

**UNIVERSITY OF TARTU**  
**DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH STUDIES**

**TEACHERS' TECHNIQUES OF SUPPORTING STUDENT  
UNDERSTANDING IN ENGLISH IMMERSION EDUCATION**

**CASE STUDY: TARTU INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL**

**MA Thesis**

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## **ABSTRACT**

This case study, conducted in Tartu International School (TIS), observed the techniques two teachers in English immersion education use to convey their message and support student understanding. As the nature of immersion education does not allow codeswitching the teachers must utilize other techniques to help students comprehend their message. The first part of the study provides an overview of what the scholars in the field have examined about immersion education and its benefits. The research most often done in the field of immersion education is centered on the students and their achievements. It could be said that teachers, the other half of the equation, have been left a secondary position, which is why this study contributes to filling this gap, yet calls for more research on the teachers of immersion education. The introductory part also introduces TIS and its immersion education teachers involved in this study.

The second, empirical, part of the study looks at tools used by the two teachers in immersion education, which is often more meaning-focused rather than form-focused. Teachers aim at reaching understanding in teacher-student communication and less focus on the veracity of the grammar. The teachers observed in this study were recorded and interviewed and their techniques were categorized into verbal and non-verbal tools. The teachers used the tools frequently and often simultaneously, providing the students with many opportunities to understand their message. This study also looks at how the two teachers reflect on the usage of these tools, since self-reflection is also an important technique teachers need to utilize in order to improve as teachers. This case study provides insight into how teachers in English immersion education communicate verbally and non-verbally to support their message and aide student comprehension.

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## INTRODUCTION

This study observes how teachers in English immersion education use different techniques to convey their message and how they support student understanding. This research was conducted in the form of a case study that examines two teachers, with different levels of experience in the field of education, in the Tartu International School (TIS). In TIS all subjects are taught through English immersion education, as students come from various language backgrounds. Given the nature of immersion education the only language of instruction in Tartu International School is English, and teachers do not have the opportunity for code switching, using the students' first languages. Therefore teachers must find other methods in conveying their message.

Immersion education can be a very effective way to learn a second or foreign language. This language acquisition approach and the bilinguals it produces are an interesting research topic. In addition to academic research from well-known scholars, students from the English Department at the University of Tartu have also been interested in examining the students in immersion programs. From the articles and studies available conducted by leading researchers in the field of immersion education, (M. Swain, 1995; J. Cummins, 1992, 2000; S. Lapkin, 1991.) it could be deduced that the previous research conducted in areas relating to immersion education remains rather student oriented. The other equally important part of the puzzle, the teachers, has been left with less emphasis.

Teachers are an integral part of the calculation that results in the proudly published academic achievements. Teachers and the techniques and tools they use to convey their message in immersion education should be looked into more extensively. Namely the techniques in verbal and non-verbal communication of teachers are essential in order for them to be able to provide their students with comprehensible input. In addition

to the examination of different input tools some teacher self-reflection has been included in this study, because it is an important part of a teacher's competence, allowing a teacher to develop and improve their methods. This self-reflection allows teachers to keep doing what they see working and modify methods and tools they feel did not support student understanding.

The present research uses videos, which are complemented by interviews conducted, as the basis of analysis. The aim of the study is to determine the different techniques the two teachers use in English immersion education to teach their students the target language and while teaching the contents and making it comprehensible. The primary data are video recordings and interviews conducted in English immersion education. When looking into teacher self-reflection the teachers were asked to describe the instructional techniques and input tools when forwarding information to support student understanding. These statements are then contrasted in the results section with the techniques seen in the recordings.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Firstly the literature review will provide an overview of immersion education: its methods, theories and advantages. It will also provide a context and definitions for the different techniques immersion teachers have at their disposal to support student understanding, such as: comprehensible input, paraphrase, repetition, demonstration, gestures, cooperative learning. Secondly an outline will be provided on reflection as an important part of a teacher's competence, as it allows teachers to examine their communicational techniques and determine which tools work and which do not.

Abello-Contesse et al. (2013) term immersion education as a second or foreign language acquisition approach that uses the target language, usually referred to as L2, as the language of instruction. The approach, established in Montreal in the mid 1960-s, was one of the first to use a second or foreign language to teach both the target language and content; the content providing a substance for learning while using the target language as a tool. Tedick et al. (2011) describe one-way foreign language immersion education programs to provide education to homogenous learners that usually do not speak the target language upon enrolling into the program. They define the aims of the approach as follows “(1) develop additive bi/multilingualism and bi/multiliteracy, (2) ensure that learners achieve academically and (3) foster the development of intercultural understanding” (Tedick et al. 2011:2). In immersion education, teachers are instructed against codeswitching, in order to prevent language learners from disregarding instruction in L2, as they might get accustomed to waiting for the translated instructions in their first language, L1, (Cummins, 1998). Walsh (2011) specified that, instead of translating, teachers need to find other techniques to make input comprehensible and to encourage student output as the proficient speaker, often a native speaker of the target language. According to Cummings (1998) teachers in immersion education should focus on three didactic areas: message, language and language use.

Although some earlier literature (Cummins, 1979, 1984; Lee, 1996) suggests the immersion education approach hinders the development of the L1, because the bilinguals it produces suffer language confusion, studies published at the end of the 1980-s (Cummins and Swain, 1986; Diaz, 1986) already showed how students enrolled in immersion education programs outperform their monolingual counterparts in many areas. These studies examined a language learner’s understanding of how a language works: how words can be formulated and joined together to form meaningful sentences. The level of linguistic

awareness in bilingual children was found to be higher in comparison to monolingual children, because they have the experience of decoding much more language input in two different languages. These results are further supported by more recent studies by Nicolay and Poncelet (2013) and Bialystok et al (2014) on the benefits of immersion education.

According to Nicolay and Poncelet's (2013) study, the cognitive abilities of students enrolled in immersion for three years, tested in the second grade, were higher than the control groups. They attributed this to the students in immersion programs having to exercise more executive control. This is when a student chooses to use one language and preventing the other to interfere in terms of grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation. Bialystok et al. (2014) found more apparent cognitive development in students only after having been in immersion for five years. The studies consisted of a battery of tasks that tested the cognitive abilities of bilingual and monolingual students. In this area they concentrated on testing the executive control their subjects showed. Executive control is displayed by an individual "in selective attention to appropriate information and the inhibition of misleading information" (Bialystok et al. 2014: 179). According to both studies the bilingual group was better able to disregard the confusing meaning of the sentence and focus on the form of the sentence in order to decide whether the sentence was grammatical or not. These studies suggest that immersion education at its best produces bilingual children that have higher metalinguistic awareness and cognitive abilities. This is why immersion education is a valuable approach in second language acquisition and why its students and teachers should be studied more.

As mentioned before, when looking at immersion education teachers one needs to be aware that they do not have the possibility for code-switching. Therefore they have to use other techniques to make their message comprehensible and support student understanding in both verbally and non-verbally. Comprehensive input is Krashen's

hypothesis on input in the classroom. Krashen (1985) formulated the hypothesis stating that in order for learning to happen the input put forth by the teacher must be modelled on the level or a bit higher of the students' proficiency. In immersion education the input needs should be met in addition to the demands for correct pronunciation, grammar and word stress, which are met with native speaker teachers. Comprehensible input is necessary for learning, but Krashen neglected to address the need for the production of language in foreign language acquisition. Swain (1993), an established researcher in the field of teaching methodology and pedagogy of immersion education programs, attempts to resolve the issue with the output hypothesis that suggest learning and language acquisition at that also happens through output.

The input techniques teachers use to convey their message therefore must be complemented with a requirement for output: interaction between language learner and teacher. García (2007) states that the nature of this input and output by extension is to this day not implicit to teachers and researchers, but she emphasizes the teacher's role in the classroom to initiate and foster the collaborative and communicative nature of the lesson that allows for second language acquisition. Because a comprehensive list of the different methods and techniques English immersion education teachers have at their disposal has not been agreed upon by researchers in the field, this study uses Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) as the basis for grouping the different input tools.

Lindholm-Leary (2005) explains the SIOP model, registered trademark created by Echevarria et al. in 1993-2003, as one that helps teachers determine the academic and language needs of the students. While the teachers in TIS do not use the model in its entirety, as it has many steps, it has been included in this study as it is a good way to group the different techniques teachers utilize to support student understanding. The SIOP model



consists of 30 items that have been further categorized into eight tools to help teachers convey their message so that their input is comprehensible:

- the use of visual aids such as pictures, charts, graphs, and semantic mapping,
  - modeling of instruction, allowing students to negotiate meaning and make connections between course content and prior knowledge,
  - allowing students to act as mediators and facilitators,
  - the use of alternative assessments to check comprehension,
  - portfolios,
  - use of comprehensible input, scaffolding, and supplemental materials, and
  - a wide range of presentation strategies
- (Lindholm-Leary 2005: 55)

The model is just one way to categorize and list instructional methods and tools that help teachers in planning a lesson that supports student understanding. When it comes to making input more comprehensible Cummins (1998) further explains that immersion education teachers must use contextual supports that are both verbal and non-verbal, such as repetition, definition with the help on examples in student contexts, gestures, acting and group work: student mediation and group discussion. For the purposes of this study, and the teachers involved, these can be mentioned as key techniques in making content comprehensible in immersion education. Definition and examples contain paraphrase and explaining an idea or term in other words in the target language. Sometimes this includes using a monolingual dictionary definition or thesaurus. Repetition, as an instructional strategy, means reiterating during a lesson and practicing the new vocabulary and terminology to arrive at understanding. Using nonverbal communication such as demonstration, acting and gestures is a teacher's way to support their message through acting and is one of the go to strategies for the teachers involved in this study.

In addition to this, the use of cooperative learning, where students work together to discover, understand and practice new things, is very common in immersion education. Students might often learn more from each other in group activities, than they would

during teacher talking time. This might be due to the fact that students in a similar age range may have a similar way of conceptualizing the world. In all these techniques the role of the teacher is most significant as they have to determine what and how to teach. They are also responsible for choosing the most suitable techniques depending on different situations and according to the needs of the students.

Immersion education teachers therefore stand at a very important position when it comes to forwarding content to students. Teachers need to be aware and systematic in the use of these techniques in order to support student understanding and create an environment where foreign language acquisition is possible. In a study on teaching languages through content Lyster (2007) agrees with Genesee's (1987) claims that the only slightly satisfactory results in student target language skill level could be explained with the teachers' efficiency in incorporating language within their lesson. These claims are further established by studies that seem to suggest immersion teachers often find difficulty in determining what language elements they should integrate with their content and how they should do so to arrive at substantial results (Camarata, Tedick, 2012:27).

These studies therefore, underline the importance of methodical planning and self-reflection and how they prove to be a vital part in reaching the goals of immersion education - to arrive at target language proficiency and creating bilinguals. Many studies have been conducted on the impact of a teacher's experience on their skill level and self-awareness. According to Beijaard et al (2000) the knowledge of an expert differs from that of a less experienced teacher in three ways: the range and structure of memory items, less cognitive effort in different tasks and problem solving with the help of relevant information from memory. From their study it can be concluded that a teacher's experience level can affect how a teacher sees a variety of events in the classroom and how they reflect on their experiences in order to construct memory models that help them in new

situations in the future. Reflection therefore is one key element in looking at how a teacher makes progress to become an experienced and professional of education.

**1.** This study uses the term English immersion education, whilst a case might be at times made for using the term Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) in Estonia. David Lasagabaster and Juan Manuel Sierra (2010) outline the problem of the synonymous and ambiguous use of the two terms. The authors emphasize the main difference of CLIL and immersion in language objectives and outcomes. According to Lagabaster and Sierra (2010) a student's ability to use the target language in their own community is one of the most important language objectives of immersion education. This case study takes place in TIS, which is surrounded and in cooperation with an international community that uses English as their lingua franca. One of the main objectives of the school for teaching English is so that students can function in that community. Secondly Lagabaster and Sierra (2010) differentiate immersion and CLIL, using the first language of the teachers: in immersion the educators are native speakers of the target language. The teachers of TIS involved and examined in this study speak English as their first language. Thus immersion is a term more warranted in the case of this study.

## **TARTU INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL**

### **TIS AS A LEARNING ENVIRONMENT**

I chose Tartu International School (TIS) as the object of my case study, because it represents a multicultural and international community in Tartu that uses English as its lingua franca. It was founded in 2001 to meet the needs of the growing international community providing education for a group of seven students. From there on, demand has been on a steady rise and in the study year 2015/2016, around 40 students call it their school. In the Tartu area, the school is relatively small, but therein rests its distinctiveness as a field of study. Irrespective of its size, TIS has a significant role in the community not only on the city level, since the Estonian education system plans to take advantage of the opportunities afforded by international teamwork. “Exchanging experience across national borders is a vital condition on decision-making processes” (Keränen and Kõrgesaar 2010: 556). Here the school has made a commitment to serve the international community in Tartu by engaging in cooperation with different international schools around the world.

The number of students in TIS changes annually and so do the nationalities. Currently Swedes, Danes, Finns, Estonians, Americans, Italians, Germans and Lithuanians can be met wandering the halls. No matter the figures, TIS believes that teaching a foreign language and learning about other cultures in comparison with one’s own, students become more tolerant and accepting of others (TIS Curriculum Guide), as all students are taught Estonian culture and appreciation and respect for other cultures (TIS Development Plan).

The school sees its importance in creating tolerant and open-minded individuals, who have the skills to study and work around the world. On their web page ([www.istartu.ee](http://www.istartu.ee)), they state the significance of learning and speaking foreign languages as key, because it creates the opportunity for international cooperation. As its main objectives

in TIS Statute (2012) they specify a responsibility for the education of children of foreigners, while they stay in Estonia. TIS also waves a multicultural flag and aims to provide its students with a modern and high-quality education that produces accepting students.

The school is divided into three levels: kindergarten, elementary school and secondary school. Classes are often small and made up of students from different grades. This is what the school calls compound class methodology (TIS Curriculum Guide) and finds it a valuable tool in creating tolerance and developing learning among students of diverse ages. TIS follows the Estonian Curriculum set in the Private School Act, the Act of Elementary and Secondary Education of Estonia and it has been adjusted to suit the needs of the international student body (Tartu International School Statute). TIS has been accredited by the Estonian Ministry of Education and Research.

English is the language of instruction and TIS for the most part adheres to English immersion education principles. Although the school does not take a stand in choosing between the different terminologies, immersion and CLIL, they admit to using a special method for foreign language acquisition. According to Attachment 1 to the TIS Statute entitled “English - the language of instruction”, the school is attended by students whose mother tongue is English and students whose mother tongue is something other than English. Because of this the English language curriculum is divided into two parts: speakers of English and speakers of English as a foreign language. Students whose mother tongue is not English begin all their studies in English and are therefore exposed to the target language during all their lessons, while native English speakers begin learning Estonian starting from 1st grade and German as a foreign language.

Learning objectives and goals of the instructional language, English, for all grades are described in the attachment when it comes to both native speakers and foreign language learners of English. In teaching English TIS aims to support non-native English speakers in self-expression by cooperation between school subjects and native speakers are encouraged to further develop their language skills.

### TIS TEACHERS: BACKGROUND AND EXPERIENCE

In addition to the international student base, the faculty is also made up of many nationalities, although Estonians are in majority. As this study concentrates on English immersion education, this paper will examine two teachers who are native speakers of English. In terms of teacher self-reflection aspect of this study the educators also have different backgrounds when it comes to immersion teaching experience. In the following paragraphs the two teachers involved in this study will be introduced.

Teacher number one, here after known as T1, has a very international background and ancestry with Irish, Polish and English heritages. He was born and raised in South Africa until the age of 16, from where he moved to England with his parents. Wife and life lead him to Estonia and TIS. He has formal training in business and retail, but in 2010 began to have an interest in education. He completed courses in Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) in London. The courses focused on immersion education and a part of the course was conducted in Arabic. This was to show the trainees how immersion works in practice. At TIS, T1 has been a teacher for five years and represents the more experienced teacher in this research. He teaches English to a compound class of grades 4-5 and International English to grade 2. In addition to English language classes he also teaches many subjects in English such as music, mathematics, physical education and

woodwork. He provides the school with IT support and is interested in including technology in education.

The second teacher, T2, is an American native English speaker and has also received a very international upbringing due to her parents' occupations. Her formal educational background is a bachelor's degree in arts and she had no intention of ever becoming a teacher. Somehow T2, nevertheless, found herself working in a developmentally and educationally centered daycare in the US and before joining the faculty at TIS she taught English language to a wide age-range of students. For the purposes of this paper and English immersion education she represents a less experienced teacher. As a teacher in TIS for the second year, T2 teaches English language to a compound class of grades 7-9 and English language as a mother tongue to 3rd graders. Her subjects taught through the medium of English language include crafts and Personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The TIS director, faculty, students and their parents are all informed of the study and given all the appropriate contact information to ask questions, if they are to have any. The study has consent from all parties involved. Prior to the recording I visited some lessons to get a general understanding of what to expect and to allow the students and especially the main subjects of this study, the teachers, feel comfortable with my presence.

The students were informed beforehand about the filming and its purposes. They knew that the camera was not aimed at them and that the study would be about their teacher. As TIS is a relatively small school with small classes the students are very accustomed to visitors and did not seem phased by me observing their lessons. The lessons recorded were normal classes with four different groups of students with varying English levels in each group, which is why both teachers need to use a variety of strategies in each lesson to support their message.

The videos are recorded with a tablet placed at the back of the class zooming in on the teachers to gather evidence on the teachers' tools in conveying their message in order to support student understanding. No students are on camera, since they are not the subjects of this study. The researcher is the only person to view the video material. Some screenshots are provided to illustrate some communicational and instructional strategies the teachers use.

## **DATA COLLECTION PROCESS**

The data collection process, during a two month period in the fall of 2015, began with pre-video interviews, recorded with a mobile recorder. Both interviews are about 30-



minutes in duration. The purpose of the pre-video interviews was to establish a starting point for the research and to get to know the teachers. A special emphasis was placed on inquiring about the teachers' preferred and most used techniques and tools in supporting student understanding in English immersion education.

The teachers were interviewed on their general understanding of the techniques they use and level of self-reflection they feel they practice. In this stage the teachers were asked to describe the different techniques and input tools when forwarding information to support student understanding. Open-ended questions, where ever possible, are used in order to ascertain the teachers' own understanding. As a basis for the interview questions a form for teacher self-reflection, added in the appendix, compiled by Elliot Seif (2014) for ASCD Edge Social Networking Platform for Educators was used.

The second phase of the study recorded two 45-minute lessons from both teachers. The videos were recorded in the fall in the premises of TIS following the pre-video interviews. The lessons are recorded with a tablet camera focused on the teachers in order to examine the different techniques the teachers use to support student understanding. In the lesson filmed, the students taking part in the lessons are of varying ages and have a different skill level in English, the target language. This means the teachers need to continually use different techniques to support their message in order to reach the different students.

The videos were analyzed by looking at the different ways teachers support their message according to the techniques and tools listed in the SIOP-model such as the use of negotiation of meaning, visual aids, student mediation and wide range of presentation strategies. When looking for some commentary on the teachers' self-reflection aspect the emphasis is placed on reflection as an important part of a teacher's competence, as it

allows them to examine their communicational techniques and determine which tools work and which do not. In terms of reflection, this phase of the study aims to determine to which degree these teachers exhibit self-reflection and whether the teacher's experience level is an indication of their reflective skills.

## RESULTS

The study looks at the different methods these teachers use to communicate in the English immersion classroom. This section of the study will provide an overview of the results and analysis of the techniques the two teachers use to support student understanding. The results section will provide examples from the video recordings and additional information on the chosen techniques will be provided by the interviews conducted with T1 and T2. The results section will first introduce negotiation of meaning approach most commonly emphasized in immersion education. Then the verbal and non-verbal techniques it includes and the teachers exhibit in the recordings will be presented and discussed.

### NEGOTIATION OF MEANING

As mentioned earlier in the SIOP model. One emphasis in immersion education and its techniques is negotiation of meaning. According to Roy Lyster (2002), in immersion education negotiation of meaning is a means to support student output through both verbal and non-verbal communication. The main objectives in using meaning focused negotiation, is reaching understanding in student-teacher communication, rather than correct grammatical form. In the meaning focused negotiation approach in immersion education teachers and students use a variety of strategies to support their message. Teachers also encourage students to use the different techniques to get their message across. Met (1994) describes the immersion education teacher techniques to support student understanding in the target language as follows:

- use of body language, realia, visuals, manipulatives, and other contextual clues;
- use of predictability in classroom routines and redundancy in repetitions, paraphrases, examples, definitions, and synonyms;
- use of input modifications such as a slower rate of speech, emphasis of key words, simple vocabulary, and simple grammatical structures (especially in the beginning grades).

Met (1994: 168)

Although both teachers hold grammar to a high regard, they are more meaning, rather than form, focused in their classroom communication. When the students wish to contribute, the teachers place emphasis on carrying meaning and reaching understanding between the parties communicating. In immersion education specifically it teaches the students communicational strategies for different situations. For instance when a student is in a situation lacking specific vocabulary, the strategies may help them go around the term with both verbal- and non-verbal techniques. In this communication teachers may prompt self-correction and help students find the correct vocabulary, however, T2 mentions that she too believes that the students will learn the language, especially in immersion education, since it surrounds them continually. Form-focused negotiation is a part of their daily routine, but it is however less relevant to the teachers. As stated by T2 “Trusting the environment is essential” so that the students feel comfortable communicating with a language that might not yet be fully at their disposal.

T2 also mentions she aims to keep a slow pace in communication and is open to questions and discussions so that all the students understand as much as possible. She understands that in immersion education not all students will understand everything, but she still strives to keep the students engaged and trusting that they will eventually understand, as long as they keep communicating and interacting in English.

T1 also feels it is more important to reach understanding than correct grammar. Here he elaborates his understanding that students learn from each other better than from

him. He much rather creates situations where learning can happen and trusts that the language will come to the students. When looking at different verb tenses T2 uses meaning-focused negotiation, with the help of class discussion, asking a student what the differences between the various tenses are. The students provide answers that in themselves contain grammatical mistakes and errors, but the focus of the teacher is reaching understanding when it comes to the objectives and therefore does not pay attention to the form. T2 does however, in repetition provide the correct form, but nevertheless the students are not focused on correct grammar.

This approach is oriented towards communication and reaching understanding. T1 uses plenty of class discussion in order to get his students to communicate, because it not only motivates the students, it shows T1 what the students are interested in and how they are advancing in developing their English language skills.

## TECHNIQUES

The criteria chosen are represented in meaning focused negotiation approach, where student-teacher and student-student communication and reaching understanding rather than correct form is emphasized. The teachers use the techniques, also found in the SIOP-model, regularly and simultaneously to support one another in the classroom communication and while the tools can be divided into verbal and non-verbal, they are by no means used in separation.

<b>Verbal techniques</b>	<b>Non-verbal techniques</b>
Repetition, reiteration	Humor
Definitions and examples in familiar context	Visual aids
Student mediation	Illustrative gestures
	Acting

#### **Techniques for supporting student understanding**

When looking at the tools listed in the above table, it can be said that they are integral parts in any language classroom; however the importance of them is highlighted in the immersion language acquisition approach. Because immersion education teachers have fewer liberties in the classroom when it comes to languages and code switching, it could be said they need to utilize the techniques in higher frequency. The simultaneous use of these techniques and tools is something both teachers apply when they encounter a situation, where they notice or presume students might have a harder time with comprehension.

Because a teacher's techniques and methods in communicative learning are direct results of input offered by the students and vice versa, some tools cannot be examined without looking at the students. The emphasis of this paper is on the teachers and their verbal and non-verbal communication, which means that while classroom situations and student feedback is addressed, the methods and techniques of the teachers will be the basis for analysis. In order to illustrate some of the non-verbal tools, screenshots from the recordings have been attached. The teachers have agreed to their inclusion in this paper, provided that their faces are blurred. This will not be a factor in the analysis, since this research does not focus on facial expressions.

## **VERBAL**

### **REPETITION**

Both teachers use repetition in their lessons as a way of reaching student understanding particularly when asking questions. This is a tool used by teachers everywhere, but what makes it important in immersion education is the fact that while in other situations repetition might be a way of coping with students not paying attention, in immersion education the students often might have trouble understanding the question at first utterance. In TIS the teachers repeat questions emphasizing the words that give clues to the students as to how they should respond. For instance, after receiving an odd collection of answers, T2 repeated the question “how old were you when you started learning languages?” emphasizing the words ‘how old’. During this utterance she also slowed down her speech only slightly to allow students to grasp the ends and beginnings of separate words.

With his younger students, T1 uses repetition often in vocabulary practice. In the recordings this repetition represented itself as an opportunity for gameplay. Different vocabulary items were presented first by showing the word in written form accompanied by a picture. The students went through the words and were all given an opportunity by T1 to explain the vocabulary item to their peers. With this T1 made sure the students were familiar with the vocabulary before playing. The students took turns miming and guessing the words from paper. The papers slips firstly contained both picture and word and in the end only the written form was present. As mentioned before the teachers use the techniques often simultaneously. In this instance repetition encompasses both verbal and non-verbal elements.

This game allowed the students to reach understanding along with the ability to practice the newly acquired vocabulary, attaching them to a funny situation. Although the students were working with the same 12 vocabulary items, this repetition was to practice and confirm language learning. Both teachers agreed that while repetition might feel boring at times it is important for students and teachers alike to stay patient. In this an important tool is the assurance that, because the students in immersion are continually surrounded by English, “the language will come to them” (T2).

## DEFINITION AND EXAMPLES

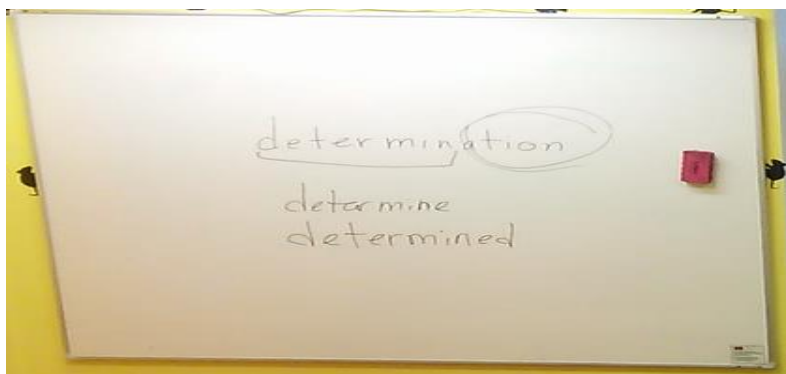
Definitions often call for the teacher to use more additional tools to support student understanding. When using the techniques of defining, the simultaneous use of complementary techniques is very apparent. The teachers are also aware of this. Among other tools, while giving definitions the teachers use the board, examples, acting and gestures, coloring the message and definition. For example T2 uses various definitions, examples and reiteration when defining the expression ‘smoke and mirrors’. She begins with “it’s an illusion”, adds “things might look one way but are something different” and ends with “they are not real” all the while gesturing with her hands as if a magician with a magic wand.

As a way of finding a definition for new words the immersion education teachers aim at providing the students with tools to look at language and infer from the surrounding language independently. The teachers report to using ‘grammar surgery’ as a technique, where students are encouraged to find a definition without the help of a dictionary. T2 does this more often because her students are older and more capable to look at language learning more actively and from various perspectives. This means that she shows the



students how to find meaning from context. First, she asks the students to look at the whole page and what the general context of the word is. Then the students look at the sentence and what role the word plays in it. When looking at the individual word: “I often try to show them how they can break a word apart for compounds, prefixes, suffixes. Looking for something that [they] recognize in there. Teaching kids how to use textual clues” (T2).

T2’s students are quite familiar with the method and use it during the lessons often. In Image 1 one such occurrence can be seen. The teacher guides the students with the help of questions and the students look at the term answering the questions. Image 1 and the following transcribed line of questions is how T2 guided the students through grammar surgery.



**Image 1 - grammar surgery - determination**

- What is the root? –determine
- What is the suffix and what does it tell us? –tion (noun)

What does it mean to be determined/ or have determination?

- I want to learn English so bad I am going to take action, I will figure out everything there is to know about it, it is going to happen because I make it happen.
- You have decided something is important and you are going to do it no matter what.
- Have you ever been determined to do something? When? Why?

In the end she asks the students to make an educated guess and if it still does not work she advises the students to look for the definition in a monolingual (wherever

possible) dictionary. In this approach she underlines the importance of a teacher's attitude and support. "Even if you are totally wrong, it is still a step toward finding understanding. The most important thing is pushing, motivating them and teaching them to take the necessary steps to reaching understanding" (T2). After reaching a conclusion with the help of grammar surgery, T2 then wants the students to use the new vocabulary and instructs in doing so by asking them questions. With the help of class discussion the term is further defined and the teacher aims to provide different context where students might expect to encounter the new terminology. By answering questions with the new term, the students can practice its use.

T1 teaches younger students, 2-4 graders, who at times need much more non-verbal support in order to understand the content and the language of the lessons. He also starts to introduce thesauruses and the skills to look at texts and languages with a more analytical approach. His students are being introduced to the grammar surgery technique and how to look at a text for clues and about the meaning of a word. He recognizes his responsibility in providing sufficient support and guidance when using the approach. For instance, when the students' workbook contains a text about Roald Dahl's *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* and the term 'Wonka's Whipple-Scrumptious Fudgemallow Delight', grammar surgery is introduced in a humorous and silly way, which in turn makes language learning less intimidating. They look at the context that is Wonka's Chocolate Factory and he has the students explain what they guess it could be referring to. This is done by concentrating on one recognizable word at a time. After arriving at an understanding of the word, he then further encourages the students try grammar surgery out when they encounter a new word.

The teachers mention using many tools to provide a context for the message and help students arrive at understanding. The teachers aim to provide the students with "the entirety of the context and something in there happens to be the key that clicks for them"

(T2). T2 mentions definitions and plenty of examples accompanied by acting and gestures to be a very important part of comprehensible input in the classroom in the immersion context. As could be seen in both lesson recordings, T1 attempts to provide the students with examples from the school environment, which is familiar to the students. For instance when explaining Albert Einstein's quote, he prefaces it by asking "do you know what quotes are?" while gesturing quotation marks with his fingers. "There are a lot of quotations marks in the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade classroom". The 3<sup>rd</sup> grade classroom with its quotation marks are very familiar to the students, which serves the students as a contextual support from the surroundings familiar to the students. In addition to finding examples from the surroundings familiar to the students, the teachers try to define different concepts from contexts that are meaningful to the students. This T1 utilizes also in spontaneous planning of the lessons, which he mentions involves recreating the situations students are interested in outside the classroom in the classroom. This he often does by letting the students create the content while he provides the vocabulary if needed. This is also where one important tool the teachers state using, student mediation, arises.

## STUDENT MEDIATION

Both teachers aim at developing the communicational tools of the students: both on a social and language level. They state that students are more likely to contribute to smaller group assignments and engage with their peers. Students are often encouraged to work together and teach each other. T1 mentions that he is responsible for creating the environment that fosters learning and the students often learn far more from each other than from him. As TIS is a small school, the students are accustomed to interacting in

English among different age groups during breaks. He also mentions that he might trick the students into thinking they have provided their own content in class discussion.

This he says might transpire if he happens to hear something suitable in the students' conversation and he simply asks guiding question to keep the students going. He then listens to the conversation and guides it providing vocabulary all the while appearing to be a bystander. This might potentially be seen as a technique in its own right, but T1 mentions that the objectives for it are mainly to have the students communicate with each other and mediate in different learning situations.

Majority of the students in this school, they don't learn English from me although I teach them English... They learn from their peers in the playground, the TV... playing games. I'm just trying to guide them in using the right phrasing, vocabulary and pronunciation. They all communicate in English and learn far more from each-other. (T1)

T2 teaches the older students, but grapples with the same dilemma. "When dealing with a class like mine where there is a very large range in terms of skill level, I think it is important to give them the skills to communicate and interact in English" (T2). T2 also mentions that she uses group work to get the quieter students to contribute to the lessons. She comments that some students never feel comfortable to take part in class discussion, but in smaller groups try to express themselves, even though they might be making mistakes. After the students have accepted the school and the instructional language as their own the techniques involved in supporting student understanding start to change. T1 mentions that all the students have their own pace and they will give the teacher a sign when they are ready to learn. Before this T1 states that "in the beginning it is important not

to push. You can throw every tool you have in your box at the student, but if the student is not ready, it will not help” (T1).

## **NON-VERBAL**

### **HUMOR**

In English immersion education, both teachers describe comfort and safety as the first step towards learning. This is the case for any student as described in Maslow’s (1943) hierarchy of needs, where safety is one of the primary elements in the foundation towards learning. In immersion education, students constantly find themselves in situations, where they might have difficulty with language. Here it is important for the teachers to create a learning environment that understands this difficulty while it encourages coping with and overcoming confusion. Only in such a state can students focus on learning a foreign language (Arnau, 1994).

Here according to T1, a preferred technique of his is to soften and calm the environment with humor. He often tries to help the students feel comfortable with jokes and tries to provide a relaxing atmosphere so that students still feel safe with the situation and cope with not understanding everything, although it inevitably happens in immersion education. T2, on the other hand, creates a motivating learning environment with different ideas and themes according to what the students would find interesting and engaging, so that the students would want to learn more of the language related to the learning situation. She also uses humor to relax the situation by making fun of herself, showing the students she does not take herself too seriously. For instance when contrasting present perfect simple with the present perfect continuous she uses humor in her examples to keep the

students engaged in the lesson “I have always wanted to be a monkey - I have been acting like a monkey for years” (T2).

As a means of training their teachers TIS has a policy of having the teachers observe each other’s lessons. During these lessons T1 has found that he incorporates humor much more often into his lesson. As mentioned humor is a technique he uses in order to create an ease in the students and the environment. This he attributes to his school years, as he found it easiest to respond and engage with teachers who made the students laugh. In his reflection he also is careful to mention that establishing ground rules and keeping to them is very important, and although goofing around is important, students need to know what is fun and what is serious.

A technique to keep the students at task, T1 often uses a gesture the students are familiar with. As the groups taught in TIS are very small the lessons often are very communicative and the conversations often steer the lessons off objectives. T1 however keeps the students focused on language as they often discuss terminology and vocabulary that is not directly related to the topic. This he mentions to be one of the liberties he allows for the English lessons, because he feels the students are contributing topics they are interested in to the lessons and all the while using the target language. While some objectives set for lessons might not be met at that specific time, other routes of discursive paths were found to be more useful.

In addition to creating a comfortable and safe environment, T1 uses humor as one of the techniques to keep his younger students engaged, concentrated in the lesson. He makes little jokes here and there, whilst keeping to the rules of proper conduct during the lessons. In Image 2 he can be seen covering his face feigning angst while the students turn their attention back to him and giggle. The students respond by laughing as they see an

adult acting silly and they are immediately back focusing on the task at hand. In Image 2, T1 can also be seen showing the students the hand gesture that asks them to circle back and focus on the task at hand. In addition to this technique being in classroom maintenance to keep students engaged, it also allows the students non-verbal messaging they are familiar with in order to create a comfortable environment for the students.



**Image 2 - humor - class room maintenance**

## VISUAL AIDS

### Board

Both teachers use the board very frequently although when asked neither of them reports to planning its use. The main reason for using the board appears to be to provide the students with a visual approach when brainstorming and allowing the students to see the vocabulary they are discussing in written form. Although not planned specifically, they both use the board during every lesson. They aim to provide the students with a picture of what the new vocabulary looks like. They also use the board to refer to what they had been doing the previous lesson activating their prior knowledge. T2 refers to a mind map they created during the lesson before by pointing to the middle and asking the students to try and remember what they had had been discussing. During one lesson T1 wrote an 'X' on the board with his finger not leaving a mark, but to illustrate his speech.

As mentioned T1 rarely plans the use of the board and he often reads the students and uses it according to their needs. This is also what T2 does. As they are going over an assignment she perceives that some of her students have had trouble writing different words and she uses the board to help them with spelling. When writing Halloween vocabulary on the board T1 activates the students' previous knowledge and checks their understanding of the vocabulary, but mentions that he often sees the board as a last resort and a backup for the entertainer T1. By this he means he often does not plan the use of the board, because he trusts the non-verbal side with acting and illustrative gestures to support his message. He turns to it, only when students seem to need the board for additional supporting visual aids.

#### Pictures and videos

When introducing new vocabulary to the younger students T1 uses pictures and words so that students can make associations. He has different handouts and picture card that contain different picture word combinations. The younger students need more preparation in terms of looking for visual aids, because many different English language skill levels are present. T1's older students use a textbook that contains pictures. In TIS most classrooms have a computer or tablet that can be used to show pictures found on the internet should the need arise. T2 also says she uses pictures from the internet if she feels she needs to illustrate a term or idea. During one of the recorded lessons T2 used a silent movie from the internet and together the class collected the terminology required to discuss the film afterwards. The focus of the lesson was stories and related mood and feeling vocabulary, which was gathered on the board.



## ILLUSTRATIVE GESTURES

Teachers in immersion education should be able to communicate non-verbally, in which gestures play a pivotal role. T1 and T2 represent teachers who are both verbally and visually efficient communicators. With these teachers' efforts go towards keeping the auditory and visual learners on board. When asked about their non-verbal communication both teachers mentioned using gestures unconsciously. They are both very visual communicators in terms of gestures and their speech is supported and colored by various gestures, but they do not plan them. When it comes to younger learners T1 says he becomes more aware of using gestures, when he sees that students seem puzzled. In situations students have trouble understanding, the teachers look for more ways of supporting their message and student understanding.

T2 uses gestures in the recordings very regularly to color her message. For instance when reading the textbook "the brain is a muscle, you need to exercise it for it to grow" in their textbook by pointing to the muscles in her arm and flexing it. "If you don't, it will become flabby" she says while loosening her muscles and jiggling her arm. When discussing stories T2 tries to elicit different parts to a story from her students. Because the students do not seem to be grasping what T2 is looking for, she resorts to different gestures trying to demonstrate to the students how a story plot is built. As in Image 3 she tries to demonstrate what she is looking for as she says "I'm a story I have a plot - just like - I'm a person I have a body", T2 says waving her hands, head and feet to show different parts.



**Image 3 – illustrative gestures - story**

When talking about different verb tenses T2 gestures with her hands in relation to her body. Things that happened in the past she places behind her and things happening at that moment she places in front of her creating a timeline. When describing present perfect continuous she explains “things that start in the past”, gesturing behind over her shoulder, “that continue into the present”, bringing her hand in front of her. As shown in Image 4, when T2 references the time element she explains “things that someone has done in the before, unspecific past”, she gestures with the hand wiggling her fingers about “or have been done at a specific point”, pointing fingers at one spot in the air, “in time. So on Monday at two o’clock”. In this way she tries to support student understanding, by elaborating on the grammar textbooks explanation.



**Image 4 - illustrative gestures - unspecific and specific past**

T1 is visual in his own right, as he explains how the lesson will be structured. He shows the students with his fingers how many games they are going to be playing and then explains the games pointing to those very fingers. He also keeps a keen eye on how the students are paying attention and nods as he receives excited feedback. When he recommends the students read for fun he mentions an author he enjoyed as a young boy. “The school has a collection of books by Roald Dahl”. Through gestures he illustrates a box and then he places the ‘books’ into it.

All illustrative gestures are accompanied by simultaneous explanations, definitions and examples. Both teachers do this many times without planning, since often they do not know what the students are going to be interested in that day. This demands the teachers to pay attention to signs of students not understanding and questions from their students to determine what they need to be explaining in more detail. According to T1 this happens every day. During one of the recordings spontaneous illustrative gestures come into play from the part of T1, when the students express their interest in knowing how to apply for a patent. In Image 5 T1 can be seen explaining the procedure all the while gesturing and miming a “whole lot of paperwork, pages and pages”. “In the end the person approves your patent” stamping his hand as a sign of approval.



**Image 5 - illustrative gestures - applying for a patent**

As with immersion education and its emphasis on negotiation of meaning, students are encouraged to use all the communicative tools at their disposal. One of the goals for the students' communicative skills is to support both verbal and non-verbal communication in the hopes of reaching understanding between the people communicating. T1 does this especially with his younger students who have a slightly weaker skill level of English than his other group. As it is a negotiation of meaning student contribution is important for the teacher's message and feedback. For instance one of the students is asked to explain 'tombstone', which she does by gesturing the earth and saying "when they put the person inside. They put the stone on top", also gesturing the tombstone with her hands. T1 is satisfied and sees that the student has reached an understanding of the vocabulary. As depicted in Image 6, T1 then repeats the student's explanation mimicking her non-verbal communication and adding key vocabulary in the verbal message. "When a person dies, they are put in the earth, yes, and the tombstone goes on top of the grave." In this way T1 is not only using non-verbal communication as a technique to support student understanding, but encouraging the students to use gestures and non-verbal techniques along with their message. The objectives of negotiation of meaning are therefore met when students receive feedback and encouragement on their message.



**Image 6 - illustrative gestures - tombstone**

## ACTING

Very close to illustrative gestures is the technique of acting. According to the interview of both teachers acting is a very important tool in their lessons. T1 includes acting into the lesson so that students receive instructional and contextual supports through different tools. He also encourages the students to act, as he has devised a miming game to practice previously learned vocabulary. The game is a silent game that allows the students to practice the vocabulary and also develop their acting and non-verbal communication skills. With the help of having seen, explained and acted the vocabulary, he believes students are more likely to arrive at understanding and learning.

T1 uses acting very often with his younger students. He attributes the use of acting to his personality and mentions it is not planned most of the time, but more a part of his individual way of communicating. When asked if he feels it is a necessary tool in immersion education, he agrees with many studies from Finland on educating immersion teachers, where teachers who were social, talkative and had acting skills were favored in the program's enrollment process, because they were seen as more able to scaffold their

message (Heinilä and Paakkinen, 1997). “You cannot just write stuff on a board and expect the students to learn language, when they have no idea about that language” (T1).

Both teachers say they act during most of their lessons, but are not aware of it, because it is generally how they communicate. T2 mentions that it is part of her personality and feels using body language and comes natural to her. The acting of different concepts becomes more deliberate and conscious choice if they see that a student is struggling with a concept and need more visual aids. This again comes back to not always knowing what things students might find difficulty in understanding.

## REFLECTION AS A TOOL

Self-reflection is an important tool in a teacher’s toolkit. It allows teachers to look at their lessons, techniques and how students responded to them. This in turn might prompt the teachers to develop on their methods, communication and the tools they use with specific groups of students. Teachers who reflect on their techniques are more likely to develop better ways of solving problems with the help of memory models they have constructed on the basis of their self-reflective practices (Beijaard et al. 2000). The authors also attributed more experienced teachers with better self-reflective ability. When looking for some commentary on the teachers’ self-reflection aspect the emphasis is placed on reflection as an important part of a teacher’s competence, as it allows them to examine their communicational techniques and determine which tools work and which do not. In terms of reflection, this phase of the study aims to determine to which degree these teachers exhibit self-reflection and whether the teacher’s experience level is an indication of their reflective skills.

T1 reflects on the work day very often during his commute. He thinks about what went well during the lessons what could have gone better. In the morning as he drives to work, he also reflects on the planning of previous lessons. He does not have a rigid lesson plan. He often plans the first 20 minutes and likes to see where the students want to take the lessons. He plans on the go and allows for the students to contribute. Every day is different and he tries to be flexible when it comes to planning. “Sometimes it works and sometimes it doesn’t” (T1) He mentions that sometimes although he plans on the basis of catering to specific students and their interests, the students might surprise and not answer in the way he thought. T2 does not actively sit down to reflect on her lessons, but she mentions that as she is building upon the previous and planning the next lesson, she thinks about how the students took part in the previous lesson. She also mentions the opportunities afforded by smaller classes and being able to take more time to reach the objectives set for the classes. She says it is important to pay attention to the students, to consider comprehension and their interactions. “Here the important thing to remember that intellect is not a stagnant thing. New knowledge is constantly being added to the bank.” (T2)

TIS emphasizes the importance of tolerance and creating an open environment. This all begins from the leadership level and goes through to the students. The staff of teachers has an opportunity to reflect on their own teaching and receive feedback on their lessons by visiting lessons given by other teachers. This opportunity is used by all the teachers and the teachers in this study find it a valuable tool in determining and bettering their own skill level. T2 mentions that she enjoys constructive criticism and thinks it crucial for development. This helps her reflect and plan ahead on things that could be changed. Here she comes back to her lacking formal training and sees observing as a way to understand what the standards in their school are and how she could meet them. In terms

of developing themselves as teachers both teachers attend courses offered by TIS and they are open to different materials and on a weekly basis use many internet sources to find new ideas in education, as they find it important to try and keep a grasp of what is happening in the field of education.

When it comes to self-reflection T1, as the more experienced teacher, focuses on identifying himself as a teacher from the inside using the first person singular 'I' to begin his sentences. While T2 starts defining herself from the outside and in many instances defines herself through other people and their perceptions. According to Van Manen (1977) and his levels of reflectivity T1 can also be seen as more interested in the worth of knowledge and the different social and communicational skills that are useful to his students. "If you think back on your own basic schooling, we were forced to learn this and that, or you will be punished. Education is becoming more practical and thinking about a learner's strengths and interests. Do not waste a person's time, when you could be making that person better at something" (T1). T2 on the other hand as the less experienced teacher is on the second level where she can already identify and analyze student and teacher communication, action and performance to see if and how the set objectives are met.



## CONCLUSION

This case study examined the different techniques two teachers in Tartu International school (TIS) support student understanding. TIS educates its students through English language immersion. One of the important points in immersion education is that no codeswitching on the part of the teacher takes place. The students learn through the target language, here English, in all their lessons and therefore are able to function within their international community using English as their lingua franca. Therefore teachers in immersion programs need to pay more attention to reaching understanding. Immersion education, its students and teachers is a worthwhile field of study. As indicated in the literature review manifold the second/foreign language approach has been shown to improve the metalinguistic and cognitive abilities of its students. The focus of the study was to look at teachers as it could be said that they have been somewhat neglected by the research done in the field of immersion.

With the help of video recording, of two lessons per teacher, the tools used by the teachers were analyzed and the teachers were interviewed to elaborate on the objectives and reasoning for using these techniques. After observing the lessons it was apparent that the main focus of the teachers, especially with students that have a weaker command of English, is to reach understanding. This means that the English language is more a means to communication than veracity of grammar. As Roy Lyster (2002) indicated in his paper “Negotiation in immersion teacher–student interaction” reaching understanding is the most important thing in immersion education. The language skills of the target language will soon follow, as a result of communication and lessons where students and their communicational both, verbal and non-verbal, are encouraged. The techniques observed in the video recordings are parts of the negotiation of meaning approach and they can be

divided into verbal: repetition, definition and student mediation and non-verbal tools: humor, visual aids, illustrative gestures and acting.

Although this case study divides the techniques into verbal and non-verbal tools, they nonetheless, continually can be seen utilized added to and supporting each other. For instance, when the teachers used verbal techniques such as definition and examples they also supported their message and student understanding by additional non-verbal techniques such as acting and gesturing illustratively. The study also found that the teachers very often did not plan the use of different techniques and reported using the techniques very unconsciously. The teachers mentioned not planning such contextual supports as they felt they sometimes found it difficult to foresee what the students might have difficulty with. The use of the techniques became more planned and active when the teachers saw that the students did not understand and needed more support. The recordings also showed that the teachers often took clues from the students on the spot and became more aware in finding techniques to support student understanding. TIS is very communicative and student centered in its approach and the teachers recorded and interviewed also aimed at developing the communicational strategies of the students. In the recordings the teachers can be seen supporting the non-verbal communication by copying it and adding the required vocabulary. Here at the same time the students learn the appropriate vocabulary and receive positive feedback on their communicational tools.

While the teachers involved in this study exhibited all the techniques involved in negotiation of meaning, this case study was limited in its data. It can be called limited because it examined the tools used by two teachers. A conclusion can nonetheless be made that the need for different tools for supporting student understanding is highlighted in immersion education. In immersion education this is stressed, because students encounter

situations, where they do not understand everything on a daily basis and in cases during every lesson.

A teacher's responsibility is to forward new information with the help of instructional and communicative supports, therefore teachers should be more aware of them and their usage. As importantly researchers should pay more attention to the teachers of immersion education, because they play an important part in the proudly published accomplishments of the students in immersion programs as compared to their monolingual counterparts. Hence this is something to be studied further, especially in the field of immersion education. This would allow the teacher training programs to place emphasis on the different techniques required. The observations made in this case study about self-reflection as a tool and its links to an immersion educator's experience also call for more study. All in all this study should serve as a call for more teacher centered immersion education research, because as immersed students differ from their monolingual counterparts, so do the teachers in their techniques, methods and attitudes.

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## APPENDIX

### INTERVIEW - QUESTIONS

***1. What kind of teacher are you?***

***2. What's special and unique about your teaching?***

What makes your individual style of teaching unique and special?

***3. How do you get your message across to the student in immersion education?***

Do you use different strategies to help the students understand?

***4. What are the primary, core types of instructional strategies that you use regularly to support student understanding in immersion education?***

Are these effective? Are they “powerful”? Engaging? Why do you use these?

***5. How do you know when your students have understood?***

Student performances? Behaviors? Use and application of skills? Attitudes?

***6. How much do you practice self-reflection?***

Is it active and deliberate?

***7. How will you work on your teaching in order to improve what you do?***

Who and what helps you to improve? What resources do you use?

***8. What do you think is the most difficult thing in immersion education?***

How do you try to solve this problem?

Elliot Seif, 2014. Available at

<http://edge.ascd.org/blogpost/exercise-ten-teacher-questions-for-self-reflection>



## RESÜMEE

TARTU ÜLIKOOL

INGLISE FILOLOOGIA OSAKOND

Saana Kolvanki

### **Teachers' techniques of supporting student understanding in English immersion education**

#### **Case study: Tartu International School**

Õpetajate poolt kasutatud tehnikad õpilaste arusaamise toetamiseks ingliskeelses keelekümbeluses

Juhtumiuuring: Tartu Rahvusvaheline Kool

Magistritöö

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Lehekülgede arv: 48

Käesolevas juhtumiuuringus on jälgiti Tartu Rahvusvahelise Kooli (TRK) kahe õpetaja tehnikaid sõnumiedastuseks ja õpilaste arusaamise toetamiseks ingliskeelses kümbelusklassis. Keelekümbluse olemus ei luba koodivahetust, seega tuleb õpetajatel kasutada muid vahendeid õpilastele aine arusaadavalt edasiandmiseks.

Magistritöö esimeses osas antakse ülevaade varasematest keelekümbeluse olemusest ja eelistest. Keelekümbelus valdkonnas uuritakse sageli õpilasi ja nende saavutusi. Õpetajad, kui selle paari teine pool, on aga jäänud tagaplaanile. Seetõttu otsustati käesolevas töös keskenduda just keelekümbelushariduse õpetajale. Sissejuhatav osa tutvustab TRK-d ja antud uuringus osalevaid keelekümbeluseõpetajaid.

Teine ehk empiiriline osa annab ülevaate kahe õpetaja keelekümbeluses kasutatavatest tehnikatest, mis enamasti on rohkem tähendusele kui vormile keskendunud. Seega on õpetamise põhifookuses enam arusaadavuse saavutamine õpetaja ja õpilase vahel, ja mitte grammatiline korrektsus. Uuritavaid õpetajaid lindistati ja intervjueriti, ning nende tarvitatud tehnikad kategoriseeriti verbaalseteks ja mitteverbaalseteks vahenditeks. Õpetajad kasutasid verbaalseid ja mitteverbaalseid tehnikaid sageli ja tihti samaaegselt, pakkudes õpilastele mitmeid võimalusi sõnumi mõistmiseks. Magistritöö uurib ka kahe õpetaja kasutatud tehnikate mõtestamise ulatust, kuna eneseanalüüs ja refleksioon on olulised aspektid õpetaja enesearengus.

Käesolev juhtumiuuring annab ülevaate õpetajate ingliskeelse kümbeluse verbaalsetest ja mitteverbaalsetest kommunikatsioonivahenditest sõnumi edastamisel ja õpilaste arusaamise parandamisel.

**Märksõnad:** inglise keel, keelekümbelus, õpetajate tehnikad, verbaalsed ja mitteverbaalsed tehnikad

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