Two-Day Symposium:
Born-digital Texts in the Foreign Language Classroom

Friday, 15/01/2021 — Saturday, 16/01 2021
Organisers: Christian Ludwig & Saskia Kersten

Due to the global COVID-19 pandemic
this symposium will take place online.

We would like to invite researchers, educators, policy makers, and teachers of English as a foreign language to participate in a two day symposium on digital texts in English as a foreign language education.

New technologies are changing the way we live and communicate. With regard to foreign language education, they also offer huge learning potential, for example by providing a broad variety of new writing spaces, text types, literary genres, and brand-new perspectives on learners not only as consumers but also producers (prosumers). This potential can be harnessed by analysing and discussing how language is used in, and shaped by, online communication with our EFL learners. Outside academia, the discourse about online communication often centers around the fact that digitally mediated communication is somehow 'less': less good, less sophisticated, or less worthy of consumption. In order to counter this perception of digital language practices, for example texting, as having a supposedly detrimental effect on language skills, it is important to include born-digital texts and practices in language education, not least because this is a form of communication most language learners already engage in daily but may not perceive as being connected to their language learning. Engaging with texts learners are likely to encounter 'in the wild' also may be motivating by bringing their everyday communicative practices into the classroom and therefore providing opportunities for a wider reflection on appropriateness, different communicative styles, and contexts.

Against this background, the aim of this symposium is to promote productive conversations about the role of digital texts in the contemporary English as a foreign language classroom as well as the kind of (hybrid) texts that emerge in digitally mediated communication. The two-day format features short talks, workshops, and poster presentations, allowing participants to exchange ideas about novel approaches to digital texts in foreign language learning.

Thus, the two closely interconnected foci of the symposium are:

a) using, analysing, and producing digital-born texts, e.g. social media posts, chats, and podcasts, etc.,

b) working with born-digital literature, i.e. literary texts created exclusively on and for digital devices.

By exploring these two areas, we hope to find answers to the challenges that the often experimental and potentially ephemeral born-digital texts pose to traditional foreign language education. Furthermore, we would like to address the increasingly fluid boundaries between literary and non-literary texts and how to deal with these in EFL settings.

The symposium will start off with a plenary talk by a renowned scholar in the field, leading us into the topic by addressing some of the key questions around the study and use of digital texts in EFL. The symposium concludes with a two-hour think tank session open to all participants. The aim of this educational think tank is to bring together knowledge and to develop a comprehensive literacy model for dealing with digital texts in the classroom.

Depending on how the current Covid-19 situation develops, the symposium will either take place in Berlin, move to a fully online format or a mixture of both taking into account international, national, and regional restrictions and guidelines issued closer to the date.

How to contribute

If you wish to contribute, send an email to <u>christian.ludwig@fu-berlin.de</u> <u>and</u> <u>s.kersten@herts.ac.uk</u> by 31/08/2020, including your name, institution, email address as well as a working title (max. 10 words), an abstract (250 max.), and a short bio (50 words max.). Your presentation should address one or several of the following key questions:

- *How do we work with born-digital texts in the EFL classroom?*

- *How can the analysis of born-digital texts be integrated into the EFL classroom?*

- *How can we capture and harness texts for teaching that are by nature subject to change and/or ephemeral?*

- *How can born-digital texts be used to raise awareness of differing and changing communicative practices?*

- *What is the role of collaborative authorship in the field of digital texts?*

- *How do traditional literacy lessons need to be adapted to work with born-digital texts?*

- *What is the relationship between born-digital literature and traditional print literature?*

- *What can born-digital fiction do that print fiction cannot?*

- *What is the role of off-canon and/or fan fiction?*

- *How can the Digital Humanities inform EFL learning?*

The contributions to the symposium are intended be collected in an edited volume after the symposium.

We look forward to working with you on this!

Kind regards,

Saskia Kersten & Christian Ludwig