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Promoting Learner Engagement through Interactive Digital Tools

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Abstract

Interactive digital tools and virtual learning spaces can be effective in engaging learners with language, content, and culture that promote language proficiency. However, the mere utilization of technology tools does not guarantee learner growth in language proficiency without careful attention to research-informed learning strategies and standards-based instructional design. Learning objectives and language functions drive instruction, and digital learning tools can provide differentiated learning opportunities and learner support that scaffold the learning process. The authors provide a review of the literature on technology integration in world language education as well as examples of popular digital tools designed to facilitate meaningful, interactive communication. Three digital tools, WeChat, iBook Author, and Spark Video, were chosen as exemplars as they provide varied and multiple instructional functions in all three modes of communication.

Keywords: communicative proficiency, social cognitive approach, technology tools

Introduction

Technology is ubiquitous—digital media has transformed our lives, our interactions, and it has connected us globally. Digital media has changed the nature of education, most specifically how, when, and where we learn. This has led researchers to stress the need for theoretical and practical support for language

teachers in the effective use of technology in the classroom (Bax, 2011; Kessler, 2007). Effective integration of digital media guided by research- informed pedagogy can enhance learner motivation and engage language learners in the language learning process. While much research has been conducted on perceptions and the impact of effective technology integration in world language classrooms, there is limited research focused on effective integration of technology tools to engage language learners in meaningful interactions that promote language proficiency (Wu, Childs, & Hsu, 2018). In order to address this gap in the literature, this paper focuses on strategies designed to integrate digital tools to foster language proficiency.

Technology integration and foreign language education: History, trends, and impact

The evolution of language learning has shifted from learning about language, to communicating in the language, to using language as a tool to access content (Moeller, 2018). Due in large part to the digital age, access to authentic language sources and resources are available on demand through multimedia, social media, online conferencing, and a plethora of Web 2.0 apps and tools. The key to connecting the classroom and the global language community lies in incentivizing and motivating learners to pursue language practice and learning beyond the classroom walls where they can apply their acquired skills. When learners use language skills in authentic language contexts within language communities, motivation increases and purpose for language learning becomes real (Yu, 2016).

Much like the evolution of language teaching, technology integration in language instruction has undergone significant paradigm shifts. Often referred to as Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL), CALL has experienced three stages of development due to prevailing theoretical and pedagogical influences of second language acquisition in corresponding periods in history (Schmid, 2010). During the 1960s and 1970s, research and teaching practices related to CALL reflected a behavioristic approach that focused on providing drills and repetitive practice with minimal feedback. Cognitive approaches to CALL gradually emerged during the 1970s followed in the 1980s by strong emphases on communicative language teaching. Cognitive approaches to CALL strove for more learner control and interaction with technology in contextualized language learning practice and sought to engage students in non-drill formats with enriched feedback to support learner language development. Influenced by socio-cultural theory, a focus on meaning, negotiation, and learner interactions with materials, texts, and peers in authentic contexts was promoted (Schmid, 2010; Shrum & Glisan, 2015; Vygotsky, 1978). Social-cognitive CALL aims to promote interactions among and between learners, as well as with native-speakers, instead of focusing solely on interactions between language learners and technologies. Effective integration of educational technologies for language learning aimed to provide or simulate authentic contexts to engage language learners through diverse learning tasks. This goal aligns with the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) statement on the role of technology in language learning, which states that technology use engages

learners in interactive, meaningful, cognitive interactions with other speakers of the target language (ACTFL, 2017). The focus is on co-construction of knowledge of both culture and language to facilitate the development of language proficiency, intercultural communicative competence, and negotiation of evolving identity (Blyth, 2018; Kessler, 2018).

Educational technology has been used to create virtual and augmented learning spaces to strengthen learning communities through online interactions in semi-authentic contexts. Virtual and augmented learning spaces allow learners to participate in diverse learning tasks aimed at developing communicative skills through co-construction of knowledge (Kessler, 2018; Liu & Olmanson, 2016). According to the National Standards in Foreign Language Learning Project (2015), the three modes of communication include interpersonal, interpretive, and presentational communication. Interpersonal communication is the direct oral and written communication between individuals who are in personal contact. Interpretive communication is receptive oral and written communication via print and non-print materials, visual or recorded materials. And, presentational communication is the spoken or written communication for an audience where there is no direct, immediate, personal contact (National Standards in Foreign Language Learning Project, 2015)

Three modes of communication and meaningful interaction

Interpersonal, interpretive, and presentational communication skills develop independently based on varied factors such as opportunities for practice and interactions with native speakers and authentic materials. In their research on the integrated performance assessment, Glisan, Uribe, and Adair-Hauck (2007) examined students' performance in three modes of communication with advanced Spanish classes and reported that students performed better during presentational communication than interpersonal communication. Adair-Hauck and Troyan (2013) noted that language instructors use presentational tasks more frequently than the other two modes, making it the predominant mode assessed in language classrooms. The spontaneous nature of interpersonal tasks makes this mode challenging for language instructors to teach, model, and assess (Glisan, Uribe, & Adair-Hauck, 2007; Wu, Childs & Hsu, 2018). Glisan, Uribe, and Adair-Hauck (2007) reported that students failed to perform well in the interpretive mode due to comparatively limited exposure to listening input. Such findings indicated that more effective tools and instructional strategies were needed to support learners to develop interpretive and interpersonal communicative skills. In order to address these needs, this paper explores effective technology tools and provides real-classroom examples to assist language teachers in integrating innovative technology to ensure student engagement when developing communicative proficiency.

Effective technology tools to promote language learning and intercultural communication

In order to optimize language learning, learners must engage in interactions with speakers of the target language as they co-construct meaning in authentic contexts. Research has associated student engagement positively with task outcomes

and learner achievement (Peng, Song, Kim, & Day, 2016). Social interaction, effective scaffolding of learning tasks, and student autonomy have been identified as promoting task engagement (Gao, Bai & Park, 2017). The technology tools described in this paper provide a virtual space for language practice designed to promote meaningful interaction, strengthen the social and language development of the learning community, involve learners in cognitively engaging learning tasks, and create authentic contexts to foster both language proficiency and intercultural competence. We have chosen three technology apps, WeChat, iBook, Spark Video, to illustrate effective use of technology that can develop language proficiency when "guided by viable educational and language development rationales" (Gonzalez-Lloret & Ortega, 2014, p. 3).

Meaningful communication in authentic contexts with WeChat

Social networking technologies have been identified by researchers and language practitioners as effective tools to support world language teaching and learning (Kessler, 2018). WeChat, a social networking technology tool, has been documented in the research literature as (a) positively fostering specific language skills (Liu, 2014; Wu, 2016); (b) contributing to learner community building (Cheng, 2016; Wang, Fang, Han, & Chen, 2016; Qi & Wang, 2018); (c) facilitating negotiation of meaning and meaningful interaction in a low anxiety environment (Cheng, 2016; Tang, & Hew, 2017), and (d) engaging students in problem-solving tasks in authentic contexts (Kessler, 2018; Zhang, 2016). Research has shown that online chatting contributes to interpersonal communication with increased language production and improved language complexity (Golonka, Bowles, Frank, Richardson & Freynik, 2014).

Interpersonal communication with teacher presence. WeChat is a highly compatible social networking tool that can be used on mobiles, tablets, or computers (both Aroid and ISO systems). While this app originated in China, it is compatible with many languages, including English, German, Spanish, French, Arabic, and more. With its powerful functions ranging from instant messaging, to social interaction, and to online business, WeChat is the most popular social media app used in both China and Chinese communities outside of China. WeChat was not designed specifically for educational purposes, but due to its popularity and diverse functions, it can serve as a promising educational tool when used with appropriate instructional pedagogical design. Pedagogical considerations and instructional planning are pivotal to implementing non-pedagogically-designed technology tools like WeChat, since meaningful interaction in the target language among students via social media does not happen intuitively.

Wang, Fang, Han, and Chen (2016) examined teaching, social, and cognitive presence of WeChat-mediated language exchanges between two college language classes, an Australian third-year Mandarin class and a Taiwanese English class. In their study, they claimed that teacher presence, the role teachers played in the WeChat learning community, facilitated cognitive and social development for language learners. Wang and colleagues described teacher presence, or teacher role, in the WeChat community as a co-designer who creates tasks, facilitates

learning, and provides language support and feedback. Such findings regarding teachers' roles to monitor, facilitate, and provide feedback to support student language learning using technologies have been confirmed in multiple research studies (Moeller & McNulty, 2006; Moeller & Park, 2003).

The implementation of technology in teaching practice must begin with a pedagogical purpose based on the learning objectives and a general understanding of the affordances of technologies that are able to serve that purpose (Saudelli, & Ciampa, 2016). WeChat is a popular social media option among teachers as it provides asynchronous, semi-synchronous, and synchronous online communication (Liu, 2014; Tang & Hew, 2017; Qi & Wang, 2018) and its messaging function allows for interpersonal communication in different modalities (e.g. text, audio, and video messages) (Figure 1). In addition, its user-friendly grouping function allows language instructors to group learners the way that is most appropriate for achieving the intended learning objectives. This flexible grouping approach promotes engagement in online interpersonal communication either in pairs or in groups any time, any place. Students can ask for help whenever they have questions by sending a text or voice message to instructors, thus allowing instructors to monitor group work and provide individualized support and feedback. Both students and instructors can initiate synchronous communication via voice chat, video chat, and group conferencing. Asynchronous conversation provides more flexibility for interlocutors with less stress and increases willingness to communicate, since spontaneity is not required (Freiermuth, & Jarrell, 2006; Wu, Childs & Hsu, 2018).
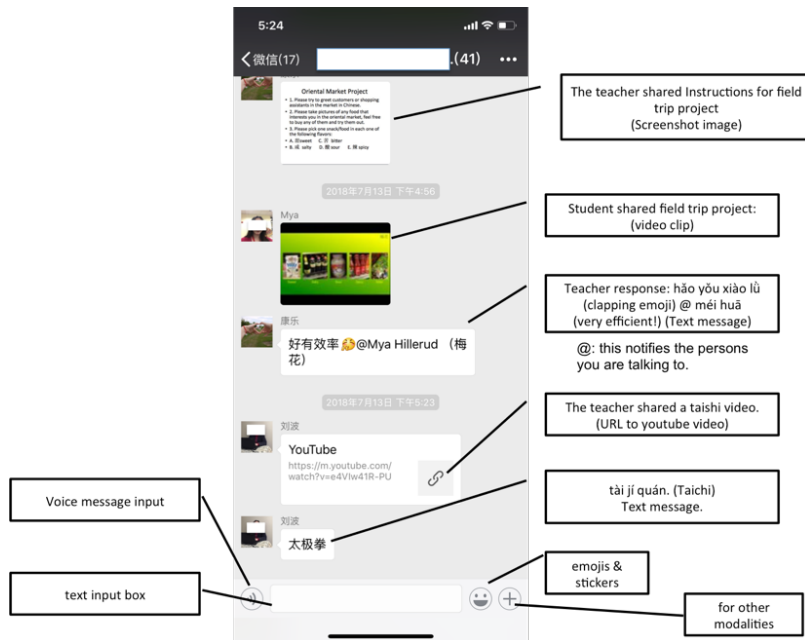

Figure 1. Screenshot of teacher and student communication via WeChat

WeChat projects and learning tasks are designed to guide and gauge meaningful interaction both at the teacher-student level and student-student level. Wang, Fang, Han, and Chen (2016) co-designed five tasks with classroom teachers based on the pedagogical needs and learning objectives determined by the teachers. Each task was shared with students with detailed directions to ensure meaningful, authentic communication via WeChat. The first icebreaker voice-messaging communication task allowed teachers to pair students and create WeChat groups for each pair of students. Each WeChat group included an English learner from Taiwan, a Chinese learner from Australia, and their respective teachers. Due to time differences, students were allowed to choose asynchronous, synchronous, or semi-synchronous modes of communication. In this way, WeChat provided a platform for language learners to communicate with native language speakers. First, learners were required to send an audio greeting and a short self-introduction in the target language to their language partner. Then, learners were to chat about their interests and hobbies in their chosen modality. The final step was to set up a schedule for further communication.

The Australian Mandarin and Taiwanese English teachers were able to witness student interaction, but did not participate in the conversation until students asked for help and support. The structured task served as an effective ice-breaker in that it provided language learners a topic, resources, and support. The pairing-up ensured that every student was involved in the task with equal participation and was individually accountable (Kagan, 1994; Shrum & Glisan, 2015). The flexibility for students to choose from symmetrical, semi-symmetrical, and asymmetrical formats to communicate involved all students in the task, including those with potentially less interactive personality traits (e.g. shyness). During the student interactions, the teachers monitored student learning and provided support or feedback if such a need emerged. A follow-up class discussion allowed participants to provide additional feedback in terms of language use. Factors such as time differences and the length of communication were considered while designing learning tasks. Students also used a variety of modalities (e.g. text, visual, voice, and video) to express themselves to accomplish the communicative task.

WeChat-mediated interpersonal communication tasks must integrate research informed pedagogy-driven curricular design that facilitates meaningful communication in authentic contexts (ACTFL, 2017; Kessler, 2018). Alternative technologies that facilitate interpersonal communication include, but are not limited to, popular social networking and instant messaging technologies such as WhatsApp, Skype, QQ, Google hangout, Messenger (with Facebook), and Flipgrid (asynchronous). No matter what technologies are used, it is important to consider the following criteria to ensure smooth integration and to achieve the identified learning outcome. Technology-mediated interpersonal communication should begin by:

- Identifying learner linguistic levels and the necessary scaffolded support needed for learners to achieve their learning goals (Moeller. & Yu, 2015).
- Aligning learning objectives with standards to determine the purpose for the communicative task (Ziegler & Moeller, 2012).

- Pairing and grouping students based on communicative purpose (Brandl, 2008).
- Identifying technology functions that support student learning based on learning purpose (Hughes, 2005).
- Preparing clear instructions for both task details and technology use for student reference (Brandl, 2008; Novodvorsky, & Weinstein, 2014).
- Composing rubrics to evaluate student language production.
- Identifying strategies for monitoring learning and providing feedback.

Interpretive communication through guided exploration of authentic materials. Instructors can share materials in various modalities with WeChat by using the individual chat or group chat function. WeChat also allows for integration of appropriate authentic materials in the form of text, images, audio, video, URL, and other formats that are appropriate for developing language proficiency. According to Glisan et al. (2007) and Kissau & Adams (2016), there is a need to focus on learning strategies that support the development of the interpretive mode of communication. WeChat provides easy access to authentic materials. There are more than 12 million public accounts that provide resources in all fields ranging from food to academic resources (Central Broadcasting Web, 2017, February 6). In addition, there are more than a hundred subscribable public accounts related to Chinese learning and Chinese culture materials alone. Official accounts are available for learners of other languages with more than 30 official accounts related to Arabic learning.

In order to promote interpretive communication skills, instructors should provide guiding questions and comprehension checks to help learners reflect on their reading and listening practice and to focus on main ideas and important details (Wu, Childs & Hsu, 2018). In the WeChat environment, instructors can assign materials with guiding questions to engage individuals in interpretive practice and provide individual support as needed. Instructors can also group learners strategically to negotiate meaning and discuss learning strategies to co-construct meaning (Shrum & Glisan, 2015). Instructors can assign different readings on the same topic to various groups based on their language proficiency and facilitate group presentations based on the reading content.

Presentational communication within a learning community. In order to promote learner autonomy, it is vital that learners demonstrate their language learning actively through performance-based tasks (Novodvorsky & Weinstein, 2014; Shrum & Glisan, 2018). WeChat allows learners to share learning evidence in different modalities with other language speakers of their own choice. There are two ways to share learning evidence: one is to post in a group chat, and the other is through WeChat Moment. Figure 2 is a screenshot of a student's WeChat Moment page. The student was a participant in the 2017 STARTALK residential Immersion Chinese program at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln for high school students with no prior experience learning Chinese. The theme of the immersion program was "Experiencing Chinese Festivals through the Five Senses." The curriculum included five Chinese festivals contextualized through authentic materials in multimodality to provide students with both cultural and language input. Students

were required to post a presentational assignment via WeChat moment as evidence of learning. Figure 2 provides an example of a presentational writing assignment that was posted at the end of the day after students had finished the Lantern Festival unit. Learners were asked to write about their understanding of the story, the related culture, and the language they had learned. Learners were provided with detailed instructions and a rubric to guide their presentational assignment (Appendix A). They shared their presentational writing assignment with the entire class via WeChat moments (Moments, July 13). The student participant retold the Lantern Festival story as if she were the goose in the story.
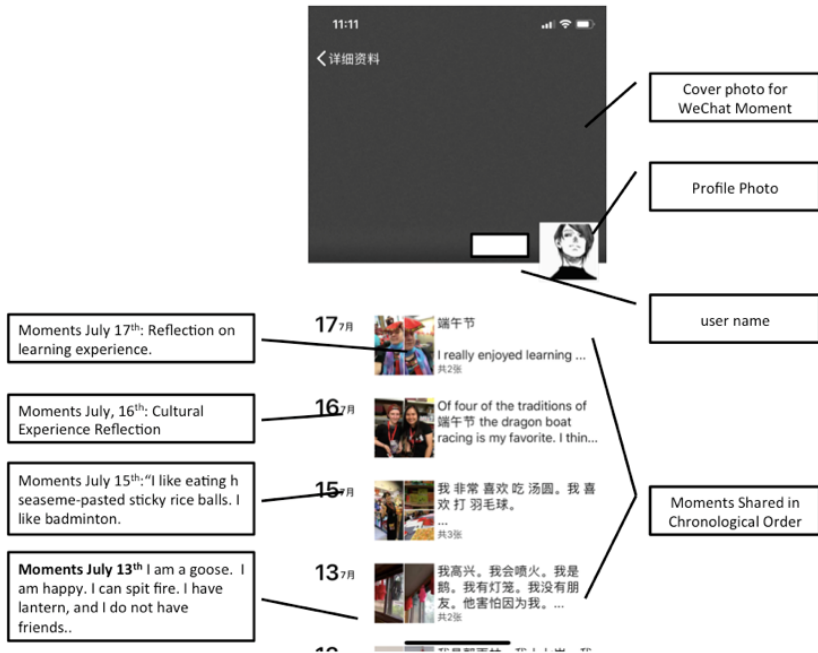

Figure 2. One Novice-level student's WeChat moment demonstrating presentational communication

All learners were required to use the commenting function to provide feedback on at least two of their peers' posts. Each student was required to respond to the peer comments and make revisions if needed based on peer reviews. For each peer comment, students provided constructive feedback on language use and content based on assignment rubrics. A sample comment from a student on the July 13 posting in Figure 1 is "Your story was told from the goose's perspective, and it is very interesting. I would recommend to start the story with *wǒ shì é* [I am a goose] instead of *wǒ hěn gāo xìng* [I am happy]." In this comment, the student acknowledges that the content of the story was good while providing suggestions about the opening of the story. Students were required to make revisions based on peer comments they received. The revised version of their WeChat moment posts served as a summative assessment for the Lantern Festival Unit.

Technology-supported presentational assignments offer diverse peer interaction and peer feedback facilitated by a variety of functions, such as the "commenting" function in WeChat and the "liking" function available in most social media technologies. Alternative technologies that foster presentational skills within learning communities include a variety of social media technologies that build learner community include Twitter, Facebook, Messenger, Google Classroom, and Seesaw.

Presentational communication skills do not develop without pedagogically designed learning tasks that facilitate the learning process. Wang, at al. (2016) and Brandl (2008) recommend that teachers be present in the virtual learning community to create an inviting learning environment, model language use, establish the structure, provide explicit instructions, monitor the learning process, and serve as a resource and be available to support learner needs. As demonstrated in the WeChat examples, the Australian and Taiwanese teachers designed the learning tasks, grouped the students, provided detailed instructions, rubrics, and provided examples to support student engagement. Teachers monitored the online interactions and provided support whenever there was a need during the learning process. After students finished the learning tasks, teachers facilitated peer reviews and provided feedback as described in the example from the Lantern Festival Unit. In addition, teachers were able to provide individualized support using WeChat messaging when needed. Teachers could send reminders via the messaging function when the deadline for the assignment approached.

In sum, social media technologies, such as WeChat, can engage learners in interpersonal, interpretive, and presentational communication. The messaging function can extend interpersonal communication in the target language beyond the classroom while contributing to community building. In order to facilitate interpretive communication, teachers can screen for adequate authentic materials and design activities to elicit critical thinking while interacting with the material. Group chat, conferencing, and Moment features can facilitate presentational communication since they allow for different modalities for demonstrating language and cultural learning. However, it is not the technology that drives the instruction, but the effective strategies guided by pedagogical considerations that optimize the learning experience and promote language proficiency.

iBook: Learner-paced explorations that foster interpretive communication skills

iBook offers interactive books that promote learner engagement and personalized learning (Baldwin, 2015; Johnston, & Marsh, 2014). iBook Author is an Apple, Inc. application that allows teachers to create iBooks to address learner needs. In order to illustrate the available functions iBook offers, we provide an example from Chinese language teaching, more specifically the teaching of pinyin and Chinese characters.

The debate over when and how characters should be introduced is ongoing among Chinese language educators; however, it is generally agreed that character learning should transition from pinyin (phonetic system for the Chinese language) to character learning to facilitate the learning process (Liu & Olmanson, 2016;

Zhao, 2014). iBook has the ability to make the transition from pinyin to characters more fluid and engaging for learners. The following examples are taken from an iBook, *Xun Mei Ji* [Looking for My Younger Sister] created by Xianquan Liu, one of the authors of this article. This iBook was designed specifically to support the transition from pinyin to character learning for Novice-low Chinese learners after they were acquainted with pinyin and exposed to some basic character knowledge.

The story is about a boy's trip to China to look for his younger sister. The book uses authentic materials to contextualize character recognition in an interactive story.
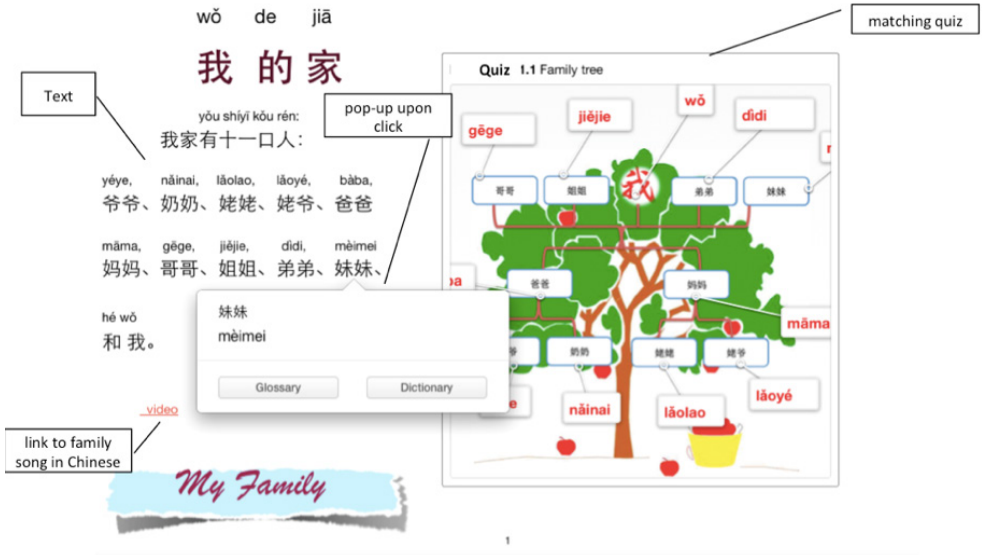
Figure 3. Reading with pop-up reference, video, and quizzes

Figure 3 is a screenshot of an introduction of the main character's family at the beginning of the book with pinyin annotation, the phonetic symbols above the characters. All new words in the text are clickable and are linked to a pop-up reference window. Learners can pick "glossary" or "dictionary" for reference. The image on the right is a two-page quiz based on the text that learners have read on the left side of the image. Other features offered by iBook Author include gallery, media, keynote, interactive image, 3D, scrolling sidebar, pop-over, and HTML. Each feature can be utilized to provide interactive interpretive practice for learners in different modalities. For example, a mini-presentation can be embedded with the "keynote" widget to provide additional cultural background that can be activated by a click if learners are interested in learning more about that cultural topic.

Different storylines are created to promote learner autonomy by offering choices in learning content. Each icon in the rectangle (Figure 4) is linked to a sub-storyline for learners to navigate a variety of storylines with similar content.

Authentic exit and entrance signs are used to ask learners to select the right entrance (Figure 5) after they have activated the sub-storyline by clicking on one of the icons (Figure 4). If they select the wrong sign, they will be led to the upper right page with feedback indicating "Sorry, you are now out of [the name of the place learners chose to explore]. The return icon will lead learners back to the previous page. Once the right choices are made, learners will be led to the lower right side of the slide picturing a boy holding a medal with *"Hao"* [Good] on it. In this way, learners are given the opportunity to learn and relearn what they have missed previously in a class in a personal learning environment in a low affective learning environment (Brandl, 2008).
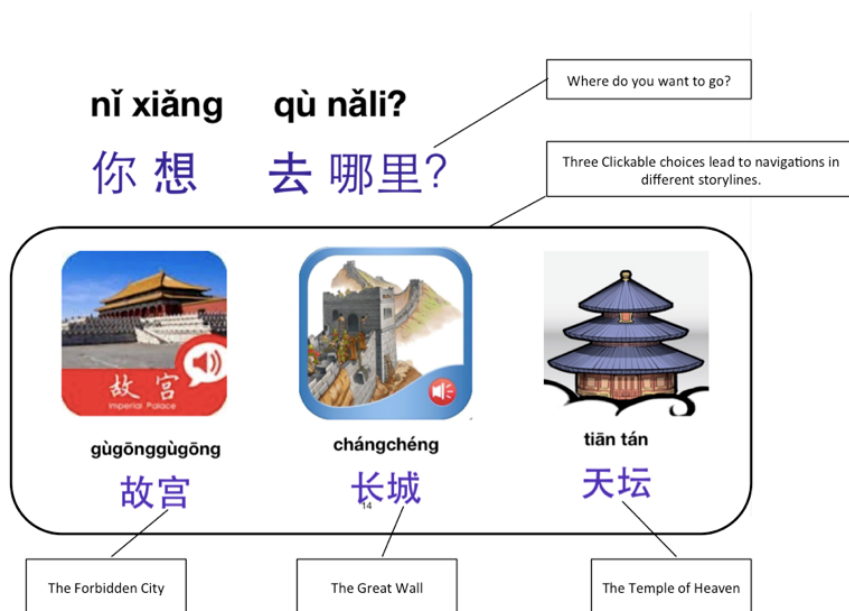

Figure 4. A question page with three clickable icons to activate different storylines

appropriate place for that action. Once again, the incorrect answers lead to the page indicating a return icon for a second try. A click on the correct answer leads to the page indicating the correct choice, the boy with a medal.

The intent is to remove pinyin support gradually as learners move deeper into the story. Learners are provided a simple short sentence and asked to make choices concerning what they have read. For example, routine actions appear repeatedly with decreasing pinyin support, thus familiarizing learners with characters as they build their character knowledge and confidence. Figure 6 demonstrates such an interactive, interpretive practice towards the end of the story when pinyin is completely removed from the text. On the left of the picture, a short sentence 我累了 [I am tired] using characters is presented with visual support, and learners are asked to pick the most appropriate action from the list. The wrong action words
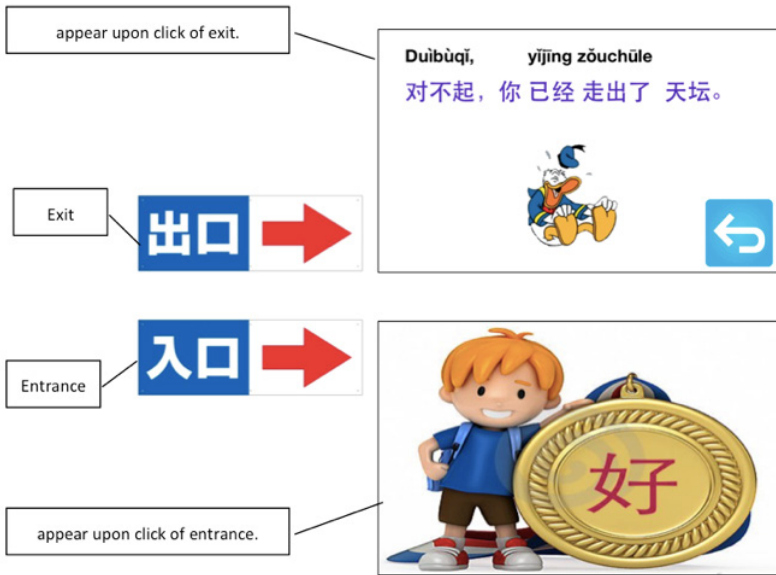
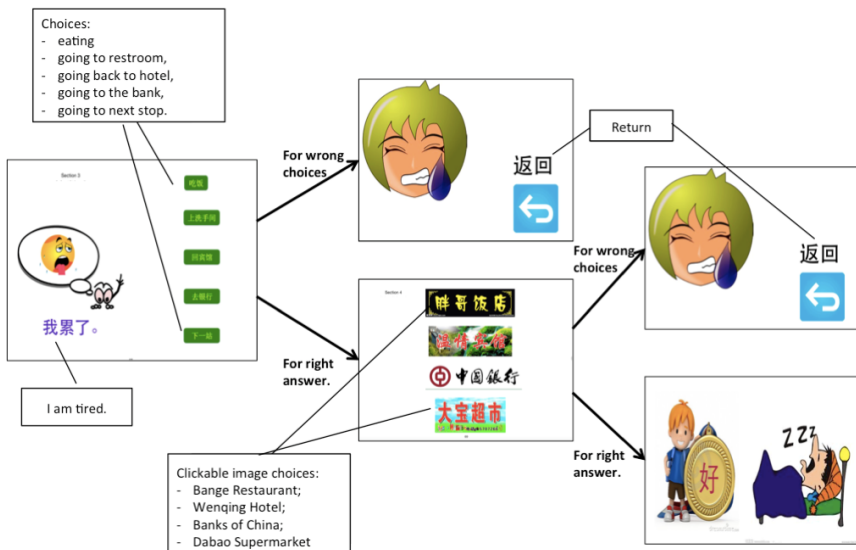**Figure 5.** Clickable contextualized character recognition practice with feedback

Figure 6. Interpreting with immediate feedback

are linked to a page indicating the answer is incorrect. Learners are provided with the opportunity to try again by clicking the return bottom (upper middle image in Figure 6). The right action word 回宾馆 [go back to the hotel], in this case leads to a page offering choices of places with authentic signs for students to pick the appropriate place for that action. Once again, the incorrect answers lead to the page indicating a return icon for a second try. A click on the correct answer leads to the page indicating the correct choice, the boy with a medal.

Using the iBook story described above, Liu & Olmanson (2016) found that scaffolded pinyin assistance and meaningful, repetitive practice in an authentic story based context with immediate feedback served as effective strategies. The technology supported high school Novice-level Chinese learners' transition from reading a pinyin-assisted text to reading a character-based text. The implementation process using digital tools that engage learners in interpretive communication is driven by pedagogical considerations to scaffold students' reading and listening practice with guiding questions, to facilitate negotiation of meaning, to provide feedback, and to demonstrate learning. Additional technologies that engage learners in interpretive communication and allow for a sharing of documents include Seesaw, Facebook, Twitter, and Edpuzzle. Edpuzzle allows for more scaffolding to guide students in individual listening interpretive practice. Edpuzzle allows instructors to edit online videos, to add voiceover, to insert questions in different formats (e.g. text, audio), and to integrate quizzes.

Presentational communication with video-presentations via Spark Video

Many technologies enable learners to demonstrate their presentational speaking, such as Sockpuppet, Flipgrid, Voicethread, and Voki. For both writing and speaking practice, Narrative PowerPoint, Sock Puppet, Little Bird Story are useful. For writing only, Pic Collage, Comic Life, Story Creator are optimal. Based on experimentation with, and input from Novice-level Chinese high school language learners in a residential immersion program, Sparkvideo was chosen as the preferred venue for demonstration of presentational communication skills. The free version of Spark Video allows learners to create videos with captions and voiceover to demonstrate both written and spoken presentational skills. Adobe Spark Video can be used on its website or downloaded as an app on mobile devices. The example below is student work from a STARTALK Chinese immersion language program for Novice-level high school learners. Prior to a field trip to an Oriental market, learners were introduced to a variety of foods and flavors specific to Chinese culture. Once at the market, students were assigned to take pictures of Chinese foods that contained a minimum of five different flavors. These pictures served as information and documentation for a presentation they prepared after the field trip focused on likes and dislikes of various flavors. Voiceover and written captions were required to demonstrate their presentational writing and speaking skills. Figure 7 (next page) shows a screenshot of the Spark Video presentation created by one of the students.

This assignment required students to describe to an audience what they liked and did not like using visuals, voice over, and subtitles. This allowed the learners to

Figure 7. Screenshot of a student's oral presentation 口味 [flavor]

practice their presentation skills (speaking, writing) as often as needed to exercise creativity in communicating their personal likes and dislikes. The familiarity of the topic allowed students to focus more on the language instead solely on the topic (McKeeman, & Oviedo, 2017). This individual assignment was designed to lower the affective filter and to include learners who were not comfortable presenting in front of class (Krashen, 1983; Shrum & Glisan, 2016). Learners were able to rehearse as many times as needed before they started recording. When students finished their presentation, they were required to post them through WeChat moments by the due date. Students then reviewed at least three peer presentation postings and provided constructive comments to help their peers to improve language, culture and presentational skills (Lundstrom, & Baker, 2009). After the peer review process, the teachers provided comments and feedback to students individually.

Conclusion

Educational technology tools provide opportunities to contextualize language learning, to address individual learner needs, and to increase both teacher presence and peer interaction in the language learning process inside and outside world language classrooms. This paper provides pedagogically-driven examples for language classrooms that exemplify how to make use of interactive digital tools effectively that create a positive virtual learning environment, provide authentic contexts, and promote interactive tasks that engage learners in communication. Integrating digital tools in world language education offers invaluable and multiple opportunities to promote language proficiency, but also offers new challenges (Kessler, 2018; Warner & Dupuy, 2018). In order to navigate technology integration successfully in classrooms, teachers are faced with the challenge of learning about the latest and ever changing technology tools as well as how to integrate these digital tools effectively to promote language and intercultural proficiency. By integrating a few technology tools that offer a variety of functions, such as those

that are described in this article, teachers and learners can become proficient in the use of these tools and experiment with the various options for engaging learners in meaningful language practice inside and outside world language classrooms.

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Appendix A: Rubric for recreating Lantern Festival story

Use what we have learned and create your own Lantern Festival story in Chinese. You are encouraged to use all that we have learned in this unit and the previous unit. Please post your story via WeChat moment by 10:00 pm on July 13.

Category	4	3	2	1
Content	The learner has a strong understanding of the Lantern Festival legend and is able to retell the story	The learner reveals a fair understanding of the Lantern Festival legend and is able to retell most parts of the story	The learner misses some major information of the Lantern Festival legend, and some meaning is lost in the retelling of the story	The learner has not understood the story of the Lantern Festival legend, and is not able to retell the story
Culture	The writing contains descriptions of many cultural elements related to Lantern Festival, including artifacts, customs, and perspectives.	The writing contains descriptions of some of the cultural elements related to Lantern Festival, including two of the following: artifacts, customs, and perspectives.	The writing contains limited descriptions of the cultural elements related to Lantern Festival, including only one of the following: artifacts, customs, and perspectives.	The writing contains no descriptions of the cultural elements related to Lantern Festival.
Language	No errors in grammatical structures	There are some minor grammatical mistakes that do not interfere with meaning	There are some grammatical mistakes, which slightly interfere with meaning	There are major grammatical mistakes, which interfere with comprehension of the writing.
Creativity	The story contains many creative details and/or descriptions that contribute to the reader's enjoyment. The learner has really used imagination.	The story contains a few creative details and/or descriptions that contribute to the reader's enjoyment. The learner has used imagination.	The story contains a few creative details and/or descriptions, but not all are related to the story. The learner has tried to use his imagination.	There is little evidence of creativity in the story. The learner does not seem to have used much imagination.