils prefer to enact a topic which reinforces the topic change. They also show consideration for their peers who have trouble in self-initiating a new topic and use the scaffolding technique to help. In case of disagreement with a new topic, they either ignore or openly reject it. It is interesting to note that they do not use topic discussion.

To sum up, we may assert that young students use the same rejection types as the teacher but to accept a topic, they have clear preferences for topic enactment and scaffolding.

5.1.4.   Tools for self-initiating a topic change

In order to self-initiate a topic change, children use different tools constituting the categories for the next table accounting for the occurrences of these tools throughout the activities. The focus is obviously on the initiation itself, not on the reaction that follows consequently. Concerning the categories, there is a total of 7 combinations:

- Speech: Initiating a topic solely on a verbal level.
- Gesture: Initiating a topic only with a gesture (e.g. pointing your finger to claim speakership).
- Action: Initiating a topic with an action (e.g. getting up)
- Speech & action: Initiating a topic through speech and action (e.g. speaking and turning the page)
- Speech & gesture: Initiating a topic verbally and using a gesture (e.g. iconic gesture that underlines a verbal input)
- Gesture & action: Initiating a topic by combining gesture and action combined (e.g. leaning forward with your body and pointing at the picture)
- Action & gesture & speech: Initiating a topic by using action, gesture and speech in the same turn, which does not necessarily happen simultaneously (e.g. turning your body, pointing and then speaking)

The following table shows the distribution of these different tools to self-initiate a topic change per activity type:
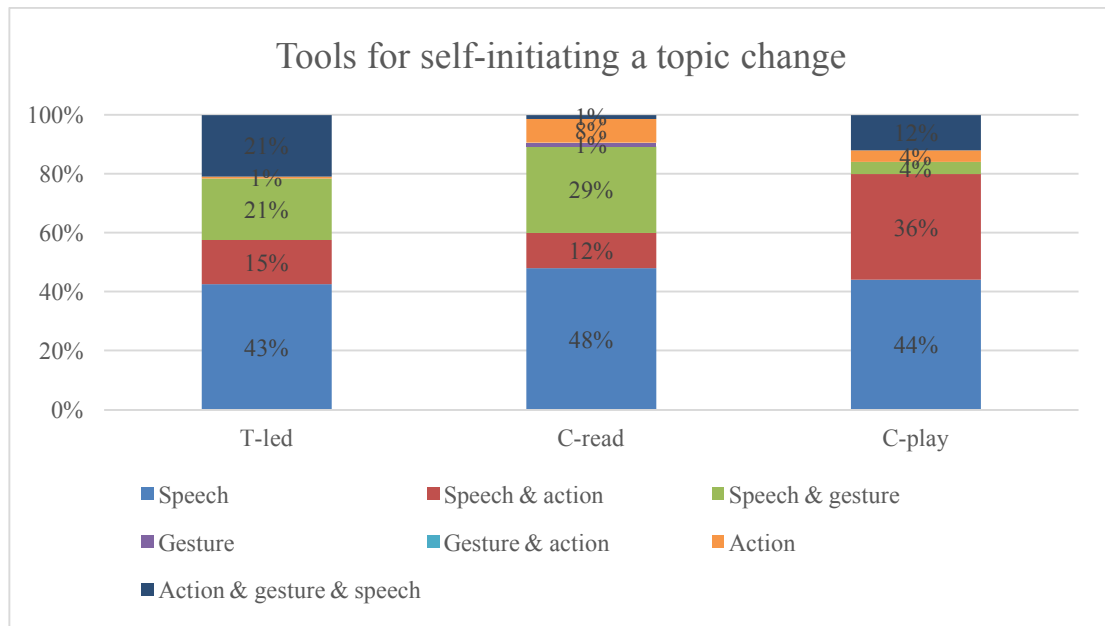
Figure 28: Tools for self-initiating a topic change – Total view

Overall, the preferred combinations of tools according to the activity type are:

- For teacher-led activities: "speech" (43%); "action & gesture & speech" (21%); "speech & gesture" (21%)
- For child-reading activities: "speech" (48%) and "speech & gesture" (29%)
- For child-play activities: "speech" (44%) and "speech & action" (36%)

The common denominator of all these strategies is "speech", accentuating the importance of verbal expression in self-initiated topic changes regardless of the activity type. The next paragraph breaks the usage down to the three activity types.

Teacher-led activities

In the presence of a teacher, children use mostly "speech" as a mean to self-initiate a topic change (43%). This is a behaviour expected from young students in a school system that intends to teach Luxembourgish. A second characteristic of teacher-led activities is the distribution of speakership via hand signs. Pupils desiring to speak are supposed to raise a hand until the teacher selects them (21%). Gestures do not refer so much to pointing in this activity type since the pupils cannot reach the book held exclusively by the teacher. Similarly, the third category accounts mainly for raising a hand combined to speaking and an action such as getting up to be more visible or to get closer to the picture to increase the chances for selection (21%).

"Action", "action & gesture" and "gesture" do not play a role in this category.

Child-reading activities

While looking at the story again, the children resort mainly to "speech" (48%). Now that they have free access to the book, pointing becomes an interesting accessory to let peers discover what one has seen (29%) and there is no need to claim speakership via a pre-set rule. Moreover, there is no direct authority, which explains why children use "action" (8% respectively 12% combined with speech) such as slamming a hand on the picture to attract attention to another topic for discussion.

"Action & gesture" or "gesture & speech" as well as solely "gestures" are not relevant for this activity type.

Child-play activities

If asked to play the story, children use "speech" (44%) and of course "speech & action" (36%) for staging purposes. Raising a hand to get the right to speak is useless as the interaction is moving at a fast pace and roles are fixed so that every child gets the opportunity to speak when required by the story plot. The book is not used anymore which makes pointing needless too. A small part is covered by "speech & gesture & action" (12%).

"Gesture & action" as well as "gesture" are inapt for this activity.

The following table illustrates the number of acceptances or rejections after a specific type of mean to self-initiate an utterance. The instances with 0% or 100% are less representative because there has only been one single instance of this mean in the data.

		Acceptance			Rejection		
		T-led	C-read	C-play	T-led	C-read	C-play
Tools	Speech	51%	44%	55%	49%	56%	45%
	Gesture	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%	0%
	Action	0%	67%	0%	100%	33%	100%
	Speech & action	61%	33%	50%	39%	67%	50%
	Speech & gesture	46%	52%	0%	54%	48%	100%
	Gesture & action	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
	Action & gesture & speech	74%	50%	100%	26%	50%	0%

Table 13: Choice of tools and reaction

Teacher-led activities

As a reminder, in teacher-led activities, the preferred strategies are "speech" (43%); "action & gesture & speech" (21%); "speech & gesture" (21%). However, "speech" (51%) leads less often to an acceptance of the topic than "speech & action" (61%) or "action & gesture & speech" (74%). It seems that children are more successful in introducing their topic change when they underline their utterance by pointing to the relevant part of the picture or by making themselves more visible through body movements, which is comprehensible when we imagine them routinized in competing daily for attention in a big group.

Child-reading activities

In child-reading activities, the best way to successfully introduce a topic is to relate to action tools (67%) without speech (only 33%). In other words, by introducing a topic with "speech & action" children failed the most (67%). Speaking and pointing to the picture as a gesture (52%) ore even adding an action to these two elements (50%), leads to success.

Child-play activities

In child-play activities, the best chances to get a new topic through, is by resorting to "speech" (55%), "speech & action" (50%) or "action & gesture & speech" (100%). As the story is enacted, action of course appears as a preferred element. However, we do not have enough data for this activity type to draw solid conclusions out of these tendencies.

In summary, "speech" appears as the common denominator in every activity. Whereas child-reading situations seem to foster "speech & gesture" through the accessibility to the book, child-play activities trigger more "speech & action" in order to enact the story and use the space (which is constraint in presence of a teacher).

One word to the categories that are barely represented: Obviously, it seems hard to introduce a topic change without recurring to speech, especially since the pupils are required to speak up. The reason, why we do not totally discard these categories, is that there is one such example in the data where a young student points to a new element in the picture and the teacher, helpfully, picks up the visual cue and verbally explains what it is about this discovered object, and with that, making it a topic. However, this phenomenon remains marginal in our data.

5.1.5.   Differences in self-initiated topics according to preschool year

The next figure pictures potential differences in self-initiated topic changes according to the number of years spent in preschool:
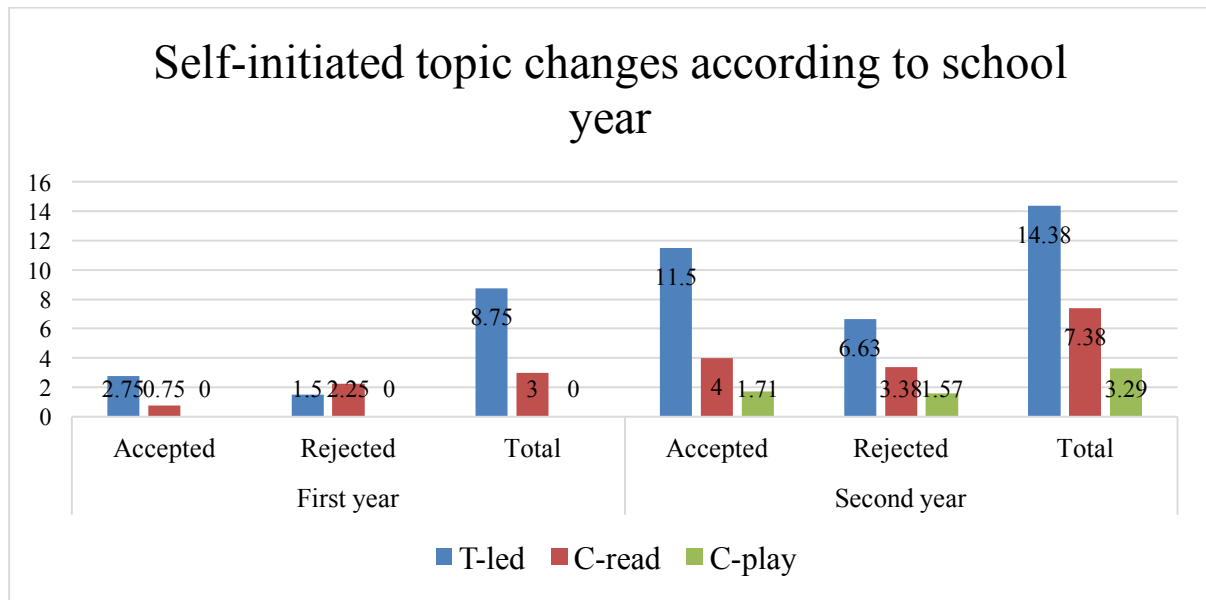
Figure 29: Self-initiated topic changes according to preschool year

Concerning the number of years spent in preschool and the relation to the number of self-initiated topics, a clear tendency is observable. The young students who are already in their second preschool year initiate much more topic changes than the new pupils (14.38 to 8.75; 7.38 to 3.0 and 3.29 to 0.0). A possible explanation could be that the pupils who spent more time in the system "school" are more acquainted with the procedures and the strategies to speak up in class. Furthermore, they might already have developed further linguistic skills that make them more confident and proficient in self-initiating topic changes. Unfortunately, the data of this study is not sufficiently covering the longitudinal time aspect (data collections in November/December 2012 and then in May 2013) so that this phenomenon can only be asserted as a tendency in this study.

5.2. The impact of self-initiated topic changes on proficiency

After having considered MLU characteristics on the one hand and self-initiated topic changes on the other hand, we are now looking into combinations of these two entities. As mentioned already in chapter 4.2, we have seen that the mean length of an utterance that has been issued after display questions appearing in a restricted format such as the IRF scheme, remains low. Opposed to this, stands the self-initiated topic change, for which the pupil took himself the initiative to place it during interaction. How does the MLU develop in such a case?
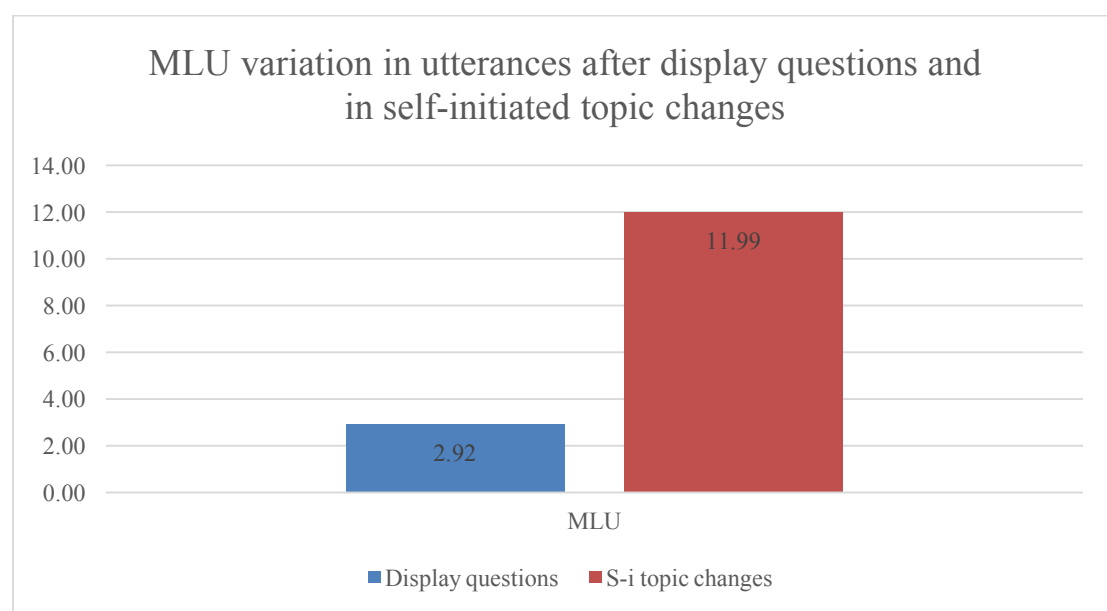
Figure 30: MLU variation in utterances after display questions and in self-initiated topic changes

After display questions, the young students' mean length of utterance is in average 2.92. Utterances, which are self-initiated have a mean length of utterance that rates 11.99 on average. We observe a quadruplicating MLU in respect to self-initiated topic changes.

In chapter 4.2, we have seen that, with a ratio of 6% of pupil talk versus 94% of speech done by teachers. The opportunities to practice Luxembourgish and hence affordances for learning, are diminished considerably. On one hand, this graph underlines the theory, that during teacher talk with display questions, the MLU stays at a low level. On the other hand, it points at occasions, during which pupils are allowed to speak up or to find a way to introduce their utterance in the teacher-led framework, and in which the

MLU is quadruplicating. Hence the young students have the possibility to put into practice their language and confront their representations about the L2 to the reactions of their environment.

The next table picks up the individual details between the MLU in ordinary utterances and in self-initiated topic changes:

	Mean MLU of utterances				Mean MLU in sitc topic changes				Tendency
	T-led	C-read	C-play	Total	T-led	C-read	C-play	Total	
Sergio	5,99	4,33	6,80	5,71	15,00	4,00	6,00	8,33	↗
Salomão	12,46	6,05	9,84	9,45	29,00	8,00	2,50	13,17	↗
Ugo	6,38	5,24	8,21	6,61	7,00	5,00	4,50	5,50	↘
Isa	7,22	5,41	10,31	7,64	13,00	4,50	11,00	9,50	↗
Benito	5,89	8,37	7,27	7,17	8,00	10,50	11,00	9,83	↗
Lídia	6,11	7,78	6,57	6,82	12,00	9,00	13,00	25,33	↗
Leticia	2,42	5,17	8,46	5,35	3,00	3,00	0,00	2,00	↘
Jacob	3,27	6,52	6,91	5,57	4,50	7,00	8,00	6,50	↗
Michele	5,04	6,99		6,02	2,00	13,50		7,75	↗
Nícolas	5,23	5,91		5,57	23,00	3,00		13,00	↗
Trevor	4,85	5,03		4,94	6,50	2,50		4,50	↘
Magda	0,00	4,57		2,28	0,00	0,00		0,00	↘

Table 14: Development of the mean MLU in self-initiated topic changes as compared to the mean MLU in all the utterances

Overall, the pupils' MLU goes up in self-initiated topic changes, meaning that they produce longer utterances when they take initiative to influence a topic in the conversation. Contrarily, Magda, Ugo, Trevor and Leticia see their MLU dropping when taking initiative. Magda is not yet able to self-initiate a topic change so obviously her MLU goes back to 0. For Leticia, Ugo and Trevor, it seems to be quite hard to

produce a self-initiated topic change and this may be an indicator that they are still at the beginning of this learning process.

By considering the performance in the different activity types, the MLU for Benito, Isa, Leticia, Lídia, Salomão and Sergio increases significantly for teacher-led activities. A drop in the MLU for Leticia, Salomão and Ugo is observable in child-play activities, whereas on the contrary, Benito and Lídia improve their MLU. Hence, the presence of the teacher, which makes it more difficult to produce a self-initiated topic change, is more stimulating to enlarge the MLU once the initiative to change the topic has been undertaken. Again, the data points to the evidence that it is more difficult to actually produce a self-initiated topic change but once it is emitted, it has a strong potential for ameliorating the mean length of the utterance.

This analysis helps understanding the context, in which most of the joint reading takes place. It also describes the degree of participation of teachers and pupils as well as the MLU performance of each pupil with respect to different communication formats.

5.3. The use of self-initiated topic changes by the pupils

In this chapter, we are going to look with more detail into the pupils' use of self-initiated topic changes as well as the employed reaction types.

Benito

Benito's outline for self-initiated topic changes and reactions resembles the following:
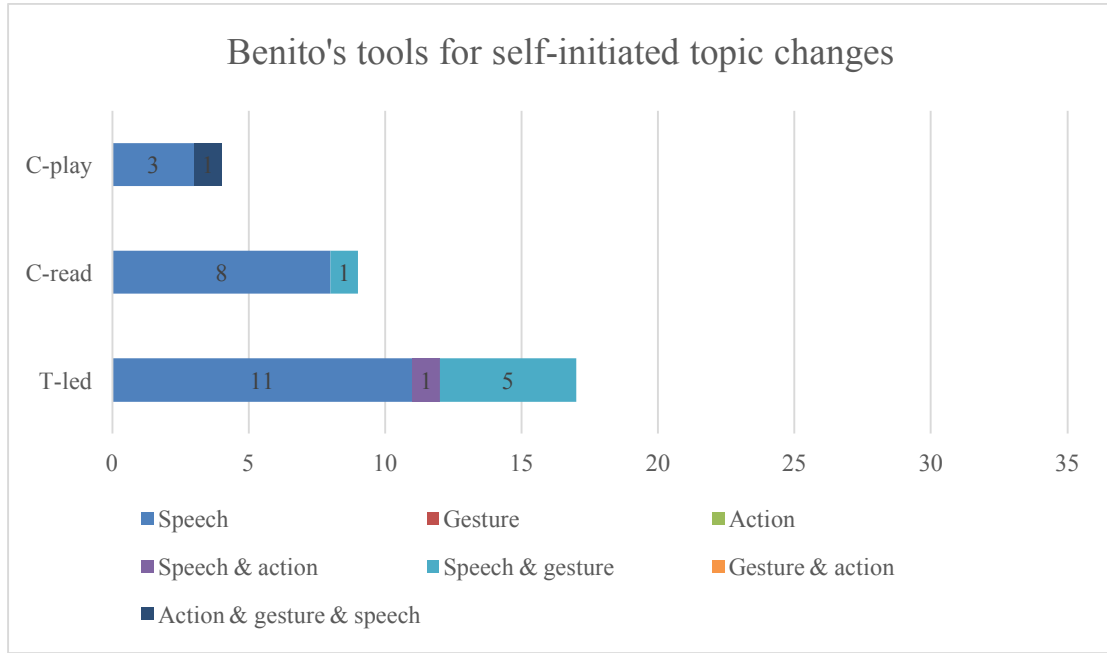
Figure 31: Benito's tools for self-initiated topic changes

The majority of self-initiated topic changes took place during teacher-led activities and was performed through speech or in combination with speech: 11 times "speech", 1 time "speech & action", 5 times "speech & gesture".
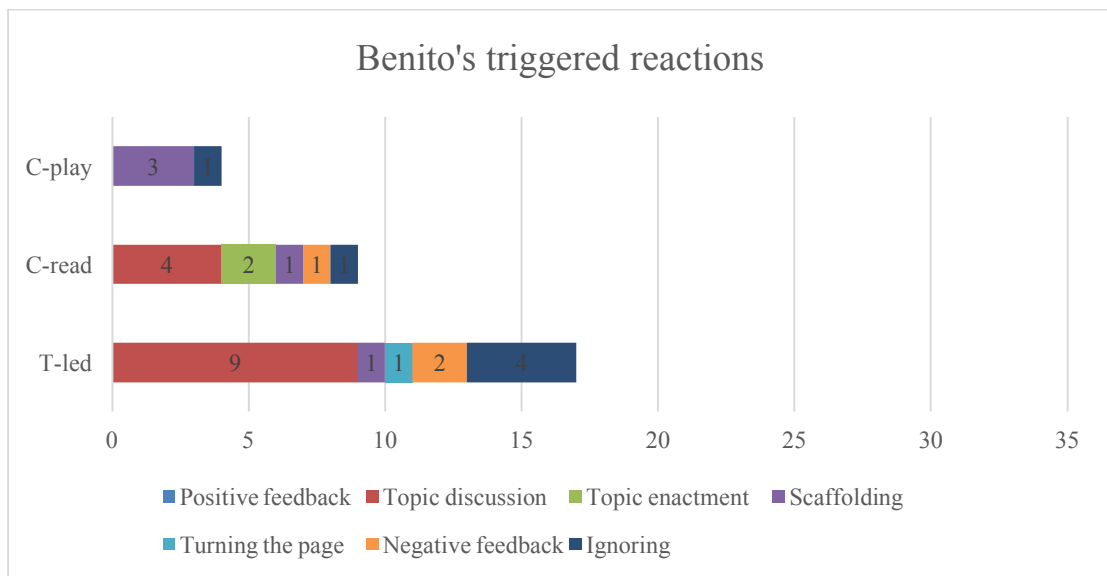
Figure 32: Benito's triggered reactions

Benito self-initiated topics that engendered a discussion when interacting with the teacher (9 times) as well as with his peers (4 times). The teacher never returned a positive feedback upon one of his initiations in our data. During child-play activities, he caused 3 scaffolding actions against 1 in presence of the teacher and 1 during child-reading. Topic enactment was triggered only in 2 instances for child-reading. Overall, his self-initiated topics were mostly accepted - 20 acceptations versus 10 rejections.

Isa

For Isa, we have this outline for self-initiated topic changes and

 reactions:
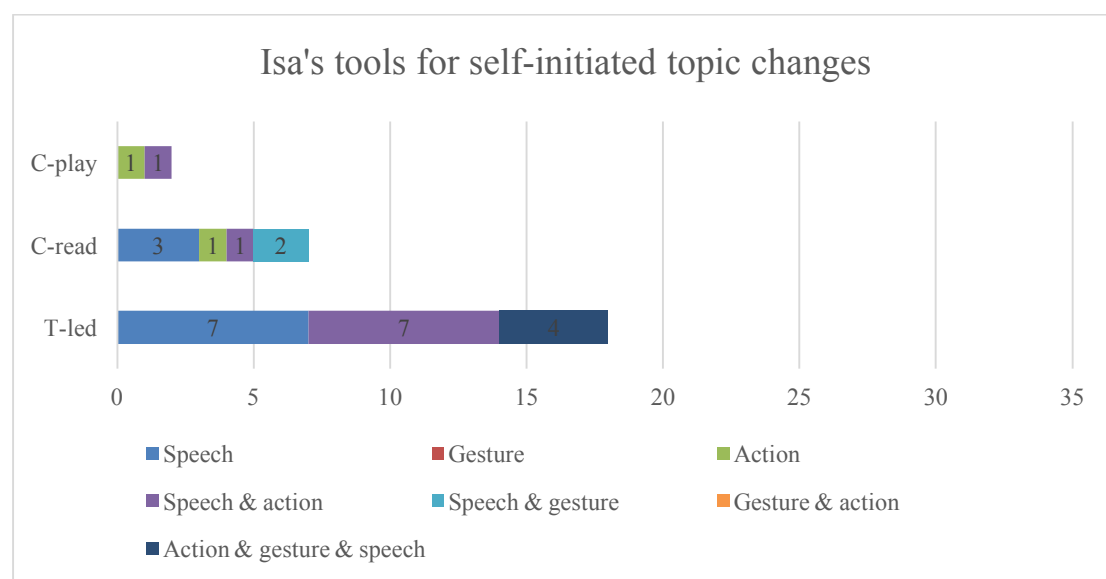
Figure 33: Isa's tools for self-initiated topic changes

In presence of a teacher, Isa self-initiated most of the topic changes. She mainly used speech: 7 times "speech", 7 times "speech & action" and 4 times "action & gesture & speech". Again speech and speech combinations are the most popular.
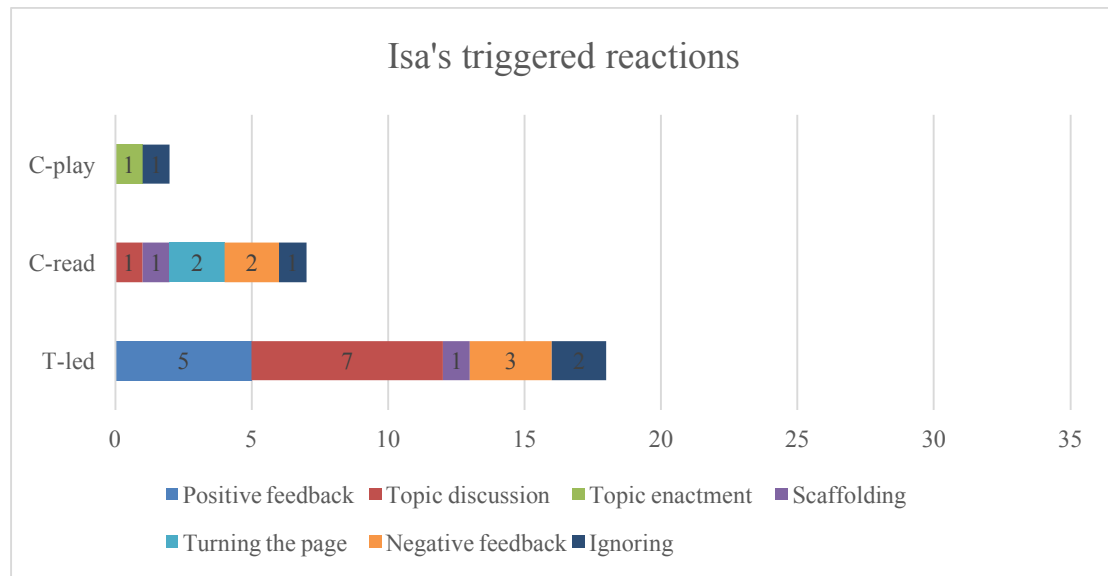
Figure 34: Isa's triggered reactions

Isa managed to self-initiate topics that engendered 7 times a discussion when interacting with the teacher. This might be a sign for quality as the teacher treated her input valuable enough as to allow for a further discussion about it. In child activities, her self-initiated topic changes were mostly rejected (6 rejections against 3 acceptations).

Jacob

Jacob's outline for self-initiated topic changes and reactions looks the following:

Jacob's tools for self-initiated topic changes
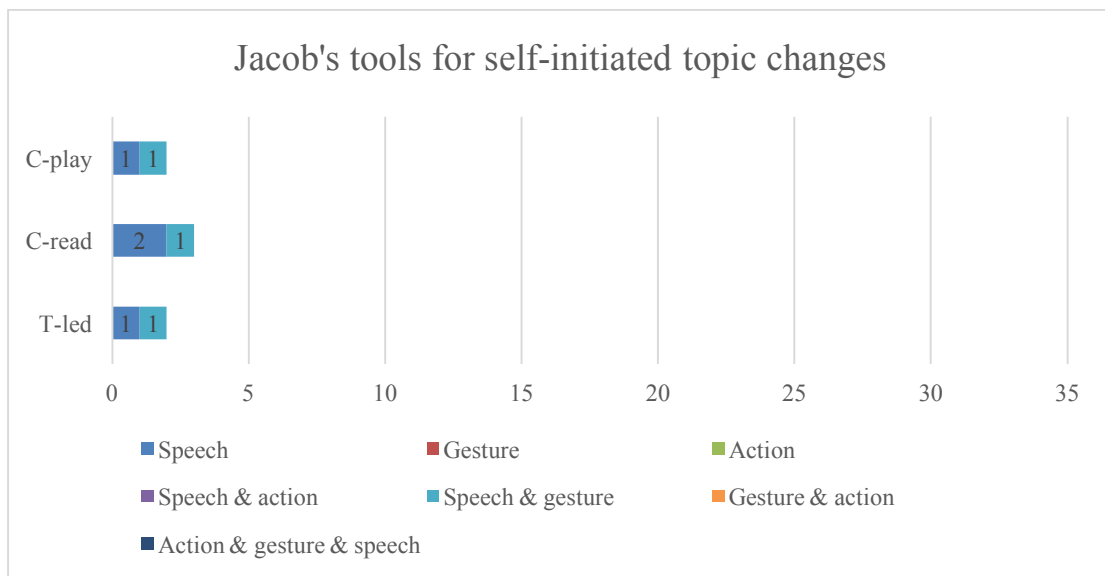
Figure 35: Jacob's tools for self-initiated topic changes

Jacob did not self-initiate many topic changes. He only used "speech" and "speech & gesture" to self-initiate a topic: 4 times the first and 3 times the latter.

Jacob's triggered reactions
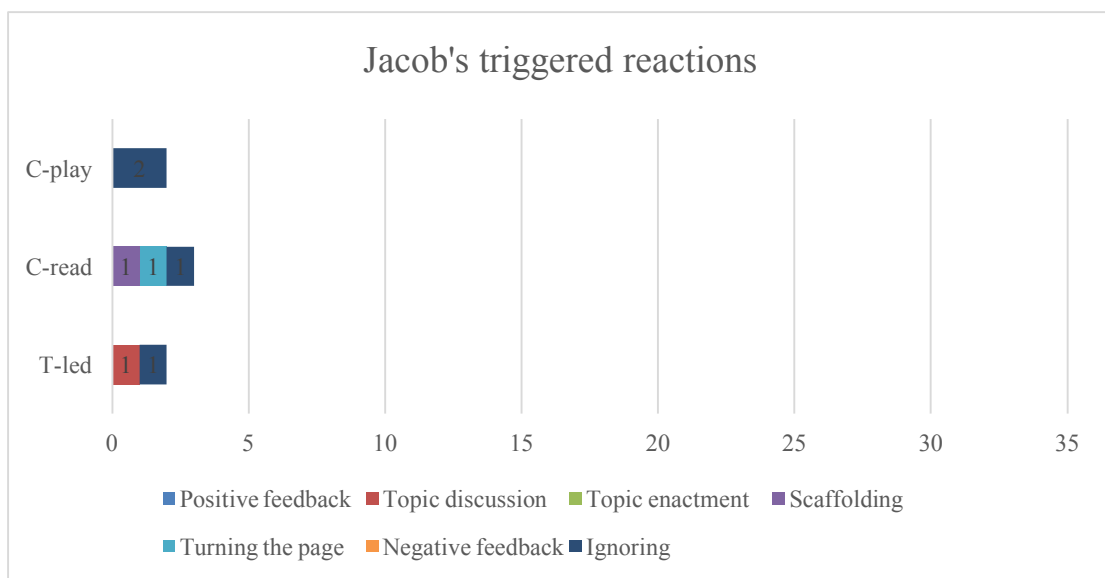
Figure 36: Jacob's triggered reactions

Jacob self-initiated a topic leading to a discussion when interacting with the teacher. In child activities, his topics were likely to be rejected.

<u>Leticia</u>

Self-initiated topic changes and reactions by Leticia take the following shape:
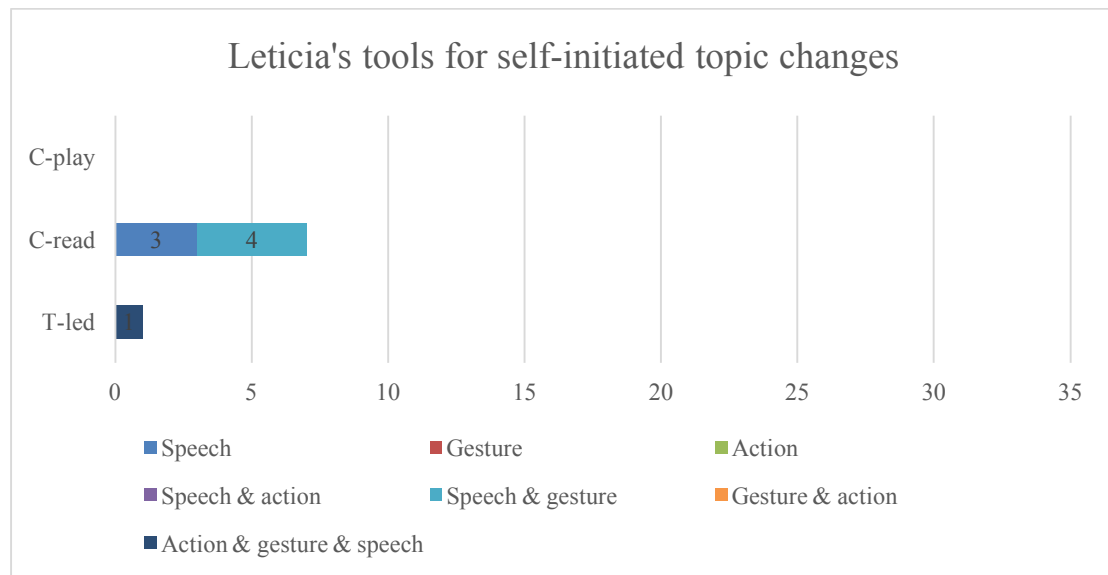
Figure 37: Leticia's tools for self-initiated topic changes

Leticia's preferred strategies to self-initiate a topic were "speech" and "speech & gesture" during child-reading situations (3 and 4 times respectively). In child-play activities, she did not take initiative, whereas in presence of the teacher, we could only count 1 occurrence for which she used a combination of "action & gesture & speech".
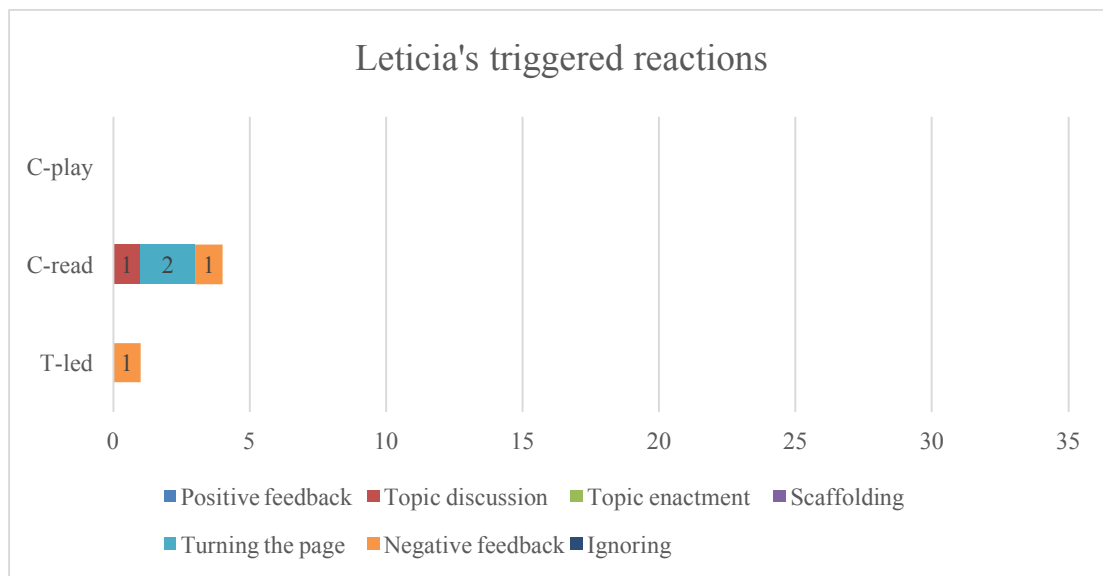
Figure 38: Leticia's triggered reactions

Leticia self-initiated topics that were mostly rejected. With her peers, she once triggered a topic discussion.

Lídia

The format of Lídia's self-initiated topic changes and reactions is represented in the next figures:
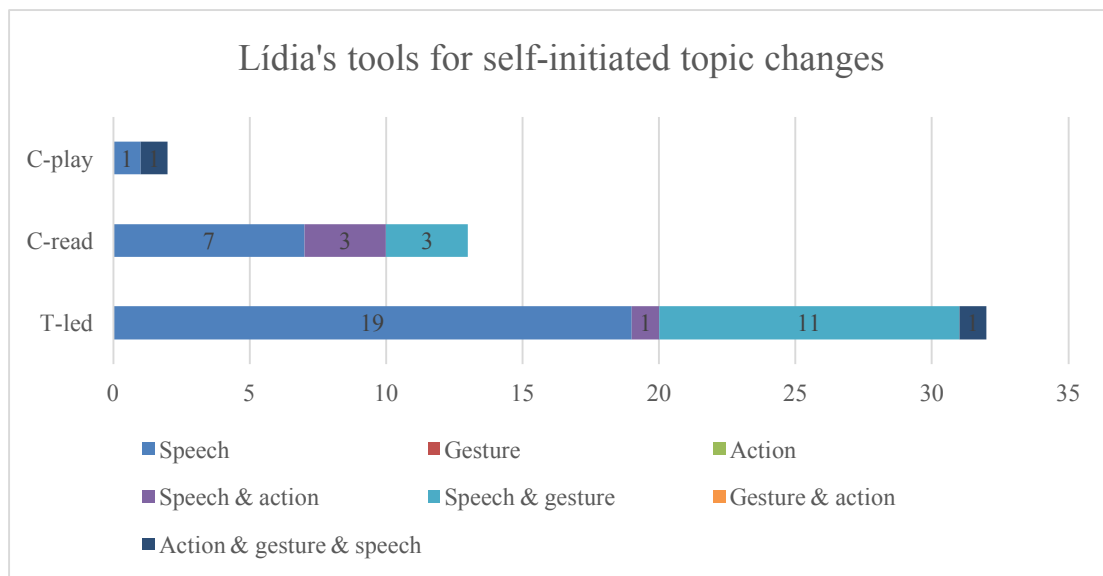
Figure 39: Lídia's tools for self-initiated topic changes

Lídia is the child who self-initiated most of the topics. Especially during teacher-led activities, her performance was remarkable with 32 occurrences. Similarly, in child-reading situations, she initiated 13 times a topic change. In opposition to this achievement, she only self-initiated a topic 2 times during child-play. She mainly uses "speech" combined with "speech & gesture" as a mean.
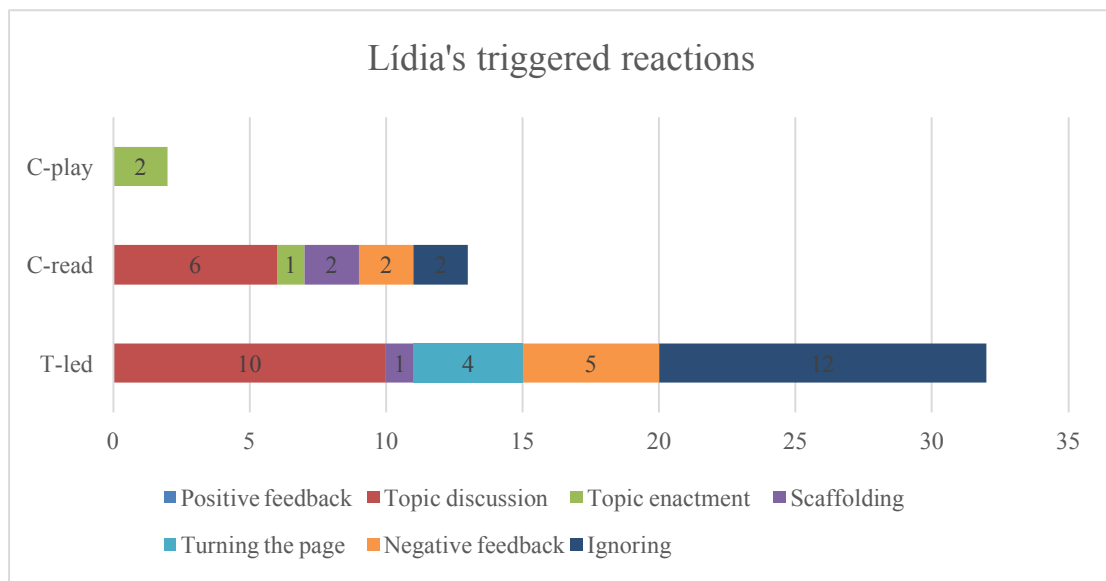
Figure 40: Lídia's triggered reactions

Lídia self-initiated topics that seemed interesting enough as to engender a discussion when interacting with the teacher (10 times) but she got more rejections to her topic changes (in total 21 times). In child activities, her self-initiated topics were mostly accepted and she managed to trigger a discussion 6 times.

Magda

Magda did not self-initiate any topic change in the whole data set. Even if we observed her as being very active on a nonverbal level such as with gesturing, body positioning and gazes, she did not use the tools "action" or "gesture & action" to self-initiate a topic.

Michele

Self-initiated topic changes and reactions for Michele have the subsequent appearance:
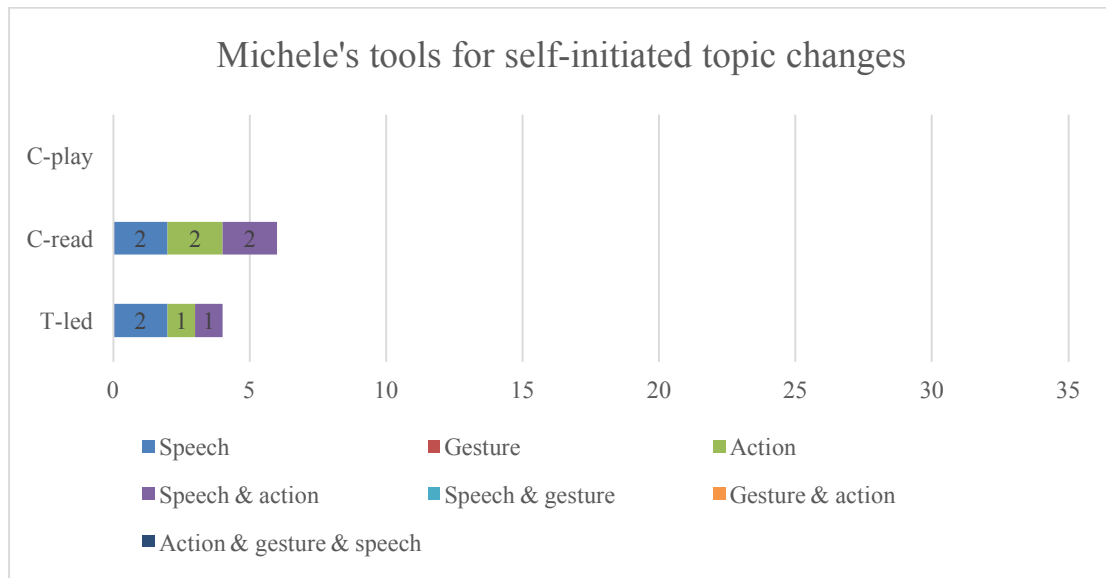
Figure 41: Michele's tools for self-initiated topic changes

To self-initiate a topic change, Michele used strategies linked to speech and action. In child-reading activities, the mixture was balanced whereas there was a slight predominance for speech in teacher-led activities.
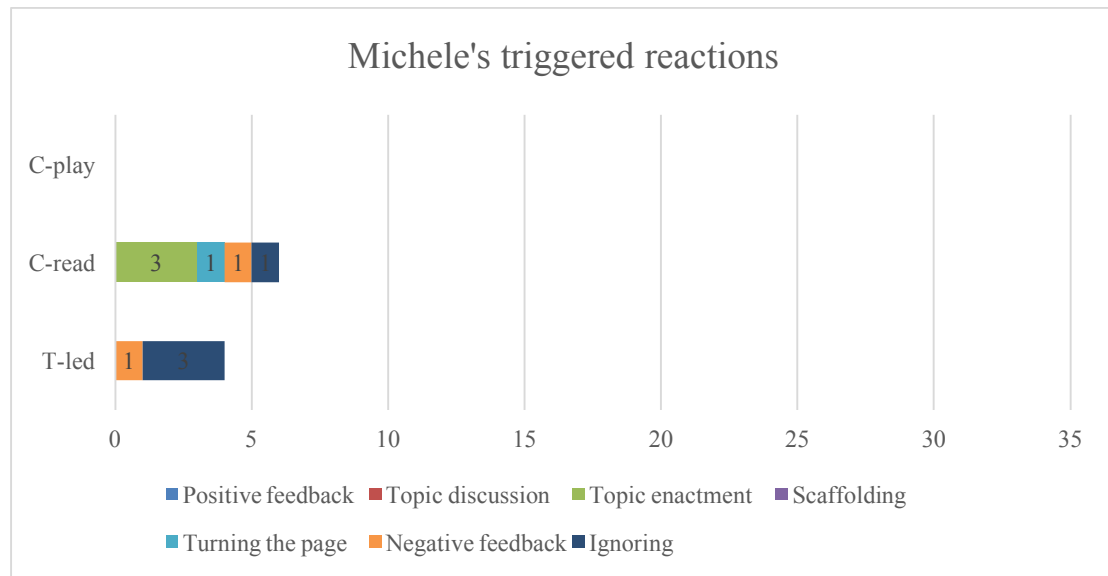
Figure 42: Michele's triggered reactions

Michele self-initiated a topic leading to enactment in child-reading activities. During the interaction with her teacher, none of her self-initiated topic changes was accepted. In child activities, her topics were more or less equally accepted and rejected.

Nícolas

Nícolas' sketch for self-initiated topic changes and reactions is materialised in the next table:
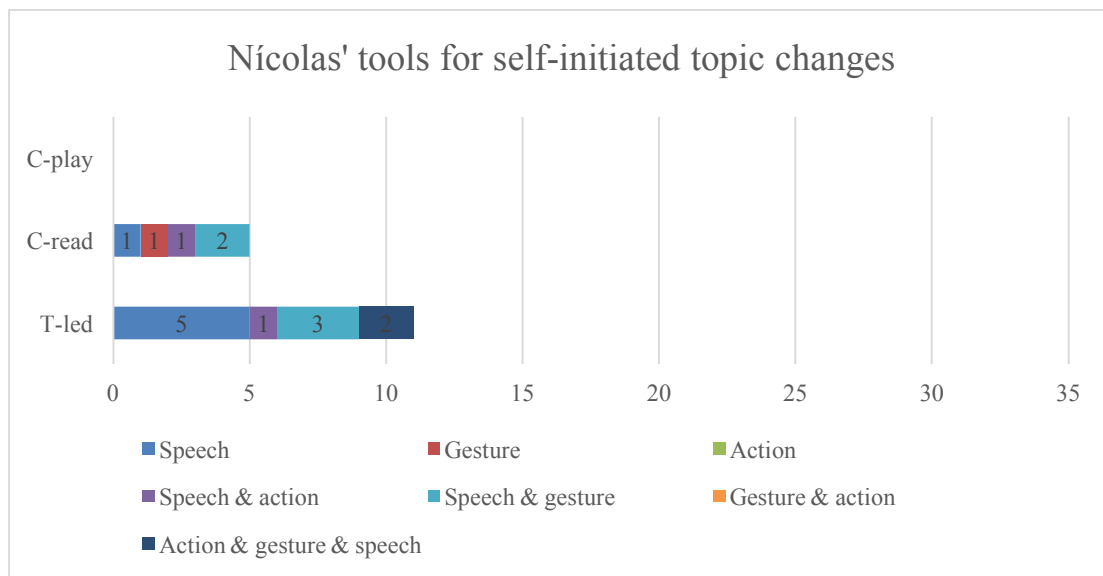
Figure 43: Nícolas' tools for self-initiated topic changes

Nícolas used predominantly "speech" as a tool to self-initiate a topic change in presence of the teacher. Slightly less often, he combined speech to gesture or to action. In child-reading activities, he used a variety of tools such as "speech", "gesture", "speech & action" as well as "speech & gesture".
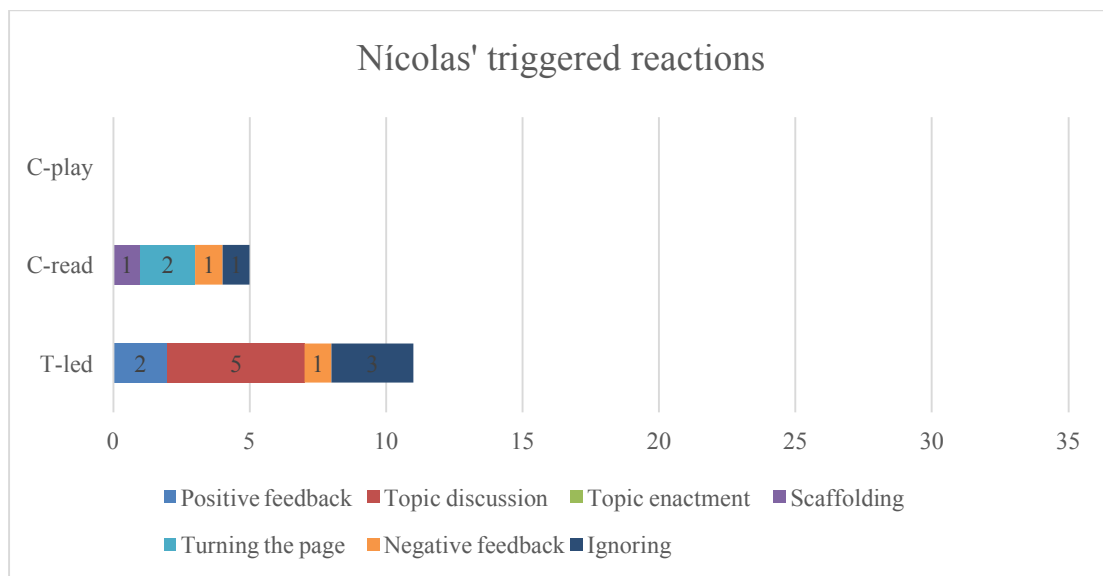
Figure 44: Nícolas' triggered reactions

Nícolas self-initiated topics leading to discussion during teacher activities. During teacher interaction, his self-initiated topics were more or less equally accepted and rejected. In child activities, his topics were generally rejected.

Salomão

For Salomão's use of self-initiated topic changes and reactions we have the following composition:
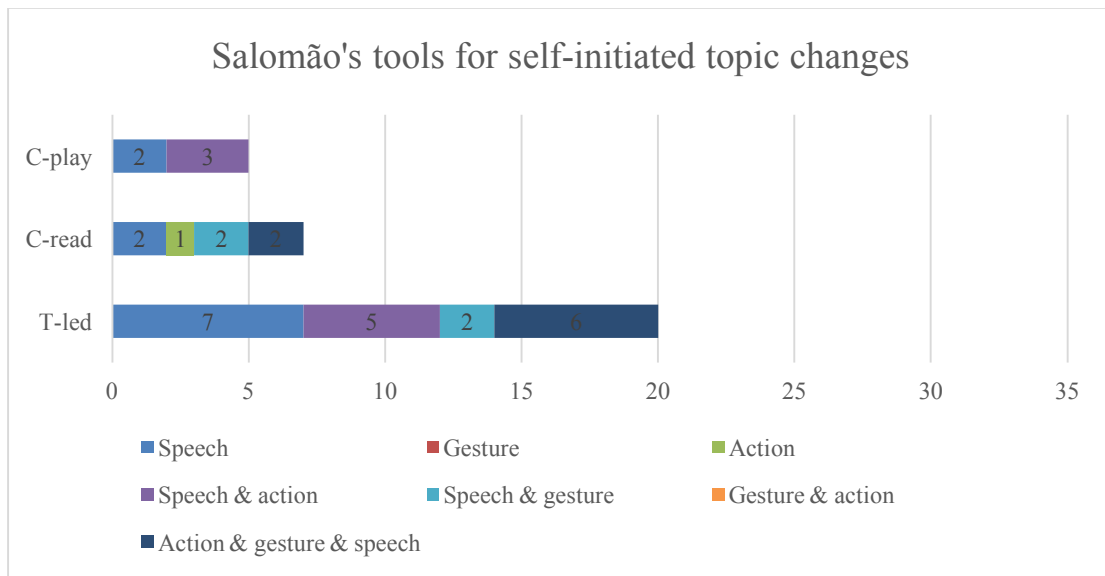
Figure 45: Salomão's tools for self-initiated topic changes

Salomão's preferred strategy to introduce a new topic is a combination of "speech", "speech & action", "action & gesture & speech", "gesture & speech" throughout all the activity types except for play where he drops "speech & gesture".
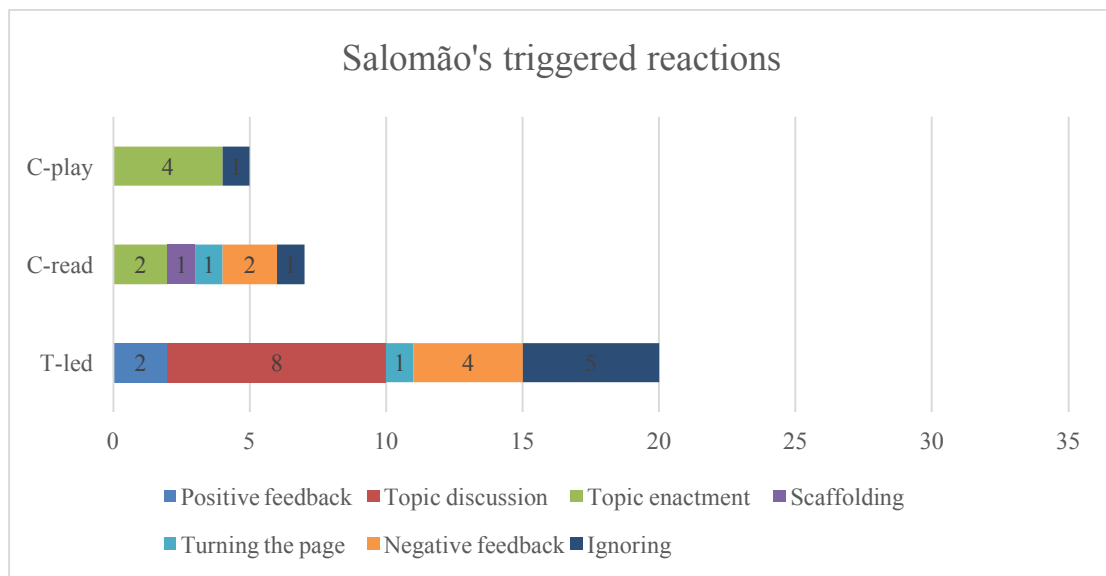
Figure 46: Salomão's triggered reactions

Salomão self-initiated topics that were treated as qualitative enough to engender a discussion when interacting with the teacher but at the same rate, his self-initiated topic changes could also be subject to rejection. In child activities, his topic changes were more or less equally accepted and rejected.

Sergio

Sergio's outline for self-initiated topic changes and reactions are taken up by the next table:
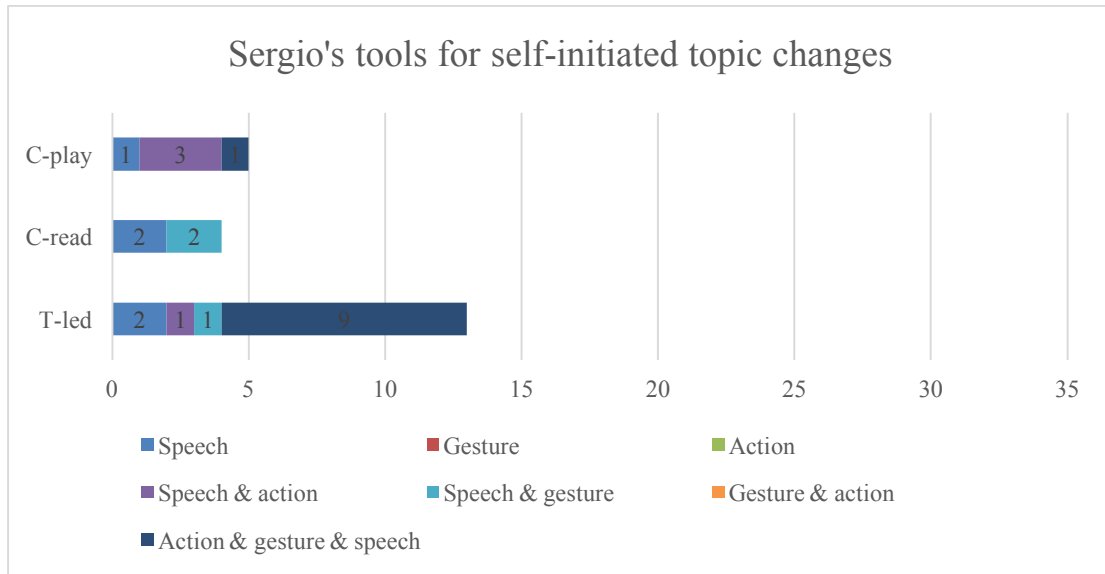
Figure 47: Sergio's tools for self-initiated topic changes

Sergio applied foremost a combination of "action & gesture & speech" when self-initiating a topic in presence of the teacher. While reading with his peers, he preferred "speech & gesture" whereas in play activities, where the book was barely used, he prioritised "speech & action".
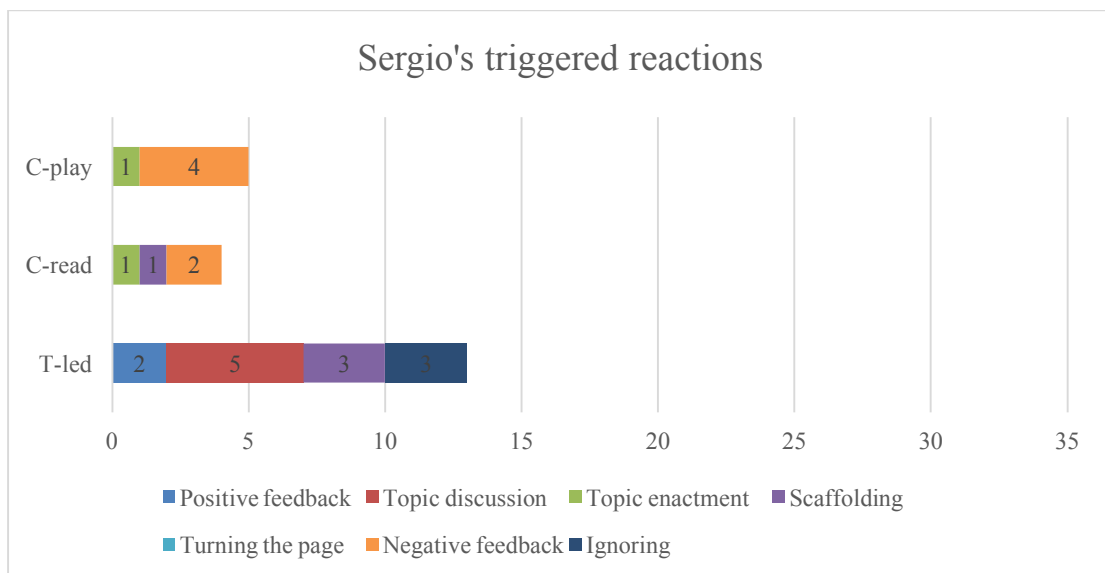
Figure 48: Sergio's triggered reactions

Sergio self-initiated topics that engendered a discussion and nearly as many that needed scaffolding when interacting with the teacher. In child-reading activities, his topic

changes were equally accepted and rejected but in child play he triggered only rejections.

<u>Trevor</u>

Trevor's outline for self-initiated topic changes and reactions looks the following:
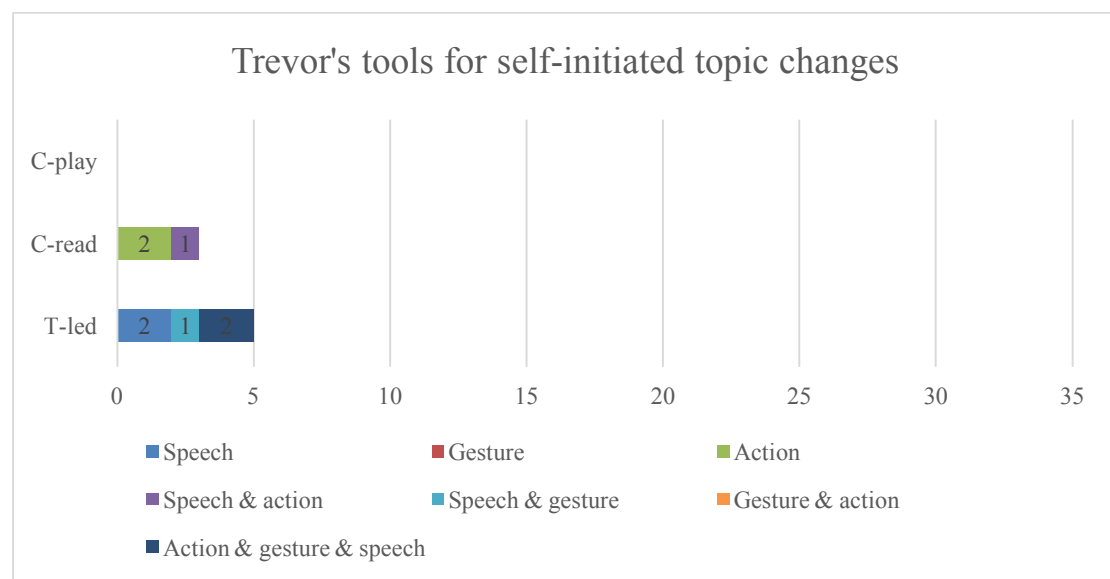
Figure 49: Trevor's tools for self-initiated topic changes

Trevor privileged "speech & action" or "action" in child-reading activities. In presence of the teacher, he gave priority to "speech" or a combination of "action & gesture & speech".
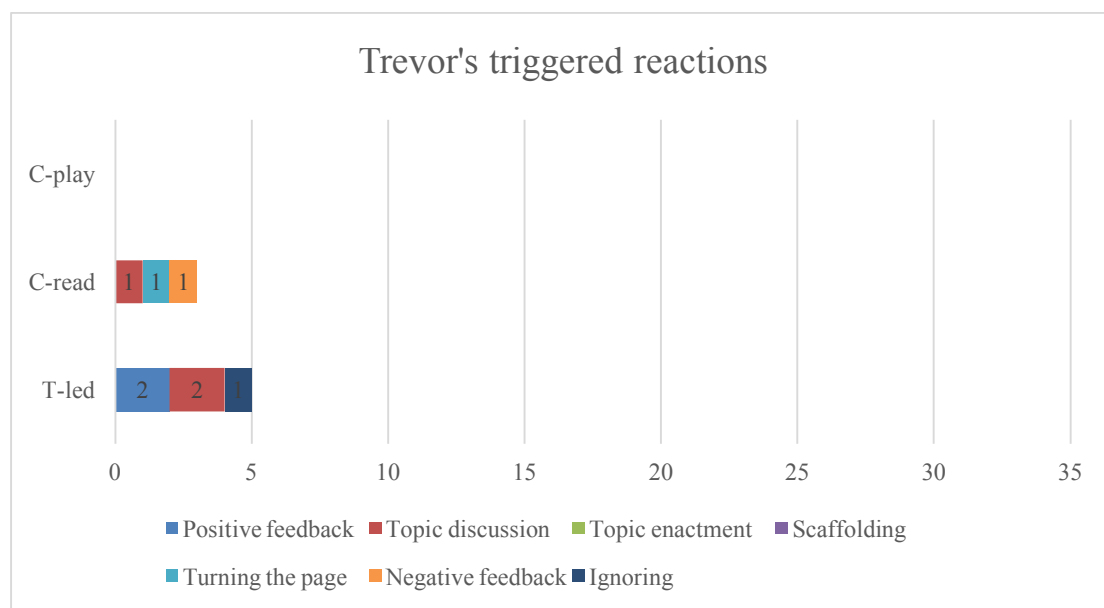
Figure 50: Trevor's triggered reactions

Trevor self-initiated topics leading to positive feedback and discussion during teacher activities. In child activities, his topics were mostly rejected. He combined speech with action to initiate a topic.

<u>Ugo</u>

Ugo's outline for self-initiated topic changes and reactions looks the following:
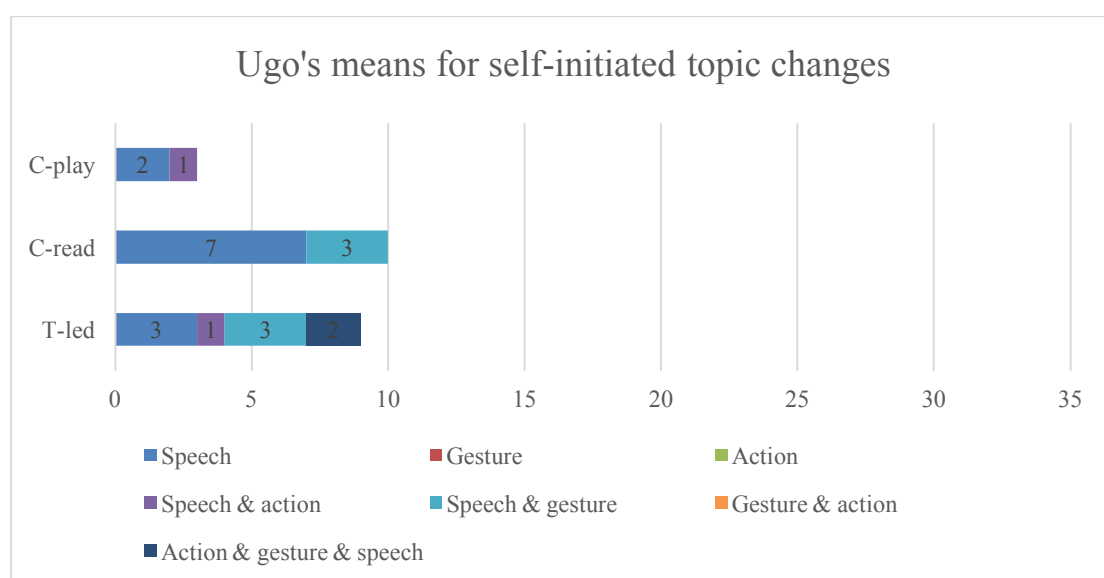
Ugo's preferred tool for self-initiating topics was "speech" – independently of the activity type. However, and given the structure of the activity, play activities triggered action strategies and child-reading activities gesture tools as well. In presence of the teacher, gesture and action were combined to speech.
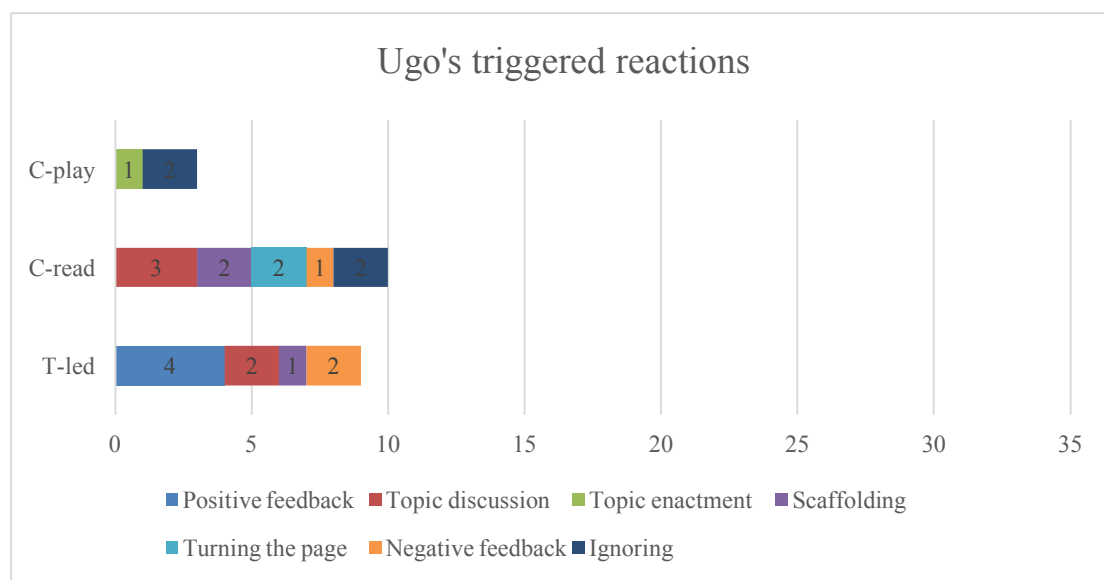
Figure 52: Ugo's triggered reactions

Ugo self-initiated topics that engendered a discussion when interacting with his peers. During teacher activities, his self-initiated topics were granted a positive feedback. In child activities, his topic changes were mostly rejected.

5.4. Intermediate findings

The previous subchapter described the young student's behaviour in terms of self-initiated topic changes, the tools they use and the reactions that follow. All these characteristics contribute to the global view of the pupils' speech outlines.

In the next figure, we compare the pupil's number of self-initiated topic changes during teacher-led and child-led activities. The unit „number of self-initiated topics" depends on the time interval of the activities as the third pupil group has less available data to analyse. Individual contributions of all young students have been put down to one hour (e.g. if a child scores 11 self-initiated topics in 27 minutes, he/she would have uttered 24,4 self-initiated topics per 60minutes/1hour). The following conditions have been assumed in order to compensate the missing data for period 2 of group 3:

-   All the children (group 1, 2 and 3) have understood the rules of the activities in terms of individual participation in the same way.
-   The contribution in period 1 and 2 is identical and linear which means that there is no „advantage" for the children of group 1 and 2 who participated in both periods.
-   The participation of each child is linear in terms of individual contribution per unit of time. This allows for projections of the number of self-initiated topic changes for children who participated less than one hour.
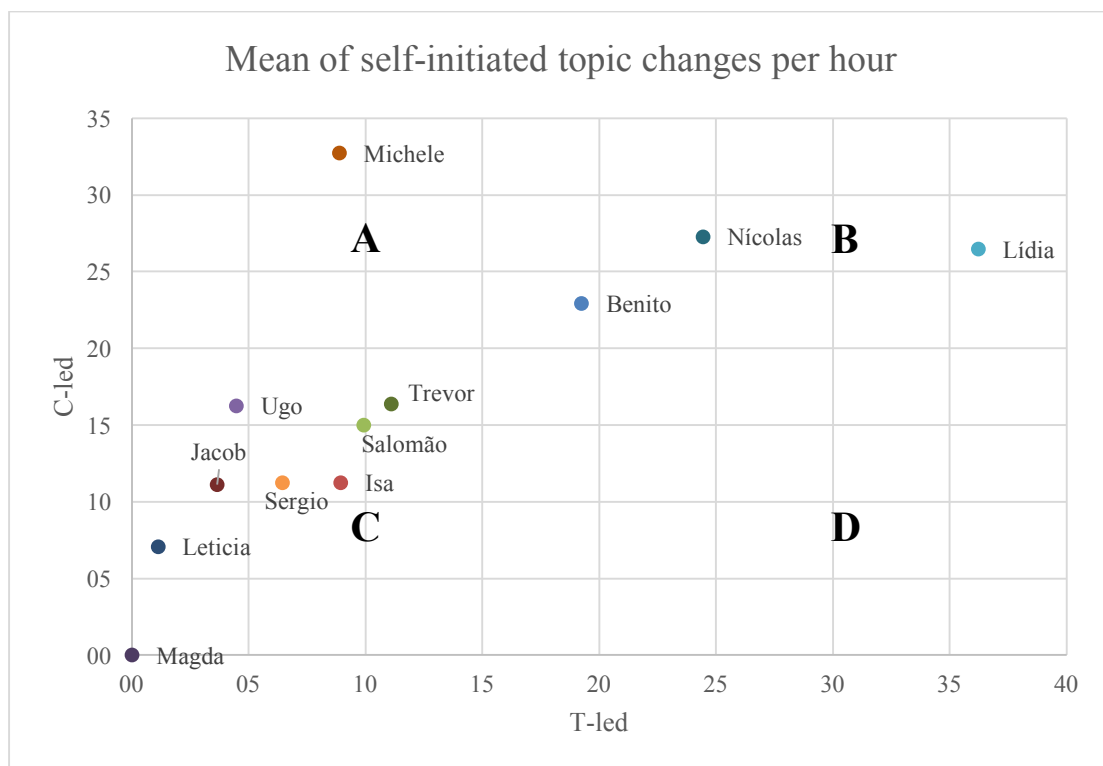
Figure 53: Mean of self-initiated topic changes per hour in child-led and teacher-led activities

To facilitate explanations, we divide the graph into four parts. The extreme ends of the segmentation refer to:

A   Upper left: Many self-initiated topics in child-led activities, few self-initiated topics in teacher-led activities

B   Upper right: Many self-initiated topics in child-led activities, many self-initiated topics in teacher-led activities

C   Lower left: Few self-initiated topics in child-led activities, few self-initiated topics in teacher-led activities

D   Lower right: Few self-initiated topics in child-led activities, many self-initiated topics in teacher-led activities

Children towards the segment "A" take more initiative in terms of topic changes with peers than in teacher-led activities. This is certainly true for Michele. Benito moves somehow between A and B which is interesting if we consider section B to be the optimum, meaning that there are many self-initiated topics independent of the activity type. Nícolas and above all Lídia seem to have reached this proficiency. The "D"-area regroups the children who are self-initiating more during teacher-led activities than together with her peers. This segment is empty, suggesting that pupils first acquire autonomy with their peers before gaining proficiency in presence of the teacher. Again we relate this to the particular type of discourse during teacher-led activities in line with Kumpulainen and Wray (1997) enouncing that *"in order to participate successfully in classroom discussions children must learn to match their classroom discourse both in terms of its social appropriateness and its content"* (p. 2). In section "C", pupils are not taking much initiative to change a topic, whether it is with peers or in presence of the teacher. Magda, for whom we could not find any self-initiated topic change, clearly fits into this category. Isa, Jacob, Leticia, Salomão, Sergio, Trevor and Ugo are more or less located in segment C or at the transition to area A, meaning that they are progressively acquiring autonomy in presence of their peers.

As outlined in chapter 5.3, Nícolas, Lídia and Benito relate above all on speech and speech-gesture-combinations to self-initiate a topic change. As they are approaching

the optimum end of our graph, we establish the hypothesis that these tools are more appropriate for successful topic changes with the teacher. In peer talk, children have an equal status and as such, they collaborate in making meaning and negotiating topics. With adults, they have to adapt their speech to the conditions that, in our case, the teacher defines (N. Hall & Martello, 1996). Action, on the contrary, seems to be a preferred mean with the peers – a possible explanation is that teachers might not accept this technique as we have already seen in chapter 5.1.4. Skilled pupils have understood this and use gesturing to change a topic successfully. Thus, the competence to self-initiate a topic change is not quickly acquired by the pupils: Only Lídia and Nícolas master it in all activity types whereas all the other children range far from them in our graph. The tendency seems to be vertical, that means children move from section "C" in the direction of "A" and then to the right. Using action as a mean to change the topic in peer activities is an important feature. Therefore, category "D" is always empty, suggesting, as for the MLU profiles, that the pupils become skilful in interaction with their peers first. Only then, do they move to the right part in the graph, that is, become competent in the discourse with the teacher or, to put it in the words of Edwards and Westgate (1994), learn *"how to be pupils"* (p. 105).

If the number of years spent in preschool, has been characteristic of the length of utterances during teacher-led activities, this is confirmed once more with the number of self-initiated topic changes. Trevor, Magda and Leticia stay in the area of section "C". However, we find an exception in the case of Nícolas who is present in the category "B" together with the pupils self-initiating many topic changes. As seen in chapter 4.3, his MLU divergence in all activity types is relatively low, that is, he is proficient in both teacher-led and child-led activities.

The quantitative analysis of the self-initiated topic changes highlights the following observations:

Chapter 5 - Self-initiated topic changes – nature, reactions and tools

➤ Finding 1

The reaction "topic discussion" to a self-initiated topic change induces a conversation by triggering even more topic changes.

➤ Finding 2

Positive feedback is used exclusively by teachers (11%) whereas only pupils recur to topic enactment (13% in C-read and 35% in C-play) as a reaction to a topic change. The preponderant reaction is topic discussion (35% in T-led and 25% in C-read); however, it does not play a role in child-play activities. Scaffolding appears most in child-led activities (16% in C-read and 20% in C-play). Also, turning the page is a preferred reaction to reject a topic change in child-reading activities (18%) and negative feedback is used most in child-play activities (20%). Ignoring is a technique applied in the rejection during teacher-led (26%) and child-play activities (25%).

➤ Finding 3

The common denominator of all the tools used to self-initiate a topic is "speech" (43% in T-led, 48% in C-read and 44% in C-play). Child-reading situations do foster combinations of speech, gestures and action because of the restricting framework imposed by the book (12% speech & action, 29% speech & gesture). Hence, with its absence during child-play activities, preferred tools are speech combined to action (36% speech & action, 12% action & gesture & speech).

➤ Finding 4

Self-initiated topic changes are more difficult to produce than general utterances. Most pupils range in section "C" (few self-initiated topics in child-led activities, few self-initiated topics in teacher-led activities). Segment "D" (few self-initiated topics in child-led activities, many self-

initiated topics in teacher-led activities) is empty, suggesting that self-initiated topic changes
with a teacher are more complex to place into the on-going interaction.

➢ Finding 5

In opposition to general utterances, the pupil needs to verbally establish a context in
which he places his self-initiated topic change. But once initiated, there is a strong
potential for higher MLU (2.92 in opposition to 11.99).

➢ Finding 6

Pupils of the 1st preschool year perform less self-initiated topic changes than their
peers in the 2nd year. Again, this suggests the necessity of learning how to integrate
the specific discourse taking place in a classroom.

Recapitulative table 2: Findings of chapter 5

The most salient finding of this chapter is the fact that the presence of the teacher makes
it more difficult to produce a self-initiated topic change. But, once achieved, it enlarges
the MLU more significantly than in child-led activities. As pointed out in chapter 4.2,
a different discourse format is taking place in pedagogical activities. This frame is much
more artificial in a sense that the teacher is predominant and in the position of
distributing speakership and judgment over pupil utterances as opposed to the child-led
activities. So far, this finding has been underlined by the numbers of a more quantitative
analysis but gives way to a new series of questions:

- Which are the conditions that foster a participation framework supporting self-
  initiated topic changes in teacher-led activities?
- How do the children manage self-initiated topic changes during the reading and
  play activities?
- What do these self-initiated topic changes, resulting from topical orientation and
  creative language use, lead towards?

The next chapter focusses on these research questions by adopting a qualitatively fine-grained sequential analysis of the interaction during teacher-led and child-led activities.

6. Self-initiated topic changes in their interactional deployment

The starting hypothesis is that self-initiated topic changes are beneficial because the young students produce their own ideas/speech, they practice language skills and they do not repeat a pre-formulated sentence of the teacher. On an interaction management level, they need to find the right tools and the right moment to place their self-initiated topic change. All of these are huge linguistic and interactional accomplishments. The reactions to their self-initiated topic change make the interaction management skills even more salient: For teachers, who are in the dominant position, it is easy to claim speakership. But for children, who are on an equal communication level, they need to refuse the utterance of a peer and make the interaction going on and maintain their own topic respectively. Out of this hypothesis, instances of "topic discussion", "scaffolding" and "topic enactment" need to be analysed on a micro level.

6.1. Self-initiated topic changes and their impact on teacher-led activities

The following data excerpts show the gradual appearance of a topic discussion and analyse the conditions that foster a participation framework supporting self-initiated topic changes in teacher-led activities from a pedagogical point of view.

The story "Katze und Hund" stars a cat and a dog who live together in the same house. Unfortunately, they argue with each other day and night which is described throughout the pages: The cat thinks the dog is mudlark and the dog believes the cat to be lazy. They fight for the carpet, for food and for their toys. The culminating moment of the story is the dog who rescues the cat's play mouse from the water (cats are hydrophobic) and the cat who climbs on the tree to get down the dog's ball (dogs cannot climb). After this incident, they become best friends.

6.1.1.   "Tearing the carpet" - Opening up the teacher's agenda

The first part of the transcript illustrates the shift from the teacher's agenda to a nuance of the topic, initiated by Sergio, but who does not manage to trigger a topic discussion. It is Isa and Salomão who add further ideas and install a rich discussion of the episode in the book.

The double picture contains the cat, which is tearing a green carpet on the one side and the dog, pulling on the other side.
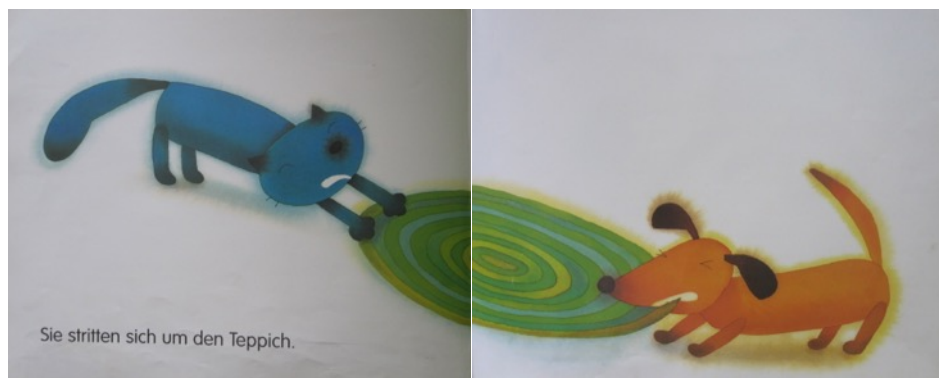
Double page of the book "Katze und Hund"

406	T2	((points to the picture)		((points to the picture)
407		dkaz di rappt op der enger		the cat tears one side of
408		säit um teppech) ((points to		the carpet) ((points to the
409		the other page) an den hond		other page) and the dog
410		dee rappt un der a:nerer		tears on the other side) of
411		säit) vum teppech a jidderee	T₁	the carpet and everyone
412		jäizt <<angry voice> tass		screams <<angry voice>it is
413		Mäin teppech (.) nee tass		my carpet (.) no it is mine
414		mäin (-) ECH kréien den		(-) I will have the
415		[teppech (.) Nee ECH kréien		[carpet (.) No I will have
416		en>		it>
417	Se	[((puts a finger up) aeh	**sitc(SGA) / T₂**	[((puts a finger up) uhm
418	T2	[sou wi	T₁	[like you
419	Se	[tass	T₂	[it is

Note: In the table above, the subscripts should be rendered as T_1 and T_2, and the label as $sitc_{(SGA)} / T_2$.

420	T2	dir och heiansdo	T_1	do sometimes as
421		[maacht		[well
422	Se	[da	T_2	[then
423	T2	mat de [spillsaachen;	T_1	with the [toys;
424	Se	[ku	T_2	[lo
425	T2	((points to Sergio))		((points to Sergio))
426	Se	dann	T_2	then
427	T2	jo;		yes;
428	Se	dann dann ((takes his hand		then then ((takes his hand
429		down)) teppech ass futti		down)) carpet is broken
430		(go) si streiden dann ass	T_2	(go) they fight then
431		((shows the disruption of		((shows the disruption of
432		the carpet) futti;)		the carpet) broken;)
433	T2	mengs du		you think
434		[wann-	$+ T_2$	[if-
435	Is	[dann hu-	**sitc** (S) / T_3	[then-
436	T2	((puts a finger to her		((puts a finger to her
437		mouth) léiss de		mouth) let
438		mech schwätzen;)		me speak;)
439	Is	((puts a finger up)	**sitc** (SGA) / T_3	((puts a finger up)
440	T2	mengs du		you think
441	Sa	((puts a finger up)	**sitc** (SGA) / T_4	((puts a finger up)
442	T2	wa si streiden an ee rappt		if they fight and one tears
443		un der enger säit an een	$+ T_2$	one side and one on the
444		un der anerer da geet den=		other then the carpet=
445	Sa	=da=	T_4	=then=
446	T2	=<<f> TEppech> (-) futti-	$+ T_2$	=<<f> will> (-) be torn-
447	Se	jo=	T_2	yes=
448	T2	=mengs de dee geet dann an	$+ T_2$	=you think then it will disrupt
449		der (.) mëtt futti gerappt		in (.) the middle
450	Se	jo	T_2	yes
451	T2	mhum,	$+ T_2$	uhum,

Data extract 6: 10a_160513_T2_KazHond – Lines 406 to 451 – Timing 0:07:37 to 0:08:10 (33s)

Description

In lines 406 to 416, the teacher narrates the story by describing what is happening on the picture: The cat pulls one side of the carpet and the dog tears on the other side of it while screaming that the rug belongs to one of the animals respectively. To illustrate their feelings, the teacher imitates an angry voice and mimes the fight where both animals drag on each side of the carpet.

In parallel, line 417, Sergio self-initiates a new topic by first using the convention for claiming speakership and then by starting to speak up, line 419. The teacher insists on finishing at the same time, as she is not interrupting her speech and producing more overlaps with Sergio (lines 418/419, 421/422 and 423/424). After having explained that the cat and the dog argue in the same way as the young students themselves would fight for toys, she officially allocates the right to speak to Sergio in line 425 by pointing at him. Sergio, after having tried several times to place his utterance (lines 417, 419, 422 and 424), starts anew in line 426 and is interrupted one last time by the teacher, encouraging him to speak (line 427). In lines 428 to 432, he can finally formulate his idea, which centres on the possible consequences of the fight: The carpet could be torn to pieces. Although Sergio is not using the correct sentence construction, he manages to get his meaning across by using an iconic gesture that symbolises the tearing movement (lines 431 to 432). The teacher accepts the proposed change of topic and starts reconsidering Sergio's utterance in lines 433 to 434.

At the same time, Isa is self-initiating another topic by simply speaking up (line 435). The teacher immediately proceeds to a classroom management measure and reminds Isa of the rule that she should not interrupt (line 436 to 438). Isa then applies the correct procedure by putting her finger up and waiting the permission of the teacher (line 439) – we are looking in detail into her topic change in the subsequent paragraph. The teacher goes back to Sergio, line 440, and Salomão prefers to stick to the rules by claiming speakership with his finger (line 441). This is the first part of his self-initiated topic change, which we are going to analyse in the next section. In lines 442 to 444, 446 and 448 to 449, the teacher reformulates Sergio's utterance by proposing a correct sentence construction and by giving a verb that characterises the tearing movement Sergio replaced by an iconic gesture (lines 431 to 432). Salomão seems to want to say something in line 445 but is silenced by the teacher's stronger voice in line 446. Sergio

is merely confirming the teacher's utterance (line 447). The teacher specifies once more Sergio's idea in lines 448 to 449, which he affirms anew (line 450) and to which the teacher gives a pending sound (line 451).

Analysis

This first part shows an example of self-initiated topic change that is accepted and engenders a scaffolding action by the teacher.

First, we consider the moment, in which Sergio chooses to self-initiate a topic change. After a longer utterance by the teacher during which she narrates the story, Sergio decides to initiate his utterance by applying the procedure to obtain speakership in presence of a pedagogue: He puts a finger up, accompanied by an "aeh" (uhm) sound that auditory should draw the teacher's attention to him (line 417). The teacher so far ignores Sergio and despite some other attempts to speak by Sergio (lines 417, 419, 422 and 424), finishes her own utterance before formally allocating the right to speak to Sergio (line 425).

Second, we take a look at Sergio's core utterance in lines 428 to 432 where he finishes his self-initiated topic change and conveys the main message:

428	Se	dann dann| ((takes his hand		then then ((takes his hand
429		down)) te|ppech| ass| fu|tti|	13 syllables	down)) carpet is broken
430		(go) si| strei|den| dann| ass|	/ 1 utterance	(go) they fight then
431		((shows the disruption of	= MLU 13.0	((shows the disruption of
432		the carpet) fu|tti;)		the carpet) broken;)

<div align="center">**MLU count 1: 10a_160513_T2_KazHond – Lines 428 to 432**</div>

As we have seen in the chapter 5.2, the mean length of utterance is higher when the pupils can self-initiate. In this regard, Sergio performs a MLU of 13.0 with his self-initiated utterance that is considerably superior to the mean length of utterance he globally attains during teacher-led activities and which rates 5.99 (see chapter 4.2). Moreover, to sustain a lack of vocabulary, he uses an iconic gesture in lines 431 to 432 to illustrate the disruption of the carpet – a strategy allowing him to still get his meaning across.

After managing Isa's behaviour (lines 436 to 438), the teacher picks up Sergio's idea, hereby stating her acceptance of the proposed topic, and reformulates the sentence. Also, she replaces Sergio's iconic gesture with an adequate verb and hereby offers him a speech model (lines 440, 442 to 444, 446 and 448 to 449) while at the same time including Sergio and asking his confirmation, "mengs du" (line 440 and 448), which he gives in lines 447 and 450. The topic stays on T_2 as the teacher asks Isa to wait with her T_3 (lines 436 to 438) and ignores Salomão's T_4 for the time being (lines 442 and 446). Thus, the activity does not stay on the basic level suggested by the book. Sergio manages to add value by refining the topic and by illustrating his own vision of the fight between the cat and the dog. This demonstrates that he moves beyond the pure visual level – the picture only shows the two animals pulling on the edges of the carpet – by evoking the possible consequences and by successfully conveying this image to the teacher.

6.1.2.   "Sharing the carpet" – Proposing solutions

In the following extract, Isa finally self-initiates her topic, triggering a rich discussion ond the fight between the cat and the dog:
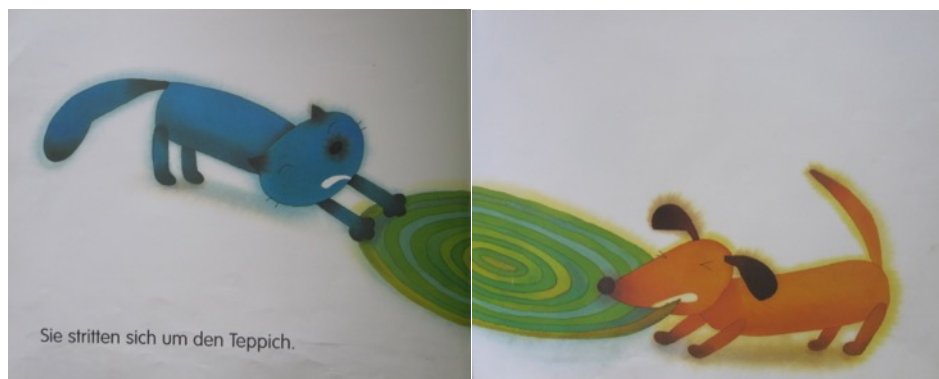
Double page of the book "Katze und Hund"

452	Sa	Ah	(sitc(S) / T₄)	Ah
453	T2	((points to Isa) Isa,)		((points to Isa) Isa,)
454	Sa	[((takes his hand down))		[((takes his hand down))
455	Is	[((takes her hand down))	**sitc(AGS) / T₃**	[((takes her hand down))
456		dann hunn se allen zwee		then they both have

457		((leans forward and points		((leans forward and points
458		to the picture) eng säit		to the picture) one part
459		vum) teppech;		of) the carpet;
460	T2	a:h↓ jo wann den teppech		ah yes if the carpet
461		géing an der Mëtt futti	+ T₃	would disrupt in the
462		rappen dann hätt jiddereen		middle then everybody would
463		eng HALschecht da bräichte		have one half and they would
464		se net méi ze streide		not need to fight anymore
465		mengs de-		you think-
466	Ug	((is sitting there with		((is sitting there with
467		crossed legs and now starts		crossed legs and now starts
468		wobbling them)		wobbling them)
469	Is	jo;	T₃	yes;
470	T2	kanns du ((points to Ugo)		can you ((points to Ugo) put
471		däi fouss) erof[setzen-		down) your [leg-
472	Ug	[((uncrosses		[((uncrosses his
473		his legs))		legs))

Data extract 7: 10a_160513_T2_KazHond – Lines 452 to 473 – Timing 0:08:10 to 0:08:24 (14s)

Description

In line 452, Salomão possibly self-initiates a topic change by using a verbal cue. If this has been an attempted topic change, it has been ignored. The teacher allocates speakership to Isa by pointing at her and saying her name (line 453). Salomão and Isa drop their hands simultaneously (lines 454 and 455) as speakership has been distributed and there is no point in showing up anymore. Next, Isa introduces a new idea, but linked to the previous topic, in lines 456 to 459. She explains the logical consequence of the two animals, tearing on each side of the carpet. The teacher acknowledges Isa's idea and repeats it by fully elaborating the explanation (lines 460 to 465). In lines 466 to 468, Ugo starts wobbling his legs, whereas Isa is confirming the teacher's utterance (line 469). The teacher resorts to classroom management measures and tells Ugo to stop wobbling his legs (lines 470 to 471), which Ugo does immediately (lines 472-473).

Analysis

This data stretch shows how the teacher regulates interaction during her narration activity: At first, Salomão tries to self-initiate a possible topic change by attracting attention towards him ("ah"; line 452) but the teacher simply ignores him and legally gives speakership to Isa by explicitly naming her and pointing to her (line 453). As mentioned previously, Isa proposes a possible consequence to what happens if the cat and the dog pull on both ends of the carpet; the object would be torn into pieces (lines 456 to 459). She has tried during some time already to place this utterance. The nuance of the topic is plausible enough for the teacher to accept it and she repeats Isa's topic change while formulating the consequence in detail and acknowledging this possibility, of which she has not thought (lines 460 to 465). For Ugo, waiting time has been to extended and he starts wobbling his legs, to attract attention or to pass time (lines 466 to 468), which is reprimanded directly by the teacher (lines 470 to 471) as this is an unwelcome action. At the same time, Isa, having successfully introduced her topic change, affirms the teacher's view of her utterance (line 469), whereas Ugo obeys the teacher's suggested behaviour of stopping his leg wobbling (lines 472-473).

6.1.3. "Cutting the carpet and taking turns" – Elaborating the solutions

The next excerpt shows how Salomão proposes several nuances of the on-going topic, hereby enriching the discussion:
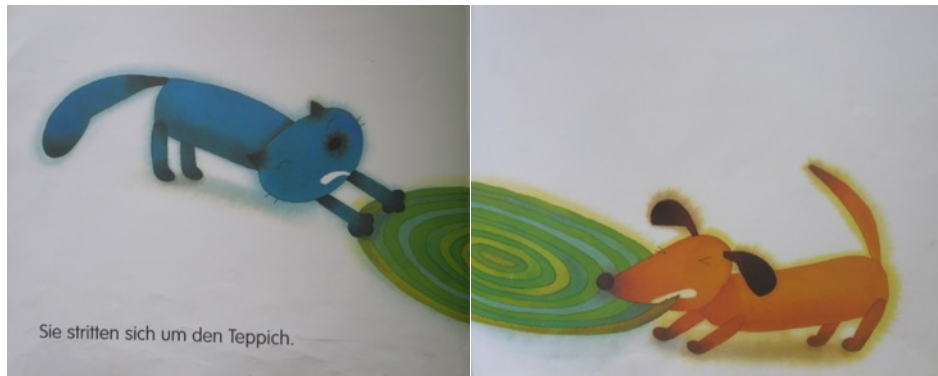
Double page of the book "Katze und Hund"

474	Sa	[oder si schneiden	**sitc(SG) / T₄**	[or they cut
475	T2	[((points to Salomao)		[((points to Salomao)
476		salomao)		salomao)
477	Sa	((makes a vertical cutting		((makes a vertical cutting
478		movement with his fingers)	**T₄**	movement with his fingers)
479		den TEppech;)		the Carpet;)
480	T2	si kéinten den teppech	**+ T₄**	they could cut the
481		duerchschneiden↓		carpet
482		wat kéinten se		what else could
483		dann nach maachen=		they do=
484	Sa	=((puts a finger up) .HH=		=((puts a finger up) .HH=
485	T2	=amplaz ze streiden-		=instead of arguing-
486		((nods towards Salomao))		((nods towards Salomao))
487	Sa	aehm ((takes his hand down))		uhm ((takes his hand down))
488		si kéinten: (.) ((clicks		they could (.) ((clicks
489		with his tongue)) aehm: fir		with his tongue)) uhm first
490		déischt daehm huelt den hond	**sitc(SA) / T₅**	duhm the dog uses
491		en e bëssi den teppech an		the carpet and then
492		dono huelt den kaz e bëssi		afterwards the cat
493		den [teppech		cat uses the [carpet
494	Is	[((puts her		[((puts her
495		finger up)		finger up)
496	Sa	an dono wiessle s a de		and then they change the
497		p' teppech;	**T₅**	carpet;
498	T2	tass eng gutt iddi (.) si		that is a nice idea (.) they
499		kéinte sech ofwiesselen	**+ T₅**	could take turns

Data extract 8: 10a_160513_T2_KazHond – Lines 474 to 499 – Timing 0:08:24 to 0:08:47 (23s)

Description

In line 474, Salomão is self-initiating a topic change by using gesture and speech (line 474, continuation in lines 477 to 479). The teacher is allocating the right to speak at the same time by pointing at him and saying his name (lines 475 to 476). Salomão continues his self-initiated topic and uses an iconic gesture to symbolise a cutting movement to reinforce the verbal aspect of his topic initiation with a gesture (lines 477 to 478). His suggestion to solve the problem between the cat and the dog, arguing for the carpet, is to cut the object into two pieces. The teacher repeats Salomão's idea and proceeds to an implicit correction by proposing a more suitable verb and using a conditional tense (lines 480 to 481). By doing so, she accepts Salomão's self-initiated topic change and eventually encourages him to go further. Moreover, the teacher opens the floor for further discussion by asking what would be other solutions to the animal's conflict (lines 482 to 483).

In line 484, Salomão quickly raises his finger, a classroom convention to claim speakership and, by this, prepares another self-initiated topic change. This time, the utterance is verbal combined with an action (= putting a finger up). The teacher did not finish her utterance from line 483 but Salomão rapidly inserts his action (line 484) before she ends her speech (line 485). In line 485 then, the teacher finishes her invitation for new ideas and she allocates speakership to Salomão with a head nod, that is, this time without adding his name (line 486). After preparing his self-initiated topic change through raising a hand, Salomão now expresses his idea verbally (lines 487 to 493). He enriches the topic by adding a new nuance: The animals could share the carpet to avoid arguing. First, the dog would use the carpet and then the cat would use it. At the same time, Isa is putting her finger up to claim speakership (lines 494 to 495) and Salomão finishes his utterance by summing up the idea he gave before (lines 496 to 497). In line 498, the teacher is acknowledging Salomão's effort by giving a positive feedback to the content of his utterance and hereby accepting Salomão' self-initiated topic change. She then reformulates Salomão's utterance with an appropriate verb (lines 498 to 499).

Analysis

In lines 474 and 477 to 479, Salomão can finally bring his self-initiated topic change to a successful end after having tried several times in the previous extracts. The legitimation comes from the teacher, formally giving him the right to speak through addressing his name and pointing at him (lines 475 to 476). In accordance with the current topic, Salomão proposes a nuance, a further solution to the problem. His utterance can also be seen as an allusion to Isa's topic change before where she described the possible consequence of pulling on the carpet from both ends. The iconic gesture symbolising a cutting movement to reinforce the verbal aspect of his topic initiation (lines 477 to 478), leads the teacher to scaffold his utterance (lines 480 to 481). Furthermore, she treats his topic initiation as relevant enough as to open up the floor for other pupils to add to the topic (line 482 to 483 and 485). Again it is Salomão who finds yet another possibility to solve the conflict of the story's protagonists; he suggests that the cat and the dog could take turns in using the carpet (lines 484, 487 to 493 and 496 to 497). If we look a bit closer at what happens on the language level, we notice Salomão restarting his utterance in line 489 after a micro pause and a tongue clicking. In line 490, he uses an erroneous verb form but it is possible that he is aware of it since he uses a filler "daehm" (uhm) just before. Also, the construction of the sentence is not quite correct but Salomão succeeds in getting his meaning across. Meanwhile, Isa claims speakership in a legal manner by showing her hand (lines 494 to 495) and the teacher is giving a positive feedback to Salomão's additional idea to solve the conflict (line 498). She reformulates Salomão's utterance with an appropriate verb by again using a conditional tense to suggest that this is only one of more possibilities - thus, keeping the floor open for potentially more ideas (lines 498 to 499).

6.1.4. "Sharing the carpet" – Return to the teacher's agenda

The last extract of this "topic discussion" example pictures one more time the young student's engagement in the exchange.
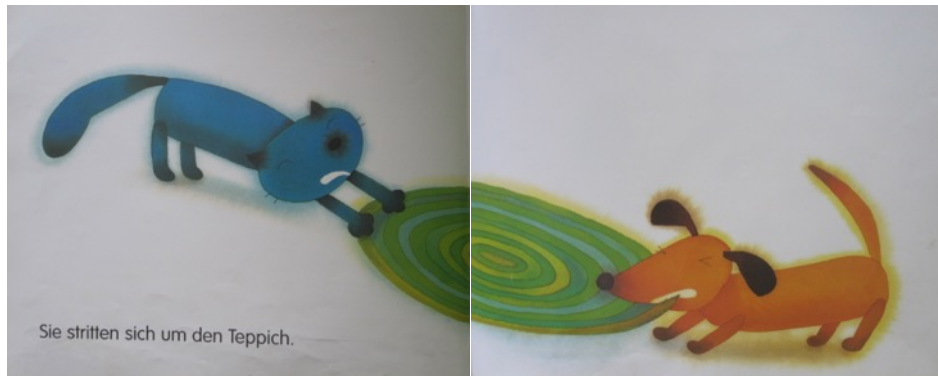
Double page of the book "Katze und Hund"

500	Sa	[oder	(sitc(S) / T6)	[or
501	T2	[eng	+ T5	[once
502		kéier läit deen een		one is lying
503		((points to Isa) hei ech		((points to Isa) there i
504		mengen disa wëllt och		think isa also would like
505		eppes soen ((points to	- T6	to say something ((points to
506		Isa) hatt huet) och		Isa) she also) has
507		eng iddi hein,		an idea hum,
508	Is	oder si zwee ginn op	**sitc(S) /**	or they both use
509		den teppech;	**T7**	the carpet;
510	T2	jo:↑ ech mengen ((hand		yes i think ((hand
511		gesture over the picture)		gesture over the picture)
512		den teppech wär och		the carpet should be
513		grouss) genuch (-) dass	+ T7	large) enough (-) that
514		si kéinten zesummen drop		both could lie there
515		[leien;		[together;
516	Sa	[((puts a finger up) .HH		[((puts a finger up) .HH
517	Is	mee well si jo rose si		but since they are mad
518		wëlle se dat net;	**T7**	they do not want to;
519	T2	ri:chteg;	+ T7	correct;
520		((turns the page))		((turns the page))

Data extract 9: 10a_160513_T2_KazHond – Lines 500 to 520 – Timing 0:08:47 to 0:09:04 (17s)

Description

In line 500, Salomão fails at establishing his next self-initiated topic change. The teacher simultaneously starts talking and elaborates on the idea he gave before (lines

501 to 502) but she ends her phrase abruptly and points to Isa to allocate speakership to her. This allocation is accompanied by a verbal description of Isa's attempt (lines 503 to 505) which is even repeated (lines 506 to 507). Isa then finally initiates a nuance of the topic by proposing that the animals could share the carpet (lines 508 to 509). The teacher picks up her idea with a positive feedback and reasons about the size of the carpet that could hold the two pets (lines 510 to 515). Then Salomão raises his finger accompanied by an insistent breathing (line 516) to claim his turn of speaking whereas Isa explains the reason mentioned before that the animals are too mad at each other to be able to share the carpet (lines 517 to 518). The teacher is acknowledging this utterance shortly (line 519), then turns the page (line 520).

Analysis

Salomão wants to elaborate on his previous idea (line 500) but at the same time, the teacher starts talking. She picks up Salomão's idea but does not finish her phrase (lines 501 to 502). She decides to allocate speakership to Isa and, by this, ignores Salomão's attempt to change the topic once again (lines 503 to 507). Curiously, she does this twice in a row (lines 503 to 505 and 506 to 507), each time pointing and mentioning Isa verbally. This gives Isa the adequate space to self-initiate her topic change (lines 508 to 509) and so she adds the idea of sharing the carpet. As this is an important concept, also in everyday interaction, the teacher positively reacts to Isa's idea and reflects on the size of the carpet being big enough for both pets (lines 510 to 515).

Salomão now insists on claiming speakership; he puts up a finger again and accompanies this action with an audible, accentuated breathing (line 516). Isa takes advantage of the gap in the conversation as the teacher is not reallocating speakership and she explains why the sharing of the carpet is not possible (lines 517 to 518). The teacher positively confirms this with one word (line 519) and quickly turns the book page (line 520). This shuts down the space for further discussion. Salomão cannot initiate the topic he wanted to and the teacher can go on with her pedagogic agenda.

6.1.5.   Intermediate findings

One of the reasons, why this example has been chosen is that it depicts six topic initiations, to which the teacher reacts positively four times. This fact makes the excerpt the richest of all the "topic discussion" instances in the data. Usually, the teacher picks up one topic suggestion and ignores further initiations but here, she elaborates the self-initiated topic changes further.

The following figure sums up the topic development for the pet's carpet as proposed by Todd (1998):

Lines	Topic (Luxembourgish)	Topic (translation)
406-411	Teppech rappen	Tearing the carpet
412-423	Sträit	Fight
428-451	Teppech futti rappen	Tearing the carpet into pieces
456-465	Zwou Säite vum Teppech, deelen	Two sides of the carpet, sharing
474-481	Teppech schneiden	Cutting the carpet
487-499	Sech ofwiesslen	Taking turns
508-515	Teppech deelen	Sharing the carpet
517-518	Rosen	Angry

Table 15: Topic development in "Cat & dog"

Clearly, the topic "carpet" is predominant. The excerpt starts with the tearing of the carpet and then moves to the explication of the fight between the pets to explain the logical consequence of tearing the rug – pulling it into pieces. Next comes the solution of what to do with the two pieces once the item has been torn. Accordingly, a solution would be to cut the carpet on purpose and give a piece to each. Subsequently, the topic of taking turns in using the rug shows up, followed by a more general compromise to share the carpet – an idea that already turned up with the concept of sharing both sides of the desired object. Eventually, the children move to the conclusion that some of the solutions cannot be applied because the pets are so mad at each other.

This rich specimen of "topic discussion" reveals different aspects: Sergio launched the whole discussion by his scaffolded self-initiated topic change, suggesting that if the pets continue pulling, the carpet is going to pieces. The teacher now opens up her agenda by asking the children whether they have more ideas. Not only do Isa and Salomão contribute autonomously to the topic by changing its orientation and, thus, enriching it (cutting the rug into two pieces or taking turns in using it) but they also trigger a topic discussion with the teacher. That is, the teacher does remain a while on this topic to construct it before going back to her agenda, which is continuing the story by following the content suggested by the pictures. Isa's and Salomão's contributions were thus relevant and appropriate enough to fit the teacher's lesson plan. Furthermore, this gives Isa and Salomão the possibility to negotiate their own point of view. With this, they stay close enough to the teacher's topic so that their nuances of the topic are accepted and built upon. The blueprint visualises the pupils' contribution to the story:
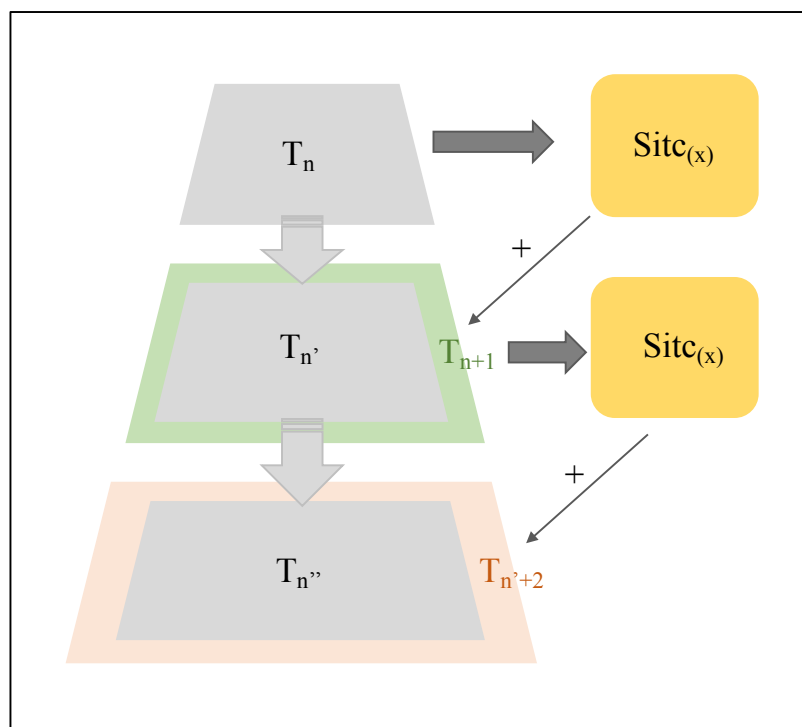
Figure 54: Blueprint for topic acceptance

We consider T_n, $T_{n'}$ and $T_{n''}$ to be the unfolding narration about the pets' fight. Sergio's topic change adds a first additional layer to the story narrated by the teacher. Then, Salomão and Isa bring in their ideas, motivated by the teacher's invitation to look for alternative ideas. With this, the initial narration is enriched with every topic change that

is initiated by the children (the model would need some more levels obviously). As soon as additional nuances are given, the original narration is not the same anymore and carries the local amendments the pupils made.

However, it still holds true that young students cannot assume much autonomy in the interaction: The teacher keeps her external control over the exchange as she is distributing speakership in the known format of labelling the next speaker by name – staying close to the concept of IRF as discussed in previous sections. The children stay within these boundaries defined by the teacher. To speak up, they raise a finger and wait for the turn to be allocated to them. At that moment, they can self-initiate a topic change which is accepted by the teacher at various moments of the activity extract. Albeit the format stays predefining in a sense that the pupils address their topic changes to the teacher, who then gives a feedback, she allocates sufficient time to the children to look for innovative possibilities to solve the argument – a feature that is not so common in traditional short IRF exchanges. Therefore, the pupils' answers do not remain monosyllabic or short but are elaborated instead. The following examples of their answers demonstrate a less constraint use of the language. Instead of repeating chunks that have been suggested by the teacher during her narration or elicitation questions, they look for creative solutions:

Sergio:

428	Se	dann dann| ((takes his hand	13 syllables / 1 utterance = MLU 13.00	then then ((takes his hand
429		down)) te|ppech| ass| fu|tti|		down)) carpet is broken
430		(go) si| strei|den| dann| ass|		(go) they fight then
431		((shows the disruption of		((shows the disruption of
432		the carpet) fu|tti;)		the carpet) broken;)

MLU count 2: 10a_160513_T2_KazHond – Lines 426 to 430

Isa:

455	Is	[((takes her hand down))	11 syllables / 1 utterance = MLU 11.00	[((takes her hand down))
456		dann| hunn| se| all|en| zwee|		then they both have
457		((leans forward and points		((leans forward and points
458		to the picture) eng| säit|		to the picture) one part
459		vum)| tepp|ech;		of) the carpet;

MLU count 3: 10a_160513_T2_KazHond – Lines 452 to 456

Salomão:

487	Sa	aehm ((takes hand down))		uhm ((takes his hand down))
488		si‖ kéin‖ten: (.) ((clicks		they could (.) ((clicks
489		with his tongue)) aehm: fir‖		with his tongue)) uhm
490		déischt‖ daehm huelt‖ den‖ hond‖		first duhm the dog uses
491		en‖ e‖ bëss‖i‖ den‖ tepp‖ech‖ an‖	26 syllables / 1 utterance = MLU 26.00	the carpet and then
492		do‖no‖ huelt‖ den‖ kaz‖ e bëssi		afterwards the cat
493		den [teppech		cat uses the [carpet
494	Is	[((puts her		[((puts her
495		finger up)		finger up)
496	Sa	an‖ do‖no‖ wiess‖le‖ s a de		and then they change the
497		p' teppech;		carpet;

MLU count 4: 10a_160513_T2_KazHond – Lines 479 to 484 and 487 to 488

Sergio is one of the novice speakers (see chapter 4.3) but with his self-initiated topic change, he manages to achieve a MLU of 13.0. In chapter 4.2, we have seen that an average MLU for traditional classroom interaction does seldom rate higher than 4.0. If we consider that Sergio's mean MLU in teacher activities is 5.99, his utterance in this example is quite an achievement. The same applies to Isa, whose mean MLU is 6.38 in teacher-led activities, but who scores 11.0 in this example. Salomão's increase is spectacular with 26.0 in this extract – against a mean MLU of 12.46 in teacher-led activities.

Moreover, all answers remain in a realistic and appropriate style by suggesting solutions such as sharing the carpet or taking turns in using it. The book functions as a further control tool: Through its pictures, a limited range of topics are predefined and the teacher watches over the maintenance of the subject, rejecting all topic changes that do not fall into the range of the story. Also, the narration by the teacher, gives the model for the child-led activities later on. In terms of activity orientation, the extract is being moved from a pure product orientation, story narration, to a more process-oriented interaction: The teacher accepts the different suggestions to solve the conflict between the cat and the dog instead of closing the participation framework and insisting on the

continuation of the narration. Hence, the focus shifted temporarily on finding creative solutions for a conflict that have not been explored by the book. The teacher does not assess the different proposals for being right or wrong but she listens to each child's input, hereby making them look for even more solutions and establish connectedness, or contingency, in between them.

Returning to the teacher's questions in this excerpt, we can see more than pure elicitation questions: The teacher uses mostly "mengs de" (do you think that…; you think that…), a phrasing that initiates the scaffolding of a student answer. She is either "rephrasing" the contribution or "extending" it (lines 440, 448 and 465) (S. Walsh, 2006b). According to Mehan (1979), elicitation questions are the most common questions in classrooms: The teachers *routinely ask questions to which they already know the "only" answer, or at least know the limits within which an acceptable answer must fall*". They question the knowledge of the pupil by placing him/her in the position to try to match her answer to the teacher's idea. Sometimes, the feedback to a pupil's response comes later as the answer is erroneous or unknown and in such a case, the teacher generally engages in more questions to make the pupil find the requested answer (and close the sequence with a feedback). Mehan (1979) then speaks of "extended elicitation questions".

Besides rephrasing or extending the young student's utterances, the teacher is also "echoing" their answers (lines 498 to 499 and 510 to 515) (S. Walsh, 2006b) and soliciting them to speak up, "hatt huet och eng iddi" (she has an idea too). However, the inviting question that really opened up the teacher's agenda to let pupils search creatively for answers, is presented in the following extract:

480	T2	si kéinten den teppech		they could cut the
481	T2	duerchschneiden↓		carpet
482		**wat kéinte se**		**what else could**
483		**dann nach maachen=**		**they do=**
484	Sa	=((puts a finger up) .HH=		=((puts a finger up) .HH=
485	T2	**=amplaz ze streiden-**		**=instead of arguing-**

Data extract 10: 10a_160513_T2_KazHond – Lines 473 to 477

The teacher repeats a previous utterance and then asks what else they [the cat and the dog] can do instead of arguing. As Gosen (2012) affirms, *"the use of questions that do not have a single correct answer and in which the goal is to arrive at consensus after negotiation also stimulates more equal participation in dialogue"* (Gosen, 2012). We can now discuss whether this question is "eliciting expanded thinking" (Edwards & Westgate, 1994), a topically related set of IREs to stimulate the child's reflection (Mehan, 1979) or a pseudo-open question – open in form but closed in function (Cazden, 2001) – but it definitely triggers a deeper discussion, engaging the pupils in meaningful thinking and larger utterances. The teacher opens up the framework of the activity, to leave room for the pupils' ideas, not necessarily knowing what they are going to propose. According to Wells (2009), the most crucial part in question-response-feedback sequence is the third part. If the teacher elaborates or asks for clarification and expansion instead of closing it via a narrow feedback, then students' answers achieve the status of a valuable contribution. Thus, learning opportunities are enhanced or constrained depending on the kind of follow-up the teacher gives in respond to a pupil's utterance (J. K. Hall, 2001; Wells & Arauz, 2006).

Chapter 6.1 - Self-initiated topic changes and their impact on teacher-led activities

➢ Finding N°1

Topic discussions lead towards richer interaction, which increases the MLU and, hence, the possibility for pupils to develop their language skills.

➢ Finding N°2

During a topic discussion, pupils can integrate their own point of view and thus contribute to the elaboration of meaning and application of their language skills.

> ➤ Finding N°3
>
> Teachers enhance pupils' answers by asking for clarification and expansion.

Recapitulative table 3: Findings of chapter 6.1

The above cited extracts demonstrate the pupils' participation in a remarkable way: Even though they have to function within the strict framework, the teacher establishes, they use the rules at their convenience to legally introduce their self-initiated topic changes. With this, they contribute to the construction of a richer narration. Within these topic discussions, their utterances gain in length and the children have the possibility to practice language outside the much used IRF scheme. The teacher fuels this exchange even more by asking for clarification and expansion. Consequently, we wonder whether children, left in autonomy on their storytelling and play activity, are able to manage narration and appearing topic changes, given that there is no authority in the person of the teacher to distribute speakership and legitimate some topics over the others - a question, we are going to focus on in the next subchapter.

6.2. Interactional topic management in child-led activities – "chaos or order"?

This section regroups **both child-reading and child-play activities** to draw a clear distinction to the activities designed by the teacher. It pursues the question on what happens if the teacher is not designing the learning process: How are the children managing self-initiated topic changes throughout the interaction?

6.2.1. Creating joint enactments

The following excerpts show how children create joint enactments to maintain a topic.

Example 1:

This first example explains the children's interest for a specific detail in the picture, namely, the elephant's head shake. The kids meticulously enact this action, asking their peers for correction about the quality of the movement. The story "Non mais ça va pas?" is about a pink crocodile trying to eat the red elephant by attracting him to the pond, however he does not succeed in fooling him.

On the left side of the picture, the crocodile is depicted. The tear running from its eyes, indicates its sadness. On the right side, there is a red elephant shaking its head so quickly that it appears to be multiple, a feature that will be of particular interest to the children.

Double page of the book "Non mais ça va pas?"

249	Li	((takes the book from Jacob)		((takes the book from Jacob)
250		mee elo) huele' huet en déi:	T_1	but now) he has
251		elefant ge(dden)		the elephant
252		((shakes her head quickly		((shakes her head quickly

253		from right to left and back		from right to left and back
254		again)		again)
255		ua[ua:uauauauaua		ua[ua:uauauauaua
256	Ja	[((imitates Lidia's	T_1	[((imitates Lidia's
257		movement)		movement)
258		uaua:uaua[ua		uaua:uaua[ua
259	Le	[((imitates		[((imitates
260		Jacob	T_1	Jacob
261		and Lidia)		and Lidia)
262		uaua:uaua		uaua:uaua
263	Li	( ) soll mer		( ) shall we
264		((shakes her head again very	T_1	((shakes her head again very
265		quickly from right to left		quickly from right to left
266		and back again) ua:::uaua		and back again) ua:::uaua
267	Le	((touches her eyes) an kuck	**sitc(SG)**	((touches her eyes) and look
268		meng aen;	**/ T₂**	at my eyes;
269	Be	((looks at Leticia and		((looks at Leticia and
270		touches his eyes)	+ T₂	touches his eyes)
271	Le	((also starts to shake her		((also starts to shake her
272		head)) autsch;	T_1	head)) ouch;
273		Lidia and Jacob are still shaking their heads.		Lidia and Jacob are still shaking their heads.
274	Li	a wéi ass meng aen, (3.0)	+ T₂	and how are my eyes, (3.0)
275	Be	oeh du has der vill aen eh,	+	uhm you have many eyes eh,
276		Lidia and Jacob stop shaking their heads.		Lidia and Jacob stop shaking their heads.
277	Le	((touches Benito's		((touches Benito's shoulder)
278		shoulder) an a wou		and and where
279	Li	[an dono war (.) huet hien	**sitc(S) /** **T₃**	[and then (.) he has
280	Le	[Ech a ((starts shaking her	T_1	[I a ((starts shaking her
281		head while laughing)		head while laughing)
282	Be	((touches his eyes) a kuck	T_2	((touches his eyes) and look
283		wéi ech hunn;		how i have;
284	Li	<<laughing> ech kommen Net	T_3	<<laughing> i do not
285		no bei dir;>		approach you;>

Data extract 11: 7c_020513_T1_ChildrenRead_Krokofant – Lines 249 to 285 – Timing 0:05:20 to 0:05:47 (27s)

Description

In lines 249 to 255, Lídia takes the book from Jacob's hands and starts describing the elephant's action. She does not finish her utterance but starts shaking her head quickly from right to left and back again while making a long sound "ua". Jacob shortly afterwards starts doing the same movement and the same sound in overlap (lines 256 to 258) followed by Leticia (lines 259 to 262). Lídia starts an inaudible utterance (line 263) and then repeats the same movement and sound as before (lines 263 to 266). At that moment, Leticia self-initiates a topic change by shifting the attention to the eyes: She touches her own eyes and invites the others to look at them (lines 267 to 268).

Benito accepts Leticia's invitation and looks towards her, then starts touching his eyes as well (lines 269 to 270). Leticia returns to the previous topic by starting to shake her head but finishes with a sound of pain "autsch" (lines 271 to 272). Lídia and Jacob are still shaking their heads (line 273) but then Lídia accepts Leticia's topic change and asks the others about the state of her eyes (line 274). Benito takes a moment (3 seconds) to react and replies that she appears to have many eyes, hereby accepting the topic (line 275). It is only at that point that Lídia and Jacob actually stop their movement (line 276). Leticia directs a question to Benito (lines 277 to 278) by asking about the location of the imaginary eyes. Lídia self-initiates a topic change as she is continuing the narration of the story (line 279). However Leticia, at the same time, starts to shake her head again (lines 280 to 281). Benito stays on the second topic about the eyes (lines 282 to 283) hereby neither accepting Lídia's topic change nor going back to Leticia's topic. The extract ends with Lídia pursuing the narration (lines 284 to 285).

Analysis

Lídia takes the book from Jacob, hereby officially getting in charge for the new page (line 249). She continues the narration of the story with one phrase that is not complete and does not really make sense (lines 250 to 251). Therefore, she starts enacting the action she cannot describe with words and shakes her head quickly from side to side, while producing a long sound (lines 252 to 255). Jacob accepts Lídia's enactment of the topic and shows alignment by imitating the movement as well as the sound (lines 256 to 258). Leticia starts a fraction later and conforms herself to the topic at hand by

also imitating Lídia's movement and sound (lines 259 to 262). The topic is maintained through this joint enactment and Lídia reinitiates the same action (lines 263 to 266).

At that moment, Leticia self-initiates a topic change by adding a detail: She refers to the elephant's multiple eyes in the picture – a symbol for the movement that the children understand very well – by touching her own eyes and asking the others to pay attention to it (lines 267 to 268). Benito, who so far did not participate in the enactment, looks in Leticia's direction and mirrors her action through touching his eyes (lines 269 to 270). At the same time, he is accepting this topic nuance proposed by Leticia. The latter returns to the movement that Lídia initiated in order to attain the effect of multiple eyes displayed on the picture hereby offering a link between topic 1 and 2 (lines 271 to 272). Lídia and Jacob persist in their head shaking (line 273) and Lídia picks up Leticia's topic detail by inviting the others to look at her eyes that should be multiple as a consequence to the head shake (line 274). Three seconds elapse until Benito finally judges that Lídia has many eyes, thus having succeeded in copying the movement from the picture (line 275). Only then do Lídia and Jacob end their head movement (line 276). Leticia attempts to get Benito's attention by touching his shoulder but she does not finish her phrase (lines 277 to 278). Lídia self-initiates a topic change as she is trying to continue the story narration (line 279) but, in overlap, Leticia relaunches the head shake while laughing (lines 280 to 281). Benito chooses not to follow Lídia's topic change, he touches his eyes instead and invites his peers to look at them (lines 282 to 283). Lídia laughs and continues the story narration by repeating the elephant's speech after shaking its head: I won't approach you (lines 284 to 285).

Although there has been some kind of disagreement about continuing the narration of the story instead of staying on one detail, that is, the head shake, the children manage to explore the picture while progressively moving on until they end on the elephant's final utterance that it would not approach the crocodile. Moreover, they have been especially attentive to the details in the picture and the display of multiple eyes to signify the movement of the elephant's head has caught their particular interest. So far, the crying crocodile at the left of the book page, does not catch the children's interest. Probably, there is no identification with this "bad" character. Instead of describing the picture verbally, the children choose to enact the movement and they persist in this

endeavour, on the one hand by executing the movement and on the other hand by accentuating the effect on the eyes. Lídia is proposing to continue the story a first time (line 279) but the children are not yet satisfied and continue the enactment. At the second proposal (line 284), they finally accept to move on.

Example 2:

The following extract shows mutual alignment on a same topic via laughter.

The story focusses on a fox family - the mother with her children Niko, Josefine and Moritz. Having decided that her children have reached a certain maturity, the mother asks them to go hunting. Josefine and Mortiz are motivated but Niko looks for creative ways to find food without putting any effort into it. The next extract shows the moment in the story, when humans drive past in their car and throw out a sandwich that Niko picks up to bring home (1). Proud, Niko shows his prey to his family but the mother tells him that foxes do not eat human food and that he should take his brother and sister, who caught bugs and worms, as an example (2). On the next day, Josefine and Moritz chase pigeons. When Josefine follows them up in the tree, she gets stuck up there while Moritz is trying to help her down again and Niko is laughing because he thinks that they are stupid to strain themselves that much for food (3).

(1)

Double page of the book "Niko Neunmalschlau"

324	Ug	((turns the page))		((turns the page))
325		wëlls du dee schmier de	T₁	do you want the sandwich the
326		männchen w'		human
327	S1	((laughs))	+	((laughs))
328	Ug	e schéisst de schmier;	T₁	he throws the sandwich;
329		tut⁵ do;		look there;
330		((starts turning the page		((starts turning the page
331		to look what is next)		to look what's next)
332	Is	an da gëtt e vun der	T₁	and then his mum
333		mama vernannt well=		scolds him because=
334	Ug	=(ir)=		=( )=
335	Is	=dat iessen ass vun	T₁	=this food is from
336	Ug	komm [mir kucken;	**sitc₍S₎ / T₂**	lets [look;
337	Is	[f' fir dmënschen;	T₁	[for humans;

(2)

Double page of the book "Niko Neunmalschlau"

338	Ug	((fully turns the page))		((fully turns the page))
339		i hei ass de schmier;		and here is the sandwich;
340		((laughs))	T₂	((laughs))
341	Is	((laughs))	+	((laughs))
342		mat ((points to the		with ((points to the
343		picture) mat mengt een		picture) with one would think
344		dat wier zalot	T₂	this is salad
345		[ha:m an TOmat;		[ham and Tomato;
346	Se	[joffer déi		[teacher they
347	Ug	jo::	+	yes
348	Is	((laughs))	+	((laughs))
349	Ug	wat iess (di mol kume)	(+)	what they eat ( )

(3)
Double page of the book "Niko Neunmalschlau"

350	Is	((turns the page))		((turns the page))
351	Ug	((points to the picture)		((points to the picture)
352		kuck;		look;
353		dee laacht ëmmer fir	sitc(SG)	this one always laughs at
354		hie:n (-) i klamm net	/ T₃	him (-) and does not climb
355		do an bam;)		onto the tree;)
356	Is	((laughs))	+	((laughs))

Data extract 12: 3c_141112_T2_ChildrenRead_Fuuss – Lines 324 to 356 – Timing 0:01:14 to 0:01:54 (40s)

Description

Ugo turns the page to start a new topic (line 324). He narrates the next step in the story that consists in asking whether someone (the fox?) wants the sandwich and then the

human throws it (lines 326 and 328). Ugo's utterance is interrupted by one of his peer's laughter (line 327) then he calls for attention (line 329) before turning the page to peek at the next step in the story (lines 330 to 331). Isa accepts Ugo's story narration and refers to the consequence of the fox picking up the sandwich (lines 332 to 333). The next utterance by Ugo is incomprehensible (line 334). Isa continues with a projection of mother fox's telling-off (lines 335 and 337) about sandwiches being for humans, and is then interrupted by Ugo who invites the others to look at what is next (line 336). Then, he turns the page entirely (line 338) and announces the whereabouts of the sandwich (line 339). Both Ugo and Isa laugh (line 340 and 341). The latter points to a detail in the picture and thinks that the sandwich is even with salad, ham and tomato (lines 342 to 345). In overlap, Sergio calls for the teacher (line 346) but does not finish his utterance. Ugo is giving an affirmative answer (line 347) and Isa laughs again (line 348). Then, Ugo starts an utterance that he does not finish and which is therefore difficult to assert inn terms of meaning (line 349). Isa turns the page (line 350) and Ugo immediately points to a detail while asking his peers to look (lines 351 to 352). He pursues with explaining that one of the foxes is laughing all the time at his brother and that he does not climb on the tree (lines 353 to 355). Isa reacts with laughter (line 356).

Analysis

Ugo is mostly handling the book in this excerpt. By turning the page, which is normally the teacher's privilege, the person has the power over the topic. In the absence of the teacher, the children assume this task. In this example, the page is turned three times.

Right at the beginning, Ugo is turning over the page and continuing the narration of the story. At the left side of the book, one can see the fox smacks his lips in front of a sandwich and on the right side, he observes a car that leaves and in which one of the passengers throws away a sandwich. Ugo's description is not complete (lines 325 to 326) and after the laughter of one of his peers (line 327), he finishes the utterance by describing the passenger throwing away the sandwich (line 328). This detail is particularly important to him as he explicitly invites the others to look (line 329). Also, the laughter of the unidentified peer can be interpreted as a positive alignment to Ugo's topic (line 327). Ugo peeks at the following images by partially turning the page (lines

330 to 331) but his previous utterance gets a positive feedback by Isa who describes the mother fox as scolding her son because he took food from the humans (lines 332 to 333, 335 and 337). Her utterance could even be considered as a nuance to Ugo's topic which would still show her positive alignment to Ugo's narration as it adds a further detail. Ugo, in overlap, however plans to move on and he invites the others to look (line 336), hereby preparing the establishment of another topic. He turns the page entirely and we are now in front of a picture, displaying the fox holding a sandwich in his mouth and presenting it to the mother – his sister and brother being in the background. Ugo immediately announces the most important element of the page, the localisation of the sandwich (line 339) and laughs at it (line 340). Isa then imitates his laughter (line 341) and, in that respect, shows alignment to Ugo's interpretation of the story. Even more, she enumerates the ingredients of the sandwich with a pointing gesture: Salad, ham and tomato (lines 342 to 345). In overlap, Sergio starts an utterance directed to the teacher but he does not finish it, so we cannot know the meaning (line 346).

Meanwhile, Ugo affirms Isa's description of the sandwich (line 347) and the latter starts laughing again to establish group cohesion (line 348). Ugo answers something partially inaudible (line 349) but it might be interpreted as a reaction to Isa's laughter and aiming to reinforce mutual alignment. Isa then turns the page (line 350) and the picture now presents two foxes climbing on a tree, whereas the third one is laughing underneath. Ugo attracts his peers' attention to a detail in the picture by pointing to it (line 351) and verbally asking them to look (line 352). He initiates a new topic and describes how the fox is laughing at his brother up in the tree and that the fox would not follow him (lines 353 to 355). Again, Isa shows agreement by laughing (line 356) and establishing a positive and jovial atmosphere.

The main purpose of this extract is to show how the children maintain mutual alignment while going through different pages of the book. One of the mediums of success consists of laughter. Firstly, laughter shows a person's positive inclination towards others. Secondly, it helps establishing a merry atmosphere in which participants feel at ease. Thirdly, it might motivate another person to go along with his utterances. In this particular case, Ugo and Isa create some kind of group cohesion, as they laugh together

at the details of the story, which are of interest to both of them. However, the other two children of the group do not participate in this exchange and remain peripheral.

Example 3:

The subsequent selection shows the negotiation of topic through joint enactment as well as how children organise their environment to embody the story.

Looking at the picture, one can see the cat on one side, ready to attack and protect its toy, a mouse. At the opposite side, the dog is taking a similar body position to defend its gadget, a ball. To reinforce property, the toys are coloured in the same way than their respective owners.

Aber am meisten stritten sie sich um ihre Spielsachen.

Chhhhh! Chhhhh!

Grrrrr! Grrrrr!

Siehst du diese Krallen? Lass meine Maus in Ruhe!

Siehst du diese Zähne? Rühr meinen Ball nicht an!

Double page of the book "Katze und Hund"

136	Sa	[((assembles the papers)		[((assembles the papers)
137		elo musse mer dat raumen;	T_1	now we need to clean this up;
138	Is	[((extends one arm and	$sitc_{(A)}$ /	[((extends one arm and
139		spits))	T_2	spits))
140		((helps cleaning up the papers))	$+ T_1$	((helps cleaning up the papers))
141	Sa	do		there

142		hm	**sitc(AGS)**	hum
143	Se	((gets up))	**/ T₃**	((gets up))
144	Sa	[an do sinn (dmeier)		[and there are (dmeier)
145	Se	[Hei	T₃	[here
146	Ug	[((growls and jumps))		[((growls and jumps))
147	Se	((picks up the nest with	T₃	((picks up the nest with
148		the egg) [hei ass de		the egg) [here is the
149	Is	[nee: nach net	-	[no not yet
150	Se	maus;	T₃	mouse;
151		hei ass dmaus;		here is the mouse;
152	Is	nach net ugo;	- T₃	not yet ugo;
153	Sa	do ass de maus	+ T₃	there is the mouse
154	Se	hei ass de maus;	T₃	here is the mouse;
155	Is	[((takes the egg))	+ T₃	[((takes the egg))
156	Sa	[((takes the nest) an		[((takes the nest) and
157		hei ass mäi bull;	+ T₃	here is my ball;
158		gëff bull;		give the ball;
159	Is	ok waart-	+ T₃	ok wait-

Data extract 13: 10b_160513_T2_ChildrenPlay_KazHond – Lines 136 to 159 – Timing 0:01:55 to 0:02:12 (17s)

Description

The excerpt starts with Salomão assembling the papers he used for the play and his statement that it needs to be cleaned up (lines 136 to 137). At the same time, Isa, playing the cat, extends an arm and spits (lines 138 to 139). Then, she helps cleaning up the papers (line 140). Salomão starts an utterance (line 141) but then gives a sound of hesitation (line 142). Sergio gets up (line 143). Immediately afterwards, Salomão starts talking (line 144), whereas Sergio verbally draws the others' attention (line 145) on the object, he is picking up. Ugo imitates the dog with growling and jumping (line 146).

Sergio then picks a nest with an egg to support the dramatic play and communicates to the others that this nest symbolises the mouse (lines 147 to 148 and 150) but Isa starts her objection in overlap (line 149) as she thinks that Ugo's proposal comes too early. Sergio repeats his utterance and even corrects the gender of the article (line 151). Isa repeats her utterance and, by adding Ugo's name, makes it clear that she is addressing Ugo's growling and jumping (line 152). Salomão confirms Sergio's idea with the

mouse (line 153) and Sergio repeats his utterance for the third time, hereby going back to the erroneous version of the first time (line 154). Simultaneously, Isa takes the egg (line 155) and Salomão picks up the nest (line 156), explaining that this would be his ball (lines 156 to 157). According to the role of the dog he plays, he asks Isa to hand over his ball (line 158) and Isa asks him to wait (line 159).

Analysis

When the extract starts, Salomão is assembling the papers that were used to play the page before (line 136). He insists on cleaning up their stage (line 137) as they are now facing the page of the cat and dog arguing for their toys: The cat plays with a mouse and the dog with a ball, both items are coloured similarly to the animals to reinforce property. Isa is initiating a topic change as she is extending her arm and spitting, symbolising the anger of the cat (lines 138 to 139). This action happened in overlap to Salomão's cleaning and Isa puts her topic change on hold, to help Salomão with his task (line 140). Salomão's next utterance is unfinished (lines 141 to 142) but when he continues it remains inaudible.

Sergio preparing a self-initiated topic change through getting up (line 143) and he needs several tries before being able to get his meaning across (lines 145, 148, 150): When he starts the verbal part of the utterance (line 145), he is in simultaneous competition to Salomão (fragment in line 144) and to Ugo who starts acting through growling and jumping (line 146). To help himself, Sergio picks up two items that acquire a symbolic meaning of being toys: a mouse and a ball (lines 147 to 148). On the verbal level, he starts explaining that one of the two objects is the mouse (lines 148 and 150) and Isa holds back Ugo who is eager to enact another part of the story (line 149). Sergio repeats his utterance for emphasis (line 151) as well as Isa who inserts Ugo's name this time to make sure that her message attains the recipient (line 152). Salomão accepts Sergio's proposal for symbolic play and the referring tools by repeating the utterance (line 153). Sergio at his turn echoes the idea a third time (line 154) to reinforce it. Isa accepts the topic proposal by grabbing the egg (line 155) at the same time during which Salomão accepts the nest (line 156) and immediately they engage in the play by re-enacting the plot described in the book (lines 157 to 159).

On the one hand, this example describes how children manage their own symbolic play and how they are able to maintain the topic. Although Ugo presses to move on with the story, Isa asked him to wait albeit giving him the perspective that his idea will be realised later ("nach net", not yet). This negotiation is accepted by Ugo who does not manifest himself anymore in this excerpt (nor does he protest). On the other hand, it shows the capacity of the children to arrange their environment for their purposes: To successfully act out the passage of the book, Sergio proposed to use tools. These tools are assigned a symbolic significance that is accepted by all the participants to embody the story.

Example 4:

The next extract delivers an example of how children accept instructions to allow the topic to move on.

The story describes a crocodile that wants to eat a child in order to become strong. Its parents desperately try to offer alternatives (bananas, cake, sausage) but their son would not accept any of it. The children play the plot from their memory and they do not use the book for support.

		The children do not use the book "Je mangerais bien un enfant". It stays closed.		
069	Be	=wëll ee KAND iessen;	T_1	=want to eat a CHILD;
070	Li	mee ((puts one hand in front		but ((puts one hand in front
071		of Benito's chest) ok mee		of Benito's chest) ok but
072		((points in front of her)	$site_{(AGS)}$	((points in front of her)
073		dono wëlls du ee zoossiss)	/ T_2	afterwards you want a
074		(.) grouss zoossiss		sausage) (.) big sausage
075		gaange sichen;=		go get it;=

076	Le	=((lifts both hands) ok ok)		=((lifts both hands) ok ok)
077		ok; ((moves around to get	+ T_2	ok; ((moves around to get
078		the imaginary sausage)		the imaginary sausage)

Data extract 14: 8b_020513_T1_ChildrenPlay_Krokodil – Lines 069 to 078– Timing 0:01:20 to 0:01:29 (9s)

Description

Benito in the role of the small crocodile announces his intention to eat a child (line 069). Lídia holds back Benito by putting one hand in front of his chest (line 070) and indicating to Benito and Leticia that the former wants a sausage, which the latter, in her role of the mother, should provide (lines 071 to 075). Leticia accepts Lídia's proposal by lifting her hands and verbally confirming it (line 076). Immediately, she executes it and pretends fetching an imaginary sausage (lines 076 to 078).

Analysis

Benito's first utterance of the excerpt constitutes topic 1. He conforms himself to the role of the book and plays a hungry crocodile. Furthermore, he understands the importance of "child" on which he puts special emphasis (line 069). Lídia assumes the role of a referee as the character she is playing has not yet appeared in the story: She changes the topic to add a detail that she thinks is particularly important. To do so, she needs to hold back Benito (lines 070 to 071) who is unspooling his plot and indicate him that he forgot to mention the sausage. Using her hands to physically retain him, is a strong signal, which she accompanies with a verbal explanation (lines 071 to 075). The sausage that only exists on an imaginary level is supposed to be very big (line 074) and indeed the picture in the book, which the children in this group do not access during their play (it remains on the floor on the side) shows a huge sausage. Leticia accepts Lídia's topic change by verbally acknowledging and executing the action – both making the story move on (lines 076 to 078). Her hands that she lifts up, reinforce her good intention and it might be the answer to the strong signal, Lídia sent when she made Benito pause.

Being able to negotiate interaction so that it becomes acceptable for all participants is a key to success. Lídia is in charge of the story narration and when Benito wants to move on in the play, she physically holds him back, while justifying this strong gesture through an explanation of what Leticia has to do first, in order to keep the logic of the story. Her topic change, bringing in the sausage, is an instruction that Benito and Leticia both accept in order to preserve a smooth flow of their play. The book functions as a guide line because nobody is challenging Lídia's objection that the sausage cannot be omitted. Theoretically, the children could have changed the plot but they decided to stick with the original as suggested by Lídia. This mutual agreement on the sausage detail allows them to move on.

6.2.2. Helping each other

Another strategy to keep the interaction flow going on, is to help peers when they have trouble formulating their utterances or when they do not correctly represent the story facts.

Example 1:

In the next extract, children correct a detail about the story content without interrupting the development of the topic. In Luxembourg, St. Nicholas is believed to bring toys to the well behaving children during the night of December 6th. The story "E Cadeau fir den Ieselchen" shows his preparation work and the adventures he undergoes together with his donkey during that special night.

The picture displays St. Nicholas as he is cleaning his hat, while sitting in his room full of pictures, presents, toys… Humour arises from the reverend man sitting in pyjamas and slippers on a chair.

Double page of the book "E Cadeau fir den Ieselchen"

083	Mi	hie mécht säin hu hu:tt	T₁	he cleans his
084		propper-		hat-
085	Ni	((points to the picture)		((points to the picture)
086		(l iuk hei	sitc(SG)	( )
087		[am pyjama-	/ T₂	[in pyjamas-
088	Mi	[kleeschen		[nicholas
089		[( )		[( )
090	Tr	[(de sa) ass net	+ T₂	[(the) is not
091		an engem pyjama:;		in pyjamas;
092	Mi	hie botzt sech-		he cleans himself-
093		hie mat seng hutt	T₁	he puts the hat
094		[dorobber		[on top
095	Ni	[((stops pointing to the		[((stops pointing to the
096		picture))		picture))
097	Tr	[((points to the picture)		[((points to the picture)
098		eng pyjama ass do:;)	+ T₂	pyjamas are there:;)
099	Mi	ie huelt all dKAddoen		and he has the presents
100		schonn agepaakt-	T₁	already wrapped up-

Data extract 15: 6c_211212_T3_ChildrenRead_Kleeschen – Lines 083 to 100 – Timing 0:00:12 to 0:00:26 (14s)

Description

Michele is narrating the story (lines 083 to 084) when Nícolas starts pointing to the picture (lines 985) and asks the others to look at a specific detail of the pyjama (lines 086 to 087). The last part of his utterance is overlapping with Michele (line 088) whose following utterance (line 089) remains incomprehensible as it overlaps with Trevor's

objection that Nícolas' detail is not the pyjama (lines 090 to 091). Michele simply continues her narration (lines 092 to 094). Only at that moment, does Nícolas stop pointing (lines 095 to 096), at the same time during which Trevor points to another part of the picture (line 097), announcing that this would be the correct location of the pyjama (line 098). Michele, without hesitation, continues the narration (lines 099 to 100).

Analysis

Michele describes St. Nicholas' preparations: He cleans his hat (lines 083 to 084), he washes himself (line 092), he puts on his hat (line 093) and he has already wrapped all the presents (lines 099 to 100). Her narration is consistent with the description of the picture. Nícolas, however, has spotted a particular detail that caught his attention and that is why he points to the picture (line 085) and asks his peers to look at the pyjama (lines 086 to 087). His utterance represents an attempted topic change that is ignored by Michele but picked up by Trevor, who does not agree with Nícolas (lines 090 to 091) and wants to rectify the location of the pyjama. Nícolas seems to ponder this possibility as he stops pointing a little bit later (lines 095 to 096). Trevor then points to the correct location of the pyjama (line 097) and reinforces his gesture verbally (line 098) as Michele continues her narration (lines 099 to 100).

This example shows how the children maintain the flow of a narration, while side utterances are tolerated and even fruitful for the understanding of the story. We do not know whether Nícolas misunderstands the vocabulary "pyjama" or if he simply confounds two items. Trevor reacted immediately, to help locate the accurate object without seriously perturbing Michele in the narration of the story. It also demonstrates the children's capacity to mediate language without the teacher.

Example 2:

The subsequent data example shows how the children positively reinforce each other on a problematic vocabulary without getting stuck in the story narration.

On the left, the picture shows the witch "Zilly" who falls down the stairs and is lying on the floor. On the right side, one can see her transforming her cat with her magic wand to a green colour.

Double page of the book "Zilly"

091112_T1_ChildrenRead_Hexl_Minute02:43
Screenshot corresponding to line 158

158	Be	((points to the picture)	T_1	((points to the picture)
159		BIS DO:)		UNTIL THERE:)
160	Ja	((points to the picture and	sitc(SG)	((points to the picture and
161		traces a downward movement)	/ T_2	traces a downward movement)

162		uo: rutschbahn (niha)		uo: slide ( )
163		juhu:=baatsch;		whoho=( );
164	Be	tass net rutschbahn	T_2	it is not a slide
165		((traces a downward		((traces a downward
166		movement) bif bei bis bei	T_1	movement) ( ) until until
167		DEE ru' aehm (-) ae:hm		HERE sl' uhm (-) u:hm
168	(Ja)	trapen;	+ T_1	stairs;
169	Li	gef:	(+ T_1)	( )
170	Be	TRApen-		stairs-
171	Ja	nom		after
172	Be	trapen hat hie gefall	T_1	the stairs he fell
173	Ja	[muss ech eppes guddes	sitc$_{(S)}$ / T_3	[put something nice
174	Li	[(ella de bi aa)		[( )
175	Ja	drop[man (.) hat ech gesot	T_3	on [it (.) i said
176	Be	[de ka:z gee:t-	sitc$_{(SG)}$ / T_4	[the cat becomes-
177		((hand movement towards the		((hand movement towards the
178		floor) GRÉNG) sinn;		floor) GREEN;)
179	Li	gréi:ng	+ T_4	green
180		((turns the page))		((turns the page))

Data extract 16: 2c_091112_T1_ChildrenRead_Hex – Lines 158 to 180 – Timing 0:02:33 to 0:02:50 (17s)

Description

Benito points to the picture (line 158) and verbally indicates the witch's trajectory. Jacob imitates Benito's pointing (line 160) and, with his fingers, follows the fall precisely (lines 160 to 161). He compares this action to a slide (line 162) accompanying this with many sounds (lines 162 to 163). Benito is expressing his disagreement in the following line (line 164) and traces the right movement according to him (lines 165 to 167). He wants to label the end location and starts a word search (line 167). Jacob, suggests the word "stairs" (line 168), whereas Lídia starts a sound, she extends but does not finish (line 169). Benito repeats Jacob's suggestion (line 170) and the latter starts another utterance (line 171). Benito announces that the witch fell in the stairs (line 172). Jacob starts an utterance (line 173) in overlap with Lídia (line 174), which he finishes after her (line 175). Benito also starts to speak in overlap (line 176), explaining with a hand movement (line 177) that the cat turned green (line 178). Lídia repeats the word "green" (line 179) and turns the page (line 180).

Analysis

Benito points to the lower part of the picture and shows the spot where the witch's downfall came to an end (lines 158-159). Jacob joins him by firstly pointing to the picture and tracing a downward movement (lines 160-161) and secondly vividly re-enacting the witch's fall with exclamation words and comparing it to a slide (lines 162-163). The pointing serves to reinforce the meaning that the children construct together and it shows mutual alignment. Jacob's utterance can also be interpreted as a topic change because he brings in the nuance of a "slide", making a comparison to an object children are emotionally related to. In the next turn however, Benito is not agreeing with Jacob's statement and rejects the term "rutschbahn" (slide) (line 164). He leans forward to accentuate his engagement and puts emphasis on his personal view, whereas Jacob and Lídia sit with their backs straight, implying a slight distance from the others. Moreover, Benito's intent to specify the description results in a word search (line 165). It seems as if Jacob is helping Benito by suggesting an alternative lexical item, "trapen" (stairs) (line 168). Lídia also seems to help but is unsure of her suggestion so that she does not finish her utterance (line 169). Meanwhile, Benito is acknowledging Jacob's contribution by repeating the word and putting accent on it (line 170). Jacob starts a new utterance (line 171) but Benito is enlarging his own utterance from before and uses the participle of the verb "to fall" correctly (line 172).

In this excerpt, the children are collaborating to describe the witch's fall: Except for Leticia, all are contributing, either with an imaginative description, or with an objection to a particular lexical item, triggering a negotiation of meaning around the words "slide" and "stairs". This takes the exchange to a deeper level; an action usually claimed by a teacher. It also demonstrates the children's capacity to pursue the narration, even though there can be troublesome events such as problematic vocabulary or disagreement in the description.

Example 3:

The next extract describes the empathy, with which children are able to help speakers who are less active (less competent).

The book page shows a riverside. On the left part, the crocodile is approaching the little girl who is playing with a boat on the right part.
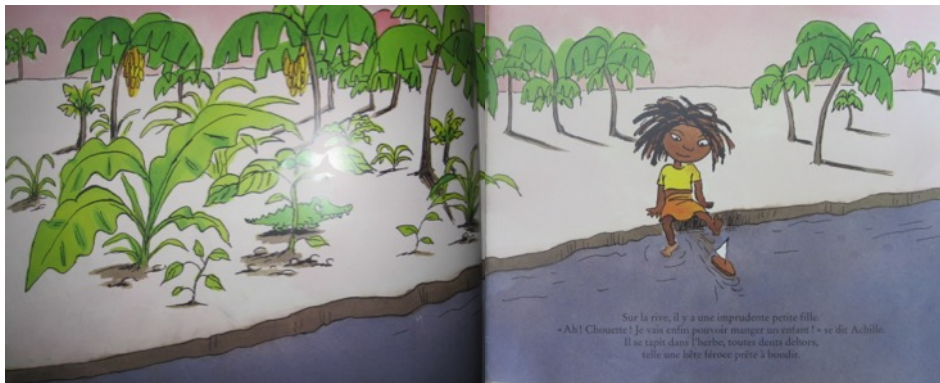
Double page of the book "Je mangerais bien un enfant"

161	Le	dono (.) de krokodil		afterwards (.) the crocodile
162		verstoppst sech wann (.)		hides when (.) when he waits
163		wann e mécht wuart a geet	T_1	and he (.) then he eats (-)
164		ien (.) da geet een		the crocodile eats
165		(-) krokodil iessen an		and then (3.0)
166		dono (3.0) ua; (4.5)		ua; (4.5)
167	Li	[<<whispering> spatz	**sitc$_{(S)}$** /	[<<whispering> sharp
168		zänn;>	**T_2**	teeth;>
169	Le	[((closes the book))		[((closes the book))
170		((opens the book again))		((opens the book again))
171	Be	((puts his hands as	+ T_2	((puts his hands as
172		imaginary claws in front	(sitc$_{(S)}$	imaginary claws in front
173		of his mouth)	/ T_3)	of his mouth)
174		<<p> r::ua::>		<<p> r::ua::>
175	Li	<<whispering> déi zänn;>		<<whispering> the teeth;>
176	Le	dono (-) déi spatzen zänn;	+ T_2	then (-) the sharp teeth;
177	Li	[huet en erausgemaach	T_2	[he put them out

178	Le	[huet e sou gemet (.)	T₂	[he did like this (.)
179		ua:: an d' an ae:::h	(sitc₍S₎ / T₄)	ua:: and d and ae:::h
180	Li	da' (.) 't ass fäerdeg	-	the (.) done
181		leticia;		leticia;
182	Le	da ((gives the book over))		then ((gives the book over))

Data extract 17: 8c_020513_T1_ChildrenRead_Krokodil – Lines 161 to 182 – Timing 0:03:23 to 0:03:59 (36s)

Description

Leticia explains that the crocodile is hiding and waiting before eating (lines 161 to 166). Her utterance is interrupted by three micro pauses, one longer pause and eventually a three seconds pause at the end of it. She adds a sound (line 166) followed by 4.5 seconds of silence. Lídia suggest the words "spatz zänn" (sharp teeth) in whispers (lines 167 to 168). Leticia closes the book – her action (line 169) overlaps with Lídia's utterance but she reopens the book again immediately (line 170). Benito is imitating claws by putting his hands in front of his mouth (lines 171 to 173) and making sounds (line 174). Lídia is whispering again "déi zänn" (the teeth) (line 175) which is finally repeated by Leticia (line 176). Again, Lídia is suggesting a continuation of the narration (line 177), which overlaps with Leticia's own utterance (line 178). Leticia makes sounds and is stuck with her narration (line 179). Lídia tells her that her turn has finished (lines 180 to 181) and Leticia hands her over the book (line 182).

Analysis

Leticia is describing the crocodile's hiding and watching before eating (lines 161 to 166). So far, Leticia appeared rather silent during any of the activities, regardless of the presence or absence of the teacher. Now she is narrating the story and although there are many pauses in her speech, indicating that she is pondering her utterance, she manages to express many aspects: e.g. the crocodile is hiding, he is waiting or he is going for food. Her utterance ends with the word "dono" (then), indicating that her narration is going on but after a three-seconds pause, she is merely uttering a sound, followed by a longer pause of 4,5 seconds (line 166). Lídia suggests an alternative

ending for Leticia's utterance, "sharp teeth", but it also constitutes the next step in the narration, so it might be interpreted as a topic change to proceed to the next step in the story (lines 167 to 168). In overlap, Leticia closes the book (line 169), probably in despair because she cannot finish her utterance. Lídia's proposal seems to be an alternative for her, as she opens the book again (line 170).

In the meanwhile, Benito offers an imaginative enactment of the crocodile's sharp teeth or his claws (lines 171 to 174), which might also be considered as a topic change. Lídia whispers to help Leticia who, after opening the book again, does not say anything (line 175). She simplifies her utterance by leaving the adjective, however Leticia now repeats Lídia's more complex proposal with the adjective, sharp teeth (line 176). Lídia suggests the ending of the utterance (line 177) at the same time, during which Leticia finishes herself (line 178). Again, she gets stuck in the narration (line 179) and Lídia indicates the end of her turn (lines 180 to 181). Leticia agrees and hands over the book to her, signifying that she finished her narration (line 182).

Salient in this abstract is how Lídia shows empathy towards Leticia who appears as a less competent speaker in need of help. Support is provided by Lídia in the form of word proposals, which Leticia picks up. Even Benito is giving a hand through the enactment of the crocodile's dangerous teeth. Again, the children prove their ability to maintain successful interaction, even though trouble appears in the form of Leticia's word search. Instead of doing the narration for her, Lídia helps progressively by suggesting the appropriate vocabulary, acting as a more capable peer and taking Leticia to the next level. Albeit the suggestion of a topic nuance has not been done by Leticia, she takes benefit out of it, as there are a series of further utterances developing from it (lines 175, 177 to 180) and helping her finish the description of the picture.

Example 4:

This example depicts a content negotiation between Benito and Lídia. Although they spend some time on formulating their utterances, they manage to find the appropriate verbal content of what they need to say in their roles as the crocodile and the elephant.

In this whole activity, the children do not resort to the book but play the story from their memory. The plot is about an evil crocodile attracting other animals to the water in order to eat them. One day, an elephant comes by and the crocodile seizes it by its trumpet. The elephant manages to draw back so that the crocodile asks it to approach again. But the elephant claims not to be crazy and refuses to obey. Then the crocodile fakes crying because nobody is playing with it and the elephant suggests that it should invite other animals in a nicer manner. Being sly, it does not fall into the crocodile's trap. The story ends with the elephant going home to its mother and the crocodile staying alone in its river.

	The children do not use the book "Non mais ça va pas?". It stays closed.		
137	Be	da muss de soen (.) da muss		then you have to say (.) then you have
138		de soen nee: ech kommen net	T₁	to say no i am not
139		méi no bei=		approaching=
140	Li	ech KOMMEN net méi ((shakes		i AM NOT ((shakes her head
141		her head horizontally) no:)		horizontally) approaching)
142	Be	((waves his index) du has		((waves his index) you said
143		gesot na' aehm ech kommen		( ) uhm i am not
144		net méi no) ((makes a face)	sitc$_{(AGS)}$ / T₂	approaching you) ((makes a face)
145		ech KOmmen net méi no well)		i am not approaching you because)
146		ah nee aeh'		ah no uh'
147	Li	aehm ech kommen net		uhm i do
148		[méi	+ T₂	[not
149	Be	[<<f> méi		[<<f> approach
150		no ((makes a face) well de	T₂	you ((makes a face) because
151		krokodil ass déck béis;		the crocodile is very evil;
152	Li	nee well de aehm ech kommen		no because the uhm i do not
153		net méi no well de kokodile	+ T₂	approach because the crocodile

154		iessen ons an dono hues	**sitc(S) /**	eats us up and then you said
155		gesot komm mat mir spillen;	**T₃**	come play with me;
156	Be	an da has an da hat hie		and then you and then he
157		gesot Nee:	**+ T₃**	said no

Data extract 18: 7b_020513_T1_ChildrenPlay_Krokofant – Lines 137 to 157 – Timing 0:02:19 to 0:02:47 (28s)

Description

Benito explains what needs to be said next in the story (lines 137 to 139). Lídia repeats his instructions and adds a reinforcing head movement to it (lines 140 to 141). Again, Benito proposes another variation of the text that has to be spoken by Lídia (lines 142 to 146), thereby gesturing with his fingers and making a face. The actual piece of information he wants to add (lines 149 to 151) only comes after Lídia tries to adapt her utterance to his previous suggestion (lines 147 to 148). The actual suggestion does not find any uptake in Lídia's utterance (lines 152 to 155) as she adds a new element that has not been proposed by Benito. The latter is agreeing with Lídia and orients his next utterance to what has been said before (lines 156 to 157).

Analysis

In this extract, Benito elaborates the text that needs to be spoken by the elephant in the story: He initiates his order twice (lines 137 to 138) before suggesting the words "I will not approach". Lídia repeats his suggestion by emphasizing the word "kommen" (approach) and adding a horizontal head movement symbolising "no" (lines 140 to 141). Benito self-initiates a topic change by using three elements: an action, a gesture and speech (lines 142 to 146). He waves his index finger like someone trying to instruct and repeats his previous utterance (lines 142 to 144) but he does not find the right words so he cuts off his utterance by making a face (line 144) and restarting again only to stop at the word "well" (because) (lines 145 to 146). Obviously, formulating the reason gives him trouble. Lídia repeats Benito's utterance (lines 147 to 148) but she is interrupted by Benito continuing his topic change (line 149). Again, he makes a face (line 149) and finally explains the reason why the elephant should not approach the crocodile: The

crocodile is evil (lines 150 to 151). This is a nuance to what has been said before and adds a moral aspect to the children's play. Lídia is repeating Benito's first part of the utterance (lines 152 to 153) but she initiates herself another topic nuance by stating the crocodile's plan (to eat the animals) (lines 153 to 154). Thus, she gives the next step in the plot, which consists in the crocodile's request to play with it (lines 154 to 155). Benito picks up Lídia's topic proposal and announces the elephant's negative reaction to this (lines 156 to 157).

Benito and Lídia spend 28 seconds negotiating the verbal parts of their play. Throughout this interaction, which lasts quite long in terms of children's attention span, they actively search for a version they all agree on. One might expect that without the guiding of a pedagogue, the children would end up arguing or just drop that passage and move on. Nevertheless, nothing of this happens and Benito and Lídia take special care to design their roles: Benito suggests what Lídia should say as an elephant and Lídia takes up his proposal although Benito needs some time to finish it. When he eventually finishes his proposal, Lídia picks up the utterance and changes the last bit (the justification) to offer the consequence of the crocodile's evil plan (it will eat the elephant) and to prepare the next step in the play. Benito agrees and continues the play. The negotiation has been successful and both actors can continue the plot.

6.2.3.   Maintaining the topic through disagreement

Like adults, children are not always agreeing on a subject. But even though there are different interpretations of the narration, the children manage to keep the topic.

The story "Niko Neunmalschlau weiß alles besser" is about a fox family. The mother wants her three children to start hunting for food on their own. Josefine and Moritz are very eager to do so however the third child, Niko, is too lazy. Throughout the story, he finds many creative ways, such picking up a sandwich to sidestep hunting.

Example 1:

In the following instance, the interaction seems to be on the verge of disagreement and chaos but the children manage to find their way through it to suit everyone.

The picture of the book shows a night scene in which Niko is in the front and his sister Josefine and his brother Moritz are trying to hunt a mouse at the boarder of the forest.

Double page of the book "Niko Neunmalschlau"

137	Ug	((points to the picture) an	T₁	((points to the picture) and
138		den niko an den-		niko and-
139	Sa	((points to the picture) an	sitc(SG)	((points to the picture) and
140		[de mama seet si mussen	/ T₂	[mum says they have to
141	Is	[((points to the picture)		[((points to the picture)
142		dat do ass den niko;)	- T₂	this is niko;)
143	Sa	op de:n-	T₂	go-
144	Is	juegd	+ T₂	hunting
145	Sa	juegd [goen	T₂	hunt[ing
146	Is	[du weess		[you do not
147		[awer	T₂	[knwo
148	Ug	[jo:	+	[yes
149	Is	guer näi:scht;	T₂	anything at all;
150	Ug	((turns the page))		((turns the page))
151	Se	((puts his finger up)		((puts his finger up)
152		ass e ech;=		it is me;=
153	Sa	=JOffer ugo	-	=teacher ugo
154	Ug	[((points to the picture)	sitc(SG)	[((points to the picture)
155		an do)	/ T₃	and there)

156	Sa	[sot net		[did not say
157	Se	E:ch	-	I:
158	Sa	wann [sergio;		if [sergio;
159	Se	[ugo	-	[ugo
160	Ug	[((starts turning the page		[((starts turning the page
161		back))		back))
162	Se	[ech (ruffe) jo		[i (ruffe)
163	Ug	nee hei hei=ei	sitc(S) / T4	no here here
164	Sa	((puts both hands on the		((puts both hands on the
165		page))		page))
166	Is	maach [net futti	-	do not [tear it
167	Ug	[nee:	-	[no:
168	Sl	i::h		i::h
169	Ug	nee nee mer mussen hei	-	no no we need to start
170	Is	[maach dbuch net futti;	-	[do not tear the book;
171	Ug	[ufänken;		[here;
172		m::ussen n dann dann du;	T4	need n then then you;
173	Sa	((points to the picture)		((points to the picture)
174		<<laughing> hei ass> bal	sitc(AGS) / T5	<<laughing> this is> nearly
175		wéi kéis hei; (---)		like cheese this; (---)
176		kéis;) (2.0)		cheese;) (2.0)
177		hum,		hum,
178	Is	oder tass knascht;	+ T5	or it is dirt;
179	Sa	((starts turning the page))		((starts turning the page))
180	Ug	((puts his hand on the page)		((puts his hand on the page)
181		ey: salo:mao=	-	ey: salo:mao=
182	Sa	=nee mir hunn: schonn alles		=no we already have everything
183		vun hei [ei'	-	of this [( )

Data extract 19: 3c_141112_T2_ChildrenRead_Fuuss – Lines 137 to 183 – Timing 0:01:26 to 0:02:04 (38s)

Description

Ugo is pointing at the picture and starting an utterance (lines 137 to 138), which he does not finish. Salomão is also pointing to the picture and starts a self-initiated topic change (lines 139 to 140) at the same time, during which Isa points to the picture too and states Niko's localisation (lines 141 to 142). With this, she is not aligning herself to Salomão's proposed topic. Salomão is continuing his utterance that ends in a word search (line 143). Isa suggests the missing vocabulary (line 144) and Salomão repeats it in his now

finished utterance (line 145). Isa starts an announcement in parallel; she thinks that Salomão is ignorant (lines 146, 147 and 149). Ugo decides to turn the page (lines 150) and Sergio immediately puts his finger up (line 151) to claim his turn to narrate the story (line 152). Salomão is calling for the teacher and names Ugo (line 153). Ugo starts pointing and initiating a topic change (lines 154 to 155), whereas Salomão continues his previous utterance (lines 156 and 158). Sergio again bids for the floor (line 157) and names Ugo (line 159) who is not respecting it. The latter starts turning back the page (lines 160 to 161) and Sergio insists even more (line 162).

Ugo tries to direct Sergio's attention to a detail (line 163) and Salomão puts both hands on the page to prevent Ugo from manipulating it (lines 164 to 165). Isa fears the pages to be torn and asks him not to destroy them (line 166). Someone is shrieking (line 168) and then Ugo is giving instructions on what should be done (line 169). Isa is asking them again to be careful (line 170) and finally Ugo can finish his utterance from before, stating that they should start narrating at the page, he wanted to turn to and that afterwards it would be Sergio's turn (lines 171 to 172). This seems to be satisfactory, as Salomão starts pointing to the picture and laughing: One of the objects reminds him of a cheese (lines 173 to 177). Isa suggest an alternative - dirt (line 178). Finally, Salomão is turning the page (line 179) but this time, Ugo is not agreeing and puts his hand on the book (line 180), calling Salomão's name (line 181). Salomão reassures him that they have said everything that is relevant on the page (lines 182 to 183).

Analysis

In this sequence, Ugo is in charge of describing the picture and narrating the story: He points to a detail relevant to him (line 137) and explains about Niko, the fox (lines 137 to 138). However, he does not immediately finish his utterance, which gives Salomão the chance to self-initiate a topic change by pointing to the picture and narrating what the mother fox wants her children to do (lines 139 to 140). At the same time, Isa starts pointing to the picture as well to show her friends the localisation of Niko (lines 141 to 142). By doing so, she actively ignores Salomão's topic change – a form of disagreement. Salomão continues his utterance and ends up in a word search (line 143). This time, Isa is helpful and suggests the appropriate word, "juegd" (hunt) – now

agreeing with Salomão's topic change. Her hint makes the narration going on as Salomão inserts the vocabulary in his utterance (line 145). Nevertheless, Isa seems a bit frustrated as she offends Salomão by stating that he knows nothing at all (lines 146 to 147 and 149). We cannot determine whether Ugo's affirmation (line 148) is an agreement with Isa's reproach or the preparation for his next action, turning the page (line 150). Sergio interprets this action as being the moment when he would become in charge of the narration. He claims speakership by putting up his finger, as he would be asked to do in presence of a teacher, and states that it is his turn (lines 154 to 155). Salomão is helping Sergio by calling the teacher and saying Ugo's name (line 153). The teacher is probably somewhere in the background but does not intervene.

Ugo ignores both Sergio's claim and Salomão's accusation: He points to the picture and tries raising attention to a particular element (lines 154 and 155). This can be considered as a topic change as Ugo wants to continue the narration on a detail he is interested in. At the same time, Salomão attempts to finish his protest (lines 156 and 158), whereas Sergio still claims his right to speak (lines 157 and 159). Neither of them is accepting Ugo's topic change. Ugo resorts to an even stronger tool by turning the page back, an ultimate mean to change an on-going topic (lines 164 to 165). This can be considered to be yet another attempt to change the topic or a distraction from the topic, Sergio wants to treat as he would be the legitimate narrator of the current book page (the children take turns in explaining the story). Isa's reaction to Salomão's manoeuvre is to tell him not to damage the book (line 166) and Ugo reassures her (line 167). Unfortunately, we cannot identify the person shrieking, so it remains only an assumption that it might be Sergio who resorts to a more insisting strategy to defend his rights (line 168). Ugo tries to justify his actions by telling the others that they need to start the narration on the page he refers to (lines 169 and 171 to 172). Again, Isa tells Salomão not to damage the book (line 170).

So far, the narration has stopped because the children negotiate who has the right to speak. Eventually, Salomão points to the current picture and laughs, a reconciling action (lines 173 to 174). He compares a detail in the picture to a cheese and repeats the word for emphasis (lines 174 to 176). This is a very subtle way of introducing a new topic and bringing the children's attention back to the picture instead of arguing about speakership. Isa accepts Salomão's topic change and contributes by saying that

the cheese might also be some kind of dirt (line 178). Then Salomão turns the page (line 179) but Ugo attempts a last time to stay there (lines 180 to 181). Salomão successfully tells him that all the information of the page has been given (lines 182 to 183) – legitimating the action of moving on. The excerpt ends here with the children continuing the narration; the argument is closed.

This example is interesting in a way that it shows how children are perfectly capable of negotiating disagreement and moving on. One would expect the children to argue and Salomão's attempt to call for the teacher, proves that she is normally the person in charge of handling this kind of situation. With the pedagogue remaining silent, the children have to handle interaction themselves. A variety of strategies are used: Turning the page is a powerful tool to close a topic and move to the next one (or in this case, going back to the previous one by folding back one page). The teachers use this technique a lot and the children show their understanding by applying it themselves. Isa deviates attention by asking her peers to take care of the book. Laughing is a way of signalling reconciliation and helps to dissolve tension in interaction. Salomão successfully puts an end to the argument and moves the interaction back to the narration process. The last attempt of Ugo is soothed by telling him that everything has been said, which he seems to accept as he is becoming silent. The children exchange their ideas on the identity of some details (cheese or dirt), then move on by turning the page.

Example 2:

The following example portrays another transgression of speakership and how children successfully manage to hold the interaction.

The double book page shows the cat Zingaro lying in the middle of the floor. The witch Zilly is tripping over the cat, which has its eyes closed. The fall is drawn quite

spectacular with Zilly being in a horizontal position, holding a net with which she was trying to catch a fly that now escapes.
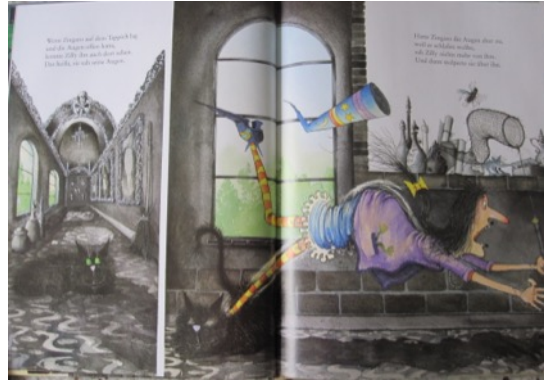
Double page of the book "Zilly"

297	Sa	well den zingaro ass		because zingaro is black
298		schwaarz a wann den zingaro		and if zingaro closes his
299		seng aen aehm zou mécht da	T₁	uhm eyes then zilly does not
300		gesäit dzilly net mee säin		see but her house is all
301		haus ass ganz schwaarz an		black and then
302		dann wann hatt kënnt		she cannot
303	Is	[((turns the page))		[((turns the page))
304	Sa	[da gesäit hatt	T₁	[then she cannot
305	Ug	[O::h	**sitc(S) / T₂**	[O::h
306	Sa	den zingaro net wann den	T₁	see zingaro if
307		zingaro [(mécht;)		zingaro [(closes;)
308	Is	[(hal [nies)	**sitc(S) / T₃**	[(hal [( )
309	Ug	[oh da dee::n	T₂	[oh then this
310	Sa	NEE::: (.) ech schwätzen	-	no (.) i am still
311		nach ëmmer;		speaking;
312		((turns back to the previous		((turns back to the previous
313		page)) an aehm (.) an de		page)) and uhm (.) and the
314		wann aehm säin haus ass	T₁	if um her house is
315		ganz schwaarz a wann en=		all black and if=
316	Is	=UA: kuck e skelett	**sitc(S) / T₄**	=UA: look a skeleton
317	Sa	wann den zingaro seng an	T₁	if zingaro closes his
318		zoumécht da gesäit den zilly		eyes then zilly will not

319		n' se net [an de sergio	**sitc**(SG)	see it [and sergio
320	Se	[((points to the	/ T₅	[((points to the
321		picture) kuck da:t		picture) look at this
322	Sa	(si na op hiel)	-	(si na op hiel)
323		((turns the page))		((turns the page))

Data extract 20: 4c_171212_T2_ChildrenRead_Zilly – Lines 297 to 323 – Timing 0:05:38 to 0:06:16 (38s)

Description

Salomão explains why Zingaro cannot be seen by Zilly (lines 297 to 302) and Isa turns the page (line 303), which triggers a sound of amazement by Ugo (line 305) that might be an unfinished topic change. Salomão continues his description (lines 306 to 307) and Isa also starts a potential topic change that is not brought to an end (line 308). Meanwhile, Ugo continues his unfinished topic change (line 309) and Salomão reacts with a protest, telling his friends that he has not finished (lines 310 to 311). He turns back to the previous page (lines 312 to 313) and continues his explanations (lines 313 to 315). Isa quickly interposes an exclamation to draw her peers' attention to a skeleton (line 316) but Salomão continues his description (lines 317 to 319). Sergio is initiating another topic change (lines 320 to 321) as he draws the others' focus on a certain detail in the picture by pointing. Salomão utters something inaudible (line 322), then he turns the page (line 323).

Analysis

Salomão explains that Zingaro's fur colour is black and if it closes its eyes, Zilly cannot see her pet anymore and that Zilly's house is black (lines 297 to 301). All this information is announced without logical order. It looks like Salomão is enumerating some facts and when he comes to the story action he is interrupted (lines 301 to 302) by Isa (line 303) and Ugo (line 305) simultaneously. Many things happen at the same time now: Isa is turning the page, whereas Salomão is trying to continue his utterance from before and Ugo is self-initiating a topic change by uttering an astonished sound. Salomão still continues his explanation – when Zilly arrives, she cannot see Zingaro if

its eyes are closed (lines 306 to 307). Again, Isa starts an utterance in overlap (line 308) and this might be a potential topic change but unfortunately it remains inaudible.

In the meantime, Ugo continues his initiated topic change by verbally drawing attention to a detail on the new page (line 309). His observation must be obvious, as he is not pointing to the item. Salomão is getting upset and utters a loud and long "no" followed by the explanation that he is still in possession of the speaker right (lines 310 to 311). According to his protest, the other children do not respect it by speaking up illegally. This is an instance, in which the attribution of speakership becomes obvious as it leads to a conflict. Mostly, children negotiate their turns more or less fluently but in this case, there has been a violation and Salomão protests loudly against it. With the page turned, the cut in the topic is manifest and Salomão has to change back to the previous page (lines 312 to 313) to be able to continue his utterance. This interruption somehow confused him because he restarts twice (line 313 and 314) before repeating the information of the black house (lines 314 to 315) and ending up again in a word search (line 315).

Isa takes advantage of this hesitation and quickly inserts a topic change by uttering an amazed sound "ua" (ua) and verbally inviting her peers to look at the skeleton (line 316). Salomão determinedly continues his description about Zingaro closing his eyes, so that Zilly cannot see him (lines 317 to 319). At the end, he addresses Sergio (line 319) but the latter starts to point at a detail and asks the others to look at it (lines 320 to 321) – another potential topic change. Salomão ignores it, utters something inaudible (line 322) and turns the page (line 323), hereby closing the topic himself and moving on to the next page.

Interestingly, Salomão keeps his topic throughout the extract. At several instances, he literally has to defend it against the attempted topic changes. Turning the page is a strong action to end a topic and move on to the next one. To this, Salomão reacts decisively by loudly stating his disagreement and emphasising his unfinished utterance. Salomão refers to a social law/courtesy that asks speakers to wait until the other one finishes his proposals. Adult speakers more or less know how to do this diplomatically and often children manage to change topics quite smoothly too. In this case, by turning

the page, the change has been too abrupt, leading to an adequately strong reaction by Salomão. However, the other children do not react negatively, for instance by insisting on keeping the new page. A possible explanation is that the kids are aware of the transgression and that Salomão has a strong social position. Therefore, the children let Salomão finish his topic albeit they keep on inserting an utterance here and there.

6.2.4.   Intermediate findings

All the previous extracts stem from child-led activities and investigate how children handle storytelling successfully, even though the teacher is not designing a pedagogic framework. Without this formal distribution of speakership, turn-taking, that is classroom talk in general, is managed more locally (Cazden, 2001). The data extracts disclosed three major strands playing a role in this local handling of storytelling interaction: Creating joint enactments, helping each other and maintaining topic in spite of disagreement.

With the teacher disappearing as a dominant figure, distribution of speakership becomes a much more local management. The power balance between the pupils moves back to equilibration and they need to negotiate their turns by themselves. Little details in the picture book now matter and the young students attend to them with utter seriousness. An elephant shaking its head as well as a sausage for the crocodile threaten to bring the story play to an end. However the children manage to negotiate these different aspects to the satisfaction of all the participants. In the example with the multiple eyes of the elephant, the pupils are preoccupied by the imitation of one particular move. They try various techniques of shaking their head and ask their peers to evaluate whether they achieved the same aspect than the animal drawn in the picture. Even Leticia, being more reserved especially in activities with the teacher, introduces the topic of the multiple eyes that is used to artistically symbolise the movement in the book. The children then pay special attention to each other's eyes while shaking their heads and they persist quite some time in doing so. Only after Lídia's second attempt to change the topic to continue storytelling, do the others accept. Although play is often taken as less serious business than formal pedagogic activities, Björk-Willén and

Cromdal (2009) found that this special form of child interaction is neither inconsequential nor disorganisational. Following Garvey (1980), play is *"an arena in which children explore concepts, language and develop a whole range of mental as well as social skills"* (in Björk-Willén & Cromdal, 2009, p. 1496). The enactment thus serves the purpose to replace missing vocabulary when the children do not know how to verbally describe this action. Similarly, Ugo is particularly interested in the humans who threw away the sandwich that Niko, the fox, brought home. Throughout the extract, he points at different details in the picture to which his peers do not always react positively. However, group cohesion is preserved through joint laughter (Jefferson, Sacks, & Schegloff, 1987) and this "collusive laughter" helps to overcome interactional difficulties (Mc Kinlay & Mc Vittie, 2006).

Symbolic play sticks out best in the episode of the cat and the dog where the children face organisational issues. It is Sergio who finally suggests to use material from the classroom to pretend they are a ball and a nest. The topic of imitating the pet's playing could be reinforced and these requisites support the children in being highly attentive to each other and making a next relevant contribution to the plot (Blum-Kulka & Snow, 2004). In the episode of the "Krokofant", the children even spend half a minute with negotiations on how to incorporate their roles but they succeed in finding a compromise. This metacommunication consists of negotiating how to proceed in the play on an interactive level and is called, what Goffman (1974) proposed, a "framed activity", with which participants are able to interpret their actions and are encouraged to engage in explanations for the interpretation of this frame (in Aukrust, 2004). This argument finds its proof in Isa's urge towards Ugo to wait with his utterance or in Lídia's management of the sausage topic during the crocodile play. In these examples, Isa and Lídia have to stop their peers in their ongoing interaction to modify the sequence without offending them. Another strategy, also serving to regulate the interaction, is the one-child-one-page system, where each child is allocated one page to describe more or less without being interrupted. The peers only intervened when there is missing information or the description needs scaffolding.

Even though the teacher is absent in all of these activities, the pupils are not totally free. The book remains as a border that restricts the children's imagination through the pictures of the story (Gorman, Fiestas, Peña, & Clark, 2011) and at some point, the

children even adapt the rule "one page, one child-narrator". Thus, the design of this specific semiotic structure of the book sets the activity framework, within which the children act (Melander & Sahlström, 2009). Moreover, the teacher told the story beforehand and this means that her version considerably influences the pupils. Also, the content of young students' utterances is subject to evaluation. The pupils themselves pay attention to one another and, to a certain degree, side utterances are tolerated as shown in the example of the pyjamas. For Trevor, it is crucial to rectify Nícolas' mistake on where to locate the clothing albeit Michele is continuing her narration all along. As Aukrust (2004) puts it:

> Children may set themselves up as explainers and spontaneously offer explanations, they may request explanations by asking why, what or how questions, or respond to requests for explanations, reflecting and adjusting to peer group conversational norms for cross-turn coherence as well as for what counts as violation of such norms. (Aukrust, 2004, p. 396).

At other moments however, storytelling is suspended to attend to language difficulties. In the example "Zilly", the children jointly scaffolded the notion of "slide" and "stairs" – an action that one would rather expect from a teacher. In this case, the pupils departed from a word search to take their language to the next level. In chapter 6.3, we are going to explore this phenomenon with respect to meaning. Leticia, in the extract "Krokodil", engaged in a word search for "sharp teeth". Here, her peers deploy many strategies to help her to move on in the narration: gesturing in front of his own teeth (Benito), whispering the right word (Lídia) and not overruling her by merely continuing to speak (Benito and Lídia). Leticia, in the role of a less capable peer, is guided by Benito and Lídia (Rogoff, 1990a) – all this with the purpose to maintain the flow of narration and without deviating from the storyline. The notion of "scaffolding" was coined first by Bruner (2002). In Vygotsky's terms (1978), such tutorial behaviour is collaborative and fosters a child's upgrade to his or her next zone of proximal development (ZPD). Van Lier (2004) compares such scaffolding with "assisted performance" which is dismantled once the help is no longer needed (p. 147). In SLL, scaffolding is clearly *"allowing a novice to begin or maintain pursuit of the task goal and control frustration during problem solving"* (Donato, 1994, p. 50).

Maintaining the topic despite disagreement, is an accomplishment with the pedagogue remaining in the background. The episode of the foxes on a hunt shows the fragility of this interactional work. The word search for "hunt" triggers a whole series of reactions, starting with Isa blaming her peers for destroying the book, Ugo turning the page to make them move on and Salomão calling for the teacher's help. With the teacher not intervening, the children have to resolve the conflict on an equal basis and in the end, laughter serves them to reconcile and move on with the story narration (Mc Kinlay & Mc Vittie, 2006). The same group has a similar incident during the story of the witch as Salomão's storytelling is interrupted several times by Ugo, Sergio and Isa pointing to different details in the picture. When Ugo turns the page, Salomão literally explodes. Ugo's action was too abrupt and Salomão goes back to the other page to finish his narration and turns the page himself. Two aspects are striking: First, the children know that they transgressed an important interactional rule and second, Salomão seems to have a strong social position in the group. Pomerantz's (1984) argues:

> Participants orient to agreement with one another as comfortable, supportive, reinforcing, perhaps as being sociable and as showing that they are like-minded" and that "disagreements, on the other hand, are oriented to as being uncomfortable, unpleasant, difficult, risking threats, insult, or offence. (as cited in Mc Kinlay & Mc Vittie, 2006, p. 798).

Having overstepped a boarder, the other children draw back to let Salomão finish his turn.

Instead of an external control exerted by a teacher, the young students regulate their interaction more autonomously. Self-determination is only limited through the pictures of the book and we did not find instances of the pupils going beyond the story. Nevertheless, an embodied handling is especially salient in the play activities during which children use all possible channels to enact the story. Self-initiated topic changes occur at a higher rate than in the presence of a teacher. Without this external guiding, the children can throw in their topic changes at any time and then it is up to them to conceive a positive or negative reaction towards it.

As we have seen before, children are not necessarily accepting any topic proposal; on the contrary, serious negotiation takes place at many moments of the interaction. An

intensive discussion about details that have not been picked up by the teacher in her first activity take place during these child-led activities. The children choose, for example, to enact the elephant's head shake or the playing with pet toys while paying attention to an accurate restitution of the picture. In opposition to the teacher, they do not have access to the text which would have informed them about the written plot. The picture is the only representation the children can turn to and in this way a small detail became a corner stone in their storytelling. As Oyler (1996) points out, *"the the text itself is not the ultimate authority: it is what the reader does with the text that counts"* (p. 156) and *"the central role of photographs and illustrations for developing children's understanding and expertise"* cannot be denied (p. 154). As already exposed in chapter 5.2, the benefits of self-initiated topic changes reflect themselves in the increase of utterance length:

Ugo:

351	Ug	((points to the picture)	13 syllables / 1 utterance = MLU 13.00	((points to the picture)
352		kuck;▌		look;
353		dee▌ laacht▌ ë▌mmer▌ fir▌		this one always laughs at
354		hie:n▌ (-) i▌ klamm▌ net▌		him (-) and does not climb
355		do▌ an▌ bam;)		onto the tree;)

MLU count 5: 3c_141112_T2_ChildrenRead_Fuuss – Lines 351 to 355

Benito:

142	Be	((waves his index) du▌ has▌	14 syllables / 1 utterance = MLU 14.00	((waves his index) you said
143		ge▌sot▌ na' aehm ech▌ ko▌mmen▌		( ) uhm i am not
144		net▌ méi▌ no)▌ ((makes a face)		approaching you) ((makes a face)
145		ech KOmmen net méi no well)▌		i am not approaching you because)
146		ah nee aeh'		ah no uh'

MLU count 6: 7b_020513_T1_ChildrenPlay_Krokofant – Lines 142 to 157

Lídia:

070	Li	mee| ((puts one hand in		but ((puts one hand in
071		front of Benito's chest) ok	13 syllables / 1 utterance = MLU 13.00	front of Benito's chest) ok
072		mee ((points in front of		but ((points in front of
073		her) do|no| wëlls| du| ee|		her) afterwards you want a
074		zoo|ssiss)| (.) grouss|		sausage) (.) big sausage go
075		zoossiss gaang|e| sich|en;=		get it;=

MLU count 7: 8b_020513_T1_ChildrenPlay_Krokodil – Lines 070 to 074

The examples of Ugo, Benito and Lídia show an average MLU of 13.0 – a score much higher than in the short triadic exchanges discussed in chapter 4.2. Since the children do not need to fill in an answer space, they have to put more effort into explaining what they are actually referring to with their proposed topic.

Finally, the young students are less product-oriented in their interaction. Although they have an assignment, narrating the story or playing the story, they are less intent on a quick and straightforward replication of the book content. As mentioned before, the absence of an external authority reinforces this freedom and the children take time to negotiate important aspects that are not necessarily details, the teacher insisted on before. Enacting details from the picture is as relevant than suspending narration to help a peer construct his/her utterance and an unwelcome topic change is contained with more or less tactfulness. As Aukrust (2004) puts it, *"while a core aspect of children's interactions with adults is asymmetry in knowledge, skill, and power, their more symmetrical interactions with peers might require different strategies of talk management"* (p. 394). Whereas teachers define the textual theme and consequently hold the power in the activity, peer-directed interaction also includes the pupils who may not have the correct academic answer.

Chapter 6.2 - Interactional topic management in child-led activities – "chaos or order"?

➢ Finding 1

Children are capable of successfully managing storytelling interaction on their own by:

    a) Organising the narration (e.g. one-child-one-page system or complicity through joint laughter)
    b) Maintaining the topic in spite of disagreement.

➢ Finding 2

Children find their own ways of working on story elements by:

    a) Elaborating story details (e.g. head shake)
    b) Negotiating meaning (e.g. usage of tools to enact the story or rectifying missing details crucial for the story narration)
    c) Scaffolding the form of story narration (e.g. "slide" or "sharp teeth")

Recapitulative table 4: Findings of chapter 6.2

Striking in all these data extracts, is the children's capability of managing the narration of the story, even though they fight for speakership and they are not always agreeing on the suggested topic nuances, their peers offer. The pending expectation of these exchanges ending up in some kind of chaos, is dissolved in the strategies the young students deploy to successfully lead storytelling. They do not stick closely to the narration model that is offered during the joint reading session by the teacher. Instead, they elaborate details that strike their interest and scaffold or negotiate meaning, where they are not agreeing on the message of the story or where one of their peers is struggling in terms of understanding. Hereby, the children demonstrate their sensibility for story content, a competence ultimately being of great importance to any pedagogic

lesson. The now pending question centres around a more linguistic turn of pupils' self-management and if they are able to unlock lexical understandings through the joint construction of story meaning.

6.3. Emerging lexical understanding through topical orientation

In this subchapter, the analysis focuses on the topical orientation and creative language use resulting from the self-initiated topic changes. In this section, the translation of the utterances is done in a verbatim manner to reflect the children's learner language.

6.3.1. "Juegd" – Scaffolding story meaning through gesturing

The following extract about Niko who refuses to hunt like a real fox shows the negotiation of a topic through scaffolding:

Double page of the book "Niko Neunmalschlau"

119	Ug	((points to the picture **1 +**		((points to the picture **1 +**
121		**2**) an:de mama huet gesot) di		**2**) an:d the mum has said they
122		deet ((sweeps from **1** to **2**	T₁	go ((sweeps from **1** to **2**
123		several times) déier (--)		several times) animal (--)
124		fänken;		catch;

125	Sa	[((touches the mic))		[((touches the mic))
126	Is	[djos' de jos	sitc(S) /	[the jos' the jos
127		djow	T₂	the jow
128	Sa	[de JOsefine	+ T₂	[the JOsefine
129	Is	[djosefine de mo'	T₂	[the josefine the mo'
130	Ug	[den ( )	(sitc(S) / T₃)	[the ( )
131	Sa + Is	an de mo:ritz	T₂	and the mo:ritz
132	Is	an=	T₂	and=
133	Sa	=an de:	T₂	=and the:
134	Is	den niko;	T₂	the niko;
135	Sa	niko;	T₂	niko:
136	Is	jo;	T₂	yes;
137	Ug	((points to the picture 1)	T₂	((points to the picture) and
138		an den niko an den-		the niko and the-
139	Sa	((points to picture 2) an	sitc(SG) / T₄	((points to picture) and
140		[de mama seet si mussen		[the mum says they have to
141	Is	[((points to the picture 3)	-T₄	[((points to the picture)
142		dat do ass den niko;)	T₂	this is the niko;)

| 143 | Sa | op de:n- | T₄ | on the:- |

144	Is	**juegd**		+T$_4$	**hunt**
145	Sa	**juegd** [goen		T$_4$	**hunt** [go
146	Is	[du weess		T$_4$	[you know
147		[awer			[but
148	Ug	[jo:		+ T$_1$	[ye:s
149	Is	guer näi:scht;		T$_1$	at all anything;
150	Ug	((turns the page))		site$_{(A)}$ / T$_3$	((turns the page))

Data extract 21: 3c_141112_T2_ChildrenRead_Fuuss – Lines 119 to 150 – Timing 0:01:10 to 0:01:35 (25s)

Description

The extract depicts Ugo who is pointing to the picture and explaining the story: Mother fox tells her children to catch animals (lines 119 to124). Isa is self-initiating a topic change by trying to say the name of one fox three times (lines 126 to 127). Salomão accepts the topic change and announces the correct name of the fox (line 128). Isa starts her utterance in overlap, adding another name part to the now correct first name (line 129). Simultaneously, Ugo starts an inaudible utterance (line 130) whereas Salomão and Isa say the second name in chorus (line 131). Then, Isa starts an utterance (line 132) which is continued by Salomão (line 133) and completed by herself (line 134). Salomão repeats the third name (line 135) and Isa affirms it (line 136). Ugo points to the picture (1) and voices Niko's part in the story (lines 137 to 138) but Salomão is picking up Ugo's first topic about mother fox and points to her in the picture (2) (lines 139 to 140) at the same time when Isa is pointing to the correct Niko in the picture (3) (lines 141 to 142). Salomão is continuing the first topic but does not finish his utterance (line 143). Isa is giving the correct term "juegd" (hunt) (line 144) which Salomão repeats to complete his previous utterance (line 145). Isa seems to be blaming Salomão of knowing nothing at all (lines 146 to 147 and 149) whereas Ugo is aligning himself on Salomão's utterance (line 148) before turning the page and ending this episode (line 150).

Analysis

In lines 119 to 124, Ugo tries to explain that the mother fox tells her children to go hunting for other animals. Isa and Salomão do not seem to be satisfied with Ugo's utterance because they start to give precisions: Isa is self-initiating a topic change by searching for the name of one little fox (lines 126 to 127), Josefine, and Salomão completes her utterance by naming the animal with the wrong gender (line 128), "de josefine". Hereby, he aligns himself on Isa's topic change. Simultaneously, Isa says the same name with the correct gender, "d'josefine" (line 129). Then, she wants to add a new element, the name of another fox, Moritz, but she does not finish her utterance (line 129). Ugo, at the same time, tries to say something but the last chunk is not comprehensible (line 130) – we suppose that he repeated the name of the last fox Moritz. In line 131, Isa and Salomão repeat the element, putting it into a larger chunk. Isa and Salomão then start to construct the third element together by adding up to each other's utterances (lines 132 to 134) and by confirming the item (lines 135 to 136). Ugo points to the picture and initiates an utterance (lines 137 to 138) by drawing on what has been said before by Isa and Salomão, acting as more capable peers in this sequence. Salomão is imitating Ugo's pointing movement and adds Ugo's perspective (voiced in lines 119 to 124), which is the opinion of the mother fox (lines 139 to 140, 142 and 144) on her children's hunting. Isa is speaking at the same time by correcting Ugo's pointing and referring to the right Moritz in the picture (lines 141 to 142), then she quickly helps Salomão in his search for the vocabulary "juegd" (hunt) (line 144). Salomão accepts the lexical item and uses it in his next utterance by completing it with a verb (line 145); his addendum is acknowledged by Ugo in line 148. Isa then notes that someone, probably Salomão, does not know anything at all (lines 146 to 149).

This sequence contains many elements: At the beginning, it seems as if the children would be competing in saying a new element first. Especially, the naming of the fox constitutes a problem but if we look closely at the picture, it is only possible to distinguish the mother due to her size from her offspring. Nevertheless, it seems very important to the young students to name the foxes right as we see in the pointing and correcting of the names. Except for Sergio, all the pupils are involved and they listen to each other's utterances to react appropriately. Through this collaboration on reconstituting the story elements, this sequence shows an instance of scaffolding as Isa

and Salomão slowly add precision to Ugo's initial description and help each other in finding words and names. Being in an unformal situation without a teacher, Ugo does not repeat the more precise description that has been constructed by Isa and Salomão. He closes the sequence by turning the page to move on.

Ugo participates in the story narration although he lacks the technical vocabulary of hunting. His pointing and sweeping gestures reinforce the meaning of his utterance and connect him to the book. As we have seen before, gestures take an important stance in topic management and skilled pupils use them successfully. Although Ugo's topic is changed by Isa's second topic proposal, Salomão and Isa pick it up again later by providing the correct lexical item "Juegd" (hunt). The correct location of the foxes is negotiated in detail as every single fox is pointed at in the picture. Even though the teacher merely points at them during her initial narration, the children emphasise this detail. They do not lose themselves in the discussion and successfully get back to scaffold the initial vocabulary issue. At the end of the extract, they have achieved a more detailed version of Ugo's original description. Functioning as more capable peers, helps Ugo to potentially reach his next proximal zone of development in terms of language skills (Donato, 1994; Vygotsky, 1978).

6.3.2.   "Suergen" – Applying a new lexical item

The next example traces the growing understanding of the lexical item "Suergen" (worries) first during the teacher-led activity and then its comeback in the child-led activities. The story "Je mangerais bien un enfant" depicts a crocodile who one day decides to refuse whatever food his shocked parents bring him. They bring bananas, a cake and a sausage but the junior declares his intention to eat a child. Eventually, he leaves his parents to find a prey. The girl he encounters however plays with him like a toy and the crocodile does not manage to scare her nor eat her. Soon enough, he flees home and eats bananas again.

The following extract displays the narration of the story by the teacher and the first appearance of the lexical item "Suergen".

Double page of the book "Je mangerais bien un enfant"

107	T1	dmama krokodil **mécht sech**	T_1	the mum crocodile **makes herself**
108		**suergen** an ['t freet;		**worries** and [she asks;
109	Li	[wat ass	T_1	[what is
110		**suergen**		**worries**
111	T1	't huet bëssen angscht;	T_1	she has little fear;
112	Li	a:h.	T_1	a:h.
113	T1	't free' (.) 't freet bass		she asks (.) she asks are
114		du sécher bass (.) WËlls de		you sure are (.) want you
115		net eng lecker gutt banann		not a tasty banana
116		nee merci mama äntwert de	T_1	no thanks mum answers the
117		klengen Haut↑ géif ech		little one Today↑ would I
118		léiwer e kand iessen;		rather a child eat;
119	Li	O	T_1	O
120	T1	wat hues Du da fir eng iddi		what have you then for an idea
121		wonnert sech dmamm (.) an		marvels the mum (.) in
122		de banannebeem do wuesse		the banana trees there grow
123		banannen (.) Keng kanner;	T_1	bananas (.) No children;
124		jo mee Ech (.) giff léiwer		yes but I (.) would rather
125		e kand iessen;		a child eat;
126		((turns the book around))		((turns the book around))
127	Li	an hinn ass ROse an [en ass	**sitc(s) /** **T₂**	and he is Angry and [he is
128	Be	[firwat		[why
129		ass hie rosen,	**+ T₂**	is he angry,

130	Li	well hie wëll kee banann an		because he wants no banana and
131		de mamm se' ((extends her		the mum se' ((extends her
132		arm) maischt esou an) de	T₂	arm) does like this and) the
133		mamm **mécht sech suergen**		mum **makes herself worries**
134		(i ma)		(i ma)

Data extract 22: 8a_020513_NT_Krokodil – Lines 107 to 134 – Timing 0:01:57 to 0:02:40 (43s)

Description

The teacher narrates how mother crocodile worries about her son (lines 107 to 108). In overlap, Lídia starts asking about the meaning of the noun "suergen" (worries) (lines 109 to 110) and the teacher gives an explanation in the subsequent utterance (line 111) which Lídia acknowledges (line 112). Then, the teacher continues the narration (lines 113 to 126) which is only interrupted once by Lídia's exclamation "o" (line 119). After this story description, Lídia is self-initiating a topic change (line 127) and Benito questions her about it (lines 128 to 129). Lídia answers him by using the noun "suergen" (worries) (lines 130 to 134).

Analysis

While telling the story, the teacher uses the expression "suergen" (worries) to explain the crocodiles' feelings (lines 107 to 108). Quickly, Lídia asks in overlap what she means with this lexical item (lines 109 to 110) before the teacher can continue with her long description during which she expects the young students to listen quietly. The pedagogue explains the expression with "'t huet e bëssen angscht" (being afraid a little bit) and Lídia shows her new comprehension about this emotional noun (line 112). The teacher then continues to describe how the crocodile mother offers bananas to her son who declines them with the announcement to eat a child (lines 113 to 118). This dramatic moment is reinforced by Lídia's "o" and shows how she emotionally connects to the story (line 119).

Again, story narration continues and after this, the teacher turns the book around to show the picture to her pupils (lines 120 to 126). Lídia then self-initiates a topic change

and points at the fact that the crocodile son is angry (line 127) which can be seen in his posture on the picture (cf. beginning of the transcript). Again, she is concerned with the feelings of the characters. Benito accepts her topic change and asks about the reasons of the anger (lines 128 to 129). Lídia answers his question (lines 130 to 134) and uses a gesture to replace a missing lexical item (lines 131 to 132). This seems to be the gesture, the mother uses to give the banana to her son (refer to the picture at the beginning of the transcript). After this, she uses the expression "sech suerge maachen" (to worry) correctly (line 133) although when asked about it at the beginning of the extract, she isolated the noun "suergen" from the verb construction.

The lexical item of "suergen" comes back one more time during the interaction with the teacher:
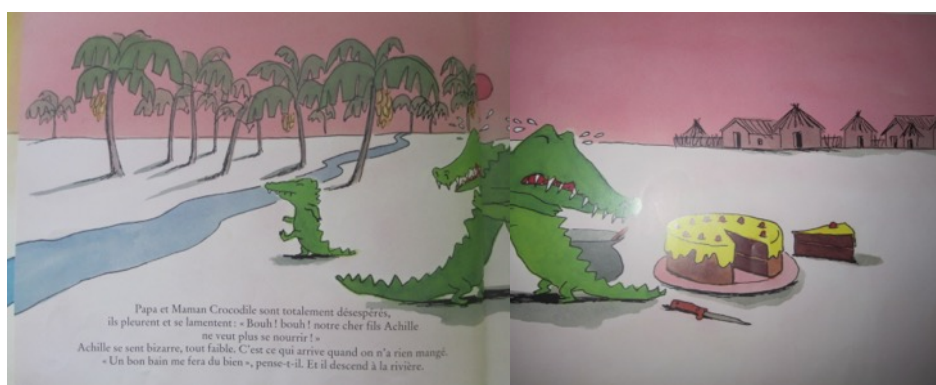
Double page of the book "Je mangerais bien un enfant"

279	T1	[da geet e rof bis	T_1	[then goes he down until
280		an de floss;		in the river;
281	Li	((points to the picture) Ah	$sitc_{(SG)}$ / T_2	((points to the èicture) Ah
282		do) ass en;		there) is he;
283	Be	firwat sinn di elo draureg,	$sitc_{(S)}$ / T_3	why are they now sad,
284	T1	((clears her throat) majo	$+ T_3$	((clears her throat) well
285		[si **maache**		[they **make**
286	Li	[jo well	$+ T_3$	[yes because
287	T1	**sech suergen;**	T_3	**themselves worries;**
288	Li	jo [well	T_3	yes [because
289	Be	[wat	T_3	[what

290		ass **suergen**;		is **worries**;
291	T1	ma si hunn=	T_3	well they have=
292	Li	=maachen=	T_3	=make=
293	T1	=e bëssen angscht ron		=a little fear ron
294		fir hiert kand well hien	T_3	for their child because he
295		[näischt		[nothing
296	Li	[jo	T_3	[yes
297	T1	mei wëll iessen=	T_3	anymore wants to eat=
298	Li	=jo an dono geet (.)		=yes and then go (.)
299		dono hunn di net gesinn		then have they not seen
300		an dono wann hien net	$sitc_{(S)}$ /	and then when he not
301		do ass bei si an dono aehm	T_4	there is with them and then uhm
302		aehm e kräischen si mi;		uhm e cry they more;
303	T1	mhum,		mhum,
304		((turns the page))	- T_4	((turns the page))

Data extract 23: 8a_020513_NT_Krokodil – Lines 279 to 304 – Timing 0:05:39 to 0:06:05 (26s)

Description

The narration (lines 279 to 280) is interrupted by Lídia's self-initiated topic change (lines 281 to 282) and is followed by another self-initiated topic change of Benito (line 283). The teacher answers Benito's questions about the reason of the crocodiles' sadness by repeating the expression of "sech Suerge maachen" (to worry) (lines 284 to 285 and 287). During her answer, Lídia starts an utterance that aligns herself with that topic as well (line 286) but as she is interrupted by the teacher's explanation, so that she has to repeat her utterance (line 288). Now it is Benito who asks what the lexical item "suergen" (worries) means (lines 289 to 290). The teacher clarifies the expression by comparing it with fear (lines 291, 293 to 295 and 297) whereas Lídia tries to speak up twice (lines 292 and 296). After the teacher's comment, she can fully develop her topic change (lines 298 to 302) but she does not trigger any further discussion with the teacher (lines 303) who turns the page hereby stating clearly the end of the episode (line 304).

Analysis

While the teacher is going through the story (lines 279 to 280), Lídia self-initiates a topic change through pointing to attract attention to a detail in the picture (lines 281 to 282). Benito does self-initiate a topic as well; he asks why the crocodile parents are being sad (line 283). While the teacher is clearing her throat and starting to clarify (lines 284 to 285), Lídia is initiating her own answer in overlap (line 286). When the teacher finishes her explanation by using again the expression "sech suerge maachen" (to worry) (line 287), Lídia repeats the beginning of her previous utterance (line 288) but Benito cuts her with his simultaneous question about the meaning of "suergen" (worries) (lines 289 to 290). Like Lídia before, he isolates the noun from the verb. The teacher is clarifying the meaning by comparing it to the feeling of fear (lines 291 and 293 to 295 and 297) and Lídia is interposing an utterance fragment twice (lines 292 and 296). Eventually, after the teacher's clarification, Lídia self-initiates another topic change by describing the crocodiles' tears when noticing their son's absence (lines 298 to 302). The teacher briefly acknowledges Lídia's topical elaboration (line 303) and turns the page to state the end of the exchange clearly (line 304).

The next data clip shows how Lídia takes up the lexical item "Suergen" in her play.

	The children do not use the book. It stays closed.			
098	Le	wëlls du eng zoossiss	T_1	want you a sausage
099		iessen;		eat;
100	Be	Nee ech WËLL keng ech eng	T_1	No i WANT no i a
101		KAND iessen;		CHILD eat;
102	Li	an dono ech an du hum'	$sitc_{(S)}$ /	and then i and you hav'
103		aeh zou su **suerge gemaach**;	T_2	uhm like like **worries made**;
104	Le	hu::.		ha::.
105		m.	$+ T_2$	m.

Data extract 24: 8b_020513_NT_ChildrenPlay_Krokodil – Lines 98 to 105 – Timing 0:01:55 to 0:02:06 (11s)

Description

According to the role of the crocodile mother Leticia is playing, she asks Benito, the crocodile child, whether he wants to eat a sausage (lines 98 to 99). Benito refuses by putting strong emphasis on the verb "well" (to want) and by stating his needs with clear accentuation, "Kand" (child) (lines 100 to 101). Lídia, playing the crocodile father, gives role instructions, hereby adding a new nuance to the play by adding the expression "suerge gemaach" (to worry) (lines 102 to 103). Leticia imitates the crying mother to accept Lídia's topic (lines 104 to 105).

Analysis

Leticia plays her role as crocodile mother and offers her son, incorporated by Benito, a sausage (lines 98 to 99). The latter, as dictated by the story plot, refuses the food with emphasis and claims a child instead (lines 100 to 101). This accentuation is also suggested by the strong mimic of the crocodile in the picture, the children have seen during the teacher's narration. Lídia, as the crocodile mother, gives a play instruction (lines 102 to 103) that shows her capability of switching between story management and actual role play. Furthermore, she uses the expression "su suerge gemaach" (to worry) and merely forgets the personal pronoun (lines 102 to 103). Interestingly, even though children are not using the book to play the story, Lídia places the expression in the sausage episode, which comes after the episode where the teacher used it. Leticia is imitating a short cry (lines 104 and 105) to play her sadness, which shows alignment to the topic as well as comprehension of the right feeling to display at that particular moment of the story.

The last data stretch comes from the child reading activity of the crocodile story. In terms of timeline, it took place after the teacher's narration and the play activity:
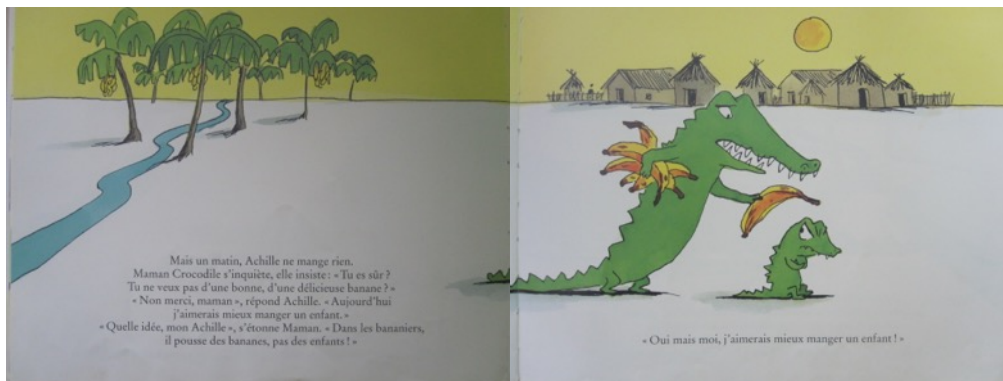
Double page of the book "Je mangerais bien un enfant"

050	Be	h::eno hat en de mama gesot		the:n has the mom said
051		aehm: iess de banann an da		uhm: eat the banana and then
052		hat de krokodil gesot (.) Ech	T_1	has the crocodile said (.) I
053		WËLL Keng banann iessen Ech		WANT No banana eat I want
054		wëll léiwer e Kand iessen		rather a Child eat
055		(-) e::h↑		(-) e::h↑
056	Ja	[a wann dee ( ) an ech,	$(sitc_{(S)}/$ $T_2)$	[and when the ( ) and i,
057	Be	[wéi hues du ee gudde iddi:	T_1	[how have you a good idea:
058	Li	an dono huet hatt dmama **sech**	$sitc_{(S)}/$	and then has the mum **herself**
059		**suerge gemaach;**	T_3	**worries made;**
060	Be	an da huet de mama (-) aehm	$+ T_3$	and then has the mum (-) uhm
061		[aeh		[uh
062	Li	[<<whispering> **sech**	T_3	[<<whispering> **herself**
063		**suerge** [**gemaach;**>		**worries** [**made;**>
064	Be	[ae:h (.)	T_3	[u:hm (.)
065		g' **suerge**↑ **gemaach** a::n-		m' **worries**↑ **made** a::nd-
066		((turns the page))		((turns the page))
067		((gives the book to Leticia)		((gives the book to Leticia))

Data extract 25: 8c_020513_NT_ChildrenRead_Krokodil – Lines 50 to 67 – Timing 0:00:58 to 0:01:29 (31s)

Description

Benito is retelling the story part, during which the crocodile mother offers a banana to her son, which he refuses because he prefers to eat a child (lines 50 to 55). Jacob is starting a self-initiated topic change that is partly inaudible and which he does not repeat

at a later moment (line 56). At the same time, Benito continues the storytelling (line 57). Lídia suggests the next utterance for Benito by her self-initiated topic change (lines 58 to 59) which he does accept. However, Benito stops the repetition before completing it (line 60) and uses a space filler "aeh" (uh) to cover his word search (line 66). Lídia reproduces her topic change again in whispers (lines 62 to 63) and this time Benito is able to copy it (lines 64 to 65) before turning the page and handing the book over to Leticia (lines 66 to 67).

Analysis

The extract resumes at the moment during which Benito describes the crocodile mother trying to convince her son to eat bananas (lines 50 to 55). Similarly, as during the play activity, Benito puts emphasis on the verb "wëll" (to want) mirroring the angry feeling of the crocodile in the book (line 53). The next utterance of Jacob is a potential self-initiated topic change but as it is partly inaudible, he is not repeating it and no one is reacting to it, we cannot be sure (line 56). Benito, in overlap, finishes the narration (line 57). Lídia self-initiates a topic change by adding the nuance of "sech suerge gemaach" (to worry). The construction of the expression is correct and ready for Benito to be repeated. After the first part of the utterance, nonetheless, he starts using space fillers "aehm" (uhm) (line 62) and "aeh" (uh) (line 63) not knowing how to use the new expression in context. Lídia, being helpful, repeats the expression in whispers (lines 62 to 63). Benito takes up her utterance but forgets the personal pronoun and stops his utterance with a pending intonation, giving the feeling as if he would like to add something or would not be satisfied with his utterance (lines 64 to 65). By turning the page and giving the book to Leticia, he ends the episode (lines 66 to 67).

Characteristic of this data example is the developing use of the topic "sech Suerge maachen" (to worry). Lídia is the first to ask the teacher about the meaning hereby isolating the noun from the verb structure and afterwards, when applying the expression herself, putting it together again. Then it is Benito's turn to inquire about the signification of the expression and although the teacher would not let Lídia explain it, she tries several times to insert an utterance. Unlike Lídia, he is not using the

construction autonomously in his speech. After having learnt from the teacher, Lídia can now function as a more capable peer. Later, in the play activity, Lídia comes up with the topic by herself: Employing the chunk, although not a hundred percent correct, at another moment of the story narration, shows that she has developed a deeper understanding of the meaning. She can now adapt it more flexible to any context. During the reading activity, Benito is narrating the part of the story in which the teacher originally used the expression. When the boy stops in his storytelling, Lídia is suggesting the expression once more – this time in a correct version. Nevertheless, Benito is not yet able to transfer the comprehensive knowledge of the expression into the actual capability to use it in a productive oral way. He encounters trouble in reproducing the suggested sentence proposal by Lídia and finally repeats only part of it and turns the page to close this episode.

6.3.3. "Falen" – Lexical understanding through topic discussion

The following story "Zilly, die Zauberin" is about a witch named Zilly whose house is all painted in black. Unfortunately, her cat, called Zingaro, is black too, which creates a series of problems. Zilly cannot see her cat and therefore she is tripping of the animal repeatedly. At some point, she decides to look for solutions and the idea is to perform magic on the cat to change its fur into green. But then, Zilly is falling over Zingaro in her garden and as a result, she transforms her cat's fur into many colours. The birds start making fun over Zingaro because he is so funny and the poor animal stays sadly upon a tree. Zilly is not happy either and she decides to transform her house into a colourful space and to change her cat back into the black Zingaro – hereby inducing the happy ending of the story.

When the four pupils Lídia, Leticia, Jacob and Benito were asked by their teacher to "retell the story that had been read to them the other day", they had to collaboratively set up the story of the witch "Zilly", hereby making choices on speakership, content and interactional organisation. The following extracts show the topical orientation of the pupils and how they reconstruct the meaning of the story by laying special attention

on the lexical item "falen" that is grammatically built and rebuilt throughout the on-going interaction:

Double page of the book "Zilly"

091112_T1_ChildrenRead_Hex_Minute0208
Screenshot corresponding to line 136

136	Le	an ((points to the picture)	T_1	and ((points to the picture)
137		elo:) den zingarO		no:w) the zingarO
138	Li	[hie hat sou aen zou (.)	+	[he did like eyes closed (.)
139		gemeet	+	did
140	Be	[hie: ha:t-	$sitc_{(S)}$ / T_2	[he: di:d-
141	Le	zin[garo (.) hat	T_1	zin[garo (.) did
142	Li	[dono hat	+	[then did
143	Be	[da hat (.)	$sitc_{(S)}$ / T_2	[then did (.)
144		da hat den zi:=		then did the zi:=
145	Li	=**gefal**=	+ T_2	=**fell**=
146	Be	=**gefal**;	T_2	=**fell**;

Data extract 26: 2c_091112_T1_ChildrenRead_Hex – Lines 136 to 146 – Timing 0:02:06 to 0:02:19 (13s)

Description

Leticia accompanies her utterance on Zingaro with a pointing gesture to the picture (lines 136 to 137). Lídia describes Zingaro's closed eyes (lines 138 to 139) whereas Benito starts a possible topic change in overlap (line 140). Leticia continues her previous utterance (line 141) whereas Lídia narrates (line 142) and Benito restarts his utterance (lines 143 to 144) at the same time. Lídia finishes the narration with a verb followed by Benito echoing it (lines 145 and 146).

Analysis

Leticia is directing her peers' attention by pointing at Zingaro (lines 136 to 137). All the children are aligned to the common focus on the book, by having their bodies and gazes turned towards the artefact. Although conforming with the topic, Lídia is taking over immediately by describing what the cat is doing (lines 138 to 139). Benito, who initiates a turn at the same time, does not finish his utterance (line 140). Leticia tries a second time to place her idea (line 141) but her speech is overlapped by Lídia and Benito (lines 142 and 143). Eventually, Benito is able to start a self-initiated topic change describing the cat (line 144) however it is Lídia who brings in the keyword "gefal" (to fall) (line 145). Benito acknowledges her idea by repeating the same lexical item (line 146). By looking at the picture, showing the witch Zilly tripping over the cat and not vice versa, it becomes clear that the meaning is constructed among the children. The items "gefal" (to fall) and "Zingaro" are common ground enough to symbolise the witch's tripping over the cat.

Leticia puts emphasis on the cat but during this short exchange the topic is shaded (Jefferson, 1984; Sacks et al., 1974) towards the main theme, the fall, as we are going to see in the following extract which continues exactly where the previous example ended:

Double page of the book "Zilly"

091112_T1_ChildrenRead_Hex_Minute0219
Screenshot corresponding to line 147 and 148

146	Li	((turns the page))	(sitc$_{(A)}$ / T$_3$)	((turns the page))
147	Be	well [well (.) hie	T$_2$	because [because (.) he
148	Li	[sim:salabi:ma	T$_3$	[sim:salabi:ma
149		nee waart (.) fir de	**sitc$_{(SA)}$**	no wait (.) for the
150		(ja de)	**/ T$_4$**	(ja de)
151	Ja	abrakadabra:	+ T$_3$	abracadabra:
152	Li	(-) de (g)e::x↑ huet		(-) the (w)i::tch↑ has
153		seng a::nd↑ nach eng		her ey::s↑ another
154		kéier zougemeet (.)		time closed (.)
155		((points to the picture and	T$_4$	((points to the picture and
156		traces a downward movement)		traces a downward movement)
157		**gefaalt gefaalt gefaalt**-=		**fell fell fell**-=

091112_T1_ChildrenRead_Hex_Minute0234
Screenshot corresponding to line 158

158	Be	((points to the picture)	+ T$_4$	((points to the picture)
159		BIS DO:)		UNTIL THE:RE)
160	Ja	((points to the picture and		((points to the picture and
161		traces a downward movement)	**sitc$_{(SA)}$**	traces a downward movement)
162		uo: rutschbahn (niha)	**/ T$_5$**	uo: slide ( )
163		juhu:=baatsch;		whoho:=( );
164	Be	tass net rutschbahn		it is not slide
165		((traces a downward	+ T$_5$	((traces a downward

091112_T1_ChildrenRead_Hex_Minute0240
Screenshot corresponding to line 165

166		movement) bif bei bis bei	+ T$_5$	movement) until until
167		DEEN ru' aehm (-) ae:hm		HERE sl' uhm (-) u:hm
168	Ja	**trapen;**	T$_5$	**stairs;**
169	Li	gef:	+ T$_5$	( )
170	Be	**TRApen**–	T$_5$	**stairs**–
171	Ja	nom		after
172	Be	**trapen** hat hie **gefall**	T$_5$	**stairs** did he **fell**

Data extract 27: 2c_091112_T1_ChildrenRead_Hex – Lines 146 to 172 – Timing 0:02:19 to 0:02:46 (27s)

Description

The extract starts with Lídia turning the page, which is counted as a topic change (line 146). Benito is starting an utterance that is still in line with the topic from the previous data extract (line 147) and Lídia pronounces the magic formula simultaneously (line 148). Then, she initiates another topic change (lines 149 to 150). Jacob is picking up her spell by adding his own version (line 151) but Lídia sticks to her topic change and elaborates her utterance (lines 152 to 157). Benito now accepts her proposal and with a pointing gesture (line 158), adds a detail to her utterance (line 159). Jacob self-initiates a topic change by adding a nuance to what has been said before (lines 160 to 163). Benito contradicts (line 164) and corrects the movement with a gesture and words (lines 165 to 167). As he misses a lexical item, Jacob suggests one (line 168). Lídia seems to propose another vocabulary (line 169) however Benito picks up Jacob's (line 170). The latter says another word (line 171) and Benito takes up his previous utterance by reformulating it (line 172).

Analysis

By turning the page, Lídia is opening up a new sequence (line 146) although Benito refers himself to the previous one still (line 147). By this change of the topic nuance, she constrains every further attempt to expand the description of the cat Zingaro and his role in the fall of witch Zilly. In parallel, she is orientating her peers to a new element by using a prefabricated word, a well-known spell in child language, which she is expanding with the sound "a" at the end (line 148). As in the example before, the children are still oriented towards the book, lying at the centre of their semi-circle whereas Jacob is sitting with his back straight, thus gaining some kind of overview – a position he keeps during this extract.

In the subsequent line, Lídia seems to have had an idea as she begs her peers to wait (lines 149 to 150). Jacob is building on Lídia's previous spell by giving the name of another spell (line 151) and the latter is waiting for him to finish before adding a new element to the story: Lídia describes the witch's closure of the eyes (lines 152 to 154), which is not in the picture. Besides, the children are looking at the drawing where the witch already fell down the stairs, so their description still relates to the previous page.

Their higher degree of engagement is displayed through leaning forward to the book. Lídia enacts the witch's fall iconically by tracing a downward movement (lines 155 to 156), strengthening the shape of the picture, as well as the action of falling. She is also accentuating it verbally by repeating the verb "gefaalt" (to fall) three times (line 157). The erroneous usage of the past tense of the verb "falen" (correct form: "gefall") is interesting. But it is not clear whether Lídia is overstretching a grammatical rule (adding the morpheme "t" to form the past tense for some verbs in Luxembourgish) or mixing up the two distinct verb forms ("gefaalt" being the participle of "falen", to fold). Benito is announcing his alignment in the following utterance by pointing to the lower part of the picture and showing the spot where the witch's downfall comes to an end (lines 158 to 159). Jacob is joining them by first pointing to the picture and imitating Lidia's downward movement (lines 160 to 161) and then vividly re-enacting the witch's fall with exclamation words and comparing it to a slide (lines 162 to 163). By this, he enacts a self-initiated nuance of the topic. The pointing serves to reinforce the meaning that the children construct together and it shows mutual alignment.

However, the next turn shows Benito's disagreement with Jacob's statement and he rejects the term "rutschbahn" (slide) although not the topic change itself (line 164). He leans forward to accentuate his engagement and puts emphasis on his personal view whereas Jacob and Lídia sit with their back straight, marking a slight distance. Moreover, Benito's intent to specify the description results in a word search (line 165). It seems as if Jacob is helping Benito by suggesting an alternative lexical item, "trapen" (stairs) (line 168). Lídia also appeared to be helping but since she does not finish her utterance (line 169), we cannot be sure of this hypothesis.

Meanwhile, Benito is acknowledging Jacob's contribution by repeating the word and putting accent on it (line 170). Jacob starts a new utterance (line 171) but Benito is enlarging his own utterance from before and uses the participle of the verb "to fall" correctly (line 172). In this sequence, the children were collaborating to describe the witch's fall: Except for Leticia, all were contributing, either with spells and an imaginative description, or with an objection to a particular lexical item, triggering a negotiation of meaning between the words "slide" and "stairs", which took the exchange to another level.

The topic "falen" (to fall) is then put in the background for a short time to return in the subsequent extract:

Double page of the book "Zilly"

091112_T1_ChildrenRead_Hex_Minute0352
Screenshot corresponding to line 228 and 229

228	Ja	[iwwert dzingaro **gefall**	T_1	[over the zingaro **fell**
229	Li	[((touches Jacob's arm)		[((touches Jacob's arm)
230		de ga:z-	$sitc_{(SA)}$ / T_2	the ca:t-
231		de ga:z,		the ca:t,
232	Ja	wou [tschan	- T_2	where [tschan
233	Li	[((pulls on Jacob's	T_2	[((pulls on Jacob's
234		arm)		arm
235	Ja	tschan [tschan tschan	T_1	tschan [tschan tschan
236	Li	[de kaz,	T_2	[the cat
237		de gaz [**gefa::ll**,		the cat [**fe::ll**
238	Be	[den ZINgaro;	$sitc_{(S)}$ / T_3	[the ZINgaro;
239	Ja	((points to the picture)	$sitc_{(SG)}$ / T_4	((points to the picture)

091112_T1_ChildrenRead_Hex_Minute0359
Screenshot corresponding to line 238f and 240

240	Ja	((points to the picture)	sitc(SG) / T4	((points to the picture)
241		an da war hatt [sou **gefall**;)		and then did she [like **fell**;)
242	Li	[do si		[there are
243		((points)	T2	((points)
244		picken do si mega		thorns there are mega
245		[vill picken		[many thorns
246	Le	[aeh uhm dat ass	T4	[uhm uhm this is
247		net **gefa:ll**		not fe:ll
248	Be	picken da war och [da war	T3	thorns then was also [then
249		och		was also
250	Ja	[do och	T4	[there also
251	Be	de mutz an de	T3	the hat and the
252		[zauber do::		[magic the::re

Data extract 28: 2c_091112_T1_ChildrenRead_Hex – Lines 228 to 252 – Timing 0:03:50 to 0:04:06 (16s)

Description

Jacob narrates a part of the story (line 228) at the same time when Lídia touches his arm to initiate a topic change (line 229). She repeats the word "cat" twice (lines 230 and 231) but Jacob seems to stick with his first topic to which he adds sounds (lines 232 and 234) even though Lídia pulls his arm for the second time (lines 233 to 234). She restarts her utterance (lines 236 to 237) whereas Benito is initiating another topic change (line 238). Via a pointing gesture, Jacob self-initiates another topic change (line 239) which he accompanies with an explanation (lines 240 to 241). Lídia still continues her own initiated topic (lines 242 to 245) whereas Leticia reacts to Jacob's utterance by disagreeing with his view of the story (lines 246 to 247). Benito finishes his idea (lines 248 to 249, 251 to 252) and does not give the possibility to Jacob to execute another utterance (line 250).

Analysis

Jacob is reinitiating the topic of the fall in line 228, by leaning forward, he is again displaying full engagement. Leticia has her body oriented to the book, whereas Benito sits with his back straight to keep some distance to the ongoing action. Lídia absolutely wants to describe the cat and in order to get Jacob's full attention, she leans forward and touches his arm (line 229 and 230 to 231), hereby assuring physical contact that constrains Jacob to direct his attentiveness to Lídia and focus on her proposed topic change. Jacob, however, seems to pursue his utterance and starts a series of onomatopoeic sounds to illustrate the witch's tripping over her cat (line 232 and 235) while being pulled on his arms even more resolutely by Lídia (lines 233 to 234). In line 236, she reinitiates her utterance and repeats the word "cat" twice. First her pronunciation [k] is correct than she goes back to her version of the word (with an initial [g] - resembling more the word "gato", "cat", in her first language Portuguese) (lines 236 to 237). She then uses the correct form of the verb "gefall" (to fall), like Jacob in line 228. Whether it is a mere repetition or a discontinuous use of the verb is not possible to be derived from the data.

Then, Benito initiates an utterance with the cat's name, in overlap with Lídia's word "gefall" (to fall), maybe because he thought that Lídia was looking for the name of the cat (line 238). Jacob points to the picture to underline his verbal description of the witch's tripping hereby initiating another nuance of the topic (lines 239 to 241). He and Leticia are leaning forward to be closer to the book whereas Lídia makes a connection to the artefact with her arm. Benito seems somehow distant – sitting with his back straight and his hands folded to listen to the on-going action. Lídia starts her utterance in overlap and directs the other's gaze to the "picken", the thorns of the bush, by pointing to them and aligning herself on Jacob's topic (lines 242 to 245). She insists on the fact that there are many thorns by repeating her previous utterance and upgrading it with magnifying adjectives "mega vill" (lines 244 to 245). Only in lines 246 to 247, Leticia brings in her disagreement about the meaning "gefall" (to fall), though she does not develop this any further. Benito is taking up his idea from before and tries to add an element twice (lines 248 to 249). Jacob starts an utterance in overlap (line 250) but

finally Benito manages to place to new elements, "mutz" (hat) and "zauber" (magic) (lines 251 to 252).

The witch Zilly's fall comes into being through the combination of different sign systems: Through the picture in the artefact "book", their body positioning towards each other, their pointing to shift attention and gaze to details and the on-going change of the verb "to fall", the children re-enacted the Zilly's fall. Turn-by-turn, they build a shared understanding of this action by orienting collaboratively to the topic of the fall whereas the picture is providing the activity framework towards which the children orient their talk to. The full engagement into this collaborative task is underlined by the children's body position towards each other and the book, whereas the knowledge about the verb "to fall" is reconfirmed, modified and expanded throughout the interaction:

Occurrence	Speaker	Lexical item "to fall"
145	Lídia	gefal
146	Benito	gefal
157	Lídia	gefaalt (3x)
172	Benito	gefall
228	Jacob	gefall
237	Lídia	gefall
241	Jacob	gefall
247	Leticia	gefall

Table 16: Occurrence of the lexical item "gefall"

Lídia and Benito first use the lexical item "gefal"(to fall). Lídia develops this erroneous form of the verb "falen" further when she uses "gefaalt". Benito then uses the correct form "gefall". His utterance may be a chunk that he remembers, which would explain the correct form of the verb even though no one gave a right model before. Eventually Jacob, speaking Luxembourgish as his first language, uses the lexical item correctly so that Lídia copies the correct form. Whether it is a durable learning or not, does not come out of the data because the verb does not occur again. Leticia is the last one to use the lexical item correctly.

Interesting is also the sweeping movement that has been used to accentuate the long fall down the stairs. Following Goodwin (2003), a pointing gesture carries an iconical component, that is *"a gesture that traces the shape of what is being pointed at, and thus superimposes an iconic display on a deictic point within the performance of a single gesture"* thus bringing the moving finger and the target point into a dynamic relationship (Melander & Sahlström, 2009, p. 1529).

The topic "falen" as well as the verb itself are located in the interaction between the children. As the different signs system react to each other, the pupils elaborate on their topic. Melander and Sahlström (2009) confirm that "the changes taking place cannot reasonably be understood as a matter of the expression of changes in individual mental modes". Learning, thinking and knowing are rather seen as relational by Lave and Wenger (1991) and that is why topical orientation needs to be considered as an elemental facet of participation. Even though the artefact "book" suggests a specific content of discussion, it is still up to the children to choose the focal point of their discussions, which they did by accentuating the witch's fall throughout the different moments of the story. One first self-initiated topic change triggers a topic discussion during which the children add self-initiated nuances of the topic. This can stand in sharp contrast with the actual agenda of the teacher who would prefer the pupils to concentrate on other elements such as the story structure (beginning, development and ending).

6.3.4.   Intermediate findings

The previously elicited instances demonstrate the children's ability in elaborating a topic in all its nuances while staying with the story plot. Also, the examples have a progressive development of lexical items in common: The hunting episode shows the scaffolding of the noun "Juegd" (hunt), necessary to sustain story narration. The expression "sech Suerge maachen" (to worry), first appears with the teacher and was highlighted to explain the meaning. Lídia is able to isolate the expression from the sentence, bringing it down to the basic form and demonstrating knowledge about formal word formation (Henrici & Köster, 1987). Then, she explores the application of the new expression in different contexts, that is, in the play and reading activity. This is a prominent example of the dynamic learner language and how the learning of chunks helps growing vocabulary knowledge (Dauster, 2007a).

The joint construction of the lexical items "Trapen" (stairs) and "falen" (to fall) end up in a complex description of a story detail. These examples demonstrate how pupils are capable of exploring new lexical items and use them in context: At the beginning, their application may not be grammatically correct but practice is a necessary step in developing solid linguistic knowledge. In opposition to more formal teacher-led activities with particular linguistic exercises, children show their capability to attend to new lexical items and to experiment their application in interaction (Dobinson, 2001). Slimani (2001) singles out the *"idiosyncratic nature of learning vocabulary"*, meaning that words, which have not necessarily been pinpointed by the teacher, may still become salient for the pupils and that they might even benefit more from these vocabulary items than those explicated by the teacher. Accordingly, the pupils engage in interaction where they highlight linguistic aspects and use tools, such as scaffolding, corrections or word searches to explore the meaning of new lexical items and sustain each other in the learning process (Cekaite & Björk-Willén, 2012; Müller, 2007).

The negotiation of lexical items leads to an increase of the MLU as shown in the examples below:

Salomão:

139	Sa	((points to picture) an⌐		((points to picture) and
140		[de⌐ mama⌐ seet⌐ si⌐ muss⌐en⌐	9 syllables / 1 utterance = MLU 9.00	[the mum says they have to
		[...]		
143		op⌐ de:n-⌐		on the:-
144	Is	**juegd**		**hunt**
145	Sa	**juegd** [goen		**hunt** [go

MLU count 8: 3c_141112_T2_ChildrenRead_Fuuss – Lines 139 to 145

Lídia:

058	Li	an⌐ do⌐no⌐ huet⌐ hatt⌐ dmama⌐	11 syllables / 1 utterance = MLU 11.00	and then has the mum **herself**
059		**sech⌐ suer⌐ge⌐ ge⌐maach;**		**worries made;**

MLU count 9: 8c_020513_NT_ChildrenRead_Krokodil – Lines 058 to 059

Lídia's scaffolding of the expression triggers more language production with Benito:

060	Be	an⌐ da⌐ huet⌐ de⌐ mama⌐ (-) aehm	10 syllables / 1 utterance = MLU 10.00	and then has the mum (-) uhm
		[...]		
064		[ae:h (.)		[u:hm (.)
065		g' **suer⌐ge↑⌐ ge⌐maach⌐** a::n-		m' **worries↑ made** a::nd-
066		((turns the page))		((turns the page))

MLU count 10: 8c_020513_NT_ChildrenRead_Krokodil – Lines 060 to 066

Although Benito repeats Lídia's utterance, her scaffolding helps Benito to work in his ZPD, boost his language production and, in the future, enable him to use the expression autonomously. With all the three children, we observe an MLU superior to the minimum of 3.0 found in chapter 4. Even though a child is not yet able to finish a given topic change, the joint scaffolding of the linguistic items triggers a discussion around the lexical item and increases language production.

What is more, the previous example of the stairs shows the benefits of topic discussions during which the children jointly orient towards a same theme, that is, exploring the meaning of falling down the stairs. The fine coordination of pointing and sweeping movements, directing the children's attention to the verbal explications, literally lets

the witch's tripping come into being and shows how these different sign systems intersect with each other (Melander & Sahlström, 2009). Radford (2009) considers gestures as genuine constituents of thinking because thinking occurs also through language, body and tools. In our example, the children have to agree mutually on the topic and maintain the different nuances of this same topic appearing across the discussion. Linguistic means thus become resources for the children to organise their verbal interaction which in return reshape the linguistic tools into more sophisticated devices (Doehler, 2004).

Chapter 6.3 - Emerging lexical understanding through topical orientation

➢ Finding 1

The pupils are able to successfully scaffold a linguistic item (e.g. "hunt") and carry on the initial story reading activity.

➢ Finding 2

Identifying new expressions to explore their meaning (e.g. "sech Suerge maachen") and experimenting their application in other contexts, are crucial capacities for pupils to develop their linguistic knowledge and highlight the dynamic nature of their learner language.

➢ Finding 3

The negotiation and enactment of the lexical item "falen" (to fall) is achieved collaboratively through a topic discussion. Topical orientation, therefore,

appears as a key element, with the children choosing themselves the focal point of their interaction with the story book.

Recapitulative table 5: Findings of chapter 6.3

The most interesting findings of this subchapter turn around the dynamic learner language and how new lexical understanding emerges. Through the scaffolding action of the more capable peers, new lexical items are explored and eventually transferred into other contexts: "hunt", "sech Suerge maachen" and "fallen". These learning processes happen naturally along to the story narration and do not interrupt the flow of the interaction. With the pupils choosing themselves the focal points of their discussions, they discover story content in their own way.

So far we have focused on the quantitative view on young students' utterances as a whole and self-initiated topic changes more specifically. Qualitatively, we have advocated the sequence-by-sequence investigation of topic construction in three different activity types. To conclude the analysis, we add one more perspective about the teachers, to clarify their view on topic discussions, their pedagogical goals and their management of self-initiated topic changes.

Part V

The teachers' representations of the L2 learner

Analysis of L2 learners' topic management during book reading activities in preschool

Measuring L2 proficiency in classroom talk through MLU

- Teacher talk and IRF patterns in joint reading activities
- Pupil profiles

Self-initiated topic changes as a predictor for proficiency in L2

- Nature, reactions and tools
- Pupil profiles

- Topic discussions, topic management and emerging lexical understanding

The teachers' representations of the L2 learner

- Post-reflection on pupil involvement
- Pedagogical goals and language learning beliefs
- Management of self-initiated topic changes

7. The teachers' representations of the L2 learner

The last analytical strand is focusing on the teachers' perspective on a chosen extract of their lesson. Subject of the interview was a reflection on what they saw in the video extract of their own lesson, their pedagogical goals and the inherent beliefs on second language learning as well as their management of topic changes initiated by their young students. As a reminder of the exact formulation of the interview questions, please refer back to chapter 3.4.3. To conclude, this last analytical strand, we put the findings with theoretical references into perspective and match them with the quantitative results on how teachers handle topic changes.

7.1. Unexpected learner's involvement

The first question confronted the teachers with the conflicting view between their former beliefs and the new impressions resulting from the review of an extract on their narration activity. Both of them showed honest stupefaction about the appearance of this discrepancy:

"[…] am Nachhinein erstaunt driwwer. [...] mam Sergio dass hie vill besser Lëtzebuergesch geschwat huet wéi ech dat an Erënnerung hunn. Dass hie vill méi (.) eppes (.) ah e krut wierklech eppes (.) eng Iddi ausgedréckt wat ech him eigentlech am Nachhinein nemi sou zougetraut hätt. An dass ech fannen dass déi dräi äh véier am Fong (-) si hu jo awer (.) oder haaptsächlech well se oder den Ugo huet just gesot si streiden mee déi aner dräi hunn awer wierklech Ideen zum Buch gehat,

Rough translation:

„[...] astonished in retrospect. [...] about Sergio that he spoke Luxembourgish much better as I remember him doing it. That he really could express an idea which by hindsight I would not have expected. And that I think that the three uhm the four (-) they have (.) or mainly because they or Ugo only said they are fighting but the other three really had ideas about the book what could happen next or what could be done."

wat elo geschitt oder wat ee kéint
maachen."

Interview extract 1: Teacher 2, question 1

With many pauses, teacher 2 is voicing her astonishment about the degree of comprehension by Sergio, a pupil she estimated less capable of following a narration. She recognises his ability to express an idea in the Luxembourgish language. Moreover, she thinks that, except for Ugo who brought in the idea of "arguing", all the other pupils had valuable input to give. The word "am Nachhinein" (in English "in retrospect"), suggests a shift of perception compared to how the teacher used to think about the young students. What she can see from the video does not match with her previous generalisation about pupil participation. The notion of "zoutrauen", reflects this post-awareness that she underestimated her pupils. Teacher 1 is voicing similar thoughts:

"[…] also d'Geschicht ass net einfach esou verzielt ginn an äh si hunn näischt matkrut. Also tëschent den (.) dem (.) deenen zwee ((laughs)). D'Lídia an de Benito si hunn d'Geschicht wierklech gutt (.) äh (.) materlieft. An déi aner d'Leticia an (-) naja ((laughs)). (--) Jo. Mee do war ech mengen bei deenen Kanner do war d'Leticia dat och am Rouegsten ass an och net sou vill (-) verstanen an hatt ass och dat Jéngst mengen ech gewiescht."

Rough translation:

„[...] well the story has not been told only like that and uhm they would not have understood anything. Well between (.) the (.) the two ((laughs)). Lídia and Benito really lived the story. And the others Leticia and (-) well ((laughs))- (--) Yes. But Leticia has been the calmest among all the children and did not understand (-) that much and she was the youngest as well I think.

Interview extract 2: Teacher 1, question 1

The degree of the young students' involvement surprised teacher 1. To her, it is important to acknowledge that her story narration does not simply pass over the children, except for Leticia whose silence she explains with her young age and lack of comprehension.

Furthermore, teacher 1 is impressed by emotional participation of her pupils:

"Maja dass en se d'Geschicht awer scho gutt verstanen hunn an déi iergendwéi sou (.) mat (.) erliewen sou well se (.) äh (-) jo well si eben do matschwätzen a soen jo äh de Krokodil ass béis oh nee d'Meedchen ass elo béis […]."

Rough translation:

„Well that they already understood the story quite well and that they somehow (.) like (.) lived it because they (.) uhm) yes because they participated in the talking and say uhm the crocodile is evil oh no the girl is now evil [...]."

Interview extract 3: Teacher 1, question 1

The pupils are questioning the morality of the crocodile's and the protagonist's behaviour. For the children, it is important to establish the roles of the good and the bad a point that struck teacher 1 during the video reviewing and which is also reflected by the pauses in her speech. The pupils' consideration shows a deep reflectivity on the essence of the story and mirrors the exposure to other fables that convey cultural values (Talwar, Yachison, & Leduc, 2015). Not only do they need to understand the temporal happenings of a story but they also should grasp its moral and make conclusions about "good" and "bad".

The perception of teacher 2 in view of the children's proposals to resolve the conflict between the cat and the dog goes into a similar direction:

„Dass si awer Léisunge fonnt hunn, eng aner Léisung wéi ech (.) well ech wollt jo (.) wahrscheinlech dass se vläicht drop kéimen, dass (.) äh se kéinten zesummen um Teppech leien mee si hunn nach vill aner Méiglechkeete fonnt wat kéint

Rough translation:

„That they found solutions, another one as me (.) because I wanted (.) probably that they maybe hit on it, that (.) uhm they could lie together on the carpet but they also found many other possibilities of what could have happened or what could be done."

geschéien oder wat ee kéint man."

Interview extract 4: Teacher 2, question 1

Teacher 2 is acknowledging the fact that the pupils come up with many other ideas. She wanted them to find out that the pets could use the carpet together, however, they were even more creative by suggesting the animals could take turns in using the carpet or could each have a piece of the rug. We can see from here that the pedagogue is disclosing a practice which is used frequently at school. She wants them to find a solution that she has already in her mind as it is proposed by the book and that is critically labelled as "Guess What Teacher Thinks" since it does not leave much space for creativity (Young, 1992). However, in this case, the question about possible solutions did not turn out to be a display question to test knowledge that she had in mind. But rather, it developed into a more open discussion about further solutions to a problem. Moreover, the pupils are using personal resources by comparing the animal's fight to their everyday conflicts during which they also need to find compromises with their peers. This connection to their known situations is important to make sense of the story and reflects the children's "funds of knowledge", meaning that they interpret new information with prior experiences they had in their daily lives (Gonzalez et al., 2005).

The discrepancy between what the teachers think during their activities while they are actually carrying them out and what their impressions are once confronted with the video, is striking in this first interview question. Both seem to largely have underestimated their young students' abilities, which they admit through their astonishment. This pessimistic stance towards the children's competencies is partially explained by the fact that teachers have less observation possibilities when they are actively involved in the narration. Harte et al. (2014) have pointed out the same phenomenon of midwives watching videos of their work so that they could pause and think about aspects that they may not have considered before to engage them into substantial reflections. In our case, much of the children's story perception remains unnoticed. Consequences for the evaluation are the teachers' superficial notion of their pupil's abilities and hence an insufficient planning of further assistance measures.

7.2. Language learning beliefs

An essential part of the interview centres on the pedagogical goals. The teacher's aim in the recorded joint reading activity, as well as in story narrations in general, is tackled. Moreover, they were asked about other language development activities organized in their classrooms.

The two teachers had different goals for their narration activity. Teacher 1 wanted her pupils to understand the story and to be able to retell it:

"Ma (-) dat en se d'Geschicht verstinn ((laughs)) dat en se sech kënnen (.) äh d'Geschicht och äh weider verzielen. […] dass en se och doduercher ebe bëssen ähm de Wortschatz erweideren."

Rough translation:

„Well (-) that they understand the story ((laughs)) that they know it (.) uhm to retell the story as well. [...] that they enlarge the lexicon through it."

Interview extract 5: Teacher 1, question 2

The children are supposed to develop their comprehensive skills, that is, to hear and understand the language of the story. The provided vocabulary from the story should enrich their oral competencies. In a next step, they should be able to narrate the story themselves which means reproducing the language that has been heard before. Teacher 2 considers narration primary as a medium:

„Bon, éischtens d'Sprooch ze (.) hinnen d'Sprooch bäizebréngen an deem Sënn, dass si mech héiere schwätzen, dass ech (--) hir Sprooch mol léieren andeem ech (.) an dem ech ebe richteg schwätzen an dann och si zu Wuert kommen ze loossen [...]."

Rough translation:

„Well, first the language (.) teach them the language in a sense that they hear me speaking that I (--) learn the language in a sense that (.) in a sense that I speak correctly and then also let them speak up [...]."

Interview extract 6: Teacher 2, question 2

The story is supporting the development of language, just like any other narration. The teacher offers a correct model of language to her pupils to which they aspire in their learning process. Her underlying implicit premise reflects the belief that frequent examples of language models enhance language development (Hargrave & Sénéchal, 2000). Furthermore, the story provides speech opportunities for the pupils to practice their oral skills (Lever & Sénéchal, 2011; Opel, Ameer, & Aboud, 2009).

Additionally, teacher 1 tries to create an interest for the story that inspires the children enough to go back to the story at a later stage:

| „[...] wéi soll ech soen, dass en se d'Geschicht intressant genuch fannen fir déi dann och méi spéit äh wëllen nach eng Kéier also d'Buch nach eng Kéier wëlle gesinn an äh dass en si se sech selwer verziele kënnen." | Rough translation:

„[...] how should I say that, that they find the story interesting enough to later uhm another time that they want to see the book again and uhm that they can narrate it by themselves." |

Interview extract 7: Teacher 1, question 2

Crucial for language development to teacher 1 is the number of times a child re-reads a book – a finding covered by research as well (Dickinson & Smith, 1994; Reese & Cox, 1999). Thus, the story needs to be interesting enough to raise the child's willingness to look at it again. As they are not yet able to read printed text, fascination for the plot is essential to remember it and memorise it without an adult reading it. The repeated settlement with a story leads children to incorporate part of the story language in their retells (Stadler & Ward, 2010).

Teacher 2 made the children look for the solution of the argument between the cat and the dog. Without knowing the ending, the young students had to make predictions about the possible solution.

„[...] dass si op déi Léisung géinge kommen, déi herno dann am Buch ass mee um Wee dohinner soe si jo nach vill aner Saachen an dat gëtt jo da sproochlech (.) wéi soll ech soen (.) Variabilitéit vun dem wat se soen."

Rough translation:

„[...] that they would find this solution which is afterwards suggested by the book but on the way towards this they also say many other things and this then linguistically (.) how can I say this (.) variability of what they say."

Interview extract 8: Teacher 2, question 2

As mentioned before, the teacher did not expect her pupils to find other solutions to resolve the conflict. This results in the linguistic variability that she is pointing to now. By thinking outside of the boundaries of the book, the pupils engaged in a creative process. To express their ideas, they had the opportunity to practice speaking which lead to topic discussion and scaffolding of language (see chapter 6).

Overall, teacher 1 designs language activities to teach Luxembourgish vocabulary to her young students:

„Jo, Wortschatz erweideren [...] fir lo ech weess net korrekt Sätz an sou weider ze maache fannen ech och elo wichteg, dass dat eben no an no kënnt mee (.) ech mengen dat éischt ass awer schonn de Wortschatz."

Rough translation:

„Yes, enlarge the lexicon [...] to now I don't know to do correct sentences I think it is important that this happens progressively (.) I think the first thing is the lexicon though."

Interview extract 9: Teacher 1, question 3

The pedagogue points to the importance of acquiring vocabulary before intensively working on a syntactic level revealing a generalised attitude to language learning.

Teacher 2 refers to her speaking as a role-model for the learners on the one hand and on conveying the intention of the book on the other hand:

„Ech wëllt eigentlech ëmmer kombinéieren, dass ech (.) dass si lauschteren, wat ech soen an dass si och matkritt matkréien wat vläicht de Message offiziell am Buch ass mee dass si awer och kënne sech ausdrécken a schwätzen [...]."

Rough translation:

„I always like to combine that (.) that they listen to what I say and that they also understand the official message of the book but that they also know how to express themselves and speak [...]."

Interview extract 10: Teacher 2, question 3

The children are expected to listen and acquire the speech model presented to them. With this model, they may experiment their oral skills and discuss the book and its main message. However, teacher 2 points to a major dilemma:

„[...] just muss ech soen éierlech fir mech selwer ass et schwéier d'Grenz ze fannen well wann s de si vill schwätze léiss (.) herno dann (-) ((laughs)) dat kléngt negativ mee dat aart dann heiansdo aus mee bon (.) 't hänkt dervunner of. ((laughs)) Wann (.) wéi soll ech soen, well dee Message deen s du wollts weiderginn ka verluer goen eben mee ech fannen et awer och schued wann s du nëmme schwätz a si kënnen näischt soen."

Rough translation:

„[...] only I need to say that for me personally it is difficult the find the limit because if you let them talk (.) then (-) ((laughs)) this sounds negative but this sometimes degenerates but well (.) it depends. ((laughs)) If (.) how should I put this, because the message you wanted to transmit may get lost but it is a pity if you do the talking alone and they cannot say anything."

Interview extract 11: Teacher 2, question 3

If pupils are granted too much expressive freedom, the teacher is afraid that the goals of her activity will be missed in the sense that the main message of the story is not elaborated enough. Children would stray in too many directions and the goal fixed by the pedagogue is neglected. The teacher feels this to be a dilemma because attaining

her agenda means to restrict the young students' amount of verbal expression at the same time. This conflict appeared clearly in chapter 4.2 with the teachers' questioning format being analysed: If the framework remains very strictly teacher-controlled, pupils' MLU remains low, that is the volume of verbal expression is reduced to a minimum. However, an opening of this framework takes away the teachers' possibility to regulate the verbal exchange. The teacher, being in charge of the learning process, feels that she is not meeting the requirements of successful teaching. This concern re-appears in the next quote from teacher 2:

„Well ech sinn nämlech net awer net ganz prett well ech weess du kéints jo dat och esou erzielen oder sou maachen, dass si quasi alles erzielen a wann herno da' (.) dat eng ganz aner Variant ass, wéi dat wat am Buch steet, ass dat och ok mee souwäit war ech awer nach net."	Rough translation: „Because I'm not yet totally ready because I know you could narrate it or do it in a way that they would nearly narrate everything and if then th' (.) a totally different variant than what is written in the book would that be ok as well but I'm not yet there."

Interview extract 12: Teacher 2, question 3

Conscientious of alternative narration styles, teacher 2 admits that she is not ready to give away the reins of her activity by letting the children tell the story and with that create their own variation of the book.

Concerning the exemplarity of story narration as language activity, both teachers agree on the importance of pictures as a support for language and recurring practice of verbal skills.

„[...] duerch Lidder an sou äh jo an de Sproochaktivitéiten ähm äh bon iergendwéi schonn ëmmer mat Bi also mat Biller fir dass en se äh och (.) also ech weess net	Rough translation: „[...] through songs and the like uhm yes and language activities uhm uh well somehow always with pictures so that

wann dat elo Wierder sinn, déi se nach net kennen fir dass en se sech awer eppes kënnen drënner virstellen. [...] An dono vläicht heiansdo froen dann d'Kanner jo déi aner ob si dat kënnen erklären (.) heiansdo hu si bessert Vocabulaire wéi ech ((laughs)) fir deenen anere Kanner dat kloer ze maachen oder ze erklären. […] wat se kënne weisen (.) ech weess net wann dat elo eng Bewegung ass oder sou."

they (.) well I don't know if there are words they don't know yet that they can imagine them. [...] And then maybe sometimes some of the children ask if they can explain it (.) sometimes their vocabulary is better than mine ((laughs)) to make it clear to the other children or to explain it. [...] what they can show (.) I don't know when this is like a movement."

Interview extract 13: Teacher 1, question 5

Besides Luxembourgish songs, teacher 1 also uses pictures to explain vocabulary. The underlying representation is to connect the auditory to the visual. Her practice of asking other children to explain a vocabulary because they say it in a more child appropriate manner or they demonstrate it with movements enters in the same vein. Teacher 2 is applying similar strategies:

"[…] also elo virun allem am kleng' an ähm, wéi nennt een dat (-) Causerien oder Biller (.) Bildbetrachtungen (-). […] Bon, am klenge Grupp fir den Appui hunn ech zwar och dacks sou Sproochspiller gemaach mat sou (.) weess de sou Kaarten fir de Sazbau an sou mee dat ass awer nëmmen een Deel dat ass fir Kanner, déi scho gutt schwätze kënnen, wou s de just nach

Rough translation:

„[...] well above all in small' and uhm how do you name that (-) chats or pictures (.) picture viewing (-). [...] Well, in small groups for the coaching I often did language games with (.) you know with these cards for sentence construction but this is only a part of it this is for the children who already know to speak well, where you only do some (-) uhm (.) fine-tuning."

ronderëm (-) eh (.) feile gees."

Interview extract 14: Teacher 2, question 5

Again, causeries and pictures are the best techniques to teach language to young learners according to teacher 2. She singles out a point that has not been mentioned before. In small groups, she likes to practice syntax via pictures. This is especially useful for more advanced learners sd she needs to do only minor adjustments.

Prevalent in this subchapter is the argument that pictures are the best medium to teach language. The opportunity to put this new knowledge into practice is key for training oral competencies, however, teachers are afraid to lose control over the book narration for which they feel responsible – one of the reasons why creative language use through topic discussions is only permitted punctually. Teachers consider their speech as a model for the pupils in their learning process. After having heard the teacher's narration, children should practice retelling the story in their own words that is reapplying the new vocabulary items in their own speech. In this aspect, raising interest for the story is considered to be the key to success.

7.3. Handling of topic changes

One aspect treated by the interviews built upon topic and the teachers' reaction if new topics arise. Both teachers advocate the opinion that discussions should never roam too far away from the actual story.

| „[...] hänkt dervunner of well äh (.) also wann s (.) also schonn driwwer schwätzen, jo, awer wann et elo sech net zel (.) ze vill an d'Längt zitt well bon mir sinn elo am Gaang eng Geschicht ze erzielen an do kënne mer elo net vun der Geschicht ganz | Rough translation:

„[...] it depends because uhm (.) well if (.) talking about, yes, but if it does not la (.) not last too long because well we are narrating a story and then we cannot come off it totally and uhm yes. Then I mostly tell them (.) yes well then tell us and then we see how the story continues |

ofkommen an äh, jo. Dann meeschtens soen ech hinnen (.) jo bon dann äh ziel mol kucke mer wéi et weider geet vläicht kréie mer eng Äntwert dann wann net dann äh kënne mer nach eng Kéier iwwert d'Geschicht zielen an da vläicht zu dem Punkt dann zréckkommen. […] wann ech schonn eng Geschicht mat de Kanner maachen dann ass et och wichteg dass en se den Interêt un der Geschicht do halen wann se (.) also wann se komplett fort sinn dann huet et herno kee Wäert méi fir d'Geschicht weider ze erzielen."

maybe we'll have an answer and if not we can narrate it again and go back to that point. [...] when I do a story with the children then it is important that they keep up an interest for it if they (.) if they are completely off it than there is no point in continuing to narrate the story."

Interview extract 15: Teacher 1, question 4

Teacher 1 argues that story narration must not be slowed down too much because other pupils' interest could fade away. If she tells a story, she wants the children to keep focused. Topic changes are deviated by asking the initiator to wait and see if the story is going to answer the question anyway or to wait until the end of the narration. As Stokoe (2000) points out, classroom talk that is "on-task" is actively encouraged by teachers whereas "off-task" talk is considered as something not belonging to the institutional context. Similarly, teacher 2 reasons that:

"Oder et hänkt dervun of wann dat eng kleng Grupp ass an et ass den Appui Lëtzebuergesch da fannen ech dat ok, Haaptsaach (1.0) mir schwätzen an da kënne mer och herno an enger spéiderer Appuisstonn eng Kéier doriwwer

Rough translation:

"Or it depends if it is a small group and it is coaching in Luxembourgish then I think it is ok. Basically (1.0) we talk and then we can come back to it in another coaching session but when I do a theme

wech' do' dorop zréck kommen mee wann ech awer elo mat der ganzer Klass (.) een Thema maachen an et geet mer och (-) net nëmmen ëm Sprooch mee et geet mer och ëm d'Thema oder sou dann da kann et sinn, dass ech do einfach méi strikt wëll derbäi bleiwen an déi Aussoen net sou zouloossen. Oder méi spéit (.)."

with the whole class (.) and I'm not only interested in the language aspect but also in the theme than it is possible that I want to stick more strictly to it and that I do not allow these utterances. Or later (.)."

Interview extract 16: Teacher 2, question 4

The risk of losing the attention of the class is linked to potential discipline issues. Therefore, teacher 2 accepts topic changes in smaller groups of pupils. These groups, often called focus groups, come together with the aim to learn Luxembourgish. Hence, teacher 2 supports topic changes if they make the children discuss a point and, with that, apply their oral skills. A further important factor in her decision, whether to accept a topic change or not, is the aim of the activity. When she aims to develop language, then she accepts the topic. However, if she wants to stick to a certain topic preselected by herself, she does not allow any deviation of it – legitimated through her special status of being the teacher (S. Walsh, 2006a).

Overall, teachers stick as closely as possible to their agenda. Topic deviance is usually not allowed and prevented through strategies such as asking the child to wait with his/her idea until the end of the story or labelling a topic change as inappropriate – a dilemma that is also pointed to by Emanuelsson and Sahlström (2008) in their study on the price of participation versus teacher control. Interestingly, teachers allow for topic changes in smaller groups with the focus of learning Luxembourgish. This statement reveals their awareness of the importance of more open discussions with the pupils in the learning process. However, this consciousness is not translated into their bigger group activities due to a felt threat to their authority. Keeping the agenda and classroom

control dominates over the potential risk of loosening the framework for creative story discussions.

7.4. Intermediate findings

Three main ideas stand out of the previous interviews: Firstly, teachers are amazed at their young students' active engagement in the activity and their understanding of the story plot. Secondly, they reveal their beliefs about language learning hereby explaining their pedagogical proceedings. Thirdly, they position themselves towards topic changes.

Obviously, teachers cannot take a sufficient observing distance to their teaching so that video recorded classroom activities gain meaningful weight in assessing pedagogic work. In this case, stupefaction arose from pupil involvement in terms of motivation and contribution to content as well as comprehension of the narration and emotional engagement. The young students' ability to interpret new information with prior knowledge during the discussion about how to solve the pets' fight is recognised as well as the change in talk that occurred when they were given room for a more open interaction with the story. Instances of such exclusive creative language use are reflected in the teacher's beliefs of language learning according to which they set the model by privileging story narration over extended content discussions, thus exposing pupils to a maximum on the target language (Dockrell, Stuart, & King, 2010). The importance of pictures for establishing visual connection with auditory input, is highlighted in the teaching of vocabulary. More rarely, young students are asked to predict development in the story plot or discuss a certain aspect of the narration. Opening up the framework for creative language use and less predictable discussions are considered as a potential threat to classroom discipline and hence are not encouraged on a regular basis. However, the teachers are aware of this dilemma for language development. When being asked about their handling of pupil-initiated topic changes, the teachers assert that the discussion should stay as close as possible to the story in the book to guarantee an orderly flow of the group activity.

The last observation is especially important to our study of self-initiated topic changes. If we compare the teachers' claims to the quantitative part of our analysis, we get a

more defined picture of their handling of self-initiated topic changes. By counting all the instances of self-initiated topic changes, we come to the conclusion that both teachers have different reactions:
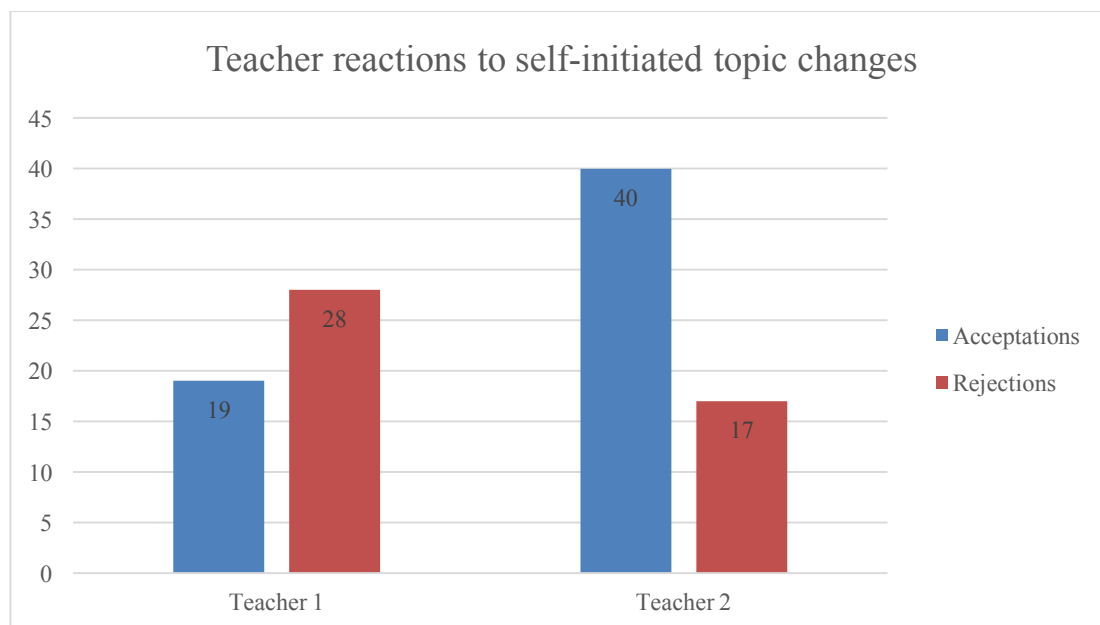
Figure 55: Teacher reactions to self-initiated topic changes

Teacher 1 declares not to accept self-initiated topic changes during her joint reading activities which is consistent with the data. A total of 47 occurrences for a topic change were identified and teacher 1 rejected 28 of them – this is the majority. From the opposed end, we can say that she is still accepting more than half of the proposed topic changes. Teacher 2 announced language to be the primary focus for her narrative activity and that she is accepting topic changes under such conditions. Again, this matches our findings as teacher 2 is accepting 40 topic changes by her young students. Only 17 were rejected. The following graph shows the type of reactions that both pedagogues had in respect to self-initiated topic changes:
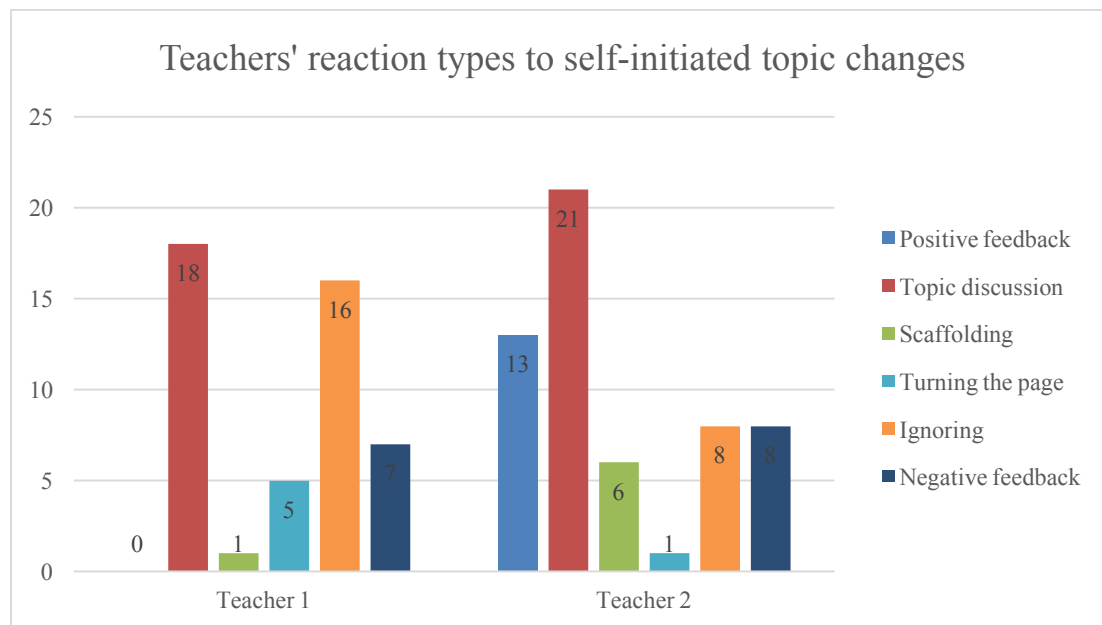
Figure 56: Teacher's reaction types to self-initiated topic changes

Teacher 1 is not using positive feedback to accept a topic change. If a topic change is proposed that she considers as valuable enough to contribute to the narration, she allows for a topic discussion. 18 of these examples have been counted. Scaffolding is occurring only once. Interestingly, teacher 1, considering herself as keeping tightly to her agenda and rejecting most of the topic changes, is tolerating discussions once she accepted the change of focus. In case of rejection, she prefers the more face-saving measure of ignoring (16 times) before negative feedback (7 times) and turning the page (5 times).

Teacher 2 is giving positive feedback 13 times and builds a topic discussion in 21 instances. Scaffolding appears 6 times. To her, deviating from the story is bearable to foster language development and hence she supports mostly topic discussion. To reject, she uses the strategy of either ignoring (8 times) or negative feedback (8 times) whereas page turning occupies a marginal position (1 time).

Characteristic of the teachers' practice are the paradoxes in their goals and the delivery of the actual lesson. Although the teachers claim the importance of verbal practice, they also need to deliver a correct model of the Luxembourgish language and to for this the pupils need to stay focused and receptive. Even though, the chosen books are very interesting and appealing for young children (e.g. colourful pictures, stunning

characters, child-centred topics, humoristic story developments etc.), they need to wait for the child-led activities where they can become more active and self-regulating. Teachers are afraid of letting go the reins of story narration because they think that they drift too far away from their pedagogic goals. But the analysis of the topic changes in chapter 6.1 shows that they do allow for such deviance and that this does foster creative use of language, hence promoting learning in the ZPD (Cameron, 2001; Kinginger, 2002; Van Lier, 2004; Vygotsky, 1978).

In line with Engeström (2001) and his activity theory about contradictions, we highlight the tensions under which take place children's learning processes. The following graph is inspired by Campbell and Dunleavy (2016) who used it initially to show contradictions in the K-12 classroom as field experience and is adapted to show the influences of the context upon the story book activities:

Mediating Artefacts: Curriculum, classroom practices, conception of effective pedagogy, school-classroom culture, storybooks

Story book activities

Teacher practice: Observation, evaluation, size of groups, experience, pedagogical goals

Students: Learning processes, understanding of the narration, self-initiated topic changes, active involvement, concentrated listening

Figure 57: Context-specific tensions on the story book activities

As described in chapter 1, the curriculum foresees the transmittance of particular competences in relation to language learning such as understanding a text and its theme

in global way, identifying the main actors, expressing oneself in a comprehensive way and answering at questions. Classroom practices, such as teachers see in their colleagues' teaching, from senior teachers during their internship or what they have themselves experienced in their childhood have a deep impact on their pedagogical choices. Conceptions of effective pedagogy transmitted via the curriculum of their professional education before entering service also play a role. Each school is embedded into a local context that again plays into the practices in the classroom (e.g. parental demands, structure of buildings, availability of materials, composition of pupil population etc.). Especially, for the context of this study, the story books used for the activity substantially design the lesson by the topic they suggest. As seen in the interviews, teachers are limited in their observation of the activity and the assessment of pupil performance and motivation. Their conviction of pictures as the best medium to teach language is, for example, not suggested by the curriculum but rather it is based on their own experience. Careful in delivering a correct model of the Luxembourgish language, the teachers consider it important for the young students to listen in a concentrated manner to the narration and not to deviate the topic. They also feel that group size is an essential criterion for the lesson design; the smaller the group, the more pupil-initiated topic changes are allowed. After finishing the narration, the young students are allowed to re-tell the story and put into practice the Luxembourgish language. This stands in contrast with children's need to participate in the here and now, that is during the actual activity of joint reading which can be complicated by the number of pupils simultaneously wanting to contribute. However, the teachers voice their awareness of creating a more open environment in story narration as opposed to their agendas and authority.

Four major findings come out from the previous analysis:

Chapter 7 - The teachers' representations of the L2 learner

➢ Finding 1

Against the teachers' expectations, the young students engage much more actively in the story activity both in terms of comprehension and contribution to the discussion.

➢ Finding 2

Vocabulary growth is the main aim of the teachers' language activities and through their narration, a linguistic model is provided and exposure to the target language is warranted.

➢ Finding 3

The teachers claim to refuse self-initiated topic changes in order to maintain classroom discipline. However, they both are, at a different level, unconsciously privileging topic changes.

➢ Finding 4

Contextual influences create tensions under which the pupils' learning process is taking place.

Recapitulative table 6: Findings of chapter 7

The last part of the analysis on the teachers' perspective has revealed several points: The young students' involvement in the activity, both in terms of motivation and comprehension, astonishes the teachers. During their lessons, they have few

possibilities to observe their pupils and they are too much engaged into the lesson as to analyse their own practice. The video gave them the occasion to look back on the activity and reflect upon their impressions. The unexpected learner involvement also points to a certain representation that the teachers put on the children, namely that their participation in the activity would not be that intense. Through the interview questions about their pedagogical goals and their teaching strategies for Luxembourgish, the teachers were given the opportunity to speak up. Numerous pauses and restarts in their answers suggest that the teachers are not used to voice their aims and pedagogic tools. Nevertheless, they provided some clues and vocabulary work turned out to be their strategy of choice. They also consider their speech to be the model for the language learners. Hence, reading stories to the them becomes an important activity. Much less emphasis is put on the production of the pupils and therefore, the teachers claim to reject self-initiated topic changes in order to keep up their own agenda during the lesson. Curiously, our data revealed that both teachers are nevertheless accepting many topic changes and engage into topic discussion with their pupils although at a different degree of intensity. For the two of them, group size is key when it comes to less guided conversations about stories. This means that they preconize small groups for language teaching during which the children can participate more actively and contribute more freely. For the young students, this also signifies that the opportunities for active language production are limited and from this, tensions arise in respect to their SLL process.

Now that we have reunited all the analytical strands, we are going to relate them in the next chapter. Reflections on self-initiated topic changes and their impact on the MLU have consequences for the language learning process of the children and thus we can conclude our research with constructive suggestions on teaching.

Part VI

Self-initiated topic changes as an opportunity

for creative language use

8. Self-initiated topic changes as an opportunity for creative language use

In the last chapters, we have looked at L2 proficiency in classroom talk being measured a) in overall utterances via the MLU and b) in self-initiated topic changes as a particular form of utterance. Furthermore, we proceeded at a sequence-by-sequence analysis of self-initiated topic changes and their impact on topic discussion, interactional management and emerging lexical understanding. Then, we highlighted the teachers' post-reflections on chosen extracts of their activities as well as their representations of the L2 learning process. In the next section, we recapitulate the findings of all the analytical strings to match them to our study objective, which is to uncover the role of self-initiated topic changes during preschool book activities and the processes of how the participants use different communicative and material resources to orient to, establish, and change topical orientation. The different foci of analysis are put into perspective to draw conclusions for SLL. Besides the creation of a substantive theory for creative language use during book reading activities and some recommendations to foster favourable conditions for the L2 learning process, we will also show limitations of this study and potentialities for further research.

8.1. Looking back on the analytical leads

The aim of this dissertation was to uncover the role of self-initiated topic changes during preschool book activities. As we are going to discuss, the joint turn-by-turn construction around a topic gives insights into the second language learning process. Of particular interest is how the participants use different communicative and material resources to orient to, establish, and change topical orientation. The teachers' handling of topics during joint reading uncovers book routines as they are regularly designed in preschool.

Chapter 4 - Measuring L2 proficiency in classroom talk through MLU

Chapter 4 zoomed in on the discrepancy in performances between pupils of the first and second preschool year (see Figure 20). In all the activities, whether they are teacher-led or child led, the pupils of the second year, show a greater proficiency in terms of MLU. In line with Wells (2009), we pointed at the existence of a specific communication format, teachers, as representatives of the institution "school" impose in their classrooms. This framework has significant differences to the communication children are used to in their families. In the absence of a goal (e.g. achieving goals, sharing interests etc.), young students are not only considered as unequal partners but they have to bid for the floor to speak and to adapt to the teachers' agenda. Mehan (1984) even pinpointed a specialised code used to transmit the academic curriculum which is not transparent to pupils.

Another relevant finding pointed out a tendency for acquiring proficiency in academic contexts (see Figure 21): Except for one child, all the others have a higher MLU performance in child-led activities. Again, this underlines the presence of a different discourse format during teacher-led lessons (Hayes & Matusov, 2005; Oyler, 1996; Sharpe, 2008; S. Walsh, 2002; Wells, 2009). In opposition, we concluded that child talk is more natural as it copies what children are used to in family conversation. To become successful speakers in a classroom, they need to learn how to adapt their utterances to social appropriateness and content to ultimately be sensitive to the teacher's expectations.

Divergence between pupils' MLU performance in teacher-led and child-led activities (see Figure 22) highlighted Magda's, Leticia's and Jacob's facility in peer-led activities whereas Salomão and Sergio are more talkative in presence of the teacher. Lídia, Nícolas, Ugo, Isa and Trevor are more balanced in terms of MLU during teacher-led and child-led activities, an equilibrium transforming them into competent speakers in any scholar situation. Michele and Benito occupy an intermediate position between those who achieve a high MLU only in one activity type compared to those who are balanced in proficiency. We concluded the existence of a dynamic transitional stage between an imbalanced state (high MLU in either one of the activity types) and proficient speakership in any activity type. However further research is needed to determine the modalities of such a dynamic state and how this could be useful for

teachers to boost development of these pupils. As Jacob and Michele do speak Luxembourgish at home, next to another language, but do not show a balanced MLU throughout the activity types, we assume once more that linguistic competence is not enough to become a skilled participant in classroom discourse. Furthermore, this points to a double defiance these children face at school: Getting to know the discourse type and learning a new language. The results of Magda and Leticia in terms of a more guarded participation in classroom are challenging. Which other communication channels could they be using and, again, how can they be sustained in their development to become more efficient in classroom discourse? Once more, this constitutes a lead for further research.

From the perspective of the teachers, we identified a total talking time of 94% during teacher-led activities. In reverse, this means that pupils only access 6% of the timing to practice their oral skills. By analysing closer the exchanges that took place during these reading sessions, we discovered a traditional exchange type, which has been largely discussed in the literature as IRF (Geoghegan et al., 2013; Lee, 2007; Mehan, 1979; Van Lier, 1996; S. Walsh, 2002, 2003, 2006b). On a quantitative side, we assessed the pupils' MLU when the teacher remained in this triadic exchange format that is intrinsically linked to a closed question type, known as display question. Consequently, the young students' MLU did not outrun a score of 3.0. In opposition, MLU raised beyond this value when the teacher used open-ended and probing questions.

Chapter 4 helped us taking stock on what happens on a quantitative level in teacher-led and child-reading activities. The unit "MLU" showed how proficiency, in terms of number of syllables, varied across these activities and changed with each individual child. However, it was insufficient in explaining what takes place on a qualitative base with these communicative skills children need to become competent speakers in any of these school activities. This led us to a next chapter in which we used another unit of analysis, the self-initiated topic changes.

Chapter 5 - Self-initiated topic changes – nature, reactions and tools

Chapter 5 described the nature, reactions and tools concerning the self-initiated topic changes. Once a speaker proposes a topic change, different reactions are available to

the other speakers. In our data, we encountered turning the page, giving negative feedback or ignoring as means to reject the topic change. To accept it, positive feedback, topic discussion, topic enactment and scaffolding are possible in our context. Interestingly, topic discussion triggers even more topic changes and with that increases MLU further. This relevant finding was investigated further in chapter 6.1, to which we are going to come back in the next section. The reaction of a positive feedback was exclusively used by teachers, as they hold the right to evaluate utterances. Only pupils recurred to topic enactment; all the other techniques were applied of any of the actors. Noticeably is the result that topic discussion is the preponderant reaction type in joint reading and storytelling activities. The teachers seem to have a preference for that reaction as well since scaffolding appears more often in child-led activities. On the rejection side, teachers privilege ignoring whereas children favour page turning in storytelling and negative feedback in play activities. Concerning the performance of a topic change, our pupils used different tools. Common to all of these tools was the medium "speech", which was combined either to "gesture" or to "action" or to both of these.

According to the number of self-initiated topic changes, the pupils could be asserted (see Figure 53) as follows: Segment "A" refers to a greater number of topic changes in presence of a peer than with a teacher. Part "B" symbolises an optimum with an equalised high number of topic changes in teacher-led and child-led activities. Opposed to this is section "C" where the number of topic changes in both activity types stays low. In zone "D", the number of topic changes is high for teacher-led activities but not for those which are child-led. One result pointed at the emptiness of this segment, which we relate again to the specific type of discourse taking place in teacher-led activities. The majority of the children moves in segment "C" or at the transition to zone "A" suggesting a progressive gain in competence in self-initiating topic changes. Blending these results to the use of tools from chapter 5.1.4, we notice that children in or close to section "B" rely on speech or speech-gesture-combinations to self-initiate a topic. We therefore established the hypothesis that these tools are more appropriate during teacher exchanges. On the exact opposite, we assume that action is less tolerated by teachers for changing topics. This strategy is used more during child-led activities and preferably by pupils in zone "C". Also, the developmental tendency seems to be vertical, meaning that children raise their number of self-initiated topic changes with peers and

then with teachers (segment "D" being empty). Action appears thus as an important practice before acquiring more subtle strategies such as gesturing or mere speech-related techniques to change a topic. The relevance of experience in preschool is confirmed once more with the fact that the pupils from the first year, namely Trevor, Magda and Leticia, range in section "C". In that respect, self-initiated topic changes are more difficult to produce than general utterances because the child needs to establish the context of the utterance first (in opposition to fragments of speech as an answer to a formulated question). But therefore, the MLU augments significantly: A score of 11.99 in self-initiated topic changes as opposed to 2.92 in general utterances produced during IRF sequences. This finding is supported by Dauster (2007b) who investigated autonomous utterances over time and found that they gain in length unlike imitative utterances. Another salient finding of this chapter asserts that it is more difficult to self-initiate a topic change in presence of a teacher. Due to the different discourse format taking place in pedagogical activities, teachers are usually in a dominant position. Once the young student succeeds in changing the topic, however, MLU is increased in a more significant amount than with peers – notwithstanding due to topic discussions that follow as potential reactions and enlarge the exchange. Chapter 4 and 5 have above all analysed the data under a quantitative viewpoint but they produced further research questions for which we chose a qualitative approach as done in chapter 6. The questions with which we pursued our study were:

- Which are the conditions that foster a participation framework supporting self-initiated topic changes in teacher-led activities?
- How do the children manage self-initiated topic changes during the reading and play activities?
- What do these self-initiated topic changes, resulting from topical orientation and creative language use, lead towards?

Chapter 6 - Self-initiated topic changes in their interactional deployment

Chapter 6 focussed on a) topic discussions, b) topic management and c) emerging lexical understanding by taking a qualitative stance to our analysis:

The first part centred on self-initiated topic changes and their impact on teacher-led activities (see subchapter **6.1**). The chosen example from the story on the cat and the dog arguing for a carpet illustrates the rich discussions arising from six topic changes. At first, Sergio self-initiated the topic change towards the pet's tearing of the carpet. The teacher scaffolded his utterance to crystallise the consequence - the disruption of the rug – and then opened up the participation framework by asking who else had an idea to contribute. Out of this, other nuances of the topic developed: Isa and Salomão proposed to share it by lying on each end of it, to cut the carpet into two pieces to give a part to each animal or to take turns in using it. The teacher allowed for a topic discussion and constructed the pupils' contributions before going back to her agenda and narrating the story plot. Sergio, Isa and Salomão thus took an influence on the conversation and their participation was judged relevant enough to suspend the teacher's lesson plan temporarily. They negotiated their own point of view on the story while staying close enough to the teacher's topic so that their nuances of the topic were accepted and built upon to ultimately enrich the initial narration (see also **Figure 54**). Thus, a major finding points to the utility of topic discussions to give young students a platform to elaborate autonomously on the meaning and, ultimately, applicate their language skills.

Although our analysis identified the three-step structure of IRF exchanges (see subchapters **2.2.1** and **4.2**) which boundaries the children respected by raising their finger and waiting to be allocated speakership, their answers do not remain monosyllabic. As the teacher is allocating sufficient time to the pupils to think about innovative solutions on how to solve the fight, they can elaborate their utterances. Therefore, Sergio, as one of the novice speakers (mean MLU in teacher activities is 5.99), achieves an MLU of 13.0 in this extract. Even Salomão (mean MLU in teacher activities of 12.46) can boost his MLU to 26.0 in this example. This brings us to the important result that topic discussions lead towards richer interaction, which increases MLU and hence the possibility for young students to develop their language skills. The activity, at first targeting story narration, later developed into process-oriented interaction because the teacher did not close the participation framework. For that moment, her focus shifted to a search for creative solutions that were not elicited by the book which usually limits the range of possible topics by its pictures. Also, she did not evaluate the answers for right or wrong but accepted each proposed nuance to establish

contingency between the pupils and the lesson content (Van Lier, 1996). Her questions went beyond mere elicitation and prompted the pupil to elaborate on the utterance ("mengs de" meaning "do you think that"). Rephrasing, echoing and extending were other strategies she used, which helped to expand the discussion since they asked for negotiation and favoured more equal participation with her young students. Thus, a last result is the teacher's type of follow-up used on pupil utterances as a crucial factor for pupil's increased utterance elaboration and further topic changes.

In the second part, we focussed on interactional topic management in child-led activities and how such interaction continued without the teacher's guidance of the lesson (see subchapter 6.2). The pedagogues' previous narration and the pictures as the elements of the semiotic structure of the book set the activity framework within which the children moved. Without formal distribution of speakership, turn-taking obviously became much more locally managed in a sense that classroom talk resembled informal conversation. Creating joint enactments, helping each other and topic maintenance despite disagreement were features that carried the activities in an orderly manner, as we identified through our analysis. With the power balance moved back to equilibration, the young students attended to small details in the picture book with utter seriousness. Although different topic changes arose, the children managed to successfully negotiate them to the satisfaction of everyone: The head shake of the elephant intrigued Leticia who, usually more guarded in her participation, proposed this topic change to her peers which was then explored further. Such enactment serves as a strategy to replace missing vocabulary. Enacting the graphic phenomenon for quite some time, the children tried different techniques to find out whether they would have multiple eyes when shaking their heads very quickly, which was then evaluated by the others. In line with Björk-Willén and Cromdal (2009), we see this form of child interaction as consequential and organised where children explore concepts and language to foster their mental and social skills. Also, they picked up this detail of the head shake exclusively from the picture as it had not been brought up by the teacher before.

Not always did the pupils accept all the topic changes. As shown in the fox story for instance, Ugo pointed at different details in the pictures at several moments of the activity, which his peers rejected. Laughter then served as a measure to overcome the

interactional trouble and preserve group cohesion. Then, Salomão's storytelling was interrupted several times by Ugo, Sergio and Isa pointing to details in the picture. Ugo's page turning literally led to Salomão's explosion. With Ugo's action having been too abrupt, Salomão went back to the other page, finished the narration and afterwards turned the page himself. Noticeable are two points: On the one hand, Salomão's social position in the group appears to be solid and, on the other hand, the children were aware of having transgressed an important interactional rule. They did not insist on the details in order to soothe out the tensions and to come back to an interaction everybody feels comfortable with. Still in the same activity, Ugo tried turning the page to go back to a previous topic or to make the story move on to the next stage. Taking turns in narrating helped the children in the organisation and thus each child was in charge of one double page. Turning the page, then, was the signal given to the next child to continue telling the story.

Furthermore, turning the page did not prevent topic nuances which were integrated into the narration under the premise that they did not break completely with the story or that they supplemented forgotten information. Especially during symbolic play, the third activity type, organisation was key. In the story with the cat and the dog, Sergio suggested to use material from the classroom as requisites for a ball and a nest which supported them in their attention to each other to make the next relevant contribution in the play. This metacommunication on the interactive proceedings of a play, which we labelled as "framed activity" according to Goffman's term (1974), helps the children to interpret their actions within that frame. Lídia's management of the sausage topic during the crocodile play where she had to stop her peers in their ongoing interaction to modify the sequence without offending them is one example. Side sequences in the interaction were successfully executed and did not lead to a stop of the narration as we have seen in the pyjamas scene, where Trevor meticulously rectified Nícolas' mistake on where to locate the clothing. Suspension of the story narration took place when language difficulties had to be addressed. In the story about "Zilly", the pupils jointly scaffolded the notion of "slide" and "stairs" – an action we would rather have expected from a teacher. The search for the right word permitted them to take their language to the next level. When Leticia looked for the expression "sharp teeth", her peers adopted a series of strategies to help her finding it: gesturing in front of his own teeth (Benito), whispering the right word (Lídia) and not overruling her by merely continuing to speak

(Benito and Lídia). Thus, Leticia, as the less capable peer, was guided by Lídia and Benito to a) maintain the flow of the narration and b) suggest the appropriate linguistic expression to her. This tutoring behaviour induced Leticia to work in her ZPD. But word search was also a source of disagreement as shown by the item "hunt", which triggered extreme reactions, such as the risk of page destruction or the call for the teacher. In the end, it was again laughter that helped the children reconciling. Again, we asserted that the negotiation of the interaction was beneficial for the MLU (in average above 13.0): Instead of filling in answering slots, the pupils had to defend their points of view and put more effort in explaining them. In that respect, their focus is much more process-oriented. Instead of getting through with the narration, they spent considerable efforts on the organisation of interaction, on support for struggling peers as well as on details which truly matter to them, hereby demonstrating sensitivity for content. Whereas teachers define the textual theme and by this hold the power over the activity, peer directed interaction includes also the pupils who may not have the correct academic answer. The pedagogues' fear of disorder, when giving away the reins of narration, is dissolved by the children's capacity of successfully managing storytelling.

Third, we concentrated on the lexical understanding reached through topical orientation (see subchapter 6.3) where young students showed their organisational ability to stay with the narration while simultaneously developing a progressive grasp of lexical items. The example "hunt" demonstrates the children's successful scaffolding of the lexical item to carry on with the story narration. The word, Salomão was looking for, resulted in being crucial to continue the story and accordingly, Isa suggested the appropriate item. Similarly, we identified the pupils' effort to identify new expressions, to explore their meaning and to apply them in new contexts – hereby keeping the dynamics of their learner language. Lídia picked up the expression "to worry" during the teacher's narration and isolated it from the sentence while setting it back in its infinitive form. Later, she experiments the expression during storytelling and play – displaying her capability of putting it into new contexts and dynamically expanding her learner language as a developing system (Dauster, 2007a; Lightbown & Spada, 2006).

Our last finding from this subchapter underlines the role of topical orientation as a crucial element in children's autonomous choice of focal points. The negotiation and

enactment of the lexical item "to fall" with the characteristic sweeping gestures was jointly achieved through topic discussion and resulted in a complex description of one story detail. The gesture took its importance in the fine-tuning of the meaning and literally made the witch's fall downstairs come into being. It appeared as a constituent of thinking that occurred through language, body and tools. In all these illustrations, the pupils worked on lexical items that struck them.

Slimani (2001) pointed at the idiosyncratic nature of vocabulary learning and pinpointed the fact that some words become salient to pupils without a teacher having singled them out in the first place. In our examples, knowledge about lexical items was shared with the whole group so that everyone could take advantage of it. Again, this is a feature we would have attributed to a teacher-led activity. Although the use may not be grammatically correct, practicing is a necessary step in developing solid understanding of these new lexical items and moving forward the learner language. Through interaction, the children deployed strategies such as scaffolding, corrections or word search to support each other in their learning process. Once more, we observed an increase in MLU while children jointly scaffolded the linguistic item and triggered a discussion around it (above 9.00). Common to all the above-mentioned examples is the mutual orientation towards the same topic and its nuances to explore meaning. The lexical items appear as resources to organise the verbal interaction which in return reshapes the items and increases their sophistication (Doehler, 2004).

Chapter 7 - The teachers' representations of the L2 learner

In chapter 7, we analysed the teachers' perspective on pupil involvement, their pedagogical goals, their beliefs on language learning as well as their management of self-initiated topic changes. The teachers were positively surprised at their young students' active engagement and their understanding of the lesson. This awareness, caused by the post-reflection during the video tape, explains itself through the tight involvement in pedagogical activities, during which they have not sufficient distance to observe their pupils or their teaching practices. Thus, pupils showed themselves as highly contributing and engaged in the lesson. They suggested valuable solutions on

how to solve the pet fight and, if given the opportunity for discussion, elaborated on the story in a deep manner.

The teachers' belief of being a role model for the language learners is mirrored in their preference for story narration over extended content discussion, hereby exposing the young students to a maximum to the target language (Dockrell et al., 2010). Furthermore, they favour pictures which support vocabulary learning through visualisation. However, an opening up of the participation framework in the lesson is rated as potentially threatening because discussion seems to become less predictable and therefore uncontrollable. Both teachers therefore claim, they would not encourage this on a regular basis even if they admit being aware that this might slow down language learning. Topic changes initiated by the pupils are supposedly not tolerated to maintain the discussion as close to the story book as possible and to keep the flow of the group activity. Thus, strategies such as ignoring and negative feedback are preferred for rejection. Results from our quantitative analysis, however, show that teacher 1 still accepted more than half of the proposed topic changes whereas her colleague, teacher 2, accepted even most of them (see Figure 56). Both, once having accepted the topic change, allowed extensive topic discussions which fostered creative language use and promoteds learning in the zone of proximal development (Cameron, 2001; Kinginger, 2002; Van Lier, 2004; Vygotsky, 1978).

The addressed dilemma between stimulating verbal practice by passing control to the young students on one hand and giving a correct speech model on the other hand were highlighted additionally through our graph (see Figure 57) inspired by Campbell and Dunleavy (2016), which also points at tensions arising from mediating artefacts and the macro context: The curriculum, as discussed in chapter 1.2.2, sets the scene for the goals and the content of pedagogical teaching. Major influences also come from the experienced school practices in teachers' own childhood, at professional teacher education (study content, internships) and from what is valued as effective among working colleagues. The school itself is anchored in a specific local context (e.g. parental demands, structure of buildings, availability of materials, composition of pupil population etc.). The story book activties, as analysed in our study, impose a specific lesson design by their topic as well (see chapter 6). Teachers are constraint in their observation and their assessment of pupil performance and motivation as we have seen

in the interviews in chapter 7. For instance, their empahsis on pictures as the best tool to teach language is not suggested as such by the curriculum but rests on their professional experience as well as the strategy to offer a language model to the young students and to keep them focused and concentrated on their agenda. With the importance of vocabulary, teachers give priority to reading activities. Group size becomes crucial in lesson planning since smaller groups allow for more pupil-initiated topic changes. On the contrary, whole-class reading induces the teachers to postpone pupils' contributions mostly to the end of the activity which stands in sharp contrast to the children's need to participate in the here and now and to advance in learning Luxembourgish. All these contextual influences produce the pressure impacting on the pupil's learning process.

In the next section, we are going to sum up all the main features of the analysis on self-initiated topic changes to create a model and theorise the opportunities of accepting self-initiated topic changes for L2 learning. The construction resulting from this, helps quantifying the benefits of self-initiated topic changes. First, we describe its design, then, we move to its application as well as potentialities for further research, to conclude with its pedagogical use.

8.2. Opening up the participation framework for topic discussions

Throughout our analysis in chapter 6, we have focused on the interactional deployment of self-initiated topic changes. Three aspects have been identified:

1) Self-initiated topic changes may lead to more topic nuances and thus activate complex topic discussions.
2) Pupils successfully manage topic changes without the supervising framework of a teacher.
3) Self-initiated topic changes trigger potentialities for emerging lexical understanding.

In line with the principles of grounded theory, the following three-dimensional model about book related activities in preschool draws on the aforementioned results from our data analysis and is supported by already existing theoretical concepts.

Design of the model
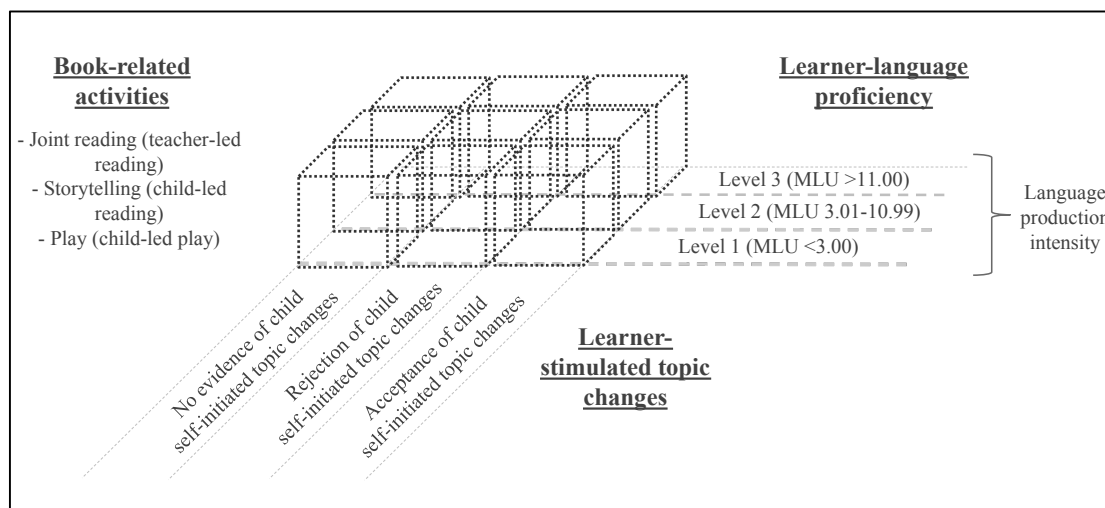
Figure 58: Model of pedagogical interaction

A first axis symbolises the **book-related activities** relating to the mode of interaction. In our data, we have observed interaction in three different activity types: As already explained before, interaction in joint reading lessons with the teacher take a very particular shape through the artificial distribution of speakership, the use of display questions to test knowledge and the feedback on pupil answers. Opposed to this, we find the discussions around a topic as described extensively through the example of the pet fight in chapter 6.1 in which the teacher gradually opened up her participation framework through clarification and expansion questions and in which the young students skilfully managed to insert their nuances of the topic hereby boosting the length of their utterances. In their storytelling and play activities, the children deployed strategies such as "one-child-one-page" or used laughter to establish mutual complicity and move through interactional difficulties when topics where rejected. Although the children were fighting for speakership that had to be managed locally in the absence of the teacher, they successfully carried the storytelling to an end. Even more, they worked on elements in the book such as the elaboration of story details (e.g. head shake of the

elephant), where enactment played an important role to satisfy the children's natural need for exploration hereby creatively functioning in-between the boundaries of the book that predefines the story through its pictures. Negotiation of meaning became crucial in the usage of tools to enact the story or in the rectification of missing details during the storytelling. Abstract images based on the story narration by the teacher, were concretised and enlarged. Troublesome utterances were attended to through scaffolding (e.g. "slide" or "sharp teeth") and displayed the pupil's ability to help each other on the lexical level as well. All this highlights the young student's capacity to autonomously manage interaction during school activities – a responsibility that is usually attributed to a teacher and which stands in contrast to the uneasiness in respect to "losing control" voiced by the teachers in the interviews.

A second axis of the model comprises the **learner-stimulated topic changes**, that is, the self-initiated topic changes. On the one extreme stands the non-existence of any learner initiated topic changes whatsoever, which corresponds to a rigid classroom culture of pure listening where the pupils have understood that their contributions are not welcome. A middle stage figures the rejections, which equals to a very strict participation framework established by a teacher as the authority. In our child-led activities, we have not observed such limitations although the pupils are not afraid of rejecting a topic with more or less emphasis such as ignoring, negative feedback or turning the page. The teacher-guided lessons do move along the continuum as well, being closed or more open depending on the teachers' current decision of refusing or accepting a topic change. The other end of the axis matches a very open framework in which teachers and pupils negotiate the topic collaboratively. Acceptance is achieved through providing positive feedback, scaffolding, topic discussion and enactment. In our data, we matched such topic discussions to the acceptance of numerous topic nuances on the basis of the example of the pet fight for the carpet (for a reminder, see 6.1). At the ground lies the teacher's story narration which is enriched successively by Sergio's, Isa's and Salomão's self-initiated topic change bringing in nuances like "tearing the carpet", "sharing the carpet" or "taking turns". All these layers that are co-constructed in the discussion around how to solve the pet's fight for the carpet contribute to the overall meaning our young students take out of that joint reading

activity – possible solutions to solve a fight for an object. The importance of such topicalisations lies in the development of one original topic into all its nuances as a frame for learning all the participants orient to and jointly accomplish. This shared common understanding of the topic comes solely into being through interaction.

A third axis comprises **learner language proficiency** and builds on the MLU of children's utterances to express the degree of intensity. Based on our analysis of the mean length of utterance in IRF exchanges, we fix level 1 to an MLU inferior to 3.00. In our data, we have identified repetitive utterances in the confined structure of IRF. If the teacher asks display questions to which she knows the answer, the pupils tend to reply with very short utterances. Because they do not need to establish any context while speaking, the MLU of their answers does not raise above 3.0. Very often, they replicate a vocabulary that has been explained previously and is closely linked to the story in the book. The highest level orients itself to the mean length of utterance in self-initiated topic changes, that is 11.00. Level 2 fills up the space between level 1 and 3 with values between 3.01 and 10.99. In our analysis, the mean "speech" to self-initiate topic changes significantly boost the MLU and with that promote the children's practice with the L2, especially when these topic changes lead to topic discussions. Furthermore, the children regulated themselves during the activities and successfully scaffolded lexical items such as "hunt", for instance, while at the same time carrying on the narration of the story: Together, they reflected on the missing lexical item until Isa finally came up with "hunt". Similarly, Lídia became aware of the teacher's use of the expression "to worry" and she asked her about the meaning. Later on, Benito imitated her and asked the same question. However, it is Lídia, who, in the next activities, used the expression in new contexts. Although not yet correct, her practising will lead to mastery, thus expanding her learner language; that is her knowledge about the Luxembourgish language. The joint construction of the meaning of "to fall" and "stairs" is a rich example of how topic discussion in child-led activities is blended with enactment. Our pupils use all the resources at their disposal: They orient body and gazes to the picture in the book, they trace the fall via iconic gesturing and they use speech to describe what is happening to the witch. The joint construction of the meaning in the story helps the children to explore creative applications of the language. The freedom

to choose their focal points also helps them to pick up the lexical item of their choice. Second language learning in the ZPD is achieved through such creative language use: Not so much the result of establishing a topic is beneficial for the learning but the *processes* of negotiating points of view, of discussing lexical items and of co-constructing the course of interaction make the children learn in their ZPD. Creative language is thus an integral part of the activity and also shapes this same activity in a relevant way (Ferreira, 2008). The support the teacher or the peers offer becomes less and less, relocating the social development on the psychological, individual plane of the language learner (Lantolf & Poehner, 2010).

Application of the model - examples

Subsequently, we apply the model to the three activity types: Joint reading, storytelling and play. Our goal is not to play off the different examples against each other. Rather, we try to illustrate the model with instances of good practice, which we analysed in detail in chapter 6. Also, we would like to point out that the model mirrors only a chosen part of a whole activity. To draw more general conclusions about pedagogical interaction in a given activity, the model has to be applied consistently to the whole lesson.

A first application of the model reflects the joint reading activity of chapter 6.1, during which pupils and the teacher discussed possible solutions to the pet's fight for the carpet because it shows an interactional framework, allowing for a rich classroom exchange in terms of self-initiated topic changes and learner language proficiency:
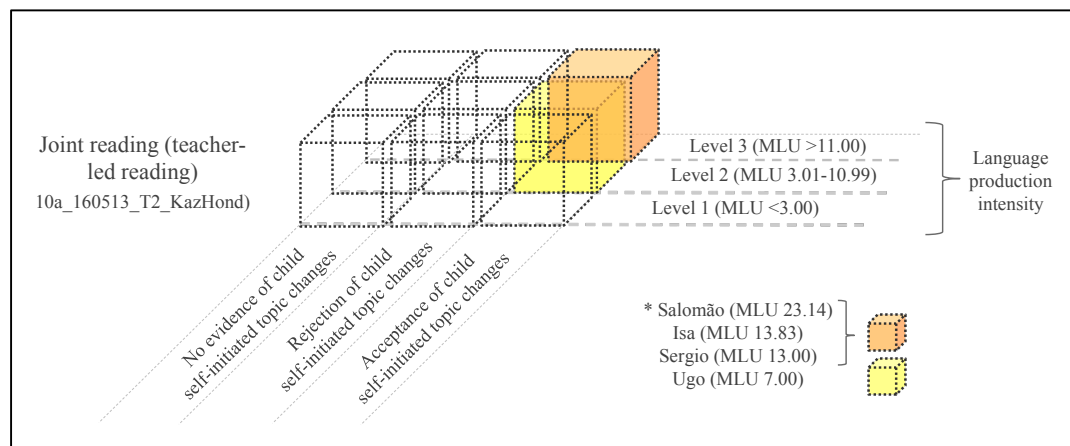
Figure 59: Pedagogical interaction in the joint reading activity 10a_160513_T2_KazHond

At the course of the activity, the teacher accepts numerous topic changes which lead to the development of a topic discussion between the pedagogue and her pupils (as shown in chapter 6.1). In the model, this is situated in the category "acceptance of child self-initiated topic changes". Self-initiated topic changes are counted throughout the whole joint reading activity on the pet fight for the carpet and reveal that Sergio, Isa and Salomão achieve an MLU of 13.00, 13.83 and 23.14 respectively. Hence, the intensity of their language production is located on level 3. Both factors therefore reflect the richness of the exchange, as symbolised by the orange cube and contribute to local meaning-making towards which all participants orient, be it only the pupils (storytelling and play activities) or the teacher included as in this case. With an MLU of 7.00, Ugo is still located on level 2 (see the yellow cube). In total, we only found two instances of self-initiated topic changes that were rejected in that activity. The teachers' partial withdrawal in favour of the other children's intuitive and autonomous interaction management and their contribution to the topic triggers more creative language in the sense that pupils have space to explore and experiment. This presupposes trust in the pupils' abilities in assuming responsibility for their own learning process. Integrating their perspective is rewarding, as a *"real meeting of minds"* happens and a shared understanding of the topic is achieved (Wells, 2009). The high intensity of language production entails the practice of the L2, which the learners need to work on their proficiency in Luxembourgish.

In chapter 6.2, we analysed the children's autonomous topic management despite numerous topic rejections while playing the story. As an example, the subsequent

model is going to be applied to all the children's self-initiated topic changes in the activity "Krokofant":
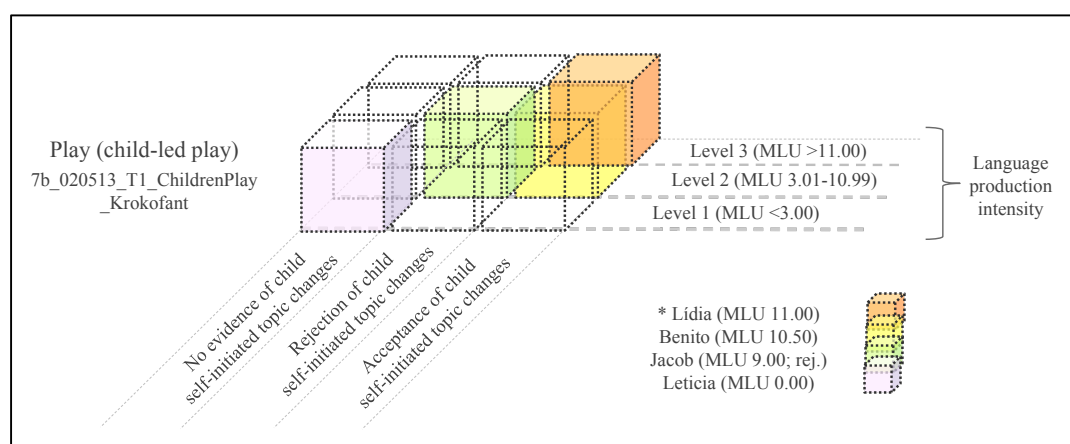
Figure 60: Pedagogical interaction in the play activity 7b_020513_T1_ChildrenPlay_Krokofant

The quantitative analysis of the MLU of selected self-initiated topic changes for Lídia resulted in 11.00, hence, we settle the degree of language production intensity on level 3 (orange cube). Benito's MLU is slightly inferior with 10.5 and therefore locates itself on level 2 (yellow cube). Jacob is self-initiating only 1 topic change, with an MLU of 9 but considering the rejection of his topic change, he settles in on level 2, column 2 (green cube). For Leticia, there is no evidence of self-initiated topic changes which keeps her MLU to zero (violet cube). As shown in our analysis in chapter 6.2, the quality of the interaction is still very high for the other children and the mere negotiation of topic changes already stimulates language production.

The same is true for the model as applied to an example of storytelling activity in chapter 6.3:
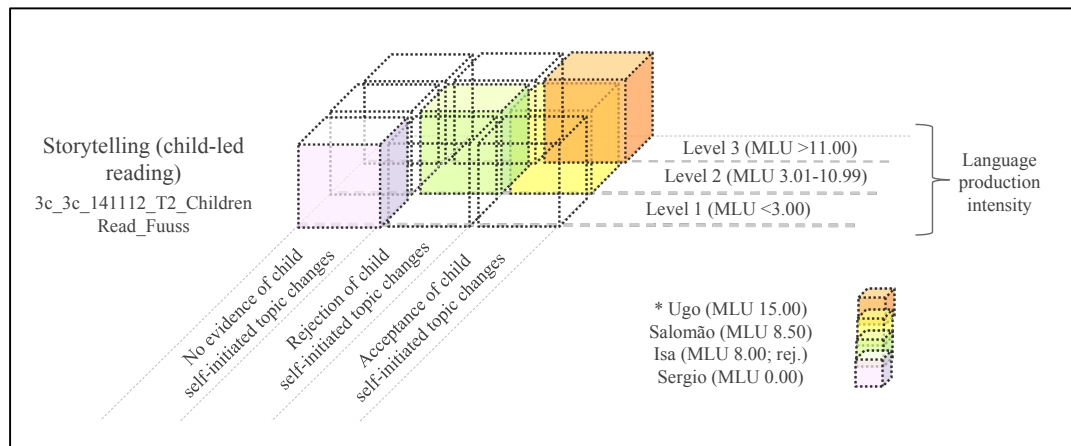
Figure 61: Pedagogical interaction in the storytelling activity 3c_141112_T2_ChildrenRead_Fuuss

The joint discussion of the lexical item "hunt" is located in the category of "acceptance of sitc" as the children attend to their peer's topic change and scaffold the correct words to complete the utterance. Ugo moves on level 1 with an MLU of 15.00 (orange cube) whereas Salomão achieves an inferior MLU of 8.50 in level 2 (yellow cube). Isa's only self-initiated topic change in this activity, with an MLU of 8.00, is rejected. Therefore, she is located on level 2 and column 2. For Sergio, there is no evidence of self-initiated topic changes. Compared to the activity of the pet's fight, the model illustrates that for a different activity, the same children can achieve diverse levels. This is interesting in the respect that our model can show, in which type of activity a child is potentially more at ease.

To sum up the reflections on the three examples above, we consider pedagogic activities with the following characteristics as desirable to achieve qualitatively high-graded book activities:
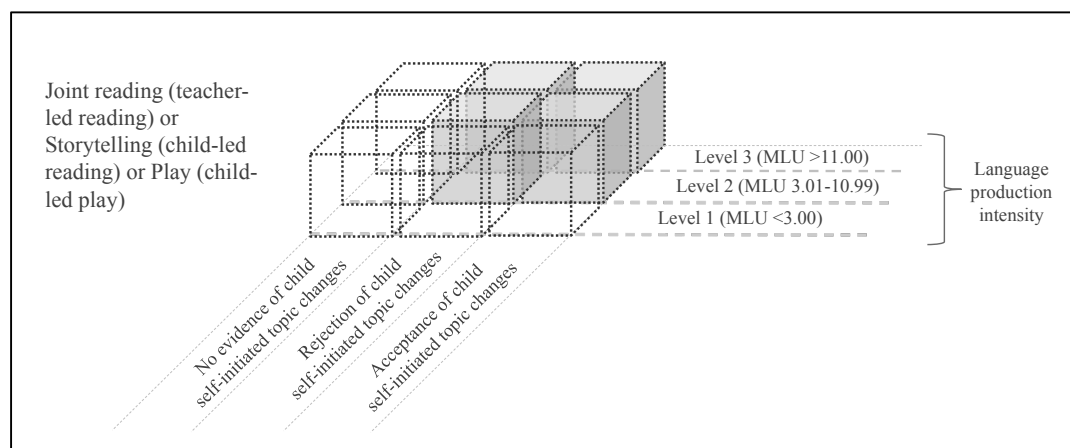
Figure 62: Optimal pedagogical interaction in book-related activities

Certainly, language production needs to climb above level 1. Only pupils who are linguistically engaged, are able to practice their language, negotiate content and meaning in order to improve their L2 (see discussions in chapter 6). In an extreme case, there could be high language production but no self-initiated topic changes such as in teacher-led exchanges based on IRF models or repetitive language. However, this is not in line with children's natural need of engaging into meaningful conversation with the members of the community. We have shown that the mere appearance of self-initiated topic changes helps boosting the MLU to a level above 3.00 (see chapter 5.2). Even if the topic is rejected, the child has at least made the effort to pronounce its utterance and establish the verbal context for it (in opposition to the fragmented chunks children formulate to display questions, see chapter 4.2). Ideally, self-initiated topic changes are accepted and topic discussions are built upon, which sustains intensive language production. Consequently, we argue for book activities which, on our graph above, are located in the grey zone. Allowing for topic changes and, even better, accepting them to foster topic discussions, are prerequisites for intensive language production. With this practice, learners can increase their proficiency in Luxembourgish over time.

Further research on the model

With the measurement of language production and the sequence-to-sequence analysis of self-initiated topic changes in three different types of activities, we use the model to combine quantitative and qualitative approaches. According to the choice of method,

another perspective on the phenomenon of pedagogical interaction is attained. As we could not spot other initiatives working with a three-dimensional model for pedagogical interaction, we suggest a more comparative view for future qualitative research: Which parameters should be altered to trigger more self-initiated topic changes? Are they the same throughout all the activity types? We have seen that the teacher's degree of involvement is an important criterion but are there any other pupil-related factors that influence their autonomous topic management? On the quantitative side, would other units, such as words or sentences, make a difference in the degree of language production? Instead of enumerating the occurrences of self-initiated topic changes in numbers, counting the MLU (or any other unit) for all the self-initiated topic changes per activity type and per pupil would give a subtler picture. In that sense, a longitudinal study is appropriate to determine the effects of teachers' systematic elicitation of learner-stimulated topic changes on the development of L2. Also, depending on the research goal, the model could be readapted for another unit altogether, such as self-initiated repair as an example.

Pedagogical use of the model

On the one hand, teachers can blend the model into individual participation to draw conclusions over the degree of participation and the intensity of language production for a specific pupil. For example, how many topic changes does the pupil already initiate and what is the level of the MLU during these topic changes? The pedagogue then has another tool to assess individual performances and, in a further step, design sustaining measures to foster more self-initiated topic changes and raise the production intensity to move on to a next developmental stage. This came out as well in our analysis of the profiles on overall utterances in general and self-initiated topic changes in particular. Michele and Benito occupy a transitional stage between those with a balanced MLU in child-led and teacher-led activities and those who are rather active in the presence of their peers. There is no research focusing on the different levels, the learners pass through in their learning process of the Luxembourgish language – neither as L1 nor as L2. Interesting for further research would be to investigate which are the features that would make these children move to the next, more skilled, stage and, as

with Magda and Leticia, which would be the triggers to take influence on topic development in conversations and move them to level 2 or 3 in our model.

On the other hand, teachers can apply our model to the whole class if they want to evaluate contribution potential for all pupils, that is, assess how open they design their pedagogical activities. Our model then functions as a tool for practitioners to reflect on their own practices: Did any self-initiated topics occur? If no, the participation framework needs to be redesigned, in order to allow for more pupil initiatives. How many self-initiated topic changes occurred and were followed up by a topic discussion? This gives the teacher already a good overview on the degree of openness of the lessons. A further step would be the isolation of pupil-initiated topic changes to count the MLU and check the production intensity of Luxembourgish.

As discussed, our model can be used in two respects, namely on a) an individual and b) on an auto-reflective level. We are aware of the intensive and time-consuming demands, the application of the model requires. For practitioners, we therefore suggest limiting its use to pupils in need for increased assistance in their L2 learning process. The model could be used to monitor their development by exercising it every 3 or 4 months in child-led activities during which the teacher has time for observation. For an overview of the openness of their lessons, teachers could check the occurrence of self-initiated topic changes, as they alone are already triggering a higher production intensity of language. The subjacent deduction is the shift of their control in favour of more pupil-regulated learning. During joint reading, they assist, not dominate, the young students' discussion on the topics they extract from the story narration. In storytelling, they eclipse themselves even more and trust their pupils' ability in designing language in autonomy. As play activities have a high degree of potential for enactments, they give new learners the chance to embody the narration while resorting less to the L2 - being all the time assisted by their peers which enables learning in the ZPD and creates potentialities for them to self-initiate topics in the near future without any help. In the next subchapter, we are going into more details on these recommendations.

8.3. Teacher control in friction with autonomous topic management

The quality of classroom interaction stands and falls by the talk that is being done by the pupils on the one hand and by the teachers on the other. This is true for the young students collaborating in autonomy during specific tasks and for teachers and pupils interacting in a guided lesson. In our study, we have highlighted different key elements in the teachers' talk impacting on second language learning:

- Talking time (see chapter 4.2)
- Pedagogical claims (see chapter 7.2)
- Topic discussions (see chapter 6.1)

On a quantitative side, if the teachers absorb 94% of the talking time in their joint reading activities, this clashes with their goal of developing the pupils' comprehensive and productive Luxembourgish skills as foreseen by the official curriculum (see chapter 1.2.2). Furthermore, the classical teacher-student IRF exchange format keeps their MLU average inferior to 3.0 due to very restrictive display questions: Compared to more natural peer conversations, the pupils get fewer turns, voice less elaborated meanings and issue grammatically less complex utterances in teacher-led activities. Again, this stands in sharp contrast with the pedagogical aims claimed by the teachers to promote L2 skills through a) giving young students a correct model of Luxembourgish language and b) fostering vocabulary development through book-related activities. It also collides with the principle that successful language instruction fosters extensive opportunities for interaction in the L2 (Ellis, 2005). On a qualitative side, we also have analysed how teachers successfully open up their framework to allow more self-initiated topic changes and jointly construct topic discussions hereby helping the pupils to learn in their ZPD. MLU rises during activities, which are not teacher-regulated and where the pre-established participation framework of the teacher does not apply. We are now going to discuss the characteristics of creative language use during child interaction and what can we learn from this to optimise teacher-led activities.

In chapter 2.1, we have seen that the primary goal of child development is to make meaning of the world around them, language being the medium to do so, to become

competent members in their community. Knowing is then defined as something dynamic and thus learning takes place in interaction and through interaction. Learners observe experts, who are learners themselves but share a given piece of information or skill and then imitate them. Various strategies to assist the learner in his/her ZPD are deployed, the most prominent being scaffolding or guided participation. The common denominator of all these concepts is the joint negotiation of meaning during a learning task – both at school and at home. What characterises child-led activities at school are thus the modes of acquiring knowledge as the children have observed in their environment before having come to the institution "school". Teacher-led activities are a new, artificial construct, during which pupils have to bid for the floor to speak, have to respect a given topic and are judged on the quality of their communications in respect to that theme. The spontaneous and intuitive learning opportunities in children's home contexts are not transferable to school. The pressure of instruction destroys part of the sensitivity for the children's immediate needs for learning to talk and through talk as equal partners. As a result, the *"cultural code of classroom discourse"* (Mehan, 1984) or named more recently, the *"academic language"* of school with its *"taxonomies"* of language (Cazden, 2001) cause challenges to all pupils and above all to those who still need to learn the language of instruction. In the analysis of chapter 4.1, we have seen that the pupils of the first preschool year of our study have a lower MLU in teacher-led activities than their colleagues from the second year whereas for child-regulated activities, there is no such difference.

Constructing knowledge also entails an active discussion of new discoveries and how to assemble them to the overall model. Negotiating topics thus becomes a crucial competence which is exactly what happens during our child-led activities and, to a more complex extent in our teacher lessons. As argued more in detail in chapter 2.1.4, topic, defined as the aboutness of a conversation, is the contextually available meaning of a discussion participants orient to and the ability to stay on it or to change it, is at the core of communicative competence. However, topics are also closely linked to power balances, which brings us back to the teacher-student relationship, in which the former mostly decides who speaks when about what.

In chapters 5.1 and 5.2, we discussed what self-initiated topic changes look like and how they impact on children's talk. The most significant finding is the tendency of self-

initiated topic changes to increase the MLU of the utterance to 11.99. This is linked to the verbal context that needs to be established in order to let other participants understand what the suggested topic is going to be about. But we also asserted that self-initiated topics, despite their benefits for the utterance length, are harder to produce in the first place. Therefore, they constitute a smaller percentage of the overall conversation – regardless of the type of activity. Recalling the graph of chapter 5.4, we see that most of our pupils perform more self-initiated topic changes in presence of their peers as in comparison to teacher-led activities. This points once again at the more constraining nature of teacher talk during guided lessons. Also, pupils with two years of preschool practice self-initiate more topics, overall and particularly with the teacher, than their friends of the first year. In our opinion, this suggests the need to learn how to integrate the self-initiated topic changes into the fast-paced child interaction and the rule-governed framework established by the teacher. And, once more, the tendency points to an improvement of autonomous topic changes in presence of peers before ameliorating in teacher-guided activities.

Due to the aforementioned participation framework established by the teachers, we found more topic changes in their lessons than in the child-led activities. Obviously, one form of breaking away from the teacher-controlled environment is done through denial of the pedagogue's topical orientation and through the suggestion of alternatives. As seen in chapter 7.3, the teachers in this study are aware of that strategy. Whereas one teacher considers this to be a threat to her agenda, the other one admits the potential benefits of giving more space for meaning negotiation, although at the same time claiming not yet being ready for it. Apparent is the tension, between which teachers move with mediating artefacts (e.g. curriculum, classroom practices), their own practices (e.g. observation, evaluation) and the pupils (e.g. learning processes, understanding of narration) as exposed in the overall context in chapter 1.2 and in Figure 57 on context-specific tensions on story book activities. Emanuelsson and Sahlström (2008) express the dilemma accurately by stating that "*there seems to be no way in which one can avoid paying the price for participation by sacrificing some control over content*" (p. 220). The collaborative accomplishment of the open participation framework presupposes that none of the actors, not pupils nor teachers, have total control on the topic.

In the section "Pedagogical use of the model" of chapter 8.2, we have pinpointed how the theoretical model of self-initiated topic changes could be used by teachers in an individual as well as in an auto-reflective perspective. Being aware of the time-consuming constraints of the model, and in line with the reflections above, we would like to single out the characteristics necessary in a book-related activity to promote self-initiated topic changes, knowing that their presence entails a higher degree of language production intensity.

The following table states the three main characteristics and blends them with recommendations for teacher-led activities:

Characteristics of child-led activities	Recommendations for teacher led-activities
(1) Making sense of the world	- Orient the lesson on pupils' contribution since they bring in topics from the story that are truly meaningful to them - Be prepared to move beyond the initial story to new activities that are topically related
(2) Negotiating topics jointly	- Include the pupils in the process of accepting and rejecting topics - Draw back in favour of more pupil involvement - Let topic discussions happen - Ask open-ended questions
(3) Enacting story contents	- Give the children the opportunity to enact story content as this is an important channel to make sense of new knowledge

Table 17: Recommendations for teacher-led activities

A first consequence for instruction is thus to refocus lessons on *sense making*. Rather than dropping a prearranged lesson plan on the young students, the teacher could stay attentive to their current interests - in general or more specifically related to a detail in the story he/she is reading to them. The pupils will inevitably bring up features that truly matter to them – just as they did in all the child-led activities while simultaneously bringing the narration and the play to a successful end. As in our example of the multiple eyes of the elephant, the lesson could have been developed into a discussion of graphical design (for instance, how did the artist achieve the visual effect on paper; can one reproduce it; is it transferable to other paintings...) and even if the discussion drifts away from the initial plan to read the story and impregnate the children with the language, Luxembourgish would become the medium through which a new aspect of the topic is discussed and its oral practice would happen naturally along the way. Less competent pupils can then benefit from the teacher's and the peers' help to participate in the negotiation of this meaningful activity that definitely can rise from a pure book level to the practice of new paining skills. The participation of the novice pupils then gradually evolves due to the guidance of experts as discussed in the concepts of communities of practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991) and guided participation of novices (Rogoff, 1990a, 1990b) in chapter 2.1.3.

A second recommendation refers to young students' need to *jointly negotiate topics*. Moving away from the traditional exchange format in which the teacher asks display questions that pupils can answer nearly monosyllabically so that a short concluding feedback can be given, the children should be encouraged to self-initiate topic changes. As seen in the example of the pet fight (see chapter 6.1), the teacher has to open up the participation framework to allow for such richer exchanges to be built up. In contrast to their discomfort, voiced in the interviews of chapter 7, where teachers recognise the rejection of topic changes as an attempt to maintain control over the activity, we encourage their withdrawal in favour of more pupil involvement, harbouring the opportunity to implicate them more in the negotiation process of topic changes. Discussions that grow out of topic changes and are fuelled by more nuances to the topic, enrich the conversation considerably (see Figure 54) and ultimately raise the MLU of pupil utterances, which entails intense practice of their verbal Luxembourgish skills. The analysis on child-led activities (see chapter 6.2) has shown that they are perfectly capable of judging which topics are worth continuing and how to handle rejections

without blocking the development of the activity. In line with Wells (2009), we advocate for more open-ended questions that encourage pupils to build on their answers and be reflexive. Especially the less skilled ones need time to answer; asking them to clarify and revoice their utterance helps them moving on in their language learning process.

The third repercussion points to the *enactment of story contents*. The play activities have demonstrated skilfulness both in terms of organisation and language learning content. The enactment of the story presupposes an understanding of the story content and adequate responses to the actions of the other children. Material needs to be handled and integrated into the play (e.g. the nest and the ball in the pet fight, Data extract 13). Topic changes have to be evaluated for their usefulness of the acting and need to be integrated accordingly (e.g. "eat the sausage", Data extract 14). This is especially delicate in the case of rejection where all the participants want to preserve their faces while laughter is often used as a mean to move on. Also, less capable peers need to be guided in a sense that they can participate in the flow of the activity (e.g. "do not approach", Data extract 18). The child-led activities also picture the ability to explore lexical items (see chapter 6.3) as described by the examples of "the hunt", "to worry" and "to fall". Play thus creates rich learning situations that offers multiple challenges to young students. Instead of keeping them in a passive listening position, the teacher has a tool to foster their organisational skills for interaction, mediated through the practice of Luxembourgish. Furthermore, enactment is an important channel for children to make sense of their world and apply new knowledge as already pointed out by Paley (1990), Björk-Willén and Cromdal (2009) as well as Ludwig (2009). Results from chapter 5.4 point to the trend that pupils first develop their oral skills with peers before they become more active in teacher-led activities. Thus, play supports the children that still need the most help in language production. As such, child-led activities (reading and play) should not be dissociated from a more traditional storytelling activity directed by the teacher but they should be used as a follow-up task. Even more, why not letting the pupils autonomously elaborate on a storybook by accessing the pictures and discuss their view on it as an opinion in its own right.

8.4. Situating the research results on self-initiated topic changes

Our dissertation adds to previous research in SLL that takes a socio-cultural stance towards learning (Dauster, 2007b; Hayes & Matusov, 2005; Pallotti, 2005; Van Compernolle, 2010). By understanding L2 learning as participation in cultural practices where the learner gradually gains in expertise to transform into a more skilled participant in the community, we explicitly consider learning as socially distributed. On a micro level, we have shown how pre-schoolers orient to topic changes by jointly constructing on it and adding richness to the discussion. By elaborating their utterances, they produce more language and through the increased practice of Luxembourgish, they ultimately work on their proficiency. We also have analysed how learners participating in a more guarded manner (e.g. Leticia), in a dynamic transition stage (e.g. Benito and Michele) and as being more expert in classroom discourse (e.g. Lídia, Salomão, Ugo), successfully organise interaction in child-led activities and, to a certain extent, with the teacher.

We built on studies about storytelling and play that either focussed on language learning or the development of narration structures (Devescovi & Baumgartner, 1993; Fekonja-Peklaj et al., 2010; Isbell et al., 2004; Kenner et al., 1996; Lever & Sénéchal, 2011; Piker, 2013; Rydland, 2009; Rydland & Aukrust, 2005; Stadler & Ward, 2010; Wright et al., 2008) by analysing how children successfully organise and structure their child-led story book activities while at the same time developing a gradual understanding of lexical items. As shown in chapter 2, there is less research available on topic development among pupils during reading activities that are less teacher controlled. With our analysis on creative language use during topic discussions and enactments, we hope to contribute new insights into the joint negotiation of topics among pupils.

Taking a pragmatic stance towards topics, we built on Melander (2009) respectively on Melander and Sahlström (2009) who designed the notion of "topicalisations" to describe the dynamic development of topics. Our results point to the co-constructional nature of topics as they are jointly negotiated among the young students and show how an initial topic change triggers further nuances to contribute to a richer discussion about the story book. To our best knowledge, no study in the Luxembourgish context has focussed on such pragmatic features of preschool talk so far. Building on Grobet (1999)

who discourages the study of isolated topics, we have pinpointed new perspectives on the combinations of topics by associating self-initiated topic changes to their ensuing nuances to build up the discussion around the story book. With that, we support the notion of topic in constant movement which can be adjusted, negotiated and co-constructed by all the participants (Doehler, 2004).

With the picture book as a cultural tool, we have illustrated how teachers and pupils move within the boundaries of the suggestions made by text and pictures. Foremost in child-led activities, we have highlighted how the pupils make relevant topical aspects playing only a marginal role in the story and use them for exploration and knowledge enhancement (e.g. the multiple eyes of the crocodile or the enactment of the witch's fall to explore the meaning of the verb "to fall"). Oyler (1996) has already pointed to the introduction of new topics taking different shapes (such as personal experiences, intertextual initiations or claims of expertise) in respect to information books which we extend to our story books.

Finally, our study has implications for fundamental teaching by shedding light on the interactional processes that create topic changes, and their implications for rich discussions on story books. Against the background of all the Luxembourgish learning pupils in preschool and the difficulties they encounter in the course of their school career (see chapter 1.2), our research contributes to the understanding of the processes involved in SLL. Grasping its modalities allows for a different support of the learners and, with a pragmatic understanding of SLL, we have given one aspect on how to design story book activities while placing the focus on more peer-led activities. In line with Hayes and Matusov (2005), we claim that one way of improving language learning is to create space for pupils' self-initiated topic changes. Essential for triggering longer pupil utterances and increase proficiency in the target language, is to open up the participation framework to allow for more pupil contribution, which then give way to more nuances and build up a rich topic discussion.

Limitations of our study are located in the time setup. As we have not gathered data on a long-term basis, we could not determine developmental changes over time in the children. Apart from showing the potentials, it is not possible for us to trace concrete developments in the children's language skills. However, it is worth investigating further children's linguistic behaviour in terms of the different language production

levels and use of topic changes as highlighted in our model. This model, as mentioned before, reflects only a specific part of a whole activity. It certainly would be interesting for further investigation, to assign the model to entire activities so as to draw conclusions about pedagogical interaction in general. In the context of our MLU analysis, we determined with Benito and Michele a dynamic transitional stage between a more imbalanced stage of proficiency (high MLU in either one of the activity types) and more expert speakers in any kind of activity (see chapter 4.3). Future research is needed to determine which are the modalities of this transitional stage and how teachers can use it to promote Luxembourgish learning. So far, no scientific work has been done on the levels, Luxembourgish learners pass through. We are also aware of the critical discussion around MLU as an indicator for language development (see chapter 3.6.1) and contribute with the notion of self-initiated topic changes as another pointer to the development of proficiency and creative language use. Similarly, in the analysis of self-initiated topic changes, we have identified Magda and Leticia as more guarded in their participation. As for Magda, our research tools were not appropriate to investigate the non-verbal channels, she was employing for communication. The question arises on how teachers can sustain the development of these two girls to bring them towards a more active verbal participation.

In the last chapters, we have focused on the contextual plane by describing the tensions arising from a rigid participation framework on one side and by explaining the potentials for learning through the opening-up of such a framework on the other side. To answer the research question on the conditions that foster a participation framework supporting self-initiated topic changes in teacher-led activities, we have sketched a theoretical model and we have explored practical trails on how to adapt the design of the activities. These recommendations plead in favour of less control on topics during story book activities and a preference for follow-up activities that put the learners in a leading position (storytelling, play) to make sense of the content and to jointly negotiate topics. We have illustrated the repercussions of self-initiated topic changes in combination to language production intensity on the on-going interaction and on creative language use through our model. The joint construction of meaning is essential for children in their attempts to understand their surroundings. Thus, as a resolution to

the question on how children manage self-initiated topic changes during storytelling and play, we have shown their skilled handling of the interaction. Not only do they resort to different reaction types regarding self-initiated topic changes, but they also mobilise repairing measures, such as laughter or mutual help for the understanding of lexical items. The creation of joint enactments is crucial in their quest for meaning making. Language is used mainly to communicate with the people in the community and children check validity to adapt their view of the world to the new situation. This refers back to our last research inquiry on self-initiated topic changes and what they lead towards in terms of topical orientation and creative language use. Consequently, the content of a conversation becomes not only a vector for children to discuss new knowledge but also serves as a tool to take influence on the conversation subject and adapt it to the child's current needs for learning, hence our understanding of topics as a pragmatic unit that is jointly constructed during interaction. At the same time, the creative use of Luxembourgish for topic negotiation serves the practice of the L2. The pupils used the stories as springboards for meaning making and for interaction with their peers and as such, their self-initiated topic changes boost the MLU and create potentials for development. If we consider progress as not always linear, but as a series of related acts, then interaction means the adjustment of the learner to new situations. Seeing the learner move in the ZPD, enables us to override the dichotomy between the individual mental life and the socio-cultural environment. From this perspective, topics, in talk-that-does, are a local turn-by-turn achievement, the learners orient to - in their pursuit to learn the language that ultimately enables them to participate fully in their community.

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APPENDIX

A.   Overview of tables

B.   Overview of figures

C. Overview of data extracts

D.   Overview of interview examples

E.   Overview of recapitulative tables

F.   Transcript convention

The transcripts follow the **GAT-convention** as developed 1988 by Margret Selting, Peter Auer, Birgit Barden, Jörg Bergmann, Elizabeth Couper-Kuhlen, Susanne Günthner, Christoph Meier, Uta Quasthoff, Peter Schlobinski and Susanne Uhmann.

Accentuation:

acCENT	first or main accentuation
accEnt	secondary or auxiliary accentuation
ac!CENT!	very strong accentuation

Noticeable jumps in intonation:

↑	increasing intonation
↓	decreasing intonation

Changing pitch:

<<t>	>	low pitch (not sure whether the letter changes in English)
<<h>	>	high pitch

Volume and speed:

<<f>	>	forte, loud
<<ff>	>	fortissimo, very loud
<<p>	>	piano, quiet
<<pp>	>	pianissimo, very quiet
<<all>	>	allegro, quick
<<len>>		lento, slowly
<<cresc>	>	crescendo, getting louder
<<dim>	>	decrescendo, getting quieter
<<acc>	>	accelerando, getting quicker
<<rall>	>	rallentando, getting slower

Breathing in and out:

.h, .hh, .hhh	breathing in (depending on the length)
h, hh, hhh	breathing out (depending on the length)

Sequential structure:

[ ]	speaking in the same moment
=	turns are following each other quickly

Silences:

(.)	micro-silence
(-), (--), (---)	short, intermediate and long silence (ca. 0,25 or 0,75 until 1 second
(2.0)	approximated silence (more than 1 second)
(2.58)	measured silence

Intonation:

?	climbing much
,	climbing
-	same intonation
;	dropping
.	dropping much

Other conventions:

((coughing))	acts which are not occurring during speech
<<coughing> >	acts which are occurring while speaking
<<amazed> >	interpretational comments
( )	incomprehensible sequence
(always)	assumed wording
al(w)ays	assumed sound
(always/often)	possible alternatives
((…))	skip in transcript
->	reference to the turn analysed in the text

G.   Activity and interview transcripts

Please refer to the enclosed CD for all the activity and interview transcripts.