

The Pedagogical Value of Children's News: Multimodal Insights from a Primary Learning Context

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Abstract

This research aims to explore primary school teachers' understanding of and relationship with the news as well as their awareness of the potential pedagogic value news programmes tailored for children hold. Moreover, it aims to explore which and how socio-semiotic modes are employed in children's news programmes. A mixed methods approach was employed to achieve these objectives. Primary school teachers were given the chance to interpret child-oriented news items through semi-structured interviews. Educators expressed their relationship with the news as adults and as children, current students' relationship with the news together with ideas of how child-oriented news can be used as a pedagogical aid in the primary classroom. Thematic analysis was utilised to analyse teachers' insights. This analysis showcased the extent to which teachers are ready to implement child-oriented news in their classrooms and what this entails for them keeping their students in mind. Furthermore, a socio-semiotic multimodal interpretation of various child-oriented news items was carried out. This process was guided by the MIRROR framework. These analyses formed the basis of numerous pedagogical recommendations with the intention of supplying primary educators with ideas on how to include child-oriented news items in their language lessons. Such pedagogical recommendations based on the educators' insights and the socio-semiotic interpretation of child-oriented news items, may be modified as needed and implemented by teachers to offer their pupils contextualised educational experiences, leading to improved learning efficiency.

Keywords:

Children's News

Multimodality

Primary Education

Teacher Interviews

Pedagogical Suggestions

MIRROR Framework

*To my late grandad,
a pillar of wisdom, strength, and unconditional love to our family.*

*To my late aunt,
the first to notice my lifelong passion for teaching.*

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Chapter 1 – Introduction

As a child, I did not like the news at all. Whenever the adults around me wanted to watch the news, this only meant that I had to stop watching cartoons or sitcoms, for example, Hannah Montana, to watch something extremely boring. The reason behind the lack of interest or urge to watch the news was because I felt news items did not pertain to my everyday life. For example, I remember not understanding news items about Malta's change in currency from the Maltese Lira to Euro and irregular immigration. Additionally, I barely understood the news despite it being in my first language, Maltese, because certain words used were challenging to comprehend at that age. Thus, I thought of the news as something important for adults and solely meant for them. The absence of child-oriented news programmes or news items consolidated this belief. Although I have recently become aware of Newsbus, a news programme based on 10 episodes which aired when I was around 10 years old, I do not recall watching or hearing about this news programme at the time.

As I reached middle adolescence, I gradually became more interested in the news, for example, the 2013 election period. I became aware of its relevance and I could better understand certain terminology and what was going on. This means that I started seeing the news in a new light only because I was growing up and could understand more. I do not recall any news items being mentioned or discussed at school. Nothing was simplified, adapted or explained further for me as a child. Years later, this is still the case in the local Maltese context. It is highly likely that children cannot keep up with what is going on around them and what other children are going through. The worrying inexistence of a current local news programme aimed at children encouraged me further to take on this study.

When working with primary school children as a student teacher, a student had asked me to explain how and why the Russia-Ukraine war started. When I further discussed this question with the whole class to get to an answer and spark a discussion, I noticed that the great majority of them do not watch the news but are keenly interested in understanding better what would be going on around them locally and beyond. Nowadays,

children can easily look up videos and access websites to further their knowledge. However, I feel it is still important for them to stay updated with and understand the latest happenings through a child-oriented news programme which can also serve as a space for them to engage in dialogue, voice their opinion and listen to others'. As an educator, I also wondered how such programmes can serve as pedagogical tools in my lessons. This led me to formulate the following research questions:

1. To what extent are Maltese Year 5 teachers aware of the potential pedagogic value of children's news programmes?
2. Based on the outcomes of the first research question, also viewing the outcomes of my multimodal interpretation, which suggestions can one come up with to initiate, enhance or facilitate the use of child-oriented news items within the Maltese Upper Primary language learning context?

These will be answered in the different chapters which follow, based on literature as well as my analysis and findings. The following is a summary of each chapter. In Chapter 2, I will critically review literature dealing with the concept of news as well as standardised and child-oriented television news programmes. The content of children's news programmes and how they impact their young audience will also be reviewed. Furthermore, I will look into what existing research says about the role of adults in children's understanding of television news and about children's relationship with the concept. Moreover, I will pay particular attention to the arguments regarding the integration of television news in the teaching of different curricular subjects as well as news creation on a school level. Finally, I will discuss the standing of child-oriented news programmes in the Maltese social, cultural and educational context.

The third chapter will include a thorough discussion of the methodology employed in this study. In addition to discussing the ontology and epistemology that served as the foundation for my research, I will also describe how the news segments and participants

were chosen, as well as the research instruments used in this research. Furthermore, I will describe what the pilot study and the actual study involved, as well as the ethical standards considered throughout this study, in addition to justifying the methodology adopted. Towards the end of this chapter, I will explain the data analysis methods by which the gathered data was analysed.

In the data analysis chapter, which is the fourth chapter, I will perform a critical analysis of the main findings which emerged from the educators' insights gathered through the semi-structured interviews which I conducted and transcribed. These findings will then be consolidated or contrasted with literature about child-oriented news items and their educational value. In this chapter, therefore, I will answer the first research question of this research by analysing teachers' perceptions of child-oriented news in itself and as a pedagogical aid.

The following chapter, Chapter 5, will deal with multimodal suggestions. In this chapter, I will answer the second research question by providing suggestions on the use of child-oriented news items to instruct children both at school and at home. The provided suggestions are based on teachers' perceptions and ideas which the teacher participants shared in this study. Furthermore, these recommendations will also be based on my socio-semiotic multimodal interpretation of various child-oriented news items. Although the provided pedagogical suggestions focus on fifth-grade students, educators can adapt these ideas and recommendations when teaching different skills to primary school students of various ages.

In the sixth and final chapter, I will conclude this study by outlining the main findings and conclusions resulting from this study. Moreover, I will address the limitations which I ran into throughout this process. Future research suggestions will also be presented. These can be used by other researchers who wish to further look into the socio-semiotic multimodal characteristics used in child-oriented news and educators' awareness of child-oriented news programmes' potential pedagogic value.

Chapter 2 – Literature Review

2. Outline

This chapter reviews what producers and scholars stated in the literature on standardised and child-oriented news respectively. This is because the latter is a more specialised genre of the former and is relatively understudied. In this literature review particular emphasis will be put on news content and its consequent impact on the younger audience. This will be linked with what parents and educators can do to help children and students make the most out of the news. I will also present children's own opinions and attitudes towards the news as well as discuss research that focuses on the educational relevance of news and its potential use as a pedagogical aid. The Maltese context will also be discussed since there seemingly is a need for more local research in this area.

2.1 Definition of News

Attempting to define news is not as easy as it might seem especially since it can be accessed in different ways and may take different forms. Intuitive explanations of news like "I know news when I see it" (Patterson, 2000) and "what the news media transmit" (Sigal, 1973) overlook its forms and complexities. Therefore, some academics prefer to speak about 'news values' (Harcup & O'Neill, 2001). To be selected as news, stories must satisfy at least one of the requirements presented in Table 1.

Story Requirement	Meaning
The power elite	Stories concerning powerful individuals, organisations, or institutions.
Celebrity	Stories concerning people who are already famous.
Entertainment	Stories concerning showbusiness, human interest, animals, unfolding drama or opportunities for humorous treatment.
Good news	Stories with particularly positive overtones, such as rescues and cures.
Bad news	Stories with particularly negative overtones, such as conflict or tragedy.
Magnitude	Stories that are perceived as sufficiently significant either in the numbers of people involved or in potential impact.
Relevance	Stories about issues, groups and nations perceived to be relevant to the audience.
Follow-up	Stories about subjects already in the news.
Newspaper agenda	Stories that set or fit the news organisation's own agenda.

Table 1: Requirements for a story to become news according to Harcup and O'Neill (2001)

Donsbach (2004) believes that a set of criteria is still subjective as reflected in the requirement of 'relevance'. Therefore, other scholars attempt to formally define news. One should distinguish between 'hard' and 'soft' news. The latter tends to be more open for discussion and debate (Harcup & O'Neill, 2016) since it mainly deals with entertainment and tends to be regarded as less serious and less focused on covering socio-political events (Tanikawa, 2017).

Numerous definitions are made up of at least one characteristic a happening must possess to become news. According to Niblock (2005), 'news' comes from the Latin 'nova' meaning 'new things.' This is touched upon by De Fleur and Dennis (2002) – "news is... fresh knowledge about [a current] event" (pp. 73-74). Similarly, Niblock (2005) defines news as a record of the latest happenings and developments that in some way affect people's lives whilst Kieran (1997) asserts that "news... should be new and significant" (p. 29). Both Kieran and Niblock stress the importance of another characteristic – significance.

Fuller (1996) merges significance with interest when he explains news as significant or interesting matters to the public. What deviates from what is normal or expected tends to be interesting. In fact, the earliest found definition of news is the expression 'when a man bites a dog' which captures this central characteristic of anomaly (Palczewski, 2018). This is also reflected in Maynard's definition – news is the "new, weird, vivid and unexpected" (Palczewski, 2018, p. 4).

Significance and interest take us back to the distinction between 'hard' and 'soft' news. Since "soft news" seems to be dominating news production lately (Zaller, 2003), some of the aforementioned formal definitions of news, such as Kieran's, have to be revised since they only seem to define 'hard news', the traditional type of news (Tanikawa, 2017).

2.2 Television News

Television news is an audio-visual journalistic creation broadcast regularly (Visnovsky et al., 2018). Watching television may be considered as a passive activity compared to Internet use where one is free to socialise and instantly get up-to-date information from their source of choice on any topic (Kim, 2013). Despite the internet's increased use (ITU, 2019), television remains adults' favourite information source (Ofcom, 2021). However, Kim (2013) recognises both television and the Internet as the two main sources of information for children. Thus, this study focuses on television news programmes since many news outlets also upload their news items on their website.

A set of requirements like in Table 1 can never comprise all news stories. When a news item is chosen to be broadcast on television, external factors come into play including luck, convenience (Harcup & O'Neill, 2016), degree of access, deadlines, and competition for exclusives (Phillips, 2015). This is because journalists in news outlets undertake a selection process where a story is selected over another (Golding & Elliott, 1979) leading Visnovsky et al. (2018) to call them “‘creators’ of a certain reality” (p. 43). This explains Mayeux’s (1996) definition of news as “what people need and want to know” (p. 4).

Other academics focus on this selection process in their consequently vague definitions of television news. Gans (1979) describes news as a product of journalism whilst Bennett (1983) describes it as what politicians encourage, and news outlets produce. Similarly, Iggers (1998) and Patterson (1998) define news as events constructed and transformed by journalists to reach the public. Schudson (2003) sees news as “a consumer product that must be made fresh daily” (p. 13). In contrast with these ideas which hint at journalists bending the truth, Harrison (2006) stresses the importance of sincerity and accuracy in television news.

2.3 Child-Oriented Television News

“The child shall have the right to freedom of expression; this right shall include freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds... through any... media of the child's choice” (United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989).

Access to information through any preferred media source is every child’s right. Although limited in number, there exist child-oriented news programmes, a specialised genre of news discussed in section 2.2, on television in various countries. This means that such countries are providing children with more means to access information compared to those countries which do not have any child-oriented news programmes. ‘Children’ in this study refers to children aged 8-12 since literature considers this age group as an appropriate audience for child-oriented news shows (Van Der Molen & De Vries, 2003). Matthews

(2010) defines child-oriented news shows as “communicative spaces” (p. 4) which meet children’s right to information, knowledge, and participation. Comparably, Narberhaus Martínez (2018) defines children’s news as “sources of information specifically aimed at children” (p. 45) which gradually prepares children for the adult information society. This echoes Matthews (2010) in considering these programmes as ways of facilitating news happenings taking place in society, thus making children feel more included, and García (2003, in Narberhaus Martínez, 2018) in stating that children’s news programmes help the process of socialisation and the development of thinking skills.

Contrary to other television content aimed at children such as cartoons, news programmes are restricted probably because they can only be used once due to their relevance. Thus, this takes serious dedication (Narberhaus Martínez, 2018). Producing them is also expensive and work-intensive (Hirst, 2002). Consequently, children’s news has been insufficiently studied (Carter, 2013).

Similar to Narberhaus Martínez (2018), Matthews (2003) describes children’s news programmes as sources that “inform and address children as citizens” (p. 3). Through this statement, Matthews views children as ‘cultural citizens’ with full rights and responsibilities, not as an immature group of people or as ‘citizens in the making’ (Carter, 2013). Similarly, Lemish (2007) establishes that children should be regarded as a type of audience with their own needs, rights, and interests. Table 2 shows current children’s news shows in different countries.

Country	Programme Name	Network	First date of broadcast
Argentina	Paka Data	Pakapaka	2019
Australia	BtN	ABC Me	1968-2003; 2005
Belgium	Karrewiet	Ketnet	2002
Belgium	Niouzz	RTBF	2000
Denmark	Ultra Nyt	DR Ultra	2013
Germany	logo!	KiKa	1988
Ireland	News2day	RTÉ Two	2003
Netherlands	Jeugdjournaal	NPO Zapp	1981
Norway	Supernytt	NRK	2010
Sweden	Lilla Aktuellt	SVT Bam	1994
United Kingdom	Newsround	CBBC	1972
United States	Nightly News	NBC	2020
United States	Teen Kids News	First-run syndication ¹	2003

Table 2: Examples of current child-oriented news television programmes

Many of these shows air in the evening with an average duration of 10-30 minutes respecting the American Academy of Paediatrics' recommendation that children do not watch television for more than two hours daily (Christakis, 2014). Those aired in the morning, like *Newsround*, usually have a great social media presence including easily accessible episodes from their websites or are broadcast again in the evenings. This meets Clause 5 of the Children's Television Charter presented at the First World Summit intended to address the needs of the child audience – "Children's programmes should be aired in regular slots at times when children are available to view, and/or distributed via other

¹ A programme which is broadcast on a major network, and broadcast simultaneously on over two or more stations affiliated with such television network (*First-run syndicated television programme*, 2022).

widely accessible media or technologies” (Home, 1995). Table 3 shows discontinued children’s news shows from various countries.

Country	Programme Name	Original Network	Broadcast
Malta	Newsbus	PBS	2010-2011
Philippines	RPN NewsWatch Kids Edition	RPN	1979-1993
Philippines	RPN Jr. NewsWatch	RPN	2004-2005
Sweden	Barnjournalen	TV1	1972-1991
United Kingdom	First Edition	ITN	1994-2002
United Kingdom	Newsround Showbiz	CBBC	2001-2005
United Kingdom	Sportsround	CBBC	2005-2010
United States	In the News	CBS	1971-1986; 1996- 1997
United States	30 minutes	CBS	1978-1982
United States	Channel One News	OAN	1989-2018

Table 3: Examples of discontinued child-oriented news television programmes

Television was children’s “favourite place for news” (Carter et al., 2009, p. 11) up until a few years ago, however, nowadays children seem to prefer the Internet means of accessing the news (Robb, 2017). Nevertheless, when children were asked where they got the news “yesterday”, traditional media which includes television scored nearly as much as online media (Robb, 2017). Furthermore, according to Moore-Russo, Buchheit & Walker (2013), television is the most accessible way through which children receive information implying that despite the number of discontinued children’s news programmes, these are still necessary.

2.3.1 The Content of Children’s News

A strand of research considers child-oriented news programmes as compensation for the lack of news for children and their overall exclusion from public life (Matthews, 2016).

Narberhaus Martínez (2018) elaborates that children shouldn't face standard news content which is difficult for them to understand, such as unfamiliar terms and metaphors, to find answers to their questions and be active citizens in society who participate in their communities' civic and social life.

Certain producers of children's news shows seek to offer a "safe haven" (Strohmaier, 2007, p. 154) for children from the difficult realities, thus, adapting the programme "cognitively and emotionally" (Alon-Tirosh, 2017, p. 3). These producers affiliate with Kleemans et al.'s (2017) 'vulnerable child paradigm' – children cannot understand abstract and highly emotional content such as wars and they should therefore be shielded from such coverage (Cantor et al., 2010). Consequently, events tend to be simplified, sometimes even de-contextualised (Carter, 2013) as long as they are presented gently (Alon-Tirush, 2012). In other cases, positive elements are emphasised whilst negative ones are either completely removed or shown remotely without any daunting background noises (Van Der Molen & De Vries, 2003). According to Kleemans et al. (2019), such consolation strategies make journalism constructive, one which weakens children's negative responses as it reports events in a positive and solution-based manner.

Researchers and producers belonging to Kleemans et al.'s (2017) 'empowered child paradigm' believe that if children are to be informed, that should also be of the current difficulties (Matthews, 2003). Corwin (as cited in Grant, 1996) believes that "children have the right to understand the world if they are going to be part of it" (T6). Such stakeholders do not perceive children as innocent, vulnerable or as having less developed cognitive abilities compared to adults but as autonomous beings (Carter, 2013). Some children's news creators believe that the problem lies in the way a news item is delivered and presented rather than on the topic – "You can show children anything; it's just a matter of how" (Alon-Tirosh, 2017, p. 7). As children would have probably already encountered certain news items, Götz (2007) agrees with these creators that news items should not be hidden or oversimplified but further explained to avoid misunderstandings. However, producers consider suicides and eating disorders as exceptions since these are highly influential and

gossip since it lacks significance (Alon-Tirosh, 2017). This together with producers' suggestion that 'heavy' content should be balanced by lighter content and avoided at the beginning of the programme (Alon-Tirosh, 2017), shows that producers are rarely radical believers of the aforementioned 'empowered child paradigm' (Kleemans et al., 2017).

Characteristics of child-oriented news include presenting news items in an uncomplicated, unambiguous manner (Matthews, 2010) using simple words and immediately clarifying technical terms (Alon-Tirosh, 2017). Relating news items to children's realities or presenting their perspective – whilst remaining objective – is another key characteristic (Matthews, 2010). This with a touch of humour reduces formality consequently captivating children more (Alon-Tirosh, 2017). Furthermore, adequate background information is often provided, and the impact of the news item is thoroughly discussed (Buckingham, 2000). Verbal text is often simultaneously presented visually (Van Der Molen & Van Der Voort, 2000) and technologies and colourful visuals are employed to keep children engaged (Alon-Tirosh, 2017) as in Figure 1.



Figure 1: Jeugdjournaal's colourful visuals

(Karrewiet van Ketnet, 2021; hoera: het NOS Jeugdjournaal mag 40 kaarsjes uitblazen; Time of Screenshot: 00:46)

Here, technology is being employed through the use of a digital display behind the news anchor. This display shows the name of the news programme, its website and logo in a very colourful manner which tends to capture children's attention. All these characteristics should reduce Götz's (2007) concern regarding the misinterpretations of events.

2.4 The Effects of News on Children

As implied in the previous section, studies show that children's exposure to news is highly related to their emotional responses (Buijzen et al., 2007). News may leave a positive or negative impact on children depending on various factors including whether the event is unfolding in real-time, how frequently news is reported and the extent to which coverage is detailed or repeated (AACAP, 2020). Since children tend to process the news perceptually, they are more likely to consider and be attracted to visual elements over textual ones (Van Der Molen & Van Der Voort, 2000). Thus, both content and form of exposure play a role in the type of impact news leaves on children.

Additionally, Van Der Molen and Konijn (2007) notice that the greater the degree of identification of the child with the news item's victim, such as someone who was run over in a traffic accident, the greater the emotional impact of the news will be as the child may start to think that he may experience the same thing. Carter and Messenger Davies (2005) add the child's educational and socio-economic backgrounds as determining factors of the extent to which a child is negatively impacted by the news. This is because the greater the educational level and the higher the social class, the greater the tendency of children watching television including news as a way of occupying their time (Van Oijen, 2019; Ponte, 2008). Another factor which affects the extent to which one is affected by the news is the individual level of empathic concern (Buijzen et al., 2007). Age also plays a role since children gradually acquire new language and cognitive skills including the ability to distinguish between fantasy and reality as they grow older (Smith & Wilson, 2002), thus, decreasing the potential negative impacts of the news. However, other researchers argue that younger children may be less afraid of the news as this is less visually striking than the fantasy stories they often watch (Cantor & Riddle, 2014).

2.4.1 Negative Effects of News on Children

Buckingham (1996) states that being informed through news is much more important than the risk of feeling upset and scared. Various studies have researched the numerous negative effects of news on many children. For example, 63% of the child participants in Robb's (2017) study expressed a negative reaction to news including anger and sadness.

Negative psychological reactions are due to exposure to negative news such as crimes and disasters (Riddle et al., 2012). These may be either short-term or long-term (Kleemans et al., 2017). Short-term reactions are temporary such as nightmares and bedwetting whilst long-term reactions are more long-lasting such as anxiety and disliking animals portrayed as violent (Carter & Messenger Davies, 2005). These are heightened when graphic images are used and when the event would have happened locally (Van Der Molen et al., 2002). Valkenburg (2004) adds that children's negative reactions intensify when they observe the emotional responses of eyewitnesses and relatives of victims as well as when they hear negative information from the reporter. When suffering others are portrayed, children feel empathy for the victims particularly when they put themselves in the victims' shoes, anger towards the event and worry for their own safety (Götz, 2007).

Certain conditions and feelings usually related to excessive coverage of negative occurrences including stress, depression, and desensitisation, are also present in children (Jiménez-Morales, 2006) hindering children from actively participating in society (Kleemans et al., 2017). Furthermore, children may misinterpret experiences and create negative, false beliefs about their world (Kleemans et al., 2017). This further increases negative impacts forming a viscous circle (Alon-Tirosh, 2017). Although the oversimplification of news is generally intended to reduce negative reactions in children, due to the lack of detail, it may lead to a lack of understanding and an increase in negative impacts (Nikken & Götz, 2007). This is in line with the belief certain news outlets hold that "information brings more

emotional security into children's world than fearful concealment" (ZDF, 2020 as cited in Carter, Steemers & Messenger Davies, 2021).

According to the AACAP (2020), children tend to imitate what they see and hear in the news. Thus, persistent exposure to violence can lead to an increase in aggressive and violent behaviours by children because they start perceiving violence as normal (Van Oijen, 2019). Therefore, news may leave negative emotional, psychological, and behavioural effects.

However, such negative impacts of the news on children may be counterargued since they are based on the view that children lack autonomy, are persistent victims (Carter & Messenger Davies, 2005) and innocents needing protection from violence (Carter, 2013). Underlying these negative effects is also the idea that children lack the cognitive skills to process news safely (Carter, Steemers & Messenger Davies, 2021).

2.4.2 Positive Effects of News on Children

On the other hand, some scholars argue that only when provided with information can children take a position as socially responsible and critical citizens who are able to engage in thoughtful reflection on social matters in front of the wider social problems and issues (Matthews, 2003). This echoes ZDF's (2020 as cited in Carter, Steemers & Messenger Davies, 2021) statement – "The more children learn about their environment, the better they can classify what they hear and see" (p. 357). Some researchers consider news consumption as indispensable in the process of developing knowledgeable and mindful citizens who are more aware of their decisions and actions (Livingstone, 2008). Tuchman (1978) even defines news programmes as great sources of knowledge. Such knowledge will be manifested in political and civic participation, for example through the act of voting (De Vrees & Boomgaarden, 2006).

Greater interactivity of the news outlet with its young audience also leads to more children involved in society (Nikken & Götz, 2007). Rather than passively absorbing news

content, children should be given space to voice their valued opinions and ask questions to improve their critical thinking skills (Carter, Steemers & Messenger Davies, 2021). Child-oriented news programmes which give space for this, satisfy Clause 2 of the Children's Television Charter (Home, 1995).

Media literacy is defined as “the ability to access, analyse, evaluate and create messages across a variety of contexts” (Livingstone, 2004). Frequent news consumption makes children better equipped to consider the source of information and ensuring its reliability, how wording and visuals shape the message, and what secondary content, like headlines, accompanies news stories (Fromm & Smith, 2019). However, Notley and Dezuanni (2018) notice that ‘news literacy’ has become ‘old fashioned’ as recently the focus has shifted on media production skills rather than the ability to engage critically with the media. This explains the inclusion of being able to create messages in Livingstone's (2004) definition.

Ofcom's (2022) survey concluded that through news, children can remain updated with the latest happenings and find out about new concepts and inventions. This includes ways to help others and ensure safety for the community (Fromm & Smith, 2019), such as knowing when and how to use emergency contacts. Moreover, Gladkova (2013) emphasises that news consumption increases children's awareness of other cultures and appropriate behaviour facilitating connections and socialisation. Such knowledge consequently leads to greater academic success (Fletcher, 2022).

The positive impacts trustworthy news from reliable sources may leave on children can be summed up by Clause 1 of the Children's Television Charter – high-quality television programmes “allow children to develop physically, mentally, and socially to their fullest potential” (Home, 1995) especially regarding political awareness and self-empowerment (Nikken & Van Der Molen, 2007). However, having reviewed such positive impacts of the news on children may lead to some arguing that children are being considered as “political naïves” (Carter, 2013, p. 256), referring to young people who need to consume news to be prepared for adult life.

2.4.3 The Role of Parents and Educators

Sometimes, parents and educators are unknowledgeable or uninterested in monitoring children's evaluations of news items (Alon-Tirosh, 2017). However, studies show that they can be key sources of encouragement in the process of understanding and helping children become actively involved citizens and critical information processors whilst minimising any potential harm (Saylor et al., 2003).

Weisser (2021) states that family is an extremely influential variable that determines children's access to the news, frequency of consumption and follow-up of these contents. Although some researchers believe that being overly controlling, for example setting prohibitive rules on television use, is not beneficial (Livingstone & Helsper, 2008), the AACAP (2020) recommends controlling the amount of news exposure. Sometimes, protection intensifies negative emotional responses in children since they would lack facts restricting them from talking about what they might have heard elsewhere (Seiter, 2007). Hence, rather than controlling access to the news without an explanation, echoing Bybee, Robinson and Turow's (1982) 'restrictive mediation', parents and educators should communicate and discuss with children the news content they are being exposed to as well as contextualise news events (Buijzen et al., 2007). Thus, practising Bybee, Robinson and Turow's (1982) 'evaluative mediation'. However, Nathanson and Cantor (2000) consider both forms of adult intervention as effective.

Communicating with trusted adults helps children manage their emotions and constructed understandings, increasing their sense of safety (Silveira, 2019). Lawrence and Wozniak (1989) suggest co-viewing, family members watching television together, as this leads to better understanding and renders news content more relatable to the child. For this to be successful, the AACAP (2020) recommends that parents and educators question children's understanding, encourage questions, and provide reassurance of protection. Furthermore, The National Association of School Psychologists (as cited in Reis, 2012) insists on letting the child lead the conversation whilst highlighting the rarity of certain events and keeping explanations age-appropriate.

‘Unfocused parental mediation’ involves adults casually and unintentionally voicing their views and positions about new information (Bybee, Robinson & Turow, 1982). Although this might restrict children’s critical thinking (Rodriguez, 2021), it might be effective since children tend to draw close to adults in terms of tastes and interest in certain topics facilitating discussion (Silveira, 2019).

2.5 Children’s Perspectives on Television News

Children’s perspectives and attitudes towards news are rarely considered noteworthy and are consequently absent (Messenger Davies, 2004). The idea that most children are uninterested and apathetic when faced with the newsworthy affairs underestimates children’s wish and capabilities to critically engage with the news items (Kruuse & Kalmus, 2016). Contrastingly, some studies portray children’s well-thought-out opinions on news items (Matthews, 2016). Additionally, they wish to know more about the world through the news (Kleemans et al., 2017).

Children seem to have media literacy skills since they are aware of journalists choosing and moulding news items, are capable of critically evaluating news and recognising bias and missing or misleading information (Kleemans et al., 2019), leading to Robb (2017) calling them “sceptical consumers” (p. 13). For example, children noticed that they are in the news only when involved in crimes or to stimulate adults’ sympathy regarding disasters (Robb, 2017).

Regarding content, children wish for the less interesting news items to be either left towards the end or interwoven between the more interesting ones (Carter et al., 2009). Alon-Tirosh (2017) notices an inclination towards light-hearted topics although socio-political issues were also deemed interesting (Weisser, 2021). However, following Van Der Molen and Konijn’s (2007) suggestion, some producers completely avoid socio-political issues and focus on news items which might amuse children more (Matthews, 2016). Moreover, children wish for simple, clear language together with slower and more concise coverage which contextualises information (Alon-Tirosh & Lemish, 2014). They would

appreciate a touch of humour and subject clarification together with surprising information such as the world's largest hamburger contest (Carter et al., 2009).

Although, children usually like visually stimulating content (Van Der Molen & Van Der Voort, 2000), this excludes close-ups of horrifying things such as injuries (Kruuse & Kalmus, 2016). This explains Alon-Tirosh and Lemish's (2014) conclusion that children wish for news programmes to be more positive especially those who equate news to "a set of disturbing, controversial, and violent images" (Silveira, 2019, p. 101). When news is not very relevant to children's realities due to a high degree of formality and minimal presence of young people (Alon-Tirosh & Lemish, 2014), children feel excluded (Weisser, 2021), frustrated and bored (Kruuse & Kalmus, 2016). Addressing this, children suggested that they take on different roles such as reporters in news programmes to render them more interesting and reliable, although others argued for the need to include adults' insights (Alon-Tirosh & Lemish, 2014). Furthermore, children preferred colourful studio setups with backgrounds and graphics throughout the programme (Alon-Tirosh & Lemish, 2014) as in Figure 2.



Figure 2: Newsround's colourful and technological set

(Image retrieved from <https://www.newscaststudio.com/2017/09/11/newsround-new-set/>)

Here, the use of bright colours, specifically pink and white, is very clear. Furthermore, the set includes two screens which serve as a background and a way of incorporating graphics throughout the news programme.

2.6 News and Education

In a pedagogical environment, children are to be exposed to authentic, informational texts such as news (Ekstrand, Wright & Pera, 2020). News highlights the relevance of the content to students' lives and contextualises learning encouraging further engagement with the instructional material (Purcell-Gates, Duke & Martineau, 2007). Learning is contextualised when adequate background information – even regarding outcomes and consequences – is given (Buckingham, 2000). Hence, for pedagogical purposes, Buckingham favours Iyengar's (1991) 'thematic' frames – stories that place "public issues in some more general or abstract context" (p. 14). This contrasts with 'episodic' frames which are more topical as they take "the form of a case study or event-oriented report and [depict] public issues in terms of concrete instances" (p. 14).

Exposure to news in different curriculum subjects creates citizens who understand ongoing real-world issues, engage in debates and discussions, and work collaboratively for a positive change (First News Education, 2022a). This involvement makes up for the prominence of 'episodic' frames in news shows (Iyengar, 1991). Furthermore, watching the news in a supportive classroom setting leads to greater knowledge and news-seeking behaviours (Anderman & Johnston, 1998). All this whilst teachers get to know their students better through their expressing of ideas on the news segment (First News Education, 2022b).

Teachers of various subjects, such as Geography and Social Studies, value news programmes as helpful resources as they deal with topics like politics, current events, and natural disasters ("News: Using the news in the classroom", 2016). For example, news can be integrated into Geography by encouraging pupils to describe the location of the news story or examining the causes and effects of a particular natural disaster before thinking of possible solutions. On the other hand, teachers of subjects like Maths do not see much correlation with their subject area (Yeager & Pandiscio, 1993). However, numeracy and mathematical concepts such as fractions, decimals, currency, and averages can be better understood and practised using news ("News: Using the news in the classroom", 2016). News containing statistical or demographic information can be used to teach graphs as students can convert numbers or the pros and cons into graphs. The aforementioned lack of correlation between Maths and news may be due to the fact that news items which lack statistical or demographic information are more difficult to extract mathematical concepts from (Verner, 2015).

Whilst reinforcing and updating scientific concepts in the curriculum, through exposure to news students are becoming more scientifically literate (Jarman & McClune, 2007). Ajayi (2018) defines scientific literacy as "the knowledge and understanding of scientific concepts and processes required for personal decision-making, participation in

civic and cultural affairs, and economic productivity” (p. 2). However, one has to be careful when choosing news items to avoid those which convey scientific misconceptions.

Apart from being a helpful educational aid in photography, sports and music, news also helps language teaching since mastery of language is essential for effective communication (Dezuani, 2019). When choosing news items as resources for language lessons, educators should ensure that these are free from any linguistic errors. Evans (2006) elaborates that television news can help integrate and develop the four language skills – listening, speaking, reading, and writing. For example, news programmes can be used to help students practise writing by turning a segment into a newspaper report (Verner, 2015) or writing predictions and connections to the story (Evans, 2006). Moreover, pupils may be split into groups and asked to perform a news broadcast or conduct television-style news interviews to their classmates (Dezuani, 2019). This is sometimes taken up on a school level in the form of a news show where students participate by taking on different roles as portrayed in Figure 3 (Blackwelder, 2020b).



Figure 3: A School Newscast

(Image retrieved from <https://www.edutopia.org/article/using-school-news-program-promote-positivity-during-pandemic>)

School news programmes may cover issues from the wider community or limit themselves to the school such as establishing the day's lunch choices (Blackwelder, 2020a). Having a group of students work on such a show under teachers' guidance promotes collaboration and teamwork (Blackwelder, 2020a). Moreover, BGSN (2021) mention inclusion, increased confidence, and enhanced literacy skills as other benefits. However, if the educator fails to give clear instructions and communicate effectively, such a project will not be successful (Wang, 2016).

Despite the numerous benefits of news as a pedagogical tool, Buckingham (2000) establishes that news programmes are "ineffective means of informing people" (p. 58) because even adults misunderstand, ignore or forget news shows' content. Thus, news programmes are insignificant in political education, but they do play a role since with greater political knowledge comes a more informed and active participation (Buckingham, 2000). Comparably, Masterman (1980) points out that many students may respond negatively to having television news as an educational resource especially since research shows that interest in news increases with age.

2.7 The Maltese Context

In 2006, there was already the need for programmes locally created by professionals in pedagogy which educate children without talking down to them or oversimplifying language ("Children's TV programmes mediocre", 2006; Borg, 2006). Although there are sporadic programmes which give children a space to express themselves like *Il-Kamp* where children ask questions to adults from different walks of life and *Esperti* a quiz show involving child participants, there are no news services tailored for children on any of the Maltese television channels. From my research, *Newsbus* seems to be the sole local attempt at a child-oriented news programme to date.

This lack of local action implies that the news media is generally indifferent to children's right to be informed of the daily happenings in their society and beyond, as Kaziaj

and Van Bauwel (2017) note on Albania's identical situation. The Maltese context fails to meet the first clause of the Children's Television Charter and the requirement of the UN's Convention discussed in section 2.3. Moreover, Clause 6 of the Children's Television Charter regarding the public financing high-quality children's informational content (Carter, Steemers & Messenger Davies, 2021), is also seemingly not fully satisfied by the state.

The Maltese Broadcasting Authority (*Legislation*, n.d.) has not established a time requirement for children's programmes. The BA (2008) states that "care should be taken when scenes of violence are repeated in succeeding news bulletins, at times when children would be watching" (section 2.4). Moreover, it labels children as "vulnerable" (*Requirements as to standards and practice applicable to news bulletins and current affairs programmes* 2008). Hence, the 'vulnerable child paradigm' (Kleemans et al., 2017) discussed in sub-section 2.3.1 seems to be predominant locally. In a recent report, the BA (2020) believes it needs to protect minors more. Nonetheless, the BA (2014) had pointed out the need to include news programmes addressed to children in every schedule. Despite these claims, the BA is yet to issue further statements or updates about child-oriented news shows.

In a recent survey which evaluates Maltese residents' viewership of television content amongst other forms of content, the BA (2023) solely included participants aged 12 and older. This implies that the BA is yet to interview children under the age of 12.

From an educational perspective, the National Curriculum Framework emphasises the importance of exposing children to media and encourages "authentic, contextualised tasks" for powerful learning experiences (MfED, 2012, p. 39). Although television news is a beneficial pedagogical aid since it is an authentic digital literacy medium which contextualises and facilitates learning (Ekstrand, Wright & Pera, 2020), the NCF does not acknowledge it as an educational resource.

Apart from financial limitations (Hirst, 2002), the local mentality may be another principal reason why Malta does not have child-oriented news programmes (Kleemans et al., 2019). This inexistence may imply that children are perceived as cognitively and emotionally immature to consume news and hence, should be protected from it (Galotti, 2011). The consequent lacuna in research is also worrying as no local studies have seemingly been carried out to date on the local awareness and use of child-oriented or standardised news programmes in education.

2.8 Conclusion

In this chapter, I discussed what researchers have established about news and its potential use as a pedagogical tool. Focusing mostly on child-oriented news, I explored which news items are usually included or excluded and the reasoning behind the producers' decisions. I also focused on the influence news content may have on children linking this with the major role of parents and educators in determining how news influences children. News content and its impact were then linked with children's relationships with the news. With all this in mind, I presented literature-based ways of incorporating news into one's teaching. This gave me a clearer idea of the educational benefits and methods of using the news in teaching different curricular subjects.

Chapter 3 – Methodology

3. Outline

This chapter will provide an in-depth explanation of the reasoning behind the research methods chosen, the data collection procedures, the relevant ethical considerations, and the data analysis methodologies employed. This research intends to explore the following research questions.

1. To what extent are Maltese Year 5 teachers aware of the potential pedagogic value of children’s news programmes?

2. Based on the outcomes of the first research question, also viewing the outcomes of my multimodal interpretation, which suggestions can one come up with to initiate, enhance or facilitate the use of child-oriented news items within the Maltese Upper Primary language learning context?

I chose a proficient research design, data collection tools and data analysis methods, to get to the achieved results. By compiling and analysing excerpts from child-oriented news and considering teachers' awareness of its educational potential, I also developed multimodal pedagogical recommendations. Table 4 presents the chronological steps taken when collecting data for this study.

Time frame	Data collection
November – December 2021	<u>Initial ideas and steps:</u> I started sharing my ideas for this thesis with my supervisor. I mainly wished to research the pedagogic value and relevance of child-oriented news items in the Upper Primary years. During this period, I was

	<p>carrying out weekly observations in a state school, specifically with Year 5 students.</p> <p>Although these observations were not related to this research, familiarity with the Year 5 syllabus and curriculum as well as with Year 5 students themselves, led me to mainly focus on this year group in my research (see sub-section 3.3.2).</p>
<p>January – April 2022</p>	<p><u>Research proposals</u> (see section 3.6):</p> <p>I drafted, finalised and submitted my research proposal to the Faculty of Education. As soon as approval was granted, I submitted a proposal form to UREC and FREC. This included drafting and finalising permission letters for the Heads of Schools, information letters and consent forms for the interviewees and the list of interview questions I, as the researcher, shall be asking.</p>
<p>April 2022 – July 2022</p>	<p><u>Recruiting participants</u> (see section 3.6):</p> <p>After having been granted ethical clearance from UREC and FREC, I sought permission from the Directorate for Research, Lifelong Learning and Employability and consequently from the Heads of Schools to be able to approach Year 5 teachers from the respective school. Following this, I sent information letters and consent forms to teachers in the respective schools.</p>

August – October 2022	<u>Sociosemiotic multimodal interpretation</u> (see sub-sections 3.7.1 and 3.7.2): I chose which news segments I shall be analysing. Following their transcription, I drafted and finalised my sociosemiotic multimodal interpretation.
November – December 2023	<u>Piloting of interviews</u> (see sub-section 3.5.1): Following the teachers’ consent to participate, I piloted the interview with two teachers.
January – March 2023	<u>Actual interviews</u> (see sub-section 3.5.2): Following the pilot interviews, I carried out the actual interviews with six different teachers to those who participated in the pilot interviews. These were immediately transcribed.
April – June 2023	<u>Data Analysis</u> (see sub-sections 3.7.3 and 3.7.4): The transcribed data were then analysed following Thematic Analysis.

Table 4: Steps taken to collect data in chronological order

3.1 Ontology and Epistemology

An appropriate ontology and epistemology were chosen to guide my research. Ontology deals with the nature of reality or existence – “what is out there to know about” (Grix, 2002, p. 175). Epistemology studies knowledge – how it is derived and its reliability and validity (Kant, 2014). This study recognises that meaning is constructed and produced through social interactions and experiences, and is being constantly revised and updated (Bryman, 2001). Hence, this research was based on relativist ontology (Pham, 2018) which believes that individuals construct different but equally valid perspectives and meanings to

the same phenomenon (Gray, 2014). Relativist ontology was suitable for this research since all individuals have subjective pedagogical experiences in relation to standardised and child-oriented news.

This ontology relates to an interpretivist epistemology. Interpretivism looks for “culturally derived and historically situated interpretations of the social life-world” (Crotty, 1998, p. 67). Whereas positivism is fact-based since it values scientific observation and encourages empirical inquiry, interpretivism encourages qualitative methods which bring to light the personal and subjective social construction of the individual’s world (Gray, 2014). To construct the study, therefore, the researcher and participants had to work together (Yen, 2012). Getting to an explanation meant understanding my ‘culturally derived’ perspective and personal educational insights of child-oriented news as well as the participants’ (Ormston et al., 2014).

Ensuring the research outcomes are valid and useful is often left out since interpretivism seeks a deeper understanding of the phenomenon, in this case, children’s news, rather than the generalisability of results to other people and settings (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011). Another concern is about its subjective ontological position (Mack, 2010) which leads to bias in the research findings since these are affected by the researcher’s interpretations, beliefs, thoughts, and cultural preferences (Pham, 2018). However, Mack (2010) notes that interpretivists still attempt “bracketing their assumptions” (p. 8) and preconceptions especially in their interactions with participants. The strongest limitation is that interpretivism is more focused on understanding phenomena rather than challenging them. Therefore, it fails to acknowledge “political and ideological influences on knowledge and social reality” (Mack, 2010, p. 9). As a matter of fact, this research was not intended to intrinsically analyse child-oriented news but to better understand their educational implications in the upper primary years’ classroom.

Although this epistemology has its limitations, it also has several strengths. It explains the use of more than one data collection tool to address the research questions

(see section 3.4). These allowed me to access different interpretations and thoughts about children's news. Furthermore, there was no hypothesis that my study tried to prove or negate. 'Findings' were created as the investigations proceeded (Waring, 2017) and invite reinterpretation (Ahmed, 2008). The multimodal framework (see sub-section 3.7.1) I adopted itself emphasises that there is no one possible interpretation of a text (Cremona, 2017). Therefore, an interpretivist approach seemed fit.

3.1.1 My Role as a Researcher

In this study, my role as a researcher was to gauge the extent to which Maltese Year 5 teachers are aware of the potential pedagogic value of children's news programmes. Based on these outcomes and my socio-semiotic multimodal interpretation of various news segments tailored for children, I gave multimodal pedagogical suggestions of how child-oriented news items may be used in class. I first started with my multimodal interpretation to not be influenced by the teachers' perceptions or possible mention of multimodal characteristics. Moreover, I was attentive to not influence the participants as much as possible to minimise researcher and participant bias and reduce errors in my research findings (Farnsworth, 2019). Through my careful choice of words, I attempted to omit my interpretations and impressions of certain multimodal characteristics. For example, whenever a participant commented about music in children's news shows I asked, "What can you tell me about music?" rather than "Why do you think music is upbeat?". However, researcher bias and interpretation cannot completely be eliminated in the data collection and analysis processes (Dubois, 2015).

3.2 The Research Design

A qualitative, quantitative or a combination of both methods had to be chosen for this study's data collection. One of the aims of this study was to provide in-depth factual and descriptive information regarding children's news through educators' reasoning, understanding, thought, experience, intentions and attitudes towards them (Johnson &

Christensen, 2012; Ahmad et al., 2019; Eyisi, 2016). For this reason, weight was given to participants' views through semi-structured interviews (Ahmad et al., 2019).

Since this research does not involve accurately measuring the relationship between two variables, the qualitative method of collecting data was more suitable for the purposes and nature of this research (Ahmad et al., 2019). Collected data from interviewed participants consists of Year 5 teachers' insights about the subject. To better understand what multimodal features were made use of in different episodes of various children's news shows, I had to analyse them multimodally before interviewing teachers.

Thus, using a multimodal approach meant adopting a different qualitative research method leading to multimethod research (Creswell, 2015). This essential approach enabled the identification of key multimodal features of children's news shows. A limitation of using multiple qualitative research methods is that it requires more resources and is more time-consuming (Creswell, 2014). On the other hand, the main benefit of a multimethod qualitative study is higher-quality research which makes different angles and variations visible (Tierney, Sabharwal & Malish, 2019). Such research designs are sometimes considered "the strongest ones" (Esterberg, 2002, p. 37).

3.2.1 Logo and Newsbus

This study's multimodal analysis shall study Germany's *Logo* and Malta's former news programme, *Newsbus*. The main differences between the two are shown in Table 5.

	<i>logo!</i>	<i>Newsbus</i>
Country of Production	A German production	A Maltese production
Status of Broadcast	Still airs	No longer airs (only aired for three months in 2010-2011)
Type of Broadcast	Live broadcast	Recorded broadcast
Frequency of Broadcast	Daily	Weekly
Average Duration	Around 10 minutes long	Around 15 minutes long
Social Media	Over 26,000 YouTube subscribers + Over 305,000 views on its episodes	No social media presence
Reporters	Adult reporters	Child reporters
Featured Participants	Feature children in their videos	Feature adults in their videos and vox-pops
Topics Per Episode	Various topics in each episode	One topic each episode

Table 5: *logo!* and *Newsbus*

Newsbus is unavailable for streaming on any social media platform and hasn't been replaced by a local equivalent to date. Malta and Germany differ significantly in resources and the value they give to such programmes. This possibly explains *Newsbus*' complete lack of social media presence and its discontinuation. *Newsbus*' limited resources and complete lack of social media presence may be attributed to the fact that this was produced around 13 years ago. Consequently, *Newsbus* is not easily accessible. However, I was flexible and for this study's purposes, I had contacted its producer and cameraman, both of whom did not have access to any of the episodes. All *Newsbus* episodes were then retrieved through the National Public Broadcasting Services' archives. Table 6 includes screenshots from a *Newsbus* episode.




Screenshot	Description
	<p>Newsbus' jingle</p>
	<p>The episode's main newscaster</p>
	<p>The programme's newscasters</p>

Table 6: Screenshots and descriptions from Newsbus' news programme

Logo's producers are aware of the aforementioned children's right to information and their freedom of expression (*Logo!*, 2014). *Logo's* producers reply to children's comments, questions and feedback, often received through the network's website (Carter, Steemers & Messenger Davies, 2021) shown in Table 7 together with screenshots from a *Logo* episode.




Screenshot	Description
	<p>Logo's jingle</p>
	<p>Logo's set and the episode's newscaster</p>
	<p>Logo's website</p>

Table 7: Screenshots from Logo's news programme dating 15/4/22 and Logo's website

(Images retrieved from <https://www.zdf.de/kinder/logo>)

Responsible and active citizenship includes the ability to voice one's concerns and opinions regarding local and global affairs (Carter, Steemers & Messenger Davies, 2021). By writing to a child-oriented programme, children become "politically active and very much involved in their own society" (Nikken & Götz, 2007, p. 117).

3.2.2 The Use of Multimodality in this Study

Multimodality was used in this study to analyse child-oriented news segments (see sub-section 3.4.1). Furthermore, multimodality may be applied to the educational field since learning derives from “the dynamic interrelationship among the different semiotic modes... such as the linguistic, the visual, the gestural, the spatial or the audio mode” (Papadopoulou & Avgerinou, 2019, p. 5). Utilising these diverse modes improves the quality of teaching (Litonjua, 2020). Hence, I used the findings from my multimodal analysis to inform my pedagogical suggestions in line with the second research question.

3.3 Sampling

3.3.1 The News Segments

In my study, I aimed to compare and contrast a local with a foreign children’s news programme. This shall also highlight differences in the countries’ resource allocation to such productions, and how these programmes are perceived by producers and the general public. For this reason, stratified sampling, which involves dividing the population – or in this case, texts – into strata to choose a sample from each subgroup (Taherdoost, 2016). While identifying relevant stratification variables can be challenging (Taherdoost, 2016), for the purposes of this study, the only variables considered for stratification were the country of production (Malta vs. other countries) and the language used (Maltese vs. non-English). This sampling technique ensures high and equal representativeness from the relevant subgroups (Sharma, 2017).

Since *Logo* is delivered in German, a language I have no knowledge of, my socio-semiotic multimodal interpretation exclusively focused on modes other than language. This excludes other current English-language children’s TV news programmes in countries like Australia, the US and the UK. However, stratified random sampling (Dörnyie, 2007) was used since apart from *Logo*, other children’s news programmes like *Jeugdjournaal* which uses Dutch could have been analysed. On the other hand, *Newsbus* was chosen because it is the only local child-oriented news programme to date. This is delivered in Maltese, my mother

tongue. The study acknowledges the impact of time and technological advancements due to *Newsbus* airing in 2010.

In selecting texts for interpretation, criterion sampling was adopted which involves choosing cases that “meet some predetermined criterion” (Patton, 1990, p. 176). To facilitate comparison and differentiation, the chosen items from both news programmes were required to address the same topic within a similar timeframe considering the available samples. While all 17 *Newsbus* episodes were included in the sample, a 5-month sample from the beginning of March to the end of July was available for *Logo*. Table 8 alphabetically lists the main topics *Logo* and *Newsbus* addressed.

Common themes in <i>logo!</i>	Common themes in <i>Newsbus</i>
New Inventions	Christmas
Famous People	Fireworks
Illnesses	National Budget
Natural Disasters and Extreme Weather	National Children’s Festival
Politics	National Laws
Sports	World Animals Day
The Environment	World Pasta Day
War	World Television Day

Table 8: Recurring themes in Logo and Newsbus

Although these topics were not treated by both programmes, three common topics were found – Blood Donation, Energy and Transportation. The latter was chosen as its airtime in *Logo*’s sample came closest to *Newsbus*’ as illustrated in Table 9.

	<i>logo!</i>			<i>Newsbus</i>		
Common Topics	Episode Date	Duration	Total Airtime	Episode Number	Duration	Total Airtime
Blood Donation	14/06/2022	02:17-04:02	1 minute 45 seconds	Episode 5	00:43-09:59	9 minutes 16 seconds
Energy (Water and Electricity)	17/06/2022	01:45-03:30	4 minute 7 seconds	Episode 14	00:59-13:20	12 minutes
	21/07/2022	02:34-04:56				21 seconds
Transportation	15/04/2022	03:20-05:21	4 minutes 54 seconds	Episode 13	00:59-10:27	9 minutes
	9/06/2022	00:40-2:10				28 seconds
	18/06/2022	00:45-02:08				

Table 9: Common topics between Logo and Newsbus

Hence, my multimodal interpretation was based on a sample lasting 14 minutes and 30 seconds. Multimodality's prioritisation of depth over quantity (Bezemer & Jewitt, 2010) explains the relatively short duration of the analysed segments.

3.3.2 The Participants

To select participants for the main study and the pilot study, I first chose the schools with which to establish contact – two primary state schools using convenience sampling (Creswell, 2013). In this form of non-probability sampling, “members of the target population are selected [based on] practical criteria, such as geographical proximity, availability... accessibility [and] willingness to volunteer” (Dörnyie, 2007, p. 99). The schools

were selected for their geographical proximity and ease of accessibility. I was allocated to one of the schools for my teaching practice. Thus, I was familiar with the school's staff, policies, and procedures. The other school was approached because I knew it would be willing to participate based on its involvement in my previous studies and my existing rapport with the school administration. Although this saves time and money, valuable information and credibility may be put at risk (Creswell, 2013). However, convenience sampling seemed appropriate for this research considering the specific criteria that participants needed to meet – being qualified primary school teachers and currently teaching or having taught in Year 5. Since the generalisability of findings is not the aim of this research (see section 3.1), the type of schools they teach or have taught in does not play a role.

To answer the first research question, individual interviews were conducted with qualified primary school teachers – pedagogical experts with relevant experiences relating to the subject (Creswell, 2013). Those who teach or have taught Year 5 were deemed the most suitable. Literature on child-oriented news (Van Der Molen & Van Der Voort, 2000; Robb, 2017; Kaziaj & Van Bauwel, 2017; Kleemans et al., 2019; Ekstrand, Wright & Pera, 2020) indicates that these are usually targeted at children in upper primary and onwards because 9-year-olds have the prerequisites to follow and understand news programmes and distinguish reality from fantasy and sympathise with others (Valkenburg & Piotrowski, 2017). Moreover, at this age, children are more responsive to news items and capable of drawing inferences from them (Kleemans et al., 2019). Prior allocation to a Year 5 class during teaching practice aided in becoming familiar with the learning outcomes for that grade, facilitating the eventual provision of pedagogical suggestions. Thus, I adopted convenience sampling (Creswell, 2013).

Dukes (1984) recommends samples of 3-10 participants for qualitative studies using interviews. Therefore, for the pilot study, I interviewed two participants whereas for the actual study, I interviewed six. The sample size was “informed by ‘fitness for purpose’” (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2018, p. 224), aiming to gather diverse perceptions and unique

insights rather than striving for generalisability, which would require a larger sample size (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2007).

3.4 Research Instruments

To gather the necessary data following the aims of this research stated in Chapter 1, I used the following research instruments:

1. Socio-semiotic multimodal text interpretation (sub-section 3.4.1)
2. Semi-structured interviews with teachers (sub-section 3.4.2)

3.4.1 Socio-Semiotic Multimodal Text Interpretation

To be able to give multimodal pedagogical suggestions and answer my second research question, I carried out a multimodal text interpretation which is open to other interpretations. This research method examines how meaning is constructed and communicated through texts in particular social settings. Kress and Van Leeuwen (2001) define multimodality as “the use of several semiotic modes in the design of a semiotic product or event” (p. 20). Semiotic resources or modes are “socially shaped and culturally given resource[s] for making meaning” (Kress, 2009, p. 54). Modes include gestures, gaze, proxemics, dress, visual and aural art, posture, writing, image-text relation and page-layout, cinematographic and sound (O’Halloran & Smith, 2012; Jewitt, 2009). Multimodality believes meaning is conveyed through the selection, order, and interrelationship of context-dependent modes in interactions (Lyons, 2016). Thus, the focus was on how semiotic resources, other than language, interact with each other and with language (O’Halloran & Smith, 2012).

Embodied modes encompass bodily movements such as language and posture, while disembodied modes relate to the setting of the interaction such as clothing and music

(Norris, 2004). Furthermore, superordinate modes are the ones conveying the main meaning whereas subordinate ones complement superordinates to form the entire message (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2006). The 'reach' of modes varies between contexts and cultures since, for example, what is expressed using speech in one culture is expressed using gestures in another. Hence, we cannot assume that translating one mode to its equivalent in a different culture uses the same resources (Kress, 2009).

According to Kalantzis et al. (2016), meaning can be communicated through six categories each encompassing various modes depending on the semiotic resource used. Without prioritising any modes, my multimodal interpretation was based solely on the modes which seemingly carried the most meaning in the news segments to ensure an encompassing analysis. These were determined after familiarising myself well with the chosen segments. Furthermore, the analysed modes were sufficient to answer my second research question, which required an analysis of the main multimodal characteristics of each news item. The analysed segments utilised modes from all the aforementioned categories presented in Table 10.

Categories	Modes
Written meaning	Written words of phrases
	Case
	Font
Spoken meaning	Language
	Vocabulary
	Person
Visual meaning	Clothing
	Colour
	Camera angles
	Camera shots
	Camera movement
	Symbols
	Point of view
Audio meaning	Music
	Sound effects
	Volume
	Beat
Spatial meaning	Proxemics
	Layout
	Depth
	Scale
Gestural meaning	Facial expression
	Gaze
	Gestures
	Posture
	Kinetic action/ movement

Table 10: Analysed modes and their respective categories

Since language is central in communication as it carries the most information (Norris, 2004), spoken meaning was included in *Newsbus*' interpretation. However, since this view automatically subordinates all the other modes and overlooks their interaction's complexity (Norris, 2004), *Logo*'s news items were not analysed in terms of spoken meaning. Hence, all non-verbal modes in Table 10 were prioritised to better understand how meaning was orchestrated through them.

3.4.2 Semi-Structured Interviews with Teachers

A semi-structured interview is a qualitative research method which takes the form of a conversation with one participant at a time (Adams, 2015). For my first research question, I conducted semi-structured interviews with Maltese primary school teachers. This intermediate approach falls between close-ended surveys characterised by the rigorous adherence to verbatim questions and unstructured interviews characterised by a complete lack of rigidity or list of questions (Wellington, 2000). The semi-structured interview, the most valuable approach in educational research, offers flexibility, thus giving more control to the interviewer when acquiring in-depth information from interviewees (Wellington, 2000).

Since depth is prioritised over breadth (Webb, 2015), Magaldi and Berler (2020) describe this research tool as exploratory. These interviews aimed to explore teachers' perspectives and opinions on the subject matter – child-oriented news shows and their use in the primary classroom. Hence, this research served as a “platform” (Wellington, 2000, p. 139) for teachers to voice their valid, personal views on children's news and their place in the primary classroom as pedagogical professionals in line with this study's ontology and epistemology.

For my semi-structured interviews, I used close- and open-ended questions (Adams, 2015). These served as a checklist to cover intended issues and to ensure that participants were given enough time and the right prompts to sufficiently elaborate on their views.

The first two questions were intended to establish rapport and comfort by discussing participants' teaching experiences. The next seven questions explored teachers' understanding and engagement with the news and child-oriented programmes. The remaining questions served as reflection prompts about students' relationships with the news, the benefits and drawbacks of children consuming news, and the use of child-oriented news as pedagogical tools in language teaching.

Before discussing the latter, participants were shown *Logo's* jingle and news item on different means of transportation and road safety in Germany dating 18/6/2022. This was 2 minutes and 7 seconds long. This news item was chosen because since it is in German and many Maltese have no knowledge of this language, participants could focus more on other modes. Moreover, this news item was deemed suitable because it does not deal with a particular happening but is mostly educational with real-life pictures and videos. These reasons eliminated the two other analysed news items from *Logo*. Furthermore, since this news item is educational, it was intended to help participants explain the different ways such news items can be used as resources in language lessons. Table 11 shows several screenshots from this news item.

Screenshot	Description
	<p>News caster and <i>Logo's</i> news set</p>

	<p>Adults using bikes and scooters</p>
	<p>A child thinking and three different pictures of people crossing the road, road signs and traffic</p>
	<p>Adults and children crossing a road by foot</p>
	<p>Adults and children crossing a road by bike</p>

Table 11: Screenshots and descriptions from Logo's news programme dating 18/6/22

To ensure convenience, the interviews were conducted via Zoom, a rich and productive alternative to face-to-face meetings (Wellington, 2000). These interviews were carried out in one-to-one settings where participants could find a private, quiet space to their liking with no distractions (Harrell & Bradley, 2009). This privacy allowed for relaxed and expansive discussions. To enhance their sense of ease, participants were given the

choice of being interviewed in Maltese or English, and interviews were limited to a maximum of one hour (Adams, 2015), with an average duration of 45 minutes.

3.5 The Data Collection Process

3.5.1 The Pilot Study

A pilot study is a “small-scale version, or trial run, done in preparation for the major study” (Polit, Beck & Hungler, 2001, p. 467). It prevents flaws and increases the quality of research (Polit & Beck, 2017; Malmqvist et al., 2019).

I piloted the semi-structured interviews using the same setting, that is, that of an online interview. Two teachers, one with more than 10 years of experience and the other with less, were selected through convenience sampling (see sub-section 3.3.2). These participants work in different schools than the ones approached for the actual study and were selected.

Due to this piloting process, the points listed in Table 12 emerged. I worked on these aspects in my actual interviews.

Aspects to work on	Reasons	Examples
Avoid discussing the thesis title and intention before the interview.	To not influence their thoughts, opinions and ideas.	Now let's move on to my thesis' topic. As you remember, my thesis is about child-oriented news items. What do you understand by 'news'?
Do not use double negatives when paraphrasing questions.	To avoid misunderstandings.	Don't you think that there are subjects which should not be included in the news?
Avoid using "exactly" and "ok" after participants' responses.	This might indicate that I am seeking a particular, correct answer.	Participant: ...I mean, we find a lot of news around us, but it depends what interests you. Interviewer: Exactly.
Ask for more information and further explanations if something in the participants' response is not well explained.	To increase clarity in their response and perhaps gauge more insights.	N/A

Table 12: Aspects to work on from the piloting process

From the pilot interviews, I noticed that "subjects" in question 9 may be interpreted as referring to school subjects and "children" in question 10 may be understood as referring to the participants' biological children. Thus, as Table 13 indicates, the wording was changed².

² The interview questions following these changes can be found in Appendix A.

Before piloting	After piloting
Question 9 wording: “What is your view on the subjects to be included in children’s news?”	Question 9 wording: “What is your view on news topics to be included in children’s news?”
Question 10 wording: “Based on your experiences, what do children say about news? How frequently do they watch the news?”	Question 10 wording: “Based on your experiences, what do students say about news? How frequently do they watch the news?”

Table 13: Changes in the interview questions made after the pilot study

3.5.2 Actual Data Collection

Following the socio-semiotic multimodal text interpretation of child-oriented news items and the pilot interviews, six semi-structured interviews were conducted with primary school teachers chosen through stratified sampling (Taherdoost, 2016) (see sub-section 3.3.2).

The nature of semi-structured interviews allowed for paraphrasing certain questions and providing further explanations whenever participants felt unsure. For example, “How important do you think it is to contextualise teaching by making use of children’s news programmes?” was often paraphrased as “How do you think children’s news programmes as a classroom resource help you to give more context to your teaching?”. Prompting questions were used, such as “How do you think children will benefit on a personal level by watching children's news programmes?”. This was intended to redirect participants’ thinking whenever I noticed deviations and ensure relevant contributions to this study. Moreover, further questions were asked to facilitate elaboration on interesting insights, for example, “Why do you think teachers should be involved in the production of such programmes?” These are probes for reasons and ways to ensure coverage (Drever, 2003).

3.6 Ethical Considerations

Following BERA's guidelines (2018) helped me ensure that I am proceeding ethically in this study. Before collecting data, I submitted a research proposal to the University Research Ethics Committee (UREC) and the Faculty Research Ethics Committee (FREC).

After obtaining ethical clearance, I requested authorisation to gather data from state primary schools in Malta to the Directorate for Research, Lifelong Learning and Employability. After receiving permission, I set up an appointment with the two Heads of School in question to speak to them about my research and discuss the permission letter³. Obtaining permission from official institutions and gatekeepers before approaching participants and following these entities' procedures is advised (BERA, 2018).

After receiving permission, I forwarded information letters to the respective schools' Year 5 teachers⁴. As BERA (2018) suggests, these included information about my research topic, expectations for their participation, their freedom to withdraw at any time and how data was handled and stored. As Ryan, Coughlan and Cronin (2009) suggest, gathered data was rendered non-identifiable and stored securely so that participants would not be identifiable at any stage of the research. Data was discarded once the research was complete. This is why the participating schools and participants were never named, as Richards and Schwartz (2002) suggest. In the aforementioned letter, I also informed participants that interviews would be audio-recorded but they are free to stop me from recording whenever they wish. Moreover, I expressed my gratitude for their time and cooperation. Since informed and written consent is of paramount importance (Allmark et al., 2009), interested teachers signed the attached consent form⁵.

³ This can be found in Appendix B.

⁴ This can be found in Appendix B.

⁵ This can be found in Appendix B.

Before the interview, I reminded interviewees that there is no one right answer to my questions and that all differing viewpoints are insightful and valued. Prior knowledge of the subject was not required. I also asked participants whether they had any questions regarding the study. This was intended to make them feel more confident voicing their views.

3.7 Data Analysis

3.7.1 A Multimodal Framework

In this study, *Newsbus* and *Logo* episodes were analysed to see what and how different modes are used to tailor the programmes to their target audience. Multiple modes and intermodal relationships are always present when communicating. To convey meaning, modes are selected and formed based on one's culture and community (Lyons, 2016).

A multimodal framework was required to compare and contrast the analysed episodes and critically analyse the various socio-semiotic modes employed in these programmes. Thus, I adapted the MIRROR framework (Cremona, 2017) because, although this is a foreign language text analysis framework, it is easily adaptable to the multimodal interpretation of audio-visual texts. Moreover, unlike most frameworks, it includes pedagogical implementations and focuses on multimodal perspectives and social semiotics – a characteristic which is important and could easily be applied to news programmes since these are closely related to society. Table 14 shows the steps of the MIRROR framework adapted according to this study's purposes.

Acronym	Meaning
M	M onitoring available texts (in this case, news shows) and choosing the actual texts for interpretation.
I	I nitial descriptive interpretation of each news programme.
R	R epresentational multimodal semiotic interpretation (per individual programme).
R	R epresented social interpretation (per individual programme).
O	O verview of the representations observed: presenting a detailed write up of the representations obtained per individual text. Later comparing individual trends with common trends derived from texts as a whole (where possible).
R	R eorganising the representations derived from the MIRROR Framework and presented in the overview.

Table 14: An adaptation of Cremona's (2017) MIRROR Framework

Selecting the texts for interpretation and performing a descriptive interpretation of each text are the first two interconnected layers of this framework. The target audience, the communication technology used, the apparent relationship between different people in the chosen texts and the ways in which the texts differ or overlap were discussed. A sample is shown in Table 15⁶.

News Item 1	Safely on the Road
News Outlet	logo!
Clip Duration	1 minute 23 seconds
Initial Descriptive Interpretation	Logo's news items are not always about events or happenings but sometimes also simply educational and informative. This news item deals with how children are to be safe on the road considering the

⁶ The initial readings of the other analysed news items can be found in the Appendix D.

different means of transportation – mainly bikes, motorbikes, buses and cars – which may endanger one’s safety. This theme is treated in a friendly and informative way since the ideal viewers are children who tend to not be very familiar or confident when it comes to taking safety measures on the road, namely, when crossing the road on foot or riding a bike. From the present modes other than language, it looks like the main message of this news item is to inform children about how they should navigate the roads properly to avoid any injuries, whether alone or when accompanied by an adult. It may also wish to inform them about the meaning of common signs and signals they might come across with, with the aim of understanding and following them.

Using Fairclough’s (2003) terms, the ‘pre-genre’ of this segment can be said to be a description since it does not narrate a story, nor does it involve a conversation or an argument. This segment describes the road conventions for children to ensure their safety. On a less abstract level, the disembedded genre of this video clip is that of a television news report since it includes typical characteristics such as an anchor on a news set who introduces the topic and a set of images and shorter video clips with a related voice-over which support the topic (Stanley, 2020). However, this news item deviates from the typical news item since it mainly describes and educates its viewers about everyday safety measures on the road rather than narrating or giving information about a particular story. Hence, this does not meet any of the news story requirements Harcup and O’Neill (2001) establish. However, the information included is probably ‘new’, ‘relevant’, ‘interesting’ and ‘significant’ for its ideal viewer – other typical characteristics of a newsworthy item (Fuller, 1996). Additionally, contrary to this segment, the first reported happening in a news

programme is usually the day's most important story which tends to be political or economic in nature, thus, a 'hard' news item (Gans, 1979).

The genre of a news report is often purpose-driven. Hence, the activity of this genre has a strategic purpose as it seemingly aims, in this case, towards educating children to eventually be able to navigate the roads properly without injuring themselves or others in the community. To reach this purpose, the segment first portrays a female news anchor who introduces this topic to viewers. Then the segment features a series of related video clips and images with a voice-over. All video clips and images depict children in the streets or means of transportation or both. Many of the means of transportation shown are in use on the roads – such as participants driving cars, bikes and scooters – whilst other participants are shown to be either walking on the pavements or properly crossing the road. Some of the participants shown in these images and video clips are navigating the streets alone whilst others are accompanied. Sometimes children are shown to be accompanied by adults who are most probably their parents. Less frequently, children are portrayed in pairs or in groups without the presence of an adult. When this is the case, the children can be siblings, relatives or maybe even friends.

Since this text is streamed on television and may also be found on the Web, it involves one-way mediated communication. Hence, communication is mass-mediated since it depends on a medium, either television or computer, to get to its mass, anonymous audience (Westerman, Bowman & Lachlan, 2014). Furthermore, communication is two-way since although viewers cannot directly communicate back on the transmitted message, they can still express their opinion or ask

	questions to the news outlet via SMS or through their website and other social media platforms.
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Table 15: The initial descriptive interpretation of the first news item

The next step was a representational multimodal semiotic interpretation, an interpretation of which and how socio-semiotic modes were used in the texts. Semiotic modes were analysed in light of social aspects and practices in the following step. Thus, aspects related to national geography and history, culture, social identity, beliefs, acceptable behaviour, class, race and gender were brought forward. The final step was an organised, detailed write-up of the representations used.

Following this framework, my interpretation was more structured. As the framework suggests, I did not intend to uncover any hidden messages behind the selected texts, nor did I present my interpretation as “the one and only correct possible interpretation” (Cremona, 2017, p. 53). Based on the outcomes of my multimodal interpretation and semi-structured interviews with primary school teachers, I used this framework again when I provided multimodal pedagogical suggestions in Chapter 5. These discuss ways of incorporating news items in one’s pedagogical practice to enhance or facilitate student-centred teaching and learning.

3.7.2 Interpretation of News Shows

After choosing my texts for interpretation and watching each news item around 5-10 times, I had to prepare and organise my data well for it to be interpreted effectively. Multimodal transcripts or transvisuals do not follow strict disciplinary boundaries and vary between researchers (Bezemer & Mavers, 2011). Since my transcript included both visuals and writing and many modes were included, I adapted Taylor’s (2013) tabular layout shown in Figure 4.




T	Visual frame	Visual image	Kinetic action/movement	Soundtrack
1		Camera moves around jeans, focussing on stud-button. Light flashes on stud. Otherwise, very subdued light.		Piano tinkling. Song 'April skies' begins, sung by soft female voice. <i>April skies... Are in your eyes But darling don't be blue.</i>
2		Leg (with jeans on) bent at an angle to hard ground. Foot in bottom centre of screen. It is night-time.	Foot dragged.	Sounds of fighting. Muffled cries. (American film scenario?) Song continues <i>Don't cry...</i>
3		Both legs of man on hard ground	Man dragged along ground, legs apart.	Sounds of boots being dragged along the hard ground. Song continues <i>...honey, don't be that way...</i>

Figure 4: Taylor's (2013) multimodal transcript

His layout was suitable since he transcribed audio-visual texts. Moreover, it lent itself to an organised way of transcribing numerous modes. Since the transcript is no longer than one page, interpretation is facilitated since comparing and contrasting modes across frames and frames across modes is made easier. Taylor (2013) used the leftmost column's visual frames as a focal point while describing multimodality in an audio-visual text. The information related to the different modes he considered – sound, kinetic action and visual image – was transcribed linguistically.

To adapt Taylor's transcription, I employed a more extensive tabular layout since more modes were analysed in my research. However, I retained the prominence given to visual frames and transcribing in a linguistic manner. In my transcriptions, I included the

timescales for each visual frame which made up the news item, different participants' gaze was transcribed in one column and all prominent gestures were considered. A sample of my multimodal transcription is presented in Figure 5⁷.






Visual Frames	Timescales	Visual Meaning				
		Clothing	Camera shots, angles and movement	Colour	Symbols	Point of view
	00:45-00:56	The anchor is wearing a jumpsuit and sneakers. The children are wearing shorts, t-shirts, sandals and headgear.	Long shot; eye level; camera zooms in whilst slowly turning to the left	Bright		Third-person point of view
	00:56-00:59		Long shot; eye level; camera zooms into the car in the foreground	Dull		Third-person point of view
	00:59-01:01	The cyclist is wearing a jacket and formal trousers and shoes but no headgear	Long shot; eye level; camera zooms on the cyclist	Dull	Broken, white line painted on the road parallel to the pavement.	Third-person point of view
	01:01-01:04	Every person is wearing a jacket, some others also have beanies and backpacks.	Long shot; eye level; camera zooms on the bus	Dull + yellow and green bus + yellow and green bus stop sign	A sign showing a yellow circle outlined by a thick green line. The letter 'h' is written inside it in green.	Third-person point of view
	01:04-01:06	Every person is wearing a jacket, some others also have beanies or hoods and backpacks.	Long shot; eye level; no camera movement	Dull		Third-person point of view

Figure 5: An extract of the multimodal transcription for Logo's episode dating 18/6/22

3.7.3 Thematic Analysis

A thematic approach was used for analysing semi-structured interviews. This involves the identification, analysis and reporting of patterns (themes) within data in great detail (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Themes are patterns which capture something significant or interesting in the data in light of the research question (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017).

Simply summarising organised data without making sense of it, arriving at conclusions which are not based on the gathered data and overlapping themes leading to a weak, unconvincing analysis are potential pitfalls in thematic analysis (Javadi & Zarea, 2016). Furthermore, the interpretivism aspect in analysing others' experiences and opinions is in itself an issue according to Gibson (2006). However, the flexibility and relevance of this

⁷ For the full transcriptions see Appendix D.

approach across several epistemologies and research questions (Braun & Clarke, 2006) made it relevant for this research. Moreover, it leads to clear and organised conclusions and is useful in examining, comparing and contrasting various in-depth insights whilst allowing unexpected ones to emerge (King, 2004). When using this qualitative method, I moved through the phases suggested by Braun and Clarke (2006) shown in Table 16.

The process of thematic analysis (adapted from Braun and Clarke, 2006)	
Phase 1	Transcribe verbal data and familiarise yourself with the data
Phase 2	Organise your data into meaningful groups and generate initial codes
Phase 3	Sort the different codes into potential themes and sub-themes
Phase 4	Review and refine themes
Phase 5	Define and name themes with accompanying narratives
Phase 6	Produce a written report of what each theme is about

Table 16: The process of thematic analysis (adapted from Braun and Clarke, 2006)

3.7.4 Analysis of Interviews

Following the steps in Table 16, I started by transcribing solely the verbal data gathered from the interviews. Transcriptions were intended to decrease “the limitations associated with the mere intuition and recall of information” whilst allowing for several detailed observations of the content (Azevedo et al., 2017, p. 161). This process also facilitated familiarisation with the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

The researcher's background influences the transcription process (Nascimento & Steinbruch, 2019). To reduce this subjectivity, I adapted GAT's standardised transcription system (Selting et al., 2011) to fit my data, as shown in Table 17.

Symbol	Use
[text]	Overlap and simultaneous talk
(text)	Incomprehensible talk
uh, uhm	Clitics and fillers
(.)	Pause after or in between phrases
...	Incomplete utterances
“text”	Quotes from students

Table 17: An adaptation of GAT’s transcription system (as cited in Selting et al., 2011)

This notation system helped me remember the events with increased precision, allowing me to portray the participants’ perspectives more effectively. Background noises were excluded as they were not relevant to the analysis.

Nearly all participants chose to be interviewed in Maltese, their mother tongue. When analysing data, I was careful to produce translations with the closest equivalent meaning possible⁸. Therefore, I opted for a “sense for sense” translation which prioritises meaning over strict adherence to the original grammar and syntax (Guo & Yuwei, 2022). For example, the Maltese expression “mhux kollox ward u żahar” was translated to “not everything is a cinch” rather than “not everything is flowers and blossoms.” Sharing the same culture and mother tongue as the participants made my translations ethical (Hodges, 2016). Since translations can never be perfectly objective (Mahmood, 2009), I worked on data in the source language and only translated the quotes presented in Chapter 4.

The process of transcribing interviews took around two weeks. Following this, I familiarised myself with the data by reading it repeatedly while noting down ideas. After organising data into meaningful groups and generating codes, I started grouping different codes into potential sub-themes. Following this, I searched for broader themes based on the

⁸ I included the participants quotes in the source language in appendix C for the purpose of reference.

created sub-themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Table 18 presents the identified four themes from the collected data.

Identified themes from the thematic analysis of the semi-structured interviews
Teachers' personal relationship with the news
Teachers' views on the relationship between news and primary school children
Teachers' perceptions of child-oriented news
Teachers' perceptions of child-oriented news as a classroom resource

Table 18: Identified themes from the thematic analysis of the semi-structured interviews

Table 19 presents the sub-themes and codes for one of the abovementioned themes.

Theme	Sub-themes	Codes
Teachers' views on the relationship between news and primary school children	Positive effects	Encouraged to copy a good example + News help children be more aware and know how to act + News help in expanding vocabulary + News improves listening skills + News improves sentence structure + News improves grammar + News help children identify reliable sources of information + News helps children distinguish between fact and opinion + News and oral exams + News improves writing + News keeps children updated + News helps children discuss, argue and form opinions + News increases general knowledge + News improves critical thinking skills + News creates a sense of empathy and solidarity towards others + Active citizenship + News helps spark interest in other topics
	Negative effects	Stress + Anxiety + Tension + Worry + Fear + Tempted to try out certain substances
	Students' interest	Children are interested in news and discuss it/ ask questions + Children are not interested in news + Children don't actively seek news themselves

Table 19: An extract of the sub-themes and codes generated during the TA

Afterwards, I reviewed the themes in light of the sub-themes, codes and the full data set (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This was intended to guarantee internal homogeneity and external heterogeneity (Patton, 1990), that is, coherence within and clear differences between themes. The final themes formed the foundation on which I developed my data analysis presented in the fourth chapter.

3.8 Conclusion

In this chapter, I attempted to explain how data was collected, and the specific research tools utilised for this purpose. I also delved into the chosen research design, the criteria used for selecting news segments and participants, the ethical considerations involved, and the reasoning behind the chosen methods. In the subsequent chapter, I will present the results obtained from analysing the collected data.

Chapter 4 – Data Presentation, Analysis and Discussion

4. Outline

Collected data was analysed to explore the potential pedagogic value in child-oriented news items and the socio-semiotic multimodal characteristics employed. Teachers' perceptions of the educational value of children's news were analysed in light of literature dealing with child-oriented news segments. This chapter attempts to answer the following research question:

1. To what extent are Maltese Year 5 teachers aware of the potential pedagogic value of children's news programmes?

My findings will be organised according to the four main findings which emerged from the analysis:

- Teachers' willingness to use child-oriented news as a classroom resource in all types of language lessons
- Child-oriented news as an educational resource requires well-informed and well-prepared teachers
- Child-oriented news is not necessarily engaging to all
- Child-friendly explanations determine the pedagogical value of child-oriented news

All interviewed teachers admitted that they are unaware of any local attempts at a news programme tailored for children – *"I have never heard of a child-oriented news programme... I don't think they exist locally, at least to my knowledge"* – and were unfamiliar with the concept. Therefore, when discussing news, they referred to standardised news whenever they were not discussing the shown news item during the interview.

4.1 Teachers' willingness to use child-oriented news as a classroom resource in all types of language lessons

4.1.1 Teachers' ideas of using child-oriented news programmes as a resource in language lessons

As a result of being aware of the positive effects of standardised news on children, interviewed educators shared their willingness to use the news items tailored for children as a classroom resource through various ideas of implementation in the different types of language lessons. Four out of six participants directly referred to language lessons in Maltese possibly because they linked the inexistence of local child-oriented news programmes with the relatively limited resources for Maltese. Otherwise, they assumed that if a local child-oriented news show is to be produced, then this should be in Maltese, Malta's national language.

Half of the interviewees suggested that child-oriented news may be used to introduce language lessons by, for example, using it to start a discussion or a brainstorming session on the topic children will be having as comprehension or creative writing – *“you start building on them ... you start taking information, see what children understood... or what struck them most.”* Educators noted that this is an efficient way of introducing a topic to students since one cannot assume children's prior knowledge and cognitive abilities (Buckingham, 2000). None of the participants suggested using such a child-oriented news programme to conclude language lessons *“because you can't take much from it.”*

Comprehension lessons were the most frequently mentioned. Teachers suggested that a child-oriented news item may be played in the classroom and then children are to answer questions about it, hence taking on the form of a listening comprehension text (Verner, 2015)-

“You show them a video or present the news item in text and then carry out a comprehension lesson. I'm referring to both reading and listening comprehensions

which are not read out by the teacher but in the form of videos or snippets from the news.”

Others suggested translating such news items into text and using it as a reading comprehension passage (Evans, 2006).

When discussing writing lessons, teachers suggested that a particular child-oriented news item may be shown *“to strengthen their knowledge of [the] subject”* whilst *“providing some ideas”* for writing (*“News: Using the news in the classroom”*, 2016). Two interviewees use such programmes as models for students’ writing where children are to notice how a situation is being described and the type of language used – *“I sometimes did use snippets from the news to help them describe an accident or another happening. It acts as a model, even the language used, they start familiarising themselves with it.”* One elaborated that such videos help familiarise children with the tonality used in news, formality and the third person.

Speaking lessons were also often mentioned. Teachers suggested that child-oriented news items may set start to discussions about a topic – *“as a starting point for discussion [about a particular topic] in the classroom.”* Otherwise, they may introduce a theme for teachers adopting a thematic approach – *“You can turn it into a complete lesson or a theme.”* An interviewee shared Dezvani’s (2019) idea of splitting students into groups – *“You split students into groups of four and each group deals with a particular news item, different topics... a group takes sports, another takes another topic... then each group goes to the front of the class and reads out the news to the rest of the children.”* Thus, as a class, they would have researched and delivered a news programme between themselves.

As for grammar lessons, teachers believe that child-oriented news is helpful because students may be given the task of identifying a particular grammatical concept such as the plural – *“You make them read and listen and see where they would have found that grammatical concept... [they would notice] how it's being used in news.”* Another teacher

linked such a resource with improved sentence structure and exposure to linguistic expressions such as “f’ħakka t’għajn” (in the blink of an eye). Therefore, similar to Evans (2006), participants noted that child-oriented news items as pedagogical aids may be used *“in each of the four skills of language.”*

4.1.2 Teachers’ awareness of the positive effects of news on children

Teachers’ great willingness to use ready-made news items tailored for children as pedagogical aids is possibly the result of their awareness of the positive effects general news has on children. As a matter of fact, most interviewees showed a clear understanding and awareness of the benefits of watching the news. One participant commented that the positive effects of general news on children *“cannot be measured.”*

Teachers mentioned that news helps children become more aware and know how to act especially in negative situations –

“it’s good that they start getting to know about [certain topics] and becoming aware of [cases of abuse] through news because these things may happen. Moreover, if they’re aware of them they would be able to identify cases of abuse, for example in their friends, and they would know what to do. Even if God forbid something similar happens to them, they will know whom to talk to.”

Similarly, Livingstone (2008) speaks about the development of knowledgeable and mindful citizens while Fromm and Smith (2019) conclude that news teaches children how to help others and ensure safety for the community. Therefore, teachers deem news programmes as sources of informal education.

Better equipping children to consider the source of information (Fromm & Smith, 2019) was another positive effect mentioned by teachers – *“they also learn to check what news they’re watching because nowadays there are a lot of unreliable sources.”* Ofcom’s (2022) survey concluded that, through news, children can remain *“up to date”* with the latest happenings – another positive effect mentioned by various participants. Teachers’

observation that news can be a great source of general knowledge echoes Tuchman (1978). Teachers stated that when watching the news, children *“are educating themselves in terms of what they need to know in their lives as they’re growing up.”*

An educator noted that children *“would start involving themselves in the society they’re living in.”* This echoes De Vrees and Boomgaarden (2006) who hint at active citizenship by mentioning political and civic participation. Three teachers pointed out children’s increased ability to form opinions as another positive effect of watching the news – *“they mature in how they form their opinion and would be able to convey it and discuss it with others, maybe with other children.”* Furthermore, interviewed teachers mention the increased ability to think critically – *“they would be able to think in a critical manner and evaluate all that they would have heard and seen.”* Both of these abilities were also mentioned by Carter, Steemers and Messenger Davies (2021).

Interviewees also mentioned benefits related directly to school such as the potentiality of news, helping children who view them to expand their vocabulary – *“Whenever they hear a new word, they may say ‘Wow! How interesting! I will look it up or ask mom and dad about it!’... and then they will start using the vocabulary they would have heard on the news programme.”*

Improved listening skills, sentence structures and grammar were also mentioned. Teachers also pointed out the possibility of children having more ideas to express in speaking and writing tasks –

“One that would have heard the news, [about] say an accident, they would be more able to describe what happened if they’re given a similar writing task. One could take an idea from the news and apply it in writing.”

4.2 Child-oriented news as an educational resource requires well-informed and well-prepared teachers

4.2.1 The link between teachers' personal relationships with the news and their willingness to use the news as a pedagogical resource

Many teachers did not note any disadvantages in using child-oriented news items as a resource in itself – *“I don't think there are any limitations... On the contrary, I think it is something very positive.”* However, a participant excluded taboo topics and stated that she does not discuss such topics at all – *“given that the subject is suitable”*. Furthermore, a few participants mentioned the requirement of being well-prepared and well-informed even about the latest updates about a news event as a challenge – *“obviously the teacher... has to be informed as she goes along because if you're going to give a lesson and then the teacher is not well-informed on whatever it is about, it doesn't make sense.”*

Just like participants' exposure to news as children possibly affected their current relationship with the news as adults (see sub-sections 4.2.2 and 4.2.3), the latter may affect their willingness to use the news as an educational resource. All participants expressed interest and acknowledged the benefits of using child-oriented news as a pedagogical aid. However, the abovementioned disadvantage as well as the lack of news consumption by two participants may discourage this implementation.

However, participants in general genuinely seem to consider using child-oriented news especially those who have had positive exposure as children and still have a positive outlook of news as adults. To sustain this argument, other challenges educators mentioned relate to the way news programmes are used and not to the child-oriented news items in themselves – *“It depends on the teacher how much she would be able to adapt her work and resources for children and their different levels. It's not something which is specifically related to the use of news in lessons.”*

Moreover, educators pointed to the fact that the advantages of using child-oriented news as a pedagogical aid are greater than its disadvantages – *“However, it is an informative*

resource so I would use it.” Teachers also noted that any resource may be misused – *“you have to be careful... just like with anything else after all.”*

4.2.2 Teachers’ personal relationship with the news as children

Most interviewees used to watch the news every day when they were children because watching the news was part of their family's daily routine – *“every day because of my parents, they would have wanted to know exactly what was happening.”* Such participants noticed that through this practice they had become more interested in the news and asked their parents questions. Thus, such routine led to a positive opinion about the news – *“It had become a routine such that I nearly became interested [in the news] myself.”* Apart from noticing parents prioritising news, further explanations by parents also enhanced their positive opinions about the news – *“My mother, for example, used to explain to me, ‘look we saw that on the news’... you start relating your life with whatever is happening, you start interesting yourself more.”* The latter reflects Bybee, Robinson and Turow’s (1982) ‘evaluative mediation’. Consequently, this positive experience manifests itself in their willingness to employ news in their teachings (see sub-section 2.4.1).

Only one participant watched news out of his own will as a child because he was encouraged to do so by his parents and teachers – *“Sometimes, for example, parents encouraged me to watch them to remain updated, and even from school.”* This is in line with studies which show that parents and educators are key sources of encouragement in the process of understanding news (Saylor et al., 2003). This participant believes his positive outlook towards news as a child resulted from his inability to fully understand, relate and empathise as a child – *“We’re not so conscious of the severity of the news item... we are not able to understand it perfectly.”* Therefore, his personal experience in relation to news possibly helps this teacher to better understand the majority of students who seem generally uninterested in news (see sub-section 4.3.2). Furthermore, this educator is possibly more able to render implemented news items more interesting for students, keeping in mind what was lacking from news programmes when he was still a child.

Only one participant was not exposed to news as a child because her parents did not want to worry her – *“Just to protect us I think... you know, out of sight, out of mind.”* This hints at Bybee, Robinson and Turow’s (1982) ‘restrictive mediation’. The participant believes that this lack of exposure probably led to her negative opinion about the news as a child. Protection intensifies negative emotional responses in children according to Seiter (2007).

These insights referred to the three possible types of situations – children who willingly watch the news, children who are ‘forced’ to watch the news and those who are ‘protected’ from the news. ‘Protecting’ children from news seems to pave the way to negative relationships with the news followed by ‘forcing’ children to watch news programmes.

4.2.3 Teachers’ personal relationship with the news as adults

One participant noted that he internalised his childhood routine of watching the news in adulthood – *“that influenced the routine I kept when I grew up.”* This echoes Weisser’s (2021) statement that family is extremely influential in determining children’s access to the news, frequency of consumption and follow-up of these contents. Therefore, participants’ exposure to news as children seems to have affected their outlook on the news as adults and consequently, on their educational practice.

When speaking about how often they watch the news as adults, most participants communicated that they watch the news every day – *“I find time to see what’s happening around me every day.”* Many of them revealed that they prefer watching the news online, mainly through apps or social media, including Facebook, Instagram and Twitter. This is because social media is more *“accessible”* – *“you can keep yourself updated whenever and wherever you want”* and one also has control over what to know more about – *“I can keep scrolling past articles which bother me.”* This preference seems to contrast with Ofcom’s (2021) finding that television is the audience’s favourite information source. This implies

that child-oriented news programmes should be present online and on social media as well to reach a greater audience.

Half of the participants expressed the importance of watching the news since this keeps them updated and aware of what's happening around them – *“for me personally news is important because it keeps me updated with what is happening around me.”* Consequently, one would be able to *“react and form an opinion about what is happening.”* Harcup and O’Neill’s (2001) ‘relevance’ was reflected in two participants’ explanations of why they deem news, particularly that related to foreign countries, important – *“Whatever happens abroad affects us Maltese somehow.”*

Two participants who were either ‘forced’ to watch the news or ‘protected’ from it in their childhood admitted that they do not watch the news frequently. This is due to a prevalence of *“negative”* news items. According to them, news items are repetitive and uninteresting – *“You so get used to hearing the same things... so I think it's better to not hear and know anything”* – leading to disassociation – *“I then disassociate myself.”* Referring to Italian news, a participant suggested the inclusion of culture-related information and recipes. This echoes another participant’s description of news as including information related to healthy eating and the like. These comments oppose De Fleur and Dennis’ (2002) definition of news – *“news is... fresh knowledge about [a current] event”* (pp. 73-74). These shared ideas seem to be taken into consideration when teacher participants' choose whether and how to implement news programmes in their lessons. This is because the aforementioned ‘disassociation’ and ‘disinterest’ are likely to lead to a lack of knowledge and awareness of the latest happenings.

4.3 Child-oriented news is not necessarily engaging to all

4.3.1 News items have to be relevant and interesting to children

Teachers believe that the educational value of child-oriented news items depends on how relevant and interesting they are as a resource in itself for children. A resource which doesn't engage, cannot be deemed educational (Ministry of Education, n.d.).

If a child-oriented news item is relevant to students' realities, teachers are willing to use it in the classroom – *“news items have to be relatable to children.”* Most teachers stated that it is fundamental for a child-oriented news item to be linked to children's interests such as celebrities, sports and music, and to involve children. The former echoes Lemish's (2007) statement that children should be regarded as a type of audience with their own needs, rights, and interests. Teachers believe that these would make news more relatable to children and thus, more interesting – *“when you show them things which they can apply to their lives... they will be more interested.”* Relating news items to children's realities is a key characteristic mentioned by Matthews (2010).

During the interview, when one of the six teachers watched the news video (see sub-section 3.4.2), she commented – *“I remembered what we had discussed [earlier], that a lot of children were involved in it.”* Teachers' frequent reference to children's participation is reflected in Matthews' (2010) definition of child-oriented news shows as “communicative spaces” (p. 4). Although children's involvement was among the most noticed characteristics, one participant wished to see children involved as newscasters in *Logo* as well – *“I would still have involved children as newscasters.”* Children seem to share the same wish (Alon-Tirosh & Lemish, 2014).

When asked to elaborate further on what makes a news item relevant and interesting to children, many teachers mentioned informality. Interviewees noticed an element of informality in communication after viewing the news item –

“the communication seemed to have taken the form of a dialogue rather than someone who is just speaking, reading something... it was like someone speaking to

children and it was clear that it was addressed to children... they weren't just news items which were simply rendered easier but still addressed to the general public."

A degree of informality through clothing was also noticed by educators. Participants noted that the newscaster's clothing in the shown video clip is different to what newscasters wear in standardised news –

"the way the woman was dressed, for example, you're not going to see that [clothing] in adults' news. In adults' news, [presenters] wear suits, both men and women, but in children's news there is a certain degree of informality which is also important for them."

Furthermore, certain participants commented on the use of bright colours in, for example, *Logo's* colourful set and the anchor's bright and light-coloured clothing which engage children (Alon-Tirosh, 2017) – *"Aesthetically they are attractive, colourful... using bright colours to keep children engaged as well, just like we do in our classrooms after all."* However, one participant suggested that the studio set's background should include props and a screen with previews of upcoming news items as this would probably further engage children and prevent distractions – *"children's attention is captured whenever they see something catchy."*

Moreover, another participant noticed that music should be *"more soft and friendly"* when compared to standardised news as this *"keeps children engaged."* After listening to *Logo's* jingle, a participant noted that although it was *"cheerful"* and *"child-friendly"*, children *"would still be able to relate it with the news."* Although most participants liked *Logo's* music, a participant thought it should be *"livelier to capture children's attention."* A participant stressed the importance of upbeat music because this is *"the type of music [children] listen to."*

Educators also commented about the newscaster's facial expressions – *"she smiled and smiling makes a lot of difference for children. It influences them in a good way."* A smile, usually makes one more approachable and hence, children are drawn in.

Therefore, only if relevant and interesting, teachers are willing to use child-oriented news in the classroom. This is especially important for them since they are clearly aware of children's general disinterest in the news.

4.3.2 Children's general disinterest in the news

Contrary to Kruise & Kalmus' (2016) findings, teachers noted that generally children do not actively seek news themselves, are generally uninterested and *"think of news as something tedious."* Many noted that children come across news coincidentally while using social media – *"they scroll on Facebook... or Instagram... see them and click on them."* Similar to Weisser (2021), a participant stated that children's exposure to and relationship with the news *"very much depends on their caregivers."* This was also reflected in teachers' relationship with the news as children (see sub-section 4.2.2).

Due to children's general disinterest in the news, educators mentioned the risk of not necessarily engaging all students if the news had to be used as a classroom resource – *"obviously you are not going to please everyone and there will be disengaged children."* Similarly, Masterman (1980) points out that many students may respond negatively to having television news as an educational resource especially since research shows that interest in news increases with age. However, teachers still seem willing to use the news in the classroom because the above-mentioned risk is possible for any other resource. Therefore, teachers pointed out that one has to be careful to not misuse pedagogical resources – *"you have to be careful... just like with anything else after all."* Moreover, educators believe that using news in the classroom may encourage a few children to watch it in the long run – *"Maybe I won't engage everyone, but maybe they will start discussing between themselves and become encouraged [to watch the news]"*.

4.4 Child-friendly explanations determine the pedagogical value of news

4.4.1 Teachers' suggestions to minimise the negative effects of news on children

Many educators attributed the negative effects of news on children to a lack of child-friendly explanations. This is especially so considering that many children were only exposed to standardised news – *“we noticed that they were overhearing adults and maybe watching developing news aimed for adults”* – which includes extra detail for children – *“certain details... children can make do without them.”*

Picking up partial information regarding a particular news item – *“When they're not informed well, for example, whenever they do not listen to a news item in full”* – may also lead to such negative effects. As a matter of fact, *“information brings... emotional security into children's world”* (ZDF, 2020 as cited in Carter, Steemers & Messenger Davies, 2021).

The way educators address children's concerning questions about news is in line with the attributes they mentioned when discussing what usually negatively impacts children in the news (see sub-section 4.4.2). Teachers usually address these situations by explaining further and clearing up certain doubts. A teacher mentioned that she used news websites without any graphic content in relation to a school shooting which took place in the United States –

“I feel the need to answer their questions and clarify doubts. With regard to the shooting, I went on CNN's website and we read the news item together. But I was careful to not show videos or pictures which might impress children.”

Thus, educators' highlighting the rarity of certain events and keeping explanations age-appropriate resonates with the National Association of School Psychologists (as cited in Reis, 2012).

A participant noted that if children are too scared, *“they will end up hating news or hearing something and think of it as something really bad.”* This means that children may equate news to *“a set of disturbing, controversial, and violent images”* (Silveira, 2019, p. 101). Thus, educators shared suggestions related to the characteristics child-oriented news

should include. These include concise information – “[news items] aimed for adults are longer... and more detailed” – which excludes gruesomeness and is slowly transmitted to children to facilitate understanding – “the process of giving information would be at a slower pace.” Teachers’ reference to the transmission of information implies that they view child-oriented news as “communicative spaces” (Matthews, 2010, p. 4).

Furthermore, teachers believe that the number of news items in a news programme should also be limited – “maybe three or four different types of news.” When emphasising the importance of limiting information, participants referred to children’s short attention span (Levin & Bernier, 2011) which impacts their understanding – “They won’t have a lot of information which they won’t understand.” Interviewees noticed the short duration of the shown news item from *Logo* – “it wasn’t too long, maybe around a minute.”

Most participants mentioned language and vocabulary, highlighting the importance of “child-friendly language”, that is, simple words that children can understand, shorter sentences, and terms which are explained straight after – “[news] should have vocabulary which meets the children’s level.” Similarly, Alon-Tirosh (2017) stressed the importance of using simple words and immediately clarifying technical terms. Others mentioned the use of language and tonality in a way that lightens up heavy news items and does not scare children – “It should explain what’s happening but at the same time... not alarm them or scare them too much.” Two participants believe that parents usually do not stay explaining certain words and concepts to their children – “I think there are a few parents who watch the news and at the same time explain to their children certain concepts and aspects treated in the news such as those relating to politics and courts.” Similarly, Narberhaus Martínez (2018) believes that children shouldn’t face standard news content which is difficult for them to understand, such as unfamiliar terms and metaphors.

Moreover, teachers wish that child-oriented news items offer explanations and solutions – “You have to explain to children because they would know what’s going on and they would want to understand. One should also offer and emphasise the solutions with

children.” This puts children’s minds at rest – *“The news item ends on a positive note and it’s not just the negative which is mentioned. You put children’s minds at rest”* – while reducing negative effects such as fear – *“if there is an explanation afterwards, I think the created fear will decrease.”* According to Kleemans et al. (2019), such consolation strategies weaken children’s negative responses as events are reported in a positive and solution-based manner. For those news items, such as those dealing with natural disasters, where solutions cannot be provided, a teacher suggested that emphasis should be put on how one should act –

“it’s good that they are aware, and they’re given tips on what they should do if such a thing crops up... so that they will be prepared. I believe that the more information you know, the less fear you will have.”

Sometimes, protection intensifies negative emotional responses in children since they would lack facts restricting them from talking about what they might have heard elsewhere (Seiter, 2007). Through highlighting the importance of explanations and solutions, educators seem to be aware that these news programmes cover subjects that most adults are likely to be familiar with and knowledgeable about, but children are not, such as how to navigate the roads safely.

Educators also insisted on the use of visuals since these enhance understanding – *“I would include videos as well because children with visualised things, with visuals, learn a lot.”* Participants noticed the inclusion of visuals in the shown news item – *“it was visually attractive for children as well because they used a lot of videos... I imagine that everything which was said, was reflected in the video shown.”*

However, nearly all teachers insisted on the exclusion of graphic content – *“they shouldn’t include certain scenes or certain videos in child-oriented news. I am referring to scenes including violence, fights, killings and blood... even videos which include foul language or offensive gestures, they are not suitable.”*

A participant proposed the use of cartoons instead since this tends to be less scary – “if, for example, a holdup took place, that may be shown using cartoons, instead of showing a real-life man shooting in a shop.” In the analysed segments, *Logo* made use of cartoons to simplify a concept, however, as the participant suggested, *Newsbus* made frequent use of cartoons to minimise gruesomeness. Therefore, educators wish for child-oriented news to offer a “safe haven” (Strohmaier, 2007, p. 154) for children.

4.4.2 Teachers’ awareness of the possible negative effects of news on children

Despite the aforementioned tendency of disinterest in the news (see sub-section 4.3.2.), sometimes children do ask questions related to news in the classroom. This is especially so whenever something interests them, such as football, or things which worry them. Communicating with trusted adults helps children manage their emotions and understanding, leading to greater safety (Silveira, 2019). Table 20 shows the topics which mostly impacted children and were discussed at school together with questions asked. Nearly all teachers mentioned these news items.

News items students worried about and felt the need to discuss	Questions teachers are asked by their students
Russia-Ukraine War	“What exactly is happening?” “Why is this war taking place?” “Can this situation get worse?” “Can we be affected?”
Turkey-Syria Earthquake	“What caused this earthquake?” “Can an earthquake hit Malta? What will happen to us?” “How can we help the people affected?”
School America	“What will happen if a terrorist enters our school?” “Where will we hide?” “What will you do, Miss?”
Local Homicides	“Did you see what the hitman did?” “Is this how adults argue?”

Table 20: News items which recently affected primary school children and what they wanted to know more about

Stress, anxiety, tension, fear, worry and temptation to try out certain substances were among the negative effects of news on children that teachers mentioned. Table 21 shows some of the teachers’ comments concerning negative effects.

Negative effects on children	Quotes of teachers
Stress	“We had children experiencing a great amount of stress and anxiety”
Anxiety	“there was a certain anxiety within children and there was the need to explain to them further” “certain children, for example, start feeling anxious whenever they hear such things”
Tension	“there were children having a sense of anxiety and tension”
Fear	“so children came to school with a sense of worry, with a sense of fear” “they passed through a period of time where they feel scared and don't sleep”
Worry	“he came the next day impressed... meaning he was a bit worried”
Tempted to try out certain substances	“they feel encouraged to do certain things... they spark curiosity within them to try out certain things because that's what the news said”

Table 21: Negative effects of news on children according to teachers

Some children were so worried and anxious that they thought an earthquake had hit because the stage moved during their Christmas concert rehearsals – *“They thought it was an earthquake ... in reality, they were in the school hall practising for their Christmas concert and so this stage moved a little bit.”* Some of these cases were so severe that a special assembly had to be held – *“We had to hold a special assembly so that the SLT could elaborate further.”* The negative effects students experienced were because they worried

for their safety (Götz, 2007) after being exposed to negative news such as crimes and disasters (Riddle et al., 2012). This sustains the importance of further explanations and solutions in a child-friendly manner (refer to sub-section 4.4.1) to minimise such effects.

4.5 Conclusion

After this analysis which was based on the identified main findings, I conclude that teachers are greatly aware of the numerous benefits that news may have on children. Consequently, educators strongly believe and are willing to use such programmes as pedagogical tools in all types of language lessons. This willingness seems to be determined by their personal relationship with the news as adults which is in turn influenced by their personal relationship with the news as children. Parents and caregivers played a crucial role in this since they determined the amount and quality of exposure to news. Furthermore, teachers are aware that due to children's general disinterest in the news, using news in the classroom is not necessarily engaging to all. Therefore, apart from requiring well-informed and well-prepared teachers, such an educational resource has to be relevant and interesting to children to be effective. Otherwise, teachers will not consider it as a pedagogical resource. Since educators are also aware of the possible negative impacts of news on children, they also look for ways of minimising these when choosing their resources. Above all, teachers believe that child-friendly explanations are imperative as these determine the news item's educational value. Based on this analysis, I will provide pedagogical suggestions for primary school teachers and caregivers in Chapter 5.

Chapter 5 – Pedagogical Multimodal Suggestions

5. Outline

From the main findings which were identified and analysed in the previous chapter, I will be suggesting ways in which child-oriented news can best be used by educators. The suggestions provided are based on the outcomes of the data analysis, including my socio-semiotic multimodal interpretation of child-oriented news segments, and the literature. Therefore, in this chapter, I will be answering the following research question:

2. Based on the outcomes of the first research question, also viewing the outcomes of my multimodal interpretation, which suggestions can one come up with to initiate, enhance or facilitate the use of child-oriented news items within the Maltese Upper Primary language learning context?

The ideas I will present demonstrate how a variety of news items aimed at children can be effectively incorporated into various types of language lessons for Year 5 students. I will mainly focus on the teaching of the Maltese language since due to its relatively low number of speakers, educational resources in Maltese are relatively limited. Furthermore, I will be referring to standardised news items from a local news outlet in the absence of a local child-oriented news programme. Since the presented pedagogical suggestions will be based on how modes were used in the analysed child-oriented news items, I will be showing how standardised news can be rendered child-friendly by the teacher. Despite the inclusion of links of the news items which will be used as examples throughout this chapter, all these were precisely broadcast on television.

It is important to acknowledge that these suggestions can be applied to different subjects and can also be modified for primary students of varying age groups. In this chapter, I will also touch upon how teachers can inform and prepare themselves before using news items with their students. Furthermore, I will be offering suggestions about how

educators and caregivers can overcome children's general disinterest in the news and minimise any potential negative effects.

I firmly believe that for students to genuinely enjoy learning with child-oriented news items, it is essential to maintain a balance and incorporate a diverse range of activities and resources (Frary & Souza, 2023) such as documentaries and music. This implies that the element of news is not to be the focus of every lesson, as this would create a predictable routine and hinder spontaneous learning experiences. Educators can also choose to implement a variety of news items as indicated by Harcup and O'Neill (2001) (see section 2.1) and also focus on different aspects which emerge from news items such as, what makes one worthy to earn a sports award.

5.2 Using Child-Oriented News Items at School

5.2.1 Using Child-Oriented News in Language Lessons

As discussed in sub-section 4.2.1, teachers seemed very willing to use child-oriented news in their language lessons and shared ideas regarding such implementation. News items tailored for children may potentially be used in all types of language lessons aimed at 9-year-old pupils.

For example, after watching the news item (<https://tvmnews.mt/news/jinfethu-n-nominazzjonijiet-ghall-animal-honours-awards-2023/>), students may be asked to draw and describe a person who they believe deserves to be given an animal honours award. Other news items may also be presented as an option for students from which to choose one for their writing task. Providing pupils with enough freedom to exercise choice is at the centre of student-centred teaching and learning according to some theorists (Kaput, 2018). Figure 6 provides an example of a suitable writing frame.

to create a short interview between the two relating to the news event using the correct punctuation. They may work in pairs on their writing task and then record it for the teacher or for the rest of the class to see using their tablets. Otherwise, they may act it out using props, costumes and puppets. The latter helps them to immerse themselves more into the character they are interpreting since they also have to pay attention to their clothing, gestures and facial expressions. Each student may also take on the role of the news anchor and read out his/ her news report about the news event to the rest of the class (see Figure 7). Using drama in the primary classroom was found to aid child development and improve children's creativity as well as their social, communicative and cognitive skills (Özgür İşyar & Akay, 2017). To facilitate the incorporation of drama, teachers may opt to keep a drama kit including props, costumes and makeup.

For a grammar lesson aimed at Year 5 students, children may be encouraged to listen closely to a news item (<https://tvmnews.mt/news/565-zaghzugh-u-zaghzughu-jhallu-malta-ghall-jum-dinji-taz-zghazagh-flisbona/>) and make a list of a particular part of speech, for example, verbs. The identified verbs are to be put under the singular or the plural column depending on whether their subject is singular or plural. This can serve as a way of assessing students' understanding of the concept. The identified verbs can then be worked upon by, for example, finding the equivalent singular or plural version. The worksheet in Figure 8 may be used as a resource.

Isem u Kunjom: _____

Klassi: _____



IL-VERBI

Segwi din l-aħbar:

<https://tvmnews.mt/news/565-zaghzugh-u-zaghzughajhallu-malta-ghall-jum-dinji-taz-zghazagh-flisbona/>. Int u tisma' aghmel lista tal-verbi li li tkun smajt. Ikteb il-verbi taht il-kolonna t-tajba, skont humiex fis-singular jew fil-plural. Kif tikteb il-verbi kollha, sib is-singular jew il-plural ta' kull verb.

Verbi Misjuba	
Singular	Plural



Figure 8: Worksheet on Maltese verbs

Child-oriented news may also be used in comprehension lessons. After watching the news item at least twice, in line with the usual listening comprehension examination

procedure, students are to be assessed on their understanding. Asking questions and sparking a discussion is one way of assessing students' comprehension. Students may also be encouraged to summarise the news item. This discussion may also serve as an opportunity for students to predict what might have happened afterwards or who are the people usually involved when such an event takes place. If possible, students may be encouraged to think of morals related to the event. For example, children may point out the importance of not using the phone while driving.

Otherwise, assessment may take the form of a written or an online quiz. These may include drag-and-drop exercises where children, for example, complete a sentence or match a character to his/her traits. Moreover, such quizzes may also include multiple-choice questions, True or False questions and other questions which simply require a one-word answer. The example of an online quiz shown in Figure 9⁹ is based on the following news item: <https://tvmnews.mt/news/50-lifeguard-madwar-malta-biex-jghinu-lil-min-isib-ruhu-fdiffikulta/>.

⁹ Although this example was made using *Kahoot.it*, other similar platforms such as *Quizziz*, which allow for online quizzes may be used.

Il-Malta Red Cross bhalissa hija maghmula minn kemm-il lifeguard? Skip

8 0 Answers

▲ 50	◆ 55
● 60	■ 65

Kemm-il kaz ikollha l-Malta Red Cross fix-xahar? Skip

14 0 Answers

▲ 10	◆ 100
● 1,000	■ 1,100

Liem hu l-iktar riħ li jolqot lill-Gzejjer Maltin? Skip

12 0 Answers

▲ Nofsinhar	◆ Punent
● Grigal	■ Majjistral

Figure 9: Online quiz

Gamifying assessment tends to increase pupils' engagement and motivation (Kim, 2015). Other forms of games may also serve as modes of assessment. For example, children can be assessed on their understanding of a news item through a game of bingo. Students shall be given a bingo card each while the teacher asks questions on the news items which would be serving as a comprehension passage. Colourful visuals are included for increased engagement and enhanced understanding. Each student is to draw a circle around the answer he/she deems correct and should keep doing so until all nine boxes on their bingo card are marked. Not all students will have the same bingo card. Two different versions of bingo cards are to be distributed so that around half of the pupils would mark all their boxes before the other half. An example of a set of questions and a sample bingo card based on <https://tvmnews.mt/news/virtual-reality-headset-tiehdok-sal-afrika-wagt-li-taghti-donazzjoni-lill-missio/> is provided in Table 22.

Bingo Questions (for teachers)	Bingo card (for students)		
1. F'liema post se tittella' l-inizjattiva li se tqajjem kuxjenza dwar it-tbatijiet ta' nies inqas ixxurtjati?	 <p>In-nies tal-lokal</p>	 <p>Il-Knisja</p>	 <p>L-Afrika</p>
2. F'liema post se tieħdok ir-realtà virtwali?			
3. Għal-liema post ikollhom jimxu n-nies inqas ixxurtjati?			
4. X'jisimha l-organizzazzjoni missjunarja?	 <p>Missio Malta</p>	 <p>Il-voluntiera</p>	 <p>Il-Belt</p>
5. X'jisimha l-inizjattiva li se ttella' l-organizzazzjoni?			
6. B'hal min tħossok bir-realtà virtwali?			
7. Xi nsejħulhom dawk in-nies li jmorru jgħinu lil oħrajn inqas ixxurtjati?	 <p>Donazzjonijiet</p>	 <p>Ejja Imxi Miegħi</p>	 <p>Ilma</p>
8. X'inhu mħeggeġ jagħti l-pubbliku?			
9. Minn xiex huma neqsin in-nies inqas ixxurtjati?			

Table 22: Bingo questions and bingo card about Newsbus

Another game which may potentially be used is called Roll and Chat. This game assesses pupils' speaking skills. Figure 10 provides a template which can easily be turned into a die with prompts based on the following news item: <https://tvmnews.mt/news/il-medja-tat-temperatura-tad-dinja-gholiet-hafna/>. Pupils are to roll the die and verbally reply to the prompts, all of which require a lengthy answer.

Ixĥet id-Damma u Ddiskuti

(Ibbażata fuq: <https://tvmnews.mt/news/il-medja-tat-temperatura-tad-dinja-gholiet-hafna/>)

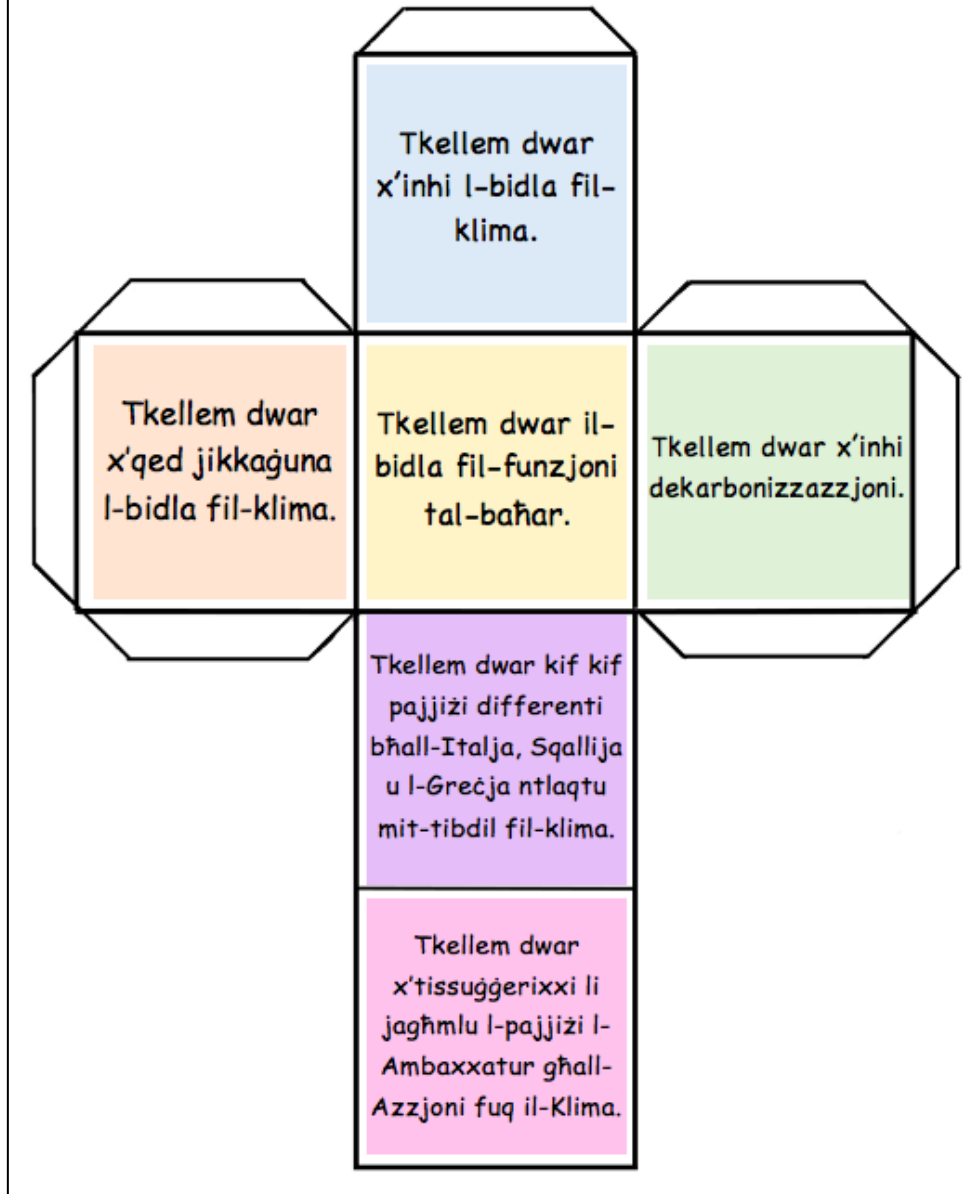


Figure 10: Roll and chat activity

For this game, students may be split into pairs or groups and a representative from each group is to roll the die. After attempting to elaborate on the prompt as a group, answers are to be shared with the rest of the class. If classroom space is too limited for this game, one should consider taking this game outside or using another classroom, if available.

These suggestions acknowledge teachers' main constraint of limited time in light of the vastity of the curriculum. This is because students' speaking and comprehension skills, for example, would still be developed all while using current news items as a resource.

5.2.2 Being Well-Informed And Well-Prepared as Educators

As interviewees pointed out (see sub-section 4.2), educators who incorporate child-oriented news segments in their lessons have to be well-informed and well-prepared to be able to explain a news event further, clarify doubts and answer any questions children may have. Since news is all around us and as teachers noted children are often exposed to standardised news (see sub-section 4.4.1), being informed and prepared is important even for educators who do not intend to implement such news segments. All educators may be faced with a situation where 9-year-old students consult and discuss with them certain news items especially since teachers tend to be a reliable and trustworthy point of reference for primary school children (Manju, 2018).

One cannot expect to foster a need for watching the news in children without leading by example. Therefore, teachers are encouraged to keep updated with the latest happenings, both locally and abroad, by watching or reading the news daily using any preferred means of accessing reliable news sources. They are also encouraged to watch news programmes tailored for children because these may help them with how best to explain a news event by excluding unnecessary detail and without twisting or oversimplifying facts. Table 23 provides a list of child-oriented news programmes around the world.

Country	Programme Name	Network	Website
Argentina	Paka Data	Pakapaka	https://www.facebook.com/canalpakapaka
Australia	BtN	ABC Me	https://www.abc.net.au/btn
Belgium	Karrewiet	Ketnet	https://www.ketnet.be/themas/karrewiet
Belgium	Niouzz	RTBF	https://auvio.rtbf.be/emission/les-niouzz-15
Denmark	Ultra Nyt	DR Ultra	https://www.dr.dk/drtv/serie/ultra-nyt_7071
Germany	logo!	KiKa	https://www.zdf.de/kinder/logo
Ireland	News2day	RTÉ Two	https://www.rte.ie/kids/news2day/
Netherlands	Jeugdjournaal	NPO Zapp	https://jeugdjournaal.nl
Norway	Supernytt	NRK	https://nrksuper.no/serie/supernytt
Sweden	Lilla Aktuellt	SVT Bam	https://www.svtplay.se/lilla-aktuellt
United Kingdom	Newsround	CBBC	https://www.bbc.co.uk/newsround
United States	Nightly News: Kids Edition	NBC	https://www.nbcnews.com/nightlykids
United States	Teen Kids News	First-run syndication ¹⁰	https://teenkidsnews.com

Table 23: Examples of current child-oriented news programmes

Due to the lack of local news programmes tailored for children, teachers may use the visuals of foreign child-oriented news programmes and add a Maltese voice-over to

¹⁰ A programme which is broadcast on a major network, and broadcast simultaneously on over two or more stations affiliated with such television network (Law Insider, 2022).

eliminate the language barrier. Otherwise, Maltese teachers are to revert to standardised news items and render them child-friendly. I am doing so through my suggestions by creating activities based on how modes were used in the analysed child-oriented news items.

Teachers are expected to read and inform themselves of the latest study findings as part of their continuous professional development (Cutler, Cooper & Gindidis, 2022). Thus, educators are encouraged to read related research to be better informed on the benefits watching the news has on children (see sub-section 4.1.2) and how to effectively implement child-oriented news with their students in various types of lessons. Examples of helpful literature are provided in Table 24.

Name of Resource	Author	Date of publication
News and America’s Kids	Michael B. Robb	2017
The making of citizens: Young people, news and politics	David Buckingham	2000
Using TV news to integrate the four skills: A guide for EFL teachers	Christina Evans	2006
Use the news: In the English classroom	ABC Education	2019

Table 24: Helpful literature about child-oriented news programmes

Since I am aware of teachers’ limited time and workload, reading at least one resource, or its main findings is suggested. Moreover, informing oneself of at least the three main news events of the week should be sufficient. The main news events are usually the most talked about and/or the ones appearing towards the beginning of news programmes. Resorting to child-oriented news programmes may facilitate this process since news items tend to be shorter and more concise. Furthermore, the SLT can help in this regard by

organising related Continuous Professional Development (CPD) sessions by inviting news anchors or other people who work with the news outlets. These knowledgeable guest speakers may, for example, share ideas on how to best render standardised news items child-friendly. Alternatively, the SLT can supply the school with a screen displaying the day's news events next to the notices. This will benefit both teachers and students while emphasising the importance of staying updated with whatever is happening around us.

Apart from consulting the literature, teachers should also maintain frequent communication with parents through, for example, online platforms used for parent-teacher communications or during parents' days. This is because parents can better guide teachers by giving them insights on, for example, how children are impacted by the news at home or what 9-year-olds wish to know more about. These insights can better guide educators' planning and instruction. Similarly, Epstein (2001) noted that the main purpose of creating and fostering a collaboration between schools and families is to support teachers in their work and enhance students' academic achievements.

Other colleagues, especially if more experienced, can also be very insightful in this regard. Teacher collaboration has been found to improve teachers' practice, address the diverse needs of students and increase students' attainment (Poulos et. al, 2013). Collaborating and discussing with other teachers may lead to more effective implementation of such a resource as well as a means of sharing one's creative ideas and experiences intended to render lessons more fun, engaging and educational for the students.

5.2.3 Overcoming Children's Disinterest in the News

As the data analysis suggested in the previous chapter (see sub-section 4.3.2), Year 5 students are generally disinterested in news although this cannot be generalised to all Year 5 students. Educators play a great role in improving children's relationship with the news through the way these are used in their lessons.

To highlight the benefits and importance of news, teachers may dedicate a part of their classroom, for example a notice board, to news. Figure 11 shows an example of this.



Figure 11: News board in the UK classroom

(Image retrieved from: <https://www.fenews.co.uk/skills/picture-news-taking-the-weekly-news-agenda-into-schools/>)

Children shall be invited to find and bring news articles or pictures from news items of their choice and pin them to the board throughout the scholastic year. Otherwise, they can choose to simply write down the headline or a few sentences about the news event. This practice may also double as a way of making pupils aware of certain news outlets' biases when critically evaluating news items, thus improving children's digital literacy skills (Kleemans et al., 2019). Apart from increasing other pupils' interest in the news, this practice may serve as a teacher's guide, facilitating their planning and instruction. Fitting pupils' interests and needs makes teaching learner-centred (Olugbenga, 2021). Ideally, teachers choose a recent news item from a local child-oriented news programme which

would have been suggested by the students themselves through the news board in the classroom. These news items may be incorporated into different types of language lessons (see sub-section 5.1.1).

Utilising local and recent news contextualises teaching and learning more, thus, rendering it more interesting and familiar. Figure 12 shows an example of a news board based on current news items in the local context. QR codes which lead interested children to the child-oriented news item or the news programme in which it featured may be provided. This facilitates children's access to news. Using their learnpads, students may simply scan the QR code and watch the news item in their free time at school or at home.



Figure 12: Newsboard in the Maltese classroom

If another news item is chosen apart from the ones students suggest, teachers are to ensure that this is relevant to Year 5 children's realities and in line with their interests. The following questions may be utilised to help render the chosen news item more relevant and relatable, and thus more interesting, to students:

1. What do you think happened? Can you explain this news event in your own words?
2. Where did it take place? Have you ever been to this place?
3. Who was involved? Were there any children? What else do you notice about the children in the news item?
4. What do you notice about the people's clothes? How are they important to the news item?
5. Look at the people's faces. What do you notice? How do you think they are feeling? What makes you think so? Why do you think they are feeling that way? How would you feel if you were to be in that situation?
6. What would you have done if you were in that situation?

Through these questions, students are made to relate to and empathise with the participants and possible victims featured in the news item. Apart from taking on their perspective, students are encouraged to put themselves into the participants' shoes and think, feel and act as if they were in the portrayed situation.

When choosing a news item, educators have to ensure that its implementation is also engaging for 9-year-olds. For example, the news item may be introduced by initially only displaying the headline, such as '*Car Crashes into a Shop in Valletta*', or an image which captures the main event. An example of such an image is shown in Figure 13. Then, students will be asked to make predictions about the news item based on these prompts.



Figure 13: A car which crashed into a shop

(Screenshot retrieved from Logo's episode which aired on 9/6/22)

Educators should also allow for opportunities in which children explain the news themselves especially if they would have watched the news item before it is treated in class. This practice would encourage other students to watch the news especially since children tend to identify with other children like them (Cordonier & Deschenaux, 2014).

Before watching and discussing the news item, in for example a speaking lesson, students may be provided with screenshots of the news event. They shall then sequence these screenshots according to how they predict the news item will turn out. After watching and discussing the news event, students may rearrange their picture sequence accordingly. To render such an activity more interesting, students may be asked to take a photo of the picture sequence reflecting their prediction using their tablets and then take another photo of the picture sequence reflecting their comprehension. After comparing the two photos, they can then verbally express the reasoning which led to their changes. Figure 14 shows the correct sequence of screenshots from a particular news item according to how they were shown.

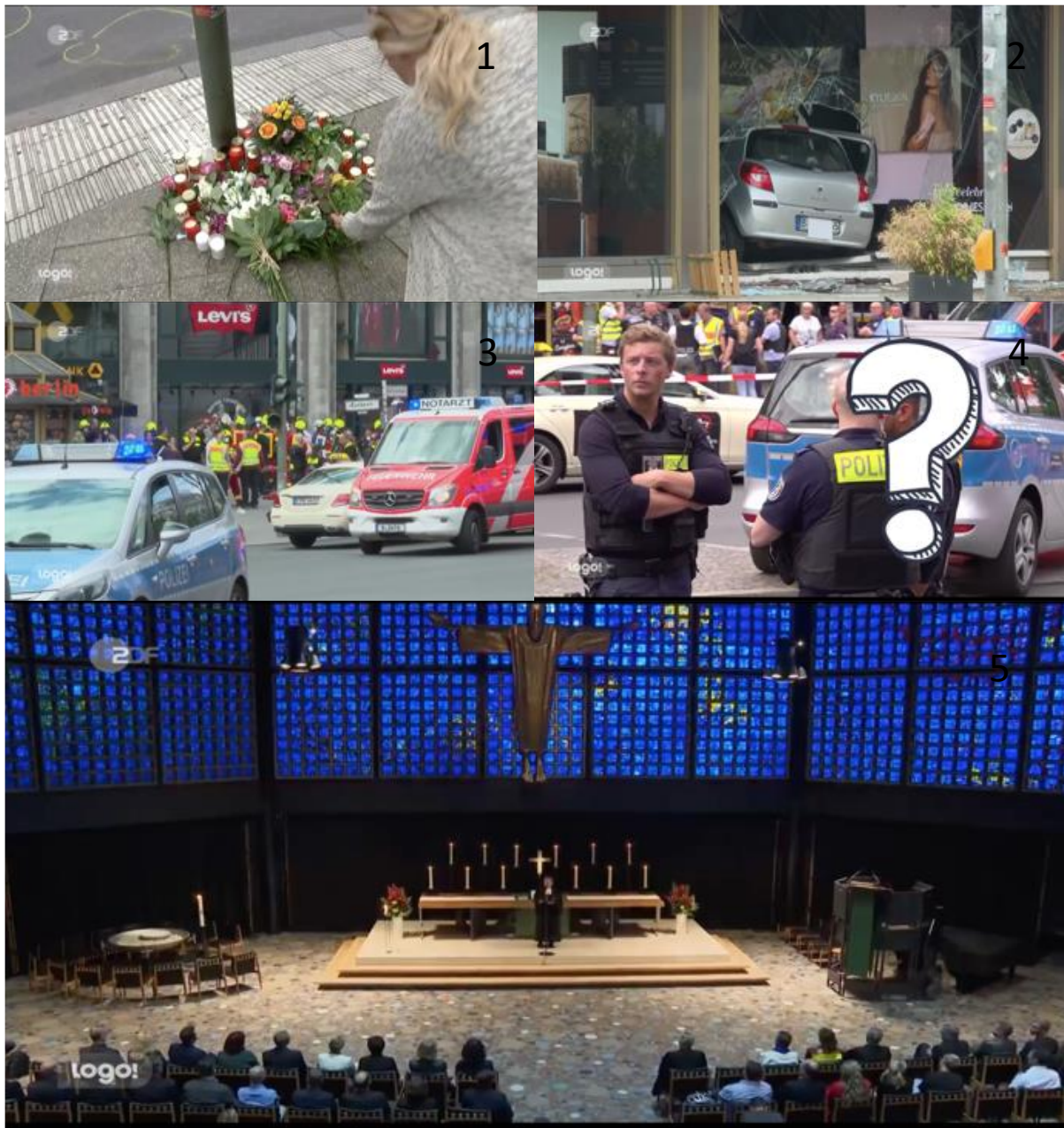


Figure 14: Sequenced screenshots of a news item

(Screenshots retrieved from Logo's episode which aired on 9/6/22)

When discussing a news event or answering children's questions about it, educators may choose to use a puppet. Attention is to be given to the intonation, positive facial expressions and use of gestures. It has been concluded that puppets help enhance in-class discussions and encourage more communication by creating a positive, relaxed climate (Kröger & Nupponen, 2019). Children can address questions to this puppet, for example

representing the news anchor, a victim or a witness, and the educator may answer children's questions and clarify any doubts through this puppet as shown in Figure 15. Apart from familiarising students with the news anchor's job, this also reflects the extensive preparation needed from both a news anchor as well as an educator.



Figure 15: Using puppets in the classroom

(Image retrieved from: <https://www.everyonepress.org/my-puppet/?lang=en>)

Another engaging way of incorporating news is by creating a news programme on a classroom or school level. If created on a school level, this would imply that news is all around us and informing ourselves of the latest happenings should be part of our daily routines. If created on a classroom level, students may be split into small groups and each is assigned a different news item tailored for children. To further inform themselves on the news item they may be encouraged to use their learnpads and watch the news item before acting it out to their peers. They will be allowed time to brainstorm ideas, write a script and assign roles, such as, the news anchor, victims and interviewees. The use of costumes and props shall also be encouraged to make it all the more engaging for the pupils. An example is shown in Figure 16. Therefore, the implementation of child-oriented news items is being made more engaging through the use of drama, group work and technology. This can serve as a way of assessing students' speaking skills, keeping teachers' time constraints in mind.



Figure 16: An example of children using costumes and props during a role-play in the classroom

(Image retrieved from: <https://connect.cehd.umn.edu/setting-the-stage-for-learning/>)

To keep their classmates engaged, educators shall remind children presenting the news item of the importance of using gaze together with refined and positive facial expressions to enhance communication with the audience. The use of facial expressions is also important for teachers when choosing which news items to portray in class (see sub-section 4.3.1).

To continue developing their speaking skills at home, Year 5 students may be invited to watch a news item, summarise it and share their thoughts and feelings through a short video of themselves. Educators may discuss the use of appropriate clothing in line with the news item, the use of facial expressions, direct gaze with the audience and minimal gestures. Therefore, once again technology is being incorporated to render homework more interesting (Costley, 2014), however, this does not necessarily lead to a higher homework completion rate (Filosa, 2014).

5.2.4 Minimising the Negative Effects of Watching Child-Oriented News

In sub-section 4.4.2, educators showed great awareness of the potential negative effects news may have on Year 5 pupils. They strongly believe that child-friendly explanations are key to minimising such possible effects. Thus, it is the educator's responsibility to ensure that the news item is explained well enough in words that children can comprehend. Therefore, educators should ensure the use of simple vocabulary less any technical terminology such as 'defamation' or 'bureaucracy'. Moreover, when the children's first language is used, this tends to facilitate understanding.

Whenever news is used as an educational resource, teachers must plan for activities which focus on students' feelings to put their minds at rest. News topics which may seem somewhat 'controversial' for some, such as politics, abuse and racism, should not be completely excluded. This is in line with teachers' firm belief that exposure to certain news items makes children more aware and knowledgeable on how to act (see sub-section 4.1.2). Therefore, when dealing with such topics, emphasis should be placed on how children should act. Avoiding such topics will only consolidate and reproduce the taboo.

Students' feelings may be prioritised through discussions, writings or drawings. If such feedback is negative, the rarity of events, clear explanations, preventions and solutions are to be emphasised (The National Association of School Psychologists as cited in Reis, 2012). This implies that children's perspectives has to be kept in mind meaning that teachers have to think about what might worry or stress 9-year-old children or what could have possibly been unclear for them to understand, as interviewed teachers pointed out. In line with educators' insights, in case of a natural disaster where solutions cannot be provided, emphasis should be placed on how one should act. The following questions may prove to be helpful in sparking a discussion to enhance clarity and put children's minds at rest:

1. What was the news item about?

2. Where did it take place?
3. Who was involved?
4. Why do you think this took place?
5. Have you ever been in such a situation? Have you ever experienced this event? Do you think it happens often?
6. How large is the risk of this event taking place in Malta?
7. What would you have done if you were in that situation?
8. How can you protect yourself in this situation?
9. Can you suggest places where to find shelter/ help?
10. Can you name people who can give you a helping hand?
11. How can you protect others in this situation?
12. What usually leads to such an event?
13. How can you avoid finding yourself in this situation?
14. How are you feeling? Is there anything which is scaring/ worrying you?

To be able to handle such an eventuality where children are negatively impacted by the news, teachers also have to be well-prepared and well-informed about the news event dealt with during the lesson (see sub-section 5.1.2).

Writing down on the whiteboard important or difficult terms and figures or using accompanying visuals also enhances clarity. Relevant information and other related ideas may also be written down. This practice increases deep understanding and serves as an effective tool for information processing (Armour, Schneid & Brandl, 2016). Students themselves may be encouraged to jot down their ideas, understanding, solutions and preventions to encourage active participation, collaboration and sharing of knowledge (Callanan, 2014).

When faced with situations where children are negatively impacted by news events, one needs to consider the use of visuals since many children understand and retain information better when this is presented visually (Van Der Molen & Van Der Voort, 2000).

If visuals are to be used, teachers are to ensure the exclusion of graphic content. For example, Figure 17 which includes several flowers as a roadside memorial may be used to refer to the deceased victims of the accident in the news item.



Figure 17: Roadside memorial in Logo

(Screenshots retrieved from Logo's episode which aired on 9/6/22)

Other examples include the portrayal of people on the streets, vehicles, animated and real-life cars in traffic and people and workers on the accident site instead of portraying injured or dead people. Certain news events may be explained further through the use of cartoons because, since these are less realistic, they tend to negatively impact children less. An example is shown in Figure 18.



Figure 18: The use of animations

(Screenshots retrieved from Newsbus episode 13)

Since blood is hinted at through red marks on the stick figure's face, the lack of realism decreases the picture's potential to negatively impact children. If ready-made pictures or videos which aid explanations exist, educators may opt to create their own custom-made animated videos to suit their needs. The example shown in Figure 19 was created using Animaker.

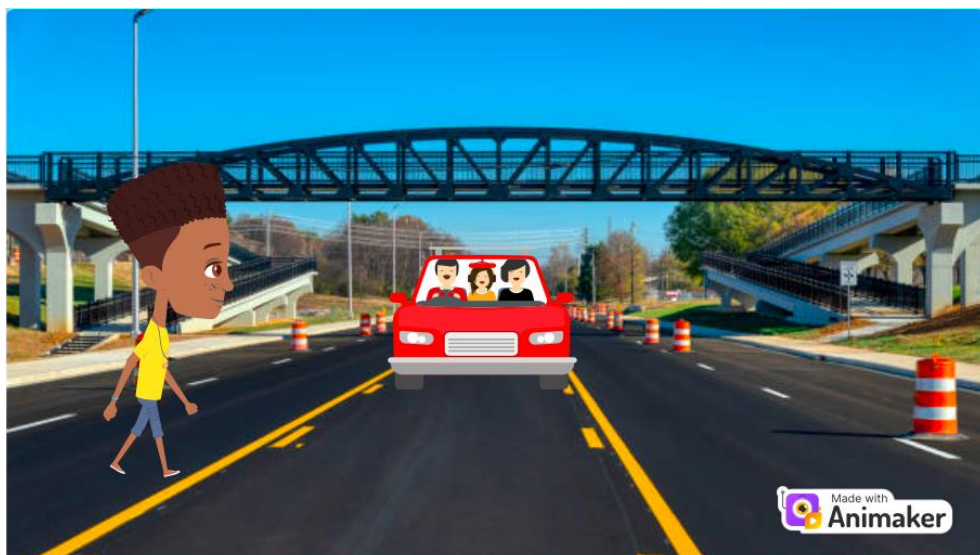


Figure 19: Custom-made animated motion picture

(Image created using: <https://www.animaker.com>)

Furthermore, the classroom's whiteboard may be used to display drawings of the news event in question, as reflected in Figure 20.

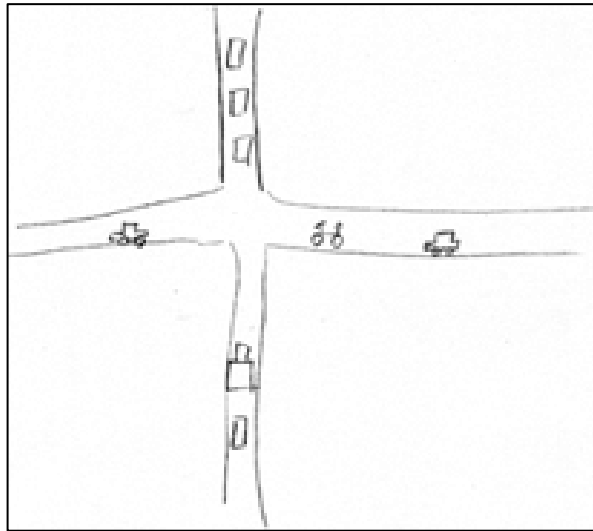


Figure 20: Drawing of important elements of a news event

(Image retrieved from: https://www.researchgate.net/figure/Drawing-of-the-concept-of-an-intersection-as-a-structural-concept_fig1_221600756)

Ideas which are difficult to draw such as 'chaos' or 'confusion' should be written down instead to avoid distracting children with visuals. Otherwise, children will focus more on the drawing than the term itself.

Students' emotions and feelings should also be prioritised through homework. According to Milbourne and Haury (1999), homework is an important aspect of the learning process as it helps children revisit and reinforce what they would have learned in class. Journaling, for example, enhances reflection, facilitates critical thought and promotes the expression of feelings (Walker, 2006). As homework, Year 5 children may be encouraged to draw or write a few sentences in their journals about how they feel after having watched or heard a news item. This is especially important if the news item may potentially upset, stress, scare or worry children. This serves as a way for the educator to check how each child was impacted by the news item treated in class. These negative impacts are then to be

worked upon in class or together with parents or other professionals, as deemed necessary by the educator.

Some popular news events may instil a negative reaction in most children within the school. Therefore, on an administrative level, special assemblies are to be held. These can be delivered by the SLT or by a group of students. As teachers shared (see sub-section 4.3.1) involving children may prove to be more effective and engaging. Therefore, a particular group of students may re-enact a particular news event and present it to the rest of the school, potentially also in the form of a pre-recorded video as shown in Figure 21. Once again, keeping children’s perspectives in mind, further explanations and solutions should be emphasised using simple vocabulary.



Figure 21: Children creating a news item

(Image retrieved from: <https://www.warrencountyrecord.com/stories/forget-the-intercom-morning-broadcasts-are-how-rbe-students-give-the-news,54167>)

The SLT is also encouraged to dedicate an assembly once a week to tackle in more depth a particular news item from the previous week.

5.3 Using Child-Oriented News Items at Home

Parents are crucial in children's development and education since they ensure the holistic growth of children, encompassing both their mental and physical development. (Ceka & Murati, 2016). Although parents are aware of children's development, they still require pedagogical information on their right to educate their children (Mojsovsja-Koteva, 2006). In section 5.1, I have presented various ideas of how primary school teachers can make effective use of child-oriented news in their classrooms. However, in this section, I will be providing examples of activities and exercises which parents can carry out with their 9-year-old children to enhance learning and understanding while minimising the potential negative impacts of child-oriented news on children.

5.3.1 Using Child-Oriented News Items for Learning at Home

As indicated in section 2.4.3, parents and guardians play a great role in children's exposure to and learning from news items. Therefore, caregivers should not prohibit 9-year-old children from consuming the news (Livingstone & Helsper, 2008), especially if it is tailored for them. Caregivers should also keep in mind that, as teachers themselves experienced (see section 4.2), children's amount and quality of exposure to news as children, will determine their outlook and relationship with the news as adults.

The dissemination of information booklets, seminars and presentations which highlight the benefits of children consuming the news shall be helpful. These can be created and held by the schools or by the teachers especially since many teachers are aware of the educational value of such programmes (see sub-section 4.1.2) and watch the news as a result of feeling the need to remain updated with the latest happenings (see sub-section 4.2.3). Seminars, both physical or online, may have guest speakers, such as a journalist or a news anchor, who can better inform parents and answer any questions they may have. Parents are encouraged to ask their child's school or teacher for more information in this regard.

Furthermore, social means of accessing the news, such as through the news programme's website, should be considered. This is because many children, just like some teachers, seem to prefer social means of watching the news over television (see sub-sections 4.2.3 and 4.3.2). As an educator, I intend to share such websites and child-oriented news programmes' schedules with my students (see section 5.2.2).

Just like a teacher has to be well-prepared and well-informed when treating a news item in the classroom (see section 4.2), parents should also be when discussing or watching the news with their children. Therefore, caregivers should watch or read the news themselves and be informed of the latest updates. This is to prevent misinforming children. Parents should also lead by example, that is, parents should often watch the news in front of their children. This is because children retain a lot from their parents in their adulthood (Stephens, 2007).

Parents should additionally encourage and help 9-year-old children to understand the news (Saylor et al., 2003). According to educators, few parents watch the news and at the same time explain it to their children (see sub-section 4.4.1). However, co-viewing is highly suggested and is a fruitful practice which renders news content more relatable to the child (Lawrence and Wozniak, 1989). Watching the news with children, even the second time at a slower pace, also leads to better understanding. This is more successful if followed by a discussion which may also be led by the child.

1. What was the news item about?
2. Where did it take place?
3. Who was involved?
4. Why do you think this took place?
5. How could this have been avoided?
6. Did you learn something new? What is it?
7. Have you ever been in a similar situation before? When?

8. What would you have done if you were in that situation?

9. Did you like this news item? Why or why not?

Through such discussions, parents are encouraged to render the news item more understandable and relatable to the child since this usually grasps children's attention and increases their interest in getting to know more. This is because, as discussed in sub-section 4.3.1, a relatable news segment makes it more significant and meaningful to the young viewers.

Communicating with trusted adults helps children manage their emotions and understanding (Silveira, 2019). During such discussions, emphasis should also be put on answering children's questions and clarifying their doubts even about the news item's language and vocabulary. According to teachers, child-friendly explanations made up of simple vocabulary and excluding any technical terminology are what makes news educational (see section 4.4). Journalism terms such as 'follow-up' and 'attribution' (NYFA, 2016) may be too difficult for children to understand.

Finding related pictures or videos from the web or even resorting to the news programme's website can be very useful. Encouraging 9-year-olds to engage with the news website, particularly if it allows direct communication with the producers, is beneficial since producers can sometimes answer their questions with more accuracy and detail than caregivers. Figure 22 shows the different means one can communicate with Logo's news outlet.

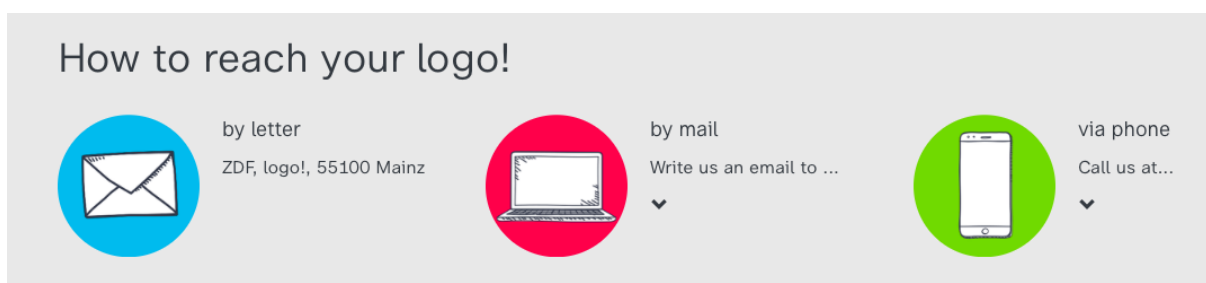


Figure 22: Different means of contacting Logo

(Image retrieved from: <https://www.zdf.de/kinder/logo>)

Since children may prefer to express themselves and their understanding through different means, they shall also be given the option of doing so through, for example, writing or drawing in a journal. They should be encouraged to choose at least one news item from the day's news and draw their understanding of it. This may either be the one which intrigued them the most or the one about which they have the most questions and doubts. Alternatively, children may also opt for drama by, for example, re-creating the chosen news item using different toys and props (see Figure 23). These can also be passed on to their teacher for further discussions and clarifications. The teacher may also refer the child accordingly to ensure that he is given help from the right sources.



Figure 23: A child narrating a news story using toys

(Image retrieved from: <https://www.howwemontessori.com/how-we-montessori/2022/07/encouraging-independent-story-telling.html>)

The abovementioned activities which parents can carry out with their children imply that parents have a role in rendering child-oriented news items even more understandable, relatable and educational. Furthermore, through these activities children's general disinterest in the news which educators mentioned repeatedly (see sub-section 4.3.2) may decrease. This means that indirectly parental intervention helps children become actively involved citizens and critical information processors (Saylor et al., 2003). Parental

intervention also improves children's media literacy (Sparrow, 2007) and moral reasoning such as helping and defending victims of injustice (Berks, 1994).

5.3.2 Minimising Negative Effects of Watching Child-Oriented News

Parents should also be informed of any potential negative effects 9-year-old children may experience after watching the news, as discussed in sub-section 2.4.1. Therefore, the aforementioned information booklets, seminars and presentations delivered by schools or teachers shall also point out this potentiality. Educators seem to be aware of such negative impacts (see sub-section 4.4.2). Therefore, parents are encouraged to engage in age-appropriate discussions about such potentiality considering children's perspective.

Apart from encouraging children to watch and understand the news, caregivers also play an important role in minimising any potential harm (Saylor et al., 2003). Completely prohibiting news consumption is not suggested. This is because, according to Seiter (2007), protection intensifies children's negative emotional responses since they would lack facts restricting them from talking about what they might have heard elsewhere. Similarly, teachers pointed out that picking up partial information regarding a particular news item may also lead to such negative effects. As a matter of fact, "information brings... emotional security into children's world" (ZDF, 2020 as cited in Carter et al., 2021). Information should not be twisted or oversimplified as this might mislead children and does not meet their right to information.

As interviewees suggested in sub-section 4.4.1 in line with The National Association of School Psychologists (as cited in Reis, 2012), news items should be discussed with children with an emphasis on the rarity of certain events, age-appropriate explanations and practical solutions. Interviewed educators highlighted the importance of these as they put children's minds at rest. In line with educators' insights, in case of a natural disaster where solutions cannot be provided, emphasis should be placed on how one should act. The following questions may prove to be helpful in this regard:

1. Have you ever been in such a situation? Have you ever experienced this event? Do you think it happens often?
2. How large is the risk of this event taking place in Malta?
3. What would you have done if you were in that situation?
4. How can you protect yourself in this situation?
5. Can you suggest places where to find shelter?
6. Can you name people who can give you a helping hand?
7. How can you protect others in this situation?
8. What usually leads to such an event?
9. How can you avoid finding yourself in this situation?
10. How are you feeling? Is there anything which is scaring/ worrying you?

Apart from the importance of validating children's feelings (Knippenberg, 2019), caregivers should monitor children's routines such as mealtimes and bedtimes (Bologna, 2022). These might indicate that such conversations are to take place more often than once.

Moreover, although resorting to the news outlet's website for visuals may be beneficial for children's understanding, caregivers should avoid using graphic content or mentioning gruesome details when giving explanations and solutions. However, explaining through animations or cartoons is suggested since these tend to be less gruesome. Therefore, parents can make use of drawings or toys to enrich their explanations. For example, to better explain and simulate a traffic accident in line with a news item from *Logo*, parents may opt to use toy cars as shown in Figure 24.



Figure 24: A simulation of a car accident using toys

(Screenshot retrieved from: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=glslugUI8u4>)

Although child-oriented news programmes employ modes to minimise such negative impacts as discussed in Chapter 4, severe negative impacts which participants alluded to in sub-section 4.4.2 shall not be ruled out. In case of such an eventuality where parents are not able to handle this challenging situation alone, they are encouraged to seek help from professionals who can help their child manage his emotions better. These negative impacts may include emotional or psychological disruptions which might occur either because of a lack of age-appropriateness in the news item, the child's educational and socio-economic backgrounds (Carter & Messenger Davies, 2005) since these determine the frequency of television consumption, the child's age (Smith & Wilson, 2002) or the personal level of empathic concern (Buijzen, Walma Van Der Molen & Sondij, 2007). Otherwise, parents can speak to their child's teacher who will then refer the child accordingly. In such circumstances, it is recommended for educators to seek guidance from other experts, such as support group members or their school's psycho-social team, to explore possible strategies for addressing these difficulties. Additionally, it is crucial that, in such instances, the specialised educational methods designed to assist the child are implemented in a way that fosters their academic development while also ensuring their overall welfare.

5.4 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have provided some pedagogical recommendations that can assist teachers in effectively making good use of news segments tailored for Year 5 children in the classroom. These suggestions can also be beneficial for parents and guardians, as they can engage in the described activities with their children to facilitate, reinforce, or verify their understanding of news items geared towards children. I hope that educators and caregivers will utilise these suggestions as a way of providing primary school children with an engaging and fruitful learning journey. It is important to acknowledge that students differ in their interests, experiences, and relationships with the news. Therefore, certain activities and suggestions may need to be adjusted accordingly. Educators are encouraged to exercise their creativity and professional expertise in crafting lessons incorporating child-oriented news that align with their students' interests and experiences, ultimately enriching children's learning process and facilitating their academic achievements.

Chapter 6 – Conclusion

6.1 An Overview of the Research Outcomes

In this study, I explored teachers' relationship with and understanding of news programmes tailored for children as well as the extent to which such programmes can serve as pedagogical tools in the Upper Primary language learning context. Through this investigation, I was able to provide answers to both research questions posed in this study.

The first research question which I answered through this research was:

1. To what extent are Maltese Year 5 teachers aware of the potential pedagogic value of children's news programmes?

The answer to this question was supplied by the primary school teachers themselves, who took part in this study by sharing with me their understanding of and relationship with the news together with their interpretations of child-oriented news programmes. Comparing and contrasting educators' insights through the thematic analysis unveiled that teachers are willing to use child-oriented news as a classroom resource in all types of language lessons; child-oriented news as an educational resource requires well-informed and well-prepared teachers; child-oriented news is not necessarily engaging to all and child-friendly explanations determine the pedagogical value of news. Teachers' willingness to use child-oriented news as an educational tool was influenced by their personal relationship with the news as adults which was in turn influenced by their relationship with the news as children. Moreover, this study's findings demonstrate that teachers are aware of the positive and negative effects news may have on children and are able to provide suggestions on how to reduce the latter. Educators also pointed out the need for one to be well-informed and well-prepared when using news in the classroom, especially in light of children's general tendency of disinterest in the news.

The second research question which I answered through this research was:

2. Based on the outcomes of the first research question, also viewing the outcomes of my multimodal interpretation, which suggestions can one come up with to initiate, enhance or facilitate the use of child-oriented news items within the Maltese Upper Primary language learning context?

Educators' voicing of their relationship with the news as well as their understanding of child-oriented news programmes and their potential educational value in this study, reflected the importance of news in one's life. Consequently, based on the teachers' insights as well as on my socio-semiotic multimodal interpretation of child-oriented news items, I provided recommendations on how different news items tailored for children can be employed to improve the educational experience of primary school pupils. The recommendations which I offered include resources and activities which primary school teachers can adapt in accordance with their students' ages, interests and abilities. Furthermore, I explored the educational value of each activity, provided concrete examples of how they can be put into practice, and addressed possible approaches for educators, parents, and guardians to tackle challenges associated with utilising child-oriented news items and rendering standardised news items more child-friendly. In this manner, I showcased different possible methods through which educators, parents, and the SLT can harness their imagination and creativity to design activities with the aim of improving primary school students' relationship with and understanding of news items tailored for children.

6.2 Limitations of this Research

The lack of resources, specifically the lack of a current, local child-oriented news programme proved to be the main limitation of this study. This is because most educators were not familiar with this concept and could not share what children think of such programmes. Thus, they had to continually refer to standardised news items. Moreover, I

had to base a substantial part of my multimodal analysis on a foreign child-oriented news programme.

Another limitation of this research was that I did not implement the multimodal suggestions which I derived from my socio-semiotic multimodal interpretation and teachers' insights on using child-oriented news in their teaching. Therefore, these suggestions can form the basis of future work by being implemented, and if needs be adapted, to suit primary children based on their year group.

Since a semi-structured interview should ideally not be too long, each interview was limited to a maximum of an hour. Given more time, I would have tapped into the different ways news items can be used when teaching curricular subjects other than languages. I would have also explored teachers' insights about how they can collaborate with caregivers on this topic and the extent to which their teacher training prepared them to implement news in their teaching.

6.3 Suggestions for Further Studies

Future studies related to this research may include an analysis of what Maltese teachers and children think of local child-oriented news – their understanding and relationship with it. To capture children's insights and allow them to voice their opinions and experiences, foreign child-oriented news segments may also be used, and these may be in English or any other language. In the case of the latter, children will be able to show which modes they paid the most attention to while watching and attempting to understand. This can consequently guide future producers of a local child-oriented news programme as well as educators when choosing which news items to choose for their lessons and how to best implement them.

Another study which can be carried out may analyse teachers' effective use of child-oriented news in language lessons with primary school students. These may make use of

qualitative research methodologies with numerous primary school educators. Therefore, future studies may carry out an analysis of the effectiveness of the different activities and strategies suggested in Chapter 5 which relate to creating engaging language lessons using news tailored for children while minimising children's disinterest in the news programmes and dealing with any negative impacts which these might leave on children.

More suggestions for future studies may address the ways in which teacher training can help in raising understanding of child-oriented news programmes, their influence on children and how these can be used in education. This can also touch upon possible ways educators and caregivers can collaborate on this particular topic. Moreover, future studies may also include further recommendations on how child-oriented news can be implemented in the teaching of other curricular subjects for different year groups or how activities including child-oriented news can be adapted for a more inclusive classroom climate.

6.4 Concluding Remarks

As teachers, we gain valuable insights and grow professionally through collaborating with other educators and engaging in dialogue. As learners, we learn from these shared experiences about children's realities, their experiences and their interests. Students' realities and experiences which the teachers shared with me in this study reflect the extent to which children may be impacted, both positively and negatively, by the news even though they are generally disinterested in watching such programmes for various reasons.

This has strengthened my personal belief that, in order to effectively and critically construct lessons and activities which are relevant, understandable, interesting and engaging for primary pupils, educators must put themselves in the students' shoes. I showed that this is possible only after allowing and encouraging children to express their understanding and relationship with ongoing news events and then spark a discussion accordingly. This motivated me to create pedagogical multimodal suggestions about their

use in the primary classroom for educators. Thus, I hope that this study will encourage educators to use their imagination, creativity and professional knowledge to utilise news items suitable for children in their planning and instruction. I intend to do this as I embark on the beginning of my teaching career. I believe that through discussions with their pupils, as primary educators, we can find new ways to effectively implement and integrate child-oriented news items to provide primary children with an improved learning experience.

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Appendix A

Semi-structured Interview Questions

Semi-Structured Interview Questions

English

1. How long have you been teaching? Which year groups have you taught?
2. For how many years did you teach Year 5?
3. What do you understand by 'news'?
4. How important are news items for you?
5. How frequently do you watch the news as an adult and how frequently did you watch the news as a child?
6. What was your opinion on news as a child? What led to such an opinion?
7. How would you define child-oriented news programmes?
8. How do you think child-oriented news programmes differ from news programmes meant for adults?
9. What is your view on news topics to be included in children's news?
10. Based on your experiences, what do students say about news? How frequently do they watch the news?
11. Can you think of any benefits of children's news programmes on primary school children?

12. Can you think of any negative effects of children's news programmes on primary school children?

13. Are you aware of any local attempts of news programmes meant for primary school children and adolescents? What would you include in such a programme?

14. How important do you think it is to contextualise your teaching by making use of children's news programmes?

A news extract is played so that teacher participants would have a clearer understanding of such programmes. A few minutes from Germany's child-oriented news programme, Logo, shall be shown. These few minutes will provide an idea of how such programme is structured including what news items are like.

15. What struck you the most? If you had to compare this to 'adult' news programmes, what differences would you notice?

16. How willing would you be to use extracts of child-oriented news programmes in any of your language lessons? Could you briefly describe how?

17. What limitations or disadvantages could there possibly be of including children's news programmes in language lessons?

Maltese

1. Kemm ilek tgħallem? Liem snin tal-primarja jew sekondarja għallimt?

2. Kemm-il sena ilek tgħallem il-ħames sena primarja?

3. X'tifhem b' 'aħbarijiet'?
4. Kemm huwa importanti l-aħbarijiet għalik?
5. Kemm-il darba ssegwi l-aħbarijiet bħala adult/a u kemm-il darba kont issegwi l-aħbarijiet bħala tifel/ tifla?
6. Meta kont tifel/ tifla, x'kienet l-opinjoni tiegħek fuq l-aħbarijiet? X'seta' wassal għal dik l-opinjoni?
7. Kif tiddefinixxi aħbarijiet immirati għat-tfal?
8. X'differenza taħseb li hemm bejn aħbarijiet immirati għat-tfal u dawk immirati għall-kbar?
9. Kif taħsibha dwar it-temi li għandhom ikunu inkluzi fl-aħbarijiet tat-tfal?
10. Abbażi tal-esperjenza tiegħek xi jgħidu l-istudenti dwar l-aħbarijiet? Kemm-il darba jsegwu l-aħbarijiet?
11. Tista' taħseb f'xi benefiċċji li l-aħbarijiet għat-tfal jista' jkollhom fuq l-istudenti tal-primarja?
12. Tista' taħseb f'xi effetti negattivi li l-aħbarijiet għat-tfal jista' jkollhom fuq l-istudenti tal-primarja?
13. Taf b'xi attentati lokali ta' aħbarijiet immirati għat-tfal tal-primarja u l-adolesxenti? Kieku x'tinkludi fi programm bħal dan?
14. Kemm taħseb li hija importanti li tikkontestwalizza t-tagħlim tiegħek permezz tal-aħbarijiet għat-tfal?

Parti mill-aħbarijiet se tkun qed tintwera sabiex il-parteciċipanti jkollhom idea iżjed ċara ta' dawn il-programmi. Ftit minuti mill-aħbarijiet Ġermaniż għat-tfal, Logo, se jkunu qed jintwerew. Dawn il-ftit minuti se jagħtu idea ta' kif dan il-programm huwa strutturat u x'jinkludi bħala aħbarijiet.

15. X'laqtek l-iktar? Kieku kellek tikkumpara dan il-filmat mal-aħbarijiet tal-adulti, x'differenzi tinnota?

16. Kemm int lest/a biex tuża partijiet minn aħbarijiet għat-tfal fil-lezzjonijiet tal-lingwi? Fil-qosor, tista' tispjega kif?

17. X'limitazzjonijiet jew żvantagġi jista' jkun hemm fl-użu tal-aħbarijiet għat-tfal fil-lezzjonijiet tal-lingwi?

Appendix B

Head of School Permission Letter

Teachers' Information Letter

Teachers' Consent Form

Head of School Permission Letter

Dear Head of School,

My name is Deborah Muscat and I am a student at the University of Malta, presently reading for a Master's in Teaching and Learning in Early Childhood and Primary Education. I am presently conducting a research study for my thesis titled *The Value of Children's News: Multimodal Insights from a Primary Learning Context*. This study aims to establish socio-semiotic multimodal characteristics in child-oriented news items as well as to identify the extent to which Maltese Year 5 teachers are aware of the potential pedagogic value and the multimodal characteristics of such programmes. This project is being conducted under the supervision of Dr. George Cremona.

I am hereby seeking your permission to contact Year 5 teachers within your school and inform them about my study. My data collection methods will involve a one-to-one interview outside school hours. They will be asked a number of questions related to the area of research. The interview will take approximately one hour.

Participation will be entirely voluntary and participants will be free to withdraw at any point, without any repercussions. Data collected will be stored in a non-identifiable form. The teacher's identity will not be noted on transcripts or notes from my interview, but instead, a code will be assigned. The codes that link data to a teacher's identity will be stored securely and separately from the data, in an encrypted file on the researcher's password-protected computer. Only my supervisor and I will have access to this data.

Should you require further information, please do not hesitate to contact me or my supervisor; both our contact details are provided below.

Thank you for your kind consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

Ms. Deborah Muscat

Phone number:

Email address:

Supervisor's email address:

Researcher's signature

Supervisor's signature

Teachers' Information letter

Dear Sir/Madam,

My name is Deborah Muscat and I am a student at the University of Malta, presently reading for a Master's in Teaching and Learning in Early Childhood and Primary Education. I am presently conducting a research study for my thesis titled *The Value of Children's News: Multimodal Insights from a Primary Learning Context*; this is being supervised by Dr. George Cremona. This letter is an invitation to participate in this study. Below you will find information about the study and about what your involvement would entail, should you decide to take part.

The aim of my study is to establish socio-semiotic multimodal characteristics in child-oriented news items as well as to identify the extent to which Maltese Year 5 teachers are aware of the potential pedagogic value and the multimodal characteristics of such programmes. Your participation in this study would help contribute to a better understanding of the educational benefits of children's news and how this could be used in the Maltese Upper Primary language learning context. Any data collected from this research will be used solely for purposes of this study.

Should you choose to participate, you will be asked to participate in a one-to-one interview outside school hours. You will be asked a number of questions related to the area of research. You are free to not answer any of the questions asked. The interview will take approximately one hour.

Data collected will be rendered non-identifiable. The researcher and the academic supervisor are the only ones who will have access to it.

Participation in this study is entirely voluntary; in other words, you are free to accept or refuse to participate, without needing to give a reason. You are also free to withdraw from

the study at any time, without needing to provide any explanation and without any negative repercussions for you. Should you choose to withdraw, any data collected from your interview will be erased.

If you choose to participate, kindly send me an email on deborah.muscat.18@um.edu.mt expressing your interest. Please note that there are no direct benefits to you. Your participation does not entail any known or anticipated risks.

Please note also that, as a participant, you have the right under the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and national legislation to access, rectify and where applicable ask for the data concerning you to be erased. All data collected will be stored in an non-identifiable form.

A copy of this information sheet is being provided for you to keep and for future reference.

Thank you for your time and consideration. Should you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me by e-mail deborah.muscat.18@um.edu.mt; you can also contact my supervisor over the phone: +356 2340 2563 or via email: george.cremona@um.edu.mt.

Ms. Deborah Muscat

Phone number:

Email address:

Supervisor's email address:

Researcher's signature

Supervisor's signature

Teachers' Consent Form

I, the undersigned, give my consent to take part in the study conducted by Deborah Muscat. This consent form specifies the terms of my participation in this research study.

1. I have been given written and/or verbal information about the purpose of the study; I have had the opportunity to ask questions and any questions that I had were answered fully and to my satisfaction.
2. I also understand that I am free to accept to participate, or to refuse or stop participation at any time without giving any reason and without any penalty. Should I choose to participate, I may choose to decline to answer any questions asked. In the event that I choose to withdraw from the study, any data collected from me will be erased.
3. I understand that I have been invited to participate in an interview in which the researcher will ask a number of questions to explore the potential pedagogic value and the multimodal characteristics of children's news programmes. I am aware that the interview will take approximately one hour. I understand that the interview is to be conducted in a place and at a time that is convenient for me.
4. I understand that my participation does not entail any known or anticipated risks.
5. I understand that there are no direct benefits to me from participating in this study. I also understand that this research may benefit others since I will be contributing to a better understanding of the educational benefits of child-oriented news items and how these could be used in the Maltese Upper Primary language learning context.
6. I understand that, under the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and national legislation, I have the right to access, rectify, and where applicable, ask for the data concerning me to be erased.
7. I understand that all data collected will be stored in a non-identifiable form.
8. I have been provided with a copy of the information letter and understand that I will also be given a copy of this consent form.

9. I am aware that, if I give my consent, this interview will be audio recorded (and video recorded) and converted to text as it has been recorded (transcribed).
10. I am aware that, if I give my consent, extracts from my interview may be reproduced in these outputs, either in anonymous form, or using a pseudonym [a made-up name or code – e.g. respondent A].
11. I am aware that my data will be pseudonymised, i.e., my identity will not be noted on transcripts or notes from my interview, but instead, a code will be assigned. The codes that link my data to my identity will be stored securely and separately from the data, in an encrypted file on the researcher's password-protected computer, and only the researcher and academic supervisor will have access to this information. Any hard-copy materials will be placed in a locked cupboard. Any material that identifies me as a participant in this study will be stored securely and rendered non-identifiable.
12. I am aware that my identity and personal information will not be revealed in any publications, reports or presentations arising from this research.

I have read and understood the above statements and agree to participate in this study.

Name of participant: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Thank you for your cooperation. Should you have any queries please do not hesitate to contact me or my supervisor.

Researcher's name: Ms. Deborah Muscat

Researchers' signature: _____

Phone number:



Email address:

Researcher's name:

Dr George Cremona

Researchers' signature:

Email address:



Appendix C

Example of Interview Transcript

Original Teachers' Quotes in Maltese (prior to translation)

Example of Interview Transcript

Speaker 2

Kemm ilek tgħallem u liem snin tal-primarja u sekondarja għallimt?

Speaker 1

Mela din hija r-raba' sena skolastika u dejjem għallimt il-5 sena tal primarja dawn l-erba' snin(.)

Speaker 2

Ngħaddu issa għas-sugġett... X'tifhem b'aħbarijiet?

Speaker 1

Uhm aġġornamenti jew updates ta' affarijiet(.) li aħna mhux dejjem inkunu konxji tagħhom u għalhekk ikun hemm il-ġurnalisti, ir-riċerka eċċetra eċċetra u l-artikli li permezz tagħhom jaġġornawna(.) Aħbarijiet xi ħaġa li forsi mhux dejjem nistennew ukoll u jista' jkun qed nantiċipawhom(.) u nkunu qed nistennew ir-riżultat tagħhom(.)

Speaker 2

Għandek xi xi sugġetti partikolari f'moħħok... xi kriterji ta' x'jagħmel aħbar?

Speaker 1

Uhm aħbarijiet bħalissa gwerra, gwerer cioe, li hemm madwar id-dinja(.) Affarijiet relatati ma' kriminalitajiet... Dejjem tisma' jiġifieri relatati ma' drogi u xorb pereżempju imma dan l-aħħar ukoll pereżempju aħbarijiet fuq il-maratona ta' Puttinu pereżempju(.) jiġifieri mhux dejjem affarijiet koroh(.) ikun hemm ċertu aħbarijiet li jqnqlulek tbissima(.)

Speaker 2

U kemm huwa importanti l-aħbarijiet għalik?

Speaker 1

Jiena aħbarijiet fuq it-televiżjoni ma narax(.) jiġifieri jekk issaqsin(.) mhux ma jinteressanix just inħossni indifferenti kultant forsi għax jien ma ngħaddix minn dak li qed jgħaddi ħaddieħor? Jew forsi jien qed ngħaddi minn affarijiet li ħaddieħor ma jgħaddix minnhom? Imma fuq social media speċjalment(.) inħobb infittex daqsxejn artikli jew jiġuni u niftaħhom ħalli narahom(.) uhm jiġifieri fin-nofs qisu nista' ngħid(.)

Speaker 2

U kemm-il darba iżzomm ruħek aġġornat?

Speaker 1

Fuq il-midja soċjali kuljum nara ċertu aħbarijiet imma fuq it-televiżjoni ili snin issa(.)

Speaker 2

Għalfejn tħoss li l-aħbarijiet fuq it-televiżjoni ma jkunx relevanti għalik?

Speaker 1

Iva, kultant(.) Fis-sens hemm affarijiet li jistgħu jolqtuni personalment ta' jiġifieri(.) imma tant kemm hemm negattività kultant u hawn Malta, speċjalment il-politika ħadet wisq over allura nispiċċa ma nkun irrid nara xejn, qisu mal ħazin jeħel it-tajjeb imbagħad(.) taf kif(.) So qisni niddiżassoċja ruħi mbagħad.

Speaker 2

U fuq il-midja soċjali dan mhux il-każ?

Speaker 1

Uhm ifhimni(.) hemm ta' negattività fuq is-social media(.) jiġifieri għax taf tkissrek u taf tkun velenuża imma ovvjament jekk hemm xi artiklu li jdejjaqni kapaċi nkompli nqalleb(.) Għandi l-għażla ta' xi nsegwi u ma nsegwix(.)

Speaker 2

Fhimtek(.) Meta kont tifel(.) xi kemm-il darba kont issegwih l-[aħbarijiet?]

Speaker 1

[Meta] kont tifel kont inhobb narahom(.) issaqsinix għala(.) Uhm naħseb għax il-ġenituri kienu jarawhom u kont ngħid ħa narahom magħhom(.) Jew forsi kont ngħid bla ma naf(.) ħa nagħmel bħalhom, għax meta nkunu żgħar inkunu ninfluwenzaw ruħna iktar(.) Eħe kont narahom iktar ta' spiss ta' to be honest(.)

Speaker 2

Kienet xi ħaġa li kienet tiġi minn jeddek jew minħabba l-ġenituri?

Speaker 1

Kienet tiġi minn jeddi kif għedtlek għax ġieli kont ninfluwenza ruħi(.) kont ngħid ħa nagħmel bħalhom(.) Ġieli pereżempju il-ġenituri inkoraġġewni biex narahom biex inkun aġġornat(.) u anke mill-iskola(.) Meta kont primarja kienu jgħidulna ħafna l-għalliema biex insegwu l-aħbarijiet biex inkunu aġġornati(.) jiġifieri qisu kien jiġi minn bosta naħat(.)

Speaker 2

Fhimtek(.) X'taħseb li seta' wassal għal din l-opinjoni pożittiva li kellek dwar l-aħbarijiet bħala tifel?

Speaker 1

Naħseb meta nkunu żgħar ħafna... tipo l-età tal-primarja qed nitkellem... ma tantx inkunu konxji tal-gravità tal-aħbar... Jekk tkun aħbar ħażina dejjem... ma nkunux nistgħu nifhmuha perfettament(.) Ma nistgħux nifhmu issa pereżempju fejn jidhol gwerer għax m'aħniex f'waħda(.) aħseb u ara meta konna żgħar... Tirrelata qatt ma tista'(.) qas issa ta' adulti(.) imma lanqas li forsi ċertu empatija tkun iktar kapaċi tiġik(.) meta tkun ikbar(.) Allura kultant nagħzel li illum il-ġurnata aħjar ma nara xejn għax jaqbadni d-dwejjaq imma meta tkun żgħir qisu ċertu affarijiet pjuttost jimpressjonawk(.) Mhux jimpressjonaw b'mod tajjeb biss ta'(.) li

jbellhuk qishom taf kif(.) tkun għadek qed tiskopri d-dinja, tisma' fuq pajjiżi oħra taf kif? So l-kurżità tkun aktar imqanqla ta' età iżgħar(.)

Speaker 2

Fhimtek(.) Kif tiddefinixxi aħbarijiet immirati għat-tfal?

Speaker 1

Aħbarijiet immirati għat-tfal uhm(.) aħbarijiet li għandhom child-friendly language(.) Dik dejjem(.) Ifhem estetikament ikunu daqsxejn attraenti(.) hekk ikkulluruti b'uzu ta' bright colours(.) biex it-tfal iżommuhom engaged ukoll(.) kif aħna nagħmlu fil-klassi wara kolloxx(.) U t-tonalità ta' kif dak li jkun qed jgħid l-aħbarijiet b'tali mod li t-tfal ma jimpressjonawx daqshekk ruħhom(.) Imma aħbarijiet għat-tfal(.) nemmen li l-magħgorparti tagħhom għandhom ikunu pożittivi(.) però t-tfal iridu anke minn età żgħira jitgħallmu wkoll li l-ħajja mhux kolloxx ward u żahar(.) Allura b'xi mod tara kif ħa tgħaddi ċertu aħbarijiet mhux daqshekk pożittivi(.) biex huma jidraw minn età żgħira(.) peress li jixorbu ħafna informazzjoni ta' dik l età(.) li tista' taqlagħha min-naħa u anke minn oħra fil-ħajja.

Speaker 2

Iktar kmieni semmejt child-friendly language(.) forsi tista' tispjegali aħjar xi tfisser [biha?]

Speaker 1

[Uhm] child-friendly language(.) li l-vokabularju ma jkunx daqshekk vast daqslikieku(.) jien naf(.) jien jew int qed niktbu tezi pereżempju jew qed naħdmu fuq assenjament l-Università... Irid ikun skont il-livell u l-età ta' dak li jkun(.) Mhux li jkun informali biss ta'(.) nemmen li ċertu formalità tagħmel tajjeb għax it-tfal hekk ukoll qed jisimgħu ċertu kliem li eventwalment jistgħu japplikaw meta qed jithaddtu jew meta qed jitgħallmu l-iskola(.) imma uhm dejjem għandu jkun vokabularju li jilħaq il-livell tat tfal(.)

Speaker 2

Fhimtek(.) X'differenzi oħra taħseb li hemm bejn aħbarijiet immirati għat-tfal u dawk għall-kbar?

Speaker 1

Aħbarijiet tal-kbar nimmaġina jkun hemm aktar affarijiet grafiċi(.) Perezempju jekk hemm xi qtil(.) u hemm ritratt ta' xi ħadd bil-lizar fuqu mejjet(.) Aħbarijiet għat-tfal ma tistax tagħmilha dik(.) naħseb too much fl-opinjoni tiegħi dejjem(.) Li perezempju issues ta' politika(.) f'tal-kbar okay... I mean tajjeb li tkun agġornat però tat-tfal ma naqbilx(.) Diġà Malta hawn dan it-timbru tat-tikketti u tabelli kollha(.) ma tridx li tibdihom mindu jkunu żgħar it-tfal... Il-lingwaġġ u l-vokabolarju(.) kif tkellimna qabel(.) dawk naħseb l-iktar differenzi li hemm ta'(.)

Speaker 2

Iktar kmieni esprimejt li t-tfal għandhom ikunu infurmati(.) fuq ftit minn kollox(.) Taħseb li hemm temi oħra(.) ftit ilu semmejt il-politika(.) li m'għandhomx ikunu inkluzi assolutament fl-aħbarijiet tat [tfal?]

Speaker 1

[Uhm] qtil, drogi... Avolja ta' eżempju aħna fil-year five ikollhom is-sessions tas-Sedqa(.) Kienu jitkellmu(.) jiġifieri fuq xorb(.) fuq drogi... and that's fine għax tajjeb(.) li jien stess għedt(.) li t-tfal tajjeb li jkunu infurmati fuq ċertu ħażen u ċertu konsegwenzi(.) Imma ċertu ritratti u ċertu filmati li t-tfal jafu jimpressjonaw ruħhom u jibqgħu taħtha qisha(.) li mbagħad jispiċċaw jumbraw l-aħbarijiet jew jisimgħu xi ħaġa u jpenguha xi ħaġa ħażina ħafna(.) Politika u qtil naħseb l-iktar(.) Gwerer... uhm... ma nafx x'inhi l-opinjoni tiegħi rigward il-gwerer(.) Ovvjament jekk qed jitkellem fuq il-gwerra m'intix ħa tgħid ċertu informazzjoni li tista' tevitaha lit-tfal(.) Dawk naħsb(.) għax perezempju imbagħad faqar u ġuħ fid-dinja(.) tajjeb li jkunu jafu t-tfal eħe rigward dawk l-affarijiet(.) Imma bħala topik li ma jitkellmux fuqhom naħseb l-iktar il-qtil(.) u l-politika naħseb l-iktar u daqsxejn il-gwerer ukoll(.)

Speaker 2

Ok(.) U kieku kellhom ikunu trattati(.) il-qtil u l-gwerer(.) imma mingħajr il-graficità(.) x'taħseb kieku dwar it-tema nnifisha?

Speaker 1

Uhm iva(.) diment li l-vokabularju li jintuża(.) il-lingwaġġ cioe(.) ma jkunx daqshekk out there(.) kif taqbad tgħid(.) impressjonanti għat-tfal(.) Li jkun konċiż ħafna(.) just li qed tgħaddi messaġġ lit-tfal illi dawn huma affarijiet li m'għandhomx isiru u għandhom jinqatgħu għal kollox fid-dinja(.) Forsi toħroġ xi ħaġa pożittiva minnha pereżempju(.) jien naf(.) tgħid jekk iżzomm il-paċi mhux ħa jkun hemm il-gwerer(.) Li qed tuża ċertu lingwaġġ li nużaw aħna l-għalliema u anki l-ġenituri mat-tfal(.) qed tgħaddi l-messaġġ li l-gwerra ħażina u fl-istess ħin qed toħroġ xi ħaġa pożittiva minnha - li jekk ikun hemm il-paċi bejn il-pajjiżi(.) gwerer ma jseħħx(.) Tipprova ddur naqra magħha(.)

Speaker 2

Fhimtek(.) Abbażi tal-esperjenza tiegħek xi jgħidu l-istudenti dwar l-aħbarijiet u xi kemm-il darba jsegwuh?

Speaker 1

Kultant it-tfal inħoss li jafu iktar minni aħbarijiet(.) qas temmen(.) Uhm pereżempju hawn(.) qed niftakar it-terremot li kien hemm it-Turkija, dak il-kbir tat-Turkija u s-Sirja(.) Ġew it-tfal l-għada filgħodu qaluli kien hemm terremot kbir li laqat it-Turkija u s-Sirja u jien tipo "Ehe?" (.) Ma kellix idea għax l-aħbarijiet ma segweythomx(.) Imma huma vera kienu infurmati u bdew jgħidu kemm inqatlu s'issa(.) kemm mietu nies jaħasra sa dak il-ħin u kemm iġġarrfu djar(.) sptarijiet(.) skejjel... u qalu li n-nies fosthom il-Maltin qed jiġbru u jagħtu donazzjonijiet lil dawn in-nies tat-Turkija(.) U jien tipo ma naf xejn sakemm fittixt fuqha jien u staqsejt lill-ħbieb tiegħi u kkonfermawli dan(.) Jiġifieri... Ifhem dan it-tfal jaraw l-aħbarijiet minħabba l-ġenituri tagħhom(.) kif għedt jien ftit tal-mumentu ilu(.) Jiena kont nara l-aħbarijiet mal-parents tiegħi(.) Jiġifieri qisu kif kont jien ta' daqshom(.) Ifhem kultant(.) jaf jekk ma jinkoraġġuhomx il-ġenituri(.) ma jarawx. Imma t-tfal illum għandhom aktar aċċess

pereżempju għall-midja soċjali(.) Pereżempju vera li suppost biex ikollok Facebook account irid ikollok minn 13-il sena 'l fuq(.) però naf li għandi tfal li għandhom jien pereżempju(.) U dak mis-social media(.) minn Facebook speċjalment(.) tkun tista' tara ċertu aħbarijiet(.) Jigifieri illum il-għurnata t-tfal għandhom iktar aċċess(.)

Speaker 2

Dan l-aċċess li għandhom għall-midja soċjali(.) taħseb li qegħdin jużawh biex ifittxu li jinfurmaw ruħhom bl-aħbarijiet?

Speaker 1

Le(.) primarjament ma naħsibx jiena(.) Imma kif ikunu fiha jinzertawhom imma mhux għax ifittxu lilhom(.) Jigifieri ma tiġix minn jeddhom(.) ma naħsibx għax huma probabbli biex joqogħdu jiċċettjaw ma' sħabhom jużaw il-midja soċjali(.) Imma mbagħad joqogħdu jqallbu l-Facebook(.) pereżempju jew l-Instagram(.) whatever(.) u jarawhom u jgħidu ħa nidhol ħa nara x'inhil din(.) Imma mhux għax primarjament iridu jfittxu l-aħbarijiet(.)

Speaker 2

Fhimtek(.) Tista' taħseb f'xi benefiċċji li l-aħbarijiet tat-tfal jista' jkollhom fuq l-istudenti tal primarja?

Speaker 1

Jistgħu jinfluwenzaw ruħhom mill-mod kif ikun mitkellem l-aħbarijiet(.) fis sens(.) inti għadek qed tiżviluppa l-ħiliet tas-smiġħ pereżempju(.) li inti tisma' kelma ġdida u tgħid "illaħwa interessanti(.) ħa nfitte fuqha jew ħa nsaqsi lill-mama u l-papa fuqha"... U mis-smiġħ imbagħad tibda titħaddet ċertu vokabularju li inti tkun smajt fuq l-aħbarijiet tat tfal(.) jigifieri(.) permezz ta' dawn l-aħbarijiet... Jigifieri s-smiġħ u t-taħdit nemmen li jibbenefikaw minnhom t-tfal(.) uhm ifhem it-tfal at some point ħa jikbru eventwalment(.) so li jkunu konxji ta' ċertu suġġetti u topics(.) anke jkun daqsxejn sensitivi(.) minn età tenera(.) zghira(.) naħseb li jiggwadanjaw minnha dik(.) Dment li kif għedt l-ewwel l-aħbarijiet ikunu child-friendly(.) Imma ċertu topics tajjeb li jkunu konxji tagħhom(.) imqar ikollhom vera idea

żgħira tar-repercussions tagħhom u ta' kif jistgħu jipprevenu kontrihom permezz ta' dawn l-aħbarijiet(.)

Speaker 2

Fhimtek(.) Tista' taħseb f'xi effetti negattivi did-darba li l-aħbarijiet tat-tfal jista' jkollhom fuq l-istudenti tal-primarja?

Speaker 1

Kultant nafu li t-tfal iħobbu jdawruh il-kliem(.) allura pereżempju(.) tisma' xi haġa mill-aħbarijiet tat-tfal u tiġi fil-klassi u lil sieħbek tgħidlu għax smajt hekk hekk u hekk(.) jien naf(.) jekk pereżempju mietu 50 persuna fil-gwerra tal-Ukrajna tgħidlu “Illaħwa mietu 200 persuna” pereżempju(.) Qisek qed tipprova tgħaddi z-żmien b'haddieħor(.) it-tfal iħobbu jdawru l-kliem(.) qiegħda fin-natura tagħhom(.) kif konna aħna xi darba(.) U kif għedt l-ewwel jekk l-aħbarijiet tat-tfal ma jkunx appropriate għall-età tagħhom(.) it-tfal jistgħu jiġu anzjużi fuq ċerti topics bħalma huma d-droga u x-xorb pereżempju(.) Jekk ma jkunx l-aħbarijiet mitkellem b'mod sew għat-tfal(.) ħa jinfluwenzahom b'mod ħażin imbagħad(.) Imma mbagħad lanqas nejja u lanqas maħruqa(.) Jiġifieri lanqas trid li xi topik daqsxejn negatti(.) lanqas trid tpenġih qisu l-fjuri u l-kampanja u mbagħad it-tfal bil-kontra jmorru jithajru jagħmlu ċertu affarijiet(.) Jiġifieri allaħares qatt iqanqlulhom ċertu kurżità biex wieħed jipprova dik għax l-aħbarijiet qal li dik hekk(.) Il-ħażin ħażin u t-tajjeb huwa tajjeb(.) Jiddependi ħafna mid-delivery(.) It's not what is said but how it is said(.)

Speaker 2

Fhimtek(.) Taf b'xi attentati lokali t'aħbarijiet immirati għat-tfal jew forsi adolexxenti?

Speaker 1

Fuq it-televiżjoni(.) uhm ngħidlek id-dritt m'għandix idea għax ma narax(.) Mhux se ngħidlek li naf u ma nkunx naf(.) Issa fuq il-midja soċjali(.) hemm ċertu artikli eħe(.) iktar għall-adolexxenti milli għat-tfal(.) Għat-tfal naħseb... qas naf jekk qattx rajt to be honest(.) imma pereżempju(.) jien naf(.) Lovin Malta ġieli jiktbu ċertu artikli li jkunu mmirati għall-

adolexxenti(.) pereżempju(.) Ġieli jitfgħu kontenut mhux daqshekk ta' sugu ta' bħalma jitfa' kulħadd imma hekk dawn iċ-ċertu social media groups ngħidilhom jiena ... però ma tantx ngħid għat-tfal imma(.) Mhu qed jiġini xejn f'moħħi onestament(.)

Speaker 2

U kieku kellek tagmel aħbarijiet immirat għat-tfal(.) x'tinkludi fih u kif tistrutturah?

Speaker 1

Uhm nibda billi ngħid il-punti(.) Ħalli jekk il-ġenituri jkunu qed jaraw dawn l-aħbarijiet mat-tfal(.) jekk ikun hemm xi ġenitur li ma jogħġbux xi suġġett partikolari ikun jista' jaqleb(.) So biex nirrispetta lil kulħadd l-ewwel ngħid il-punti... dan bħal meta qed tagħmel komponent tikteb il-pjan(.) nikteb il-punti(.) imbagħad niftaħ fuq kull wieħed minnhom(.) Meta niftaħ fuq kull wieħed minnhom(.) ma rridx indum nitkellem ħafna(.) kif qed nagħmel issa(.) Trid iżzommha daqsxejn konċiża(.) straight to the point(.) għax imbagħad l-attention span tat-tfal hemm ċans li jiddevjaw(.) Ninkludi filmati wkoll għax it-tfal bl-affarijiet viżwalizzati(.) bil-visuals(.) jitgħallmu ħafna(.) Nagħmilhom filmati attraenti(.) pereżempju nintervista tfal daqshom ħalli huma jkunu jistgħu jirrelataw(.) Imbagħad meta jispiċċaw dawn(.) l-aħbarijiet ingenerali... nista' nitkellem pereżempju nagħmel slot ta' xi 2-3 minuti fuq sports tat-tfal stess bħalhom anki forsi biex jinkoraġġixxu daqsxejn ruħhom biex jitgħallmu sport u jipprattikawh(.) U nispiċċa b'messaġġ(.) Issa dan il-messaġġ jista' jkun fuq kwalunkwe suġġett imma t-tfal... bħall-konkluzjoni ta' lezzjoni(.) tispiċċa tajjeb kemm tista' biex it-tfal jieħdu kollox minnha(.) U qabel il-messaġġ nagħmel qisu wrap up ta' dak li jkun intqal(.) So l-ewwel il-punti, tiftaħ fuqhom bil-filmati u mbagħad tagħlaq kollox qisek tagħmel summary.

Speaker 2

Ideat sbieħ ħafna(.) Għandek xi idea dwar it-tul tal-programm u anki bħala ħin li fih jixxandar kieku?

Speaker 1

Mela uhm it-tfal ikunu skola sas-sagħtejn u nofs ġeneralment(.) Naħseb nagħmlu kieku għas-sebgħa jiena(.) għax imbagħad ikollok min imur il-privat(.) min imur id-duttrina(.) tipo dawn l-affarijiet trid iżzommhom f'moħħok(.) xi isports... Allura għas-sebgħa... Jew(.) jien naf(.) pereżempju għat-8 neqsin kwart qabel l-aħbarijiet tal-kbar tal-adulti(.) ngħidilhom jiena(.) biex il-ġenituri jkunu jistgħu joqogħdu magħhom imbagħad ikomplu ħa jaraw l-aħbarijiet għalihom(.) min jarahom(.) Ma ndumx aktar minn kwarta kieku jien(.) Naħseb iktar tiġi wisq għalihom(.) jista' jkun(.) diment li ma jkunx engaged ħafna(.) Imma kieku għat-8 nieqes kwart ta' filgħaxija nagħmlu(.) U forsi s-Sibt u l-Ħadd nagħmlu filgħodu mbagħad(.) Iqumu friski hekk taf kif(.)

Speaker 2

Taħseb li għandu jsir kuljum jiġifieri?

Speaker 1

Int qed iġġibni fiha... jista' jkun li wisq kuljum għax issa qed niġi fiha(.) Uhm forsi tagħmlu erba' darbiet fil-ġimgħa - it-Tnejn, l-Erbgħa, il-Ġimgħa u -Sibt, hekk taqbez ġurnata(.) Jew il-Ħadd flok is-Sibt(.)

Speaker 2

Kemm taħseb li huwa importanti li inti titfa' t-tagħlim tiegħek f'kuntest permezz tal-aħbarijiet tat-tfal?

Speaker 1

Mela jew taħriġ il-fehem jew comprehension imbagħad ikollok mistoqsijiet fuq dak li ntqal(.) Issa qabel fil-kitba kellna ngħallmu kif niktbu skeda(.) Issa skeda kienet tkun pereżempju Monday fit-8 imbagħad fid-9(.) il-programmi tal-ġurnata imma minflok tista' titgħallem kif tikteb il-punti tal-aħbarijiet imqar pereżempju jew tikteb paragrafu... L-ewwel tikteb il-punti u mbagħad tikteb paragrafu fuq kull punt u hekk qisek għandek komponiment twil(.) Pereżempju t-titlu jkun li inti taparsi ġurnalist jew ġurnalista u qed tikteb l-aħbarijiet biex imbagħad eventwalment ħa tgħidhom fil-programm tat-tfal fl-aħbarijiet so dik tiġi kitba jew

composition(.) Smiġħ (.)aħna dis-sena(.) insomma naħseb li kull sena nagħmlu(.) għandna smiġħ hawn listening jisimha l-bullettin tal- aħbarijiet(.) S'issa semmejtlek it-taħriġ il-fehem(.) is-smiġħ(.) il-kitba imma anke t-taħdit pereżempju jekk taqsam it-tfal fi gruppi u kulhadd joħroġ punt tal-aħbarijiet u eżempju jkunu 4 itfal kulhadd joħroġ punt(.) sugġett differenti... min sport(.) minn hekk(.) min hekk... imbagħad toħroġhom l-għalliema erbgħa erbgħa u jgħidu l-bullettin quddiem it-tfal... kwazi kwazi f'kollox(.) f'kull ħila tal-lingwa(.)

Speaker 2

Fhimtek(.) Bħala aħbarijiet innifsu(.) kemm taħseb li jagħmel it-tagħlim iktar kuntestwalizzat għat-tfal?

Speaker 1

Mela one jista' jkollok jista' jkun ikollok tfal li ma jsewax(.) ma jarawx l-aħbarijiet allura permezz tal-aħbarijiet bħala riżorsa għat-tagħlim(.) jistgħu jieħdu minnhom pereżempju jew forsi l-lezzjonijiet bl-aħbarijiet ikunu interessanti ħafna so jinkoraġġixxu ruħhom(.) Hemm il-vokabularju u l-lingwaġġ li jintuża u jitgħallmu dejjem(.) jiktbu aħjar(.) jaraw aħjar u l-aħbarijiet mhumiex sugġett li normalment nitkellmu ħafna fuqu(.) Fis-sens(.) nitkellmu fuq aħbarijiet differenti(.) però ma ngħidux x'jintqal fl-aħbarijiet so t-tfal jistgħu jitgħallmu minnha dik(.) U forsi anke jispiċċaw jinteressaw ruħhom għax il-lezzjoni tkun interessanti għalihom imbagħad jispiċċaw jinteressaw ruħhom fl-aħbarijiet eventwalment(.) U forsi anke jibdeu isegwuhom minn jeddhom għax(.) jien naf(.) tinteressahom is-sezzjoni tal-isport.

FILMAT

Speaker 2

X'laqtek l-iżjed minn dan il-film?

Speaker 1

Ftakart ħafna fuq dak li ddiskutejna jien u inti(.) li kien hemm ħafna tfal involuti fih(.) Ma nafx imma naħseb road safety(.) almenu hekk fhimtu jien għax Ġermaniż ma nifhimx(.)

Huwa topik importanti immens għat-tfal li joqogħdu attenti(.) speċjalment rajt ħafna roti u ftit skuters ukoll(.) li joqogħdu attenti li jmorru fin-naħa t-tajba ħalli jkunu jistgħu jitnaqqsu sew l-aċċidenti(.) Barra minn hekk(.) il-mara li bdiet tgħid l-aħbarijiet ma kinitx(.) kif taqbad tgħid(.) timida. Kienet child-friendly minnha nnifisha(.) kif tidher u kif bdiet titkellem(.) titbissem u dik it-tfal tagħmel ħafna bihom li titbissem(.) tinfluwenzahom b'mod tajjeb(.) Il-filmat għoġobni(.) ftakart f'li għidna wkoll li t-tfal qed jirrelataw kif ukoll ma' tfal bħalhom(.) U ma kienx twil ħafna(.) jiġifieri xi minuta u xi ħaġa(.) għax fil-bidu donnu kien hemm il-punti naħseb li konna semmejnienhom ukoll hux? Għoġobni għax kien konċiż ħafna(.)

Speaker 2

Ok. U kieku kellek tikkumpara dak li rajt mal-aħbarijiet tal-kbar(.) x'differenzi ewlenin taħseb li [hemm?]

Speaker 1

[Uhm] il-mużika li ntuzat(.) tat-tfal kienet aktar soft(.) friendly(.) li t-tfal iżzommhom(.) Il-mod kif kienet liebsa il-mara pereżempju(.) dik mhux ħa taraha liebsa hekk fl-aħbarijiet tal-kbar(.) Tal-kbar ikunu bl-isuits(.) nisa u rġiel jiġifieri(.) imma dik lit-tfal hemm ċertu informalità li hi importanti għalihom ukoll(.) Il-filmati tal-kbar ikunu itwal(.) ikunu iktar informattivi u aktar dettaljati(.) U ma tantx tara tfal fl-aħbarijiet tal-kbar(.) ikun hemm imma aktar jiffokaw fuq topics ġenerali li jolqtu lill-poplu kollu mhux just lit-tfal(.) So li jkun speċifikament fuq it-tfal(.) togħġobni dik(.)

Speaker 2

Iktar kmieni bdejna niddiskutu dwar l-użu tal-aħbarijiet għat-tfal fil-lezzjonijiet tal-Malti u l-Ingliż u semmejna l-ħiliet(.) Ħa nibqgħu mal-użu tal-aħbarijiet għat-tfal fil-lezzjonijiet tal-lingwi(.) taħseb li hemm xi limitazzjonijiet jew żvantaġġi relatati meta qegħdin nużaw l-aħbarijiet tat-tfal bħala riżorsa?

Speaker 1

Irid ikollok biżżejjed informazzjoni biex tagħmel il-lezzjonijiet fuqhom(.) Fis-sens(.) uhm (.) informazzjoni relevanti u vera(.) Fis-sens(.) tista' jekk ha tużaha għall-komponent(.) tivvinta imma trid tkun daqsxejn realistiku wkoll(.) Però togħgobni ħafna li actually li jintużaw aħbarijiet veri biex tużahom għal-lezzjonijiet u jista' jkun li din tkun daqsxejn limitata(.) jista' jkun(.) forsi ma tantx ikun hemm aħbarijiet tajbin għat-tfal(.) U jista' jkollok ukoll(.) bħal kull topik fid dinja, (.) li mhux kulhadd ha jinteressa ruħu(.) So dik jaf tkun drawback għal ċertu għalliema(.) Però hija rizorsa informattiva so nasal nużaha kieku(.)

Speaker 2

L-ewwel punt li semmejt kien li trid tkun infurmat sew(.) Trid tkun infurmat sew l-għalliem jew l-aħbar trid tkun informattiva?

Speaker 1

L-aħbar trid tkun realistika u trid tkun vera(.) U ovvjament l-għalliema (.) qabel... hi u tippjana lezzjoni(.) trid tkun informata as she goes along għax jekk ha tagħti lezzjoni u mbagħad l-għalliema ma tkunx infurmata fuq dak li hemm miktub(.) bla sens. Taqbad u tagħmel xejn imbagħad mill-ewwel(.)

Speaker 2

Dik kienet l-aħħar mistoqsija(.) niringrazzjak ħafna ta' ħinek u talli pparteċipajt(.)

Original Teachers' Quotes in Maltese (prior to translation)

“qatt ma smajt b’aħbarijiet immirati għat-tfal... ma naħsibx li jeżistu lokalment, almenu sa fejn naf jien”

“tibda tibni fuqhom... tibda tieħu informazzjoni, tara x’fiehmu t-tfal... jew x’laqathom l-iżjed”

“ma tistax tieħu wisq minnha”

“turihom filmat jew tagħtihom l-aħbar fi kliem u wara tagħmel comprehension fuqha. Qed nirreferi kemm għar-reading comprehension kif ukoll għat-taħriġ mis-smiġħ li ma jkunu moqrija mill-għalliema imma forma ta’ filmati jew siltiet mill-aħbarijiet”

“biex insaħħu l-għafien tagħhom fis-sugġett”

“niprovdju xi ideat”

“jien xi drabi nuża siltiet mill-aħbarijiet biex ngħinjom jiddeskrivu xi inċident jew xi haġa oħra. Nagħtihom speċi ta’ mudell, anke l-lingwaġġ użat, jibdeu jiffamiljarizzaw ruħhom miegħu”

“bħala punt ta’ tluq għal diskussjoni fil-klassi”

“tista’ toħroġ lezzjoni jew tema minnha”

“taqsam it-tfal fi gruppi ta’ erbgħa u kull grupp jaħdem fuq aħbar partikolari, topik differenti... grupp jieħu l-isports, grupp ieħor jieħu topik ieħor... imbagħad kull grupp jiġi fuq quddiem tal-klassi u jaqraw l-aħbar lill-bqija tal-klassi”

“tgħidilhom biex jaqraw u jisimgħu u jaraw fejn sabu dak il-kunċett grammatikali... kif qed jiġi użat fl-aħbarijiet”

“f’kull wieħed mill-erba’ ħiliet tal-lingwa”

“ma jistgħux jiġu mkejla”

“tajjeb li jibdew isiru jafu u jsiru konxji permezz tal-aħbarijiet għax dawn l-affarijiet jistgħu jiġru. Barra minn hekk, jekk ikunu aware tagħhom, ikunu kapaci jidentifikaw każijiet t’abbuż, eżempju fi sħabhom, u jkunu jafu x’għandhom jagħmlu. Anke jekk allaħares qatt jiġrilhom xi haġa simili, ikunu jafu lil min għandhom ikellmu”

“jitgħallmu wkoll jiċċekkjaw l-aħbarijiet li qed jaraw għax illum il-għurnata hemm ħafna sorsi li mhumiex affidabbli”

“qed jedukaw lilhom infushom f’termini ta’ dak li għandhom ikunu jafu għal ħajjithom issa li qegħdin jikbru”

“jibdew jinvolvu ruħhom fis-soċjetà li qed jgħixu fiha”

“jimmuturaw f’kif jiformaw l-opinjoni tagħhom u jkunu kapaci jwassluha u jiddiskutuha ma’ oħrajn, forsi ma’ tfal oħra bħalhom”

“ikunu kapaci jaħsbu b’mod kritiku u jevalwaw dak kollu li jkunu semgħu u raw”

“kull darba li jisimgħu kelma ġdida, jistgħu jgħidu, ‘Illami! Kemm hi interessanti! Se nfittixha jew insaqsi lill-ommi u lill-missieri dwarha!’... u mbagħad jibdew jużaw il-vokabularju li jkunu semgħu fl-aħbarijiet”

“min ikun segwa l-aħbarijiet, ngħidu aħna xi incident, ikunu kapaċi iktar jiddeskrivu x’għara jekk ikunu mogħtija titlu simili għall-kitba. Wieħed ikun jista’ jieħu idea mill-aħbarijiet u japplikaha fil-kitba.”

“ovvjament l-għalliema... għandha tkun infurmata maż-żmien għax jekk se tagħti lezzjoni u mbagħad l-għalliema mhix informata sew fuq is-sugġett, ma jagħmilx sens”

“jiddependi mill-għalleima kemm hi kapaċi tadatta xogħolha u r-rizorsi għat-tfal u l-livelli differenti tagħhom. Mhix xi haġa speċifikament relatata mal-użu tal-aħbarijiet fil-lezzjonijiet”

“Però, hija rizorsa informattiva jiġifieri kieku nuzaha”

“trid tkun attenta... bħal f’kollox hux”

“kuljum minħabba l-ġenituri tiegħi, riedu jkunu jafu eżattament x’qed jiġri”

“kienet saret rutina tant li jien kważi kważi bdejt ninteressa ruħi”

“Ommi, pereżempju, kienet toqgħod tispjegali, ‘rajt x’rajna fuq l-aħbarijiet’... tibda tirrelata ma’ ħajtek dak kollu li jkun qed jiġri, tibda tinteressa ruħek iżjed”

“Xi drabi, pereżempju, il-ġenituri tiegħi inkoraġġewni biex narahom u nibqa’ agġornat, u xi darbi anke l-iskola”

“Ma nkunux tant konxji tal-gravità tal-aħbar... ma nkunux kapaċi nifhumuha perfettament”

“biex jipproteġuna naħseb... taf int, jekk ma tarax, ma tkunx taf”

“dik influwenzat ir-rutina li żammejt meta kbirt”

“insib ħin biex nara x’qed jġri madwari kuljum”

“tista’ żżomm ruġek aġġornat meta u fejn trid”

“nista’ nqabbez artikli li jdejquni”

“għalija personali l-aħbarijiet hu importanti għax iżommni aġġornat ma’ dak li jkun qed jġri madwari”

“tirreagixxi u tiffirma opinjoni dwar dak li jkun qed jġri”

“dak li jġri barra jaffettwana l-Maltin b’xi mod”

“tant tidra tisma’ l-istess affarijiet... li naħseb li jkun aħjar li ma tisma’ u ma tkun taf b’xejn”

“meta turihom affarijiet li jstgħu japplikaw għal ħajjithom... ikunu iktar interessati”

“ftakart f’dak li ddiskutejna, li kien hemm ħafna tfal involuti fih”

“xorta waħda kont ninkludi tfal bħala preżentaturi jien”

“il-mod ta’ kif il-mara kienet liebsa pereżempju, m’intix se tarah fl-aħbarijiet tal-kbar. Fl-aħbarijiet tal-kbar, jilbsu suits, kemm in-nisa u anke l-irġiel, imma f’tat-tfal hemm ċertu sens ta’ informalità li hi importanti għalihom”

“il-komunikazzjoni donnha ħadet forma ta’ djalogu iktar milli ta’ xi ħadd li qed jitkellem, jaqra xi ħaġa... qisu xi ħadd qed jitkellem mat-tfal u kienet ċara li t-tfal qed inkunu indirizzati... ma kinux biss aħbarijiet li ġew magħmulha iżjed sempliċi iżda xorta waħda indirizzati għall-pubbliku b’mod ġenerali”

“Estetikament huma attraenti, ikkuluriti... bl-użu ta’ kuluri vivaċi biex jattiraw l-attenzjoni tat-tfal ukoll, kif nagħmlu aħna fil-klassi wara kolloxx”

“it-tip ta’ mużika li jisimgħu ż-żgħar”

“tbissmet u dik tagħmel differenza kbira għat-tfal. Tinfluwenzahom b’mod tajjeb”

“jaraw l-aħbarijiet bħala xi haġa tedjanti”

“jiskrolljaw fuq Facebook... jew Instagram... jarawhom u jagħfsu fuqhom”

“jiddependi ħafna minn min jieħu ħsiebhom”

“ovvjament m’intix se togħgob lil kulhadd u se jkun tfal li mhumiex interessati”

“Forsi ma ninteressax lil kulhadd, imma forsi jibdew jiddiskutu bejniethom u jagħmlu kuragg”

“innutajna li t-tfal kienu qed jisimgħu lill-kbar u forsi jaraw l-aħbarijiet kurrenti mmirati għall-kbar”

“ċertu dettalji... it-tfal jgħaddu mingħajrhom”

“meta ma jkunux informati sew, pereżempju, meta ma jisimgħux l-aħbar sħiħa”

“inħoss il-bżonn li nwieġeb il-mistoqsijiet u niċċara d-dubji. Rigward l-isparaturi, mort fuq il-website tas-CNN u qrajna l-aħbar flimkien. Imma qgħadt attenta biex ma nurix filmati u ritratti li jistgħu jimpresjonawhom lit-tfal.”

“jispiċċaw jobogħdu l-aħbarijiet jew jisimgħu xi ħaġa u jaħsbu li hi xi ħaġa ħażina ħafna”

“immirati għall-adultti huma itwal, iktar informattivi u iktar dettaljati”

“il-proċess ta’ kif jagħtu l-informazzjoni tkun iktar b’pass bil-mod”

“forsi tlieta jew erbgħa tipi differenti ta’ aħbarijiet”

“ma jkollhomx ħafna informazzjoni li ma jifhmux”

“ma kienx twil iżżejjed, forsi madwar minuta”

“għandu jkollu iżjed vokabularju tajjeb għal-livell tat-tfal”

“għandu jispjega xi jkun qed jiġri imma fl-istess ħin... ma jallarmahomx jew ibeżzagħhom iżżejjed”

“Naħseb li ftit hemm ġenituri li jaraw l-aħbarijiet u fl-istess ħin jispjegaw xi kuncetti u aspetti lill-uliedhom bħal dawk relatati mal-politika u l-qrati”

“Trid tispjega lit-tfal għax huma jkunu jafu xi jkun għaddej u jkunu jridu jifhmu. Wieħed għandu joffri u jisħaq fuq is-soluzzjonijiet mat-tfal.”

“L-aħbar tingħalaq fuq nota pożittiva u mhux jissemma biss in-negattiv. Isserraħ moħħ it-tfal.”

“jekk ikun hemm spjegazzjoni wara, naħseb li l-biża’ li tkun inħolqot tonqos”

“tajjeb li jkunu konxji, u mogħtija ideat dwar x’għandhom jagħmlu jekk jiġri xi ħaġa hekk... ħalli jkunu preparati. Nemmen li iktar ma tkun taf informazzjoni, inqas ikollok biża’”

“kieku ninkludi filmati wkoll għax it-tfal b’affarijiet viżwalizzati, bil-viżwali, jitgħallmu ħafna”

“viżwalment kien attraenti ħafna għat-tfal ukoll għaliex użaw ħafna filmati... nimmagina li dak kollu li ntqal kien riflett fil-filmata li ntwerew”

“m’għandhomx jinkludu ċertu xeni u filmati fl-aħbarijiet tat-tfal. Qed nirreferi għal xeni li jinvolvu vjolenza, ġlied, qtil u demm... anke filmati li jinkludu lingwaġġ baxx jew mossi ħżiena, mhumiex adattati”

“jekk pereżempju sar holdup, jista’ jintwera f’forma ta’ cartoons, minflok juru raġel ta’ veru jispara ġo ħanut”

“Ħasbu li kien terremot... fil-verità kienu fis-sala tal-iskola jipprattjaw għall-kunċert tal-Milied u l-palk iċċaqlaq ftit”

“kellna nagħmlu assembly speċjali biex l-SLT ikunu jistgħu jispjegaw iktar”

Appendix D

Initial Readings of the Scenes

Socio-semiotic Multimodal Interpretation Transcripts

Initial Reading of the Scenes

News Item 2	How Traffic Jams Develop
News Outlet	logo!
Clip Duration	2 minutes 1 second
Initial Descriptive Interpretation	<p>Logo’s news items are not always about events or happenings but sometimes also simply educational and informative. This news item is concerned with informing children about traffic jams and how they develop. This topic is treated in a friendly and informative way. It also seems to simplify things through the striking use of simple graphics as the ideal viewers are children who may not necessarily know how traffic jams form although they are most likely to have been in one. From the present modes other than language, it looks like the main message of this news item is to inform and educate children about what causes traffic jams in order for children to better understand such a situation and maybe be more understanding when they find themselves in one. In addition to this, knowing what causes traffic jams might help children predict them whenever they hear of a possible cause and encourage adults to take alternative routes.</p> <p>Using Fairclough’s (2003) terms, the ‘pre-genre’ of this segment can be said to be a description since it does not narrate a story, nor does it involve a conversation or an argument. This segment describes what usually causes traffic on the roads. On a less abstract level, the disembedded genre of this video clip is that of a television news report since it includes typical characteristics such as an anchor on a news set who introduces the topic and a set of images and a video clip with a related voice-over which support the topic (Stanley, 2020). However, this news item deviates from the typical news item since it mainly</p>

describes and educates its viewers about traffic jams rather than narrating or giving information about a particular happening. Hence, this does not meet any of the news story requirements Harcup and O'Neill (2001) establish. However, the information included is probably 'new', 'relevant', 'interesting' and 'significant' for its ideal viewer – other typical characteristics of a newsworthy item (Fuller, 1996). It seems to be typical for Logo's news programmes to include one news item per episode in which they try to unpack the 'how' and 'why' behind particular social phenomena.

The genre of a news report is often purpose-driven. Hence, the activity of this genre has a strategic purpose as it aims, in this case, towards educating children to eventually be able to understand traffic jams. To reach this purpose, the segment first portrays a female news anchor who introduces this topic to viewers. Then, the segment features a video clip and images with a voice-over. The still images portray real-life traffic on the roads whilst the video simply consists of colourful graphics which try to simplify and explain what causes traffic jams and how these are formed. The vehicles included were all cars and they seem to be pictures of actual cars and not animated ones. The background is also very simple with frequent green bubbles, an animated tree and a building probably to simply create the illusion of a moving background and hence, driving cars. The use of these animated graphics may have been intended to facilitate understanding and retain children's focus since the less detail involved, the less are the chances that children are distracted and direct their attention elsewhere. For example, had there been a lot of participants with different clothing, this could have caught the young viewers' eye and they might have missed out on more important information.

	<p>Since this text is streamed on television and may also be found on the Web, it involves one-way mediated communication. Hence, communication is mass-mediated since it depends on a medium, either television or computer, to get to its mass, anonymous audience (Westerman et al., 2014). Furthermore, communication is two-way since although viewers cannot directly communicate back on the transmitted message, they can still express their opinion or ask questions to the news outlet via SMS or through their website and other social media platforms.</p>
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News Item 3	Car Drives into a Crowd in Berlin
News Outlet	logo!
Clip Duration	1 minute 30 seconds
Initial Descriptive Interpretation	<p>Although sometimes Logo's news items are merely educational, this particular news item is a typical and informative one since it deals with a 'hard' news item (Gans, 1979). This news item provides the necessary details regarding a traffic accident in which a car drove into a crowd in Berlin. This theme is treated in a friendly and informative way since the ideal viewers are children who tend to not be very familiar with such negative happenings and hence, may have a lot of related questions. From the present modes other than language, it looks like the main message of this news item is to inform children about the event either for the sake of informing them as it is their right to know what takes place in society or to implicitly raise awareness about the importance of safe driving although this does not concern children directly at present. Otherwise, the news item may also wish to inform them about the possible repercussions and consequences of a traffic accident.</p>

Using Fairclough's (2003) terms, the 'pre-genre' of this segment can be said to be a description since it does not narrate a story, nor does it involve a conversation or an argument. This segment describes a road accident which took place in Germany's capital and largest city. On a less abstract level, the disembedded genre of this video clip is that of a television news report since it includes typical characteristics such as an anchor on a news set who introduces the topic and a set of short video clips with a related voice-over which support the topic (Stanley, 2020). This news item is a typical one since it gives information about a particular story. It meets one of the news story requirements Harcup and O'Neill (2001) establish – bad news – since it deals with a tragedy. Furthermore, the information included is most likely 'new', 'relevant', 'interesting' and 'significant' for its ideal viewer – other typical characteristics of a newsworthy item (Fuller, 1996). Additionally, since this is the first reported happening in the news programme, it is probably the day's most important story and seems to be in line with what Gans (1979) describes as a 'hard' news item usually found at the beginning of news programmes.

The genre of a news report is often purpose-driven. Hence, the activity of this genre has a strategic purpose as it aims, in this case, towards informing children about a tragedy which took place in their community possibly also unpacking the 'why' and 'how' behind it. It might also be indirectly aiming at highlighting the importance of safe driving since this can be very dangerous and even fatal. Although children cannot drive, they may still contribute to reducing reckless driving or avoiding potential hazards by pointing them out to adults. Moreover, these children are the adults of the future and the news item might already be making the importance of safe driving clear to them. Thus, children are probably being socialised into responsible

citizens who abide by the laws. Such citizens should not interrupt investigation by, for example, not crossing the barricade tape since this marks an area in which only police officers and other workers may access. At the same time, children are also probably being socialised into knowledgeable citizens since this news item primarily seems to have focused on the aftermath of a tragedy – the process which follows such a happening and the people and workers involved. Moreover, children are probably also being socialised into respectful citizens through exposure to different ways of paying respects to victims of accidents and other tragedies.

To reach these aims, the segment first portrays a female news anchor who introduces this topic to viewers. Then it features a series of related video clips with a voice-over. Nearly all video clips depict the streets of Berlin with police officers, firefighters, passers-by, and means of transportation also frequently making an appearance. Participants are shown to be either walking on the pavements or interacting. Some of the participants shown in these video clips are alone whilst others are accompanied probably by a relative or a friend. However, all of them are adults and no child makes an appearance.

Since this text is streamed on television and may also be found on the Web, it involves one-way mediated communication. Hence, communication is mass-mediated since it depends on a medium, either television or computer, to get to its mass, anonymous audience (Westerman et al., 2014). Furthermore, communication is two-way since although viewers cannot directly communicate back on the transmitted message, they can still express their opinion or ask questions to the news outlet via SMS or through their website and other social media platforms.

News Item 4	Traffic Accidents
News Outlet	Newsbus
Clip Duration	9 minutes 28 seconds
Initial Descriptive Interpretation	<p>This news item deals with how children are to be safe on the road in light of the numerous traffic accident which take place each year. This theme is treated in a friendly and informative way since the ideal viewers are children who tend to not be very familiar or confident when it comes to taking safety measures on the road, namely, when crossing the road on foot or riding in a car. From the present modes including language, it looks like the main message of this news item is to inform children about some of the causes of traffic accidents as well as of safety measures which might reduce the number or the impact of such accidents. Through the vox-pop segment of the segment, it might also wish to show them different people's reactions to traffic accidents depending on their scale.</p> <p>Using Fairclough's (2003) terms, the 'pre-genre' of this segment can be said to be a description since it does not narrate a story, nor does it involve a conversation or an argument. This segment establishes and describes traffic accidents and related safety precautions for children to ensure their safety. On a less abstract level, the disembedded genre of this video clip is that of a television news report since it includes typical characteristics such as news anchors who introduce and elaborate on the topic and a set of shorter video clips with a related voice-over which support the topic (Stanley, 2020). However, this news item deviates from the typical news item since apart from there being no particular news set for Newsbus, this particular news item mainly describes and educates its viewers about everyday safety measures on the road rather than narrating or giving information about a particular</p>

story. Hence, this does not meet any of the news story requirements Harcup and O'Neill (2001) establish. However, the information included is probably 'new', 'relevant', 'interesting' and 'significant' for its ideal viewer – other typical characteristics of a newsworthy item (Fuller, 1996). Additionally, contrary to this news outlet, usually a news programmes includes various happenings instead of just one. However, Newsbus seems to choose a newsworthy event or a topic and focus on just that throughout the whole programme.

The genre of a news report is often purpose-driven. Hence, the activity of this genre has a strategic purpose as it seemingly aims, in this case, towards educating children to eventually be able to take safety precautions in order to avoid injuries and become aware of common causes of traffic accidents. To reach this purpose, the segment features a series of video clips sometimes with a voice-over as well as a vox-pop in which news anchors allow the general public to share their experiences, if any, related to news accidents. In between video clips, the news anchors intervene to explain the topic in more detail or summarise the most salient points of the video clip which would have been shown previously. Apart from the news anchors being children themselves, most of the shown video clips depict children either interacting with the viewers or suffering consequences as a result of not taking the necessary safety measures when navigating the roads.








Since this text is streamed on television and may also be found on the Web, it involves one-way mediated communication. Hence, communication is mass-mediated since it depends on a medium, either television or computer, to get to its mass, anonymous audience (Westerman et al., 2014). Furthermore, communication is two-way since although viewers cannot directly communicate back on the







	transmitted message, they can still express their opinion or ask questions to the news outlet via SMS or through their website and other social media platforms.
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Since *Newsbus*' segment used different videos, it appeared more fragmented. The following table shows that it could be split into 11 sections.

Section	Timeframe	Details
1	00:59-02:38	A video clip of a traffic accident which takes place. Its cause and the aftermath are clearly portrayed.
2	02:39-02:56	Two news anchors introduce the topic of road accidents.
3	02:57-03:55	A video clip of car testers in a crash test lab. They emphasise the importance of wearing a seat belt.
4	03:56-04:05	Two news anchors elaborate on the responsibility of children to not distract drivers.
5	04:05-04:41	A video clip called 'The Boy Who Didn't Stop, Look and Listen'.
6	04:42-05:08	Two news anchors share statistics of road accidents in Malta and ask why these happen.
7	05:08-06:08	A video clip of car testers in a crash test lab. They emphasise the importance of wearing a seat belt.
8	06:08-06:26	Two news anchors explain the causes of traffic accidents.
9	06:26-07:26	A video clip of car testers in a crash test lab. They emphasise the importance of wearing a seat belt. A distinction between two types of car crashes is also made.
10	07:26-10:00	A vox-pop with members of the general public.
11	10:01-10:27	A video clip called 'The Girl Who Didn't Dress Bright in the Dark'.

Socio-semiotic Multimodal Interpretation Transcripts

Visual Frames	Timescales	Audio Meaning					Visual Meaning			
		Music	Sound	Volume	Beat	Clothing	Camera shots, angles and movement	Colour	Symbols	
	00:40:00-42						The anchor is wearing a shirt, pants and sneakers.	Long shot, eye level, no camera movement	Bright	
	00:49:00-57					The anchor is wearing a shirt, pants and sneakers + participants in the still image are wearing a police uniform.	Full shot, eye level; camera zooms in whilst slowly turning to the left	Bright, dull still image	Red and white barricade tape	
	00:57:01-01		Street ambience	Low, lower than monologic voice over		Every participant is wearing a jacket or cardigan, some others also have a mask and backpacks or handbags.	Medium shot, eye level; no camera movement	Dull	Flowers	
	01:01:01-03		Street ambience	Low, lower than monologic voice over		The participant is wearing a cardigan.	Full shot, high-angle; no camera movement	Dull	Flowers + candles	
	01:03:01-07		Street ambience	Low, lower than monologic voice over		Every participant is wearing a jacket or cardigan, some others also have an umbrella.	Long shot, eye level; no camera movement	Dull	Flowers	
	01:07:01-10		Street ambience	Low, lower than monologic voice over			Full shot, eye level; no camera movement	Dull		
	01:10:01-14		Street ambience	Low, lower than monologic voice over		Some participants are wearing bright yellow helmets and another is wearing a bright yellow vest.	Long shot, eye level; camera zooms outwards	Dull		

Visual Frames		Point of view	Proxemics	Layout (Framing) and Depth (scale)	Facial Expression	Gestural Meaning Gaze	Gestures, Posture and Kinetic Action/ Movement	Written Meaning Written words/phrases
		Third-person point of view		Logo's news set with a female anchor on the right hand side and a globe on the left. The anchor is in the foreground and the globe is in the middle ground.	Raised eyebrows + corners of mouth point downward	Direct	Opens arms and then holds the papers with both hands.	
	videotape	Third-person point of view		Logo's news set with a female anchor on the right hand side and a screen portraying a picture of children on bicycles on the left. The anchor is in the foreground and the screen is in the background.	Eyes slightly squinted + corners of mouth point downward	Direct + Indirect	Holds the papers with both hands.	
		Third-person point of view	Social distance	Some passers by are in the foreground whilst others and flowers and candles are in the middle ground. Vehicles and buildings are in the background.		Indirect	Two participants on the right hand side are bending or kneeling down to capture a photo of the flowers and candles. Other participants are probably taking a video or a photo with their phones since they are holding their phones in front of	
		Third-person point of view		A female participant is in the foreground whilst the flowers and candles are in the middle ground. The pole is in the background.			The woman bends down and places a flower next to others on the floor.	
		Third-person point of view	Social distance + personal distance	Flowers are in the foreground, passers by are in the middle ground whilst buildings and trees are in the background.			Some participants are walking towards whilst others away from the camera.	Rankestraße
		Third-person point of view		A plant and a pole are in the foreground, the crashed car is in the middle ground whilst the shop is in the background.				