



***Oh my gosh!* Emotion and engagement with extramural English among 6-year-olds**

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Research has shown that self-initiated engagement with English outside school – extramural English (EE) – is related to the development of foreign/second language (L2) English proficiency (Sundqvist, 2009). Since learners do activities they enjoy while using their L2, EE reflects both emotional and cognitive engagement (Sundqvist & Uztsun, 2023). However, limited research has explored young learners using digital technologies in their L2.

This paper presents a study exploring EE engagement among three 6-year-olds (1st-graders) through informal interviews with artefacts in combination with observations in the home (Coupland & Creese, 2015). The participants, one with a high score (Bro) and two with medium scores (Celine and Marcus) on a picture vocabulary test, were sampled from the STAGE project (University of Oslo, 2021). Audio recordings of home interviews and field notes were analysed inductively to explore how engagement with games, YouTube and music created affordances for L2 learning in the home.

The results showed how Bro, Celine and Marcus were exposed to English-speaking media and actively engaged with English using digital platforms. Their engagement was characterised by social interaction and shared interests with family members, in homes with generally positive attitudes towards multilingualism and encouragement of English language use. Overall, the results suggest that a combination of positive attitudes and access to technical devices affords incidental L2 English learning in the home. Such type of EE engagement will most likely influence learners' proficiency in different ways, suggesting it might be challenging for teachers to elicit latent competence in the youngest learners. Informal conversations with the participants' teacher suggested that Bro's above-average L2 English vocabulary knowledge developed from extensive gaming remained undiscovered in the first months of schooling, while Celine's music interest and initiated dialogues about everyday topics as well as idiomatic expressions (e.g., "Oh my gosh!") might have been more accessible during English lessons.

Keywords: Extramural English (EE), Young learners, Engagement

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