DIPLOMARBEIT

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Early English Language Learning.
A case study of picture book based storytelling at the Playschool Linz

Verfasserin

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… to my mum and to my dad

Acknowledgments

German Abstract

Die vorliegende Diplomarbeit *Early English Language Learning - A case study of picture book based storytelling at the Playschool Linz* untersucht Prozesse und mögliche Auswirkungen des frühen Fremdsprachenlernens auf die kindliche kognitive sowie sprachliche Entwicklung und illustriert und analysiert den Gebrauch der englischen Sprache von 17 österreichischen Kindergartenkindern der Deutsch/Englisch bilingualen Playschool in Linz. Dabei wurden die Kinder gebeten, die Bildergeschichte *Ich bin die kleine Katze* (Spanner 1981) individuell zu erzählen. Die Arbeit ist in sechs Teile gegliedert, wobei die ersten vier Teile den theoretischen Hintergrund bilden und die zwei weiteren Teile die empirische Studie und deren Ergebnisse beschreiben.

Der theoretische Teil gibt einen Überblick über die Arten, Auswirkungen und individuellen Verschiedenheiten des frühen Fremdsprachenlernens. Darüber hinaus werden auf die Aufgaben der Lehrer sowie auf die Position der Lernenden eingegangen. Die Theorie ist relevant für das Verstehen des frühen Fremdsprachenlernens im Zusammenhang mit seinen Auswirkungen auf das Sprachbewusstsein der jungen Lernenden. Des Weiteren werden Entwicklungen in Österreich im Bereich der frühkindlichen Förderung aufgezeigt. Ein zusätzliches Kapitel über Korpuslinguistik beschreibt die Vorgehensweise, die Stärken und Schwächen der gewählten Art von Datenanalyse.

Im empirischen Teil der Arbeit werden neben der expliziten Beschreibung der Vorgehensweise der Studie auch Analysen und Ergebnisse anhand einiger Beispiele und Statistiken aufgezeigt. Allgemeine Ergebnisse der Studie betreffen die Sprach- und Wortwahl, Zeitform sowie verwendete Nomen und Verben, die in den Bilderbuchbeschreibungen der Kinder vorkommen. Dazu werden Ergebnisse der Elternbefragung besprochen. Aus den durchgeführten Buchbesprechungen mit den Kindern wurden vier Gespräche ausgewählt, die einer detaillierten Analyse unterzogen wurden, welche Beispiele des kreativen, kindlichen Fremdsprachengebrauchs und die Unterschiede zwischen den verschiedenen Kindern aufzeigen.

Table of Contents

List of abbreviations

L1	First Language
L2	Second Language
YL	Young Learner
NS	Native Speaker
NNS	Non-Native Speaker
TL	Target Language
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
ESL	English as a Second Language
ELT	English Language Teaching
TEYL	Teaching English to Young Learners
EU	European Union
e.g.	exempli gratia

1   INTRODUCTION

There seems to have always been a general acceptance that the number of languages that children learn, whether through natural exposure or educational intervention, has consequences for their development. The rather negative, and at present considered as obsolete, assumption of the effects of early exposure to more than one language was even thought of as potentially damaging to the child's cognitive and linguistic development. After almost six decades of research on the topic, the prevailing belief is that there are definite advantages to introducing language learning early on in life, such as language flexibility and creativity. Due to such positive developments, parents (predominantly those living in urban areas) find themselves today selecting from a variety of different educational programmes, in which foreign language learning is emphasised. Among these is the Playschool[1] in Linz, Austria, a unique programme which highlights the importance of early education and the creation of a stimulating environment for a more natural acquisition of English in the kindergarten setting, in which my empirical study is based. The purpose of this thesis is to investigate early language learning and hereby illustrate the process of learning a foreign language at an early age by also looking at utterances in L2 English produced by seventeen five-year old children who grow up in Austria.

The first chapter of this thesis is devoted to the ongoing discussion about the young language learner and on the research that has been done on the learning of language(s) by young children. Also, some implications and effects of early foreign language learning on the young learner's development will be looked into.

In the second chapter, I will focus on the growing trend of introducing early English language learning across the world. My aim is to gain an understanding of the nature of the process of teaching pre-school children, by paying particular attention to the development of the young child, various teaching principles that ensure early language learning, as well as motivational factors and language attitudes towards the English language.

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[1]   For specifications find their website http://www.playschool.at/ and a detailed description in chapter 5.

The third chapter aims to provide an introduction to the field of corpus linguistics. It begins with explaining today's possibilities in computer-aided language analysis. The chapter proceeds by explaining three methods (lexical density, concordancing and word frequency) included in my own analysis.

The theoretical part of this work will then be supported by findings of my empirical case study devoted to the topic of early foreign language learning at the Linz English Playschool. These chapters seek to explore the general conditions and limitations of the case study as well as provide a spoken language analysis with the help of the software AntConc.

My research foci will be, on the one hand, to find out how early foreign language learning can be best realised, and which individual factors can influence the process. On the other hand, I will try to prove my assumption that language learning is individually different and, thus, dependent on more factors than merely the starting age.

2   THE YOUNG LANGUAGE LEARNER

The young language learner is the field of interest in this chapter in which I will attempt to discuss and document the complexity of the issues that pertain to child foreign language learning. The term *young learners* is used in child research to describe children between the ages of three and about ten although it is important to state here that EU member states recently agreed that pre-school children between the ages of three and six would now be called "*very young learners*, and primary-school pupils between seven and twelve were *young learners*" (Nikolov & Djigunovic 2011: 96). This certainly is a useful and essential distinction, since a three-year-old learner and a ten-year-old learner are at different cognitive developmental stages. However, there is a terminological inconsistency noticeable in the literature as some prefer to distinguish between early and middle childhood and others prefer to use the terms young learner and older learner, and recently also very young learner. Aware of this latest distinction but for the sake of simplicity, the term *young language learner* in this paper still refers to pre-literate language learners from the age three to six.

2.1   The Age Factor

Much research addresses the age factor in second language learning, as the starting age is believed to be one of the most influential factors in language attainment. The great amount of literature devoted to the age factor leads many laypeople conclude with the final proposition 'the younger the better', which inevitably leads many to assume 'the younger the easier', as Cameron (2003: 106) highlights:

> [P]arents and policy makers often seem to be persuaded by the popular idea that, in learning a language, 'earlier means better'. This notion is born out of an intuitive belief that learning is easier for children, perhaps because adults have forgotten the struggles they went through.

A fact that must not be ignored however is that early language learners rely on only one medium through which they can learn language. Since generally they are unable to read and write, they are fully dependent on learning a language through talking and listening. Only slowly laypeople become aware of the fact that child L2 learning is, therefore, not always easy.

On the whole, early language learning is in fact simultaneously both similar and different from late language learning and without denying the existence of the age factor, this thesis does not seek to explore similarities and differences of younger and older language learners, but rather acknowledge, in brief, the existence of the discussion.

In terms of early L2 learning, the Critical Period Hypothesis, proposed by Lenneberg (1967), suggests that there is "a time in human development when the brain is predisposed for success in language learning" (Lightbown & Spada 2000: 60). It is as if there is a fixed number of years during which language learning can take place naturally and effortlessly, and after which it is not possible to be completely successful. Classically, the argument holds that after puberty learners seem incapable of acquiring a native-like accent. This controversial theory was tested and discussed by numerous researchers, who often concluded that there are many influential factors to consider aside from age, (for example, motivation, attitude, personality and learning environment) which also have an influence on the ability of an individual to successfully master a foreign language.

Although various researchers argue in favour of an early start, findings on the effects of early language learning do not present a consistent picture. In many studies, young children are often said to be less efficient learners of vocabulary and grammar than older learners. Younger learners, on the other hand, do best at pronunciation as they seem to have a greater facility for imitating what they hear (Brewster, Ellis & Girard 2004: 3). There seems to be a consensus, however, about the ease with which young learners approach a new language. The view is also held that adults rarely have access to the same quantity and quality of language that children are able to access in play settings (Lightbown & Spada 2000: 67) since "[y]ounger learners in informal language learning environments usually have more time to devote to learning language" (Lightbown & Spada 2000: 60) and do not yet feel the pressure to speak fluently and flawlessly in the foreign language. This confirms Foote's (2010: 102) viewpoint that "quantity and quality of linguistic input must be taken into account in addition to [the] age of acquisition". Research findings also suggest that young learners tend to find the new language interesting, feel motivated to learn it and also feel more at ease when speaking it (Blondin 1998: 35). Whereas slightly older beginners "[do] not enjoy studying the foreign language to the same extent [...] and their motivation [seems] more

instrumental[2]" (Blondin 1998: 35). Through all these critical viewpoints it becomes clear that an early start does not automatically ensure major advantages. Language learning and language proficiency can still vary individually as different learner properties influence the learning process and can be responsible for differences in language attainment. Nauwerck (2005: 72) concludes that:

> [w]enngleich die Vorschulkinder zweifellos über den Zweitsprachenerwerb vorteilhafte Dispositionen verfügen (Unbefangenheit, Lernbereitschaft, ganzheitliche Verarbeitungsstrategien, besondere Fähigkeiten zur Lautunterscheidung und Imitation) ist die Festlegung eines 'optimalen' Alters zum Fremdsprachenlernen unter Forschern ebenso umstritten wie das Vorhandensein der von Lenneberg ins Feld geführten 'kritischen Periode'.

Blondin (1998: 23) takes a different point of view and argues for taking into account not just the starting age, but the time spent learning and the amount of exposure to the foreign language:

> [i]f 'length of time for learning' is held constant, there do not appear to be great differences in rate of foreign-language acquisition by different age of beginner, though there appears to be a tendency for older beginners to learn more quickly, so that the advantage of the early start appears more connected to the overall time for learning that this makes available.

We conclude from this that the discussion cannot only be reduced to the age factor in language learning but must also take into account the issue of time. Furthermore, when researchers attempt to define child second language learning by comparing it to adult L2 learning, cognitive, social, emotional and contextual factors must also be considered (Philip, Mackey & Oliver 2008: 5). However, in this thesis, no such comparison or discussion of potential advantages or disadvantages of an early start are necessary, in view of the fact that language learning is seen as a process and not as a finished product, since the latter implies that the learning of a language is complete at a certain age. Therefore, language learning is seen as a life-long process and as such, an early start can only be an advantage for the life-long language learner.

After having dealt with several positions to the age factor, it remains to say that "[f]or advantages to accrue, the early start factor needs to be accompanied by other factors such as 'quality of teaching' and 'time for learning'" (Blondin 1998: 35) which will be

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[2]   Older children felt that they had to study a foreign language since it would be important for their later work.

dealt with in the next chapter. For now, let us turn to the above mentioned individual learner factors that have been argued to be of equal importance as the age factor, before we investigate the language level of our group of interest, five-to six-year-olds.

2.2   Individual Learner Factors

In second language learning, it has been observed countless times that "in the same classroom setting, some students progress rapidly through the initial stages of learning a new language while others struggle, making very slow progress" (Lightbown & Spada 2000: 50). Thus, apart from the age when learning begins, there must be several other factors which can influence the process of learning a foreign language. However, these are not as easy to measure as age - as has already been suggested - is not as conclusive as one would hope.

One obvious factor which influences the learning process is the learner's personality. Although Wong Fillmore (1991: 50) makes a clear proposition by stating that children who score high in measures of sociability and communication are generally good learners, the issue is not so clear cut. When a number of personality characteristics are said to affect second language learning, one would agree with Fillmore and speculate that extrovert children who are good communicators would be more successful language learners, but again research in this field neither fully supports this hypothesis, nor does it present a consistent argumentation against it:

> some studies have found that success in language learning is correlated with learners' scores on characteristics often associated with extroversion such as assertiveness and adventurousness, others have found that many successful language learners do not get high scores on measures of extroversion (Lightbown & Spada 2000: 54).

Once again, success in language learning seems to be so inextricably linked to several factors that even children with similar characteristics achieve different results. Lightbown & Spada (2000: 54) state that when "investigating the effects of individual characteristics on second language learning, different studies measuring a similar personality trait produce different results".

Another aspect of personality which has been investigated is inhibition. It has been suggested that "inhibition discourages risk-taking which is necessary for progress in language learning" (Lightbown & Spada 2000: 55). Although this personality trait is not

explicitly considered to be a problem for young learners, I have found that even very young learners can be self-conscious and consequently inhibited when it comes to language production. Such learners are anxious about making mistakes in the L2 and often choose to speak less than they would actually be able to (see sections 5.2.2. and 6.6.). Other personality traits which could correlate with L2 production include self-esteem, dominance and talkativeness (Lightbown & Spada 2000: 55).

A further factor mentioned in the research literature which is said to have an impact on language learning, is aptitude, a feature often associated with a special talent of the learner. The aptitude factor is attributed to learners who learn noticeably quickly (Lightbown & Spada 2000: 53). The primary goal of aptitude tests is to shed light on whether the learner has "(1) the ability to identify and memorize new sounds; (2) the ability to understand the function of particular words in sentences; (3) the ability to figure out grammatical rules from language samples; and (4) memory for new words" (Lightbown & Spada 2000: 53). Lightbown and Spada (2000: 54) point out that a successful language learner may not be strong in all of the components of aptitude as "[s]ome individuals may have strong memories but only average abilities in the other components of aptitude".

The last important factor to mention in the context of individual variation in language learning is personal motivation. Motivation is widely discussed in second language learning research. Still, the issue of mutual interdependence of success and motivation remains as "we do not know whether it is the motivation that produces successful learning or successful learning that enhances motivation or whether both are affected by other factors" (Lightbown & Spada 2000: 56). What is clear, however, is that, "[i]f learners need to speak the second language in a wide range of social situations or to fulfil professional ambitions, they will perceive the communicative value of a second language and will therefore be motivated to acquire proficiency in it" (Lightbown & Spada 2000: 56). As for very young foreign language learners in the kindergarten setting, the described instrumental motivation to reach more immediate or practical goals through L2 language skills, is not yet a decisive factor - it is rather the attitudes towards the foreign language, its speakers and the learner's desire to have more contact with those speakers that will influence progress in second language learning. As Lightbown and Spada (2000: 57) conclude "[e]ven though it is impossible to predict the exact effect of such societal factors on second language learning, the fact that languages

exist in social contexts cannot be overlooked when we seek to understand the variables which affect success in learning". A comparative analysis of data on the motivation of YLs shows that "initial motivation was very high [...]. An inspection of what participants found most inspiring shows that it was learning new words" (Nikolov & Djigunovic 2011: 102). This is to say, young learners are highly motivated and want to build up L2 vocabulary. As has already been mentioned, the peculiarity of our learner group of interest is that they are pre-literate and can thus, no matter how eager, only learn vocabulary through one channel: listening to others. As vocabulary acquisition from oral context is of major importance for the understanding of the learning process of our target group, I will treat it in some detail in the following sub-chapter.

2.2.1 Learning vocabulary from oral context

This section will be concerned with factors which are said to influence vocabulary learning in general, and are specific to the oral context. Ellis (1999: 42) highlights four major components which appear to control the acquisition of new vocabulary.

For various reasons it is said that some words are more difficult to memorise than others. Possible factors supporting this statement are described by Ellis (1999: 42). He lists intrinsic word properties as one of the four influential factors and states that the complexity or simplicity of a word's pronunciation influences the uptake of new vocabulary as "[t]he extent to which learners are able to pronounce an L2 word will fairly obviously affect their ability to actually *produce* it". Since young learners can only rely on what they hear (as literacy is not yet developed) they might find some L2 words too deviant from familiar sounds and words and difficult to memorise. There is also some evidence that "learners learn nouns [as well as monosyllabic words] more readily than other parts of speech, at least in the early stages [of language learning]". This observation will be analysed and exemplified in more detail in the findings of my case study in chapter 6 of this paper.

Ellis (1999: 46) further lists 'input factors' which are said to be influential in the process of vocabulary acquisition. A number of studies suggest a correlation between frequency and word learning as "a single encounter is unlikely to be sufficient to enable learners to give the meaning of a word let alone recall its phonological form" (Ellis 1999: 47). Ellis further asserts that approximately six or seven exposures to a new vocabulary item are necessary in order for the learner to be able to grasp its meaning, depending - again - on

the intrinsic difficulty of the word. In the early language learning context, children are assumed to be exposed to fewer lexical items more frequently, as "oral input tends to have a lower lexical density than written input and [tends] to contain more lexical repetition". The overall complexity of the input in which the new word is embedded can also affect its 'learnability', which may even constitute an advantage for younger learners, as input tends to be modified according to the learner's abilities and L2 knowledge.

Interactional factors constitute another of Ellis' (1999: 51) arguments for influencing vocabulary acquisition, as "communication potentially enriches input in a number of ways that can be hypothesized to facilitate word acquisition". Oral input as opposed to written input "allows for the input to be modified at just those points where learners experience comprehension problems". When the young learners do not understand their kindergarten teacher, for example, they can request clarification and thereby gain additional indications about its meaning.

The last factors taken into account by Ellis (1999: 53) relate to the learners themselves, since "any model of vocabulary acquisition that leaves out learner factors is incomplete". It is reasonable to assume that advanced L2 learners "will find it easier to infer the meanings of unknown words from context and thus will acquire them more easily and rapidly than those with a more restricted L2 vocabulary". Also life experience and background knowledge are listed as crucial factors and are seen as inextricably linked in the process of vocabulary acquisition. Therefore, older "learners with wide background knowledge [...] [will] find it easier to infer meanings of new words from context" than will younger learners. Ellis (1999: 60) also recognises a lack of research into vocabulary acquisition from oral contexts, although many L2 learners are in fact initially dependent on oral input alone. He also indicates that L2 learners must primarily be motivated to understand new words, but also suggests in this context that young learners "are not necessarily motivated to learn every new word they come across". Consequently, vocabulary acquisition must therefore address personal factors and psycholinguistic issues as well as a variety of different factors that influence word learning, such as "children's cognitive foundations (their memory capacity, their ability to recall), the rate of their neurological maturation, personal styles, the quantity and quality of adult-child communication, individual differences and even cultural differences" (Pinter 2011: 40).

Having managed to pass all these possible obstacles, the learner is finally ready to acquire the linguistic element in question. A widely used media to trigger language learning, appropriate for young learners, is the picture book. The significance of story-book telling to transmit meaning and language is discussed in the following part.

2.2.2 The importance of story-book telling

The older the young learners get the more language they are able to absorb. By the time children are three or four years old, they start to leave the here-and-now principle and begin to explore a richer language use. Consequently, the content of speech addressed to the young learners must not any longer primarily concern their immediate environment and current events. Stadler and Ward (2005: 73) point out, "at about the age of 3 or 4 years, children begin using another language format – storytelling", a new stage of language learning and language use that is also a requirement of my case study. The BMUKK (2009: 15) explains why the use of age-appropriate stories can enhance language learning and in fact serve as the basis of literacy.

> Durch die Rezeption von Kinderliteratur und die Auseinandersetzung mit altersgemäßen Texten werden Kinder zunehmend fähig, sprachlich vermittelte Inhalte zu verstehen und zu interpretieren – auch wenn diese losgelöst von zusätzlichen Informationen wie Bildern oder konkreten Handlungen sind. Damit erwerben bzw. differenzieren sie Kompetenzen, die die Grundlage für den Prozess des Lesen- und Schreibenlernens bilden.

Children of kindergarten age are more and more cognitively able to make sense of stories. Since story structures also underlie most forms of discourse, young children structure their own communications accordingly and train themselves to memorise what has been said as well as evaluate the content of the story/dialogue. They continuously practice and gradually improve their understanding of how language functions in order to ensure successful communication. It has become evident that the use of narratives has a significant effect on oral language skills because "stories require more complex language than that needed for daily conversations" (Stadler & Ward 2005: 73). Pinter (2011: 43) also stresses the benefits of early picture book reading as follows,"[e]ngaging children in dialogue, such as joint picture-book reading, enhances their language skills, but in addition to the linguistic benefits it also helps children learn about people's mental states, motives, emotions and different cause and effect relationships". Listening to eloquent storytellers or ample narratives, therefore, provide opportunities for young children to develop a higher level of language before they

become readers themselves. Oral narratives are consequently seen as an important link to literacy and additionally act as an important transition from the sharing function of conversations to the teaching function of written language. This is to say, already "[b]y the age of 6-7 [can] children recall the important features of a story and they can combine information into a coherent story and reorder the sequence of events to make it more logical" (Mandler 1984 in Pinter 2011: 30).

What is important to notice at this point is that language acquisition can be divided into two basic phases, namely reception and production (Nauwerck 2005: 32). Taking into consideration first and second language acquisition, these two processes and their significance to learners as well as interlocutors will be investigated in the following section.

2.2.3   Language reception and production

Whenever we start learning a language, the process of acquiring it is similar to the process of first language acquisition and proceeds according to similar periods "[d]er Erstspracherwerb ist dadurch gekennzeichnet, dass das Verstehen vor dem Sprechen einsetzt (Rezeption vor Produktion) und das Sprechen sich langsamer entwickelt als das Verstehen" (Nauwerck 2005: 23). The same order, i.e. reception before production, holds true for a second language as well.

Since babies are genetically prepared to acquire any language as their first language, it is their immediate environment that is decisive. Parents and environment provide access to the sounds and features of a certain mother tongue. A newborn will already discern a difference between the sounds and gradually will the mother tongue determine the sounds the child will hear throughout the phase of reception. Then, after months of listening and observing, infants will eventually try to produce the respective sounds themselves. It is initially during the mother-child-dyad that the child absorbs the language, and albeit passively, the child's cognition is permanently active[3] to process the language input. In the context of foreign language learning, we can recognise a teacher-student-dyad which will determine the process of language learning. Although

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[3]   The ability to discriminate sounds wanes with higher age (Nauwerck 2005: 33) and makes foreign language learning somewhat different to the process of the previously described features of first language acquisition. However, intense training can make a difference and also older language learners can achieve high goals.

the student might not produce active language use, the teacher can rest assured that the student's cognition is active and receptive skills will emerge, as L1 and L2 acquisition is in this respect also similar.

Coming back to the L1, parents should be aware that throughout the whole period of first language acquisition, the child's immediate environment defines the quantity and quality of language input and hence influences the child's linguistic development to a great degree. According to Nauwerck (2005: 32), language input from parents and teachers should fulfil three main obligations. First, input should call the learner's attention to the specific language itself and second, it should let the child constitute knowledge from it. The third function of input is to motivate children to form utterances themselves and thus continuously experience the communicative aspect of language. Furthermore, it is up to the children's interlocutors to find the balance of the quality and quantity of language input, since too little and too much input can affect the language development of the child negatively. This also forms a significant aspect of second language teaching, as input that is too simplistic could bore learners, while too complex input can overstrain inexperienced learners, both leading to frustration. Teaching the child "by providing primary linguistic data that are finely tuned to the child's developmental needs" (Wells 1985: 395) is the challenge, as the autonomy[4] of the learners to also study by themselves cannot yet be expected. The input young learners receive is still exclusively the responsibility of the children's parents and/or teachers. The children's active or passive personality then influences the involvement in the learning process.

Differences in language production exist as well, as there are various stages a language learner goes through before becoming a fluent speaker in the new language. In the context of early language learning programmes, it is interesting to see to what extent the individual speaker is fluent in the non-dominant language, therefore, "attempts [have been made] to systematize these variations by rating oral language proficiency in both languages on a scale, such as from 1 (low) to 5 (high)" (Tunmer & Myhill 1984: 170). Language learners can be tested and categorised as:

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[4]   As soon as learners reach a level of autonomy teacher input can be supported by additional assistance.

1. Non-speakers with total linguistic deficiencies; ranges from speakers who are hearing the language for the first time to those who can produce a few one-word utterances.
2. Non-speakers with apparent linguistic deficiencies; speech is limited to two-word phrases and occasional simple sentences.
3. Speakers with limited speaking ability; speech contains complete sentences, but with systematic errors in syntax and repeated use of code-switching (borrowing of words from another language).
4. Near-fluent speakers; speech contains only occasional errors.
5. Totally-fluent speakers; speech sounds like that of a native speaker of the language. (Tunmer & Myhill 1984: 170)

The purpose of the case study described in detail in the last two chapters was not to test and categorise the young language learners, but to make general observations that acknowledge the existence of different levels of language learners in the same language group. On the basis of my observations, speakers could be divided into groups 2, 3 and 4.

The relevance of the division into broad language level groups only shows again how unique and individual the process of language learning is, even for children with similar starting positions or language backgrounds. Having said that, it is crucial to determine the language level of the group of learners of interest, as it is obvious that our young, basic to advanced speakers do not yet have the language ability of average grown-ups. Thus, the question as to the actual language level of young learners arises, and it will be responded in the following chapter.

2.3 Language Development of Five to Six-Year-Olds

The period between five and nine years of age is often referred to as middle childhood, a critical period when "full-time schooling, socialization and becoming literate take over much of a child's life" (Vanderplank 2008: 717). During the period of middle childhood, there is an enormous amount of language development taking place as children develop their speaking and listening skills in various settings with different interlocutors. For a clearer understanding of the language level of our target group, one focus of this thesis lies on the cognitive development of the very young language learner. This is significant for the acquisition process in general and also in relation to bilinguals. Emphasis is also put on young learners' metalinguistic awareness and on how their potential can be used to its maximum.

Fostered through social interaction and schooling, five-year-olds at the Playschool constantly practice their L1 and L2 language skills until these become internalized. Young learners are already capable of memorising songs and rhymes and practise their communication skills with peers and grown-ups. "[Sie] beherrschen [...] prinzipiell die Satzmuster ihrer Muttersprache, haben aber noch nicht den Abschluss ihrer grammatischen Kompetenz erreicht" (Nauwerck 2005: 37) thus, odd sentence patterns and structures can still occur in their L1, even more so in their L2. Language learning and cognitive development seem to be inextricably linked in the process and Vanderplank (2008: 719) points out that "language is a powerful resource which is not only central in developing social interaction during middle childhood but also acts as a toolkit for developing the mind during this period".

As their memory is initially trained to learn both verbally and visually, young schoolchildren gain additional access to knowledge when they become literate. Vanderplank (2008: 718) states that "there is significant agreement about the qualitative changes in the speed and capacity of children's memory from the age of five – changes which are crucial to the development of thinking in language and learning through language". It was found out that "Kinder integrieren Wörter nach nur ein- oder zweimaligem Hören in ihr Lexikon" (Nauwerck 2005: 35) but to actually stabilise the newly learned vocabulary it takes many repetitions. It is said that children will have acquired an active L1 lexicon from about three to five thousand words by the age of six (Nauwerck 2005: 35). Learners between six and sixteen years of age learn an average of 3000 new words a year. Quantitative differences in individual vocabulary size are only noticeable later in the learners' lives, but "[z]wischen zwei Schulkindern [kann] sogar eine Wortschatzdifferenzierung von 6000 Wörtern bestehen, obwohl bei beiden die Wortschatzleistung als unauffällig gilt" (Rothweiler 1990: 18 quoted in Nauwerck 2005: 35).

Once the communicative level is reached, it is observable that young children are already forming some sort of language awareness by reflecting on their own language and even correcting their interlocutors' language use or choice of words. This was observed more with bilinguals, since bilingual children are constantly stimulated to compare the features of their languages.

2.3.1 Metalinguistic awareness and insights

The development of language awareness can be encouraged by the environment and is mostly triggered by learning new languages: "das Nachdenken über Sprache sowie Sprachbewusstsein [entsteht] selten von selbst: Beides muss von der Umwelt initiiert bzw. aufgegriffen werden" (Rothweiler 1999 quoted in Nauwerck 2005: 37). Educational settings, such as the kindergarten, can foster language awareness, "[denn b]ereits im Kindergarten kann durch den spielerischen Umgang der Erst- und/ oder auch einer Zweitsprache dazu der Grundstein gelegt werden" (Nauwerck 2005: 37). In this sub-chapter, the focus is predominantly on metalinguistic aptitudes which are believed to be generated by early language learning as well as by growing cognitive abilities. Diaz and Klingler (1991: 183) mention bilingual education as a condition for growing metalinguistic development, "[c]ognitive and metalinguistic advantages appear in bilingual situations that involve systematic uses of the two languages, such as simultaneous acquisition or bilingual education". Recent work indicates that language learning enables pupils to become aware of linguistic, phonetic and syntactic differences, a development which is referred to as an increase of metalinguistic awareness due to early second language learning. Tunmer and Bowey (1984: 148) define metalinguistic awareness in the context of the years of kindergarten education and the first years of schooling, as follows:

> Research on the nature of linguistic development during middle childhood [...] reveals that not only is there a continuation of earlier developmental processes, but that there emerges a new kind of linguistic functioning, which has been referred to as metalinguistic development. The latter refers to the ability to *reflect* upon and manipulate the structural features of spoken language, treating language itself as an object of thought, as opposed to using the language system to comprehend and produce sentences.

This is to say that metalinguistic awareness starts to develop in early years, when children use their language(s) not only to communicate but also to reflect on it. Examples of such emerging metalinguistic abilities would be "the appreciation of linguistic jokes [...] judgement of the semantic and grammatical wellformedness of word strings, detection of inconsistencies and communication failures, and so on" (Tunmer & Bowey 1984: 148). Another important aspect concerning the discussion is added by Pinter (2011: 43) when she points out that metalinguistic development is rather slow in young children, as

[t]he ability to think about language as a system is emerging gradually. For example, most 4-year-olds are aware that word labels are arbitrary. [...] Metalinguistic awareness [...] develops fast during the years of primary school as a combined result of factors such as physical maturation and school-induced strategies and thinking skills.

Researchers in the late seventies had already hypothesised and supported the view that children who grow up with more than one language, and thus acquire either simultaneously or sequentially, two linguistic codes, enjoy a superior metalinguistic awareness (Tunmer & Myhill 1984: 176). This argument was supported by the assumption that children in the process of second language learning develop a deeper awareness of the arbitrary nature of the relationship between the phonological realisation of a word and its meaning. Various experiments in the field show that "monolinguals denied that the names of objects could be interchanged, while most of the bilinguals agreed that it could be done, in principle" (Tunmer & Myhill 1984: 180). Hence, early second language teaching teaches children that words are arbitrary, rather than intrinsic labels, causing them to realise that their language is one particular system among many (Tunmer & Myhill 1984: 183). Besides having acquired metalinguistic abilities, these are not something speakers are aware of since processing of this sort is generally referred to as automatic, and is a rather internal mechanism (Tunmer & Bowey 1984: 150).

There are more ways to develop metalinguistic awareness and "learning to read may [also] be regarded as a typically sufficient condition for a significant increase in metalinguistic awareness" (Pratt & Grieve 1984: 141). It seems that in the process of early language learning, children can already gain insights into and curiosity about language, and in this way, pre-literate children can develop metalinguistic awareness. More recent studies define metalinguistic awareness as the ability to reflect on the use of language by, for instance, merely discussing various characteristics and differences of local dialects. Thus,

[t]he meaning of the term may be extended beyond knowledge or awareness of language and be applied to awareness of strategies for language-learning or language-use. Metalinguistic knowledge then may be viewed as an important ingredient in learning a particular foreign language [...] affording children a wider experience of languages so that they may make their own more autonomous choice of which foreign languages they would subsequently wish to learn (Blondin 1998: 18).

Today, some early language programmes at the pre-primary level aim at language awareness rather than language learning. Blondin (1998: 15) reports on an experimental study conducted in Italy, where one group of four to six-year-olds received foreign language instruction in Italian, both in standard and regional variety forms while another group was educated in standard Italian only. The findings are based on specially devised tests of metalinguistic awareness and showed that the multilingual group "acquired a deeper awareness of the structure of Italian". In a similar vein, it is said that foreign language learning stimulates the cognitive development of the child (Nauwerck 2005: 28, 96) and that metalinguistic abilities enhance cognitive functioning (Pratt & Grieve 1984: 139). Language learning can, thus, be seen as a process where not only linguistic but cognitive abilities are developed.

This thesis supports the view that early L2 learning is advantageous to children's development of cognitive abilities and metalinguistic awareness, and therefore it is also essential to shed light on the extent to which these aptitudes can be developed as well as how the children's abilities can be appealed to best.

2.3.2 Optimum use of the young child's abilities

In conclusion to this chapter, it is left to say that it is important to respect every child's individuality, but it is equally important to recognise young children's similarities in order that we may better understand how they learn. Brewster, Ellis & Girard (2004: 27) list some characteristics that distinguish young children from older learners:

- have a lot of physical energy and often need to be physically active
- have a wide range of emotional needs
- are emotionally excitable
- are developing conceptually and are at an early stage of their schooling
- are still developing literacy in their first language
- learn more slowly and forget things quickly
- tend to be self-oriented and preoccupied with their own world
- get bored easily
- are excellent mimics
- can concentrate for a surprisingly long time if they are interested
- can be easily distracted but also very enthusiastic

Although these generalisations may hide the diversity of children, in order to ensure effective and productive early language teaching, these general characteristics of the younger learner must be taken into account when teaching principles are formulated to ensure child-directed language teaching.

It must also be recognized that young language learners still have to learn a lot in their first language, apart from learning another language. Much is demanded of the young learners as they "are still developing numeracy and literacy in their first language and up to the age of puberty are still learning how to master complex grammatical expressions even when speaking and writing their L1" (Nauwerck 2005: 58). These insights into L1 development must also have an impact on the curriculum of foreign language teaching. Although children around the age of four already have a good command of their L1 and are usually attentive communication partners, they do not necessarily have specific foreign language needs. Due to a possible lack of L2 needs, I tend to question that preschoolers have made a conscious decision to start learning a foreign language, thus lacking the afore mentioned affective factor 'motivation'. The parental and teacher support and interest are consequently important. In fact, they are of such significance that they constitute additional key factors in early language learning, which will be partly discussed in the next chapter.

Finally, it can be said the following: "[n]ach derzeitigem Forschungsstand gibt es keine Begründungen, die gegen frühe Fremdsprachenvermittlung im Kindergarten sprechen. Im Gegenteil, wird dies von vielen Wissenschaftlern unterschiedlicher Disziplinen als wünschenswert angesehen" (Nauwerck 2005: 72). This is to say; apart from the advantages that early L2 teaching can have on the young learners' cognitive and linguistic development, scientists claim that more research still needs to be done in the field in order to draw conclusions for language teaching. Hence, more knowledge about the state of the young child's development is not only necessary to design principles for early language teaching but vital for the formulation of educational contents and targets, something that will be dealt with in the subsequent chapter.

3   EARLY ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING

3.1   Introduction

Pre-primary education is defined as the initial stage of structured teaching, designed to meet the educational and developmental needs of young children (European Commission 2000: 50). In Europe "children [typically] start preschool at around the age of 3 and then they move to primary/elementary school at around the age of 5-7" (Pinter 2011: 2). The significance of pre-primary education is acknowledged across Europe, though, "opinions as to its educational function differ. Some believe that children should play as long as possible, while others argue that pre-school education is essential in order to facilitate a child's transition to primary school" (European Commission 2000: 50). Despite some conflicting views, it is clear that the shift from family surroundings that initially shape the child's language to the institutional surroundings of a kindergarten, where conversations with peers are possible, is an important step in every child's development. The time in kindergarten can, hereby – obviously - serve as an important contribution to the social, emotional and cognitive development of the child. Without a doubt, the expansion of the child's social environment is an important factor in the young child's life and enables the young learner to collect additional linguistic experiences via playing and interacting with peers. Time spent in the kindergarten can therefore be seen as a significant contribution to the linguistic development of the young child.

In the context of early foreign language learning, the general aim of enhancing the child's linguistic environment is met by also exposing the kindergarten child to an additional language. The goal of such bilingual programmes is not only to learn to use two different language systems, but also to develop a sensitivity to and awareness of foreign languages and cultures (Brewster, Ellis & Girard 2004: 5). Figure 1 illustrates the multilayered objectives in language teaching, with 'communication in the foreign language' being the central, but final achievement of the language learner.
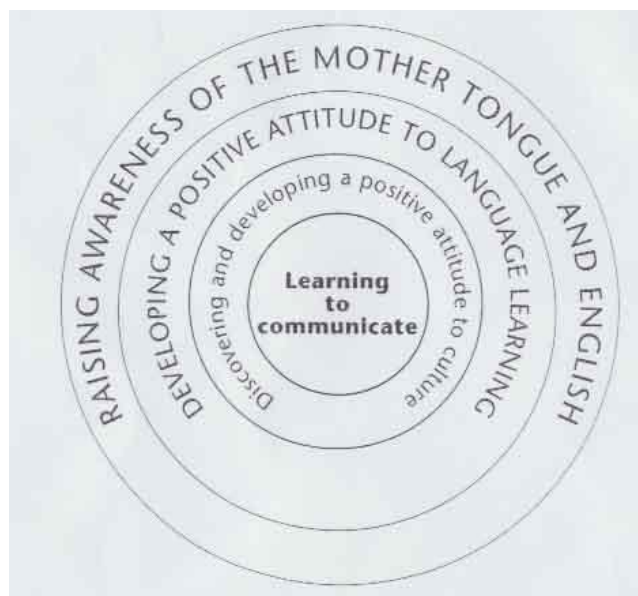
Figure 1. Objectives of early learning of English (Brewster Ellis & Girard 2004: 5)

The Playschool in Linz, the kindergarten used as an example in this thesis, represents such an early learning of English programme. The evaluation of my case study at the Playschool attempts to show if the goal that children learn to communicate in English is reached. However, some less intense language programmes, where exposure to the foreign language is restricted to a few hours per week, do not necessarily aim at the development of competence in a foreign language, but rather follow objectives illustrated at the margin of Figure 1, and comprise aims such as:

> the development of positive perceptions and attitudes, reflected in openness to linguistic and cultural diversity and in motivation to learn other languages; metalinguistic and metacommunicative aptitudes and cognitive capacity which facilitates access to the mastery of languages; and a linguistic culture which helps pupils better understand the multilingual nature of the world in which they live. (Johnstone 2003: 15)

Generally, in the early stages, language aims may merely involve getting the children used to the sounds, rhythm and intonation of, for example, English (Brewster, Ellis & Girard 2004: 8) in an atmosphere where the child does not feel the pressure of performance and attainment. Many researchers document advantages of such language programmes which primarily sensitise the children towards the diversity of languages. Also, by acknowledging Europe's linguistic diversity, it is not significant for the sensitisation process that is to take place, which foreign language is learned in order to raise awareness. Nonetheless, "the most frequently researched target language (L2) is English" (Nikolov & Djigunovic 2011: 96).

Concerned parents who decide against an early bilingual education seem to be insecure about whether an early start to learn English is actually beneficial to their child's linguistic development. They fear that learning a second language might influence their child's first language negatively and hence they opt for a monolingual education. This constitutes a reasonable objection, which we still find debated by researchers at the present. Philip, Mackey and Oliver (2008: 10) indicate possible influences an L2 can have on the young learner's L1 as the "L1 is established, although not as entrenched as that of adult learners. For younger child learners in particular, transfer may occur in ther [sic] direction due to the fragile nature of the L1". However, these concerns have lost their validity according to the current state of research (Nikolov & Dijgunovic 2011; Philip 2008; Nauwerck 2005), informing that children who enter a bilingual kindergarten at the age of three already have a stable command of their L1 before they come in contact with the other language. In fact, it is said that their L1 influences the acquisition of L2 rather than the other way around. It is once more important to note that a bilingual educational programme should continuously foster the child in two languages to ensure an ongoing process of language learning in both languages, because children who are adequately exposed to two languages at an early age will experience benefits, such as described in the previous chapters. Young language learners will also appear more flexible and creative, and they can reach high levels of cognitive development at an earlier age compared to their monolingual peers (Hamayan 1986). Finally it can be said that:

> [t]he worry about the potential negative impact on first language development has led to several studies looking into how YLs' languages interact in the early language learning process, and many of these document that exposure to a new language may favorably impact L1 development – a most desirable and fascinating outcome (Nikolov & Djigunovic 2011: 98)

In the depiction of the ongoing discussion about early language learning in this chapter, the two dominant perspectives on the issue were juxtaposed. To summarise, both are prevalent positions towards early language learning, whereas the most recent one states that early language learning does not indicate linguistic abnormalities or L1 deficiencies. Thus, there is absolutely no reason to stigmatise the early learning of languages as it was the case in numerous studies. Furthermore, we find nowadays countless L2 programmes for young language learners. Therefore, it is important to investigate into this slightly recent European trend of instruction of English to children.

3.2   Teaching English to Young Learners – a European Trend

> In many contexts, schools and policy makers do not aim for bilingual competence or for language immersion but instead they simply offer opportunities for children to experience a new language in a limited way. For those children who are born in monolingual families and stay in the same monolingual language environment for at least the first decade of their lives, the first encounter with another language usually happens in primary school. Typically, due to the unprecedented popularity of English as a language of international communication, more and more countries opt for introducing English as a first foreign language at school (Pinter 2011: 86).

Pinter's description depicts most clearly the situation of the majority of children in Austria but leaves out children with migration background. Children with another language background will have to learn German as a second language and English as a foreign language. Thus, this described reality, in fact, does not hold true for children with migration background to whom English is then their third language.

Although there is a demand to provide English programmes in the kindergarten, the majority of children usually encounter their second language in primary school. When English as a foreign language is eventually introduced in the primary school, "often only a small number of teaching hours is devoted to it in the weekly timetable and there is virtually no access or very limited access to the target language outside the classroom" (Pinter 2011: 86). Such conditions for language learning are referred to as 'low input level' contexts by Pinter (2011: 86) as opposed to 'higher input level' contexts where children learn a second language via integrating it into the curriculum rather than teaching it as a separate subject. As a consequence of the second language integration, "[pupils] may be exposed to the target language for longer periods of time during the week", (Pinter 2011: 86) which, when combined with good-quality teaching and high standards of teacher competence, is likely to achieve best results (Pinter 2011: 92).

It needs to be mentioned that in Austria there is generally not much exposure to the English language apart from the institutional input, thus being much rather counted as 'lower input level' context. However, in a growing number of European countries, English is part of the public and private environment, especially through television, films, newspapers and music. Evidently, English has become more prominent worldwide and has now "official status in sixty countries and a prominent position in twenty more countries" (Brewster, Ellis & Girard 2004: 1), a development which has

led to an upward tendency to introduce English language programmes for children all across the world. Brewster, Ellis & Girard (2004: 1) point out that parents[5] play a crucial role in this development as they "strongly believe that having English as a tool will benefit their children greatly by giving them more opportunities to gain economic, cultural or educational advantages".

English is often, but not always, the foreign language of choice. Before educational decision-makers, parents or pupils decide on a particular foreign language, some other factors play a decisive role, often predisposing their choices. Questions might be asked about the extent to which the foreign language is used within a society as well as about the common attitudes towards the particular speech community. A simple fact such as the proximity to the country where the foreign language is spoken can be very influential when it comes to foreign language learning. The fact that only a minority of children in Austria learn neighbouring languages such as Italian or Slovakian shows that "[the implications of these factors] do change over time and even the notion of 'proximity' to another country is changing with the advent of 'virtual reality' via the Internet" (Blondin 1998: 23). The ÖSZ (2007: 4) states in a research from 2004/2005 that:

> Im Schuljahr 2004/2005 dominiert in Österreich auf allen Schulstufen der Unterricht in der lebenden Fremdsprache Englisch. […] Auf der Primarstufe werden österreichweit zusätzlich noch Französisch (1,13% der SchülerInnen), Italienisch (0,98% der SchülerInnen), Slowenisch (0,76% der SchülerInnen) und Kroatisch (0,49& der SchülerInnen) als (Fremd)sprachen gelernt, wobei hier sehr große Unterschiede zwischen den einzelnen Bundesländern zu verzeichnen sind.

Throughout the last decades, English has established itself as a unifying language, especially in multilingual Europe. Today, in Europe and internationally, interactions between different peoples have become more frequent and more important, and the rise of a common language such as English is required, causing it to become the most widely used international language and the most dominant foreign language taught in European classrooms (Blondin 1998: 20).

It does therefore not surprise that it is believed that the number of English speakers within the EU will continue to increase, as "77 per cent of the EU citizens believe that

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[5] An evaluation of a parental questionnaire will be provided in chapter 6.

children should learn English as their first foreign language" (Yano 2009: 252). Besides, the Council of Europe's language policies foster,

> large-scale multilingualism in mainland Europe (or 'plurilingualism' as the Council of Europe prefers to call it). European citizens should ideally learn two languages in addition to their mother tongue. The expected benefits of such a programme include a better understanding between neighbouring nations, improved mobility of people in work and study, and an enhanced sense of a shared European identity (Graddol 2002: 92).

As a matter of fact, today, in many European countries, English is taught in primary schools and has become the 'first foreign language' in education systems, often replacing another language from that position. In figure 2, we can see that this is also the case in Austria.
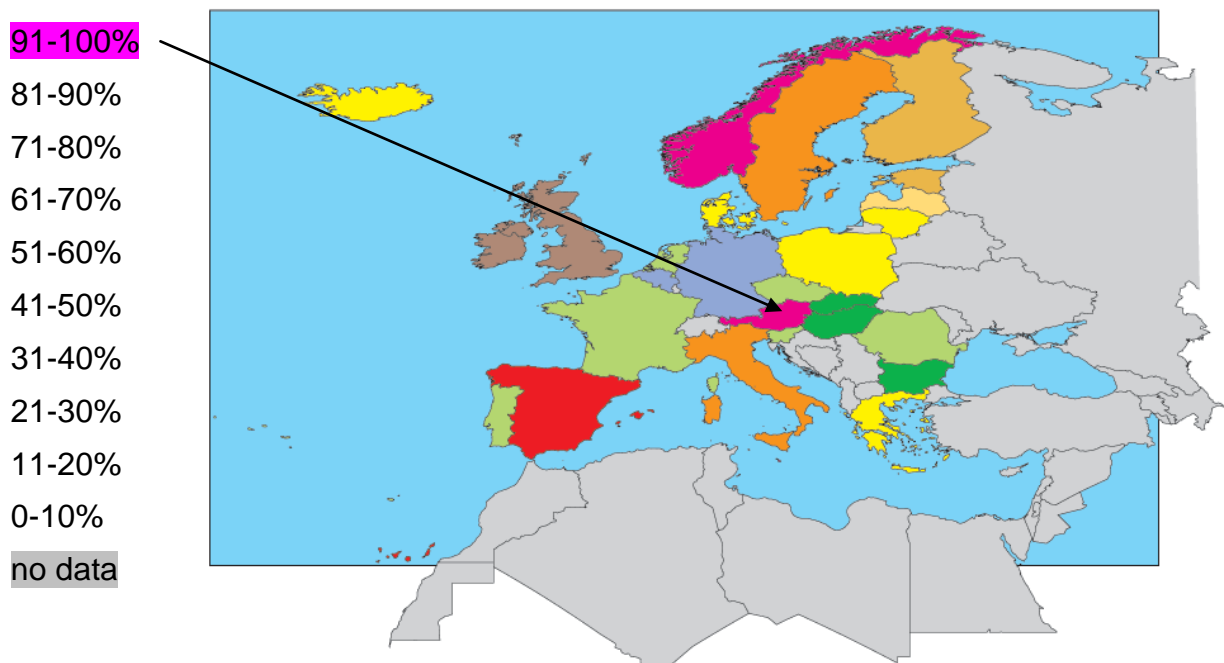
Figure 2. Percentage of primary pupils learning English in EU countries in 2002 (Graddol 2006: 88)

As shown in figure 2, children in Austria start learning English as a foreign language in primary school, and trends show that English programmes for the pre-primary level are a welcomed development. The syllabus of Austrian primary schools furthermore states the motivation and importance of confronting pupils with early foreign language learning.

> Der Fremdsprachenunterricht in der Grundschule hat die Aufgabe,
> - die Motivation zur Beschäftigung mit anderen Sprachen grundzulegen und zu vertiefen,
> - die Fähigkeit zur Kommunikation in einer Fremdsprache anzubahnen,

- dazu beizutragen, dass die Schüler Menschen mit anderer Sprache und Kultur offen und unvoreingenommen begegnen und sich als Teil einer größeren, insbesondere europäischen Gemeinschaft verstehen.
[Foreign language learning in primary school should trigger general interest in different languages as well as initiate the ability to communicate in a foreign language. It also ought to help pupils to meet different people of different language and cultural backgrounds on a receptive basis as well as see themselves as part of a greater, especially European community]. (Bildungsministerium für Unterricht, Kunst und Kultur. 2003: 1)

This is to say, early foreign language learning, just like any other L2 acquisition, should not only foster linguistic understanding of the target language but also enhance cultural understanding. This is very much in accordance with other scientists, such as Rixon (1991: 34), who also highlights four main objectives for foreign language learning.

(1) Language learning should assist the general educational objective of encouraging the conceptual development of the child.
(2) Language learning should form part of the skills/conceptual and cultural/social development of the child['s] [...] general language awareness […]. [Furthermore, it should trigger] some curiosity about the world around him/her and outside the boarders of his/her country.
(3) [Early] language learning should promote the formation of a positive attitude to language learning in general [...]
(4) Last − [early] language learning should result in the acquisition of some appropriate elements of the actual language studied.

As we can see, again, most of the criteria are concerned with something else than the pure linguistic system of a language. Thus, language learning in general engages much more than the conveyance of linguistic elements. Apart from language acquisition, it has social, cognitive, intercultural, etc. implications. In this sense the political wish to connect people across countries through foreign language learning seems to be a logical assertion, as language learning fosters common understanding between citizens of Europe. Whether or not language learners necessarily develop intercultural interests and openness is a rather individual matter, which will not be dealt with in this thesis.

Interesting to mention are the different starting levels of foreign language learning in various European countries, as in fact in some of the EU states there is relatively high exposure in daily life to a foreign language, such as English. In Holland for instance "before pupils begin to learn English at age 10 in primary school they have already acquired an impressive knowledge of English by means of television, radio and other media" (Blondin 1998: 26), whereas in Austria teachers cannot expect much prior English language knowledge of the pupils as, for example, foreign television shows are all dubbed. The lack of exposure to and lack of opportunity for interaction in the foreign

language is a major issue in language teaching in Austria. Since language learners lack exposure to the foreign language in their spare time, it has to be compensated by giving them the opportunity to engage in the foreign language in institutional settings, such as the kindergarten. Thus, it will be investigated in the following subchapter what the Austrian kindergarten curriculum concerning languages looks like.

3.3   Implications of the Kindergarten Curriculum in Austria

In my years of training to become a kindergarten teacher (2000 - 2005) I observed various different kindergarten programmes in Austria, all with more or less similar priorities in educating young children. However, only recently has the Austrian ministry for education, in cooperation with the Charlotte Bühler Institute for practice-oriented research of the young child, compiled a nationally accepted curriculum with uniform educational objectives for kindergarten pedagogy. This curriculum was officially sent out to all Austrian pre-primary educational institutions in 2009 and is seen as a significant contribution to the satisfactory validation of the importance of early education. It is important to note that the formation of the curriculum and its educational goals are oriented towards scientific insights into the development and education of children as well as the latest developments of contemporary society. Austria's current Education Secretary, Dr. Schmied, is convinced that the accepted curriculum and the obligatory kindergarten year[6], which was introduced in 2010, are important steps towards an innovative kindergarten that will gradually morph into an 'educationgarten'.

> Mit dem Bildungsplan setzten wir eine weitere wichtige Maßnahme für die vorschulische Bildung in Österreich. Nach dem verpflichtenden Kindergartenjahr ist der Bildungsplan für alle Kindergartenkinder ein neuer Meilenstein. Der Kindergarten muss noch mehr zum Bildungsgarten werden. Durch den Bildungsplan setzen wir dazu einen weiteren wichtigen Schritt. (BMUKK 2009a)

The Austrian kindergarten curriculum not only comprises six significant educational goals, which will be listed below, but also recognises and emphasises the educational mandate of early educational institutions and moreover concedes to young children the right to learn. It is also an attempt to promote the time in kindergarten as a phase where

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[6]   The introduction of a second obligatory kindergarten year is currently being discussed by the government.

children are being prepared for the demands of school. The obligatory kindergarten year is thus justified as it is viewed as fundamental to ensuring a rather smooth transition to primary school for six year olds. With the advent of the kindergarten curriculum we can now determine six elaborated educational domains in every kindergarten in Austria:

1 Emotionen und soziale Beziehungen
2 Ethik und Gesellschaft
3 Sprache und Kommunikation
4 Bewegung und Gesundheit
5 Ästhetik und Gestaltung
6 Natur und Technik
http://www.bmukk.gv.at/medienpool/18698/bildungsrahmenplan.pdf (10 June 2011)

Since this thesis focuses on language learning, I will discuss the third educational focus of the curriculum, namely "language and communication", in further detail. Given that language is the most important medium to communicate, there is no doubt that language input and development are main issues in pre-primary education. Children are interested in language from early on and are naturally soon involved in interactions, both receptively and productively. This diversity of communicative situations provides children with opportunities to listen and observe and even experiment with language themselves. Still, as previously discussed, at every stage of language development, speech comprehension is better than language production (Nauwerck 2005: 23; BMUKK 2009b: 14). This observation also conforms to the findings of my personal pilot study.[7]

The curriculum further stresses that young children are to be assisted to gain language competence in their first and second language respectively. Since, "[e]rfolgreicher Zweitspracherwerb baut auf erstsprachlichen Kompetenzen auf, daher ist es wichtig, auch die Erstsprache ständig weiterzuentwickeln" (BMMUKK 2009: 14). Moreover, the curriculum assumes that a child's mother tongue (including regional dialects) will be treated with respect since one's identity is inextricably linked to one's first language.

Another interesting fact that is mentioned in the curriculum is that young children generally participate more often in interactions with older, more mature language users. Taking into account the fact that adult interlocutors influence children in terms of language use, it can be said that adults are therefore important contributors to the

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[7] For more information read chapters 2 and 6.

progress of children's language development (BMUKK 2009b: 15). It can be concluded from this that an environment that is rich in language choice will help children to continuously improve their language skills. Kindergarten teachers can thus also help to encourage interactions by providing language learning stimuli that are enjoyable to the young learners.

It can be observed that the content of adult speech addressed to young language learners is predominantly oriented to what they already know. Therefore, it is said that topics that concern their immediate world (the 'here') and current events (the 'now') presumably help young learners to decode the linguistic input and hence, ensure mutual understanding. Observations show that "[y]oung children's communication in the preschool years is very much related to their everyday experiences and they are not yet able to communicate in a de-contextualised manner" (Pinter 2011: 43). Interactions which follow the here-and-now principle are vital for the development of meaning, language use and language structure. Therefore, it can be asserted that it is initially through the conversational format (Stadler & Ward 2005: 73) that interlocutors teach their young listeners essential language features. Thus, if the kindergarten teachers provide a rich language environment for their preschoolers, it can only lead to a larger understanding of their own and other languages, as well as peoples.

Having looked at why early language learning has predominantly positive side-effects on young children and why it has become increasingly popular in the last decades in Europe, we shall now turn to an actual example of what applied early language teaching can look like. Apart from theoretical information about the model, the Playschool Linz will be classified according to their language teaching principles.

3.4   A Pre-School Immersion Example

About twenty years ago "[r]elatively little attention has been devoted in ELT literature to the teaching of English as a second or foreign language to young learners" (Williams 1991: 203). Only about ten years ago, Cameron (2003: 105) suggested that "the expansion of Teaching English to Young Learners (TEYL) is a phenomenon that needs to be taken seriously by the ELT field" (Cameron 2003: 105). Today, the advent of

more and more early language learning programmes[8] in Austria alone seems to be an answer in the globalised world in which young learners live. There is a noticeable international interest of introducing EFL at a younger age. Even "[c]urrent statistics indicate that since 1990 approximately 60% of the nation-states of the European Union have reduced mandatory starting ages by at least two years and in some cases as much as five years" (Enever 2007: 208). Brewster, Ellis and Girard (2004: 3) identify one major logical reason for "starting to learn a foreign language several years earlier (at age six or nine instead of eleven or twelve) [as this simply increases] the total number of years spent learning the language". Alongside the lowering of the age at which schools start teaching English are "many parents, willing and able to pay for their children to have lessons outside the school system" (Cameron 2003: 105) or even before their children attend school. To lower the starting ages is, thus, one way to meet the rising demand towards early foreign language learning.

There is "[m]uch variation [that] characterizes early language learning programs according to when they start, how much time they allocate to early language learning, what type of curriculum they apply, who the teachers are, and how the programs are implemented" (Nikolov & Djigunovic 2011: 97). In this subchapter, I will give an example of what early language learning can look like by illustrating some principles I was able to observe at a bilingual pre-school programme in Linz.

The Playschool in Linz can be defined as an immersion model, as "[c]hildren are 'immersed' in a second language, which means that everyday communicative exchanges are realized in the target language" (Legutke et.al. 2009: 139). Depending on how much time is allocated to the target language use, one differentiates between partial immersion and total immersion (Legutke et.al. 2009: 139). Partial immersion is realised in the Playschool as about fifty per cent of the instruction is done in the target language, English, as opposed to total immersion which would involve a hundred per cent target language use. Less than fifty per cent target language use in language programmes is often considered as inefficient by researchers because of the limited contact with the

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[8]   URL: http://www.lernwerkstatt-ce.at/
      URL: http://www.planetenglish.at/
      URL: http://www.helendoron.at/

foreign language (Legutke et.al. 2009: 139). This, however, constitutes a radical position and even contradicts foreign language learning realities.

Ameel et al. (2005: 62) point out that foreign language learners in a kindergarten or school setting "acquire and use their languages in strictly distinct environments [and, hence,] learn the second language as a foreign language". In foreign language settings like the pre-school in Linz, the kindergarten is often the only place where the children are exposed to the new language and besides, also the only opportunity they have to practice it.[9] In connection to the restricted exposure to the target language (TL) Littlewood and Yu (2011: 65) recognise a "major challenge" for foreign language teachers and young learners as "studies have consistently found that students resort to their L1 as soon as they can and rarely initiate TL exchanges themselves". This leaves the language teacher as their sole linguistic model and, hence, the main source of TL input. This initial situation and teaching challenge will be discussed further in chapter 5.3.

However, language teachers are obviously not the only ones responsible for the success of language attainment, as Wong Fillmore (1991: 52) suggests. She correctly focuses on learners, teachers and the setting where language learning and teaching takes place. In her article *"Second-language learning in children: a model of language learning in social context"* she outlines three major determinative components which influence the process of second-language learning. There are firstly, the

> *learners* who realize that they need to learn the target language (TL) and are motivated to do so; *speakers of the target language* who know it well enough to provide the learners with access to the language and the help they need for learning it; and a s*ocial setting* which brings learners and TL speakers into frequent enough contact to make language learning possible (Wong Fillmore 1991: 52).

This again highlights the important role of the language teacher but adds two more dimensions to the process, namely that of the learner's willingness and that of the social setting. Language learning, according to Wong Fillmore, is a 'teacher-learner dyad' to which the setting serves as the learning platform, where exchange is possible. I will now examine the individual parts of the mutually influential 'teacher-learner dyad'.

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9   See chapter 6.2 for a detailed analysis of the parental questionnaire and figures about L2 input in the homes.

3.4.1 Teachers of young learners

> [Young] [c]hildren do have a less complicated view of the world than older children and adults, but this fact does not imply that teaching children is simple and straightforward [...] It is also misleading to think that children will only learn simple language, such as colours and numbers, nursery rhymes and songs, and talking about themselves. Of course, if that is all they are taught, that will be all they can learn. But children always can do more than we think they can; they have a huge learning potential, and the foreign language classroom does them a disservice if we do not exploit this potential (Cameron 2001: xii).

Several researchers agree upon the fact that teachers are key players in early language learning as "they are not only the main sources of input and motivation, but they are also responsible for what happens in classrooms" (Nikolov & Djigunovic 2011: 106). Teachers also function as linguistic role models and should assimilate their language level to that of the children but still challenge them linguistically. Nauwerck (2005: 80) highlights the teachers' need to build correct sentences and to speak clearly and lively. This way, it is argued, committed teachers will encourage children's potential and their interest in learning and speaking the language.

To ensure adequate and proficient language teaching, there are certain quality measures teachers of young learners should meet, to which Nikolov and Djigunovic (2011: 106) draw attention. According to the researchers, teachers are expected to be "(a) proficient in their pupils' L1 (presupposing that all learners have the same L1) as well as in the L2, (b) familiar with the content and methodology of the general curriculum, and (c) the principles of how children learn in general and language in particular". The two latter points are expected of every teacher who works with young children, whereas the first point seems to be most important in the context of bilingual education, since inexperience in a language will lead to insecurity. It is, thus, indispensable for language teachers to possess a good command of the languages used in class.

In fact, it is a widely discussed question as to what extent L1 and L2 should be used in the bilingual classroom. The curriculum model under examination requires that both teachers[10] in the kindergarten group are proficient in both languages, since TL speakers may at first find it easier to communicate with the young learners by means of the shared language, German (Wong Fillmore 1991: 53). Ideally, one teacher in the group

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[10] In Austria there is always one kindergarten teacher and one assistant in a kindergarten group.

is native English whereas the other is native German, but both should be fully competent in the two languages to also strive toward a balanced use of German and English. Therefore, teachers and young learners share a first language, whereas native speaker teachers are apt to use the TL as a means of classroom communication. Blondin (1998: 33) also found out that "[m]ost teachers in Germany and Austria, when teaching a foreign language, try to do so by using the foreign language rather than by resorting regularly to their pupils' first language". In that sense Chávez and Chesterfield (1985: 83) pointed out that

> [i]n bilingual programs, the appropriate use of two languages within the classroom is often considered a key factor in the implementation of a curriculum. This is especially true when a program deals with children of preschool age who are still in the progress of learning any language.

Littlewood and Yu (2011: 64) suggest a balanced use of L1 and TL but "teachers should aim to make maximum use of the TL" and conclude that "by using the TL in the classroom not only as a 'target' to be learnt but also for other purposes, students are more likely to perceive it as a useful medium for communication and develop more positive motivation to learn it" (Littlewood & Yu 2011: 66). At the Playschool in Linz, children gradually gain L1 and L2 skills and the consequentially growing confidence and experience lead the teachers to progressively expand the scope of the TL as a natural medium for communication "while recognizing the importance of the L1 as a source of security and support" (Littlewood & Yu 2011: 72). Even though a teacher addresses the child in English, the child is free to answer in German. This is a common policy in bilingual settings as teachers and learners may use different strategies of verbal interaction in dual language situations (Chávez & Chesterfield 1985: 84). Nauwerck (2005: 81) also emphasises the responsibility of the teacher as an active communication partner: "[a]ls Kommunikationspartnerin trägt sie dafür Sorge, dass die Kinder in der natürlichen Interaktion Sprache erwerben und erproben können. Dabei ist es wichtig, dass sie durch häufiges Nachfragen zur Verwendung der Sprache herausfordert".

Furthermore, a teacher's language proficiency is also a decisive factor of the young learner's ability in a foreign language, as Blondin (1998: 23) affirms. She states that "empirical studies show a link between the teacher's level of competence in the target language and the competence acquired by their pupils, especially in pronunciation and oral fluency". Cameron (2003: 111) emphasises the significance of language

proficiency and states that "[teaching] requires a high level of fluency and wide knowledge of vocabulary. Furthermore, since children reproduce the accent of their teachers with deadly accuracy, pronunciation skills are also vitally important at the early stages". Thus, the proposition that language proficiency of the teacher plays a decisive role in the language learning process of the learner is highly reasonable.

3.4.2   The young learner in the kindergarten

Having explored Wong Fillmore's (1991: 52) comments on three interlinked components, namely learners, teachers and social setting, and their influence on the learning process, it is now fitting to investigate the remaining two. The following section of this chapter will look at how the social setting of a kindergarten can motivate and invite children to make efforts to learn a foreign language.

The setting in which language learning takes place is said to be a crucial factor in early language learning. A kindergarten, in general, is a very friendly place where children are actively invited to interact throughout the day, as opposed to a school setting where children are expected to listen most of the time. The kindergarten routine usually consists of a period of time during the day when children are permitted to play freely, and a period of time that is dedicated to particular group activities led by the teacher. In terms of language learning, children will vary quite widely in what they have learnt in English, as each child's learning will depend on the meaning they have been able to construct in such group activities. Because experience in language activities is constructed individually "we cannot easily predict what is learnt from what is taught" (Cameron 2003: 110). Generally, language input is provided for everyone, but for the learning process to take place it also depends on every individual's interest and readiness.

As already discussed in a previous chapter, there is a common belief that young children learn languages much more easily in comparison to adults and the ease with which they are believed to learn a new language is admired by many. In terms of young learners, I question whether or not it is actually easier to learn an additional language[11] through visual and auditory input only, since reading and writing literacy are not yet

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[11]   "An additional language is often a learner's 'foreign language'" (Coyle, Hood & Marsh 2010: 1).

developed. In this context, Cameron (2003: 107) also emphasises the "need to consider the implications of the fact that children do not come to foreign language learning with established literacy skills". Due to the fact that a child as young as three differs from a child of school age or an adolescent, language learning and teaching will be different, but not necessarily easier. The difference, however, must have implications for young learner bilingual pedagogy and research (Philip, Mackey & Oliver 2008: 4).

One major difference is the time a young learner can focus on a certain activity. Researchers assume that five-year-olds have a concentration span of 20 minutes, if someone else expects them to focus on something. However, if they themselves choose an activity that demands concentration, this concentration span is extended depending on their degree of interest. A young learner will be interested and will also repeat activities as long as these are somehow exciting and fulfilling. Listening to long stories, for example, could challenge some learners' concentration and they might appear passive and bored (Rixon 1991: 37). Not only length of a story may have a discouraging effect, but "frequent changes of scene and wide range of vocabulary involved" (Rixon 1991: 37) can result in a rather negative teaching unit. Overall, "[i]t is not easy to teach children effectively, and the reliance on oral language means that teaching children a foreign language may, in some ways, be more demanding at [pre-primary and] primary level than at higher levels" (Cameron 2003: 111).

There are some important teaching criteria that have to be taken into account. The overall emphasis of early education is clearly on learning by playing since the joy of playing raises the child's motivation to learn. Learning by playing is thus a common and important notion when it comes to educating young children. Rituals are also important in order to provide an environment that allows the child to feel competent and confident. The repetition of certain games, songs and rhymes helps the young learners to remember and memorise (BMUKK 2009b: 27). The resultant ability to "understand, recall, and produce songs, rhymes, chants, and stories, found in most YL courses, are all examples of discourse skills" (Cameron 2003: 109). It is, therefore, initially through repetitive songs and similar activities that young learners learn to extract meaning from the new language. Even if the

> [s]ongs learned by heart have less controlled language but may give the child access to language chunks which he/she can incorporate into general language use. [...] In the best of possible cases songs and rhymes learned by heart may form part of a

child's linguistic data base from which generalisations may be made (Rixon 1991: 36).

Listening to stories and learning songs and rhymes by heart is seen as the beginning of literacy and Cameron (2001: 12) states that "[s]ome structures in spoken language are acquired late because of their connection with the written language", but children will eventually and gradually shift from prefabricated utterances to more analysed language use. Cameron (2001: 51) also points out that "[o]ver time and many, varied uses of language, the child will move from partial to more complete understanding of aspects of language and develop a greater range of language resources and skills".

3.4.3   Conclusion

Pre-primary education is, without a doubt, significant for the linguistic development of young children, seeing that the kindergarten functions as an additional linguistic environment, where language contact and linguistic experience are primarily realised via playing with other children and via targeted language input by skilled teachers. Research confirms in this context that "[p]eer interaction can foster opportunities for negotiation, feedback and modified output" (Philip & Duchesne 2008: 83) and that children at the kindergarten learn to be language partners. These observations and facts are also very beneficial in the context of early bilingual education programmes as children can help and motivate each other to learn languages.

The spread of bilingual kindergartens throughout Europe is considered "[o]ne of the most remarkable changes in European education in recent years" (Legutke 2009: 13). In a bilingual pre-school setting the children are confronted with two languages, mostly the language of the society and a foreign language. In restricted TL exposure situations, such as learning English in Austria, where young learners have a very limited experience of the learned language outside the kindergarten or school, bilingual education programmes present a way to escape the monolingual environment. Even in the case of a global language like English, children in Austria will hardly encounter English language use on the television or radio, leaving the kindergarten or school often as the main opportunity to practice. It is, thus, the teacher's commitment to provide exposure to the English language that will provide young learners with frequent opportunities for learning.

Teachers can often decide themselves what methods they want to use as Blondin (1998: 32) reports on a research from Austria that favours "an interactive approach based on meaningful, narrative material which resulted in higher levels of communicative skill than in the case of children taught by means of a more conventional approach". Much of the learning success is, therefore, dependent on the quality of the teaching as well as its methods and foci. It is safe to say that an early start is more likely to ensure native-like competence in a foreign language when learners are continuously exposed to the L2. In this context, advocates of the immersion model "explicitly address the issue of continuity" (Legutke 2009: 141) in language learning. When children leave the bilingual kindergarten and enter a monolingual school with approximately two hours of English input per week, there would be no systematic follow-up to ensure continuous teaching at their level. As we have seen so far, young language learners need adequate and continuous L2 input in order to progress in the learning process. However, only some children who attend the bilingual pre-primary school in Linz apply for a bilingual primary school. With regard to further schooling after the time in a bilingual pre-school it remains to say that:

> starting younger may not bring automatic improvement to language standards unless teacher education and [primary and] secondary language teaching both rise to the challenges of the new situation. Young learners will need to be motivated to continue learning for ten or so years, and will bring very mixed levels of language to the [primary and] secondary classroom (Cameron 2003: 105).

Parents, who opt for a subsequent primary school with no specific emphasis on English language learning, might risk that their child will be unchallenged and uninterested in the beginners class. If benefits of an early start are not to be lost, primary teachers are challenged to maintain the pupils' motivation. How primary teachers cope with classes of mixed levels of language skills and knowledge needs to be investigated more closely. On the whole, much depends on the teachers who are motivated and able to work efficiently with young learners. A teacher's enthusiasm, commitment, pedagogical skills and competence in the foreign language, undoubtedly, influence the quality of the teaching to a great degree.

However, as much as language learning requires someone who provides the language, it also depends on someone who wants to learn the language. Both are intertwined in a mutually influential process, and for successful learning to take place, much depends on the language input and on the language learner who needs to construct meaning from it.

It is, therefore, important not to underestimate the impact that aspects such as personality and social style can have on the learning process. Individual differences in self-confidence, risk-taking, interest, communicative need and sociability can affect the learner's ability and inclination to interact with people who speak the target language. Nikolov and Djigunovic (2011: 101) mention the lack of research in the field and "the need for investigating interactions of individual differences" and evidence of oral skills, such as samples of extended talk that young language learners produce. However, Lightbown and Spada (2000: 52) state rightly that it is "[a]nother factor which makes it difficult to reach conclusions about relationships between individual learner characteristics and second language learning [and they also question the ways] how language proficiency is defined and measured". An attempt of a small corpus evaluation of individual oral skills in language production is provided in the empirical part of the thesis, and found in chapter 6.3. For now let us turn to the process of data evaluation with the help of corpus linguistics.

4   CORPUS LINGUISTICS

4.1   Computer-Aided Language Analysis

This chapter aims to provide an introduction to the advantages, weaknesses and the uses of corpora in language analysis. There is a growing emphasis on the development of collections of electronic texts, also called corpora, as these allow a systematic exploration of recurring patterns in language in use (Adolphs 2006: 1). The field of corpus linguistics facilitates the aim of enhancing language description by analysing data that is collected in a corpus. When Schmitt (2002: 68) notes that "*[c]orpora* or *corpuses* (singular: *corpus*) are simply large collections or databases" containing texts or in other words, language, he also addresses a viewpoint that is debatable. The moment a speech event takes place for the purpose of a recording, a notion of artificiality cannot be denied, as Seidlhofer (2011: 107) highlights "[e]mpirical work with a corpus is always by definition removed from the context in which the talk happened". The next step towards a corpus analysis is then to transcribe the recorded speech to make it computer readable, whereby aspects of speech (intonation, mimics, gesture, etc.) get lost in the process. To give an example, for the purpose of the analyses of the transcribed utterances by the children, I have also left out my own speech. This way I created a text coherence which does not exist in the spoken examples. Naturally, children paused or waited for my feedback or prompt. It must be mentioned that a transcription can therefore not represent spoken language, but only a limited aspect of it.

Corpora can have different characteristics, since texts compiled in order to make up a corpus can vary considerably with regard to language mode as well as length. A corpus can contain spoken texts as well as written samples of language, but the process of transcribing spoken material to then upload it to a database is a far more time consuming and complex procedure. Researchers may, depending on the purpose they pursue in analysing a corpus, prefer corpora of varying "design, size and nature" (Kennedy 1998: 3) for their projects. Once a suitable corpus is found, the corpus needs to be analysed with the aid of special computer software in order to provide useful results for the study of language(s). There are two types of analysis which also follow different aims. The quantitative analysis of language data deals with the counting and identification of frequencies and distributions of certain language features within a

corpus. As McEnery (1996: 4) explains: "in quantitative research we classify features, count them, and even construct more complex statistical models in an attempt to explain what is observed". Whereas in qualitative analysis "no attempt is made to assign frequencies to the linguistic features which are identified in the data", the data is rather used to exploit language in order to explore in which varying ways a specific lexical item is used within a corpus (Adolphs 2006: 8/19). Based on the results obtained, linguists are in the position to gain information, state certain observations and make valid claims.

The field of electronic text analysis is expanding due to advances in software technology and the growing interest in using electronic resources to complement more traditional approaches to the analysis of language (Adolphs 2006: 1). Back in the 1920s, researchers, for example, still gathered frequency information of individual words in a set of texts "by manually counting each word form" (Adolphs 2006: 4). Also, there were obvious limits to gathering spoken material by manually writing down observed conversations, as for instance, the "raw empirical database for the field was kept only in private stocks, unavailable for general public examination" (Trott, Dobbinson & Griffiths 2004: 74). This nowadays obsolete method also resulted in great differences and problems in transcription methodology as no coherent and unified manual of transcription codes was in use, leading each investigator to devise a project-specific system of transcription codes (Trott, Dobbinson & Griffiths 2004: 74). Only with the introduction of the tape recorder in the late 1950s were researchers eventually able to produce high quality field recordings (Trott, Dobbinson & Griffiths 2004: 74), and with the first computerized corpora in the 1960s it became possible to generate frequency lists automatically (Adolphs 2006: 5).

4.1.1 Corpus of spoken language

The collection of data for my small learner corpus involved the sampling of spoken language production. The young learners share similar language backgrounds and attend the same bilingual kindergarten. The audio recorded material was then transcribed word-by-word and analysed with the aid of the free AntConc software. As Adolphs (2006: 12) suggests, "[i]f you have a sufficient number of machine-readable texts that you would like to put together into a corpus you can use web-based corpus assemblers to make your data more manageable and easy to manipulate". The online

software AntConc can generate Key Word In Context (KWIC) concordance lines (see subchapter 4.2.2.) and the programme also generates frequency counts (see subchapter 4.2.1.), collocation patterns and identifies key words. With the help of the frequency lists, I could include the learner's use of lexical and grammatical forms in my analysis and also determine error forms.

My compiled corpus of learner language contains a small collection of utterances produced by seventeen 5 to 6 year-old learners of English. This corpus allows me to compare and contrast certain patterns of the learners' language use. However, my analysis relates to a particular discourse event and findings cannot be generalised. Adolphs (2006: 16) also points out that "[t]he nature of electronic text resource determines, to a large extent, the research boundaries: a very small collection of texts, for example, would not contain a sufficient number of instances of a chosen lexical item needed to make any statements about its usage". The existing corpus contains 2742 words and when we look at the frequency list of the top 10 words below, we can see that frequency of individual words drops off sharply as we go down the list. The tenth most frequent word occurs ten times less than the most frequent word:

1	THE	321
2	CAT	155
3	A	99
4	AND	99
5	IS	81
6	YES	65
7	TO	50
8	I	38
9	THIS	37
10	WANTS	32

Overall there are 527 different words (also called types) that make up the 2742 word corpus. Out of the 527 word types, 279 types occur with a frequency of only 1. Amongst these low frequency types, there are words that would intuitively not appear to be infrequent, such as the English words *thing* and *touch* and the German words *essen* and *fangen*. A larger corpus may ensure that there are enough occurrences of each lexical item to allow for the extraction of patterns that are representative of the language from a concordance output (Adolphs 2006: 19). In my analysis I focused on the most frequent types and some interesting one-time-occurrences. I also analysed grammatical patterns as they "are a lot more repetitive than lexical items [...] and we can therefore expect to find a substantial number of occurrences even in a small corpus" (Adolphs 2006: 19). The emphasis of the corpus analysis has, thus, been on the extraction of

language patterns that are frequent in the corpus as well as on exploration of single occurrences that stand out lexically.

4.1.2 ICLE - VOICE and CHILDES

Another existing learner corpus is the International Corpus of Learner English (ICLE), which is the most extensive and best-known collection of learner corpus. This corpus consists of written language use only, and comprises many essays of about 700 words produced by advanced EFL learners in a variety of countries. The aim is to compile an ICLE corpus of about 200,000 words per language or country (Barlow 1992: 338).

Transcripts of spoken language remain "one of the most time-consuming components of modern corpus compilation, which is one of the reasons for the general scarcity of spoken corpora" (Adolphs 2006: 20). An example of a spoken learner corpus is the Vienna-Oxford International Corpus of English (VOICE), which was developed at Vienna University and supported by Oxford University Press. VOICE provides a sizeable, computer-readable corpus of English as it is spoken by non-native speakers, in the English as a Lingua Franca context. "VOICE is based on audio-recordings of 151 naturally-occurring, non-scripted, face-to-face interactions involving 753 identified individuals from 49 different first language backgrounds using English as a lingua franca (ELF)" (http://www.univie.ac.at/voice/page/corpus_information 20 November 2011)

The aforementioned type of corpus is a corpus of collected English language use of speakers to whom English is a foreign or second language, whereas the VOICE and CHILDES corpora include NS as well as NNS data. CHILDES stands for "Child Language Data Exchange System", an online database which was developed by the linguists and researchers Brian MacWhinney and Catherine Snow. The CHILDES project beginnings date back to 1984, when MacWhinney and Snow were offered a grant by the MacArthur Foundation to work on their idea of a computerised data exchange system (Trott, Dobbinson & Griffiths 2004: 75).

CHILDES is considered one of the early answers to the limits of the researcher's diary technique and includes "a rich variety of computerized transcripts from language learners. Most of these transcripts record spontaneous conversational interactions. The speakers involved are often young monolingual, normally developing children

conversing with their parents or siblings" (MacWhinney 2000: 1). Additionally, this database includes recordings of bilingual children, and older schoolchildren as well as adult second-language learners and children with various types of language disabilities.

In conclusion it must be said that "[r]esearch on learner corpora is often inherently contrastive" (Barlow: 342) when examples and aspects of different corpora and language learners are analysed. Comparisons of different NNS corpora can be used to underline aspects of language use shared by learners with different language backgrounds. However, the full value of corpora to language analysis is to be investigated in the following subchapter.

4.2　The Potential of Corpus Linguistics for the Study of Language

In the discussion of whether language performance can be accounted for as being expressive and informative about language competence, Ellis and Barkhuizen (2005) focus on some important features and characteristics determined through their work with corpus linguistics.

First, Ellis and Barkhuizen (2005: 21) are convinced that, to be able to describe and explain L2 competence, the "primary data for investigating L2 acquisition should be samples of learner language" either in a written or spoken form. Language production is also seen as "providing the clearest evidence of what a learner has acquired (Ellis & Barkhuizen 2005: 21), and it is for this reason that not only SLA researchers but language teachers have relied on samples of speech and writing. They are certain that what learners know is best reflected in their comprehension of input and in the language they produce (Ellis & Barkhuizen 2005: 21).

Adolphs lists several reasons why electronic text analysis should be used (Adolphs 2006: 7, 8), of which I chose some to quote below.

− Using electronic text analysis [...] is a more replicable process and any analysis can be verified by other researchers.
− The use of software tools in this process leads to more accurate and consistent results in a very short amount of time.
− Electronic text analysis can be used in a quantitative way, such as through the use of frequency lists, and lead to a subsequent qualitative exploration.

The next sections will investigate in which ways corpora can be used. I will focus on three programmes for different types of analysis, which I have used with the help of AntConc.

4.2.1 Lexical density

"A more common ratio, that is often calculated in order to gain some basic understanding of the lexical variation [...] is the *type-token* ratio" (Adolphs 2006: 39). The term token refers to the number of running words in a text while the term type refers to the number of different words in a corpus. The type-token ratio is calculated by "dividing the number of tokens in a text by the number of types. This kind of information can be useful when assessing the level of complexity. [...] As a general rule the higher the type-token ratio the less varied the text" (Adolphs 2006: 40). Thus, a text with a high type-token ratio, for example, can imply that the vocabulary range of the subject is limited.

4.2.2 Concordancing

Concordancing stands for "using corpus software to find every occurrence of a particular word or phrase" (O'Keeffe, McCarthy & Carter 2007: 8) contained in a corpus. This can be used both as a quantitative as well as a qualitative analysis tool. With the search word or phrase presented in the middle of the screen and approximately "seven or eight words presented at either side" (O'Keeffe, McCarthy & Carter 2007: 8), this format of presentation is called Key-Word-in- Context or short also KWIC format (Bernardini 2000: 121). A simple example of a Key Word in Context concordance is shown below.

Figure 3: shows a random selection of 20 occurrences of *cat*.

A concordance is a way of presenting language data to facilitate analysis. "The Key Word In Context (KWIC) concordance has become a standard way of presenting instances of individual lexical items and phrases in a given text or text collection" (Adolphs 2006: 5), like mine. The KWIC format, as the presented concordance of *cat* shows, is useful for identifying the types of grammatical structures and phrases occurring with the search word. Thus, interferences as to how a word is used semantically as well as grammatically can be made.

4.2.3 Word Frequency Lists

Another useful tool that has become possible through electronic text analysis is the"derivation of frequency information of individual lexical items and phrases" (Adolphs 2006: 40). With the help of AntConc, I was able to scan through the corpus rapidly, as AntConc and any analytic programme can easily determine the words which appear most or also least frequently in any collection of data, which are then arranged in a list according to their frequency of occurrence. Hence, wordlists are useful as they list the number of identical items in the corpus, which can give us a good "initial overview

of our data and further analyses can be carried out on the basis of the derived frequency information" (Adolphs 2006: 8). Frequency lists can enable researchers to state how often specific words occurred in the data and, for example, allow the researcher to report back to the teacher which vocabulary has been used by most learners.

5   EMPIRICAL STUDY

I implemented a study at the Playschool in Linz, Upper Austria, to gather and explore a variety of narratives from 17 pre-schoolers, aged five and six. The participants' task was to reconstitute a story from picture clues. Each story was audio taped and transcribed and will be analysed in the next chapter. In this chapter I will introduce the Playschool, a unique kindergarten programme, give an outline of my case study carried out at the Playschool and explain the way of proceeding by also looking at some considerations.

5.1   The Playschool Linz

The Playschool[12] in Linz, Austria, offers a unique programme which highlights the importance of early education and the creation of a stimulating environment for the natural acquisition of English as an additional language. The Playschool, founded in 1953 by Dr. Susanne Schönfelder, started out in a large flat in the centre of Linz, with seven children and one native English speaker. Dr. Schönfelder was inspired by the work she did in the "Amerikahaus" in Linz[13] and the pre-primary educational programme in England at that time, and made it her life's work to open her own German and English speaking Playschool in Austria. In its infancy, the Playschool was in fact more similar to a pre-school than a kindergarten. Its timetable was divided into circle games, gym lessons, snack times and the daily lesson bench. Dr. Schönfelder's daughter, Sunhild Huber-Schönfelder has been managing the Playschool for 37 years. It was Huber-Schönfelder's teacher training that led her to introduce elementary educational principles of Montessori paedagogy to the Playschool, and her enthusiasm and experience that developed the already present conditions into an advanced and unique kindergarten programme. Although the Playschool's teaching methods seem to constantly progress, its leitmotif - learning by playing - remains the same and is the cornerstone of the institution.

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[12] For specifications find their website http://www.playschool.at/

[13] Dr. Schönfelder had worked in the English library for children at the Amerikahaus during the occupation period after World War II.

Its enriching environment provides generous exposure to both languages, and allows children to learn at their own pace. In our conversation, the manager of the Playschool was convinced, both that all children benefit from the dual language input of the highly trained kindergarten teachers and that they would be well prepared for life: "[d]ie Kinder werden in allen Bereichen spielerisch in zwei Sprachen auf das weitere Leben vorbereitet. Durch pädagogische Spitzenkräfte, sowie ihnen beigestellte Native Speakers wird der Erfolg garantiert". Native speakers have always played a part in the Playschool's concept, since language learning requires the help and involvement of people who provide access to the TL and assistance in learning it.

Since its opening in 1953, the Playschool has expanded and currently has five groups. Eight trained kindergarten teachers from Austria ensure education in German as well as English, as all of them lived in an English speaking country for at least 12 months. Three additional native speakers support the English programme at the Playschool. All native speakers know enough German so that the children can address them in their native language as well. There are three same-age groups, each representing a certain level of English skills. The beginners are three to four years old; the middle group four to six and the advanced group are five to six. The official kindergarten opening times are Monday to Thursday from 0730 to 1700 and Friday from 0730 to 1500 which adds up to a maximum of 45.5 hours of language exposure per week. The Playschool also offers half-time days, either in the morning or in the afternoon, which are mixed-age groups. An additional Conversation Club takes place once a week and is attended by six to ten-year olds. Huber-Schönfelder is convinced that the English skills of all children undoubtedly improve, albeit unconsciously, during their time in kindergarten and that one essential condition for early language learning is the provision of a friendly environment which ensures access to both languages without undue pressure.

Children from the advanced group are pre-schoolers who have already enjoyed two years of learning. As the children move up the grade levels at the Playschool, instructions in German gradually decreases as instructions in English increases. The advanced children are familiar with the daily routines and conversant with specific activities of the Playschool, such as story time and the daily lesson bench. Apart from a few of them, they are not yet readers and writers, so English language learning takes place via auditory and visual input. Huber-Schönfelder describes the advanced group on the Playschool's website as follows: "Pre-school - die Fortgeschrittenen – [sind die] 5

bis 6-jährige[n] Kinder im Vorschulalter, mit denen vorwiegend Englisch gesprochen wird und die am Ende des Kindergartenjahres ihrem Alter entsprechend meist fließend Englisch sprechen [können]". Legutke (2009: 140) on the contrary observed a similar pre-primary partial immersion model and came to the conclusion that "by the end of the three years of kindergarten learners have acquired comprehension skills which by far exceed their speaking skills. Spontaneous language production, on the other hand, is rare, because children know that their teachers understand German".

I have chosen the advanced group for my case study because, compared to all "playschoolers"; the advanced children have learnt the most in the foreign language. They are also considered to be the most confident users of English in the Playschool, and by using a hand puppet and a picture book, I could gain some insights into the children's production skills. In this way the setting of my case study was defined, and with the permission of 17 parents of the pre-schoolers, I scheduled two days in June 2011 to carry out my empirical research.

5.2   An Outline of the Case Study

The study was conducted in June 2011. Seventeen English language learners of the advanced group at the Playschool Linz were selected; seven boys and ten girls aged five to six. One by one I asked all 17 children to give an account, in their own words, to me and my hand puppet, Lucky[14], of the picture book story "Ich bin die kleine Katze" (Spanner 1981). I decided to use a puppet to reduce the anxiety that might have arisen out of the unfamiliar experience of making up a story. The use of a 'naive listener' is essential in terms of providing children with a more natural story-telling situation since "[p]revious research suggested that children tell more complete and less confusing stories to listeners whom they believe to be naive rather than knowledgeable about the content of the story" (O'Neill et. al. 2002: 82). Lucky was also a representative of a shy speaker of English with no knowledge of German and this way served as a mediator between me and the children. Legutke (2009: 101) also mentioned the positive effect the presence of a puppet can have in teaching situations as "the puppet can stimulate the shyer children's willingness to speak in public, because speaking to the puppet can be far less intimidating than speaking to the teacher". Although advanced children at the

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[14]   A picture of the hand puppet is provided in Appendix C.

Playschool listen to stories every day, it is a different matter to narrate a story oneself. Even if storytelling can be seen as a "culturally universal phenomenon" (Booth 1999: 129) - something people just do all the time - the task was potentially more demanding than 'just' telling another story. The task was to turn an unfamiliar picture text into a story by using exclusively or predominantly the additional kindergarten language, English. It was more or less predictable that the young participants in my study would come across familiar and unfamiliar concepts and would have to face the challenge of overcoming these.

The development of children's narratives was investigated by Stadler and Ward (2005) who investigated previous studies by McCabe and Rollins (1994) looking into the assessment of discourse skills in young children. Stadler and Ward (2005: 74) state that young children start learning to tell stories by "recounting their own personal experiences" before they begin "to tell stories in play and finally retell and create fictional stories" (McCabe and Rollins 1994 quoted in Stadler and Ward 2005: 74).

In my research I have attempted to elicit personal experiences by choosing a book, which had a storyline that was easy to grasp and showed animals and objects from a familiar European cultural surrounding. I based the criteria for a suitable book on Bialystok's (1990: 85) observations that [c]hildren communicate primarily in order to refer to things and ideas that are present. The main obstacle to their speech, then, is adequate vocabulary. What children really need to know to satisfy their primary communicative goals are names for things". According to the 'ideas that are present' principle, the picture book "Ich bin die kleine Katze" (Spanner 1981) seemed suitable as it shows images of familiar concepts such as child, house, garden, pet and animals, which should have made the naming of the objects easier.

Its layout is child-oriented. More precisely, it has a 27x30cm format that shows 12 double-sided pictures. For the purpose of my research I cut off the text below the pictures to prevent children with literacy skills from reading. I was thus able to present a wordless picture book to the children.

The pictures in the book tell the story of a little cat that is on a journey of discovery in the garden. The storyline deals with one day in the life of the cat. The pictures[15] in the book illustrate the following sequence:

1. A little grey cat sleeps on the floor next to a girl's bed.
2. The girl then gives the cat some water by placing a bowl on the kitchen floor.
3. The cat is on the kitchen sink and tries to catch a water drop from the tap.
4. The little cat sees some birds through the window of the patio door. The birds are bathing, drinking and swimming.
5. Afterwards, the cat plays in the garden and tries to climb up a tree. It looks at a mole that peeps out of a molehill.
6. The cat also meets a hedgehog that has bitten into an apple. It looks as if the cat wants to touch the hedgehog.
7. The cat finds a cage in the garden and looks at the rabbit that lives inside.
8. The cat plays with another cat that is black.
9. The cat tries to catch a mouse which escapes by hiding behind a woodpile.
10. Also a dog that frightens the cat appears in the story, but the cat finds a safe place on the roof of a shack.
11. After meeting all these animals, the cat rests on the lap of the girl who strokes it.
12. Finally, the cat sits on a windowsill and licks its paw. It is dark outside and the moon is in the sky.

All the children in my study participated freely and were asked the same opening question; *What is happening to the cat?*. To actually construct meaning and produce utterances in the foreign language, participants were required to use their existing language resources and previous experience of language use. From my visits to the Playschool I knew that story telling was incorporated in the daily routine of the pre-school. Like most of

> EFL teachers of young learners [...] [the Playschool] recognize[s] the true value of using storybooks and storytelling as a way to create an acquisition rich environment and ideal learning conditions which provide comprehensible input or language a little beyond the child's current level of competence (Krashen 1981: 103 quoted in Brewster, Ellis & Girard 2004: 186).

Storybooks can provide an ideal introduction to the foreign language, as it is presented in an age-appropriate way. Stories are motivating, challenging and fun and can even create a desire to continue learning. Listening to stories helps children become aware of the rhythm, intonation and pronunciation of language (Brewster, Ellis & Girard 2004: 187). Furthermore, telling stories allows the teacher to introduce or revise vocabulary and structures, exposing the children to language which will enrich their thinking and

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[15] To find in Appendix C.

gradually enter their own speech (Brewster, Ellis & Girard 2004: 186). Because "[s]peaking and listening are both active *uses* of language [...] [but] [s]peaking is much more demanding than listening on language learners' language resources and skills" (Cameron 2001: 41), I tried to offer support for comprehension and production during the recordings.

Although the participants in my study were used to listening to stories in German and in English, telling a story in a foreign language can be hard work. The exercise was age-appropriate, but some were more challenged to produce sentences in English than others. The aim of the case study was to generate extended talk in the form of a picture book description. I used the same prompt in all the interviews: *What is happening in this picture?* to invite the children to tell the story of the little cat. Hence, they were challenged to:

− locate and identify facts from the pictures,

− draw inferences from pictures,

− search for information in the pictures, and

− connect interrelated ideas.

Assuming that "at each stage, the child endeavours to communicate using the resources currently available to him" (Wells 1985: 397), the overall focus of the research conducted was on English language competence of children in the advanced group who have been learning English as an additional kindergarten language for almost three years. The emphasis of the study was on L2 production, observing the children's experience of lexical difficulties in narrating a picture book based story in English, and on how the participants attempt to overcome these. The guiding research questions were:

− Are all participants willing and trying to carry out the task of telling the story in English and overcoming possible difficulties in L2?

− What communicative strategies do the advanced children employ when telling a picture book based story in their L2?

− Which variety of nouns and verbs do the children employ when telling the story?

− How can differences and variations in L2 output by the participants be explained?

Thanks to the flexibility and openness of the Playschool team, I was able to interview and record all 17 boys and girls from the advanced group over two days. The recordings

took place in quiet rooms that were familiar to the children. I prepared the picture book, the hand puppet, Lucky, as well as a notepad for each recording. For my recordings I used the Voice Memos application on my iPhone. A great advantage of using the iPhone as a recorder was that the participants did not seem to realise that it was a recorder and behaved quite naturally.

5.2.1 Research with five to six-year-old children

Children at the age of five or six already have an advanced capacity for their L1 and their discourse skills are being constantly developed, especially in a social setting like a kindergarten. The young learners' L1 language skills are at that stage already fairly developed and established, thus L2 learning appears to be a matter of "adapting or extending existing skills and knowledge" (Tunmer, Myhill 1984: 169). The participants in the case study were not only involved in a discourse event, but in a task where L2 English speaking skills were expected from the language learners. In order to guarantee a positive outcome, the recording person has to aid the children, since such a high amount of self-discipline cannot be expected of five- to six-year-olds.

To be able to tell stories, children need both, to listen to narratives and to build up knowledge and skills for being able to tell short stories. There is much that the researcher can do to facilitate the children's narrative skills in the foreign language. In order to exemplify this, let us take a look at my empirical study. As far as any empirical study is concerned, the participants have to be motivated to participate, in my case, to talk about the protagonist, the cat, in the book. It helps if a task has a clear communicative or interpersonal purpose. As in my case, the purpose might be constructed by telling the children that my hand puppet would love to hear its favourite story about the little cat. Children who like cats might be more motivated to do so than others. In attempting to break the ice at the beginning of each research situation, I sometimes chose to make a funny comment about the hand puppet's looks, or I let the hand puppet ask the child some funny questions. I deliberately tried to involve the children with the story by also asking them if they liked cats, had a pet cat or knew someone who had. This way a communicative situation was established.

Having contributed to the study's outcome in a similar way as described above, all of the participants showed communicative skills when participating in discourse and talking about the pictures in the book, although, some succeeded better than others in

formulating their ideas in English. Cameron (2001: 13) already points out individual differences in young children as "[b]y the age of five, individual differences in language domains will be established and so, for example, some children [...will] find it easier to learn vocabulary than others". This observation led me to the decision to work with children from the advanced group. Another factor that caused my interest in the advanced group is that "YLs can pick up on formal aspects of language when focus is on meaning [...] [. However,] spontaneous production emerges very slowly in the first two years". (Lundberg and Lindgren 2008 quoted in Nikolov & Djigunovic 2011: 99). This is to say, the child's involvement increases with time as the more they know the more secure they feel. At the Playschool, this factor is taken into account by putting language development and active learning into a social context. Thus, children's language skills are progressed through the interaction with skilled adults.

I first visited the advanced group in April 2011 with the primary objective of me getting to know them and them getting to know me. The two kindergarten teachers introduced me to the children and for a whole morning I was part of the group. For the purpose of my study, I spoke exclusively in English which the children accepted without question. I introduced myself as a visiting kindergarten teacher as well as a playmate. When I visited the advanced group again a few weeks later, they actually remembered me and wanted to play again, only this time I told them I had brought someone with me who was very excited to meet them. This is how I introduced my hand puppet to the children and told them its name was 'Lucky' who was very shy but eager to meet each and every one of them.

My plan was to generate little narratives in picture book description form. However, what actually happened was much more interactional, taking the form of conversations, directed in the main by my questions. The task, as I was soon to discover, was more demanding cognitively and linguistically rather than socially, as ideas had to be formulated and organised in a foreign language. When longer breaks in the conversations occurred, the children would wait for me to contribute. Sometimes they produced utterances such as 'drinks milk' to describe the cat drinking milk and were credited with having captured the gist of the event. O'Neill (2002: 86) observed that "[s]uch utterances, representing instances of null reference, have been observed in preschoolers' narratives in previous research".

5.2.2   Considerations and observations

Having dealt with the description of the setting and the structure of my case study, I now want to focus on some considerations I had to take into account before evaluating the data and, indeed, even before conducting my research.

First of all there was the ethical question of consent. Before conducting my research it was necessary to obtain permission from the Playschool as well as the children's parents. With the help of the Playschool manager and the kindergarten teacher from the advanced group, I was able to introduce myself and my project to the parents via email. Consequently, twenty parents and guardians granted permission to have their children participate in my research. Pinter (2011: 208), however, states that "[i]f children's own views and opinions are respected, it is not sufficient to ask their parents' and teachers' permission when it comes to participation in any kind of research project". I was very clear in my own mind from the outset that there was no obligation placed on the children to take part in the research, but rather they were invited to do so. Every child participated voluntarily and was interested and motivated.

Another important consideration was general language use. The vast majority of the participants in my research project are children of parents of Austrian descent. Their home-language is therefore German or an Austrian variation of German, except for one girl who is raised in an English/German bilingual household and one boy who is raised in a Hungarian/German household. All the participants have attended the Playschool since 2008, during which time all of them have been exposed to English. In a survey I conducted with the participants' parents I could also determine the linguistic backgrounds of the children. The survey[16] confirms a general initial exposure to German and three years of English at the Playschool with minimal exposure to English at home for most participants. These similar facts led me to question whether different character traits have an effect on the different L2 performances and if the variation we find across learners in acquiring a second language can simply be accounted for by personal differences in learners.

As in every large group there were very communicative children and rather shy children. Eloquent children seemed to be comfortable interacting with me in English but

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[16]   An evaluation of the parental questionnaire is to be found in chapter 6.

whenever I approached more quiet children they preferred to speak to me in their first language, German. However, all of them showed no difficulty in understanding English. The majority of children also showed no hesitation in speaking to me when I introduced myself in English. Whenever there appeared to be a communication problem in English (mostly due to a lack of vocabulary) the children demonstrated a shared willingness to help each other. During the case study the participants were addressed in English only.

It seems reasonable to believe that the variation of L2 production I encountered across the group can be, amongst other factors, accounted for by differences in learners. As shown in previous chapters, there are many personal factors that can influence or even delay foreign language learning. As already mentioned, some of these children were better at spontaneous narrative production in English than others. It is, therefore, important to consider individual differences in language production that might be linked to the children's personalities, since the learner's social skills and styles can indeed affect their ability to learn and speak a foreign language. Although this has received little attention in research on child language,

> there are good reasons to believe that there are differences between children at birth and throughout childhood on dimensions such as active/passive, responsive/unresponsive [...] that will significantly affect the amount and type of linguistic interaction that the child experiences and hence the opportunities he has for learning his native [or foreign] language (Wells 1985: 343).

To better understand this, I observed participants during the recordings to see whether they were shy, reclusive, laconic or gregarious, outgoing and eloquent. Individual observations could then be noted and dealt with accordingly. In order to preserve my objectivity and treat every child equally fairly, it was also necessary to withhold from me any background information about the participants' character. However, it is difficult in practice to "obtain significant measures of personality that are independent of communication style and this is particularly true in the case of young children" (Wells 1985: 343). According to this statement it is necessary to question whether these stylistic differences in learning persist throughout childhood and language development or whether these character observations are only short-lived.

Another factor which can influence the participants' sense of wellbeing and hence the research situation is the setting of the recordings. Lincoln and Guba (1985 quoted in Cohen et. al. 2007: 11) point out that when humans are the central focus of a piece of research, studies must be set in the participants' natural settings as context has an effect

on the participants' comfort and hence influences the studies. Since the researcher-child discourse is produced under rather experimental conditions, I paid particular interest to minimise the oddness of the research situation. Therefore, the kindergarten teacher and I agreed that the recording would not take place in a spare, rarely used room, but in the familiar surroundings of the kindergarten group, still somehow separate, but not completely apart from the daily routine of the group.

Children at the Playschool were free to interact with their playmates in any language. I noted that they spent their time interacting with one another in their native language or dialect. However, they tended to address the kindergarten teachers in English. In some instances, children would use both languages in one utterance, like "lass uns im doll's corner spielen". There are quite a few objects and places that are always referred to in English by the kindergarten teachers and children, for example, 'slippers' is rather used than its German counterpart 'Hausschuhe'. Advanced group teachers are all comfortable in English and German, but the native speaker usually speaks exclusively English at the Playschool. When children addressed her in German, she would understand but always answer in English. Clearly, the many personal instances of teacher-directed utterances in English as well as frequent teacher-child-interactions provide the young learner with individual L2 input and opportunities to hear and learn English. Ellis (1999: 84) observed that in conversations involving children "input is tailored to the child's level of comprehension" and is thus easier to follow and understand. My observations at the Playschool confirm this phenomenon of child-directed language as kindergarten teachers articulated and explained very clearly in either language.

Finally it can be said that apart from individual learner differences, sources of variation can be found in the settings in which language learning as well as language research are taking place, and in the speakers who provide access to the English language and assistance in learning it (Wong Fillmore 1991: 51). At the Playschool, the basic conditions under which learning takes place are the same for all the children in the advanced group. Since the language learning environment is the same for all children, it is up to the individual to extract and learn as much as possible at their own pace.

5.3 An Evaluation of the Parental Questionnaire

To be able to make claims on the children's English language use, I had to consider the children's general language background. For this purpose I compiled a questionnaire for

the parents to give some indication of the kinds of exposure to English in their familiar surroundings. The questionnaire[17] was primarily used to determine the language background of the participants and questions were asked about the parents' origins and language backgrounds and if and how English was practised at home. Also the parents' motives for sending their child to a bilingual kindergarten were examined. Seventeen questionnaires were filled out and returned for evaluation. I now want to present the quantitative evaluation of the data.

As shown in figure 3, the inquiry shows thirteen similar family language backgrounds and four distinct cases. Thirteen mothers and all fathers were born and raised in Austria, where all of them began learning English at school between the ages of seven and ten. The majority started to learn English in primary school, only three began to learn English in secondary school. One of the participants' mothers was born and raised in South Africa and learned German at school; and another mother was born in Austria but raised in the United States of America. Both mothers say that they are fully bilingual in German and English, however, the mother from South-Africa prefers German as the primary family language, whereas the mother who was raised in the States chose only to speak in English to her child. The third child grows up as a Hungarian-German bilingual and started to learn English at the Playschool. The fourth language background that is marked as different from the others is a family, where the mother's L1 is Cambodian, who decided to speak in German to her children, since German is the language she is most comfortable with. Therefore, it can be stated that natural English input occurs, according to the survey, in two homes, though in one more than the other.
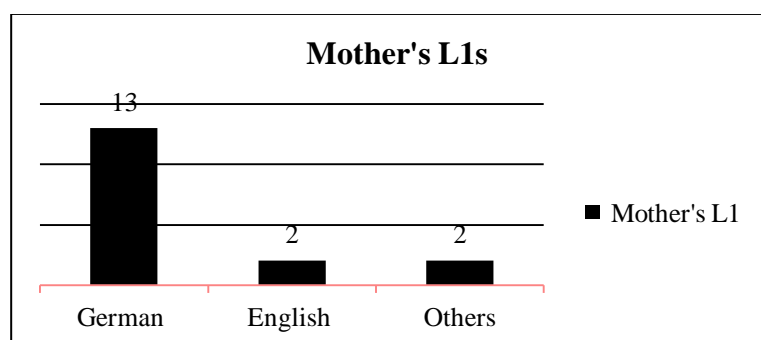

Figure 3. Mothers L1s

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17   The questionnaire is provided in Appendix D.

The survey results further reveal that the majority of 16 children (figure 4) started to learn English at the Playschool between 2.5 and 3.5 years of age. Although one child grew up with an English-German bilingual mother, the child also started to learn English at the Playschool. Only one child of a bilingual mother grew up in an English speaking household.
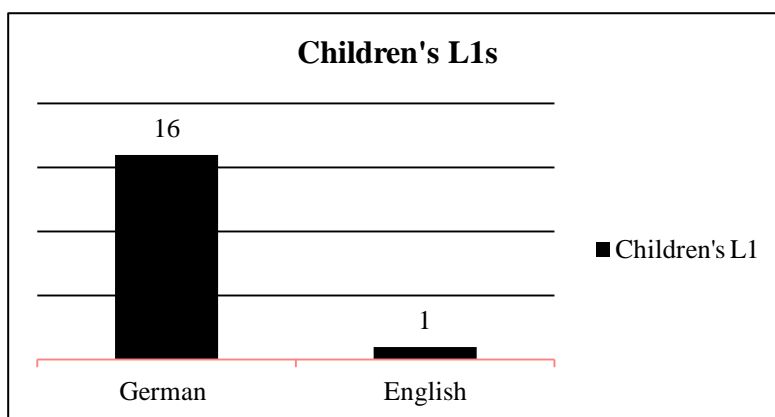

Figure 4. Children's L1s

Figure 5 shows eight possible answers that were formulated to identify the reasons and motives of parents who chose the Playschool for their young children's education. Three answers were selected by more than half of the parents and are consequently identified as the main motives. Fourteen parents stated that they wanted to give their child the chance to learn English playfully, and eleven parents said that they believe English is important in the education and future career of their children. Eight parents also opted for the Playschool, because they want to help their children to learn English by starting early. The parental approval of the Playschool's general principles seems to have been another decisive motive when it came to choosing the Playschool, as seven parents said. A main part of the general principles covers the bilingual education outline.

> The basic principle continues to be the pressure-and coercion-free use of every area of infant development for the preparation of children for their futures in two languages. The success of the English Play School derives from a balanced mix of modern educational methodology, native speakers, Austrian culture and a family atmosphere. (http://www.playschool.at/index_en.html 1 December 2011)

Six parents also based their decision on the fact that they knew the Playschool staff. Other possible reasons, such as proximity to the kindergarten and personal recommendations were not decisive factors. Additionally, it was stated by one mother that it was important to her that her children were fluent in English as she herself works in an international business where English serves as a Lingua Franca. Another parent

added to the motives that the child had lived in London for two years and the bilingual Playschool was, hence, the best option.

Parents' Motives

Motive	Value
Englische Sprache spielerisch erlernen	14
Wichtig in der sozialen und schulischen Laufbahn meines Kindes	11
Ich will meinem Kind das Englischlernen erleichtern	8
Das Leitbild der Playschool hat mir gefallen	7
Ich kenne das pädagogische Personal	6
Mir wurde der Kindergarten empfohlen	3
Ein bekanntes/befreundetes Kind ging auch in die Playschool	3
Die Playschool liegt in der Nähe	1

Figure 5. Parents' motives to send their child to the Playschool

Parents were also asked if and how they practise speaking English with their children at home. As illustrated in figure 6, more than half of those polled do not practise the English language at home, but the 7 families that do, do so playfully. Parents stated they would sometimes sing and speak with their children in English, read to them or play games in English. One mother mentioned English computer games which were played at home.
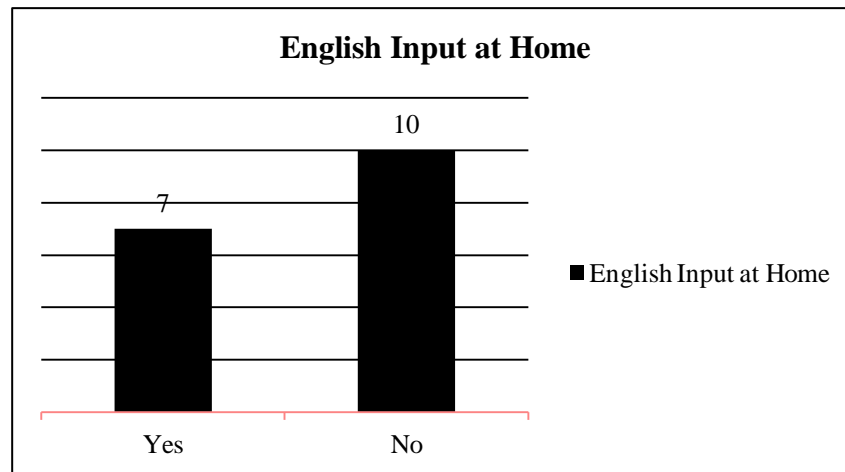
Figure 6. English input at home

When asked about personal reading rituals with their children, the survey revealed that sixteen parents preferred reading German books to and with their children, whereas nine parents also read English books with their children, as shown in figure 7. Figure 8 illustrates the different manners which can shape the book reading. According to the findings, 12 parents simply read stories to the children and 7 said that when they read stories, their children would be involved in the process as in talking about the pictures. One parent stated to also invent stories or tell, and not necessarily read, the words in the book. However, none said that their child would tell the story to the parent.

Figure 7. Book reading at home

Reading Rituals

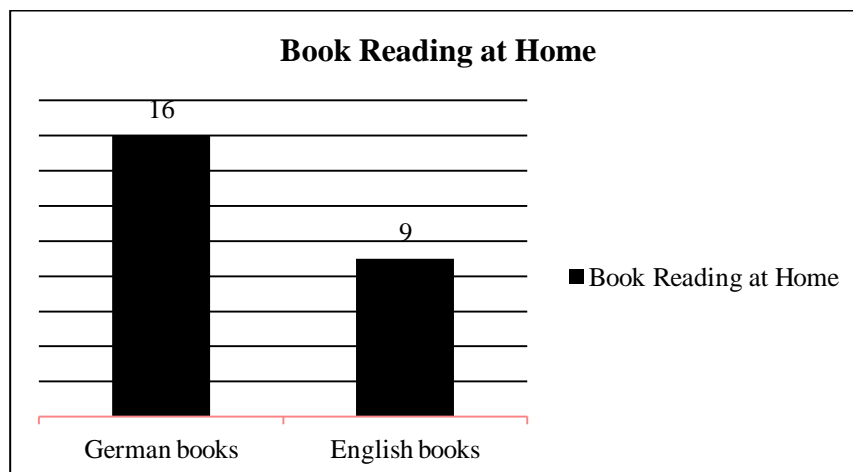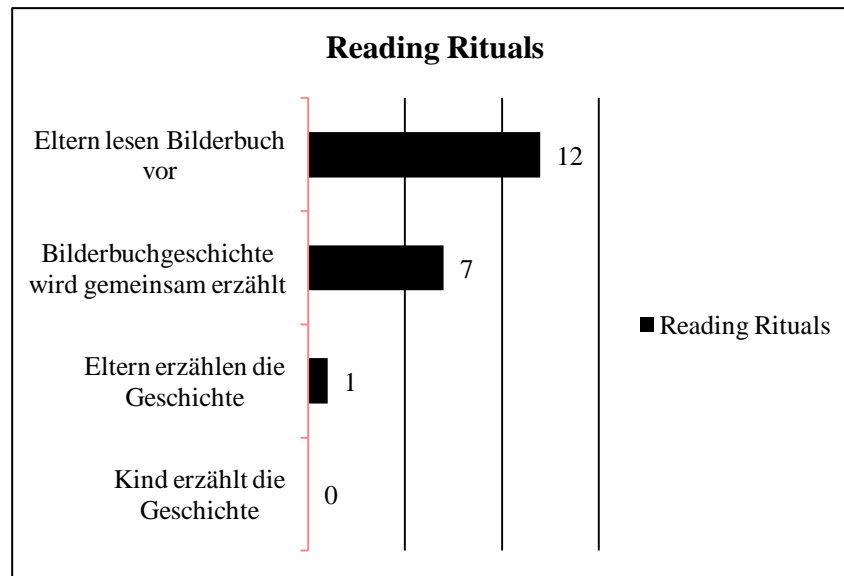|	
Eltern lesen Bilderbuch vor	12
Bilderbuchgeschichte wird gemeinsam erzählt	7
Eltern erzählen die Geschichte	1
Kind erzählt die Geschichte	0

■ Reading Rituals

Figure 8. Reading rituals at home

Since story-book telling skills were asked of the children in my study, I intend to give an outline on what recent research says about the developmental abilities needed in order to accomplish the task.

5.4　Method of data elicitation

As noted earlier, learner production is inherently variable and there are many factors that contribute to this variability. Ellis and Barkhuizen (2005: 23) mention the nature of the sample as a crucial key factor and describe three principal methods for collecting spoken primary data. They differentiate between samples obtained in naturally occurring language use and guided situations. I will describe the research method used in this study by discussing the characteristics of the last two methods.

The first method includes samples of conversations that occurred in a natural setting without any interference of the researcher, for example a recording of a conversation of children with their kindergarten teacher around the lunch table. The other two methods, by contrast, involve elicitation as the researcher uses "specially designed instruments to obtain production samples from the learner" (Ellis & Barkhuizen 2005: 23). Ellis and Barkhuizen (2005: 23) refer to the studies of Corder who defined the typical procedures of these methods. Corder (1981) explains the difference between clinical elicitation and experimental elicitation. The first involves "getting the informant to produce data incorporating particular features which the linguist is interested in at that moment and constitutes, therefore, a carefully controlled procedure" (Ellis & Barkhuizen 2005: 23).

The latter is used when "researchers have not yet decided on a particular feature of language use they want to investigate" and the informants are thus instructed to produce any data. According to these definitions, I used the method of experimental elicitation as the participants were "primarily concerned with message conveyance [and] needed to utilize their own linguistic resources to construct utterances" (Ellis & Barkhuizen 2005: 23).

According to many researchers, the "ideal data is [naturally occurring samples], [as speakers are said to pay minimum attention to their speech and such samples show] what learners can 'do' with the L2 when engaged in the kind of language use for which language is designed" (Ellis & Barkhuizen 2005: 24). A problem with the last two methods is the "fact that learners know they are being researched [which] is likely to result in a shift towards a more 'careful style'" (Ellis & Barkhuizen 2005: 26). The only way to get flawless data is to obtain recordings that are produced without the awareness of the participants. However, such a strategy is not ethical (Ellis & Barkhuizen 2005: 26) and thus not used anymore. A logical and feasible solution to the problem, discussed by Ellis and Barkhuizen (see above), is to establish a friendly and familiar relationship between the researcher and the learner.

Ellis and Barkhuizen (2005: 25) touch on the researcher's relationship to the learner and actual research conditions as factors which can have an effect on the language sampling. I will thus provide detailed information about the situational background of the learners I studied, and the actual conditions under which they performed during the recording.

In this context, it is also important to emphasise that the young learners were individually confronted with the task and had no time to prepare utterances in advance. Generally, "learners are more likely to produce complex grammatical constructions when they have time to pre-plan their production than when they have to perform spontaneously" (Ellis & Barkhuizen 2005: 22). This fact influences their linguistic output and in some way the actual language potential of the speakers might not be mirrored in my samples. However, since all the participants faced the same conditions and none of them had time to prepare their linguistics output, the outcomes can still be claimed to be exemplary.

The outcome of the case study must be interpreted with caution, given the small size of the sample. Two pre-primary educational conditions must also be addressed in order to fully grasp and understand the following evaluation.

Firstly, it must be considered that language learning takes place in a rather informal setting which does not yet specialise in language testing assessments. The focus of the case study, however, was to, in a way, test the children's ability and willingness to speak in English by asking them to 'narrate' a picture book story. This, undoubtedly, put the five to six-year-old participants in a hitherto unfamiliar and possibly strange situation, since "one-to-one conversations with a researcher are often difficult for children" (Pinter 2011: 212). Secondly, due to the young age of the learners, spoken language was given primary importance as language learning happened through mainly auditory input, since all but one of the participants had not yet developed reading and writing skills. Possible pronunciation errors in English, therefore, might be attributed to auditory input only. In my observations, I noticed that teachers and assistants at the Playschool knew their young interlocutors well and therefore articulated utterances much more clearly. In doing so, they ensured their charges understood the spoken form of the foreign language and minimised the possibility of mishearing.

However, these setting-specific conditions account only for two out of several possible influential factors. The outcome might have also been influenced by the artificial setting of the child-puppet-researcher interaction, but overall, it can be said that all participants in my study reacted positively to the task and completed the narrative. The children were free to take the initiative and create a story of their own by manipulating devices such as vocabulary, perspective and tense. They were also free to play to their strengths by using words and linguistic systems of their choice. They were asked to tell the story in English but were not denied opportunities to also make use of their German linguistic resources. It was clear that language learners "vary in the choice of language, switching from the L2 to their mother tongue according to the situational context and also mixing the two languages in the construction of individual utterances" (Ellis & Barkhuizen 2005: 23).

Before analysing the child L2 productions, it must be remembered that these are spoken, informal utterances by young children who have learned the language from mainly auditory input. As literacy is not yet developed "[y]oung children are biased towards storing and retrieving verbatim traces" (Pinter 2011: 30).

6   FINDINGS

6.1   Introduction

This chapter reports on a small-scale investigation into story-telling performance in the EFL use of young children. Working with me, these 17 children were exposed individually to the same picture-book narrative and asked to 'tell the story'. Each session was audio-recorded and the recordings were subsequently transcribed word for word. My own interventions were kept to a minimum during each child's description of the pictures. Participants were free to say as much or as little about each page as they wanted. The entire task generally took approximately five minutes to complete. Comments by me and speech by the child which did not relate to the story (e.g., children's personal stories about their pets) were transcribed, but were excluded from the analyses.

In the process of evaluating the data, it became apparent that most utterances consisted of mainly nouns and verbs. It was, thus, interesting to discern patterns and the frequency with which verbs and nouns were uttered. I also focused on different communication strategies when the participants appeared not to know a certain word in English. To get an overview of vocabulary choice, the following three aspects were selected for detailed analysis:

− the use of both language codes when naming the objects in the story,
− the use of verbs and nouns and their grammatical aspect, including interferences from L1 to L2 and vice versa and
− the lexical strategies used by each individual when confronted with apparently unknown items.

Most speech comprised short utterances and followed the sentence structure of: subject – verb – object. Given that the story line of the book did not necessarily prompt the narrator to utter more complex sentence structures, the outcome must be viewed as a snapshot of each child's ability and willingness to formulate utterances in the foreign language. To describe and analyse the samples of spontaneous picture description, I will refer to the children's output as utterances. An "utterance [...] is treated as the minimal conversational contribution, consisting of one or more clauses [...] and is defined as one independent unit of verbal communication" (Wells 1985: 60).

For my data analysis, I used AntConc, a freeware concordance programme[18] developed by Dr. Laurence Anthony at the Waseda University, Japan. For the purpose of this thesis, AntConc processed the transcripts of the 17 child *narratives*, excluding my personal questions and comments. All the narratives were stored as a computerised corpus and were analysed with a focus on certain linguistic features.

Before I give an in-depth report of the evaluation of the spoken data, it is important to recall the initial setting of this case study. The speakers recorded in this corpus are young foreign language learners who were asked to tell a picture book based narrative in English. They are all EFL speakers from the same first language background. All 17 participants were five to six-year-old Austrian children, a basis which is essential to keep in mind as each outcome is a childlike narrative told in a foreign language. Again, first language research provides some help in what we can expect from the young learners as "we cannot expect pupils to produce extended talk of these forms beyond what they can do in their first language" (Cameron 2001: 54).

6.2   Individual Differences in Language Production

This section provides insights into four individual accounts of the picture book story telling by five to six year-olds in English. For a detailed analysis, I have chosen four examples of children's picture book stories to show what children managed to tell on the base of pictures. The names of the children have been changed to ensure anonymity and confidentiality. With the help of the parental questionnaire, I could determine the individual language backgrounds, hence also the approximate language input at home. I have chosen the following children:

(1) Sophie: English/German bilingual mother who predominantly speaks in English to her daughter
(2) David: English/German bilingual mother who predominantly speaks in German to her son
(3) Amelie: Cambodian/German bilingual mother who speaks only German with her daughter
(4) Nina: German speaking mother who only speaks German with her daughter

All children are growing up in Austria and entered the Playschool at the age of three. All parents stated that they would practice English at home and roughly read between

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[18]   For more information see URL: http://www.antlab.sci.waseda.ac.jp/software.html.

0.5 and 2.5 hours per week to their children. This is an important consideration as Cameron (2001: 13) points out that "if we want children to tell stories […] they need to have experience of how this is done in the foreign language". Therefore, it could be evaluated that all four children regularly listen to stories, but none is used to tell stories on their own and none of the four children knew the book "Die kleine Katze" (Spanner 1981) before. Thus, it can be assumed that the participants are comfortable with the language, since it is not entirely new to them. It can also be claimed that their utterances mirror their actual linguistic skills and are only minimally blurred by and unfamiliarity to the task, which should prove the outcome of my study valid. The individual attempts to narrate the picture book story are listed below[19]. These subchapters on four individual cases should provide a basic overview, their utterances, however, will be analysed in further detail in the following subchapters 6.3 – 6.6.

6.2.1 Sophie

Sophie's parents are both from Austria, with German as their mother tongue. However, Sophie's mother grew up partly in the United States of America and identifies herself as an English/German bilingual speaker. Both parents speak the non-dominant language - English - to the child, who is only exposed to the dominant language when outside the home and in particular when she is at the German/English Playschool. The mother says that Sophie speaks better English than German. The parents stated they would exclusively read English books to her, approximately twice or three times a week, and mentioned that Sophie's grandmother would read German books to her every now and then. When they read stories to her, they prefer to read the words in the picture book.

In Sophie's *cat-story* she talked in her mother tongue, English, only. She consistently used the Present Progressive and switched to Past Tense (8+9) or Present Simple (17+21) for side notes or personal stories. There is an interesting instance of a German / English blend of the words *streicheln* and *stroking* in line 22.

1. he's sleeping
2. she's drinking
3. a little girl
4. looks like she's walking on the tap
5. looking—she's looking out of the window

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[19]   All the transcripts can be found in the Appendix A.

6. the birds
7. and here she's climbing the tree
8. and a mushroom I once found a ladybird baby and here is a ladybird
9. and I found a baby that's doesn't look like a ladybird yet
10. X[20] two!
11. playing with the hedgehog
12. apple
13. the cat is smelling the bunny
14. they're putting their nose together
15. and the two cats are playing together
16. she's catching the mouse
17. cats eat mice!
18. hide
19. the dog is frightening the cat
20. I can see the mouse a little
21. dogs like to do that
22. the little girl is *shtroking the cat
23. she's asleep!
24. and now she's going to bed
25. and here is a ladybird
26. if I find it
27. this one!
28. yes
29. a bee, a hedgehog, a mole
30. in here
31. yes!

6.2.2 David

David's father is of Austrian and his mother of South-African descent. His mother's first language is English and her second language is German. She started learning German at school at the age of five, and states that she speaks both languages equally well. Her son started to learn English at the Playschool but they also use English at home and with relatives. David's parents read English and German books to him, in total approximately 2.5 hours a week. They either read the book to him or read them together in a sort of dialogue.

David's *cat-story* shows alternating English and German utterances. In cases where he tried to formulate whole sentences, he used the Present Tense only. He seemed to have used the third person –s haphazardly, leaving it out four times and using it rightly five times. David attempts to use English but states twice (2+10) that he does not know a

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[20]   The transcription codes are provided in Appendix B.

certain word in English which leads him to continue in German. David's side notes to the story are always in German. In line 14 he mixes both languages and in line 18 he creates a new word, *to quetsch*, as a substitute for a presumably unknown one (assumed target form: *to touch* based on grounds of the same phonetic sound /tʃ/). He also shows signs of language awareness and creativity when he pronounced the German word *streicheln* with an American accent in line 34.

1. a ba° ball
2. mmh don't know this word
3. **die Katze schlaft
4. the man
5. drink milk
6. mmh **sie gibt ihm was zu essen
7. yes
8. the cat wants—to—be—ehm—wants—to—drink water
9. the cat
10. he—he X X I don't know this word ehm **ich weiß es jetzt
11. ehm **er tut rausschaun aus dem Fenster wo die Vogeln sind
12. ehm
13. yes
14. *sie bath
15. X scratch—scratch on the tree
16. a window and a ball
17. at the *Maul° Maulwurf
18. the cat wants to *quetsch the *Igel
19. a apple
20. yes
21. a bunny
22. X mmh **sie wollen sich gegenseitig Bussis geben
23. carrots
24. ehm the cat play with a other cat
25. the cat sees a mouse
26. yes, and eat him up
27. the cat sees a dog
28. **die kratzt, die mag den Hund kratzen
29. **mich hat schon mal eine Katze gekratzt
30. mhm
31. **aber mein Papa—wir warn mal am Bauernhof und dann hat—dort war auch eine Katze die hat mich aber nicht gekratzt die heißt nämlich Peter aber mein Papa heißt auch Peter
32. **ich nicht aber am Bauernhof
33. **die streicheln—die streichelt die Katze
34. he *streichelt (with an American accents) a *Katz° —eh cat
35. the cat scratches eye
36. mhm
37. ehm
38. I love—I.I love bunnies

6.2.3 Amelie

Amelie's father is Austrian and her mother Cambodian. Her mother speaks Cambodian, Teochew (a Chinese dialect), English and German. Since Amelie's mother emigrated and learned German in the kindergarten, she is most confident in the German language. Thus, Amelie is growing up in German only and started to learn English at the Playschool at the age of three. Her mother states that Amelie speaks better German than English. However, they practice the English language at home via playing computer games, reading books and sometimes they speak English at home. The parents read to Amelie in German approximately two hours a week, and in English approximately one hour a week. When they read the books, they read them together and a sort of dialogue emerges.

Amelie shows great competence in English as her *cat-story* is almost exclusively told in her second language. There is only one instance in line 15 where she switches to German, but even in this case she uses her L2 knowledge to immediately translate it into English. Amelie is the only one to use story features as *once a time* (1) (as for once upon a time) and direct speech (8). She tells the story mostly in Past Tense Simple only using the Present Simple in line 8 and Present Simple and Present Progressive in line 14.

1. once a time there was a little cat and a boy and it was morning
2. the cat had supper and oh! I thought this was a boy!
3. girl X mmh
4. the cat wanted to wash their hands but actually the cat can't wash hands
5. but there were water drops and the cat held their hand out
6. the cat ehm looked out of the out of the window and saw some birds in a plate bathing
7. the cat wanted to climb up the—the tree and a little mole crawled out of the—the ground
8. the cat wants to touch the hedgehog but—but it went "outch!"
9. and the little hedgehog ran away
10. then the cat saw a rabbit! He looked at the rabbit and the rabbit was shy
11. the—and then the cat found the mother cat
12. and he—and—had much fun. Then there was a dog
13. but the cat was shy but the dog was actually ehm a good dog
14. then the girl and take the cat back home and the cat was sleeping
15. then the cat woke up and but the cat ehm **is wieder eingeschlafen was sleeping then again
16. yes
17. this one
18. because the cat is so sweet

6.2.4 Nina

Nina's parents are both from Austria and started to learn English in secondary school. Nina started to learn English at the Playschool. They also practice English at home and read, for instance, English books together. They weekly read approximately two hours in German and half an hour in English to Nina. When they read books, they read them together in a sort of dialogue.

Nina's *cat-story* shows a very liberate use of the German and English language. In her story she tends to use German nouns (*Milch*, *Teller*, *Vögelein*, *Plantschbecken*, *Maulwurf*, etc.) which she incorporates in her English frame story. In line 10 she interrupts this manner of storytelling as she started to pronounce the German word *Fenster* but continued in English *eh window*. In lines 24 and 30 she used the German verb *streicheln* and in line 27 Nina shows elements of language creativity as she wanted to paraphrase *the cat is licking its paw*. She uses mainly Present Simple, sometimes the Present Progressive and only once the Past Simple.

1. no
2. there's a bed
3. yes
4. here
5. oh no!
6. the *Milch is on the floor
7. is licking the *Milch
8. oh no! The cat's playing with the *Teller
9. the *Vögelein there are in the *Plantschbecken
10. it's looking out of the *Fe° eh the window
11. here's a *Maulwurf and X X
12. he—she is getting on the tree
13. there is a hedgehog and he bit off the apple
14. there's a cat in the *Käfig and here is the cat
15. ehm *Wolle
16. carrots
17. there are playing two cats together
18. I think also
19. a mouse creeping in the woods
20. and the cat X find the *Maus oh no!
21. #uh the cat is on the *Dach and here is a *Hund
22. yes
23. yes
24. here is a girl and he's *streichelt the cat
25. yes
26. and this—the moon is up already
27. and here there's the cat and *schleck and *wischy
28. ok

29. this
30. because the girl the *streichelt the cat
31. no
32. my father has a cat X
33. yes

The analyses of the four different accounts of picture-book descriptions highlight the individual diversity and show that an English speaking language background must not necessarily be an indicator of greater language skills. Amelie, for example, learns English at the Playschool and practises her English skills at home by playing computer games and reading books, and performed best in the task. Sophie, who lives in an English speaking household, performed great too, but did not use adverbs, connectors or direct speech, like Amelie did. This distinction could also be argued as a result of individual language creativity or interest. David, who grows up in a bilingual home, uses German to fill in possible gaps in English, as he states right at the beginning *I don't know this word*. He also made use of the hesitation marker *ehm* quite frequently. Again this could also be argued as some sort of laziness or lack of interest as he might have known more in English than he actually said. Nina's utterances are interesting concerning the almost consistent use of nouns in German embedded in utterances formulated in English.

To get an idea of what could have been possible if all the children mastered the challenge together, I provided sentences which I collected from all the narratives to form a sort of *best model* told by the children.

> Once a time there was a little cat and a boy and it was morning. The cat wants to drink water. The girl gives the cat milk. She's drinking milk and there is a cake in the oven. The cat looked out of the window and saw some birds in a plate bathing. Then the cat saw a rabbit. He looked at the rabbit and the rabbit was shy. The cat sees a mole. The cat is scared of the mole and then it wants to climb on the tree. The cat wants to play with the mouse. The dog wants to play with the cat. The girl is stroking the cat. The little cat is sleeping. The end.

An analysis of all seventeen *cat-stories*[21] would go beyond the scope of this work, but the description of these four examples already highlights the individuality and uniqueness of every language learner. Although every learner is different, it can be said that all children managed to fulfil the task at their own best. In my case study I could observe that the young language learners showed pronunciation benefits without

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[21]   All seventeen stories are provided in Appendix A.

specific training. Since we have already briefly investigated four samples of the children's narratives, it is now of interest to dive into further contrastive analysis. A further investigation of the whole corpus is provided subsequently.

6.3   Focus Areas in Corpus Analysis

The size of the corpus is measured in word types and word tokens (Adolphs 2006: 40). Word tokens are concrete instances of a conceptual type, for instance the sequence *cat, cat, cat* presents three tokens of one word type, *cat*. The corpus of the children's narratives consists of a total of 528 word types in German and English, and 3284 word tokens. This amounts to an average length of 193 word tokens per child narrative at an average of 31 word types.

The transcribed narratives did not show much difference between the average word token and word type count used by male and female participants. Boys' narratives amount to an average of 142 word tokens whereas the girls' narratives were slightly longer and count 159 word tokens per narrative. However, the boys' calculated average of different word types per narrative is slightly higher than the girls'. Typically, a boy used about 40 and a girl 33 different words per narrative. Further analyses will ignore any gender distinction, but will look at all the samples of collective narratives. In the process of the general corpus analysis the focus was on the use of nouns and verbs as well as the occurrence of L1 and L2.

6.3.1   Nouns in the narratives

In my analysis I first focused on the use of nouns in the children's narratives, as the picture book presented several different and relevant animals and objects. The participants sometimes used both language codes to refer to certain objects, even though they were asked to tell the story in English. Individual differences were only noticeable when they formulated their stories, since some of them asked me directly for permission to state an utterance in German while others used the German language naturally and without inhibition. It was noticeable that some children even extended their narratives by including personal stories. All of those were triggered by pictures of certain animals/pets. Some of these personal stories were told in English, others in German, but when the children used private stories to progress the discourse, they might have done so for different reasons. Overall, it can be said that the young English language learners

formulated nouns mostly in English. Figure 9 contrasts the occurrence of the main English and German nouns (shown in Figure 10) in the narratives and shows a far greater occurrence of English nouns.
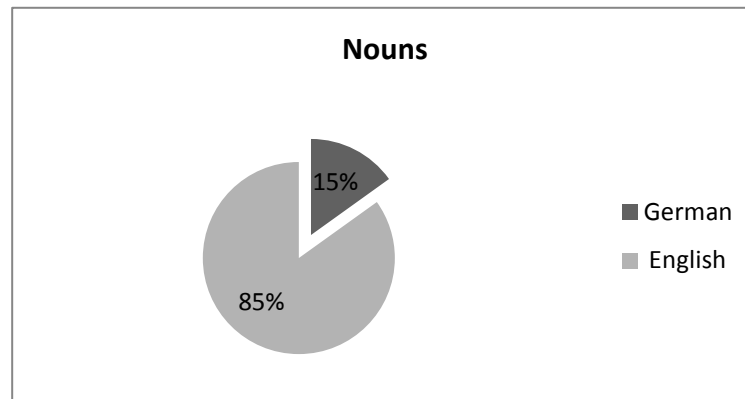

Figure 9. Nouns in English and German

As shown in Figure 10, the children referred to the objects almost exclusively in English. The cat, the main figure in the picture book, for example, was referred to 155 times in English and only 17 times in German. The numbers of times the English word for mole and hedgehog are used are significantly lower, compared to milk, tree, rabbit and cat, leading us to assume these are more difficult words. The mole is the only noun that was referred to more often in German than in English.
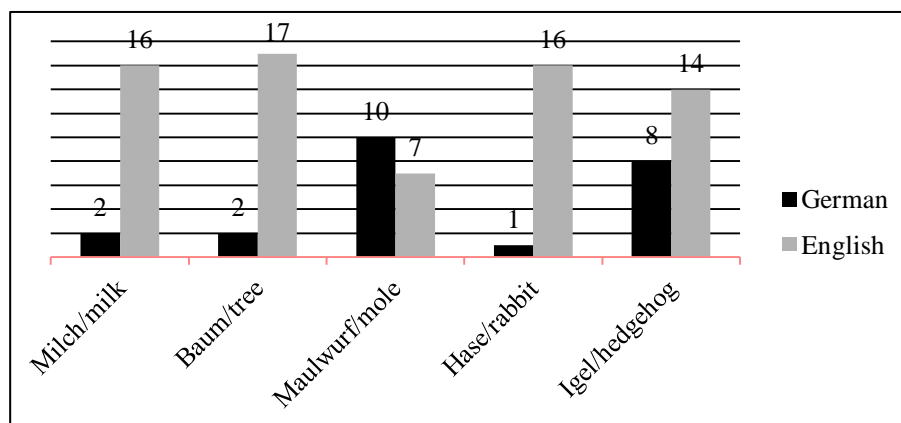

Figure 10. The Use of German and English Nouns for Animals

6.3.2 Verbs in the narratives

Attention was also given to the different verb forms used in the narratives to differentiate the children's lexicon. The variety of verb forms is diverse and was only included and listed in the evaluation if more than one occurrence could be counted, to guarantee some frequency. Figure 11 shows the five different tenses of the verbs that

occurred in the narratives. Most participants formed utterances using verbs in the Present Tense. Verbs were used in this tense in the 1st and 3rd person singular a total of 207 times, followed by 73 times in the Present Tense Progressive. There were 41 German verbs in either Present Tense or Past Aspects counted in the corpus and 39 occurrences of verbs in Past Tense Simple. Interestingly enough, Cameron (2001: 56) investigated the use of tenses in children's L1 English narratives and states that in their first language, children develop the language to be able to tell narratives quite early, and "[p]re-school children master the use of past and present tenses […] [,but] [v]ery seldom do [young children] use the present continuous that is so often found in young learner text book 'stories': [e.g.] Annie is sitting in her garden". However, Figure 11 shows that the children in my study used the progressive form fairly frequently, probably in reaction to the opening question *what is happening to the cat?*. Findings show clearly the Present Tense as the favourable narrative time.
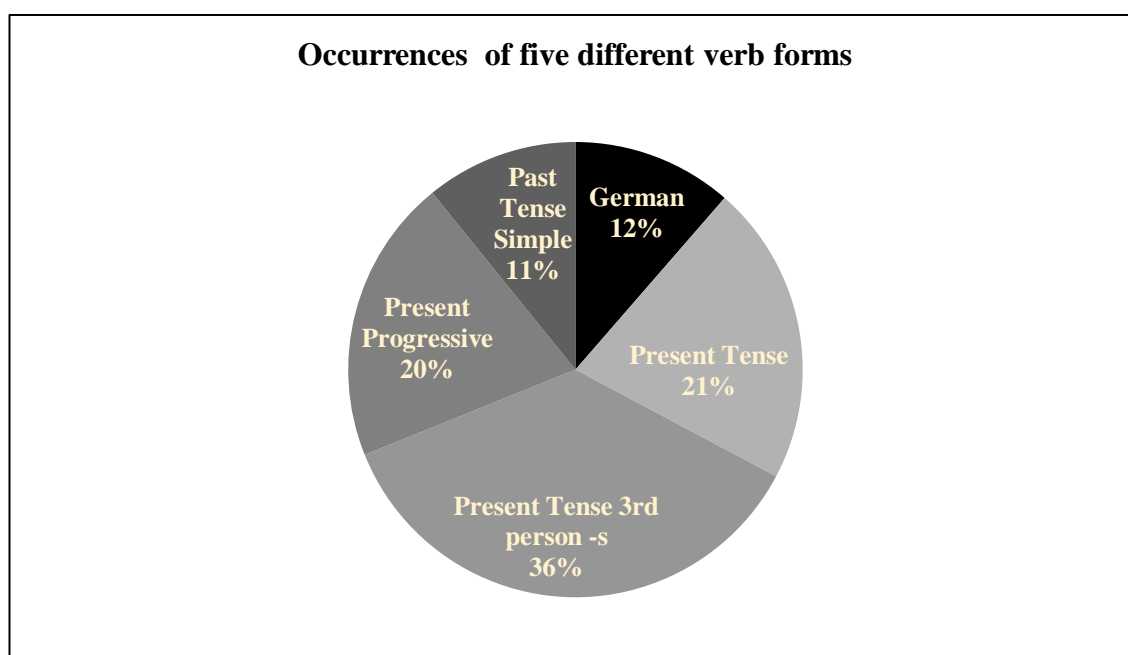

Figure 11. Occurrences of five different verb forms

6.3.3 Grammatical patterns and vocabulary richness

To be able to get an impression of the variety of verbs used in the narratives, I have provided five different tables of examples of the variety of verb forms. With the help of the AntConc software, I investigated verbs in the corpus together with their frequency, which is shown in brackets.

Table 1: Verbs in Present Tense with 3rd person-s

is (57)	wants (32)	looks (6)	sees (4)	eats (3)	has (2)	says (2)

Table 1 shows the verbs that were used in Present Tense with 3rd person –s and their frequency. The verb *is* was counted 57 times used as a main verb, 19 times as an auxiliary verb and 1 time as a hesitation marker as in *is-is-is-is-is*.

Table 2: Verbs in Present Tense

eat (15)	think (8)	play (8)	are (6)	cuddle (5)
do (5)	give (4)	want (3)	see (3)	drink (2)
wash (2)	love (2)	get (2)	find (2)	scratch (2)

Table 2 lists the different verbs in the simple present. The KWIC (Key Words In Context) function of AntConc also made it possible to look at the occurrences in their contexts. Out of the total number of 77 instances of verbs in Present Tense I counted 12 occurrences in which the third person –s should have been used according to Standard English grammar rules.

Table 3: Verbs in Present or Past Tense Progressive

sleeping (16)	looking (15)	playing (13)	washing (7)	drinking (6)	climbing (4)
catching (2)	coming (2)	eating (2)	giving (2)	going (2)	*lookings (2)

Table 3 lists all of the verbs used in their progressive form. These were either used in combination with the auxiliary verbs *am/ is* or *are*, *was* or *were*; or were uttered without the use of any auxiliary verb. The latter was used nine times to answer the question "what is the cat doing?" and three times in different word structures as in "here washing the birds", "there are the cats playing" and "the birds do washing". The following examples, taken from the corpus, are examples where the auxiliary verb should have been used as in "the cat looking" and "she playing". A new grammatical form was created by one participant in "the cat lookings at the bunny" and "the cat lookings out of the door".

Table 4: Verbs in German

schaut (7)	war (5)	streichelt (4)	versucht (4)	streicheln (3)
ist (3)	schlaft (3)	gibt (2)	tut (2)	wollte (2)
gekratzt (2)		klettern (2)		klettert (2)

Table 4 lists the German verbs that the young English language learners used to narrate their stories. Forty-one German verbs were counted. An analysis of the German verbs and their stated English counterparts is provided in the subsequent sub-chapter.

Table 5: Verbs in Past Tense Simple

was (15)	found (9)	looked (4)	wanted (3)
had (2)	liked (2)	ran (2)	saw (2)

Table 5 shows the verbs that were used in the simple past. There are a total of thirty occurrences of the correct use of the Past Tense of the irregular verbs: *be*, *find*, *have*, *run* and *see* and nine occurrences of the Past Tense of the regular verbs: *look*, *want* and *like*.

6.3.4 German verbs and their English counterparts

The task was to 'tell the story in English', as English was the only language the hand puppet, Lucky, allegedly understood. Thus, there was general agreement on the language selection. However, children were to some extent free to use words and linguistic systems of their choice. Naturally, this is particularly significant for children using a language acquired subsequently to their first language. As illustrated in figure 12 (overleaf), only about every tenth verb was uttered in their L1.
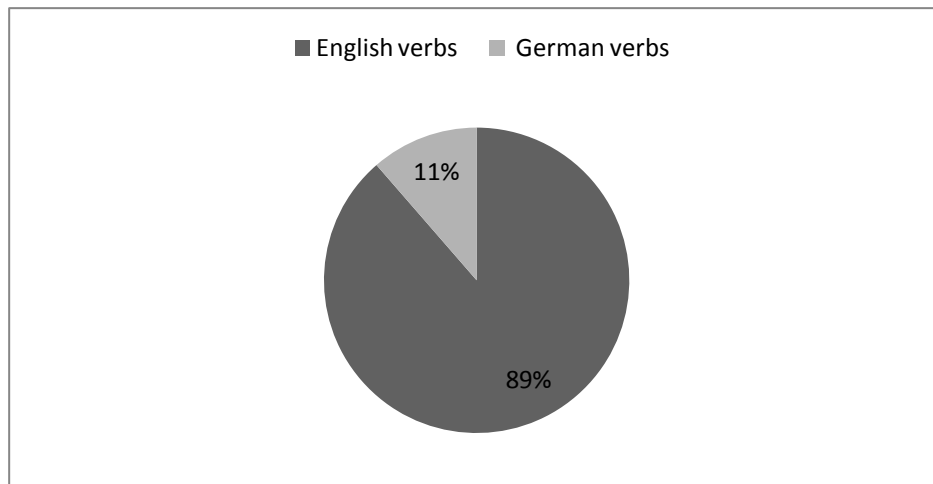
Figure 12. Occurrence of German and English verbs

There was a general tendency to use English verbs rather than German verbs; this becomes obvious when comparing the percentage of English verbs in the narratives to the percentage of German verbs. This could be explained by looking at the language learning process itself, as usually, language learners learn nouns and verbs first.

Figure 13 lists the occurrences of the selected German verb, *streicheln*. The German verb *streicheln* was used seven times whereas its English counterpart *stroking* occurred only once in the utterances. This could lead one to the assumption that the children who uttered the German word did not know its English counterpart.

Figure 13. Occurrences of the German verb *streicheln*

In summary, the participants managed to mostly refer to all but one main noun in the book in the target language, English. The times where speakers might have consciously chosen to leave out a noun, because they presumably did not know the English word, remain unknown. However, according to their kindergarten teachers, none of the nouns

should have been a problem. The analysis of verbs highlights a diversity of vocabulary choice that the young learners incorporated in their utterances. Most occurrences of different verbs were found in the Present Tense constructions, where the verbs *is* and *wants* occurred most frequent.

6.4   Learner Self-Correction

We talk about self-correction, when "learners can identify their own errors and self-correct them" (Todd 2000: 94). Self-correction can be viewed as a beneficial goal in language learning, as learners are already in the position to reflect on their language use. Some participants in the case study corrected themselves straightaway on all together eight occasions, checking their lexical choice as in "it's looking at the Biber [with American accent] [pause] oh no it's not a Biber [with American accent] but a Maulwurf" or in "the cat is looking out of the Fe[nster] eh the window". Two participants changed their utterances regarding their grammatical choice, as in "the girl is have has the cat". The preposition was changed once after it was uttered. This was also the case in, "the cat is by the in the Schoß of the girl". In another instance, the participant self-corrected two items, the pronoun and the language choice: "sie he is sleeping".

In considering these children's utterances, we have to take into account not only their acquisition of certain language specific structures, but also how far the children at the Playschool relate to one another in order to produce L2 sentences. Self-correction and experimentation with different structures showcase considerable language awareness among the children with English as an additional kindergarten language. Nonetheless, there is a pronoun inconsistency noticeable in all the utterances which did not attract the learner's self-correction. The cat was never given a name but most of the time referred to as "the cat" or given the pronoun "it", "he" or "she" but was in almost all cases inconsistently referred to as either a "she" or a "he". This is certainly not unusual for young children and "teachers need to remember that children may still be finding it difficult to use pronouns correctly in their first language to control reference to characters across a sequence of events and plot action, and not to demand unreasonable skills in the foreign language" (Cameron 2001: 12). The overall observation here is that the young language learners show astonishing language learning abilities and a language awareness that leads them to correct their own word or language choice.

6.5   Errors Related to Native Language Pattern

As discussed earlier, and from recent conversations with some of the participants' parents, I know that many parents today still decide against early language learning programmes because they fear that their children might confuse the two languages. Since I did not prompt the children to produce output in German, I am clearly not in the position to state whether or not their first language shows features of their learned second language. However, I am certain that all the participants are more proficient in their mother tongue, since German is the more dominant language in their families and in their environment.

Recent research findings, however, point out that the potential transfer is larger from L1 to L2. Nicoladis (2006: 16) also supports this viewpoint and states that "[c]hildren might be more likely to incorporate structures from their dominant into their weaker language, than vice versa". In my data I could trace some L1 influence in a number of spontaneous English narratives. The speakers here seemed to have used their knowledge of some aspects of German to produce these structures in the foreign language, English. I will now attempt to trace examples of first language influence on second language performance, not to show that they are numerous but, rather, to show that they occur. I grouped similar utterances into five categories.

1.	the cat see of the window
2.	there are the cats playing
	here is the cat running
	here is the cat tired
3.	the cat is up a auf einen Dach and the dog is looking the cat on
	the cat lookings out of the door to see what outside is
4.	the cat is sleeping and the girl also
	the cat sleeps and she also
	I think also
5.	she's giving the cat a food

The first example could be related to the German concept of *aus dem Fenster sehen*, in which case *see of* would have been used as a direct translation from German. The next three examples of the second category show traces of the more flexible German word order. If one puts an adverb (e.g. temporal, local, etc.) at the beginning of a German sentence, the subject and the verb are inverted, which is precisely the structure that is used in the three cases: Adverb [here] Vaux [is] Subject [the cat] Verb [tired].

The next example indicates that the speaker used the German verb *anschauen* and its grammar. The German verb is a so called separable verb, meaning that in its inflected form, the prefix is separated from the stem and put at the end of the phrase. It appears as if the participant has only translated it into English, producing the phrase *looking the cat on* instead of *the dog is looking at the cat*.

The fourth category shows a confusion of several translations of *auch* into English.
    Ich denke auch, dass... → I also think that...
    Das denke ich auch → I think so too.
The speakers preferred the word *also* and put it in the end of each utterance.

The example in the last category could be traced back to the colloquial style and Upper Austrian dialect as in: *Sie gibt da Kotz a Fressn*, which the child might have directly translated into English: *she's giving the cat a food*.

These examples show that L1 German can influence the output in L2 English. It is also stated that for those who acquire one language as their native language and later learn a second language, one can safely say that the naming pattern of the first language has been mastered. However, "[a]ll instances of cross-linguistic transfer that have been reported in preschool children have been in the *production* of language rather than comprehension" (Nicoladis 2006: 16).

There were grammatical difficulties for all the participants. Before discussing these data I will list some examples below.

− The cat is want to catching the mouse

− And it's try to climbing I think

− The cat is is want to catching the the waterdrop

− The cat looking looking the birds

Nauwerck (2005: 36) makes clear that until children acquire all the rules of the target language, they make use of so called "Zwischengrammatiken". This is to say, "[e]rste syntaktisch richtig erscheinende Mehrwortäußerungen lassen nicht unbedingt auf echte Sprachkompetenz schließen, sondern müssen zunächst als Imitation formelhafter Ausdrücke gedeutet werden" and until children reach a level of full grammatical competence in a language, they pass through three stages that are described below.

First, children adopt forms in an unreflective manner. This is followed by children applying, experimenting with, and usually over-generalising, linguistic rules. At this stage, children produce incorrect forms and/or create new forms. The level of experimentation with language itself and certain grammatical rules shows an active involvement with previously acquired knowledge. These experimental stages and processes eventually lead to correct forms and most children master the rules of the syntax and morphology of their language.

These critical examinations of the various utterances, which are claimed to be influenced by German concepts or German word order, could arouse two reactions. One could view these unusual utterances as mere mistakes in L2 or one could view these as utterances that show clear signs of language creativity when L2 vocabulary is not yet sufficient or L2 grammar is not yet internalised. These examples show that the speakers actively tried to state utterances in English when they could have chosen to switch to German instead. Their active involvement with the L2 must be acknowledged and is in fact already a sign of their advanced language competence.

6.6 Learner Strategies

In this chapter I will look at some evidence of the children experiencing lexical difficulties when telling an unfamiliar story in the foreign language. The picture text showed both familiar and unfamiliar concepts and it appears that the participants resorted to a set of strategies when confronted with unknown concepts. This chapter will look at the participants' solution to their problems.

The strategies of young learners to communicate in the L2 even when difficulties occur were examined by focusing on how they performed in the story telling. In order to convey a message and tell a story, the children employed different communication strategies to compensate for their target language limitations. Tim Parke (2001: 410)

points out that the use of communicative strategies is naturally significant for "children using a language acquired alongside, or subsequent to, their first language". There were lexical difficulties for all the participants; however, we can still only surmise that in these cases the speakers did not know the target items and hence used a different lexical form. The question which remains to be answered is whether differences in narrative performance are related to differences in language proficiency or solely attributable to the various daily conditions of the individuals. Parke (2001: 417) argues rightly when he says that "[w]e cannot categorically say whether children know a given item or not, as our only evidence is what they do instead of naming it". Nevertheless, it appears that informants resort to a set of strategies when confronted with unfamiliar objects in the text. In his studies Parke distinguished five different strategies to achieve communicative success,

1. prompt the teacher

2. ask the teacher directly

3. use periphrases as a means of rendering the target form

4. substitute a known item for one presumed unknown

5. grammaticalize e.g. change a known noun into a verb.

Parke suggests an initial distinction between internal and external strategies for dealing with linguistic problems as "internal" refers to the speakers' own linguistic resources and "external" to the help of others (Parke 2001: 418). I will now exemplify four of the five mentioned strategies by including examples from my case study.

(1) prompt the teacher

When I recorded the children's stories, I was their only active listener. There was sometimes a tendency on my part to intervene, mainly to help them solve a problem in the interest of easing the communicative burden and promoting the narrative flow. The decision to intervene or not was not only a question of pedagogical judgement, but was somehow induced by the individual's characteristics. Some seemed shyer than others; some asked me for help while others did not. During the recordings I was addressed indirectly twelve times with the sentence: *I don't know this word*; which I categorised as a clear request for help that could not be ignored.

(2) ask the teacher directly

At no point did the children ask me directly for a specific word, although they did tell me that they only knew the German word for a certain object in the book. As a result, their indirect requests can be categorised as requests for allowance to state the idea in their first language but also requests for help. In such a case I told them it would be all right to state the missing form in German, and when they did, I translated it into English.

(3) use periphrases as a means of rendering the target form

To avoid pauses, some participants used non-verbal strategies or periphrases to point out or paraphrase the target form. As in *and this thing here (pointing) he wants to go out* (target form: mole); *here there's the cat and schleck and wischy* (target form: the cat licks its paws) and *the cat wants to quetsch the Igel* (target form: touch). The first two examples were accompanied by gestures and all of these instances show a capacity for (non-) linguistic invention.

(4) substitute a known item for one presumed unknown

Many participants uttered the missing verb in German. Research found that "the most frequently applied communication strategies were L1-based ones" (Nikolov & Djigunovic 2011: 105) as when the linguistic vocabulary of L2 does not suffice, learners tended to use their L1 to fill in the gaps. This phenomenon is a linguistic flexibility only bilingual children in a bilingual setting have. There are quite a few instances in my recorded data, but again as stated earlier in this chapter, we can only assume that the speakers did not know the English counterpart and hence used their L1 in the following examples, *the cat is on the Dach and here is a Hund*; *the Vögelein there are in the Plantschbecken* and *then a Igel eats a apple*.

(6) show language creativity

There were no examples found in my data for category (5), however, I could identify another strategy that was not provided in the literature. Some speakers showed a capacity for linguistic invention, e.g. *ehm strawling it the cat; the dog faest the cat* and *the birds are swimmen*. These examples show language creativity, interference or

interlanguage variations[22] and illustrate the invention of a new word, e.g. *to strawl someone*. The instance of *the dog fäst the cat* could have emerged out of two reasons. One assumption is that the speaker actually heard and internalised the word *fäst* in the context of telling a dog *to fetch something* or the speaker thought of the German word *fasst* (as in he grabbed the cat) and tried the German-word-English-pronunciation trick. Either way, the target form would have been: the dog chased the cat. The third example is more a blend of the German word *schwimmen* and the English word *swimming*.

6.7   Summary of Findings

A general evaluation of task fulfilment observed in the children's performance shows that all participants tried their own best in engaging successfully with an unknown picture text and were more or less able to convey meaning in English with the assistance of German. The Playschool achieved quite impressive results in foreign language teaching to young learners in an environment which ensures access to English and German. As highlighted in previous chapters, it is essential that a bilingual educational programme continuously fosters children in two languages to ensure an ongoing process of language learning in both languages. Their stable command of German can therefore also influence the acquisition of English (Nikolov & Dijgunovic 2011; Philip 2008; Nauwerck 2005) as exemplified in this chapter. According to the teachers' estimates, most of the vocabulary needed to tell the story should not have been a problem. All the animals in the book, for example, are familiar to the children, except maybe the mole was said to maybe cause difficulty. However, due to the fact that most of the participants are not used to telling a picture book to a grown-up, the teachers also pointed out that the children would probably feel challenged to master the task. The participants' linguistic developments as a group can principally be said to be advanced, but are also characterised by individual differences. Nonetheless, all the children showed similar strategies to overcome their L2 difficulties. Most of the children possessed a good basic knowledge of syntactic structures in English and a capacity to explore new contexts in their L2 with the assistance of their L1. If the children who

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[22]   A term coined by Selinker to refer to the systematic knowledge that had been developed by a learner of a second language who has not become fully proficient yet but is approximating the target language. In the process learners preserve some features of their first language, or overgeneralise target language rules and create innovations (Rod 1997: 33).

chose to speak predominantly in German did so deliberately, by habit, or out of a sense of security, will remain unknown.

The two decisive factors, as discussed in chapter 3.4, contributing to the success of language learning, were high-quality input in English and a familiar environment. Both of these factors are ensured in the Playschool thanks to the presence of native speakers and qualified English speakers and an environment which allows language contact to be something natural without feeling the pressure of performance. Nevertheless, even after three years of bilingual schooling, the research confirms that L1 German children cannot be expected to have turned into full bilinguals, as one might have expected. Thus, the assumption that the advanced children at the Playschool would usually speak fluent English, appropriate to their age, after three years, cannot be verified in this study. The findings of the case study rather accord with Legutke's (2009: 140) observations that "by the end of the three years of kindergarten learners have acquired comprehension skills which by far exceed their speaking skills". In this context, Cameron (2001: 13) states that "children who have an early start develop and maintain advantages in some, but not all, areas of language skills". The children at the Playschool will possibly all possess a solid foundation in the English language and individually different English language skills. Cameron (2003: 106) argues here furthermore for "some evidence that young learners develop better accents and listening skills, [. However,] there is also evidence that, even in immersion situations, production skills and grammatical knowledge do not benefit as much as might be expected".

Possible limitations to the case study should be considered in order to present an overall picture. On the whole, there were no methodological problems when recording the data; however, an element of artificiality remains as some of the children did notice that I was recording our conversations, and the whole situation was altogether new to them. Thanks to the Playschool team, there were no time constraints that impacted on the study and the participants and I had not only time but space for our conversations. The aspect of individuality remains, and general claims are thus difficult to elicit. Still, a point I wish to highlight is the ease with which the young learners approached the task. All the children in my study participated willingly, and even if I spoke exclusively in English, they did not hesitate in trying to tell the story in English too, despite their L1. There were no comprehension problems noticeable when I addressed the participants in English.

7   Conclusion

What I have been doing in these pages is first, describing how early foreign language learning can benefit the young child's cognitive and linguistic development, and second, illustrating how young L2 learners use their linguistic resources to communicate. I have done this by drawing on examples from my case study about young English language learners making use of their bilingual repertoires when individually asked to tell a picture book story in English. In doing so, I have interpreted features as examples of L2 speech production.

Today more than ever, children in our contemporary society face a wide range of educational impulses and demands, and parents seem sometimes to overstrain their children with full timetables and the continuously rising level of expectations. Early language teaching, viewed in this light, could even be categorised as a not yet necessary workload. However, if education is a means by which to prepare children for the complex world that they inhabit, they should be empowered by expansive curricula in the educational system to manage the newly arising challenges of a globalised world. Moreover, children should be entitled to high quality teaching and learning that triggers enthusiasm, and should get the possibility to make use of early childhood curiosity by being provided with linguistic input in form of second language learning. At school, children will be exposed to many different subjects, and language learning will become one amongst many. Early English language learning therefore also presents a way of introducing a subject in a still familiar setting where language attainment is not part of the curriculum, and therefore without pressure.

According to recent research in early language learning, children show positive effects on language awareness, language flexibility and creativity. Research also states that through foreign language study, young children receive the opportunity to expand their thinking, acquire cultural awareness, extend their understanding of language as a phenomenon, and reach proficiency at a given level in that foreign language. Parents, educators, and policymakers should find these reasons more than enough to prove the benefits of beginning foreign language learning as early as possible.

Still, teaching and learning are complex processes and not necessarily easier when the learner is preliterate and dependent on predominantly oral input. There are in fact many mutually influential factors, such as personal language background, the setting, the

teacher's and the learner's personality and the heterogeneity of the learner group that can contribute to the process of language learning. The analysis of the empirical study in this thesis also tries to reflect and highlight that every language learner is unique, constituting a further problematic factor in L2 language learning.

Overall, the performances of the participants tend to be modest. One participant in the study achieved a native-like mastery of the second language after three years of exposure to the target language in the kindergarten. However, it is to say that achieving a native-like mastery of the second language is not a primary objective for early language teaching. If the goal of second language learning is native-like proficiency of the target language, it is "usually desirable for the learner to be completely surrounded by the language as early as possible" (Lightbown & Spada 2000: 68). With regard to the ongoing discussion about language learning, an early start and the time spent learning will eventually allow the L2 learner to become a more proficient user. It is safe to say that my findings accord with research in the field that indicates that young L2 learners experience benefits with regard to more flexible and creative language use. It remains to say that early English language learning is possible and favourable, however:

> [w]e can only conclude that an early start is not, in itself, automatically an advantage; an early start is influenced by many learner factors which play a great part in the success of L2 learning. These include levels of motivation and confidence, differences in language aptitude and personality (Bewster, Ellis & Girard 2004: 21).

Positive effects on language awareness, language flexibility and creativity provide evidence for the favourable precocious exposure to more languages. Today, researchers elucidate the positive trend towards an early start without indications that young learners might be overstrained by such language programmes. Although the government recognises the need for early education, not much is done for promoting early foreign language learning or even second language learning (e.g. for immigrant children in Austria). The compilation of the nationally accepted curriculum with uniform educational objectives for kindergarten pedagogy is at least an important step towards the recognition of early education. Therefore, pre-school foreign language programmes will have to remain a privilege for only a few, as there are no indications at the moment that the government is willing to invest, amongst other prerequisites for a large scale introduction of early L2 teaching, into teacher education for early language programmes. Therefore, much more research into early second/foreign language

teaching is needed to promote the development of a curriculum for early language programmes. Governments, parents and teachers need to recognise the advantages associated with early second/foreign language learning, so that learning a new language early on in life will not remain a privilege for only a few. In this context further research on teaching English at the primary level is necessary to ensure a smooth transition in language teaching.

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Appendix A

C: as my brother!
C: mhm
C: mhm
C: I think not, because he reads 'munch punch'
C: hmm here is a clown
C: And the cat is by the shoes
C: a boy
C: a girl
C: a girl
C: feedering the cat
C: hmmm a shower! For the cat!
C: oooh!
C: the—the cat is looking out of the window
C: ehm the birdies *do
C: the cat is climbing up the tree
C: the cat is going to the ehm hedgehog! and the hedgehog eats a apple.
C: a bunny and he—and— the cat looks to the bunny
C: it's another cat
C: they play
C: ** ich hab das schon mal gesehn bei Hunde!
C: **ein Boxer ein Boxer und ein Babyhund
C: **der Babyhund war voll klein und wild der war sooo wild!
C: #uh wow! cool!
C: he want to eat the mouse
C: a dog
C: the the —the dog —the cat is by the boy
C: the cat is by the —in the *Schoß
C: mhm in the— in—in—the—in the hands from the little girl
C: she is big
C: ** ein Marienkäfer
C: hmm this one!
C: because this one is here and they are playing

C: a cat's sleeping
C: drinking
C: mi° water
C: the girl giving the cat some food
C: yes
C: the cat is washing
C: here washing the birds eh
C: looking to the birds #coughing eh—a mole coming out and the cat wants to climb on the tree
C: there is a hedgehog he wants to eat this apple and the cat cat give out the
C: the paw
C: they give the—the bunny and the cat give their nose —nose —nose to their nose
C: there are the cats playing
C: and here is a carrot field #wah a worm!
C: here is the cat running
C: to the mouse
C: the —the dog wants to play with the cat
C: is on the I don't know the word
C: yes it's on the roof
C: look what is here!
C: the little girl
C: I don't know the word
C: *streicheln
C: yes
C: the cat
C: here is the cat tired and here is the little ladybug

C: this one!
C: because here is lying
C: **Na, ich hab ja kein Federballspiel
C: I don't know anymore and also maybe look at what there— jump—there up down
C: yes
C: what is this?
C: yes

C: a ba° ball
C: mmh don't know this word
C: **die Katze schlaft
C: the man
C: drink milk
C: mmh **sie gibt ihm was zu essen
C: yes
C: the cat wants—to—be—ehm—wants—to—drink water
C: the cat
C: he—he X X I don't know this word ehm **ich weiß es jetzt
C: ehm **er tut rausschaun aus dem Fenster wo die Vogeln sind
C: ehm
C: yes
C: *sie bath
C: X scratch—scratch on the tree
C: a window and a ball
C: at the *Maul° Maulwurf
C: the cat wants to *quetsch the *Igel
C: a apple
C: yes
C: a bunny
C: mmh .. **sie wollen sich gegenseitig Bussis geben
C: carrots
C: ehm the cat play with a other cat
C: the cat sees a mouse
C: yes, and eat him up
C: the cat sees a dog
C: **die kratzt, die mag den Hund kratzen
C: **mich hat schon mal eine Katze gekratzt
C: mhm
C: **aber mein Papa—wir warn mal am Bauernhof und dann hat—dort war auch eine Katze die hat mich aber nicht gekratzt die heißt nämlich Peter aber mein Papa heißt auch Peter
C: **ich nicht aber am Bauernhof
C: **die streicheln—die streichelt die Katze
C: he *streichelt a *Katz° —eh cat
C: the cat scratches eye
C: mhm
C: ehm
C: I love—I.I love bunnies
C: *Danke

C: **Sie schlaft
C: Yes
C: a ball
C: He eat
C: yes
C: a cat
C: yes
C: the cat see of the window
C: birds
C: **Sie klettert

C: **Der Maulwurf schaut ihr zu
C: no
C: the cat
C: a and a apple
C: **und nen Igel
C: *Hase
C: **Sie schaut sich in die Augen
C: She playing Xplayen
C: **Sie fangt ein Maus
C: a dog and a cat
C: the dog Xfäst the cat
C: yes
C: the tired
C: sleeping
C: she Xcratch
C: *Marienkäfer
C: the cat and the dog
C: no
C: yes
C: why? this
C: yes

C: **Die Katze schlaft und der Bub und es ist Abend
C: no
C: mhm
C: he is sleeping
C: *Frühstück X
C: milk
C: **die Katze kriegt wahrscheinlich Cornflakes
C: **Sie wascht alle Gefäße und so. Teller
C: plate
C: yes
C: **Sie schaut den Vögel zu wie sie baden
C: no
C: bird
C: **Sie schaut den Vögel zu
C: **Die Katze versucht auf einen Baum zu klettern
C: tree
C: the cat is climbing up the tree
C: **ein Maulwurf.
C: ehm mmh
C: **Die Katze versucht den Igel anzugreifen und hier—aber—hier traut sie sich nicht weil hier sind Stacheln und mein Papa hat in X einen Maulwurf gefunden!
C: **der war bei uns zu Hause der wollte rauf klettern bei uns er wollte rausklettern aber wir haben ihn wieder eingefangen aber dann is er den nächsten Tag gestorben
C: **aber dann haben wir ihn in userm Onkel sein Garten begraben
C: no
C: hm
C: the cat **die beiden küssen sich wahrscheinlich
C: yes
C: carrots
C: **die Katze spielen
C: no
C: I am playing
C: yes
C: the cat **Die Katze versucht eine Maus zum fangen
C: **und die Maus passt nicht auf und die Katze die hat die Maus leicht gefangen
C: the dog and a cat
C: wants to eat—wants to play with the cat
C: no **ich hab auch eine Katze und einen Hund und da jagt der Hund die Katze

C: yes
C: **Die beide—die
C: a girl
C: **Sie versucht, dass sie einschlaft
C: **Die Katze reibt ihre Augen und schaut hier raus
C: yes
C: this here
C: mhm
C: **weil ich eine Katze und einen Hund hab

C: sleeping
C: mi° some water
C: yes
C: this one girl
C: yes!
C: yes
C: **hier kommen Vogeln
C: here
C: yes
C: the birds
C: the cat **schaut den Maulwurf zu
C: **sie klettert auf nen Baum
C: yes.
C: #uh
C: **ein Igel die Katze sticht den Igel
C: no
C: yes!
C: apples fruits
C: **schaut den Hasen zu
C: the cat looks at the bunny
C: carrots
C: I don't know
C: **die lieben sich
C: yes
C: this is the I think the mummy
C: this cat **greift ein Maus an
C: yes
C: **ein Hund—a dog
C: and the cat is up here
C: no
C: yes
C: I don't know
C: yes!
C: sleeping
C: yes
C: no
C: the end
C: **weißt du was meine Lieblingsseite war?
C: this one!
C: *weil
C: Xwei this hedgehog is **der hat Stacheln
C: **von da die habn auch nen Hund und haben schon mal einen toten Igel ge°—gefressen yes
C: yes

C: the girl is sleeping and the cat also
C: the girl give the cat something to eat and milk
C: yes
C: with the water
C: the cat lookings out of the door

C: to see what outside is
C: birds
C: the cat wants to climb on the tree
C: at the mole!
C: the cat
C: mole
C: ah!
C: apple
C: the cat lookings at the bunny
C: carrots
C: another cat
C: they hug
C: the cat wants to eat the mouse
C: mmh the cat is eh the cat is on the roof and the dog wants hm
S: or to play with it? do you think the dog wants to play with the cat?
C: yes
C: in the house!
C: she's by the girl
C: it's on the windowsill
C: this!
C: I don't know

C: once a time there was a little cat and a boy and it was morning
C: the cat had supper and oh! I thought this was a boy!
C: girl mhm
C: the cat wanted to wash their hands. But actually the cat can't wash hands
C: but there were water drops and the cat held their hand out
C: the cat ehm looked out of the out of the window and saw some birds in a plate bathing
C: the cat wanted to climb up the—the tree and a little mole crawled out of the—the ground
C: the cat wants to touch the hedgehog but—but it went "outch!"
C: and the little hedgehog ran away
C: then the cat saw a rabbit! He looked at the rabbit and the rabbit was shy
C: the—and then the cat found the mother cat
C: and he—and—had much fun. Then there was a dog
C: but the cat was shy but the dog was actually ehm a good dog
C: #uh then the girl and take the cat back home and the cat was sleeping
C: then the cat woke up and but the cat ehm **is wieder eingeschlafen was sleeping then again
C: yes
C: this one
C: because the cat is so sweet

C: yes
C: yes
C: the cat sleeps and she also
C: the girl gives the cat milk
C: the cat ehm by the wash
C: yes
C: the birds are Xswimmen
C: there
C: there is still the cat but she wants climb up—up the tree
C: the cat found a hedgehog
C: and then the cat found a rabbit
C: yes
C: and then the cat found another cat
C: eh cuddle
C: the cat—the cat found a mouse
C: the dog found the cat
C: yes
C: the girl hold the ha° cat

C: the cat eh on the window
C: a ladybird
C: this
C: why she cuddle
C: yes
C: yes

C: he's sleeping
C: the cat also
C: he gets breakfast
C: milk
C: yes
C: outside
C: the bird—the birds are there
C: here
C: yes
C: it's mmh
C: mmh
C: the—the *Maulwurf
C: hm looking at the hedgehog
C: he eats an apple
C: a bunny
C: it's looking at the bunny
C: carrots
C: mmh
C: yes
C: a cat also a cat
C: a mouse
C: want to eat the mouse
C: eat the mouse
C: there is a dog
C: the dog wants to eat the cat
C: no
C: up on the house
C: inside
C: he's sleeping
C: ehm strawling it
C: the cat
C: hm
C: a ladybird
C: this
C: because they are playing
C: yes
C: in the meadow

C: the whole book?!
C: they sleep
C: shoes
C: he's drinking
C: yes! But something sweet
C: cause my daddy says we should eat sweet things in the morning and not in the afternoon or after lunch, my daddy says
C: yeah
C: milk
C: plate
C: it eh
C: playing with the water
C: she's looking outside
C: birds in the water

C: the cat wants to get on the tree
C: the
C: yes but I think I also know it in English
C: I think I know it in English!
C: it's a mole
C: and where he—the cat is scared of the mole
C: and then it wants to climb on the tree
C: the cat sees a hedgehog
C: apples
C: he's looking at a bunny
C: carrots
C: they are playing!
C: the cats
C: yes!
C: the cat wants to get the mouse
C: down there maybe. On the wood
C: a dog!
C: on the—on the
C: no
C: the little cat is sleeping
C: the cat is—the cat is
C: mhm
C: I liked all this pictures
C: no. I all liked them
C: the—there—the—the—ehm ..
C: and they play with their noses
C: yes I wanted to say this
C: a hedgehog

C: she's sleeping
C: a ball
C: there is a little girl and she is giving the cat a food
C: the cat is washing the plate
C: she's looking out of the window because there are so many birds
C: they are drinking
C: *die cat—the cat wants to climb up on a tree
C: I only know it in German
C: **ein Maulwurf
C: to eat the *Igel
C: the apple
C: ehm the cat wants to eat the bunny
C: some carrots
C: the cats are playing
C: the cat wants to catch a mouse
C: the dog wants to play with the cat
C: no
C: eh it's night
C: the little girl is—have—has the cat
C: eh I just know it in German
C: *streicheln
C: I don't know
C: the cat is tired
C: eh
C: because I like rabbit

C: he's sleeping
C: she's drinking
C: a little girl
C: looks like she's walking on the tap

C: looking—she's looking out of the window
C: the birds
C: and here she's climbing the tree
C: and a mushroom I once found a ladybird baby. And here is a ladybird
C: and I found a baby. That's doesn't look like a ladybird yet
C: X two!
C: playing with the hedgehog
C: apple
C: the cat is smelling the bunny
C: they're putting their nose together
C: and the two cats are playing together
C: she's catching the mouse
C: cats eat mice!
C: hide
C: the dog is frightening the cat
C: I can see the mouse a little
C: dogs like to do that
C: the little girl is *shtroking the cat
C: she's asleep!
C: and now she's going to bed
C: and here is a ladybird
C: if I find it
C: this one!
C: yes
C: a bee, a hedgehog, a mole
C: in here
C: yes!

C: no
C: there's a bed
C: yes
C: here
C: oh no!
C: the *milch is on the floor
C: is licking the *milch
C: oh no! The cat's playing with the *Teller
C: #uh the *Vögelein there are in the *Plantschbecken
C: it's looking out of the *Fe° eh the window
C: here's a *Maulwurf and
C: he—she is getting on the tree
C: there is a hedgehog and he bit off the apple
C: #uh
C: there's a cat in the *Käfig and here is the cat
C: ehm *Wolle
C: carrots
C: there are playing two cats together
C: I think also
C: a mouse creeping in the woods
C: and the cat X find the *Maus oh no!
C: #uh the cat is on the *Dach and here is a *Hund
C: yes
C: yes
C: here is a girl and he's *streichelt the cat
C: yes
C: and this—the moon is up already
C: #uh and here there's the cat and *schleck and *wischy
C: ok
C: this
C: because the girl the *streichelt the cat
C: no

C: my father has a cat X
C: yes

C: but I don't know the story
C: *Na
C: it's sleeping
C: under the bed
C: the—it's eating breakfast
C: she's drinking milk and there is a cake in the oven
C: and there is lots of fruit and wine in the basket
C: and the cat is washing I think
C: and then the birds are washing in the water around
C: the cat is looking outside the window
C: and it's try to climbing I think
C: it's looking at the *Biber
C: oh no it's not a *Biber but a *Maulwurf
C: a Maulwurf but I don't know the English word
C: and then a *Igel eats a apple
C: and the cat wants to stroke it but it's too eh spiky
C: and then—and then—then the cat sees a rabbit and plays with it
C: and the—the first cat what was in every picture ehm she found a friend
C: they're cuddling
C: and then one cat catches a mouse
C: oh no! That was like the brick on the shelf because somebody threw it on
C: yes
C: mhm
C: and then the cat is playing with the dog
C: and then the girl is stroking the little cat
C: and then she
C: what—what means that?
C: she's tired
C: tha° this one
C: because it's funny

C: I don't know what
C: he's sleeping
C: and the boy too
C: the cat is eating
C: and drinking
C: now the cat is washing
C: look!
C: and the cat looked under the door—the cat looked at the door and the birds do washing
C: and the cat wants to climb on this tree
C: and this thing here he wants to go out and the cat wants to eat the hedgehog and there the cat looks at this bunny
C: and the cat X with the other cat and the cat wants to grab this mouse and the m° dog wants to grab the—the—the cat and the girl there she wants to she wants to do
C: cuddle it
C: and the cat wants to cuddle itself asleep
C: my favourite picture was
C: hm hm this! And this and this and this one
C: why the others are bunny and I like very much bunny and the cat
C: carrots
C: in a
C: a cage
C: not in a cage
C: in a house!

C: yes!
C: this man is sleeping and the cat also
C: **das Mädchen gibt der Katze was zum Essen
C: yes!
C: milk
C: the cat is is want to catching the . mmh . the waterdrop
C: yes
C: the cat looking looking the birds . mmh . mmh **und die Katze tut die Vögel anschaun wie sie wie sie dort plantschen tun
C: the cat wants to climb up the tree
C: .. the the . *Maulwurf
C: the cat looks looks the . the *Igel
C: a apple
C: the cat looksing out the the bunny
C: carrots!
C: that is—is that is mmh cat's friend
C: **die tun kuscheln miteinander
C: the cat **rennen Maus hinterher and the mouse ran in this mmh mmh sm° **in eine kleinen Höhle
C: **und da kommt die Katze nicht rein weil sie zu groß ist
C: the cat is up a **auf einen Dach and the dog is looking the cat on
C: yes!
C: yes
C: the cat is coming to—to this girl
C: and—and they cuddle
C: the cat the cat is—is—is—is—is—is scratching her eyes
C: yes
C: a beetle
C: yes
C: mmh
C: this
C: why because there is a—a cat and—and—and the cat is mmh (*)fast asleep
C: no
C: but I—I have a dog **und der ist schon gestorben am letzten April letztes Jahr
C: no
C: no—no a bunny!

Appendix B
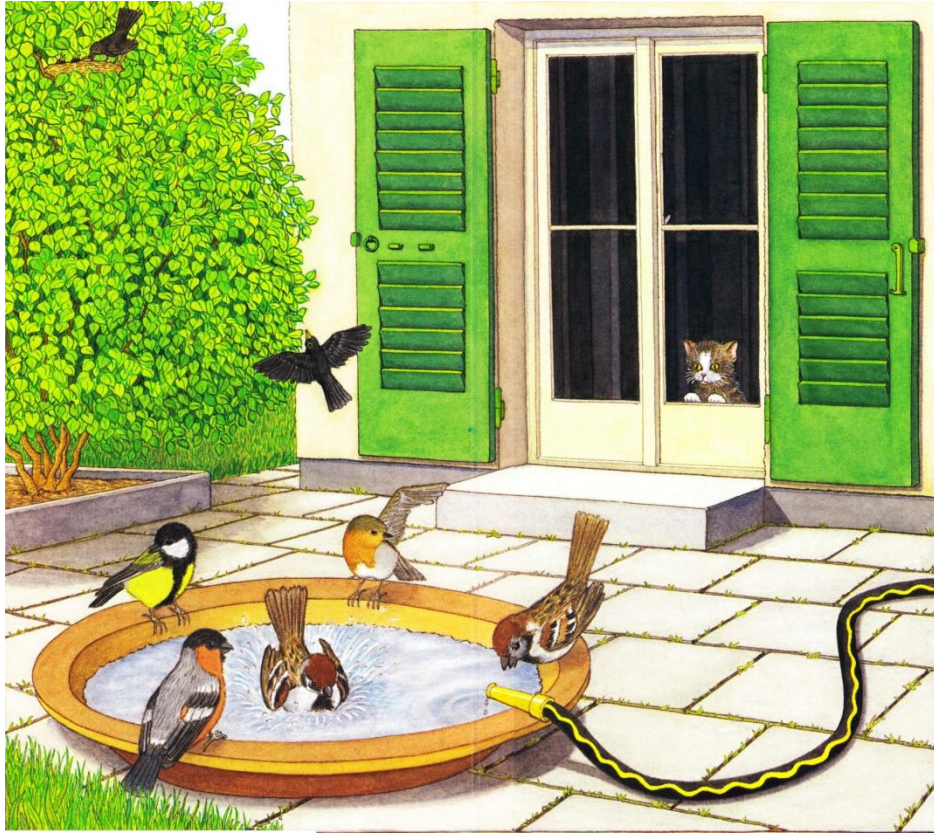
Transcription Codes

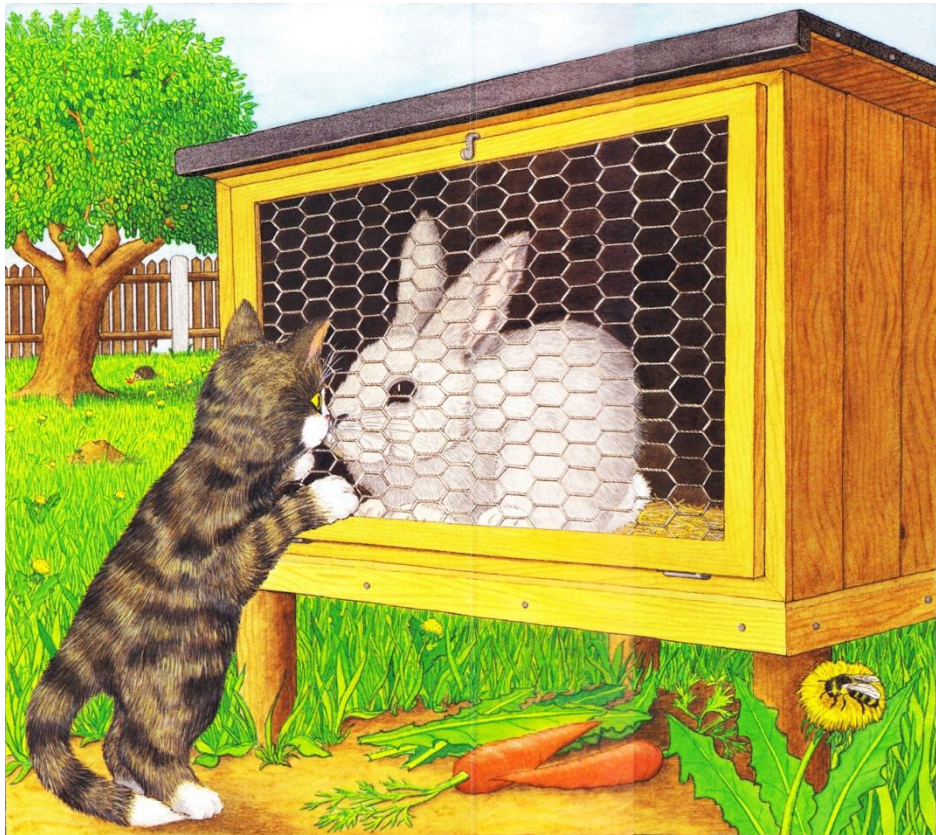C   child

X   unintelligible

.   short pause

-       repetition, stuttering

*   German word (dialect)

**   German phrases

?   question

!   exclamation
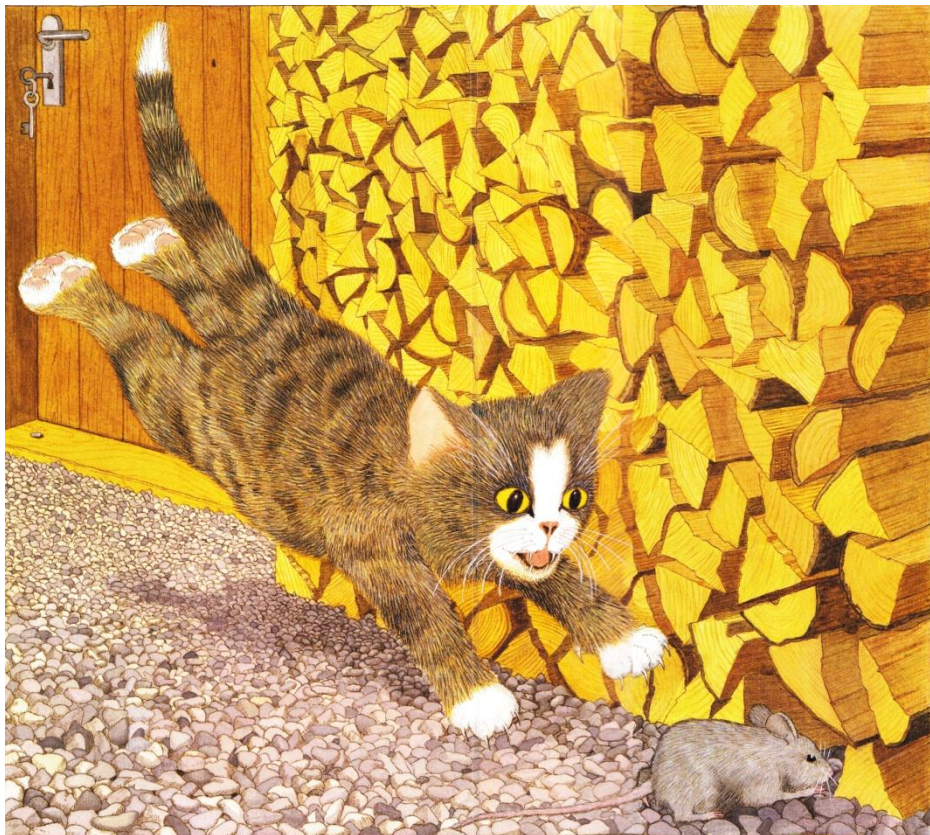
( )   extra information

°   unfinished word

Appendix C
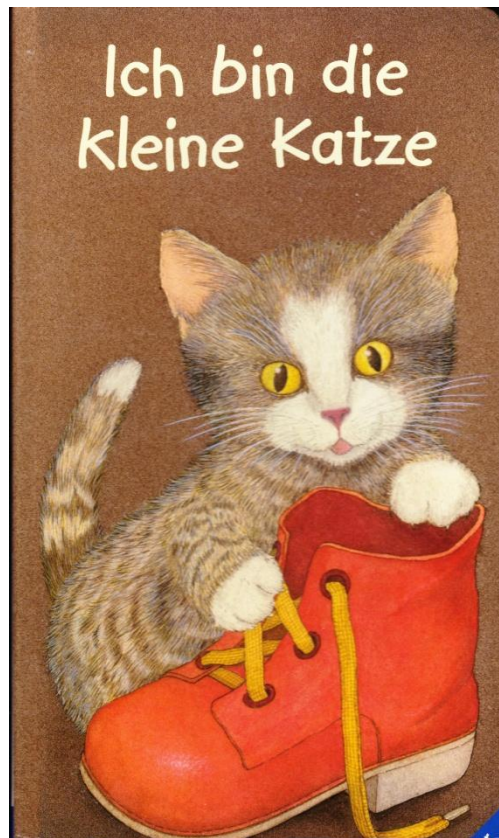
LUCKY

Appendix D

Elternfragebogen

Parental Questionnaire

Early Language Learning at the Pre-Primary Level

Die folgenden Fragen beziehen sich auf Ihre Motive Ihr Kind in zwei Sprachen zu fördern und sollte von einem Elternteil beantwortet werden. Bitte beantworten Sie die Fragen so genau wie möglich und lassen Sie keine der Fragen aus, da sie alle für die Studie von Relevanz sind. Ihre Daten werden vertraulich behandelt und anonymisiert in meiner Diplomarbeit aufscheinen.

1. Wo ist die Mutter des Kindes geboren (Land, Stadt)? _____

   Wo ist der Vater des Kindes geboren (Land, Stadt)? _____

   Wo ist Ihr Kind geboren (Land, Stadt)? _____

2. Welche Sprache(n) sprechen Sie?

□ Deutsch   wenn ja, seit wann: _____

□ English   wenn ja, seit wann: _____

□ sonstige Sprachen

nämlich_____

3. Welche Sprache beherrschen Sie besser? In welcher Sprache unterhalten/diskutieren Sie lieber?

□ Deutsch

□ English

□ sonstige Sprachen

nämlich_____

4. Welche Sprache(n) spricht Ihr Kind?

□ Deutsch   wenn ja, seit wann: _____

□ English   wenn ja, seit wann: _____

□ sonstige Sprachen

nämlich_____

5. Welche Sprache beherrscht Ihr Kind besser? In welcher Sprache erzählt Ihnen Ihr Kind eher?

□ Deutsch

□ English

□ sonstige Sprachen

nämlich_____

6. Mit welchem Alter ging Ihr Kind zum ersten Mal in den Kindergarten?

_____

7. Was waren Ihre Beweggründe Ihr Kind in der Playschool anzumelden? Welche Aussagen treffen für Sie zu? Mehrfachantworten sind möglich.

□ Die Playschool liegt in unserer Nähe und ist daher gut zu erreichen.

□ Ich kenne das pädagogische Personal.

□ Das Leitbild der Playschool hat mir gefallen.

□ Ich wollte meinem Kind die Möglichkeit geben, die englische Sprache spielerisch zu erlernen.

□ Ich denke, dass Englisch in der sozialen und schulischen Laufbahn meines Kindes wichtig sein wird.

□ Mir wurde der Kindergarten empfohlen.

□ Ein bekanntes/befreundetes Kind ging auch in die Playschool.

□ Ich will meinem Kind das Englischlernen erleichtern.

□ weitere: _____

8. Ich übe mit meinem Kind die erlernte englische Sprache auch zu Hause.
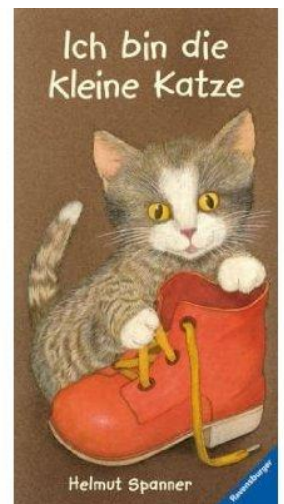
□ Ja   □ Nein

wenn ja, wie:

9. Wie viele Stunden pro Woche wird Ihrem Kind zu Hause auf deutscher Sprache vorgelesen?

10. Wie viele Stunden pro Woche wird Ihrem Kind zu Hause auf englischer Sprache vorgelesen?

**11. Kennt Ihr Kind das Buch „Ich bin die kleine Katze"
von Helmut Spanner?**

□ Ja □ Nein

12. Wenn Sie gemeinsam mit Ihrem Kind ein Bilderbuch ansehen, welche der folgenden Aussagen trifft am ehesten für Sie zu?

□ Ich lese meinem Kind aus dem Bilderbuch vor.

□ Ich erzähle frei eine Geschichte zu den Bildern im Buch.

□ Beim Lesen der Bücher entsteht meist ein Dialog mit meinem Kind und wir erzählen uns abwechselnd/gemeinsam die Geschichte.

□ Mein Kind erzählt mir die Geschichte.

13. Von wem wurde der Fragebogen ausgefüllt?

□ Vater

□ Mutter

Vielen Dank für Ihre Mitarbeit!

Curriculum Vitae

Persönliche Information

_____

Sabrina Staudinger
geb. 1986 in Vöcklabruck, Austria

Bildungsweg und wissenschaftlicher Werdegang

_____

2006 – 2012	Studium an der Universität Wien: Anglistik und Amerikanistik und Deutsch als Fremdsprache
2011 – 2012	Mitarbeiterin der Fachbereichsbibliothek Anglistik an der Universität Wien
2009 – 2010	Erasmusaufenthalt an der Universitat de València
2008	Fremdsprachenunterricht im Evangélikus Gimnázium, Budapest
2005 – 2006	ESOL Weiterbildungskurse im Acton & West London College
2000 – 2005	Bildungsanstalt für Kindergartenpädagogik (4840 Vöcklabruck)
2005	Reifeprüfung
1992 – 2000	Volks- und Hauptschule (4880 St. Georgen im Attergau)

Eidesstattliche Erklärung

„Ich erkläre an Eides statt, dass ich die vorliegende Diplomarbeit selbständig und ohne fremde Hilfe verfasst, andere als die angegebenen Quellen und Hilfsmittel nicht benutzt und die den Quellen wörtlich oder inhaltlich entnommenen Stellen als solche kenntlich gemacht habe."

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Ort, Datum   Unterschrift