‘iPad has everything!’: how young children with diverse linguistic backgrounds in Malta and the U.S. process multimodal digital text

# Details

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## Topics

## Sample

27 children aged 5-6 who read app book ‘But Not Hippo’ from each of 4 linguistic groups: (1) Maltese as dominant home language in Malta, (2) English as dominant home language in Malta, (3) third language other than English/Maltese (eg. Arabic) as the dominant home language in Malta, and (4) monolingual English native speakers in the U.S.

## Implications For Educators About

School innovation

## Implications For Stakeholders About

Other

## Other Stakeholder Implication

App developers

# Abstract

This exploratory study investigated whether/how kindergartners (ages 5– 6) with different linguistic backgrounds in Malta and the U.S. engaged in similar or different reading processes with the same app book But Not the Hippopotamus in English. As part of a broader project, we purposefully sampled children who scored top three and bottom three in their retelling of the book from each of the four linguistic groups: (1) Maltese as the dominant home language in Malta, (2) English as the dominant home language in Malta, (3) a third language other than English/Maltese as the dominant home language in Malta, and (4) monolingual English native speakers in the U.S. Our qualitative analysis of videos of the 27 children reading the app book revealed the distinct patterns of high-comprehension readers processes with multimodal digital features across these linguistic groups, and the potential of digital features to support learners with diverse linguistic backgrounds.

# Outcome

"Designing books with predominantly congruent hotspots [places on the screen that when touched, activate some mode of information] is important for supporting positive comprehension outcomes for children reading in L1 [English as the first language] or L2 [English as their second/other language]. Also, designing app books with both linguistically oriented word hotspots (word is highlighted and read out), and non-linguistically oriented congruent animation hotspots (activate illustration’s movement and sound), will provide more flexibility for children to use the modes of meaning best aligned with their individual linguistic strengths and needs. Additionally, features that would force children to engage in universally effective processes, such as listening to the entire page read aloud before turning it, and reading the text sequentially, may enhance reading comprehension outcomes." (Wang et al., 2019; p. 15).