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Maija Hatton

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Abbreviations

ELF: English as a Lingua Franca

L1: First language

L2: Second language

YLL: Young Language Learner

1. Introduction

The study of English as a lingua franca (ELF) among children has, for the most part, been limited to school environments. Prominent examples of ELF research in schools include Lopriore's 2015 and Vettorel's 2013 studies of ELF in early primary classrooms. However, ELF in preschool-aged (3-6 years) children could warrant more examination, due to the growing demand for preschool English language instruction (Graddol 2006: 88). English is viewed as a basic skill in several parts of the world; a skill that grants an individual economic mobility (Graddol 2006: 88). As parents seek to present their children with more opportunities, preschool English education has emerged as a popular educational trend among kindergartens and early childhood settings in Europe. Linguistic diversity among both children and teachers in these English kindergartens (It is difficult to populate a kindergarten exclusively with native English speaking children and teachers.) will result in the children and teachers using ELF to communicate with each other. This could lead to an increase in ELF usage among the preschool demographic before they begin formal language instruction in primary school. Having ELF as their first experience with English could have an effect on children's English education, as well as their overall attitude towards English, in the primary years.

In this thesis, ELF in an English immersion kindergarten in Vienna is examined using a study on the past tense usage of children aged approximately 4-6 years attending the same kindergarten to illustrate the use of this linguistic tool. The overarching research question driving this thesis is: What does ELF look like in a kindergarten environment? This question is supplemented by two specific questions that the study within this thesis project seeks to answer: "Do the children in this kindergarten use the simple past differently in a controlled interview in comparison to a lingua franca environment?" and "Could certain past tense forms denote ELF usage?" An English immersion kindergarten was selected for study because of my employment at said kindergarten, and certain characteristics in the English spoken by the children, who came from a wide variety of language backgrounds. The children who attended the kindergarten at the time of the study represented over 17 different languages, with 17% being monolingual English speakers and the other 83% being bilingual or multilingual. There were also teachers whose L1s represented several varieties of English, as well as Austrian German and languages from Asia

and Africa. One of the more notable characteristics from the language spoken by the children was the use of do-periphrasis as a simple past marker. I chose to investigate the past tense morphology of the kindergarten children because it was used regularly in everyday kindergarten activities and took a variety of forms (Including do-periphrasis, overregularization, and zero past marking) within the children's speech. By examining the variety of past tense forms occurring in both the controlled interviews with myself and the natural classroom environment with their peers, I hoped to gain some insight into how the children used ELF on both a sociolinguistic and morphological level. It is important to recognize and examine ELF in kindergartens in order to serve ELF-speaking children better once they enter primary school and encounter more restrictive and formal English instruction.

For the majority of these children, their English usage occurred primarily in this kindergarten environment, in which they needed to use English for communication and socialization. This environment is explained in the literature review of this thesis. The literature review also summarizes the rise of preschool English language education, discuss English for young learners and English as a lingua franca in early childhood and early primary learning environments, and outline bilingual and monolingual children's development of the past tense in order to differentiate L1 and L2 language development characteristics from the ELF usage shown in the study. The methodology and results section has a full description of the study of 38 preschool children's past tense use. The study contains three phases: questionnaires for parents and teachers on language use and attitudes, individual interviews with the participating children in which they were shown flash cards inspired by the Wug test from Berko's 1958 study to elicit the past tense, and recordings of spontaneous speech within the classroom. The demographics of the kindergarten, of both the children and teachers, is described and discussed alongside additional questionnaire data. After the questionnaire results, the results of the individual interviews are shown before the classroom recordings. Several excerpts taken from the 32 hours of classroom recordings are analyzed in order to demonstrate the use of these conjugation strategies, and to consider them within the wider context of ELF, teaching English to young learners, and ELF and early childhood education. The analysis will reveal that the community of practice (As defined by Wenger 1998, Kalocsai 2011, and Eckert 2014) contained within the

kindergarten, the children's fluid grammatical systems, and their motivated, communicatively-gearred language use are important factors that play a role in the children's past tense usage, and their usage of ELF within the kindergarten environment. This thesis will then conclude with a consideration of the implications of ELF usage in early childhood.

2. Literature Review

2.1. English for young learners and EU language policy

Presently, there is a global push towards introducing English to younger (preschool) children through governmental language policies and growing demand from families. In the context of this paper, the children being referred to are between the ages of 3 and 6 years, unless stated otherwise when discussing early primary education. A significant European Parliament publication that has influenced early primary education policy is the Barcelona objective. The Barcelona objective (2002) called for young children to learn “communication in their mother tongue plus two languages” (European Parliament Commission 2002: 5). With its global relevance and prominence, one of these two languages is likely to be English: the most studied foreign language within the EU (Eurydice 2017). Within Austria, “[...] English is still by far the most popular foreign language taught at primary school level (about 97% of all primary school children learn English)” (Jantscher & Landseidler 2000: 17). Integrated foreign language learning, which involves using the foreign language to teach other educational content and/or for classroom activities, has become part of the Austrian school system after demand from families and those in charge of educational policy (Jantscher & Landseidler 2000: 19). “[...] integrated foreign language education (or “embedded” language learning) starting at the age of 6 (= first year of schooling) was incorporated into regular schooling practices in September 1998 [...]” (Jantscher & Landseidler 2000: 19). This aligns with the EU commission's continued promotion of multilingualism after the publication of the Barcelona objective (2002).

The EU commission, acting on behalf of the European Parliament, has conducted extensive research and evaluation of multilingualism, and its promotion, within the EU context. In their communication: “Multilingualism: an asset to Europe” the EU commission issued an invitation to the Member States to “Provide genuine opportunities for all to master the national

language(s) and two other languages,” (2008: 12) and evaluates the Member states in a 2012 report as “Europeans and their languages.” This report shows the prominence of English within the EU, stating that, “At a national level English is the most widely spoken foreign language in 19 of the 25 Member States where it is not an official language,” (2012: 6) and that “Two thirds of Europeans (67%) consider English as one of the two most useful languages for themselves” (2012: 7). English’s perceived usefulness and wide distribution gives it higher status among EU nationals, which is shown in their opinion on language learning and children, “English is [...] perceived to be the most useful language. More than three quarters (79%) of Europeans think it an important language for children to learn” (2012: 75). Factors such as the EU parliament's encouragement of multilingualism and the perception of English as an essential language for European children’s futures has led to an increase in language education and English exposure for preschool children.

Moon, Enever and Raman (2008) note the “huge expansion in TEYL [Teaching English to Young Learners] programmes across the world,” which is “allied to the perceived importance of English, which in turn is beginning to have a significant impact on policy decisions, increasingly from pre-primary upwards [...]” (2008: 3). English education at the pre-primary levels continues to increase in popularity; the rise in preschoolers learning and speaking English merits some consideration of the way English is used by these young language speakers. The function of English spoken by these children, who are learning English in a country where it is not the language of everyday life and/or the language spoken at home, will be that of a *Lingua Franca*. They are using English to communicate, make friends, and ensure that their needs are met. The volume of young English learners within the EU, and the high likelihood of their ELF usage, will contribute to the continued decentralization of English, and the way it is spoken within the EU and possibly abroad by both non-native English speakers and native English speakers living in non-native speaking communities.

The ELLiE (Early Language Learning in Europe) research study by the British Council provided data on foreign language learning for early primary school children in the EU. Concerning language policy for early primary learners, the ELLiE study says the following:

“5. CEFR [Common European Framework of Reference] level descriptors as benchmarks for early primary FLL are wholly inappropriate. Such references suggest a limited appreciation of the real processes of early FLL” (2011: 5). This rejection of CEFR descriptors to monitor young learners language skills is typical of both those teaching a foreign language to young learners, as well as early childhood educators. Much of the learning occurring among young learners is holistic, grounded in meaningful use, and difficult to classify. This perspective of letting children use language without being constrained by regulations and frameworks lends itself to ELF being used in an early childhood setting with diverse teachers and staff. ELF is unregulated by CEFR due to it being a variable communicative tool; in an environment where individuals from a variety of language backgrounds are trying to communicate, CEFR does not have any power. Some of the driving factors leading to the current state of teaching English to young learners, and the policies encouraging it, are outlined by Enever et al. (2009: 6). Educational policies in certain countries are politically and/or economically motivated:

National decisions to choose English as the language for international interaction may also be identified as politically motivated where English is increasingly seen as a generic skill, according to Graddol (2008), leading governments to lower the starting age with the aim of building strong English proficiency levels for human resource development.

This view of English as an all-purpose skill needed for participation in a global workforce is leading to increased investment in English education by politicians and policy makers. Larger global considerations are not the only factor for government educational policies: parents and families are also eager to introduce English to their children from a younger age:

“[...] there is also a strong upward pressure from parents nationally on governments for their children to learn English from an earlier age because of perceived social and economic benefit [...]” (Enever et al. 2009: 6). This demand from parents, and the comparatively slow implementation of language policy changes in education, has led to an increase in private primary English education. According to Enever et al. (2009), private educators have taken note of the economic opening given to them by the global influence of English and the increased demand among parents for English being taught in primary schools; This sometimes even influences local governments to include more English in primary schools or to make the starting

age younger (Enever et al. 2009: 8). Murphy et al. (2016:62) note that many countries are introducing English earlier in preschool settings because of the strong influence coming from parents who want their children to learn English (Murphy et al. 2016: 62). Due to this perception of English as a means to better their children's lives, parents are pressuring educational systems for earlier exposure to English, and early childhood educational environments are meeting their need for this early exposure (Edelenbos and Kubanek: 2005). For further information on the pedagogy of teaching languages to young learners, see Edelenbos, Johnstone & Kubanek 2006. The big picture concept of a global society has motivated parents and policy makers to place value on foreign languages, especially those with global economic and academic reach, like English.

In his 2006 publication *English Next*, Graddol describes the global position of English and English learning with a comprehensive review of statistical information on global English education, use, and instruction. He describes the high priority placement of English in school curriculums as part of a list of "basic skills" (2006: 72) stating that, "Quite simply, its function and place in the curriculum is no longer that of a 'foreign language' and this is bringing about profound changes in who is learning English, their motives for learning it and their needs as learners" (Graddol 2006: 72). English is now necessary for work and education, especially in Europe. Despite the European Council emphasizing plurilingualism ("The European project is to create plurilingual citizens" (Graddol 2006: 89)). English is taking priority when it comes to economic considerations, such as job opportunities: "In practice, within many large companies, and even in parts of the European governmental institutions, English has become a common working language" (2006: 92). This necessity for English has led to its prominence in European education: "Steadily, across Europe, English has become the 'first foreign' language in education systems [...]" (2006:92). This consistent increase in English education has led to more parents wanting their children to start learning it earlier, as noted in Enever's introduction; the starting age of English instruction has been decreasing globally, making English a subject in primary schools and even some preschools (Graddol 2006: 88). In their publication, Graddol refers to English for young learners as its own learning model, alongside English as a Foreign Language, English as a second language, and Global English. Graddol describes the target variety of

English for young learners as a native English variety; however, the difficulty of finding a staff made up of exclusively native English speakers, or of one variety of native English, means that the target probably will not be met (Graddol 2006: 91). He acknowledges that the English for young language learners (EYLL) teachers may not be native English speakers, which adds to the likelihood of English as a lingua franca being used in an English language early childhood educational environment in Europe. Graddol also states that the purpose for English for young learners is “to develop language awareness and prepare for higher levels of proficiency in later years,” and that the language skills being emphasized are speaking and listening comprehension. He notes that the learning environment is “often informal in kindergarten, preschool or primary classroom. Affective factors are important” (Graddol 2006: 91). The language skills learned in early childhood environments are informal, but meaningful in that they are the foundations upon which further education and language learning can be built. English for young language learners (EYLL), and English as a lingua franca (ELF), two of the developments that have been touched on in this contextualization of the current climate of English instruction within the EU, will be discussed in further detail in the next section.

2.2. English as a Lingua Franca and communication among English language learners

English as a Lingua Franca is defined by Seidlhofer as: “[...] *any use of English among speakers of different first languages for whom English is the communicative medium of choice, and often the only option*” (Seidlhofer 2011: 7). This is the definition I will be operating under for the duration of this paper. In a setting in which English is spoken out of necessity, the speakers are focused on getting things done effectively, and are not weighed down by a need for total grammatical accuracy. Seidlhofer, in an earlier article, writes that “[...] English is being shaped at least as much by its nonnative speakers as by its native speakers [...]” (Seidlhofer 2005: 339), implying that the use of ELF among these nonnative speakers will have an effect on English language use as a whole. Sifakis and Tsantila (2018) have a more detailed definition of ELF, in which they specify that each individual ELF user “[...] brings a variety of English that he or she is most familiar and comfortable with and employs various strategies in order to communicate effectively” (Sifakis & Tsantila 2018: 1). The English variety being brought to an ELF

interaction, and the communicative strategies used during said interaction, reflect the ELF users communicative concerns and goals. Seidlhofer describes ELF users as:

[...] not primarily concerned with emulating the way native speakers use their mother tongue within their own communities, nor with socio-psychological and ideological meta-level discussions. Instead, their central concerns are relevance, efficiency, and personal satisfaction in language learning and language use (Seidlhofer 2011: 22).

Pedrazzini & Nava agree with this statement, noting that users use ELF as a communicative tool in transactional situations, and they do not place any identification or cultural value onto ELF, like they would on their L1 (Pedrazzini & Nava 2010: 286). Kohn writes that, “Learners also set their own requirements of successful communicative performance” (Kohn 2018: 37); as long as the learner is meeting their own internal criteria for communicative ability, they will feel that they are effective ELF users. Due to ELF being used as a communicative tool, the effectiveness of said tool is evaluated by the individual using and creating it.

This relates back to the attitudes of children learning or acquiring a first or second language. Children, when acquiring their L1 or L2, are not self conscious or concerned about grammatical rules or register. They simply want to tell someone what they saw outside, inform everyone of their opinion on birds, or get something to eat. The daily language use of children is informal and not yet influenced by these anxieties about language, which are learned later in life. A relevant anecdote from the kindergarten examined in this thesis comes to mind: A teacher was sitting with a table of five children, all approximately six years old, during lunch time. Two boys were loudly speaking German to each other, shutting out the non-German speaking children sitting with them. The teacher told them that they were at the kindergarten to learn and practice English, and requested that they switch to English. One boy remarked, in exasperation, “But I ALREADY know English!” They did not care about having perfect, native-level grammar or pronunciation, which neither of them had. In their opinion, they could already communicate in English, which meant that they spoke English at a high enough level and did not need any additional help or practice.

Widdowson emphasizes the importance of previous language knowledge in his commentary on Swan’s work, in which he discusses how learners use their previous knowledge

and awareness to learn another language (In this context, English): “If we shift perspective, a very different conclusion can be drawn from the fact that learners already know how to use language to communicate: that is that they will be naturally disposed to make use of this knowledge in processing the forms of the language they are being taught” (Widdowson 2013: 191). The learners will amass the communication skills they already have from their mother tongue and apply it to English, using it as a form of scaffolding to support the learning of different words and syntactical structures, with the end result being clear communication. “They will be inclined to be pragmatic and take in from the teaching input those features which they can most readily put to use – those which they identify as carrying the greatest “communicative load” (Widdowson 2013: 191). This pragmatism is an especially striking characteristic of ELF, and a reason for the appearance of lexicogrammatical features that have been observed in ELF, and cross-linguistic influence. The learners take what is most applicable to their previous knowledge, and in using it, they transform it through small changes brought on by the scaffolding of their mother tongue. Seidlhofer and Widdowson note that “[...] the non-conformities in learner language can be seen as evidence of communicative language learning, the development of a capability to put linguistic resources to pragmatic use” (Seidlhofer & Widdowson 2018: 28). These “non-conformities,” which includes lexicogrammatical features observed in ELF, are the way ELF users alter language for their own purposes while using their available linguistic resources to use.

Ferguson outlines these flexible, variable features that have been observed in ELF in his article about ELF practice:

[...] this precisely is the point about ELF: it eludes traditional categorisations; it is a fluid, flexible use of ‘English’ linguistic resources by (mostly) plurilingual individuals who do not constitute a speech community in any traditional sense and for whom effective translocal communication is the main goal (Ferguson 2012: 178).

ELF is a way to consolidate linguistic resources so people from different language backgrounds may communicate efficiently and effectively. ELF is able to accommodate a wide variety of linguistic resources brought to it by individuals from a variety of language backgrounds. These

individuals are able to use their linguistic resources while speaking ELF to see what is most effective, and then “meet in the middle” of their shared resource pool. This consolidation is a result of the processes that lead to innovations by ELF speakers: they are the creative ability of the ELF users to alter ELF (Grammatically and/or pragmatically) as they see fit to meet their needs, and the utilization of the aforementioned linguistic resources that all ELF users utilize (Ferguson 2012: 178). ELF is shaped by its users, and their linguistic and social backgrounds. It is a flexible entity that does not have a concrete geographic base, made for the purposes of communication, that shifts and alters itself depending on the individuals using it.

Like ELF users, language learners use English in their own way, and for their own purposes. Language learners do not repeat back the exact input they receive from their teachers: “Learners, in other words, have their own agenda and it is this they are conforming to rather than to that of the teacher” (Seidlhofer 2011: 186). The language learner in general, and the children learning English in a kindergarten, are internalizing language in a way that does not entirely line up with what they are being taught, “Although learners’ intake does not correspond with teacher input, they do take in a good deal, picking up some bits of language, discarding others. The interesting question arises as to what motivates their selective learning” (Seidlhofer 2011: 187). Previous language knowledge is a crucial resource to a learner of any language, and to individuals using ELF; “One can safely assume that this experience will have made them aware that not all features of what is linguistically encoded are of equal valency, that some are of greater functional value for them than others” (Seidlhofer 2011: 188). Depending on their previous language knowledge, the ELF user will be more or less likely to select certain linguistic features of English to use and exploit, which will not necessarily be the same way English native speakers use English” (Seidlhofer 2011: 188). Using their previous language knowledge is a necessary part of a users experience learning another language, as it “[...] helps them to ‘naturalize’ the new language, counter its foreignness and appropriate it as a communicative resource” (Seidlhofer 2011: 195).

The integration of familiar and unfamiliar linguistic features is functionally effective, and permits the language learner to use a foreign language such as English in a way that makes sense to them while still being intelligible. “The essential overall point is that the extension of formal

knowledge is motivated by functional need. How people make the language work for themselves is primary, and the forms they produce are simply a consequence of this process” (Seidlhofer 2011: 199). Individual language needs are accommodated by ELF, due to it being decentralized and not fixed in its forms or grammar.

This decentralized, fluidity of ELF leads to it being easily exploited by its users, as noted by Seidlhofer: “[ELF users] exploit the potential of the language, they are fully involved in the interactions, whether for work or for play. They are focused on the interactional and transactional purposes of the talk and on their interlocutors as people rather than the linguistic code itself” (2011: 98). ELF users are motivated by their present social interactions. They operate in the present, negotiating meaning and altering the linguistic code as they see fit in order to suit the needs of the present moment, the speaker, listener(s), and a variety of other contextual elements (Seidlhofer 2011: 98). They are not concerned with a standardized linguistic code, but with communication and interaction and creating innovations that facilitate them. The innovations in English that are produced by individuals exploiting the virtual language. The virtual language is “[...] a set of general encoding principles which are independent of their partial and selective use and which represents an inexhaustible potential for meaning making” (Widdowson 2016: 33). It should be noted that the virtual language is “[...] not a system of actual encodings: it is a generative encoding potential whose properties can only be inferred from its variable use” (Widdowson 2016: 33). This potential is what allows ELF users to use certain constructions that are not typically used in Standard English, like the examples from the kindergarten, because they were generated from said potential and are therefore grammatically correct and intelligible, even if they may sound unusual to Standard English speakers. “Rather, what we observe is the unfolding of familiar processes of language variation in language use, but extended in non-canonical, creative ways” (Seidlhofer 2011: 108). The variations on standard English use are in the name of effective, functional, and creative language use, free from the norms that confine native speakers.

While these variations are not done in Standard English, they are still perfectly viable within the scope of the language system: “We can observe that while all these innovations are not attested in StE, they are ‘legal’ in terms of the English phonological/phonotactic,

morphological, and syntactic systems, and these provide speakers with a set of basic bearings that they exploit to communicative effect” (Seidlhofer 2011: 109). Examples from the kindergarten, which are used among the children across all language demographics include: “I, also,” instead of “Me, too,” to indicate agreement or wanting something another child has, like a piece of paper, “In real,” which verifies that the story they are telling occurred in real life, and “Oh yes,” which serves as a positive answer to a negative question. These innovations are the result of the users’ previous language knowledge and English knowledge coming into contact and meshing with each other. These three innovations can be traced back to previous language knowledge brought to the kindergarten by German-speaking children, even though these innovations were used across all demographics. “I, also,” corresponds directly to “Ich, auch,” “In real” is a direct translation of “In echt,” and “Oh yes,” has the same meaning as “Doch”. These innovations are not just examples of previous language knowledge interacting with English; they also demonstrate that German, being spoken by roughly a third of the children at home, has some influence on the English spoken by all of the children who attend the kindergarten. This is because the languages “converge and merge” (Seidlhofer 2011: 112). “And when languages converge and merge, the virtual underlying systems of all languages involved come into play, and will take on more or less prominent roles depending on the specific situation” (Seidlhofer 2011: 112). The merging of languages within the language user affects their language use, specifically their additional language. By being able to pick linguistic features that make sense to them and their contexts of language use, it allows them to exploit the virtual language of English in a creative and efficient way that expands their communicative and linguistic skills. ELF, a shared resource among language users who all bring their varied linguistic backgrounds to the table, can be molded and shaped into whichever form is needed for a given situation, and can accommodate great creativity “[...] a vibrant, powerful, and versatile shared resource that enables communication across linguistic and geographic boundaries” (Seidlhofer 2011: 109). It allows people to take charge of language and use it as an effective tool for cross-cultural communication, transactional interactions, and other varied purposes.

Many of these cross-cultural communications and transactional interactions occur within the community of practice. As defined by Eckert, “A community of practice is a collection of

people who engage on an ongoing basis in some common endeavor [...]” (Eckert 2006: 1). Practice could mean any variety of activities, but in relation to this project, it means learning and using English. When a group of people meet regularly to engage in an activity, such as learning and using English, they form a community of practice. The kindergarten studied in this project meets these criteria for a community of practice; the children are together every weekday in the same location, forming meaningful relationships and using English with each other and their teachers. A community of practice is able to foster ELF communication due to several factors: diverse members; fluid, decentralized membership; and a shared linguistic repertoire. Eckert writes that “In the course of regular joint activity, a community of practice develops ways of doing things, views, values, power relations, ways of talking” (Eckert 2006: 1). By regularly interacting and doing activities together in English, the members of the community are forming similar ideas about language and language use, and even altering each others way of speaking by virtue of being in the group.

Kalocsai recognized the value of using community of practice as a way to assist with ELF research, as it “[...] allows the examination of linguistically heterogeneous, temporary, and often dislocated communities, which cannot be associated with a linguistic variety in any traditional sense of the term” (Kalocsai 2013: 26). Communities of practice unite disparate individuals as they go about accomplishing a shared goal or activity. ELF is a communicative tool used by individuals from a variety of language backgrounds who find themselves interacting with each other, so there is overlap from both concepts. Kalocsai goes on to say that “ELF speakers do not fully comply with any set of external norms but negotiate their own norms of speaking” (Kalocsai 2013: 23); this negotiation is how ELF speakers navigate communication so that all parties can use their linguistic abilities and come to a mutual agreement. Wenger’s definition of participation in a community of practice connects to the interactivity of language negotiation: “Participation refers to a process of taking part and also to the relations with others that reflect this process. It suggests both action and connection” (Wenger 1998: 55). Negotiating ELF, as part of a community of practice, is participating in said community and creating mutually agreed upon norms. Due to this negotiation, the forms and functions of the language used tend to be related, as the forms are formulated based on their functionality. As noted by

Cogo, “In these situations and communities, ELF is both form and function; besides, by performing certain functions it is appropriated by its speakers and changed in form. In other words, form seems to follow function and start a circular phenomenon of variation and change” (Cogo 2007: 60). This feedback loop, of negotiation, formulation, use, and re-negotiation, is part of the overall conventionalization of meaning for the community of practice. Two aspects of the community are essential for this to occur: “[...] shared experience over time, and a commitment to shared understanding” (Eckert 2006: 1). When a community convenes for an extended period of time, allowing relationships and connections to develop among its members, and they are willing to build on the norms they have cultivated as a group, then they will go on to establish certain norms that are meaningful to the group, such as linguistic forms or a particular way of speaking. This is a “shared repertoire,” which “[...] includes routines, words, tools, ways of doing things, stories, gestures, symbols, genres, actions, or concepts that the community has produced or adopted in the course of its existence, and which have become part of its practice” (Wenger 1998: 83). Examples of this shared repertoire were found in recordings of the kindergartener’s lunch conversations. The older children could sit by themselves at tables separate from the teachers, and their conversations reflected inside jokes and phrases. An example is “Easy peasy,” a phrase used by multiple children. The extended version, “Easy peasy lemon-squeezy, all the way to Japanesey,” was repeated, and chanted, multiple times by a group of children during one lunch time recording. The children were enjoying the repetition and the rapport they cultivated by sharing the same rhyming phrase. This is an instance of shared enjoyment and belonging to a group, even though the children belonged to fairly disparate cultures and linguistic backgrounds. The intersections between the members lives inside and outside of the community of practice also play a role in the development of social and language conventions. “Explanation for broad patterns is to be found in speakers’ experience, understanding, and linguistic development as they engage in life as members of important overarching categories” (Eckert 2006: 2). The different backgrounds of the members contribute to the overall composition of the community itself, and these different backgrounds come together to influence the language and culture of the community. “Another important aspect of the communities of practice approach is its focus on the fluidity of social space and the diversity of experience” (Eckert 2006: 3). A community of

practice can include individuals from a wide variety of backgrounds, and continuously have members coming in and out of the community due to the fluid nature of socialization. A community of practice is without a hierarchy or fixed central point; members can join and leave, and there is not necessarily a standard type of member. “Communities of practice emerge in response to common interest or position, and play an important role in forming their members’ participation in, and orientation to, the world around them” (Eckert 2006: 3). Communities of practice account for the diverse communities that now congregate around the world, for a shared purpose that has some significance to the lives of its members.

2.3. English as taught to young learners

Pinter, in her book *Teaching young language learners*, which centers around children aged 5-11 years, discusses the overall benefits, and educational strategies involving teaching English to young learners. She lists the positives for early language learning as: young learners have more time to learn and get comfortable with the language, they have less anxiety and inhibition, and also have an intuitive grasp of language and attunement to new phonology (2006: 29). This is in agreement with Edelenbos and Kubanek (2009) and validates current EU language policy. Pinter also mentions the importance of informal language learning for young children: “Children’s advantages as language learners are most obvious in informal contexts such as the playground. They tend to pick up language in everyday situations from other children in their environment relatively quickly because they want to play and make friends” (2006: 30). They are motivated to make friends and play, and language is a way to accomplish those goals. The routines in an early childhood educational environment are also useful for young learners, because the routines give them a structure that they know to expect and do not find overwhelming, and the repetition of key words and phrases allows them to get used to certain social scripts: “Familiar routines and games offer great opportunities for hearing the same language again and again and learning to take part in simple conversations” (Pinter 2006: 30). When the phrase “Let’s get dressed” is used every time when the children need to get their jackets and shoes on, the children will quickly learn that “to dress” is to put on clothes, and they will pick up related lexical items, such as “to pull,” “to button,” “jacket,” “hat,” etc. This input is valuable, especially from teachers: “In young

learners' classrooms, especially at the beginning stages of learning a language, teachers often talk a lot in the target language because they provide the language input. This helps children to get used to the intonation patterns and the sounds of the language" (Pinter 2006: 47). Routine language exposure in familiar situations will allow the children to pick up English in a methodical, natural way that is not forced or focused on "formal" teaching methods. Instead, they will learn by doing their normal activities in English, and by using English at whatever level makes them comfortable.

English-language, early childhood settings are further discussed by Murphy et al (2007). Concerning the overall approach they have observed in language and education policy for early childhood educational settings, they write: "A communicative approach seems to be widely adopted in that the main aim is to use the language in meaningful and useful contexts" (Murphy et al 2017: 61). This communicative approach aligns with ELF, because it is focused on English as a communicative tool used in authentic contexts. Murphy et al also note that "Where there is provision in another language (usually English), the focus tends more to be on developing language awareness and bicultural understanding as much as on actually learning features of English" (Murphy et al 2017: 61). In these early childhood educational settings, the teachers are trying to teach the language in a holistic way, by integrating customs, songs, and celebrations. Learning another language also makes the children aware of different languages, paving the way for metalinguistic awareness. Murphy et al's review of language policy and approaches in Europe seems to show that the English teaching approaches could allow the children in these early childhood educational settings to engage with English authentically, with the aim of clear, effective communication.

The general principles and practice of teaching to young learners is reviewed by Edelenbos and Kubanek. They discuss the benefits of starting foreign language learning from an early age; it has the child use their naturally-occurring language acquisition devices, gives them more time to become familiar with a language before school, and generally gives the child a multilingual, culturally diverse experience which positively affects their social and cognitive development. (Edelenbos & Kubanek 2008: 45). However, they warn against relying solely on an early start, emphasizing that consistency throughout the school years, support from the

environment, and quality of teaching are also key (Edelenbos & Kubanek 2008: 45-46).

Consistent engagement and learning of a language, over a period of several years, are crucial for long-term language retention, and retention of the benefits that come with early foreign language learning. As part of their conclusion on their review of good practice, Edelenbos and Kubanek remark that if their suggestions are followed, “[...] then good practice might well be considered as exemplifying important principles of early language teaching such as ‘respect for otherness’, ‘tolerating cultural dichotomies’ or ‘dealing explicitly with prejudice’” (Edelenbos & Kubanek 2008: 52). These principles of respect and intercultural tolerance fit into the unifying ideology spread by European Parliament policy, as well as the inclusive, accepting nature of ELF, which is in contrast to prescriptive language models in its acceptance of language backgrounds and varieties of English.

In a 2015 article by Dolean, they discuss the effectiveness of teaching a foreign language at a young age. They say that instruction in a foreign language is possible for preschool children, as long as it “[...] consists of organizing meaningful age appropriate activities held in the target language, [and] using concepts that children are already familiar with in their native language [...]” (Dolean 2015: 716). Developmental and contextual appropriateness are important in foreign language learning for young learners; if the activities correspond to their age level and language proficiency in their L1, there is no reason they cannot engage in foreign language learning. Dolean, like Elvin et al, they are skeptical of formal language instruction for young children, favoring the more implicit language instruction that is found in immersion programs. “Successful immersion programs in kindergarten can help children develop skills ‘in a foreign language’ and do not necessarily need to aim at helping them ‘learn a foreign language’ explicitly” (Dolean 2015: 715). For kindergarteners, integrating the foreign language into their daily lives and play activities such as play and socialization with their peers are more effective and developmentally appropriate than sitting them down for a formal lesson.

Elvin, Maagero, and Simonsen examined the introduction of English as a foreign language lessons in a Norwegian kindergartens over the course of four years. They came to several conclusions on motivation and English language instruction for

kindergarteners/preschool children. Children learning a foreign language have a desire to deepen their developing communication skills:

One wishes to expand his repertoire of meaning-making resources. Through mastering, for example, English, one will be able to communicate with people with whom one could not communicate before. One enters into a new world in which one becomes part of a community where one can have viewpoints in English (Elvin et al 2007: 77).

By entering this new speech community, they expand their world and find new things to explore: “Children seem to derive great pleasure from mastering a new language, and they also have strong motivation. They feel pride and satisfaction at being able to share this with others” (Elvin et al 2007: 77). The community and socialization aspects of language learning for young learners are highly valuable, and one of their strongest motivators. When a preschooler/kindergartener is learning a foreign language, it is beneficial for them to be engaged with a speech community and to use their developing social skills along with the foreign language they are learning.

Elvin et al. also note that “It is important that children experience pleasure when encountering English, and that they laugh and are surprised” (Elvin et al 2007: 83). At the 3-6 age range, positive reinforcement and, more generally, fun, are useful tools for motivating children to learn another language. It makes them see it as play, something they can manipulate and use on their own terms, not just something that is dictated to them by adults. Using play as a language learning tool allows the children to use all of their language resources in order to engage with English in a highly motivated manner, which can lead to ELF use.

Mourão, writing on English lessons and English corners in early childhood settings, describes the procedure of an English lesson in a kindergarten: “Considering a fairly typical pre-primary EFL lesson, beginning with circle time, teacher led instruction occurs in the form of play-like routine activities that demonstrate and provide access to the target language” (Mourão 2014: 258). The use of play and routine allow the child to interact with the language in a familiar, engaging way. The teacher also introduces vocabulary and constructions in order to broaden their expressive and communicative abilities. The teachers in Mourão 2014 reported that their children actively used the language of a topic as well as scripted language from the teacher-led activities: for example ‘Let’s play ...’, ‘Your turn!’, ‘Raise your hand!’, ‘What’s

missing?', 'They're the same', and 'Help please' (the latter a request the children are generally encouraged to use if they cannot remember something in English)" (Mourão 2014: 261). These examples of scripted language allow navigation of social situations, such as playing games and taking turns. The example of 'help please' gives the young learner a simple phrase that activates further explanation or support in their quest to communicate or understand something in English. Scripted language molds the developing language habits of the young learners, which makes the initial introduction fairly important when presenting a phrase or vocabulary to a child, due to its usage as a scaffold upon which original phrases and sentences can be built. At the kindergarten discussed in the study, consistent, scripted language is used way to get children at the very beginning of their English learning journey to use it to communicate basic needs. Some examples are "Stop it, I don't like it!," "[Item], please!" and "Go to toilet," simple phrases that accomplish basic goals like asserting bodily autonomy, getting something, and tending to bodily functions. These scripted phrases can then be expanded upon as the child gains more English knowledge. "[Item], please!" can later expand into "I want [Item], please!", then "May I please have [Item]?" as it serves as a simple scaffold for the slightly more elaborate full sentence, then for the polite form of asking. This consistent scripted speech, as most of the kindergarten children use it from one time to another, becomes part of their shared repertoire.

2.3.1. English immersion for young learners

In this section, the educational practice at English immersion kindergartens will be described, using literature from Jalkanen and Tabors in order to understand this type of educational environment and the language learning and use that occurs within it. This is important for the overall contextualization of the kindergarten that is being examined in the study, as it is an English immersion kindergarten. Contextualization will allow a fuller picture of how and why certain language phenomena may occur within this environment.

Jalkanen goes into detail about daily activities at an English kindergarten in Kuopio, Finland, and the theoretical reasoning behind said activities. The kindergarten is an "early total immersion" kindergarten, which is defined as "[...] a form of bilingual education, the major focus of which is on the development of communication skills in the target language" (Jalkanen 2009:

98). This emphasis on communication is shown by the focus on building social skills, not just content-based knowledge. In immersion, the social skills are learned through using the new language; both are taught in a simultaneous and integrated manner. (Jalkanen 2009: 98). The experiences described in the article tend to be similar to those described in the language policy report. For example: “Parents often opt to send their children to a language kindergarten because of the implications of the Critical Period Hypothesis” (Jalkanen 2009: 116). As noted in the section detailing language policy, the push for earlier starts to foreign language learning is due to parents and policymakers believing the “the earlier the better.” The critical language hypothesis plays a motivating role in both policy makers decisions, and parents choices regarding childcare. Concerning age, Jalkanen writes “Since most normal indigenous children have established their first language (mother tongue) by the age of 3½ to four years, four-year-olds should be better prepared to cope in the second language environment,” (2009: 100) putting an age limit on the “earlier is better” mantra, and reasoning that having already developed language skills will assist them in learning English: “Their mother tongue should be developed enough to enable them to process visual/aural input in English using concepts and structures that already exist through their experiences in Finnish” (2009: 100). Their L1 serves as scaffolding for certain concepts, allowing the option of one to one translation and leading to a basic, subconscious idea of concepts like sentence structure. This resonates with ELF use; ELF users are utilizing their previous linguistic knowledge in order to make sense of a foreign language, and to use it in a way that makes sense to them. This previous language knowledge is useful after they undergo passive learning and receive select input from their environment. “Often at first, the child goes through an initial silent period, and relies on help (or scaffolding) from the teacher or older peers to learn chunks of English” (Jalkanen 2009: 101). The child also receives scaffolding from their peers and teachers, and are given useful chunks of language in order to function in the kindergarten, until they are able to express themselves in their own words, as seen in Mourão 2014. “Even small routines such as saying good morning are important to the children, and provide them with real situations in which they can use English” (Jalkanen 2009: 101). Authentic, meaningful daily routines and interactions allow the children to learn English in a predictable, but real environment that is similar to the everyday activities the experience in their

L1. The social and linguistic knowledge given to them by their L1 gives them a base upon which to learn and construct a new language. The instruction at immersion kindergartens is not formal, but grounded in experiences and the child's personal needs: “Young learners’ second language instruction should be holistic, and take account of each child as an individual” (Jalkanen 2009: 101). The lack of rigid, formal instruction, and encouragement of speech production allows the child to learn English on their own terms, and use it to communicate authentically and sincerely with their peers and teachers. Corrections are done through correct repetitions of the child’s spoken language, so as to keep their confidence intact (Jalkanen 2011: 104). This correctional method is examined later in a transcript of a conversation between a child and their teacher, in the study conducted for this thesis. Jalkanen also mentions elicitations as a form of language expansion and error correction: “As the child’s proficiency increases, error correction also takes the form of clarification requests or elicitation” (Jalkanen 2011: 104). The integration of corrections and language expansion in the everyday conversations between teachers and children allows for more relaxed informality for the children, making them less nervous to speak, but still permits the development of appropriate language skills. This holistic, informal learning style in which a child has to use their previous language knowledge in order to communicate is likely to lead to ELF usage within the kindergarten or preschool environment.

Tabors, in their book *One child, two languages: A guide for preschool educators of children learning English as a second language*, examines English immersion from the context of children with no exposure to English being integrated into an American kindergarten. Tabors discusses the process undertaken by the children learning English as their L2. They state that, during the language learning process, “Typically, [the children] use everything they already know about their new language, and, not surprisingly, make many mistakes as they work their way through the process of acquiring the more complicated aspects of English” (Tabors 1997: 59). The children learning English utilize any previous language knowledge in order to scaffold their learning, and after a certain amount of adjustment, practice, and mistake-making, they will begin to understand and utilize the more complex structures. Like in Jalkanen 2009 and Mourão 2014, useful and frequent phrases (Scripted language) with clear meanings, can be internalized

and used by the learners in order to function within the English classroom environment. Tabors writes:

When [young language learners] have both the vocabulary and the grammatical form under control, they can express themselves in highly sophisticated ways, but when a piece is missing from the puzzle of their knowledge, they have to drop back to techniques that they used in previous stages of their development of the second language (Tabors 1997: 68)

So if a child who otherwise has a wide English vocabulary and entrenched understanding of grammar encounters a situation that they simply do not have the context for vocabulary for, they would regress back to the language abilities and coping methods that assisted them earlier in the language learning process. Scripted phrases could assist in providing structure to their thoughts when they have difficulty expressing them in a certain context.

Scaffolding, constructive phrases, and holistic learning assist young language learners in learning and using their English language abilities to communicate with their teachers and peers. The tools present in these holistic environments allow children to take English and make it their own, which will result in ELF usage due to the modifications they place on English for communicative purposes.

2.3.2. English as a lingua franca and young learners

This section will detail ELF in primary schools, which is the closest available ELF research that could be applied, in part, to ELF in kindergartens. While the youngest children in primary school studies are older than the 4-6 age range being examined in this project, and the setting is a classroom and not a more informal kindergarten, the pedagogical approaches to English instruction and the considerations of younger learners are useful for well-rounded representation and contextualization of the state of ELF for young learners. Paula Vettorel's 2016 article on ELF-informed classroom practices had some notable findings from the teaching proposals of teachers in a pre-service educational program, which were split into five categories:

1. Fostering awareness of the spread of English in the world, of its diversification and of language contact (English with other languages, other languages with English).
2. Exposure to WE varieties (Inner Circle, Outer Circle).
3. English as used in ELF/EIL contexts

4. Englishes, cultures, and intercultural skills
5. Communication strategies (Vettorel 2016: 119).

While these teaching proposals, and the categories their suggestions fell under, had lower secondary learners in mind, I found that nearly all of these categories also applied to a kindergarten setting, particularly the specific English immersion, international kindergarten being examined in this project. Categories 1 and 3, awareness of the spread of English and English in an ELF context, cannot exactly be fully discussed in a kindergarten/early childhood setting because history and historical events are not typical subjects taught to young children, who have, at most, a tentative grasp on the concept of time. However, 2,4, and 5 can be fully embraced in a kindergarten setting, and took place during regular kindergarten activities.

Teachers and students can come from both the inner and outer circle, and the different phrasing and pronunciation can be compared in a more concrete manner. For example, a child might point out that a teacher from India uses one word for an object, while a teacher from the United States uses a different word entirely. They can question this difference, and learn that because the teachers learned English in different places, their Englishes are slightly different, but still valid. For category 4, there would not necessarily be any direct mention of different Englishes, just the different ways people say and pronounce things. However, the children will be made aware of different cultures through learning from maps and celebrating different holidays. They will have to interact with their classmates from different cultures, and adjust themselves accordingly. Category 5 is most applicable to the kindergarten setting, because the teachers main focus is the cultivation of communication strategies. Their goal is clear communication in English, but they will also give the children scripted phrases (Jalkanen 2009, Mourão 2014, Tabors 1997) to facilitate easier communication at the beginning of the child's attendance at the kindergarten. They also point out body language, and explain to the children what a particular face or posture means.

In her 2013 study of ELF interactions between international primary students (Aged 9-11), Vettorel defined an ELF-oriented setting:

The communicative contextual settings, which were complementary to classroom work, can be defined as ELF-oriented in that
(a) participants belonged to different linguacultures,

- (b) English constituted the only commonly shared verbal code,
- (c) interaction and self-expression were aimed at genuine communication among peers (Vettorel 2013: 153).

Linguistic diversity, the need to speak English to communicate, and social interaction are also features found in many international English kindergartens, as discussed above. This makes them ELF-oriented environments. Vettorel also goes over the young learners' language use, which has features such as conversion, in which

[...] words which are part of the young ELF users' lexical baggage are likely to have been employed in novel functions to fill a momentary gap in the lexicon; it is difficult to say whether the above examples have been created out of a conscious strategy (Vettorel 2013: 155).

Features like conversion are part of the users overall communication strategy, which they may not be aware of, but they utilize their L1 in order to "fill in the gaps" of their lexical knowledge in conversation. If a child is eager to tell a teacher about picking red currants in the garden, but cannot remember the English word, they will replace it with the word in their L1 and their story would hopefully be understood by the listener. This is another example of using all available resources for communication. These young learners are motivated to make friends and communicate with the learners with whom they are engaging via ELF:

As in the written data, interpersonal communication emerges as the main focus for the participants who, in stepping into the role of ELF users, exploit their linguistic skills and resources to interpersonal meaning making (Vettorel 2013: 165).

Being allowed to engage with others and make meaning on their own gave the schoolchildren a feeling of independence, and freedom to discuss things that matter to them. Vettorel describes the students (aged 9-11) use of ELF as resourceful and engaged: "They skilfully exploit and "stretch all the linguistic resources" in their repertoire(s) in order to express content which is meaningful to them, showing a highly affective [SIC] as well as cognitive engagement" (Vettorel 2013: 165). This "stretching" of linguistic resources, engagement, and motivated expression was also found in this study of kindergarteners, which will be addressed during the discussion. Vettorel also identifies several characteristics observed in ELF communication, specifically

“lexical innovations, code switching employed to signal cultural identity, and deployment of pragmatic strategies in oral communication” (Vettorel 2013: 165-166), which was also found in this particular English immersion kindergarten. Pragmatic strategies, such as repetition, were also used by the children: “Here the requests (can you repeat) is pronounced in a non-standard way and immediately “translated” by the teacher. Can you repeat is the most employed form in the data [...]” (Vettorel 2013: 165). After reviewing the data, Vettorel states that “[...] interpersonal communication emerges as the main focus for the participants who, in stepping into the role of ELF users, exploit their linguistic skills and resources to interpersonal meaning making” (2013: 165). The children, being motivated to socialize, use all of the resources at their disposal to make friends and have meaningful communication with said friends. “In all the activities, a striking and steady element has been the strong interest and motivation the participants have displayed in communicating about the self, as well as in learning and understanding (about) other children and their worlds” (Vettorel 2013: 165). The social motivations of the children spur their utilization of ELF; one child stated ““if we had not used English, how would they understand?”” (Vettorel 2013: 166). Children are highly motivated to learn about others, and to tell others about themselves in both primary school and in early childhood educational environments, and their uninhibited curiosity and desire to share their opinions are assets to language learning.

Lopriore also wrote about their study on young learners in ELF classrooms in 2015, in which she analyzed features of the English spoken by primary school students in Italy. She explains the importance of researching ELF in young learners due to the increased diversity in the EU: “In Europe, in the last thirty years, because of the constant growth of migration movements of a wide variety of populations [...] the school population, particularly at primary level, has growingly become multilingual and multicultural in several European countries” (Lopriore 2015: 160). This multilingualism leads to children speaking different Englishes in class, and the existence of differences in their general communication styles. Having to cope with the variety of speech contained within their peer group, the children adapt to communicate as best they can. When analyzing the children’s speech, Lopriore remarks:

“The children’s multi-competence, specifically their automaticity in code switching, emerge as consistent characteristics of children’s oral production,” noting that, like the ELF users described in Kohn 2018, “[...] young learners are not concerned about the form, they know what they should communicate and whether they are effectively communicating” (Lopriore 2015:168). Younger learners focus on getting their ideas across and being able to communicate with each other; being formally or syntactically correct are not priorities for them. They are eager to use English as a tool for daily life or play; being grammatically correct would simply slow down their language use. Due to their pragmatic attitudes towards English use, young learners also use pragmatic strategies learned from their L1 when speaking English: “L1 pragmatic strategies use mostly comes from experience, when using the FL learners partly resort to their L1 competence and partly re-use or echo those strategies they have been mostly exposed to” (Lopriore 2015:170). Like in the English immersion kindergarten in Jalkanen 2009, these Italian children use their L1 as scaffolding for when they practice using English in order to help them express themselves and engage in meaningful interactions with other teachers and children. Lopriore goes on to state that “[...] the most striking features are the communicative and pragmatic strategies used by children used by children to sustain their interactions in the process of negotiating and collaborating in their meaning-making efforts” (Lopriore 2015: 170). The children use a variety of strategies in order to communicate and interact successfully and in a way that is meaningful to them, showing that they are motivated and flexible in their language use. As part of her conclusion, Lopriore writes: “As it has emerged from the oral tasks analyzed, when involved in meaningful tasks young learners, as ELF users, automatically resort to their poly-lingual pragmatic strategies, and they develop meaning oriented strategies” (Lopriore 2015: 170). Use of these pragmatic strategies, and strategies that move towards meaning, shows how innovative children in this age range can be with using English in a meaningful way.

Lopriore also observed teacher’s attitudes towards correcting English use in a 2015 article on ELF and language learning. This study involved interviews with the teachers on their attitudes and approaches. The interviewed teachers “[...] responded that their learners' ability to effectively communicate was much more important for the children's achievement and relevant for their self-confidence than correcting the commonly regarded mistakes in FL oral production”

(Lopriore 2015: 81). Like the teachers at the English kindergarten, clear communication and building confidence were two of the more prominent goals for young learners, due to their importance in creating a solid foundation for future language learning. While the classroom discussed in Lopriore's article is not the same environment as a kindergarten, both educational settings share features applicable to young learners and ELF, such as the overall linguistic and demographic makeup of the educational setting: "Contacts with people of other linguacultures, within and outside the school, may involve encounters with speakers of different first languages; in most cases, the English used in the primary classroom is a shared lingua franca" (Lopriore 2015: 74-75). The English spoken in international kindergartens like the one described in this project is ELF under this description, due to the mix of native and nonnative speakers among both children and staff. Lopriore (2015: 80) goes on:

Since English lessons are almost always taught by specialist non-native (NN) teachers and the classroom is often composed by a polylingual population, the English learnt and used to communicate in the classroom is de facto a lingua franca [...]

Nonnative teachers are an important part of the lingua franca educational environment, as they are authority figures that give lessons in vocabulary and communication, but they do it from a nonnative, likely lingua franca position. While Lopriore does not go into detail, they also mention the rise of early English education in Europe: "Children's growing exposure to English outside school affects both young learners' perception of English and their second language acquisition processes" (Lopriore 2015: 76). As implied by the last sentence, this early exposure at kindergarten will have an impact on the learners' attitudes towards English, and their overall language learning experience.

2.4. Past tense development

As noted in the introduction to this thesis, the final section of the literature review will feature an examination of children's past tense development in order to differentiate between ELF usage and typical language use for monolingual English speaking and bilingual children aged 4-6 years. This review of linguistic development is also useful for the comprehension of certain linguistic features found in children's language. The children participating in this project's study

were between the ages of 3 years and 11 months, and 6 years and 8 months. This age range is in both stage VI and stage VII of grammatical acquisition, as described in Crystal 1976. Crystal characterizes the grammatical development that occurs this age range thusly, starting with stage VI: “The main thing that happens during the next year [ages 3.5-4.5], which constitutes *Stage VI*, is that the various grammatical systems which are evidently still being developed come to be thoroughly acquired, e.g. the pronoun systems, the auxiliary verb system,” (1976: 44). He notes that “Most irregular verbs and nouns also come to be learned as such (though there are always some that seem to resist learning, often until well into primary school)” (Crystal 1976: 44). Grammatical development from the age of 3.5 to 4.5 is marked by the more thorough entrenchment of grammatical systems, which includes verbs. Some verbs are more difficult than others for children to learn, particularly irregular verbs. In stage VII, from the age of 4.5, the focus is on “learning new structures, and learning to comprehend existing structures fully” (Crystal 1976: 45). Of value to the overall approach taken in this thesis, concerning both childhood development and ELF, is Crystal’s characterization of grammatical errors in language development past the age of three “[...] from the point of view of the child’s developing system, they are not errors at all- on the contrary, they are signs of children working out for themselves the regularities and irregularities of the language.” (Crystal 1976: 44) Grammatical errors are a fully typical part of the language acquisition process, and children in the examined age range make them as part of a trial and error aspect of language use. Concerning the grammatical error of overregularization, Tager-Flusberg writes that “Overregularization errors like these [using plural -s] are an excellent source of evidence for the productivity and creativity of the child’s morphology; these are the forms no child would have heard from an adult” (Tager-Flusberg 1997: 181). This is relevant to this thesis’ examination of the past tense, because conjugation strategies like the third person zero stem and do-periphrasis for the simple past are not spoken by the teachers at the kindergarten. This means that the errors come from other children, who are also experimenting with English morphology as they use it. However, these errors are not as widespread as they may seem; Tager-Flusberg, in their discussion of relevant literature, states that “[...] past tense overregularization errors are, in fact, relatively rare (between 5 and 10 percent), but they persist well into middle childhood for particular types of verbs”

(Tager-Flusberg 1997: 181). While these errors are not as frequent as one might think, they are still typical in language development as children experiment with grammar and syntax as part of the acquisition process.

Children use possible combinations of grammatical elements during language use, eventually figuring out the ‘correct’ usage from continuous practice. This could also be applied to bilingual or multilingual children; if a child is familiar with the grammatical structure of one language, using it as a starting template for the grammatical structure of another language they are engaged in learning is a reasonable approach. The children in the kindergarten who are learning English in addition to another language spoken at home will naturally carry over elements from the home language to assist them in their English speaking and learning. This cross-linguistic influence is what makes ELF what it is- a grammatically and lexically fluid communication tool, whose characteristics are difficult to classify and categorize due to its wide variability. The range of language backgrounds being brought to ELF changes it from situation to situation; an ELF conversation between an American English speaking child and a child who speaks Austrian German at home will be different from an ELF conversation between a Japanese-speaking child and a French-speaking child.

In a later chapter, Crystal takes a fairly pragmatic, functional point of view when it comes to teaching language to children. He views language as something that should be learned through use and seeks for children to be educated in a way that is relevant to their normal language use (Crystal 1976: 78). This usage-based pedagogical point of view is also found in the kindergarten discussed in this study; it encourages a child to use English as a communicative tool, and allows their language to evolve into something that suits their usage, though it may be influenced by their L1.

2.4.1. Past tense development in bilingual children

There is a fairly extensive body of work on bilingual children and tense development, mostly focusing on French-English bilingual children. This section will provide an overview of this body of work, and discuss the findings most pertinent to this study. While the research on French-English bilingual children will not entirely correspond with this research on diverse

language speakers, their findings on cross-linguistic influence and language preference are relevant to understanding the findings of this study. Once a base understanding of bilingual children's language abilities and their language features is established, ELF can be more fully understood in preschool children.

Hoang, Nicoladis, Smithson and Furman (2016) examined English-French speaking bilingual children's use of the past tense. They noted that while there were not significant differences in tense use between the two groups, certain tenses were preferred by the bilingual children, and some tenses were favored by the monolingual English speaking children. They go on to note that "In sum, the bilingual children used significantly more present tense in French than the monolinguals and used the present tense, along with other expressive techniques, making the stories come alive" (Hoang et al 2016: 760). While there cannot be a direct comparison to the Hoang et al study, both due to language background and the age of the children, the overall consideration of past tense use, and storytelling ability in bilingual versus monolingual children is useful for the analysis of this study. Features of language use such as onomatopoeia and full use of linguistic resources are also present in ELF usage (Vettorel 2013), particularly by younger learners.

Paradis and Nicoladis, in their article on bilingual French-English children's language preferences, note that the sociolinguistic context is a notable factor in the overall language use of bilingual children. The children in Paradis and Nicoladis' study adjusted their language choices depending on their interlocutor; since they were aware that French speakers were often bilingual (Paradis & Nicoladis 2007: 279), the children made language choices to reflect that: "Consequently, some different language choice patterns can occur with French-speaking interlocutors, for example, use of inter- and intrasentential codemixing will not disrupt the ability to be understood, and if used somewhat sparingly, may be perfectly appropriate" (Paradis & Nicoladis 2007: 279). An example from the study in this thesis is when the children who spoke German in the kindergarten were particularly comfortable with code-switching, and sometimes addressing teachers in German because a certain level of German knowledge was assumed among the teachers, since they all lived in a German-speaking country.

Code-switching (Or mixing) was generally varied among the children in the Paradis and Nicoladis study. “One possible explanation for the differential rates of codemixing between their languages is that bilingual children may use a word that is inappropriate for the context as a lexical gap-filling strategy” (2007: 280). By inappropriate, Paradis and Nicoladis mean a word from the bilingual child’s other language that they are code-switching into, the language not being used for the conversation. They observed that the children who were more dominant in the minority language (French) were more consistent in accommodating the person with whom they were speaking, while the children who were dominant in the majority language (English), were not as accommodating and spoke more English in French situations (Paradis & Nicoladis 2007: 288). The article concludes that children over the age of 3;6 are influenced by their environment and language exposure, they are somewhat able to understand the particular language options in certain sociolinguistic settings (Paradis & Nicoladis 2007: 294) .

In the year before the above study, Nicoladis, Palmer, and Marentette (2007) examined “The role of type and token frequency in using past tense morphemes correctly,” comparing the amount of language input to the amount of correct past tense use among French-English bilingual and (French and English) monolingual children between the ages of 4 and 6. They focused on how the frequency of irregular verbs had an influence on the child’s ability to conjugate it, positing: “[...] the token frequency of irregulars in the child’s vocabulary may affect a child’s ability to produce an irregular form when it is required” (Nicoladis et al 2007: 238). Bilinguals, having had less exposure to both languages in comparison with monolingual children of the same languages, may have lower rates of accuracy and the forms they use for the past tense may be influenced by their other language. For example, Nicoladis et al writes: “That is, bilinguals might be more likely to use past tense forms like ‘have seen’ when they mean simply ‘saw’ because of the influence of the compound past tense in French” (Nicoladis et al 2007: 242). Bilinguals may gravitate towards a certain, less frequent form in one language because of its similarity to a common form in their other language, making conjugations easier because they do not have to necessarily cope with memorizing past tense forms and patterns that are morphologically and syntactically different in both languages. Concerning accuracy: “This study showed that French-English bilingual children were less accurate in producing past tense

morphology than English monolingual children (for both regular and irregular verbs) and French monolingual children (for irregular verbs)” (Nicoladis et al 2007: 248). This result was attributed to less frequent exposure to the past tense forms when compared to the monolingual children. The differences in regular and irregular verb accuracy between the French and English monolinguals was assumed to come from the differences in irregular and regular verb frequency in the languages. They noted another trend with the children’s use of English: “In this study, we saw that the children often used overregularizations in English, perhaps because attempts at recognizing more local families did not yield reliable predictions about the correct past tense (i.e. because there are less predictable families in English than in French)” (Nicoladis et al 2007: 249). Overregularization appeared to be a result of using a conjugation strategy that was effective in French- predicting based on verb families- under the assumption that it would be as effective in English. The differences in past tense forms in the two languages are discussed in further depth by a later study conducted by Nicoladis and Paradis, about the acquisition of past tense morphemes.

Following the results of the 2007 study, Nicoladis and Paradis went on to write about the acquisition of regular and irregular past tense morphemes among bilingual (French and English) children. They remark on the possibility of cross-linguistic transfer: “It is possible for bilingual children’s languages to interact with each other over the course of development such that grammatical properties of one language are transferred to the other language” (Nicoladis & Paradis 2012: 176). They go on to note how this transfer can be recognized in speech production: “Crosslinguistic transfer can be identified when there are differences between bilingual and monolingual children’s production of certain constructions and the differences can reasonably be attributed to knowledge of the other language” (Nicoladis & Paradis 2012: 176). These particular constructions, and their differing frequencies among bilingual and monolingual children, are signs of cross-linguistic transfer. For example, the English past perfect may be used differently by French-English bilingual children: “I had seen” instead of “I saw” due to the typical format of the French *passé composé* past tense, which can be taken as a sign of cross-linguistic transfer. In their study, Nicoladis and Paradis observed that “In English, the children only produced overregularizations (and no irregularizations) [...]” (2012: 187), meaning

that the children had not entirely memorized the irregular verbs due to less exposure, so they tried regulating unfamiliar verbs. Other errors in English included “[...] the production of a verb stem (e.g., “he eat them all up”)” (2012: 187), which shows reliance on context for the listener of the statement to understand that it occurred in the past, instead of morphology. In their discussion, they suggest that while regular verbs (In both English and French) are used with a regular rule that can be applied to all regular verbs, making them easier to conjugate. Irregular verbs are learned individually via frequent input, which makes them harder to conjugate correctly. The greater accuracy with regular verbs over irregular verbs is due to having this consistent rule for conjugation (Nicoladis & Paradis 2012: 189). Having the acquisition of regular rules, along with the frequency of exposure, be the main originators of children’s verb forms, indicates a more complex, flexible system of morphology acquisition and production.

“Bilingual children’s acquisition of the past tense: a usage-based approach” by Paradis, Nicoladis, Crago and Genesee (2011) examined how input affected the accuracy of past tense use in French-English bilingual and French monolingual children between the ages of four and five. They noted that both groups of children “[...] tended to mark irregular verbs for the past tense, even erroneously, rather than leaving them as bare verb stems, as shown by past finite scores” (Paradis et al. 2011: 572). The children knew to mark the verbs as the past tense, though irregular verb markings were not always accurate, due to the need for rote memorization of irregular verbs and possible limited exposure to said irregular verbs. There were differences between the bilingual and monolingual children: “The bilingual children, as a group, were less accurate than their monolingual peers with regular and irregular verbs in English, and with irregular verbs in French” (Paradis et al. 2011: 572). The difference in accuracy, particularly for the memorization-dependent irregular words, is explained by Paradis et al. by different rates of language exposure. “Differential exposure to each language at home, as measured by parental report, had an impact on how accurate children were with the past tense in each language, and on how their accuracy compared with that of monolinguals” (Paradis et al. 2011: 572) The lower exposure of the bilingual children to the correct past tense conjugations, in comparison to the monolingual children, likely resulted in their lower accuracy. Paradis et al. go on to discuss the bilingual acquisition of semantic and morphological features, stating that

[...] it is possible that the semantic features associated with marking verbs for past temporal reference could be shared between two developing languages, whereas children need to rely on exposure to each language to acquire all the morphophonological details (Paradis et al. 2011: 573-574).

Following this line of reasoning, this suggests that a child might already have acquired past tense marking in one language, they would be able to use that concept for a similar language that has a similar pattern so that they would not have to learn it for both languages, making language acquisition more efficient. However, they would have to be exposed to and learn the morphosyntactic particulars of each language separately because they are still disparate to some degree, even in languages with somewhat similar semantic features such as English and French. They conclude that “[...] it is possible that bilingual acquisition comes along with some compensatory mechanisms that off set their variations in input exposure to some degree” (2011: 575). While bilinguals may not have the same amount of exposure to a language as monolinguals, they may have other traits or skills that help them make up for it, enriching their language acquisition process.

Next, two studies by Döpke on German-English simultaneous bilingual children will be discussed in order to contextualize the language use of the German-English bilingual children who make up a significant portion of attendees at the kindergarten examined in this thesis. In “Competing language structures: the acquisition of verb placement by bilingual German-English children,” (1998), Döpke writes: “Typical German structures regularly appeared in the children’s German but were rare in their English, and typical English structures were much more frequent in the children’s English than in their German” (Döpke 1998: 576), implying that cross-linguistic transfer may not be as prominent in a child’s development as one might expect. Döpke goes on to state that German-English bilingual children are likely linguistically aware of some of differences between their two languages, and use structural cues to try to distinguish between them (1998: 582). While these simultaneous German-English bilinguals may be aware that they are speaking two different languages, and may not display extensive cross-linguistic influence, they may produce cross-linguistic structures. In “The interplay between language specific development and cross-linguistic influences: Evidence from the simultaneous acquisition of German and English,” (1998), Döpke writes that, in comparison to monolingual English

speaking children, the German-English bilingual children used more structures that could be attributed to the two languages influencing the accessibility of certain structures. “It appears that cross-linguistic similarities between the languages influenced the saliency of intra-linguistic accessible syntactic structures” (1998: 153). The similarities between English and German may result in a certain amount of cross-linguistic influence and transfer, and the use of cross-linguistic structures. Döpke goes on to emphasize that “[...] it is important not to down-grade cross-linguistic structures as a deviant form of bilingual language acquisition, but to assess their status as a developmental feature and a feature of individual variation within that development” (1998: 153). Cross-linguistic structures are a typical part of bilingual language acquisition, a statement supported by Müller, another German-focused researcher (1999: 168). Cross-linguistic transfer is then a product of using aspects of one language to cope with uncertainties in another, or a form of support between languages within the mind of the learner. Like Döpke, Müller views cross-linguistic transfer as a developmental feature that can be examined further in order to aid the examination of bilingual language development.

Lastly, an example of the Wug test (Berko 1958) being used in a bilingual context will be discussed, before entering into a description of the methodology used for the study. Barac and Bialystok tested over 100 children from several language groups- English monolingual, French-English bilingual, Chinese-English bilingual, and Spanish-English bilinguals- on several verbal and executive tasks. One of these tasks was the Wug test (Berko 1958). It was chosen, like in Berko 1958, because it “assesses children’s ability to apply morphological rules of English (Berko, 1958) to unfamiliar forms, therefore reflecting children’s metalinguistic awareness” (Barac and Bialystok 2012: 6). They assessed a variety of English morphology formations, and assigned one point for each correct answer (Barac and Bialystok 2012: 6). The mean scores for each language group ranged from 14.8 to 22.2 (Out of 33) (Barac and Bialystok 2012: 14). The Spanish-English bilinguals had the highest mean score with 22.2; the English monolinguals had the second highest with 18.1; the French-English bilinguals had the third highest with 15.1; the Chinese-English bilinguals had the lowest mean score of 14.8. In the discussion, Barac and Bialystok note that “The present results suggest that the metalinguistic advantage for bilingual children depends on these linguistic measures (i.e., receptive vocabulary and grammatical

knowledge)” (2012: 9). They suggest that bilinguals have either an approximately equivalent, or generally better performance in comparison to monolinguals when given metalinguistic tasks” (Barac and Bialystok 2012: 6). This suggestion could mean that bilinguals either have slightly higher, or equivalent, metalinguistic awareness in comparison to monolinguals. This more recent iteration of the Wug test hints that bilingual children may not have a significant difference in comparison to monolinguals in metalinguistic awareness, something that will be touched upon in the study below.

3. Study of past tense morphology and ELF in an English immersion kindergarten

This study was conducted in an English immersion kindergarten in Vienna. This kindergarten was selected because of my employment at the kindergarten due to working there, and because different types of linguistic phenomena were observed among the children attending said kindergarten. The overall linguistic and cultural diversity of the children and teachers was another motivating factor in the kindergarten’s selection for study, since the different language backgrounds resulted in ELF usage among the children and teachers.

Several sources were used for formulating the study procedures to make sure they were as ethical and child-friendly as possible. The study’s ethical approach was constructed with assistance from *The Ethics of Research with Children and Young People: A Practical Handbook*, by Alderson and Morrow (2011). Pinter and Zandian 2014, “‘I don’t ever want to leave this room’: Benefits of researching ‘with’ children”, shifted my perception of the participating children’s role in the study from passive to active, which further developed the approach and manner used when conducting the interviews. The information about debriefing children in Pinter and Zandian 2015 assisted with describing and discussing the study with the children when they participated. “Negotiating Informed Consent with Children in School-Based Research: A Critical Review” (2010) by Gallagher et al. led to a more child-focused approach being taken to getting consent from parents and children to participate in my study. Useful information concerning research with children was provided by *Doing research with children*, by Greig et al. (2007). Lastly, the analyses contained within *Analyzing English as a Lingua Franca*;

A corpus-driven approach (Cogo and Dewey 2013) served as a rough model for my transcription analyses.

3.1. Methodology

There were three points of data collection for this study: questionnaires for the parents and teachers, individual interviews of the children, and recordings of spontaneous speech within the kindergarten. Out of the whole potential sample of 51 eligible children attending the kindergarten, the parents of 49 consented to their participation. Eligibility was determined by their ability to comprehend and speak full sentences in English, and attendance at the kindergarten since at least the beginning of the school year (Approximately 8 months). Twenty-two participants fulfilled all of the data collection requirements (Questionnaire, interview, and classroom recordings), and an additional 20 children were interviewed and recorded in the classroom. Seven children did not want to be interviewed, but permitted me to record them in the classroom. Two families filled out the questionnaires, but their children belonged to the group that did not want to be interviewed. The three data collection methods (Questionnaires, interviews, and recordings) then branched out into five categories of data: questionnaire responses by parents (24), questionnaire responses by teachers (6), the interviews with individual children (42), recordings of spontaneous speech by individual children, and recordings of spontaneous conversations between children, as well as between children and their teachers (32 hours). The methodology behind the three main points of data collection, and the data analysis process, will each be described in this section.

The parents and teachers received different questionnaires: the parents had an eight-item questionnaire that asked for the child's age, language background, language and media exposure, preferred language(s), and the reason they were enrolled in an English kindergarten; The teachers were given questionnaires that asked about their personal language background, and their attitudes and general goals towards teaching children English at the kindergarten. The data from both questionnaires were used to form a picture of the linguistic and attitudinal demographics of the kindergarten. Copies of both questionnaires can be found in Appendix 1.

The teacher's questionnaire was formulated with the purpose of finding out more about their linguistic backgrounds, educational backgrounds, overall teaching methods, and opinions on how English should be spoken or learned. Due to their prominent role as sources of the English language for the Nonnative English speaking children, their biases and motivations concerning English education are significant in the overall language instruction that occurs within the kindergarten. Details such as their language and educational backgrounds were sought out because they would also inform the teachers' language use and approach to teaching. The teacher questionnaires were distributed among the eight teachers working with the kindergarten group being studied; after following up, 5 teachers returned the questionnaires with detailed responses. After several more instances of following up and reminding, the collection method for the questionnaires was changed to informal interviews for two of the remaining teachers, resulting in 7 responses. They were asked the questions in the questionnaire, and engaged in a conversation about English instruction at the kindergarten with the researcher. I then noted the teachers responses on the questionnaire sheet.

Out of the 42 interviewed children, 22 of them had parents who completed a questionnaire about their child's language use. For the children whose parents did not fill out the questionnaire, the most pertinent information such as their age and the languages they spoke was gathered either from the children themselves, their teachers, or by verbally asking a parent for confirmation of said details. The questionnaires were distributed after the parent gave consent for their child to participate in the study. They were handed out as hard copies, to be filled out by hand, but they were also emailed to parents who requested a digital copy. Like the consent forms, all but one of the questionnaires were in English; one was translated into German so that the parent would be able to fully understand the study and their child's participation. The parents were encouraged to fill out the questionnaire with their child; the child's opinions on questionnaire items that asked about preferred languages, media, and additional thoughts on attending an English immersion kindergarten were relevant to the study and allowed a more in-depth look at the child's language attitudes.

The individual interviews were modeled after the Wug test used in Berko 1958, in which they elicited certain morphemes from young children by reading out flash cards with drawings

on them (Berko 1958: 154). Unique versions of these flash cards were made for this project. The flash cards elicited the past tense for twenty verbs, but kept the phrasing and borrowed two of the made up verbs from Berko (1958): *rick* and *spow*. Copies of the flash cards and a list of the verbs used can be found in Appendix 2. Ten common irregular verbs, five common regular verbs, and five made up verbs were chosen for the interviews. The verbs were chosen from a list of the most common verbs in the English language, which was found online, and one or two were chosen because the children had been observed using them in ways atypical to Standard English. For example, the verb *to swim* was chosen because of its frequency of use in the kindergarten, not its overall frequency in English.

In the interviews, the child and I sat down in the kindergarten's staff room. I told them that I was doing a project about how the children at the kindergarten use words when they talk about things that happened yesterday. I explained that, if they wanted to, I would read some short stories out to them and that the child would complete them. I also told them that they were going to be recorded, if they chose to do the activity. After asking the child if they knew what "recording" meant, I demonstrated with the audio recorder by saying a brief phrase into the recorder and playing it back. The short phrase varied from child to child; the child was always asked for a "silly" phrase, in order to help dispel any nervousness they might have, but if they did not provide a phrase, I improvised something. After confirming that the child understood the procedure, that they would be recorded and listened to only by me, and that they could stop the interview at any time, I moved on with the interview. I turned the recorder on, confirmed with the child that they were comfortable being recorded, and went on to read out the verb flash cards. I kept the 20 verb flash cards in a specific order, however, the decision was made to change the order after the first five children, because it became clear that the children understood the task better with a different order. The order was changed from having an irregular verb (*to say*) at the very beginning, to a regular verb (*to play*). The illustration for *to play* was easier for the children to conceptualize for their first prompt, as they were not used to having verb conjugations elicited from them. *To say* was interpreted as *to talk* or as another verb if it was presented at the beginning, and the abstract nature of the verb added to the children's difficulty conceptualizing the task. The concrete, clear nature of *to play* was then chosen to be the first card, in order to

ensure clear comprehension of the task. The order of the flash cards then stayed the same for the following 37 participants. I read the cards out loud and prompted the child to finish the sentences written on said cards. Some children did not need much prompting: pausing after saying, “So yesterday,” would give them the cue to finish the phrase. Other children needed more prompting, in which I the researcher asked them, “What did this person do yesterday?” or “What do you see in this picture?” When a child told me what they saw in the picture by using the present tense, I elicited the past tense by asking, “And if this happened yesterday, they...?” After completing the cards, the child was asked if they had anything else they wanted to say. None of them wanted to say anything, with the exception of one child who asked to have their stamps, which were given out as a token of thanks for participating in the interview. It was made clear to the participating children that they would get stamps even if they chose not to complete the entire interview. However, for some children, this was a motivating factor in being interviewed. One child was especially eager to get stamps, and was actively asking their mother for several days to bring the consent form back so they could participate. After getting the stamps, the participating child was sent back to the classroom to continue their day. The interviews were noted, in order, with a code corresponding to the child being interviewed, and saved on a password-protected computer under the same code.

Two children were interviewed, but excluded from the data because one of them did not understand the activity after multiple prompts, and the other simply did not want to say anything, despite giving confirmation that they consented to the activity and to being recorded. Both were given roughly five cards to complete, but when I noted that they were not registering the activity, they were thanked for their time, given two stamps on their hands as a token of my thanks for their participation, and sent back to the classroom. Two additional children, one German speaker (6,2 years), and one Mandarin Chinese speaker (6 years) were excluded from the data analysis because they correctly conjugated all of the real verbs, and conjugated the made up verbs with *-ed* regularization, showing that their comprehension of the simple past was fully developed, and that they were not using any particular conjugation strategies to compensate for not knowing irregular past tense conjugations. As this study focused on examining deviations from standard simple past tense conjugations, their correct responses were not relevant to the examination of

morphological trends as an ELF marker. However, these two interviews will be included in the overall data for the real verbs. The four exclusions brought the sample of analyzable interviews from 42 to 38 in total.

The interviews demonstrated that the elicitations from the flash cards were not just a simple fill-in-the blank activity, but also a test of metalinguistic knowledge. Metalinguistic is used in this instance to mean stepping outside of language to recognize its different parts, such as tense. Some children, ranging from 4-6 years of age and a variety of language backgrounds that included native speakers, had difficulty with consciously conceptualizing the past, or “yesterday”, though most understood what was being asked after going through several cards. The children’s difficulty to conjugate a certain tense when asked, at least from the start, makes the data from the interviews slightly less accurate as a portrait of the individual children’s use of the past tense, since metalinguistic considerations are not part of the children’s typical language use. However, the interview data is valuable when considering how some children refer to the past and consider it, and well as how they use certain strategies when asked to use the past tense.

The final point of data collection was the classroom recordings of spontaneous speech. First, consent was obtained from the parents of the participating children, and of any children too young to participate who may be recorded due to the open design of the classroom space. Consent was also obtained from the teachers working in the classroom, both before starting the recording process and whenever a digital recorder was placed near them. After the interviews were conducted, digital recorders were placed around the kindergarten. The digital recorders were small, designed to record lectures or meetings. The digital recorders were placed on tables in areas where the children tended to sit and talk for longer periods of time, such as the snack table and the art table, where they could sit and draw. They were also placed on tables during lunch time, after the children sitting at the table consented to being recorded during that particular lunch. The approximate length of each recording was approximately an hour or 90 minutes. The children were always informed when the recorder was being placed, and asked if they were comfortable with the placement. They were told to come to me, since I was in the same room, if they were uncomfortable being recorded and wanted it to be taken away. On

occasion, a child would request that it be taken away, so I would then take the recorder and place it in a different area. The presence of children whose parents had not consented to recordings was also a factor in the placement of the recorders. The majority of children had consented, with the exception of two, so there was always another area away from the nonconsenting children, where a recorder could be placed. The children understood that the digital recorders were related to the interviews, and respected my request that they not touch it. There were many recorded instances of the children reminding each other to keep their hands off of it, discussing their interviews, and even scolding each other if they had slightly touched the recorder. They would sometimes speak into the recorder, addressing me. Due to the presence of the recorder being a slight distraction, I tried taping them underneath the tables to make it easier for the children to forget about the recorders and speak naturally amongst themselves. However, the recorder did not record audio as accurately when taped under a table due to the sound bouncing off of the linoleum floor, so I got the majority of useable audio from the recorders placed directly on the table. There were several instances of interference from a well-intentioned teacher, who moved the recorder over to a different spot so it could be closer to children who were having a conversation. Eight recordings occurred with me sitting with the children at lunchtime and asking them questions that would elicit the past tense (For example, “What did you do this weekend? Could you tell me a story?”), but the majority of the recordings were spontaneous, natural speech. There were also several recorded instances of a teacher sitting and speaking with the children at their table during lunch time. The teachers were highly supportive of the project, but also occasionally exercised their right to not be recorded during lunchtime on days when they did not feel as enthusiastic.

After all of the possible data from the three data points- questionnaires, interviews, and recordings- was collected, the data processing began. The questionnaire responses from the parental questionnaire were put into a spreadsheet, organized in columns headed by the code for each specific participant. The answers were given numerical values; for example, each language was given an assigned number (1-18), depending on the order in which the questionnaires were processed. The interview responses were put into the same spreadsheet, under the column for the corresponding participant. The verbs that were tested in the individual interviews were put into

individual cells in the first column, and the corresponding conjugations for each verb was typed out in the same, corresponding row for each participant in order to aid comparison. Transcribing the interview results involved re-listening to the interview and typing out the child's answers in the column for said child. This kept the relevant demographic data from the questionnaires and the interview data itself in the same place, and easily comparable. The columns for the participants were then color-coded by their language background, i.e., by the language(s) spoken at home, to aid with the visual comparison of interview results. This separated them into six categories: monolingual English native speaker, German-English bilingual at home, German-speaking at home, third language spoken at home, third language and English spoken at home, and third language and German spoken at home. After each group was differentiated, they were examined to see if there was any distinct tense use, or categories thereof. The four main tense categories emerged from this initial examination, and the instances of each category were tabulated for each language group. For each participant within a particular group, usage of each type of conjugation were counted, and then added together to form a picture of how the group, as a whole, tended to use the past tense. These results were then put into bar charts, showing how many participants in each group had at least one instance of using a certain past tense conjugation. These tables will be discussed in section 3.2.2.1. An overall tabulation of the past tense conjugations was done, as shown in Figure 3 in section 3.2.2.1.

Concerning the questionnaire data: the two most relevant data points to the evaluation and discussion of the English spoken at the kindergarten were the languages spoken at home, and the reasons why parents enrolled their children in an English immersion kindergarten. A full list of languages was assembled (Appendix 3), and a pie chart of the six language background groups was made to visualize their prominence within the overall sample. After giving numerical values to each category of reasons for children's enrollment, a pie chart was also made for visualization purposes. The questionnaires for teachers were not put into a spreadsheet, as there were only seven to process. Instead, a more holistic approach was taken. The responses were read, compared to each other, and assessed in relation to the literature on English for young learners. The results of said analysis can be seen in section 3.2.1.1.

The last category of data, the audio recordings of the children going about their everyday activities in the kindergarten, was processed via transcription. Each recording (An audio recording in a particular place in the kindergarten, for a certain period of time) was done in my [the researcher's] presence. I sat nearby and noted down the codes of the children sitting or moving near and around the digital recorder, as well as the location and time period during which the recording took place. After each day of recording, the recordings were downloaded onto my password-protected computer, and labeled with the date, location, and codes of the recorded participants. I then later listened to and transcribed the recordings according to VOICE (Vienna-Oxford International Corpus of English) (VOICE Project 2007) conventions. Initially, I intended to transcribe all of the classroom recordings, but the resulting 32 hours of audio proved to be too much to transcribe in its entirety. Instead, I listened to the recording until they heard any past tense usage. Once past tense usage was heard, I played it back and transcribed it, using the participant's code to differentiate between the speakers. If the past tense usage was contained within a conversation, I transcribed the conversation as well, for the purpose of adding context. This process was repeated for the 32 hours of audio recordings. After transcribing was finished, I then read through the transcripts, first looking for past tense monologues or stories told by the participants, and then dialogues between children and/or their teachers. Initially, past tense usage in stories told by individual children was of interest because it was easily comparable to the participants respective interview results. However, while considering the social and reciprocal nature of ELF, it became evident that interactions between the participants were also useful points of data for analysis. After selecting several monologues and dialogues, with examples from all of the language demographics, the past tense use in each excerpt was analyzed in isolation, then in comparison to the relevant interview results. Information from the questionnaires was also integrated, in order to form a holistic, case study style analysis of the participants from each excerpt. The monologues are analyzed first, followed by three conversations (Two between children, one between a child and teacher). The analysis of monologues allow an examination of individual children and their overall tendencies when it comes to tense usage, while the analysis of the conversations permit an evaluation of ELF communication within two or more individuals within the kindergarten environment.

3.2. Results

3.2.1. Questionnaire results

Out of the 42 interviewed children, 22 had parents who completed a questionnaire about their child's language use. For the children whose parents did not fill out the questionnaire, the most pertinent information such as their age and the languages they spoke was gathered either from the children themselves, or their teachers. In the questionnaire (Available in Appendix 1), the parents were asked eight questions concerning their child's age, language exposure, and experience with the kindergarten or English language learning in general. Among the questions was "Why did you choose to enroll your child in an English kindergarten?"

The reasons for placing their children into an English kindergarten could be sorted into six categories:

1. The family was English-speaking and wanted their child to be in an English-speaking environment.
2. English was viewed as important for an international education, or their child's future in general.
3. They had English-speaking relatives and wanted their child to be able to communicate with them.
4. They felt that an additional language was a positive thing to give their child.
5. The internationally diverse character of the kindergarten was appealing.
6. Other, non-linguistic and non-cultural reasons such as the kindergartens proximity to their workplace, its good reputation, and that the kindergarten uses Montessori pedagogy.

Most families had multiple reasons, in more than one of the above six categories, for sending their children to an English-language kindergarten; a visualization of these reasons can be seen in Figure 1 on the next page.

Reasons for Enrollment

- Monolingual English speakers
- English important for education/future
- English-speaking relatives
- Positive view of multilingualism
- Diverse and multicultural
- Non-linguistic reasons (Good reputation, Montessori pedagogy, convenience)

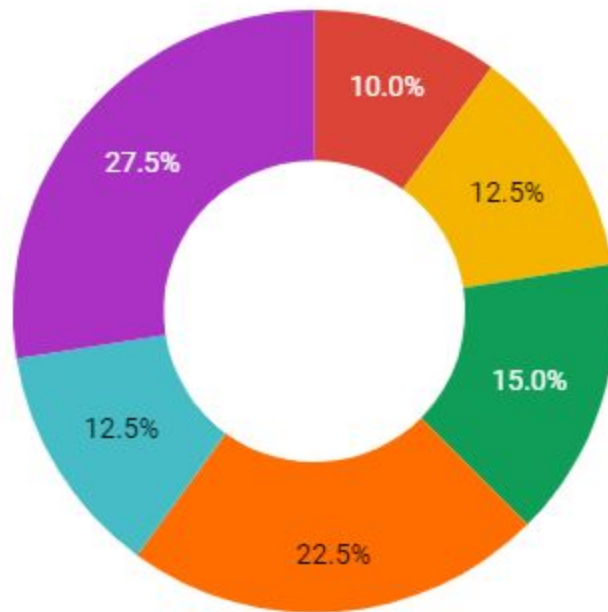


Figure 1

Non-linguistic reasons were the most prominent, at 27.5%, due to the good reputation of the kindergarten and its use of Montessori pedagogy, which were both appealing factors to a significant number of parents. Non-linguistic reasons often intersected with the linguistic or cultural reasons: some parents liked the kindergarten's pedagogical method, and were also seeking to intentionally cultivate bilingual- or multilingualism in their children from a young age, for educational or familial reasons.

10% of parents were native English speakers on temporary assignment in Austria, and the kindergarten was generally convenient for their work and for keeping their child in a place where they could learn and make friends in their native language. 12.5% of questionnaire respondents wanted their child to learn English because of its importance in their further education, and because they felt that "the earlier the better" (The Critical Age Hypothesis, as discussed in Edelenbos et al. 2005) applied to language learning. 15% of families had English-speaking relatives and wanted their child to be able to communicate with them, giving English personal, not just economic, value to the family. Overall, the non-monolingual English speaking families

viewed acquiring English as a valuable asset for their child's future, and also found exposure to cultural diversity from a young age to be generally beneficial.

There were 17 languages represented in this sample; the main language groups are shown in Figure 2 below. For a full list of all languages, please see Appendix 2.

Primary languages spoken at home

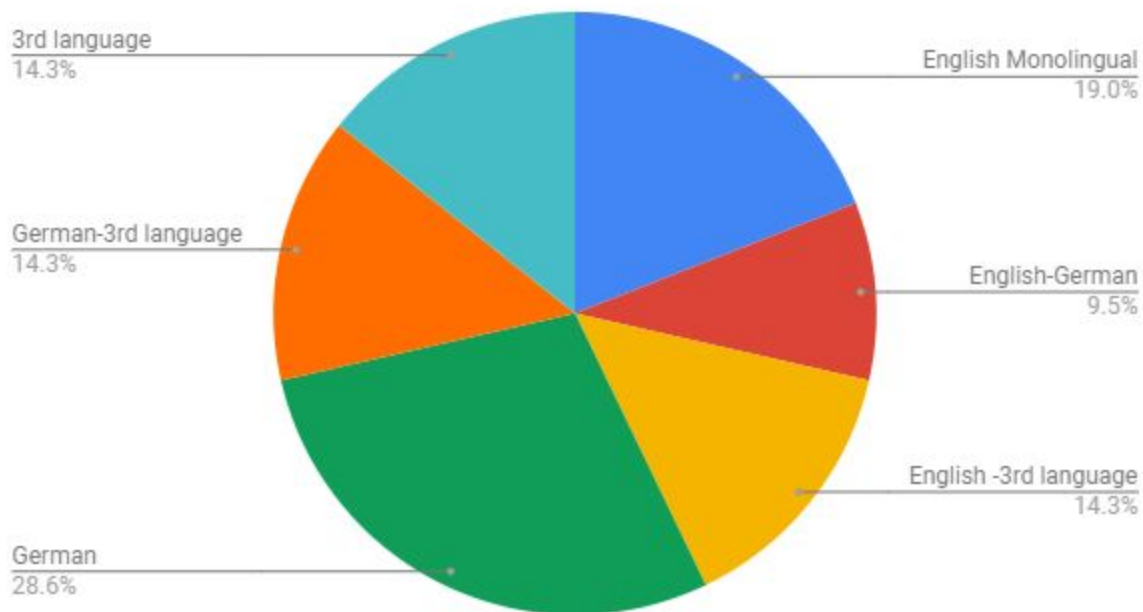


Figure 2

Three children had languages they were regularly exposed to via a family member or media and understood to a certain extent, but spoke it either minimally or not at all. These languages were Bahasa Indonesian, Farsi, and Hungarian. These languages were not observed to have any strong bearing on the children's overall English usage, but the existence of these languages in the children's schema may have some effect on their language usage in general.

Out of 51 possible participants, 42 children agreed to be interviewed and 38 interviews were used as part of the analysis of past tense morphology, as explained in the methodology section (3.1.) The interview data was used as a basis of comparison for the audio recordings.

Concerning age: the participating children ranged in age from 3 years and 10 months to 6 years and 8 months.

3.2.1.1. Teacher questionnaires

The nine teachers for this kindergarten group came from a variety of language backgrounds. Among their first languages, two varieties of English (Australian and Scottish) were represented, as well as Austrian German, Turkish, Swahili, Bengali, and Malayalam. None of the teachers were aware of ELF before this project. They all had training in early childhood pedagogy, primarily Montessori pedagogy. When asked about their approach to teaching English, they almost unanimously stated that getting children to communicate clearly in English was their main priority. Four of the nine teachers filled out the questionnaire form (Available in Appendix 2); information for the rest of the teachers, such as language background and education, was gathered informally while having a conversation.

When asked about maintaining a certain standard of English at the kindergarten, all four of the respondents wrote that they consciously try to maintain a certain standard of English. Two of the four, who were native English speakers (Australian and Scottish English), specifically stated that they focused on using simple language at work, and on having clear pronunciation. Both native English speaking teachers said that they use more informal English at home. One teacher stated that they spoke more “slang and everyday English,” while the other wrote that they spoke “more ‘sloppy’ language” at home. When asked about correcting language use, the teachers answered that they repeated back a child’s sentence with the correct language, but never outright corrected children. One teacher wrote that they would use occasions such as circle time or when reading a book to emphasize certain language features. The responses to “Do you think children should learn a certain standard of English?” varied, and reflected certain points of view on English standardization. One native English speaking answered that, to them, personally, the child should have a good foundation of British grammar and pronunciation; however, they were open to the variety presented by different standards of English (General American, etc.). The other native English speaking teacher wrote that children should learn a certain English standard. Which standard it would be depended on the child’s geographic situation; the closest English-speaking country (United Kingdom, United States, Australia, etc.) should determine which standard ought to be adhered to.

The strategies the teachers said they used when teaching English were fairly simple: one wrote “Conversation, reading!” while another wrote “authentic and keeping it simple.” Authentic language use and exposure were important factors in English learning for these particular teachers. Another teacher went into more detail, writing: “Make it fun- learning is hidden in using play and props. Lang[uage] and flash cards and games encourages listening skills and vocabulary.” This teacher’s strategies explicitly seek to foster enjoyment of English among the children, as well as certain skills beneficial to those learning an additional language, such as listening skills.

The teachers all took a fairly pragmatic approach towards English in the kindergarten; for children, English was for communication and learning about the world around them. Like in many environments in which there are children, the mantra “Use your words!” was often repeated. Children were encouraged to use their own words to express their feelings, wants, and/or needs, and as long a child’s English was intelligible, it was accepted by both the teachers and their peers.

3.2.2. Individual interview results

The interview data revealed four main strategies for verb conjugation, in addition to the typical correct conjugations, which were utilized by all of the children with no correlation between the strategies and type of verb. The correctness of the verb conjugation was judged by comparing it to the standard simple past of the verb. The four strategies were used within all of the language groups (English monolingual, English-German bilingual, and English- third language bilingual); however, certain strategies were used more than others.

The four strategies were:

1. Use of the past progressive, ex. “The boy was seeing.”
2. Do-periphrasis as a past tense marker, ex. “The boy did see.”
3. Regulation with the -ed ending, ex. “The boy seed.”
4. Zero past marking, ex. “The boy see.”

3.2.2.1. Overall interview results

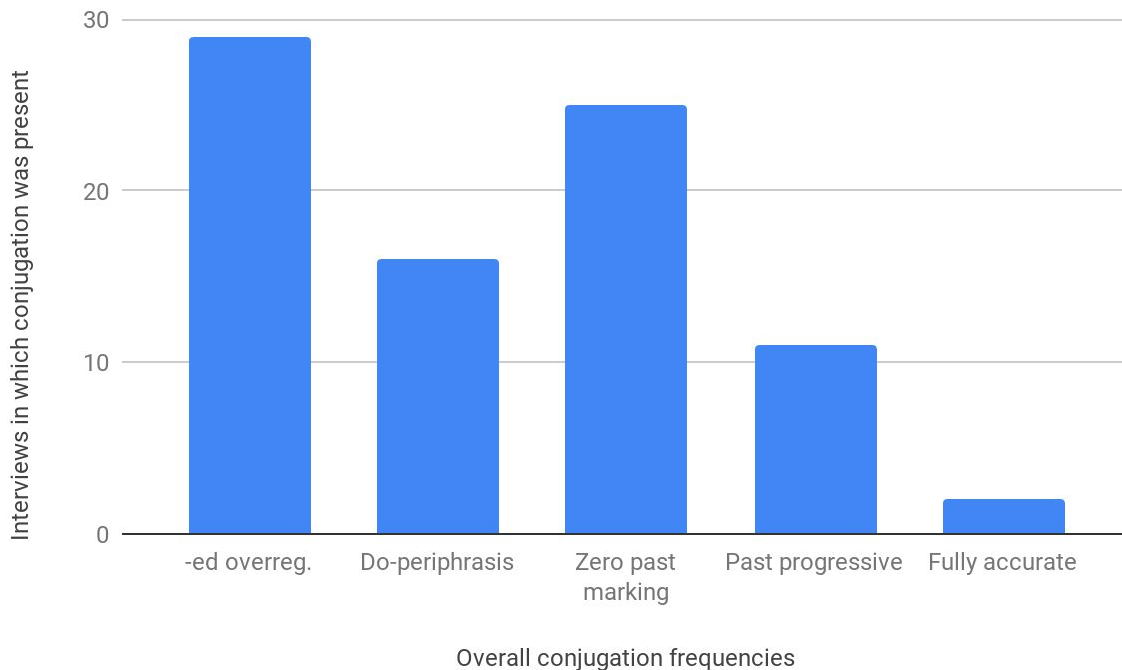


Figure 3

The above data comes from the 40 individual interviews, in which the 2 excluded interviews that got all of the conjugations correct are included, the overall frequencies of the conjugation strategies within the sample. It can be observed from Figure 3 that *-ed* regularization was the most frequent conjugation strategy, followed by zero past marking, do-periphrasis, and the past progressive. Up to three of these strategies were used at a time during individual interviews, regardless of language background. The 38 children who did not correctly conjugate all of the verbs in their interviews would switch between the strategies, sometimes with no discernable pattern, sometimes relying on one strategy more than the others, but still engaging at least two strategies. Frequency was measured by the conjugation strategy being used at least once for a real verb in an individual interview. The results from the real verb portions of the interviews will now be presented for each of the six main language groups at the kindergarten:

1. Children who speak primarily German at home
2. Children speaking both German and English at home
3. Children speaking German and a third language at home
4. Monolingual English speakers
5. Children who speak English and a third language at home
6. Children who speak a third language at home

Among the children who spoke German as their L1, and spoke it at home, zero past marking was the most frequent conjugation strategy, as it was present in nine out of the ten interviews in the language group. *-ed* regularization was the second most frequent, being present in eight out of the ten interviews. Do-periphrasis was the third most frequent strategy, being present in seven out of ten interviews. The past progressive came in fourth, as it was found in two out of the ten interviews. In three out of the ten interviews, do-periphrasis was disproportionately more frequent than any other strategy: it made up 50% or more of the child's responses to the real verbs.

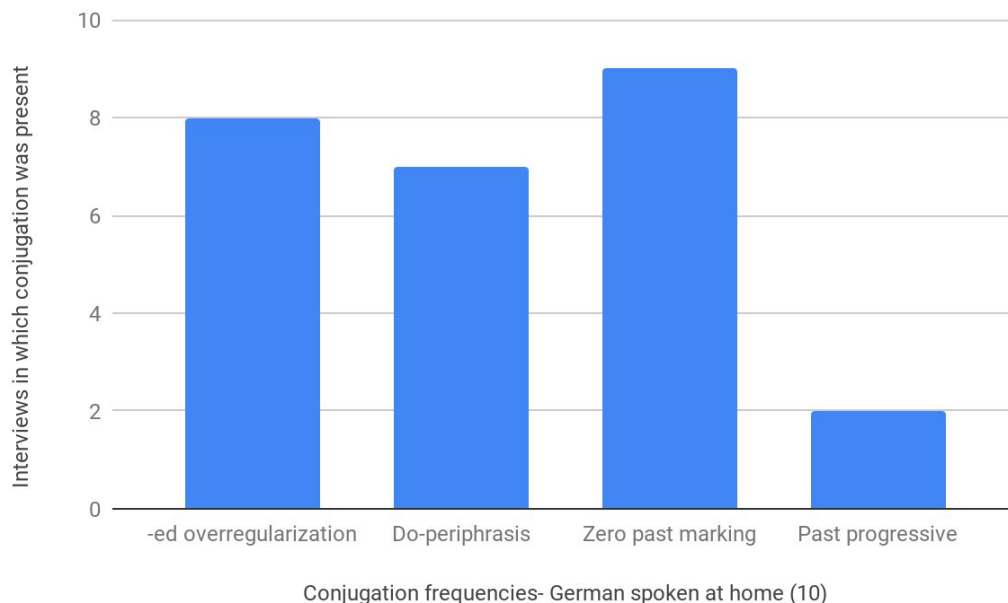


Figure 4

While the sample of children who spoke both German and English simultaneously at home was small, with three children, none of them used do-periphrasis. One of the German-English bilingual children did not use any of the mentioned conjugation strategies, correctly conjugating the 20 real verbs. Due to their ability to correctly conjugate the past tense, that particular child was excluded from the graph, as they did not use any conjugation strategies. One of the other children used the past progressive heavily in their interview; it made up over 80% of their responses. The third German-English bilingual child used three conjugation strategies: *-ed* regularization, zero past marking, and the past progressive. The past progressive and *-ed* regularization had the same frequency in this child's interview, while zero past tense marking was used once.

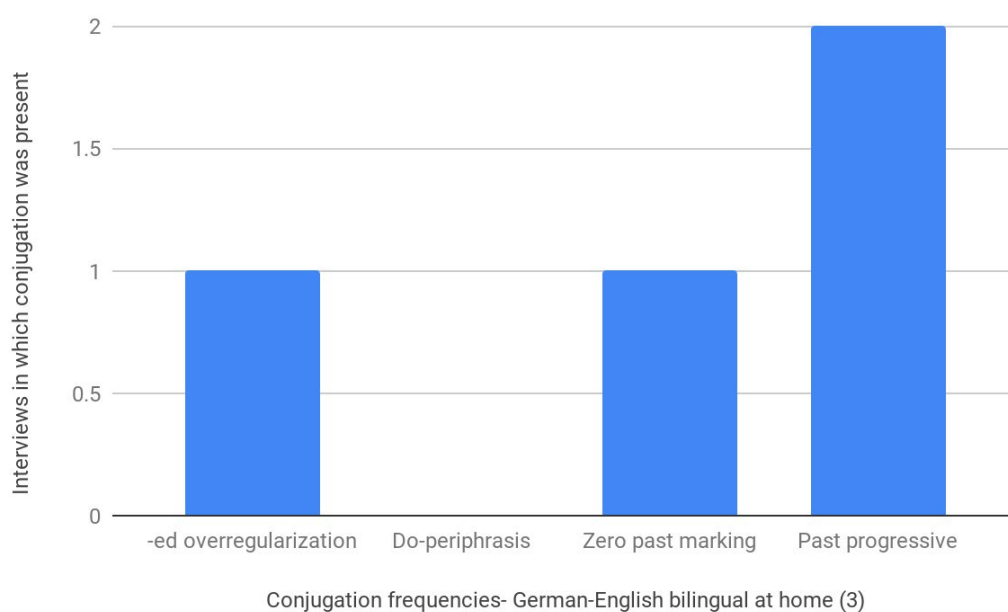


Figure 5

The four children who spoke German and a third language at home all used do-periphrasis in their interviews. Two children did not use -ed regularization at all for the regular verbs, instead relying on zero past marking and/or do-periphrasis. One child used do-periphrasis for 95% (Nineteen out of the twenty real verbs) of their responses. The German and third language speaking group was the only group that had a higher frequency of do-periphrasis than of -ed regularization.

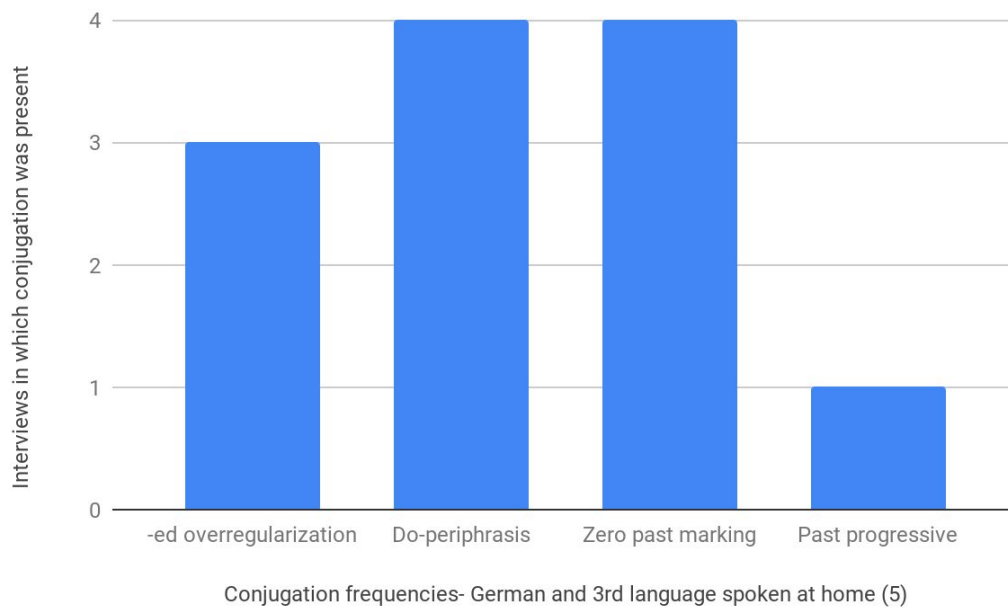


Figure 6

All eight of the monolingual English speakers used *-ed* regularization for both irregular and regular verbs. However, two out of the eight used do-periphrasis, both in two instances, in their interviews. They both used do-periphrasis for one regular and one made-up verb: one child used it for the verbs *to play* and *to marv* while the other child used it for *to walk* and *to kazz*. Both children also used *-ed* regularization in their interview, which is of note when considering that the two real verbs they used do-periphrasis with were regular and would have been correct with the regular *-ed* ending. Among the monolingual native English speakers, there was only one instance of the past progressive, and one instance of zero past marking. Both instances occurred in two different interviews.

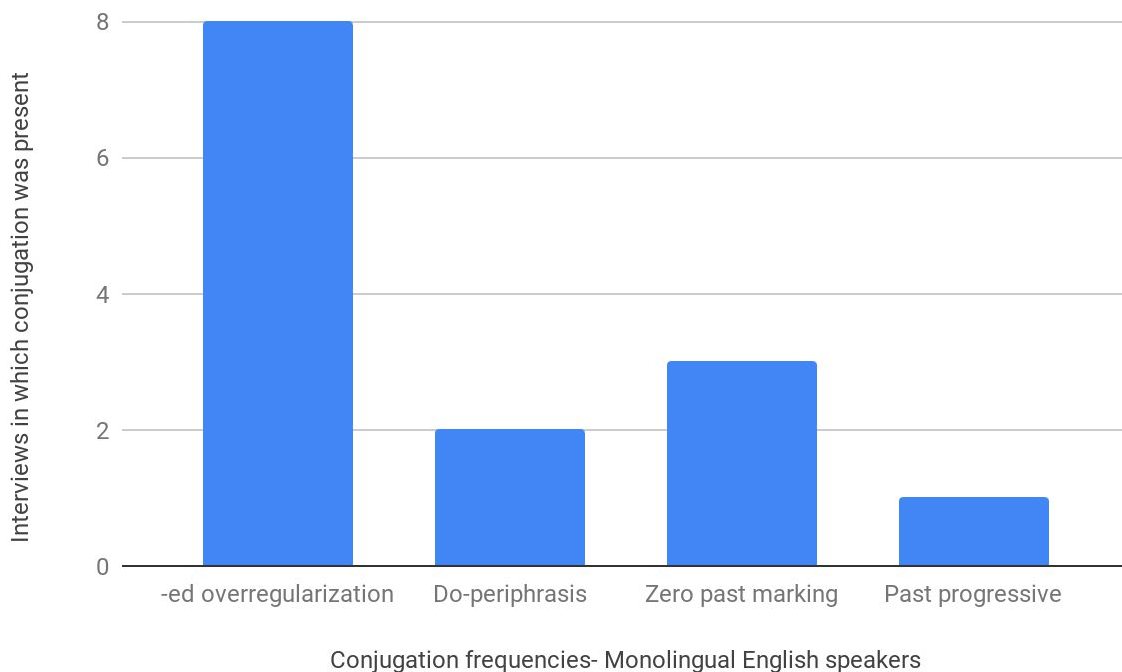


Figure 7

Of the six children who spoke both English and a third language at home, three (50%) regulated with the -ed ending, and two of the three also used zero past marking. Two of the six children used do-periphrasis in their interview. Another two children used the past progressive in multiple responses. A different child correctly conjugated several regular verbs and the irregular verb *to make*, but otherwise used zero past marking in the interview. An outlier in the English and a third language group was a child who used both the past progressive, and a progressive construction with the verb *to like*, for fourteen out of the twenty real verbs. Instead of saying the progressive form (“He was walking”), they would say “He likes walking.”

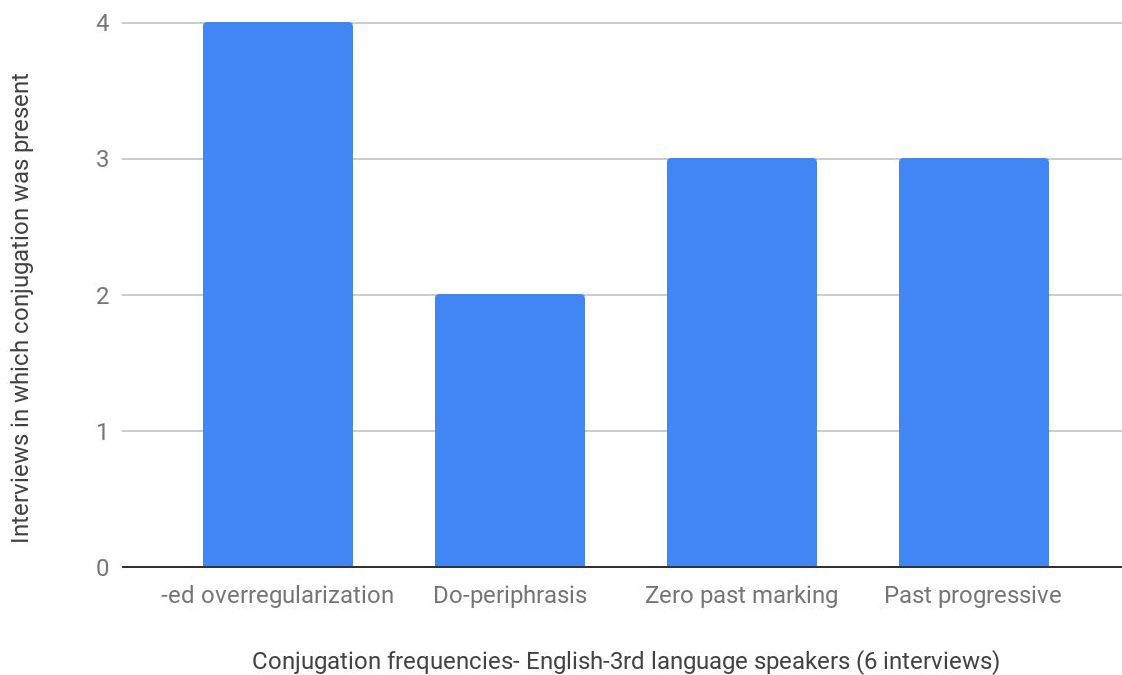


Figure 8

Concerning the six third language speakers, zero past marking and *-ed* overregularization was used by all but one of the children, who conjugated everything correctly. Like the German-English bilingual child mentioned earlier in this section, this child was not included in the graph for their group because they got everything correct from memory and did not use any conjugation strategies. Two of the third language speaking children used do-periphrasis in their interviews, but only after they were asked to repeat their response for the researchers clarification. Two children used the past progressive, one child utilizing it in one instance, the other in four instances. The most used conjugation strategies was zero past marking (Used by five of the children), and *-ed* overregularization (Used by four of the children). One child in particular, who spoke Spanish as their L1, used the progressive as a response once and otherwise did not conjugate the verbs, with the exception of applying the regular *-ed* ending to the made up verb *to marv*.

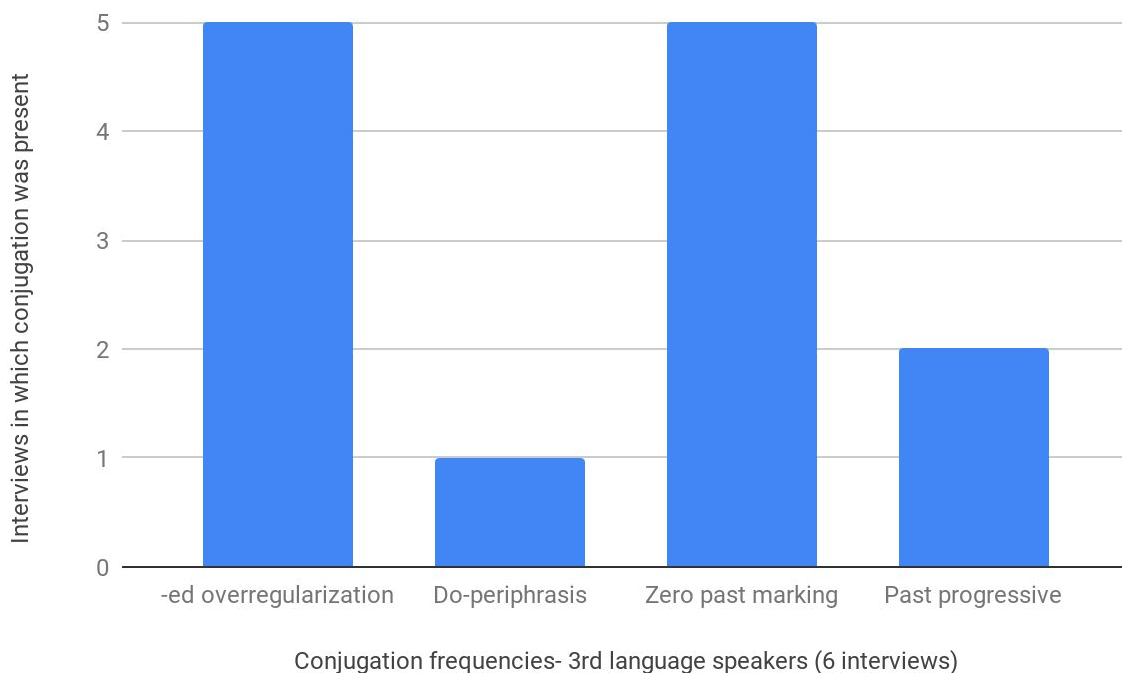


Figure 9

Next, the results for the made up verb will be given. Within the entire sample, all four conjugation strategies were used for the made-up verbs. In the entire sample, *-ed* was the most frequent conjugation for all verbs, making up 32 out of 38 (84%) instances for each verb. Zero past marking made up 17.6% of answers to made-up verbs, do-periphrasis made up 14.7% of responses to made up verbs, and the past progressive made up 6.1% of instances. The present progressive was also used by four separate children in their interviews.

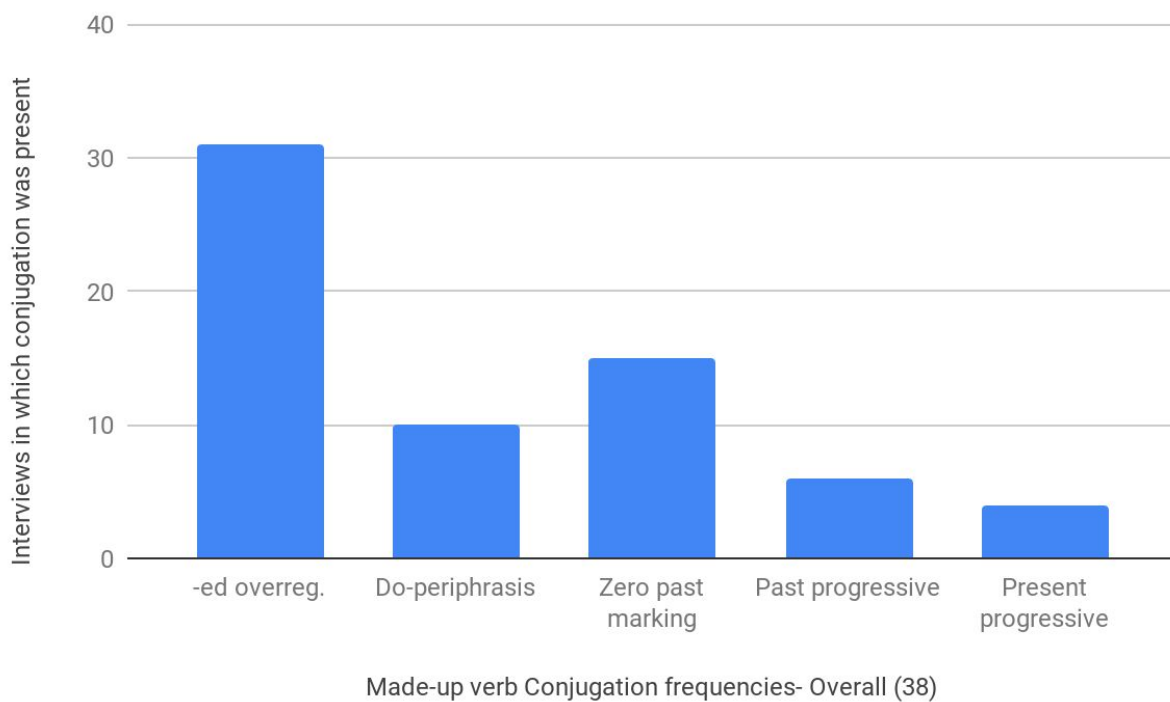


Figure 10

The conjugation strategy with the highest frequency among the children who spoke German at home was *-ed* regularization. Zero past marking had the second highest frequency in the group, followed by do-periphrasis and the past progressive. This group also had another type of conjugation: the present progressive. Instead of saying, for example, “He walked,” using the simple past tense, or “He was walking,” two children in the group answered with the present progressive, “He is walking.”

Made up verb conjugation frequencies (German spoken at home)

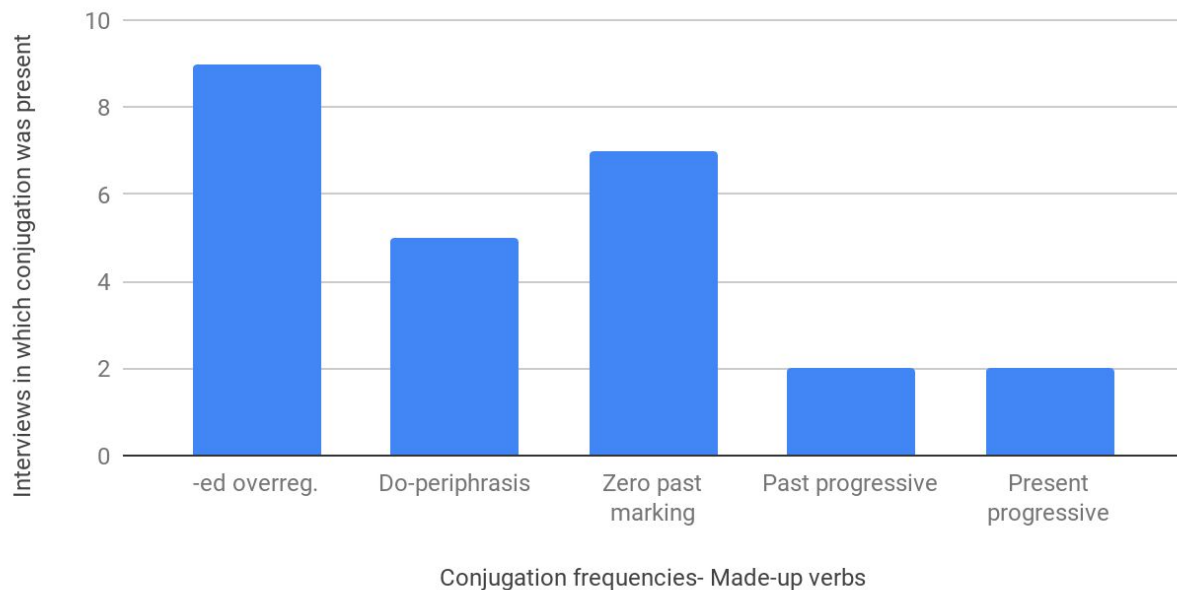


Figure 11

Among the children who spoke English and German at home, all of them used *-ed* regularization in order to conjugate the made-up verbs. Two used the past progressive, including the child who used the past progressive for 80% of their responses. The child who did not use the past progressive used zero past marking.

Made up verb conjugation frequencies (Bilingual German-English) (3)

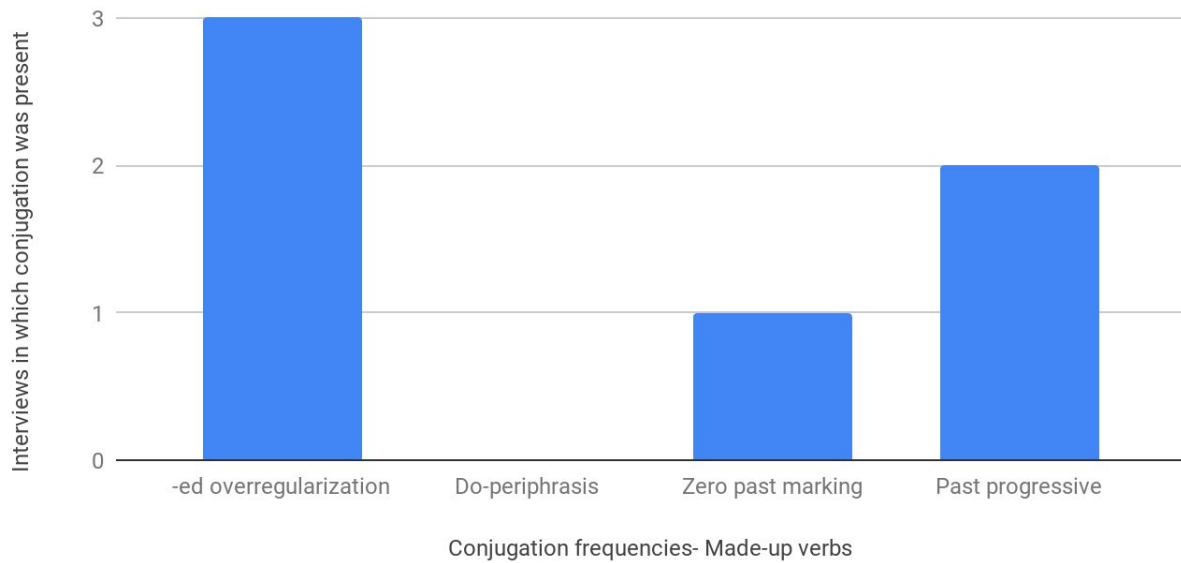


Figure 12

The children who spoke both German and a third language at home favored *-ed* regularization for the made-up verbs, followed by zero past marking, and do-periphrasis and the past progressive tied at third in frequency for this group. Overall, *-ed* regularization and zero past marking were the most common strategies used by this group in order to conjugate made-up verbs.

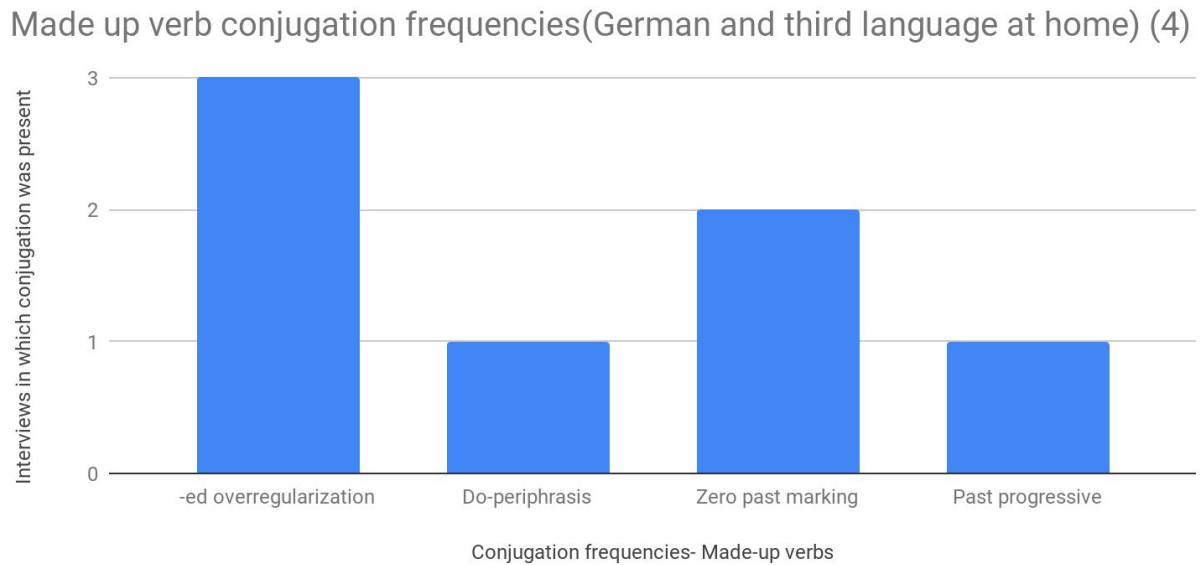


Figure 13

Among the monolingual English speakers, seven out of eight used *-ed* regularization to conjugate the made-up verbs. Two used do-periphrasis, and one of the two also used zero past marking.

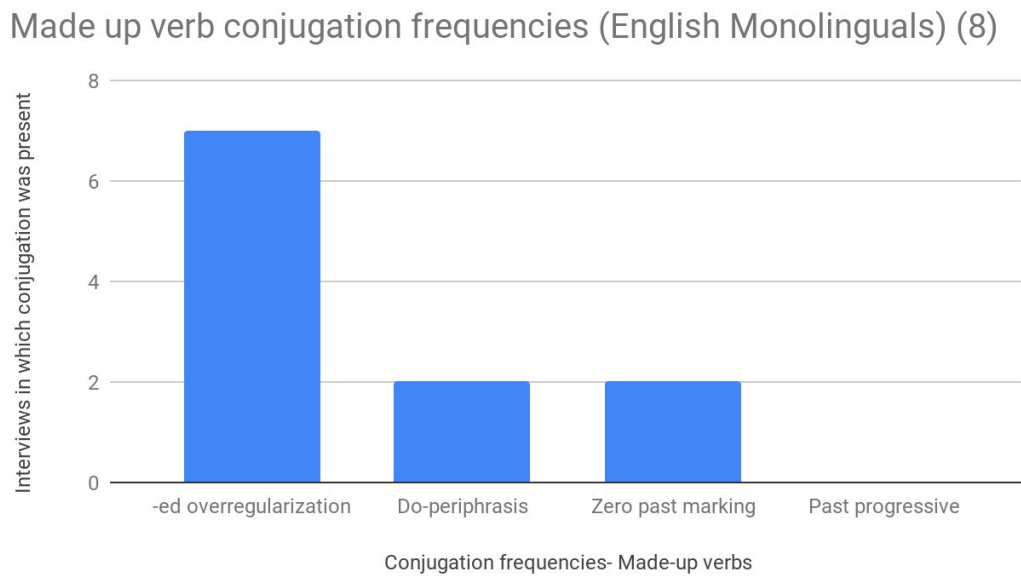


Figure 14

Half of the children who spoke English and a third language at home used *-ed* regularization to conjugate some of the made up verbs. Two others used zero past marking for at least one made-up verb. One child used the past progressive to conjugate made-up verbs- Another child used the progressive, “Marving” instead of “Marved” or “was marving”.

Made up verb conjugation frequencies (English and a third language at home)
(6)

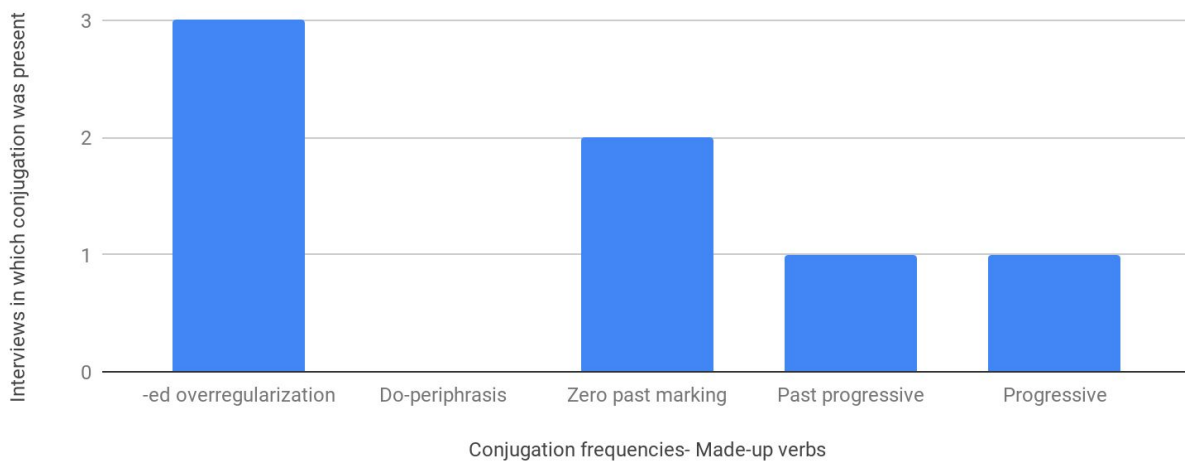


Figure 15

Lastly, 6 out of 7 of the children who spoke a third language at home used *-ed* regularization to conjugate made-up verbs. Zero past marking was used by three out of seven, followed by do-periphrasis being used by two children. The past progressive and present progressive were used by individual children.

Made up verb conjugation frequencies (Third language at home) (7)

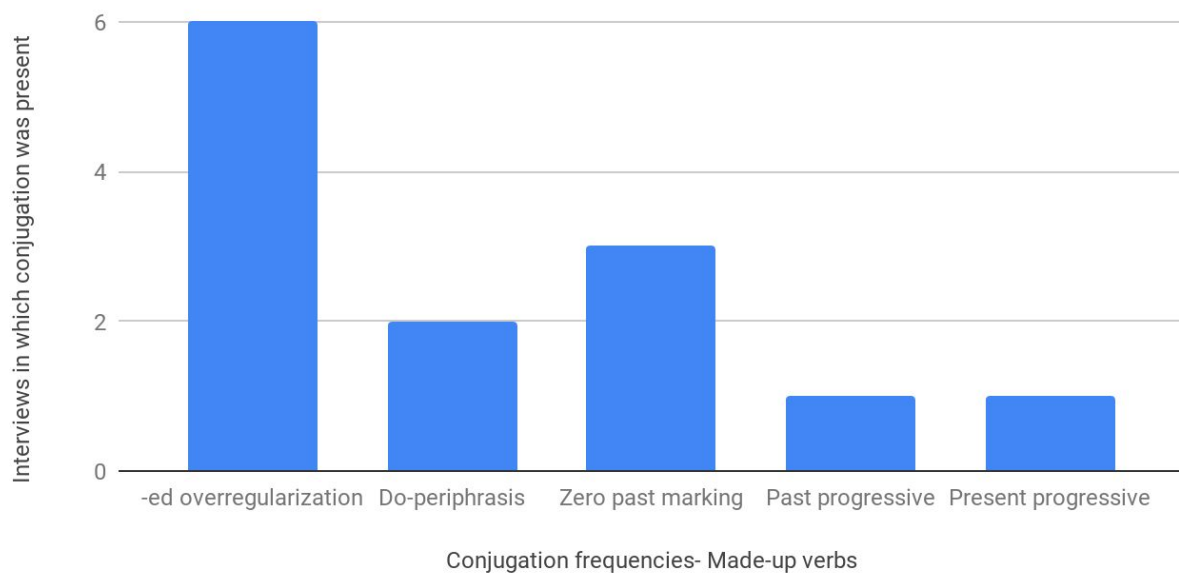


Figure 16

The most frequently used conjugation strategy for the entire sample was *-ed* overregularization, for both the real and made up verbs. It was also the most frequent strategy for made up verbs in each of the featured language demographics. The second most frequent conjugation strategy was zero past marking, followed by do-periphrasis and then the past progressive. . The German speakers had a higher frequency of using zero past marking (9) than *-ed* regularization (9), and they had fairly frequent do-periphrasis use (7 out of 10 in the demographic group). The children who spoke both German and English at home had 2 instances of past progressive use, one more than *-ed* regularization (1). In the 3rd language speaker demographic, *-ed* overregularization had the same frequency as zero past marking (5 instances). Among the children who spoke both German and a 3rd language at home, do-periphrasis and

using zero past marking (4 instances each) were slightly more frequent than *-ed* regulation (3 instances). The monolingual English speakers favored *-ed* regulation the most, but do-periphrasis and zero past marking were both answers present in their demographic.

3.2.3. Classroom recordings

One of the purposes of this thesis is to have an analyzed account of the ELF interactions between children, in order to show the effectiveness of their communication even though they do not conform to native speaker norms. As stated by Seidlhofer, “Detailed accounts of ELF interactions are necessary to counter the pervasive myth that adherence to ENL norms is necessary for effective intercultural communication” (Seidlhofer 2011: 23). The excerpts presented below highlight the children’s communicative ability and fluid negotiation of the English past tense via ELF usage. The excerpts were all transcribed following the VOICE conventions. Ten excerpts that exemplified the speech of these children in their natural kindergarten environment were selected from the 32 hours of field recordings. They were split into two categories: monologues and dialogues. The monologues include longer excerpts spoken by one child, while the dialogues have exchanges between children, and on one occasion, between a child and teacher. This permits the analysis of both individual children’s speech, as well as their communication. The excerpts cover the German-speaking, third language speaking, and monolingual English speaking language groups. The presentation of said excerpts will follow a case study model; the full context of the monologue or dialogue will be explained, and the child’s questionnaire information and interview results will be compared alongside the excerpt. This is for the purpose of having a full, well-rounded understanding of the ELF context as it relates to the participant. All participant names have been changed for anonymity. Any bolding in the transcriptions was added later in order to highlight past tense use.

3.2.3.1. “Martin” German speaker (5 years 9 months)

Martin speaks German at home with his family. His main group of friends all speak German, and they speak German while playing or doing activities together in the kindergarten. Overall, he prefers speaking German, though he expresses himself well in English. Martin had been attending the kindergarten for over four years, since he was one year old. When asked why he

was enrolled in an English kindergarten, his parent wrote “English is an important language. We want that he starts to learn as soon as possible.” His parents place importance on learning English early, due to its general usefulness. In this excerpt, Martin is telling a teacher about a time he went strawberry picking. This recording took place during lunchtime, when he was sitting with two other children and a teacher.

Martin: uh ah fourth uh from the fourth of july **i was** in in um one one in one garden and so many so manyy (4) **were** so many erdbeeren

Teacher: airplanes?

Martin: no (2) erdbeeren

Teacher: okay

Martin: and and **i did i did pluck them i did pfluck them** and then **i did make** ah ah um a (2) a cake with with

Martin used both code-mixing and do-periphrasis in this except. He talked about picking strawberries; he substituted the German word *erdbeeren* for *strawberries*, which caused some confusion for the teacher, who thought they heard the English word *airplanes*. Martin replied in the negative to *airplanes*, pauses, then decided to repeat the word *erdbeeren* again. He may have been trying to remember the English word, and still being unable to find it, decided to use the German word again.

In another instance of code mixing, Martin used the word *pluck* instead of *pick* when he talked about picking the strawberries. This then changed into *pfluck*, which is derived from the German word for *to pick* when used in a harvesting/gathering context (*pflucken*), as Martin did here as he talked about strawberry picking. However, the typical German pronunciation would be *pflück*, but Martin does not change the vowel sound from the English *pluck* to the German *pfluck*. While

he substituted a German word, he still used the English pronunciation, making this a case of phonetic accommodation. As he was speaking to an English-speaking teacher, he kept the English pronunciation even when code-mixing.

In combination with the code-mixing, Martin also used do-periphrasis to mark the past tense. He correctly conjugated the simple past forms of the verb *to be*, likely due to the verb's high frequency in English. Martin uses do-periphrasis with both *to make* and *pflucken*. He conjugated the irregular verb *to make* by combining do-periphrasis and the verb stem, a simple construction that regulates the irregular verb. Martin conjugated the German verb *pflucken* as if it was an irregular, or possibly unfamiliar, English verb, also by using do-periphrasis and the verb stem.

From examining Martin's past tense usage, it seems like he is using his L1, German, as scaffolding for his L2, English. When he did not have the right word, he put the German word in its place, but then went on to use the German lexical items as if they were in English. This is shown by Martin not using the German past participle of *pflucken*, which is *gepflückt*, as would be expected in typical German speech. For example, *Ich habe Erdbeeren gepflückt* would be the German equivalent to the English phrase *I picked strawberries*. Instead, Martin deconstructed *pflucken* by taking out the stem, *pfluck*, going on to use English do-periphrasis and pronunciation to create *I did pfluck*.

Martin also used repetition in order to either accommodate the listener (the teacher) by repeating *erdbeeren*, or alongside fillers such as *um* and *ah* in order to give himself more time to find the right words. He repeated *so many* twice before deciding on the word *Erdbeeren*, and *one* before choosing the word *garden* to describe the place he went strawberry picking. Martin was determined to find the correct words to tell his story; he did not sound anxious in the recording, he seemed to simply be gathering his thoughts.

In his interview, Martin actually had one instance of the past perfect- *had played*. He had four instances of do-periphrasis, three with irregular verbs and the fourth with the made up verb *to spow*. He also had six instances of *-ed* regularization for irregular verbs. He conjugated all of the regular verbs correctly, with the *-ed* ending. When it came to the made up verbs, he used three different conjugation strategies: *-ed* regularization twice, do-periphrasis once, and zero past

marking once. However, for the verb *to marv*, Martin produced the phrase *did have a marving*. This combination of do-periphrasis, the perfect tense, and nominalizing a progressive verb displays Martin's knowledge of the parts of English grammar, but shows that he may not fully understand how each part functions individually. This novel phrase is likely due to the novelty of the verb *to marv*; Martin is trying to conjugate the past tense of a new word, so he uses whatever linguistic knowledge he has to produce this phrase. This makes sense in light of his inconsistent use of conjugation strategies for the made-up verbs throughout the interview. He is using a variety of strategies to cope with the made-up verbs, but he does not have a fixed morphological rule yet. However, he has a fixed understanding of do-periphrasis. In both the interview and the recording, Martin uses do-periphrasis exclusively for irregular or made-up verbs, in order to regulate them and avoid having to memorize the simple past for each in order to use the past tense. He also used *-ed* regularization for the other irregular verbs. With the exception of *found*, Martin used either do-periphrasis or *-ed* regularization to conjugate the irregular verbs. Martin still used German for scaffolding, especially if he could not remember the right word in English, but his pronunciation and morphology came from English. By regulating the past tense with *-ed* regularization and do-periphrasis, he made English easier to utilize for his communicative purposes.

3.2.3.2. "Sara" Third language speaker (Bosnian)- 5 years

Sara, the child speaking in the following excerpt, is 5 years old, and she speaks Bosnian at home. At the time of the recording, she had been attending the kindergarten for at least three years. Her older sibling also attended the kindergarten before starting school. Here, Sara described a playdate with a friend, and then a video she had seen of a childbirth.

we did play on the trampoline at t to tina aand and **we did play** inside outside also outside and inside umm then **we did** umm uh hh mm then **we did uh play** with the barbie? (.) and uuh then **we did eat** something and then and then **i went** home (.) and then it was night and then **i slept** and then and then tomorrow **i went** to the kindergarten

[...]

@@ @@ **i thought** that was a balloon! (.) a little little balloon (2) yesterday i ah **i watched** how the how the babies be in the in the stomach of the mummy and then mm it grows and **it was growing** and growing and growing and then and ah uhh then **we seed** uh on the tv the uh mm uhh mmm **the mummy was** in the um um it uh umm it and **the baby came out** and **she was sleeping** and then **she waked up and see** the baby and then ah bu but then **they did go** to the operation

Sara is a prime example of how a child can fluidly switch between conjugation strategies, something done by several children within this sample. In the first paragraph, she used do-periphrasis to mark the past tense for both the regular verb *to play*, and the irregular verb *to eat*. She correctly conjugated the irregular verb *to go*, but also use the regular *-ed* ending for the irregular verb *to sleep*. Sara showed obvious knowledge of the irregular past tense, with the correct conjugations of *to think* and *to go*, but it is inconsistent. For example, at the end of her story, she used do-periphrasis to mark the past tense for *to go*, even though she successfully conjugated it twice in the same instance. In all three instances of Sara using *to go*, the context was the same, simple past tense; the third instance was not emphatic. She also used the past progressive- *was growing* and *was sleeping*, but these instances can be counted as correct conjugations because they refer to a continuous action.

There is additional evidence of regulating irregular verbs with *-ed*, such as *seed* and *waked*. The range of conjugation strategies, and accuracy, shows that her English past tense grammatical system is still flexible, and not yet solidified. She demonstrated solid knowledge of the past tense and how to express it, and her conjugation of *to think* was impressive because it was one of the verbs with the least accuracy from all of the collective interviews. In the recording, Sara was a motivated and expressive speaker, eager to talk about her playdate and excited to describe the childbirth video. Using *-ed* overregularization and do-periphrasis as a past tense marker let Sara say what she wanted to say fluently and in an understandable manner.

While her language use was not perfectly standardized English, it was developmentally appropriate and communicatively effective.

Sara's interview did not have as much variety as this excerpt; she heavily favored do-periphrasis, which it made up 80% of her responses to real verbs. She conjugated two of the real verbs correctly, and did not conjugate *to see*, but otherwise do-periphrasis dominated her interview. This implies that do-periphrasis is an entrenched past tense form in her English grammatical system, and it emerges when the past tense is elicited from her. However, the variation in the recording suggests a more flexible grammatical system. Even though do-periphrasis is used when she is consciously using the past tense, the conjugations in the recordings show that she is capable of effectively utilizing multiple conjugation strategies, as well as correctly conjugating the simple past for a variety of irregular verbs. One assumption could be that Sara consciously uses do-periphrasis for the past tense, but when engaged in spontaneous speech, she uses all of the conjugations.

3.2.3.3. "Sasuke" Third language speaker (Japanese)- 4 years

Sasuke did not want to be interviewed, but consented to being recorded in the classroom. He speaks Japanese at home, making him part of the third language (Not English or German) speaking demographic group, and had been at the kindergarten for over a year and a half at the time of recording. In this excerpt, he was telling his friends at the snack table about a butterfly he found in his kitchen.

one day (.) one day **i go** to the kitchen gain [again] butterfly is in the kitchen (.)
today again and i see a lot and i **i and again and i went up and go and no butterfly**
and daddy say mummy daddy come and oh yes oh yes a sounds said it

It seems that Sasuke was relying on contextual cues, such as *one day*, and *today*, to get the temporal setting across since he was leaving the verbs *to go* and *to see*, as stems. However, he later correctly conjugated *to go* and *to say*, demonstrating that he knew the past tense forms of some verbs and was capable of using them. The mixed nature of his past tense use, as well as the

structure of his story, imply that Sasuke was still acquiring the grammatical and syntactical rules of English. Like some of the other third language speaking children, he tended to leave the verb stems instead of conjugating, or trying to regulate the verb conjugations.

3.2.3.4. “Johanna” Third language speaker (Finnish)- 4 years and 8 months

Johanna is also a third language (Not English or German) speaker of Finnish, who had been attending the kindergarten for nearly nine months, and English kindergartens in general for about 1.5 years. In her questionnaire, her parent wrote that she had been exposed to English in some way since birth. When asked about enrollment, they wrote that they wanted to give her a chance to learn a second language at an early age, for internationalization. The parent noted that Johanna did not seem to have a preference towards speaking Finnish or English; they said that she spoke a nice mixture of the two on a daily basis. At the kindergarten, Johanna gamely socialized and spoke English with the other children, and had made several friends from different language backgrounds that she played with in English. At the time, she had developed a stutter, but was still eager to speak to and communicate with her peers and teachers. In this excerpt, Johanna was asking another child about when they both saw each other outside of the kindergarten.

did y did you remember w-when we **saw** each other in i-in running sushi? (2) A-and i **did see** the a-and i **did see** jen in in in in in mine in in mine big sisters [unknown]

Johanna used both the correct simple past conjugation for *to see*, along with do-periphrasis for the same verb within seconds of the previous conjugation. This shows that, even though she was able to correctly conjugate the word, she might have utilized the past simple conjugation and do-periphrasis as interchangeable past tense markers. Johanna used do-periphrasis as both an interrogative for the other child, and as a statement. This demonstrates the ease with which do-periphrasis could be used in both interrogatives and statements without the need to conjugate the main verb. In her interview, she had four instances of *-ed* regularization and three instances of zero past marking in their interview, with no do-periphrasis. The do-periphrasis in this excerpt may be a result of other children using it around Johanna in the

kindergarten. It could also have begun as a logical way to make regulated past tense statements in response to questions using do-periphrasis, since she would have been regularly asked such questions by their teachers to elicit English conversation from them.

In her interview, Johanna either used *-ed* regularization or zero past marking if she did not correctly conjugate the verb.

3.2.3.5. “Charles” Monolingual English speaker- 6 years

Charles also declined an interview, but consented to being recorded in the classroom. He is a monolingual English speaker, who had been attending the kindergarten for over three years. In this recording, Charles was telling his tablemates at lunch about Christmas at his father's house.

did you know harry when it was christmas w (.) and i was at my daddys house my daddy (.) s house didn't have a christmas tree only a plant so hh so he **decorate** the plant and santa claus **did give** uh the presents to the pla:nt

This is notable because this monolingual English speaker did not use do-periphrasis for emphasis on the verb *to give*, but as a regular past tense marker. Charles also used the zero past marking strategy for *to decorate*. This was the only portion of audio that had a monolingual English speaker using do-periphrasis as a regular past tense marker, so he may be an outlier among their language group. However, this implies, at least for Charles, that being in an environment where his bi- or multilingual peers are using do-periphrasis as a past tense marker will lead to its adoption by monolinguals. Do-periphrasis makes the past tense easier to form, circumventing rote memorization of irregular verb forms, so it would not be out of the question that a monolingual peer would use it.

3.2.3.6. “John” Monolingual English speaker- 6 years

John has been attending the kindergarten for nearly three years at the time of recording. In his questionnaire, his parent wrote that he was enrolled in an English kindergarten because they

spoke English at home, and wanted to maintain his English skills while they lived in Austria. In this excerpt, he was explaining a picture he drew of another child.

and do you know i got a picture of jacks face i **got** a pict i i **made** a drawing of it here
how it looks like and i **drawed** a (.) picture like ha (.) of his **drawed** a picture of jacks
teeth and a picture of his eyes

John also showed some variance in the way he conjugates irregular verbs. He conjugated *to make* correctly, while he used *-ed* regulation for the verb *to draw*. He also seemed to regulate irregular verbs by using *-ed* regulation.

In his interview, John had one instance of *-ed* regulation, *thinked*, otherwise conjugating all of the verbs correctly. The made up verbs were all conjugated with regular *-ed* endings. This shows that his English grammatical network was almost fully entrenched. *-ed* regulation, instead of do-periphrasis, seemed to be the more typical way of verb conjugation among the monolingual children, and one of the more favored conjugation strategies overall. However, Charles' use of do-periphrasis, as well as do-periphrasis use in the interviews for two other monolingual English speaking children, shows that it is at least recognized as a valid past tense verb form among the monolingual children.

3.2.3.7. German-English bilingual “Julia” 6 years 2 months

German speaker “Lucas” 6 years

Julia speaks both English and German at home, as she has an English-speaking father and a German-speaking mother. She would speak German to other German-speaking children at the kindergarten, but had non-German speaking friends, and played in both German and English. Responding to the questionnaire, her parent wrote that “I don't see a preference. She switches back and forth based on the person she is talking to.” When asked why Julia was enrolled in an English immersion kindergarten, her parent wrote that they wanted to make sure she kept her English after moving from the United States to Austria. The main parental motivation towards

enrollment seems to be maintaining English, as it is an important language in their family. Julia had been attending the kindergarten for approximately four years at the time of recording.

Lucas speaks German at home, and like the previously discussed Martin, tended to socialize with other German-speaking boys. His parents did not complete the questionnaire, but it was observed in the kindergarten that he preferred to speak German. However, he would accommodate non-German speaking peers and speak English to the teachers without hesitation. At the time of recording, he had been attending the kindergarten for at least two and a half years.

In this excerpt, Julia and Lucas are sitting at lunch with two other children, one German speaker and one non-German speaker. There were snatches of German conversation between the German speakers, but the majority of the table conversation was in English. Julia and Lucas were both telling a story to the non-German speaking child, Fleur (French-speaker). The other German-speaking child had been asking Fleur about which animals scared her; she insisted that she was not scared of any of the animals they listed. Lucas and Julia went on to tell a story about a dangerous gorilla.

Fleur: i'm not scared of gorilla gorilla doesn't do anything

Lucas: oh yes! They can take your (.) hair (.) one time in the zoo something happened very (.) bad

Julia: yeah i **saw** it (.) we two were together **we were having** a playdate like and then (.) like i was

Lucas: the boy the boy a a **boy climbed** over the fence and and pooh! **gorilla taked** him on the (.) a eh **went with him** on the hair and **pulled his hair** pulled his hair pulled it and and and he pulled his hair down where water is now and and he **he pulled** and pulled and pulled and and now and then the policeman the **the zoo man come and he shoot him**

Julia had accurate past tense use; she conjugated *to see* correctly and used the past progressive for a continuous event, their playdate. Her American background shows with her use of *like* as a filler.

Lucas, likely because he spoke more than Julia in this excerpt, demonstrated more variety with his past tense usage. He used *-ed* regularization for the irregular verb *to take*, and also left the verbs *to come* and *to shoot* with zero past marking. He relied on the previous contextualization of the past tense for the phrase *The zoo man come and he shoot him*.

Lucas seemed to be unable to come up with the correct conjugations at this particular moment, but is still clearly eager to finish their story. In the recording, he spoke quickly, without many pauses, using repetition as a filler when he needed to find the right words. He was very engaged with storytelling; the use of *pooh!* as onomatopoeia to indicate the suddenness of the gorilla grabbing the boy, and the repetition of *he pulled* to evoke the continuous, violent way the gorilla handled the boy are vivid details that added texture to the story. Lucas, having less English exposure because he speaks primarily German at home, may have less accurate verb conjugations due to the fluid nature of his grammatical systems. Do-periphrasis does not appear in this excerpt, but the *-ed* regularization and zero past marking demonstrate that Lucas had more than one coping mechanism for the past tense, especially when trying to relay an exciting story.

In his interview, Lucas had two instances of the past progressive, one instance of *-ed* regularization, and three instances of zero past marking. The presence of three conjugation strategies in the interview and the alternation between *-ed* regularization and zero past marking during their story can be seen as markers of the overall fluidity of his past tense usage.

Julia used the past progressive for over 50% of her interview responses, suggesting a reliance on that particular tense when using the English past tense. Her reliance on the past progressive might mean that the past progressive is particularly entrenched in her personal language use, due to exposure at home or because it is also an effective regulating form, much like do-periphrasis, into which they can plug in a verb stem in order to produce the past tense.

3.2.3.8. “Jane” Monolingual English speaker- 6 years

“Lucas” German speaker- 6 years

Jane is a monolingual English speaker, about six years of age at the time of recording. She had been attending the kindergarten for at least four years. Her older sibling also attended the kindergarten. The second speaker is a German speaker, “Lucas” from the previous excerpt. Jane was telling her tablemates at lunch about a visit from the tooth fairy.

Jane: no (.) you just need to put it in the middle of your pillow and the tooth fairy will take it you know what? One (2) d one (.) the first tooth um this one (.) **i put** the tooth on that (.) in the middle (.) **i went** to the toilet and **the tooth fairy took** the tooth (.) when **i was** on the toilet and **bring me** the two euro and **put it** the (.) on her tooth on one of her teeth (.) and the she uh **she flied away @@** so funny right?

Lucas: fell it fell it fell it in the toilet or not? (.) fell it in the toilet or not?

Jane: **i put the tooth** under my pillow in the middle (.) **i went** to the toilet without the tooth (.) **i went** on the toilet and **the tooth fairy came twinkling by** and **took** the tooth **put the two euro** and **had hidden** away @@@@ (.) then **i came** back

Jane showed a solid grasp of typical English past tense conjugation, with only one *-ed* overregulation of an irregular verb. She conjugated *to fly* as *flied* to fly, instead of *flew*. Her conjugations of the irregular verbs *to put*, *to go*, and *to take* were consistent throughout the excerpt. She also used slightly more advanced language, such as the past perfect *had hidden*, and the evocative phrasing of *the tooth fairy came twinkling by*. The second part of this excerpt is an example of the ELF context of the kindergarten. The second child, Lucas the German speaker, needed clarification on what happened to the tooth when Jane went to the bathroom. Lucas used the correct conjugation of *to fall*, and *or not* to make a question, which is not a typical Standard English way of asking a question. Typically, one would be likely to say, “Did it fall in the toilet?” Lucas used the past tense to get clarification: “fell it,” along with “or not” and a

questioning inflection to get their question across without question words or do-support. In the recording, the repetition of *fell it* sounded like he was trying to get the words out in order to clarify what happened in the other child's story. The use of *or* and a vocal inflection can be used to make a phrase interrogative in German. For example: "Das ist grün, oder?" Translation: "That is green, or?". The speaker makes a statement, and seeks verification with *or* and an inflection, turning the statement into a question. Lucas, a German-speaking child, was using his previous linguistic knowledge to inform his interactions in English, and to engage with the story.

After Lucas asked about her tooth, Jane responded by clearly repeating what she had previously said in a measured, even tone so as to facilitate comprehension by her friend. Jane deliberately slowed down her speech, showing practiced effort in clarifying her story. This repetition, a characteristic of ELF exchanges, was paced slowly at the beginning to clarify the location of the tooth. The two separate sentences, said in an intentionally clear manner, were an example of how the children clarify situations or stories to each other. Jane used the communication skills of repetition and modulating her tone and pacing in order to help Lucas, a classmate with a different language background, understand her story. This shows linguistic awareness and good communicative ability.

Jane had six instances of *-ed* overregularization for irregular verbs (*thinked*, *swimmed*, *gived*, *seed*, *finded*, and *taked*) and conjugated the rest of the verbs correctly. This consistency suggests that she had a secure English grammatical system, albeit one in which the simple past is not fully memorized. This means that she did not necessarily have to exploit other conjugation strategies in order to express herself. However, her interaction with Lucas showed that she was aware of how to accommodate others linguistically, making her a notable contributor to this ELF environment.

3.2.3.9. "Stefan" German speaking- 3 years and 10 months

"George" Australian English speaker- Teacher

The following excerpt is an example of a conversation between a teacher and a child. In the excerpt below, a child who speaks German at home, "Stefan," was speaking to an Australian teacher, "George." Stefan had been attending the kindergarten for approximately two and a half

years at the time of recording. His parent wrote that they chose to enroll him at this English immersion kindergarten because it was international, and provided intercultural exposure. They also liked that the kindergarten used the Montessori method, and had a large garden for the children to play in. When asked about Stefan's language preferences, they stated that he preferred German, and would only speak English outside of the kindergarten with his nanny, who had limited German. At the kindergarten, Stefan strongly preferred to speak German, and to play with German-speaking children. He was able to effectively communicate and understand English; he simply preferred German. In this excerpt, Stefan was telling George about a recent visit to the zoo.

Stefan: i would not see the tiger!

George: you did not see the tiger?

Stefan: i just was see the spider

George: you saw spiders? Where did you see the spiders?

Stefan: by the tiger

George: oh okay

Stefan: but some (.) one eat the spider

George: eat a spider?

Stefan: and then he was hurting

Stefan started off with *would* instead of *did* in the phrase “I would not see the tiger.” George noticed this, and repeats the statement back with the correction, which is common practice at this kindergarten and in immersion kindergartens (Jalkanen 2007: 104). Stefan then went on to mix past progressive and zero past marking with *I was see*. Instead of *I was seeing*, or *I see*, Stefan combined them. George also noticed this, and recast Stefan’s phrase with the simple past, *You saw spiders?* and added a question (*Where did you see the spiders?*) to keep the conversation going. After Stefan answered George’s question, he used zero past marking for the past tense again, with *some (.) one eat the spider*. George repeated the end of the phrase for clarification: *eat a spider?* After which Stefan used the past progressive, in reference to either the spider or the person who ate it: *and then he was hurting*.

In his interview, Stefan used do-periphrasis in seven instances, the present progressive in one instance, and zero past marking for the other six instances. The made up verbs were all conjugated with a combination of do-periphrasis and the progressive, e.g. *did ricking*, with the exception of *did bess*, an example of do-periphrasis and zero past marking. Stefan also used the do-periphrasis/past progressive combination for the verb *to give*, making it *did giving*. This mixing of conjugations and tenses, as well as the lack of any *-ed* regulation, shows that Stefan may have a rather shallowly entrenched English grammatical system. However, using what linguistic resources he has, Stefan is able to tell stories, have conversations, and communicate with others..

The teacher, George, is a prime example of this focus on interpersonal communication, and of how eliciting and modeling of English language use is done at the kindergarten. It is executed in a nonjudgmental, engaged manner that allows the child to organically utilize and expand on the English abilities they already have, focusing on communication over form.

3.2.3.10. Johanna is a third language speaker (Finnish)- 4 years 8 months

Ethan is a monolingual English speaker- 4 years

Frieda is a German speaker- 3 years 9 months

Johanna: you you don't em **you don't any take day** some water

Ethan: i i **did take water** actually outside today

Frieda: me too:

Johanna: but you have to drink lots of water when it hot

Ethan: i **did drink water** when it was hot outside

This is an interaction between a third language speaking child (Johanna) and a monolingual English speaking child (Ethan). It can be observed that Ethan is also using do-periphrasis for the past tense, but in the correct social context. Johanna accused Ethan of not taking any water to drink, while using zero past marking for the verb *to take*, instead relying on context by using the word *day* for *today*. Ethan refuted this claim, using do-periphrasis for emphasis on the verb *to take*. He also used the word *actually* to point out the real, factual nature of their claim. After Frieda interjected, Johanna continued the conversation, seemingly ignoring Ethan's statement, and going on to emphasize the importance of drinking water when it is hot outside. Johanna may not have been ignoring Ethan's statement, but could have instead been trying to make a statement about drinking water unrelated to Ethan. However, Ethan interpreted her response as ignoring him, so he re-emphasized with *I did drink water*, using do-periphrasis in the typical social context again. This was one of the few instances of do-periphrasis by the interviewed monolingual English speakers, and like most of the instances, it was couched in the typical conversational context of emphasis or stressing the validity of their statement. This shows that it is possible that the majority of monolingual speakers were not as reliant on do-periphrasis

for conjugating irregular or unfamiliar words as the German-speaking or third language speaking children.

In his interview, Ethan used zero past marking for the irregular verb *to make*, correctly conjugated *to find*, and then used *-ed* overregularization for the remaining eighteen verbs. Like John, an older monolingual English speaking child, Ethan relied on *-ed* overregularization instead of do-periphrasis, suggesting a solidified grammatical system.

4. Discussion

After reviewing the interview results, it appears that a consistent variety of constructions are used as past tense markers by this sample of kindergarteners. While there are outliers, such as one child using *to like* as an auxiliary verb, and the two children who completed the interview with fully grammatically correct responses (one German speaker and one third language speaker (Chinese)), the four main conjugation strategies of *-ed* overregularization, do-periphrasis, zero past marking, and the past progressive are generally adhered to within the sample. In the overall sample, the children used *-ed* overregularization most often, which is consistent with the aforementioned literature concerning the language development of L1 English speakers (Crystal 1976, Tager-Flusberg 1997). Even though the majority of the children were not native English speakers, their acquisition of English seems to follow the same order of acquisition as a native English speaking child, as seen in the order of acquisition posited by Brown 1974.

In comparison to *-ed* overregularization, the frequency of use of the other conjugation strategies varied depending on their language. Certain groups of children appear to use some strategies more than others, such as the German-third language speakers using zero past marking more often than *-ed* overregularization (Figure 4), and the third language speakers using zero past marking as frequently as *-ed* overregularization (Figure 8). Even though *-ed* overregularization was the most frequently used conjugation strategy overall, the three other conjugation strategies (Do-periphrasis, zero past marking, and the past progressive) were used consistently throughout the interviews. Monolingual English speaking children also used the three other strategies in their interviews, albeit to a lesser extent. The interviewed children used up to three conjugation strategies in their interviews, on average, they used two. There was no

discernable pattern of correlation between the strategies used, the type of verb it was used for, and their language demographic. This inconsistency and flexibility of their conjugation strategy usage implies that they have not yet settled on one grammatical marker or construction to signify the past tense, and that they are still developing consistent tense use. This aligns with the literature on language development according to Crystal 1976, Tager-Flusberg 1997, and Berko 1958.

The prevalence of the four listed conjugation strategies can be attributed to a set framework of past tense morphology that has been entrenched in the children's English due to their significant (In terms of length and intensity) English exposure (Nicoladis & Paradis 2012) at the kindergarten. The high frequency of *-ed* overregularization has indicated that the majority of children had, to some extent, set morphological rules for English, as seen in the preschool children studied in Berko 1958, and the acquisition of the past tense as described in Crystal 1976. This corresponds to the language morphology development phases set out by Crystal (1976) and Tager-Flusberg (1997). The use of do-periphrasis, however, especially in the four cases (Three German speakers and one third language speaker) where it made up over 50% of a child's interview responses, implies that the children may have more inclusive morphological rules for the past tense in comparison to the typical monolingual English speaker, as seen in excerpt 3.2.3.11. Ethan used do-periphrasis to emphasize the truth of his statement, that he really drank water. In the recording, he began to sound almost distressed, as he placed stress on "did" when he used it to highlight his statement. In comparison to Sara's somewhat neutral usage of do-periphrasis, as seen in 3.2.3.2, Ethan's do-periphrasis was emotionally charged and used to emphasize the truth. Sara used it as a past tense marker as she told the story about the birth video she watched; there was no need to stress the validity of her story. Do-periphrasis is an acceptable past tense marker for Sara, and its additional features of highlighting truth or an action are not used by her. Do-periphrasis was found in interviews of monolingual English speaking (Used by two children out of eight) and 3rd language speaking children (Used by one child out of six interviews), but at lower frequencies in comparison to the children who spoke only German (Seven children out of ten instances) or a combination of German and a third language at home (Used by four children out of five).

With the exception of the two children who had used grammatically correct conjugations, each child from the overall sample used at least two, and up to three conjugation strategies in their interviews. Overall, *-ed* regularization was the primary conjugation strategy for all verbs, across the participant sample. However, the verb *to bess* was a slight outlier to this pattern; it had the same amount of instances of *-ed* regulation as it did of zero past tense marking. This might be due to the placement of *to bess* in the interview. The *to bess* flash card was placed approximately at the halfway point in the interview, between two irregular verbs, which may have increased the use of the zero past marking strategy.

While the past progressive was one of the least used conjugation strategies, its heavy usage by one child, who speaks both German and English at home, and its presence in the classroom recordings is worthy of attention. It is also of note that the use of the past progressive in ELF has been noticed by ELF researchers: Ranta offers a possible explanation for past progressive use, saying that “[...] adding the ending *-ing* and the auxiliary BE to a verb (any verb for that matter) gives the verb more prominence and salience in the speaker’s utterance” (Ranta 2006: 112). The past progressive form (*to be* + verb stem *-ing*) does not deviate from its given formula, unlike the irregular forms found in the simple past tense. This consistency of form appears to make the past progressive easier to internalize and use in speech. The form is the same for all verbs, and takes up more space in the sentence, calling more attention to the verb itself and the actions occurring within the sentence. This eye-catching feature of the past progressive also makes it more memorable, and therefore easier to recall. The simplicity of the form can also assist in recall efforts, making the past progressive a safe choice for an English learner when talking about something occurring in the past.

The origins of do-periphrasis use can be traced back to the typical interrogative format in English, which uses do-periphrasis in *wh-* questions. Interrogatives such as: *What did you do?*, *Where did you go?*, *Why did you do that?*, and *Who did you see?* are used daily in the kindergarten, often by teachers for the purpose of eliciting a response in English from the child with whom they are speaking. This can be seen in the conversation between the child and teacher in section 4.2.1, in which he asks *Where did you see the spiders?* These open-ended questions are useful when modeling interrogatives and getting a child to use more than a one-word

response, as noted in the literature by Jalkanen 2011. This is also an example of scripted phrase use, in which the teacher uses a whole phrase (“Stop it, I don’t like it”.) or construction such as the interrogative (“Have you ___?”) repeatedly in order to model language use and further entrench certain phrases, lexical items, and grammatical features in the child’s mind (Tabors 1997, Jalkanen 2011, Mourão 2014). This is why they are so frequently used by the teachers, who are modeling English language use to the children. The consistent repetition of these interrogatives might have contributed to the use of do-periphrasis in the kindergarten, because a logical response to a question like “Where did you go yesterday?” could be “I did go to the park.” The children who use do-periphrasis change the interrogative into a statement, both mirroring the question they have been given, and regulating the past tense into something easily useable without rote memorization of past tense forms. By using ELF, they have the freedom to exploit the virtual language (Widdowson 2013). The children do so, taking a specific form such as do-periphrasis and using it as a simpler, more regular way to express the past tense.

Do-periphrasis as a past tense marker is a grammatically valid construction, but it is used mostly for emphasis, or for confirmation when the truth of a statement is being questioned as seen in the conversation between children in section 4.2.2. When used in either of these social contexts, the auxiliary verb (*to do*) is stressed. It is not stressed when used as a past tense marker by these children. As stated by Seidlhofer, ELF characteristics can include “‘Overusing’ certain verbs of high semantic generality, such as *do, have, make, put, take*” (Seidlhofer 2004: 220). This overuse, particularly of do-periphrasis, is present in the everyday language in the kindergarten, as shown in both the interview data and classroom recordings. Along with this overuse, the fluid switching between strategies in both the interviews and classroom recordings is one of the more salient observations from this project. Since the children’s grammatical systems are not fully acquired, as they are still acquiring it up to primary school (Tager-Flusberg 1997: 178), so they are using all of their available resources to communicate amongst themselves. “The children’s multi-competence, specifically their automaticity in code switching, emerge as consistent characteristics of the children’s oral production: young learners are not concerned with the form. They know what they should communicate and whether they are effectively communicating” (Lopriore 2015: 168). Again, the children’s focus is on

communication, socializing and playing with their peers, which is their community of practice. They switch conjugation strategies and use all of their linguistic abilities in order to meet their communicative goals in their community.

This switching between strategies was quite fluid when observed in both the interviews and recordings, indicating that the child's English morphological rules were not entirely solidified, which is typical for the 4 to 6 year age range. Language development in 4 to 6-year-olds is marked by learning grammatical systems and further entrenchment of said systems (Crystal 1976: 44-45). This implies that the grammatical systems in 4 to 6-year-olds are more flexible, and somewhat shallowly entrenched. This possibly means that children in this age range are more susceptible to influence from the varieties of English being spoken around them, and cross-linguistic influence from their environment. The child is still absorbing language rules, and the environment in which they spend most of their time, whether it is the home or kindergarten, will influence the development of these rules and their language use in general.

The clustering of certain past tense forms within the different language groups (Ex: German speakers using more *do*-periphrasis, or third language speakers using *-ed* overregularization and zero marking at the same rate), shows that the child's previous language knowledge may have an influence on the child's past tense use, though the overall sample size is too small to make any further assumptions. Other than previous language knowledge, the kindergarten environment may be one of the most influential factors due to it being a highly diverse community of practice for the children. Due to their membership in the community of practice (Eckhart 2006, Wenger 1998, Kalocsai 2011) at this linguistically diverse kindergarten, the children were exposed to several varieties of English and were permitted to use English in whichever way they needed in order to communicate. As seen from the teachers questionnaire data, communication was viewed as highly important, and was a main focus of their language teaching approach. At the kindergarten, as long as the efforts of a child learning English as an L2 are intelligible, they are accepted by the teachers and their peers. The teacher might repeat back a correct version of what the child has said, but otherwise the child will get what they requested (For example: an item, attention, or assistance) from this interaction in English. This broader acceptance of non-standard English in order to encourage communication and generally elicit

language use from the children has resulted in some children using more morphologically manipulable forms such as the past progressive and do-periphrasis for the simple past tense, due to their ease of use in comparison to having to memorize the past tenses of many irregular verbs. The influence of the community of practice can be seen in the use of these grammatical innovations for the simple past tense among the monolingual English speakers. Two monolingual English speaking children used do-periphrasis in their interviews, likely due them copying their peers. The ease of use of these forms is not confined to the children learning English as an L1; the monolingual English speakers could also benefit from a more transparent morphological process for expressing the simple past, as opposed to the rote memorization process of irregular verb conjugations that extends to the early primary school years.

This is a product of them being in an ELF-oriented setting (Vettorel 2013: 165), where clear communication is valued not just by the teachers (As shown in the teacher questionnaires), but by the children as they go about socializing with their peers with varied linguistic backgrounds. The children in the excerpts exemplify the focus on interpersonal communication that is a characteristic of ELF users (Vettorel 2013: 165). They are eager to communicate with others, and to share meaningful experiences.

When it comes to past tense use, the children use whichever linguistic tools are at their disposal. As seen in the excerpts, particularly with Sara, Johanna, and John, a child might be able to produce the correct past tense conjugation of a verb in their interview or spontaneous speech, but they may not always use the same conjugation during spontaneous speech. They may switch to using a conjugation strategy, like do-periphrasis, *-ed* regulation, or zero past marking, because it is more thoroughly entrenched. Their language is fluid because they are still developing their grammatical systems (Crystal 1976), but it is still functional. These strategies are functional, and effectively communicate whatever they are trying to say. “The essential overall point is that the extension of formal knowledge is motivated by functional need. How people make the language work for themselves is primary, and the forms they produce are simply a consequence of this process” (Seidlhofer 2011: 199). The functionality and effectiveness of the conjugation strategies are the focus, not the forms themselves. This is not only because the children may not be

interested in having “correct” language, but also because they are engaged in the conversations and the communication happening between individuals, like a typical ELF user.

Children in an ELF-oriented setting (Vettorel 2013), such as this English-immersion kindergarten, speak ELF because it serves as the closest means of communication that will allow them to express their wants and needs. This kindergarten is not intentionally ELF-oriented; it is coincidentally ELF-friendly due to the inclusive nature of the environment, the diversity of the children and teachers, lack of prescriptive rules or emphasis on a particular variety of English, and the heavy emphasis on clear communication. These factors are what have made ELF possible in this environment; it is nonjudgmental and is simply oriented towards building social and language skills in a holistic manner. ELF, a communicative tool, is shaped by the kindergarten community of practice. By convening together regularly for a shared purpose (Kindergarten), and having meaningful relationships with each other, the children, as well as their teachers, have formed a community of practice with their linguistically and culturally diverse peers (Wenger 1998: 73). The children have a strong sense of membership to the kindergarten, of belonging to the community that had been established there. This community fosters ELF through meaningful interactions and by emphasizing communication. The innovations of using the past progressive, third person zero, and do-periphrasis for past tense conjugations as a way to avoid the rote memorization of irregular past tense conjugations is an instance of exploiting the virtual language (Widdowson 2016: 33), as well as establishing their own linguistic repertoire for this community of practice (Wenger 1998: 83).

Due to this sense of membership to this community of practice, and the transactional way English is used by the children to get things done at the kindergarten, the children are typical ELF users in that “They are focused on the interactional and transactional purposes of the talk and on their interlocutors as people rather than the linguistic code itself” (Seidlhofer 2011: 98). The children make meaning with each other and express themselves at the kindergarten. As Lucas was telling the story about the gorilla, he was “exploit[ing] their linguistic skills and resources to interpersonal meaning making” (Vettorel 2013: 165). The story about the gorilla had meaning to Lucas, and he used his linguistic abilities to bring it to life for his tablemates at lunch. As stated by Vettorel, “[...] interpersonal communication emerges as the main focus for the

participants [...]” (2013: 165). The children are highly motivated to interact and play interpersonally. This play-based motivation leads to more communication, interaction, and meaningful language use, as well as the strengthening of a community of practice. This community of diverse children, who have been brought together to learn and speak English has led to some prevalent language forms, such as the free use of do-periphrasis as a past tense marker. Even the monolingual English speakers in the study, who are part of English-speaking speech communities with language exposure outside of the kindergarten, either acknowledge or use these atypical forms, such as do-periphrasis. The kindergarten, as a community of practice that is diverse, open, and focused on communication, has led to the coincidental establishment of an ELF-friendly (Not ELF-oriented as in Vettorel 2013) environment. In turn, this has led to the children’s exploitation of the virtual language of English for the simplification of the simple past tense in a way similar to adult ELF users, as noted in Seidlhofer 2011, and older school children (Vettorel 2013).

5. Conclusion

ELF is spoken in this English immersion kindergarten because the formation of a community of practice and holistic, communication-centered language education have converged to create an ELF-friendly environment. The community of practice gives the children a sense of community, so they naturally adjust their language in order to accommodate each other and mark their membership to this kindergarten community. The bi- and multilingual and English-speaking monolingual children are all highly motivated speakers, who are still developing their syntactic and morphological forms. This makes them open to experimentation and flexible when it comes to the morphology of English, which allows them to use and exploit the virtual language. The interviews show the kindergarteners metalinguistic knowledge and ability to recall past tense morphology, which manifests differently in the classroom. In the classroom, language gives the children a connection to their community of practice, and has purpose and meaning, a contrast to an interview in which they are prompted to give simple past tense forms for common verbs.

ELF has been able to emerge, and thrive, in this kindergarten because of the motivated and playful interactions between diverse language speakers, the supportive and non-prescriptive

attitudes of the teachers, and their focus on communication. The language learning that occurs in this kindergarten is not limited by the prescriptive language rules found in formal language classes in schools, giving the children more freedom and agency when it comes to using the language for their own purposes. The children are in a sensitive period for language development and a prime time for linguistic innovations. They use ELF to accommodate and socialize with peers from different linguistic backgrounds and meet any immediate needs such as assistance with an activity. ELF is a functional communicative resource, not just a phase in their linguistic development, and it helps the children learn and socialize while building on this communicative tool. Innovations in ELF can simplify the more complicated grammatical aspects of English, and the use of do-periphrasis in order to regulate the irregular past tense makes English easier to handle and use for those children learning it as their L2. As the children are highly motivated speakers, they contribute to the development of their own version of ELF while simultaneously honing their communicative skills. These children will likely grow up to be seasoned ELF users, and other children in similar English immersion, ELF-friendly environments may possibly do the same. The rapid global expansion of English immersion and bilingual kindergartens/nurseries will create more early childhood environments like the one in this thesis, in which ELF thrives and allows children to engage with English in an informal, flexible way that suits their direct purposes. This is especially relevant for children learning English as an additional language: their early ELF usage may be a positive or negative influence on their future English learning. Using ELF as a communicative tool from an early age may give a child a sense of ownership over the English language, as they can freely communicate and adjust their language situationally. It may also become frustrating when they enter formal schooling and might be expected to conform to a certain standard of English, and to “correct” the linguistic innovations they have implemented successfully in early childhood simply because it does not conform to the particular standard they are learning in school. This might demotivate the child, as their interactions with the English language will differ from their utilization of ELF. Generally, exposure to ELF and a range of English varieties spoken by teachers and their peers at the kindergarten will likely grant children better communicative skills, as the children will be well-versed in negotiating meaning and communicating with a variety of individuals from different linguistic backgrounds. The

children at this kindergarten will have had to find ways to communicate with peers and teachers from highly diverse backgrounds, which will have assisted with the development of their communicative abilities and social skills.

Their use of ELF as a communicative tool allows the children the freedom to exploit the virtual language of English in a way that suits their communicative needs. It also helps them navigate the acquisition and learning of past tense conjugations of irregular verbs: ELF gives them the flexibility to experiment with past tense conjugations as they go about acquiring the “correct” forms, and it permits deviations from the “correct” forms in order to avoid rote memorization and to facilitate communication by any means. In conclusion, ELF is present in this English immersion kindergarten, and is used by the children to cope with learning English as a second language, and/or to communicate and express themselves effectively to their peers and teachers. The children are highly motivated to share their thoughts, ideas, and needs with others has led to linguistic innovations such as the regulation of the past tense with do-periphrasis and the past progressive, as well as zero past marking. However, these innovations are not as frequent as *-ed* overregularization, which is still the standard feature of English irregular past tense acquisition. The prevalence of English immersion and bilingual kindergartens warrants further examination of ELF in kindergartens, how ELF effects past tense morphology, and how ELF usage from a young age will affect a child’s transition into formal English education.

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7. Appendix 1- Parental Questionnaire

1. How old is your child, in years and months?
2. Why did you decide to enroll your child in an English kindergarten?
3. How long has your child been in an English kindergarten, or been involved with English?
4. Which language(s) does your child speak on a daily basis? Which language(s) do they prefer to speak?
5. Does your child have language lessons or exposure (For example: tutoring, language school, native speaker babysitters, etc.) outside of the kindergarten? What kind of instruction, and in which language(s)?
6. Does your child have books, movies, TV shows, or YouTube channels they regularly (Daily or weekly) read or watch? What are some of their favorites, and what language(s) are they in?
7. Approximately how many hours a week does your child spend watching videos and reading books, respectively?
8. Is there anything else that you or your child would like to share about their experiences in an English kindergarten?

8. Appendix 2- Teacher Questionnaire

1. What is your native language and country of origin?

2. Which languages do you speak, and to what degree of fluency?

4. Do you try and stay within a certain standard of English (For example: Received Pronunciation, General American) when working at the kindergarten? If you speak English at home, do you speak it differently at the kindergarten?

5. How often do you correct children's language use (word order, pronunciation, grammar, etc.)? Do you ever emphasize "correct" English?

6. Do you think the children should learn a certain standard of English?

7. What is your overall strategy for teaching children English, if any?

8. Is there anything else you would like to share about your experiences as a teacher in an English kindergarten?

9. Appendix 3- List of languages spoken by children at the kindergarten

Bosnian

English

Finnish

French

German

Hindi

Igbo

Italian

Korean

Luganda

Malayalam

Mandarin

Polish

Shona

Spanish

Swedish

Turkish

Peripheral languages: Bahasa Indonesian, Farsi, Hungarian

10. Appendix 4- List of verbs used in individual interviews

Made-up

Spow

This is a man who knows how to spow. He is spowing. He did this yesterday. What did he do yesterday? Yesterday, he _____.

Rick

This is a girl who knows how to rick. She is ricking. She did this yesterday. What did she do yesterday? Yesterday, she _____.

Marv

This is a dog who knows how to marv. It is marving. It did this yesterday. What did the dog do yesterday? Yesterday, it _____.

Bess

This is a boy who knows how to bess. He is blessing. He did this yesterday. What did he do yesterday? Yesterday he _____.

Kazz

This is a lady who knows how to kazz. She is kazzing. She did this yesterday. What did she do yesterday? Yesterday she _____.

Irregular

Say

This is a boy who likes to say things. He is saying something. He did this yesterday. What did he do yesterday? Yesterday he _____.

Take

This is a girl who likes to take things. She is taking a ball. She did this yesterday. What did she do yesterday? Yesterday she _____.

Swim

This is a fish that likes to swim. It is swimming. It did this yesterday. What did it do yesterday? Yesterday it _____.

Make

This is a woman who likes to make toys. She is making a toy. She did this yesterday. What did she do yesterday? Yesterday he _____.

Go

This is a man who likes to go out. He is going out. He did this yesterday. Yesterday he went out. What did he do yesterday? Yesterday he _____.

See

This is a dog who likes to see. It is seeing a girl. It did this yesterday. What did it do yesterday? Yesterday it _____.

Think

This is a girl who likes to think. She is thinking. She did this yesterday. What did she do yesterday? Yesterday she _____.

Find

This is a boy who likes to find things. He is finding a ball. He did this yesterday. What did he do yesterday? Yesterday he _____.

Gave

This is a man who likes to give. He is giving a boy a flower. He did this yesterday. What did he do yesterday? Yesterday he _____.

Tell

This is a girl who likes to tell stories. She is telling a story. She did this yesterday. What

did she do yesterday? Yesterday she _____.

Regular

Look

This is a boy who likes to look. He is looking. He did this yesterday. What did he do yesterday? Yesterday he _____.

Talk

This is a man who likes to talk. He is talking. He did this yesterday. What did he do yesterday? Yesterday he _____.

Play

This is a girl who likes to play. She is playing. She did this yesterday. What did she do yesterday? Yesterday she _____.

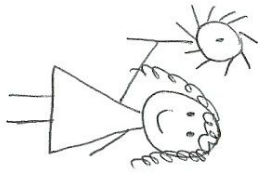
Show

This is a woman who likes to show things. She is showing the girl a picture. She did this yesterday. What did she do yesterday? Yesterday she _____.

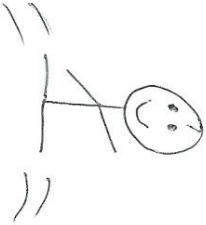
Walk

This is a man who likes to walk. He is walking. He did this yesterday. What did he do yesterday? Yesterday he _____.

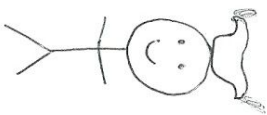
11. Appendix 5- Flash cards used in the individual interviews



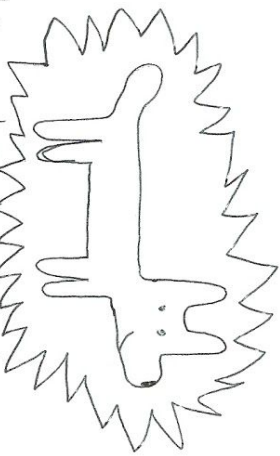
This is a girl who knows how to rick.
She is ricking, she did this yesterday.
What did she do yesterday?
Yesterday, she _____.



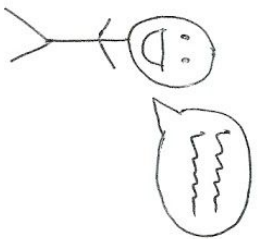
This is a boy who knows how to bess.
He is bessing, he did this yesterday.
What did he do yesterday?
Yesterday he _____.



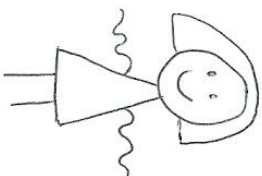
This is a man who knows how to spaw.
He is spawing, he did this yesterday.
What did he do yesterday?
Yesterday, he _____.



This is a dog who knows how to maw.
It is mawing, it did this yesterday.
What did the dog do yesterday?
Yesterday, it _____.



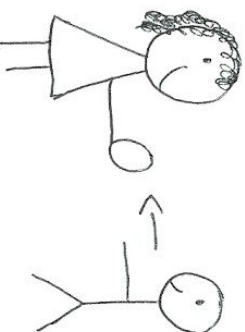
This is a boy who likes to say things.
He is saying something. He did this yesterday.
What did he do yesterday?
Yesterday he _____.



This is a lady who knows how to kaze.
She is kazing. She did this yesterday.
What did she do yesterday?
Yesterday, she _____.



This is a fish that likes to swim.
It is swimming. It did this yesterday.
What did it do yesterday?
Yesterday it _____.

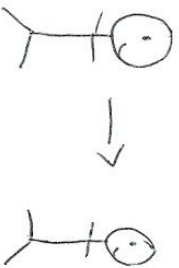


This is a girl who likes to take things.
She is taking a ball. She did this yesterday.
What did she do yesterday?
Yesterday she _____.



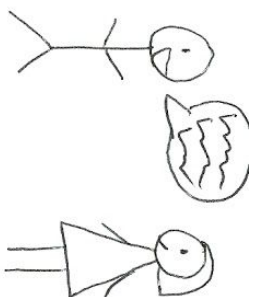
This is a girl who likes to play.
She is playing. She did this yesterday.
What did she do yesterday?

Yesterday she _____.



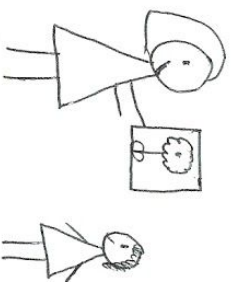
This is a man who likes to walk.
He is walking. He did this yesterday.
What did he do yesterday?

Yesterday he _____.



This is a man who likes to talk.
He is talking. He did this yesterday.
What did he do yesterday?

Yesterday he _____.

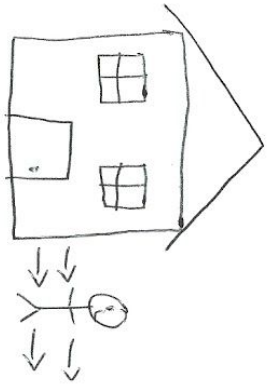


This is a woman who likes to show things.
She is showing a girl a picture.
She did this yesterday.
What did she do yesterday?

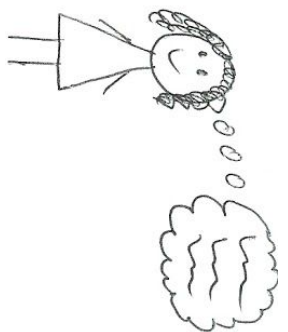
Yesterday she _____.



This is a dog who likes to see.
It is seeing a girl. It did this yesterday.
What did it do yesterday?
Yesterday it _____.



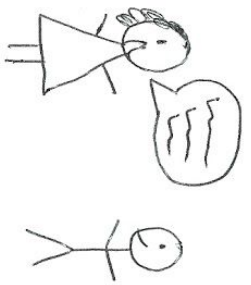
This is a man who likes to go out.
He is going out. He did this yesterday.
What did he do yesterday?
Yesterday he _____.



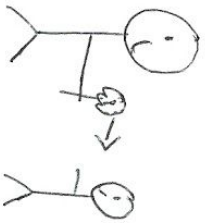
This is a girl who likes to think.
She is thinking. She did this yesterday.
What did she do yesterday?
Yesterday she _____.



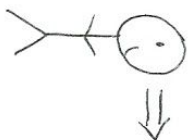
This is a woman who likes to make toys.
She is making a toy. She did this yesterday.
What did she do yesterday?
Yesterday she _____.



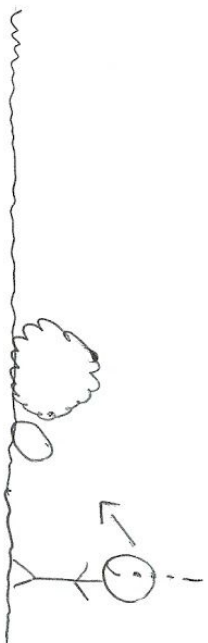
This is a girl who likes to tell stories.
She is telling a story. She did this yesterday.
What did she do yesterday?
Yesterday she _____.



This is a man who likes to give.
He is giving a boy a flower.
He did this yesterday.
What did he do yesterday?
Yesterday he _____.



This is a boy who likes to look.
He is looking. He did this yesterday.
What did he do yesterday?
Yesterday he _____.



This is a boy who likes to find things.
He is finding a ball. He did this yesterday.
What did he do yesterday?
Yesterday he _____.

12. Abstract

“She did say it to me!”: English as a lingua franca in a Viennese kindergarten

English kindergartens are steadily increasing in popularity worldwide, due to the perception of English as a useful life skill and the push from parents and policy makers to introduce it to children at earlier ages. This has led to more children being exposed to English before the start of formal language instruction in school, which will impact later English instruction because it establishes the English language in the mind of the child. These English immersion kindergartens have been known to bill themselves as international by having both children and staff from a variety of countries, cultures, and, crucially, language backgrounds. This linguistic diversity, along with other factors including an established community of practice and an emphasis on speech production over conforming to a certain variety of English, results in English as a lingua franca (ELF) being the primary form of spoken communication in this early childhood educational setting.

In this thesis, the manifestation of the past tense in the spoken English of children aged 4 to 6 years old of varied language backgrounds, all in attendance at the same English immersion kindergarten in Vienna, is examined through both individual interviews and recordings of spontaneous speech occurring during everyday kindergarten activities. Some of these children have been observed using features such as zero past marking, the past progressive, and do-periphrasis in place of the simple past tense. These observed features are part of the ELF usage at the kindergarten, and will be analyzed in order to understand the use of the simple past tense as well as the role of ELF in influencing the children's past tense morphology. The results of this thesis, that ELF can and is used by preschool children, can mark the beginning of further examination of preschool English instruction, and ELF in early childhood education.

“She did say it to me!”: Englisch als Lingua Franca in einem Wiener englischsprachigen Kindergarten

Englischsprachige Kindergärten in nicht-englischsprachigen Ländern erfreuen sich weltweit immer größerer Beliebtheit. Die Erkenntnis von Eltern und Politikern, dass Englisch zunehmend wichtig für das spätere Arbeiten und Leben ist hat dazu geführt, dass Kinder in zunehmend jüngeren Jahren der Fremdsprache Englisch ausgesetzt werden. Diese Einführung in die Sprache vor der eigentlichen, formalen Erlernung von Englisch hat weitreichende Konsequenzen auf ebendiese formale Erlernung, da die Sprache bereits im Kopf des Kindes etabliert ist. Diese englischsprachigen Kindergärten präsentieren sich vorzugsweise als international indem sie sowohl die Kinder als auch die Erzieher_innen aus unterschiedlichen Ländern, Kulturen und, am wichtigsten, aus unterschiedlichen Sprachräumen rekrutieren. Diese sprachliche Vielfalt, zusammen mit anderen Faktoren wie einer etablierten *community of practice* und einem Fokus auf Sprachproduktion zu Lasten der Erlernung einer bestimmten, fixierten Form des Englischen, führen dazu, dass das gesprochene Englisch in diesem frühkindlichen Erziehungsumfeld als Lingua Franca gewertet werden kann (*Englisch as a Lingua Franca*, ELF).

Die vorliegende Arbeit untersuchte, wie Kinder im Alter zwischen 4 und 6 Jahren, die einen englischsprachigen Kindergarten besuchen und unterschiedliche Muttersprachen sprechen, die Vergangenheitsform von Verben bilden. Die Untersuchung umfasste Einzelinterview sowie Aufnahmen von spontanem Sprachgebrauch in alltäglichen Kindergartensituationen.

Die Auswertung ergab, dass die untersuchten Kinder die Bildung der korrekten Vergangenheitsform vermieden und unterschiedliche Strategien zur Vergangenheitsbildung nutzten, darunter das nicht-bilden der Vergangenheitsform (*zero past marking*), Nutzung des *past progressive*, und Konstruktion einer *do*-Paraphrasierung. Diese Strategien sind Teil der ELF Ausprägung an diesem Kindergarten und wurden analysiert um ein Verständnis über die Nutzung der Vergangenheitsbildung und der Rolle von ELF in der Morphology von Vergangenheitsformen zu bekommen.

Die Ergebnisse dieser Arbeit, dass ELF von Kindergarten Kindern genutzt werden kann und genutzt wird, stellen einen ersten Schritt für die Erforschung von ELF in einem vorschulischen Umfeld dar.

