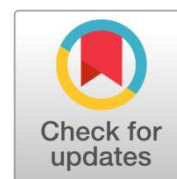


## VISUAL METAPHOR IN EARLY SECOND LANGUAGE EDUCATION

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### Abstract

The paper adapts the theory of knowledge enablement in knowledge-sharing companies to the needs of the second-language classroom to explicate the association between pedagogical interaction and the effectiveness of the teaching process. The goal of the inquiry is to alert language teachers to the hidden opportunities visualization and layout suggest in designing a stress-free educational environment conducive to amplifying language knowledge and skills in a context stimulating knowledge enablement. Visualization is explored at two levels: 1) the level of text layout and illustrations; and 2) the level of visual images and visual metaphors. The method of structural and functional modelling is used to present the layout of exercises and language content and the visual metaphor identification method is employed in the analysis of visual images. A conclusion is asserted of the instrumental role of visuals in English coursebooks for young learners as a medium of visual literacy and as a factor in streamlining the development of productive second language skills. This claim is substantiated by a case study that 1) demonstrates the contextualizing function of images and visual metaphors in English language coursebooks for young learners; and 2) explores the means, instruments and ways of visualizing the instructional content of two TEYL coursebooks published in 2014 and 2015.

**Keywords:** knowledge enablement, visual metaphor, visual literacy, visual layout, stress-free environment

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## **Visualisation and Knowledge Enablement In TEYL**

Since knowledge is strictly individual and information can be deemed part of a person's set of knowledge structures only if it is presentable through the unique language of their own primitives (Gelepithis & Parillon, 2002), teaching strategies that rely heavily on knowledge transfer seem rather inefficient. The boom of projective teaching techniques and the return of constructivist teaching show that both those who explore education and those who actually teach at schools are becoming increasingly aware of the gap between what we teach and what our students perceive in terms of both quality and amount. With a focus on this peculiarity of teaching and learning alike, the present paper inquires into second language education and argues that teaching English to young learners (hereafter TEYL) nowadays can be streamlined by a more effective and expedient use of visual images and visual metaphors, which are an integral component of students' everyday learning experience. To this goal, the study employs P. Gelepithis and N. Parillon's theory of knowledge enablement in knowledge-sharing companies (Gelepithis & Parillon, 2002) and adapts it to the needs of the second-language classroom in order to underscore the role of the interaction between teacher and student and among students themselves in the effectiveness of the teaching process. Founded on the theory of knowledge enablement, an argument is presented that contemporary English language coursebooks are, by design, supportive of an environment that affirms the role of the teacher as a mediator rather than as a source of information. Such a relation between educator and educated facilitates the transformation of information into knowledge and, ultimately, skills and language competencies as a result of the improved classroom communication. This improved communication, reinforced by specific visualization strategies promote collaborative learning and contribute to a stress-free, effective, and learner-oriented education. The above argument is supported through a case study which analyzes the means, instruments and ways of visualizing the instructional content of English course books from the Fairyland young learners system (2014-2015) widely used for starter and beginner levels in both private and state schools in Bulgaria. The analysis explores the relation between the layout of student tasks and exercises, on the one hand, and the effectiveness of early second language learning, on the other. The method of structural and functional modelling and the method of visual metaphor identification (Sorm & Steen, 2018) are used to analyse the exercises and instructional content of the two coursebooks. Visualization is explored at the level of text layout and text illustrations and at the level of visual images and visual

metaphors. The idea is suggested that visualization, as an instrument supportive of the visual cognitive ability, can also positively affect the development of language, which is itself a cognitive ability (Evans & Green 2006). This claim is buttressed by demonstrating the possibility for visual metaphor to fabulate and contextualize the presentation of semantic and structural categories in TEYL to the effect of reducing stress in pedagogical communication and transforming coursebook content into multi-modal stimuli that encourage effective learning.

### **Visual Metaphor as a Cognitive Tool in TEYL: Theoretical Rationale**

Visual metaphor, just like all metaphors, is structural. That is, any metaphor is part of a system and contributes, as such, to the reframing of one concept in terms of another. If a metaphor persists in an English language textbook, then it is most probably part of a larger scale construct. Used expediently, it can facilitate the learning process by contextualizing pedagogical communication and fabulating the instructional content.

Since '[v]isual images play an ever-expanding role in the communicative landscape of contemporary societies' (Sturken & Cartwright, 2001), research accrues on the role of visuals in learning and teaching. The incorporation of visual literacy into multimodal literacy (The New London Group, 1996) and the subsequent attempts to transform literacy pedagogy into multiliteracy one (viz. Salbero et al., 2015, p. 5) open a research void, which has been continuously revisited over the past 20 years. Discussing the prevalence of visual images in contemporary society, Serafini (2017) explores the views of Gee (1992), Kress (2010) and Gee and Hayes (2011) re-asserting that in a world mediated by visuals and multimodal texts created and perceived in various environments, people engage in a large scope of literacy practices that inevitably place socially embedded discourses into the context of multimodal communications and digital technologies (Serafini, 2017). In what has been referred to as the 'pictorial turn' since the 90ies of the previous century, the focus on images as simply entertaining or illustrative is being replaced by the notion that 'images are central to modes of representation, communication, and the processes of interpretation' (Mitchell, 1986, p. 4-5). Drawing on this observation, Mitchel contends that visual metaphor, as a strategy, is often concerned with making the abstract concrete and thus understandable on more immediate "human"

terms and concludes that 'there is much work to be done in understanding the range of visual metaphor available to educators and designers' (Mitchell, 1986, p. 6).

How can a visual metaphor be employed to facilitate learning in TEYL? Answering this question requires that the concept of metaphor be placed in the perspective of language and learning in view of their points of intersection. In a seminal work published in 1985 George Lakoff and Mark Johnson define metaphor as a pattern of thought discerning between three types of metaphorical conceptualization: ontological (reframing an abstract concept in terms of a concrete one); orientational (reframing and evaluating an abstract concept in terms of pre-conceptual image schemata, such as Up-Down; Source - Path - Goal; Centre - Periphery, etc.), and structural (reframing a set of related abstract concepts in terms of another set of related concrete ones) (Lakoff & Johnson 1985). In time, the idea developed and in *Women, Fire, and Dangerous Things*, George Lakoff suggests that all conceptual metaphors are structural, that is, it is possible to associate the metaphorical implications to a concept or a set of concepts of different orders of abstractedness (Lakoff, 1987). In support of this claim, corpus-driven analysis of ontological metaphors from the conceptual domain WATER/LIQUIDS shows that all abstractions structured metaphorically through terms from the respective semantic field form a unified functional semantic field of related concepts addressing emotions, mental states, communication, time, mind and reasoning, interpersonal relations, and their social context (Levunlieva, 2011).

This brief discussion makes it possible to decode the term visual metaphor in the context of language learning. As stated above, metaphors are patterns of thought. They are invariant relations which are realized through their variants. Sometimes these are articulated through language and thus we get linguistic metaphors. For example, the concept of *morality* in English is thought of in terms of cleanliness. If we want to express the idea of redeeming oneself from the feeling of guilt, we say *wash one's hands*; to express the absence of guilt we say *my hands are clean*; the same concept can also be expressed using a related abstract concept as if it were a concrete one *clean conscience*. Thus, we get the conceptual metaphor MORALITY IS CLEANLINESS. In brief, regardless of the form in which a thought pattern is shaped, it is metaphoric as long as one item is reframed within the topology of another by projecting relations, and elements from a source conceptual

domain to a target one. Such conceptual constructs can be articulated or manifested through images, and this leads to visual metaphors.

The following definitional aspects of visual metaphor can be foregrounded in the context of this study:

- (a) Metaphor utilizes the familiar to explain the unfamiliar; or, it can recast (or defamiliarize) something already understood or misunderstood with something else familiar. This should not be minimized as an educational technique: the learner’s base of knowledge is leveraged for a learning episode;
- (b) metaphorical association is accomplished through mapping, the transfer of meaning from one thing to another;
- (c) the components are differentiated as source (usually familiar) and target, where topic-relevant attributes of the source are mapped onto the target (Peterson et al., 2015, p. 6).

Now that a working definition has been put forward regarding visual metaphors, it can be safely stated that one of the shortcuts to learning a foreign language in the TEYL classroom is the conscious, goal-oriented employment of the layout and the pictures and illustrations coursebooks offer to both educators and learners. The above claim necessitates that visual metaphor be operationalized as a component of visual literacy and explored as instrumental in TEYL. Over the years the concept has undergone a variety of content shifts. In a critical analysis of the scope and content of the concept in which a review is offered of ideas suggested by Dondis (1973), Seels (1994), Felten (2008), and Avgerinou (2009), F. Serafini summarizes the most salient aspects of visual literacy which involve the ability to handle, model, generate, and exploit culturally based images and visual resources to build knowledge drawing on experiences in various social and communicative contexts (Serafini, 2017). This point of departure in the search for conditions of knowledge effective utilization of visual images is summarized in Table 1.

**Table 1.** *Elements of visual literacy (based on Serafini 2017).*

Cognitive implications of visual literacy	Medium of visual literacy	Mental processes employed in actualizing visual literacy
<i>Ability to interpret, design, produce visual images</i>	<i>Culturally based objects, visual images, and visual resources</i>	<i>Modes of representation</i>
<i>Strategies of communication</i>		<i>Processes of communication</i>
<i>Aptitude for visual thinking and learning</i>		<i>Processes of interpretation</i>

Table 1 shows how visual literacy manifested in the perception, interpretation and comprehension of objects, images, and visuals is formed by abilities, strategies, and aptitudes which activate the process of learning through the underlying language and image-based processes of representation and the socially predicated processes of interpretation, and communication. What is of utmost importance here is that both the prerequisites and the consequent phenomenon of learning through images can be streamlined and contextualized by visual metaphor. How does this 'upgrade' occur?

So far, a definition was suggested of metaphor as a thought pattern and an invariant construct realized through its many variants: linguistic, visual, multimodal. A visual metaphor is thus an articulated thought pattern activated by objects, images, or visual resources projected from a source onto a target conceptual domain. Additionally, visual metaphors perform a dual function: 1) they give information in graphic form so as to organize and structure it; and 2) they convey the key aspects of the represented information through the characteristics of the metaphor employed (Eppler & Burkhard, 2005). Thus, visual metaphor relates to both structure and process – a division Lengler and Eppler (2007) use to describe the representational value of visualization methods. In its structural aspect, a metaphor is therefore a model; it renders the important properties of a concept salient and facilitates the formation of a conceptual domain based on systematic projections of elements and relations from another domain. In its process aspect, however, a metaphor has schema-like qualities, which allows for new information to be assimilated with learning and experience and enables the transformation of information into knowledge. Its cognitive function can be activated if the target domain topology, elements, and relations are framed and explicated by the underlying image. But cognition through visual metaphor does not stop here. Knowledge of the target domain is implicit and tacit, while knowledge of the source domain is explicit and actual. It is founded on learners' experience of the concept encoded in the image. The deeper the knowledge of the source domain becomes as experience accrues, the more implications concerning the target domains can be explicated. What is the relevance of these characteristics of knowledge and its co-relation with metaphorical conceptualization to the English language classroom?

Considering these properties of knowledge, it is plausible to say that property attribution stemming from a concrete to an abstract domain in the formation of an

abstract concept is isomorphic with the process of acquiring L2 grammatical and semantic categories. The internalization of L2 vocabulary or grammar into the learner's interlanguage re-echoes the process of metaphorical cognition of what is distant or unknown through what is close and familiar. The process of learning how to use a word or category in actual speech starts from something familiar, the meaning of the word in L1 or the lexical content of the syntactic expression to be acquired and builds up to include familiarity with syntagmatic and paradigmatic relations, distinctive features of the word meaning or the usage of the category that do not occur in L1. This is a matter of time and hard work, which is naturally buttressed by the analogical language-inherent processes of acquiring knowledge of abstract conceptual domains through knowledge of concrete ones in L1.

In the case study that follows a summary is offered of: (a) visual metaphors employed in *Fairyland 3 and 4*, Express Publishing, 2014-2015 in view of their use in streamlining TEYL; (b) the overall layout and the role of pictures, accompanying the practice exercises in the course books, which demonstrates that they are not a mere distraction to the eye, but learning tools aiding the student in completing the task illustrated.

### **Visual Metaphors in *Fairyland 3 and 4*: A Case Study**

Visual metaphor, as a strategy, is often concerned with making the abstract concrete and thus understandable on more immediate "human" terms (Peterson et al., 2015, p. 4). One of the central conceptual metaphors construing the way we see life and the events/situations that occur in life in many world languages is LIFE IS A JOURNEY. It ramifies into a number of derivative metaphors, such as A CAREER IS A JOURNEY (*He is on the path to promotion*), A MARRIAGE IS A JOURNEY (*embark on the road of married life*), A RELATIONSHIP IS A JOURNEY (*Our relationship has reached a dead end*), DIFFICULTY IS AN IMPEDIMENT TO MOTION (*We need to overcome these hindrances*), DIFFICULTIES ARE LARGE MOVING OBJECTS, etc. (Lakoff & Johnson, 1985; Lakoff, 1993, Yu, 1995). Thus, speakers of French, English, German, Russian, Chinese, Japanese, and many more languages conceive of life as a journey and of life situations or experiences as points in this journey. While in science textbooks '[t]he use of visual metaphor ... poses challenges of complexity to both the researcher and designer' (Peterson, 2015, p. 9), the

metaphor LIFE IS A JOURNEY and the derived metaphors LEARNING IS A JOURNEY and A LEARNER IS A TRVELLER naturally reside in the layout of TEYL coursebooks.

In the present section these observations are supported through an analysis of Fairyland 3 and 4 by Jenny Dooley and Virginia Evans, Express Publishing 2014, 2015, which are English language systems for the third and fourth grades. The method of structural and functional modelling, along with the method for visual metaphor identification (Sorm & Steen, 2018), is employed for the inquiry. The dominant type of metaphor distinguishable in the textbooks is the contextual one defined as a visual where only one domain (either source or target) occurs within a context peculiar to the missing domain (Forceville, 2016). How are the images this system contains actualized as metaphorical; how do they contribute to the metaphors LEARNING IS A JOURNEY and A LEARNER IS A TRVELLER, and what is their potential to facilitate learning and cognition in a process that transforms tacit into explicit knowledge and input language into interlanguage?

First, in accord with and as a means of forming intercultural competence as part of the linguistic one, English language textbooks feature a group of children, usually of a variety of backgrounds, origins, and races, who explore one or more distant locations so that target language can be introduced and internalized in a variety of situations. This feature is promoted by the National Educational Goals Panel, which emphasizes the acquisition of inter-cultural, along with language, competence (DOS, 2015, p. 26). Thus, part 3 of the system opens with a picture presenting in its foreground the group of adventurous children who are to lead the student through a myriad of destinations and fascinating situations in order to help them learn the language. The first child on the left is lying on the meadow reading a book and smiling at the perceiver. The second is carrying flowers in her hand, the third has just mounted his bike, and the fourth is dancing to the sound of her mp3 player. As early as this first page of the book, the underlying associations are formed between the characters and the roles they are to play in the coursebook: the dedicated learner, the environmentally conscious girl, the adventurous boy, and the merry girl, always ready for a party. The caption, 'Join the magic now, come with me to Fairyland' is positioned in such a manner as to look as if it were coming from a fairy hovering above the children. She is carrying a magic wand and has a wreath of flowers on her head. On the right-hand side in the background there is a rainbow, a prototypical symbol of both change and travelling, and at its side is a leprechaun



sitting over the proverbial treasure pot. In the distance, in front of the far end of the rainbow, where it disappears behind the horizon, stands a homomorphic tree, smiling at the characters. Two important inferences emerge from the very first picture in the students' book. First, a journey is at hand. Second, along this journey, the children characters will be assisted by creatures who will render it an adventure with the help of magic.

What comes out in the coursebook in connection with this metaphor can be decoded at three mutually defining structural levels: (a) the level of organization; (b) the level of text-image unities (the storyboard constructed of comic-like texts for reading comprehension); and (c) the level of layout (the role of illustrations to the exercises and the instructions that go with them).

At the level of organization, the life as a journey metaphor derives the metaphor *LEARNING IS A JOURNEY*, an implication foregrounded by the title of each review unit. All review sections are called *CHECKPOINT*, which highlights an important element of the source domain (*IN TRAVELLING WE CROSS BORDERS SECURED BY CHECKPOINTS*) and projects it onto the target (*AS KNOWLEDGE ACCRUES, LEARNERS STEP INTO NEW TERRITORIES*).

At the story-board level of text-image unities, the designers create the same effect by picturing the children in a variety of situations, some in their houses, others in the classroom, still others in the magic forest. Both worlds, however, co-exist in time and space, and can even come together because objects from the magic world can be transferred to the real one, and objects from the real world can appear and exist in the magic one (Fairyland 3: Unit 2a, Time for school, p. 12; Unit 2b, It's a magic pen, p. 14). Additionally, the implication is instilled upon the readers that along this journey any wrong can be straightened and any harm done can be undone through the help of magic instruments, such as the magic wand of the fairy (Fairyland 3, Unit 3a, *My family*, p. 22; Unit 4b, p. 30; Unit 9b, *A lovely day*, p. 72). Just as in fairy tales, where on their quest the hero is invariably assisted by donors, who present them with magic objects to use for protection and in times of trouble (Propp, 1968), in the coursebook the characters are given second chances on a number of occasions. This peculiarity of the story line that emerges in the background can be used by teachers to instil their students with a sense of confidence necessary to develop their productive skills. In addition to the projection

this metaphor implies onto the whole trial and error process that leads to learning, several derived metaphors can be founded on the above observations, which contribute to the levelling down of students' affective filter. From the conceptual proximity of LIFE IS A JOURNEY and LEARNING IS A JOURNEY stems the derived metaphor THE WORLD IS A SCHOOL. From the implications of the LEARNING IS A JOURNEY metaphor (i.) *its destination is a magic land; (ii.) there is a treasure in this land; (iii.) there are difficulties on the way, but help is always available*) spring the derived metaphors A LEARNER IS A TRAVELLER and KNOWLEDGE IS A TREASURE, which bring about the inferences: (i.) *as learners' knowledge accrues, they cross boundaries/checkpoints* (A LEARNER IS A TRAVELLER); (ii.) *the journey is magic; (iii.) the learner has a magic identity; (iv.) learning is a treasure hunt/an adventure* (KNOWLEDGE IS A TREASURE). These metaphors typically underlying the visuals in foreign language course books can be used to create an environment conducive to collaboration, stress-free learning, and effective interaction within the classroom in more than one way. In combination with the biographical method, they can serve as triggers for stress-free guided discussions of situations from the learners' own lives. In conjunction with intensive methods, they can be employed as visual material contextualizing the communicative situation. Building up on this basis, the dramatization technique can be meaningfully applied in role-plays to enrich learners' experience through simulated knowledge, i.e., through vicarious experience. Also, the application of interactive methods founded on meaningful feedback can benefit from the purposeful employment of suitable visuals too, as they contextualize language production and put it in the perspective of a specific communicative intention. The use of the right images can stimulate learning through collaboration by reducing the anxiety that often accompanies foreign language production. In the following section an analysis of the coursebook's layout confirms the above claims and observations.

An important feature of the layout is related to the instructions to the practice exercises. In terms of organization, there are three basic types of practice exercises in Fairyland 3 and 4: (a) drawing and writing exercises for project-based individual learning; (b) matching activities for learning through graphemic/acoustic – image identifications; (c) completion exercises, where learners use visual information to complete missing parts in texts, dialogues, or sentences; or to produce sentences or dialogues on their own.

Type 1 activities come together under the umbrella term Portfolio and represent individual projects usually meant for work at home. They reinforce the key grammatical forms and vocabulary introduced in the main text-image unity of the respective section of the book. All of these require that the learner make a drawing and describe it using specific target language expressions. The task is set in two separate stages. At the first stage, which is given as a preparatory exercise, the students complete missing forms in a text illustrated with a picture of one of the characters. The only instructions to this task are *Read and write*. In-text dotted lines stand for the missing words and the necessary information is encoded in the accompanying image. At the second stage, the task is specifically set as a Portfolio project. This time the instructions *Draw and write* are accompanied by an illustration featuring a boy or a girl in a situation similar to the one visualized in stage one. Though not metaphorical at all, the approach encourages a process of visual – graphemic substitution which again engages, along with the language faculty, at least two modalities: the visual and the motor ones. This contributes to the establishment of a multi-sensory learning episode that follows *Principle 3 of knowledge enablement*: “Understand the organisation and its environment as a dynamic entity shaped, primarily, by humans” (Gelepithis & Parillon, 2002, p. 4). What favours its transformation into a learning strategy for young students is that in most cases, no models are specifically provided for the exercises. Rather, the desired answers are visualized through a situation that includes a hypothetical student(s) producing the utterance required in the instructions. This hypothetical student is usually drawn in a particular situation where the utterance is relevant. Thus, there is a correct answer(s), but it is presented visually through a whole situation in which the target grammar or vocabulary are encoded in a message invoked by the visual. That is, the correct answer is not necessarily the type of answer each student originally has in their mind at the onset of the activity because individual experiences differ and therefore students’ interpretations of the model situation may vary. What is of utmost importance here is that these incorrect or alternative interpretations allow teachers to receive feedback that is informative on students’ progress and at the same time may be used in formative assessment, the process in which teachers use students’ answers to diagnose their own achievements or failures in teaching the instructional content. Additionally, these discrepancies between the acceptable answer(s) and students’ oral or written production engender reflection and self-reflection on the task. The goal-oriented use of these two

processes leads to the formation of a borderline zone of interaction between the language forms actually produced by the learner and the potentially correct/acceptable answers. Due to the dual nature of language 1. as a cognitive ability (Evans & Green, p. 2006) and 2. as a system (Sausseur, 1983), whose structures need to be explored jointly with those of the adjacent structural levels (Zvegintsev, 1975), this borderline zone invokes tension within the elements of that system creating a condition of imbalance, which, in Piagetian terms, can be overcome by assimilating the new information into existing schemata (Piaget, 1954). In such situations, a teacher's role is not so much to correct the mistakes/errors a learner makes but to establish a pedagogical situation that puts the student's answer into communicative perspective. This can occur if a communicative intention is created (Grice, 1989), which in turn implies active learning – in this case, a committed attempt to get a message across in specific circumstances and with a concrete communicative goal.

In summary, the knowledge enabling strategy and its TEYL implications include three stages: (i.) reflection and self-reflection on the task; (ii.) formation of a zone of interaction between the language forms produced and the potentially correct/acceptable answers; (iii.) formation of a condition of imbalance overcome by assimilating the new information into existing schemata. What counts here and what actually contributes to effective learning, is that schemata reside in the mind, they are not language-based. Rather, they are based on experience and are comparable to “folders” in our mind which contain structured knowledge of that experience. Each time it tells us something new of the category whose members are “saved” in the folder, we add a new file containing its new property/properties. That is, regardless of the language in which a particular chunk of information is fed into the schema, it is still distinguishable as input (Krashen, 1985). In the process, the language ego, which often counterbalances second language learning (Guiora, 1972), poses no hindrances to internalization and therefore to the transposition of information into knowledge.

Why does visualization form an integral part of learning through type 1 activities? When accompanying a text, a visual renders its processing easier. Rather than describe what the student is expected to do, the images that illustrate the Portfolio exercise transform the target content with the new grammar and vocabulary into a picture of a child doing something familiar: walking the dog, doing some sport, shopping, etc. These

situations invoke existing knowledge that can be articulated in L1. This knowledge, however, is also articulated in L2 at the preparatory stage of the exercise where the learner completes missing L2 information again based on a visual. That is, the L2 language input is formed in a written mode first, then it is illustrated with a new visual, and finally the learner composes a second text based on that visual and on the information in the preparatory activity. Thus, new grammatical and vocabulary units are virtually dressed in familiar form through a process engaging two cognitive faculties in the learning process: the visual and the language faculty. Finally, the information processed through these faculties is sampled in L2 at home in a stress-free production process in which prior knowledge and new information blend into a picture-and-text unity that conveys and describes situations known to the learner incorporating the motor skills in the process. The result is multi-sensory input facilitating language production.

Type 2 and type 3 activities are for classroom work and practise new lexis or grammatical constructions. All of them aid the learning process by presenting missing or required information in the form of images accompanying the exercise. Here, these are not merely illustrative in character. Rather, their role is, by engaging the visual and, sometimes the hearing modality, to provide the student with information that is an essential component of the instructions that point out what needs to be accomplished. The instructions make no sense without the accompanying image. Both authors and designers rely on visuals to make student tasks clear. For example, a common exercise in the course book is *Listen and colour/draw/number, etc.*, which incorporates the hearing, the visual, and the motor modalities. Learners are required to listen to a text and colour/draw/number, etc. the objects mentioned or the situations and characters introduced as described in the listening passage. In another group of similar exercises, students are invited to label various objects, to single out an object based on certain characteristics, or to name these characteristics (size, shape, colour, parts, etc.). In the next group, which concludes the activities performed in the first two, the learning episode reaches its climax when students take part in a guided speaking or writing activity whose purpose is to articulate the new vocabulary units in language forms which are already familiar or to use the target grammatical structures based on an image, presenting a communicative situation that requires its use.

To use the dominant metaphor in the coursebook, on their journey to mastering the language, learners can rely not only on their ability to focus on the task at hand, but also to use their visual, motor, and hearing modalities, which help them along the way.

### Conclusion

Language acquisition in the structured environment of the second language classroom, especially at an early age, is characterized by certain difficulties that inhere in the psychological profile of the learner and in the nature of the object of learning. While language as a system is highly structured, its manifestation as speech is to a great extent non-definite in that ascribing meaning to form is a matter of context, experience and shared knowledge between speaker and hearer. Also, mastering a foreign language means overcoming one's native language ego, which, despite its flexibility with children, often leads to anxiety and stress. As a result, teachers of English to young learners need to take advantage of all opportunities the second language classroom offers in order to reduce that stress and stimulate students' attention without diminishing their cognitive load. One way to do this is by creating a learning environment in which the relation *instructional content - visualization* in TEYL coursebooks enhances knowledge enablement opportunities. This includes using visual metaphor as a strategy supporting active learning; employing the layout of modern course books so as to decrease students' affective filter and enhance the flexibility of their language ego; increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of the educational process by adopting a mediating rather than instructing function in the teaching process. The untapped potential of visualization in this process can support the development of second language skills in a multi-sensory environment by contextualizing the language input and reducing its complexity. The importance of visual metaphor and visualization in TEYL is therefore twofold: they are a type of stimuli that decrease the level of anxiety in the English language classroom, and they also favour the development of language by improving *teacher-student* and *student-student* interaction streamlining learning both in terms of time and resources.

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