Investing in digital storytelling

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In recent years, digitally-mediated multimodal literacy practices have started to gain growing attention in second language (L2) education. How do such practices contribute to L2 learners’ academic growth, language development and learning motivation are widely discussed and investigated (Casañaeda, 2013; Hafner & Miller, 2011; Huang, 2012; L. Lee, 2014; Oskoz & Elola, 2014; Y.-T. C. Yang & Wu, 2012). However, empirical studies that investigate L2 learners’ investment (Norton, 1995) in digitally-mediated multimodal literacy practices are still scarce. For example, it is unclear how L2 learners’ capital contribute to their social definition of multimodal practices and further assist them in their participation in L2 learning.

Grounded in Bourdieu’s (1977) notion of capital, this qualitative study investigates English language learners’ investment (Norton, 1995) in one type of digitally-mediated multimodal literacy practices, digital storytelling. The study collects students’ digital stories, interviews, and questionnaires as the research data.

This presentation plans to focus on one of the preliminary findings that highlights students’ situated production of digital stories and their agency in cumulating their capitals throughout this project. The investment of four students who work together for their digital story ”To be or not to be” will be mainly discussed in this presentation. Embodied in their linguistic capital (e.g., experience with English idioms, expressions and storytelling), social capital (e.g., club and dormitory experience) and culture capital (e.g., college schooling experience), these four students invest to make meaning through instances experienced in their lives, highlighting college students’ paradoxical positioning in college in their digital story. Their digital capital (e.g., experience with digital movie production) further assist them to appropriate and orchestrate multimodal resources in meaning delivery. On the basis of this presentation, the researcher hopes to bring in discussions for possible research and pedagogy in relation to multimodality, digital storytelling and L2 education.

Keywords: capital, new literacies, digital storytelling, investment, multimodality.