



Wired New Learning: Blogging Malay Literacy

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Abstract

This article examines the function of wired literacy and rejects skeptical accusations that it is just empty talk. Selected Malay blog entries and follow-up emails will be examined to show that wired literacy simulates asynchronous learning support. The infusion of wired literacy with *new learning* through the use of blogging, it is argued, engenders effective self-paced language learning. Within a new learning paradigm, there is decentralizing of one teacher, one narrative and one chapter, at a time; the conventional wisdom of learning as knowing is replaced by the notion of learning as doing. As a pedagogical approach distinct from the standard lecture-tutorial approach, the new learning paradigm advocates doing, in place of knowing, by blending process with content. Practicing wired new learning in the form of blogging, assists language learners to further develop their Malay linguistic intelligence acquired in class. Furthermore, the practice of *journaling* in online learning offers a reflective avenue for activities to be recorded in the foreign language. It is proposed that this form of online journaling therefore becomes a stimulating input motivating students towards language acquisition. The conclusion is that new learning is blended into new literacies to enable a confluence of offline and online modalities in foreign language acquisition.

1 Culturally intelligent – somewhat

It has been proposed that understanding culture through its accompanying linguistic intelligence facilitates the development of a discerning mindset regarding other linguistic-cultures. Introducing the notion of cultural intelligence (CQ), Earley, Ang & Tan say that major multinational companies such as IBM and Shell are interested in a multicultural outlook (2006). Explicating further, Earley et al. use the term *cultural autism* aptly to describe people with behavioral deficits in a foreign culture. Such people exhibit low behavioral CQ, which is proposed to be a common factor behind cross-cultural conflict. It is argued that approaching language learning as developing a concept described as new discourse intelligence could lead to recognizing cognitive aspects of culture of the speech community being studied.

I argue that Malay language may be a semiotic means to know the collective worldviews of the Malay speech community. The worlds of nature, human beings and supernatural are three pertinent spheres identifiable from scrutinizing standard Malay literature and discourse in Southeast Asia (Tham, 1990). A decade after the millennium, awe for nature and supernatural remains prevalent in the repercurse performance of Riau Malay (Sew, in press). Further afield, the Malays in the archipelago northwest of Perth distinguish inhabitable places from barren islets giving rise to the difference between *pulu* (island) and *cagos* (small island) (Asmah Haji Omar, 2008). These Cocos Malay morphemes reflect an urge towards survival in the collective consciousness of Malay sea farers in the Indian Ocean.

I argue that understanding a foreign language L2 as different ways of describing and seeing the world is not an isolated or isolating phenomena¹. The understanding of the L2 itself is influenced

and colored by the learner's first language L1. In the EFL experience of Spanish speakers the acquisition of English does not erode the learner's identity (Brooks-Lewis, 2009). One does not shed the Spanish-self to meet the linguistic-cultural norms of the target speech community. Naturally, to make a simplistic and straightforward correlation between bilingualism and biculturalism would be a highly suspect supposition. At the same time, the writer is aware that perceiving cultures as complete and separate reveals a latent false superiority concerning one's own particular culture (Kumaravadivelu, 2007). This is not least because a culture is in reality a cluster of cultures (Frascara, 2006). It is inherent in all culturally-specific discourse, either in spoken, print, or digital formats contains a preferred viewpoint of an author or institution.

Whilst the acquiring of L2 enhances the awareness of the target culture leading to a level of CQ enhancement this quality of awareness should not be confused with enculturation. Indeed, successful acquisition of Malay does not entail an unconditional embracing of Malay culture. Rudimentary CQ awareness may be induced by means of L2 acquisition, e.g. an appreciation of Malay politeness and a sense of a close relationship with nature. CQ is a relevant external quality in human interaction even within a speech community. In this respect, L2 pedagogy may consider a CQ-enhanced curriculum as a means to foster culturally intelligent exchanges in human interactions. Designs for learning incorporating CQ-enhanced content may it be argued be a foundation for developing the conation of citizens of the future because they could be an investment in the cognitive capital of individuals. This could then be regarded as an employability criterion in transnational corporations selection processes (cf. Claxton, 2002).

1.1 *The psycholinguistics of late bilingualism*

I begin with a more basic question in language learning, namely how does a mind during the learning process decode and understand a foreign language. Learning a L2 presupposes that two discourse intelligences are at play, i.e. discourse accommodation and discourse production. The first concerns the use of a ready supply of *inner text* (Tomlinson, 2003) as a basic thinking pattern to decode foreign terminology or text. Against the backdrop of the L1, the L2 learning begins with a constant evaluation of L2 input (orthography, phonology, semantics and syntax) against an overarching L1 cultural-linguistic system (Schwartz & Kroll, 2006). The underlying L1 of a local Singaporean learner, for instance, could be either English, or an Asian or European language (mother tongue). In this respect, Malay freezes, such as *nasi lemak* and *layang-layang*, for example, are exotic scripts to the basic L1 textual lens of the learner.²

Whilst both the XY and XX morphology may have similarities as at universal level the comprehension of such double-word structures in L2 is not automatic. The nature of L1-L2 intersubjectivity is a consequence of inter-linguistic processing and this is part of the semantic accommodation invoked in the knowing and acquiring of L2. This runs counter to the ancient blank slate theory of language acquisition and the notion that semantic analysis occurs in a vacuum.³ The development of L2 accommodation is rooted in, and affected by, the underlying L1 linguistic system. It may be argued that foreign language teaching and learning inevitably involves the mediation of L2 with L1.

The development of applied psycholinguistic linguistic processes, including linguistic knowledge analysis and the control of linguistic process (Bialystok, 1991), are thought to accommodate and develop L2 concepts during successive and late bilingualism. It is possible to make a distinction between the term, successive bilingualism, which refers to the acquisition of two languages one after the other in childhood, and late bilingualism, which refers to the acquisition of a second language after childhood (Field, 2004). The process by which L2 concepts are understood through L1 concepts is problematic, if the information processing is predominantly based on form pairing. An example of this deficiency in the process of form pairing would be when in a Malay class, a learner wants to express *ringan* [LIGHT, not heavy] but selects *cahaya* [LIGHT, illumination] from an online English-Malay bilingual dictionary. The polysemous Malay terms for *light* renders form pairing a weak method in L1-to-L2 mediation. Nonetheless,

clarification with L1 can result in an increase in the learner's awareness of homonymic difference and improved abilities in form pairing for developing L2 intelligence as knowledge.

Recent studies on L2 acquisition suggests that there is a unitary system governing the developmental stages of L2 regardless of age. The acquisition of L2-Korean *wh*-constructions in both proficient children and adults, for example, indicates a unified underlying representation observable in the aligned developmental paths of both groups (Song & Schwartz, 2009). Similar stages of L2-Korean development in young and adult speakers is consonant with the claim that it is impossible to distinguish between the effects of native grammar (L1) and Universal Grammar (UG) in L2 acquisition (Belikova & White, 2009). The application of L1 to assist in the L2 mental wiring of the adult learners according to native syntactic patterns, either as domain-general problem solving skills or domain-specific cognitive facilitation is, thus, not unfounded in second and foreign language acquisition.

Research into late bilingualism in Spanish speakers has shown the significance of incorporating L1 extensively beyond a peripheral role into EFL lessons. The resultant Mexican learners' positive feedback included improved understanding of EFL lessons, and engaged learning leading to enhanced expressive abilities in their EFL learning experience (Brook-Lewis 2009). In a different study, twelve pairs of undergraduate Spanish EFL use L1-L2 intrasentential codeswitching to direct attention, retrieve and appropriate L2 expressions from memory as well as corroborate the meaning produced in L2 (Alegria de la Colina & del Pilar Garcia Mayo, 2009). In yet another study, transcription analyses and interviews of twelve adult ESL students completing two learning tasks yielded positive findings. Firstly, the use of L1 assists the learners to reach a higher cognitive level in problem solving; and secondly, L1 as a learning tool is used to produce the definitions of new words more directly by the learners in their learning interaction (Storch & Wigglesworth, 2003). I argue that what is needed is to work with the belief that L2 teaching in late bilingualism is interrelated with how L1 learners activate L1 as an aspect of their learning. The use of L1-English, for example, is an affordance for collaborative enterprise in a L2-Spanish learning task at Essex (Ganem Gutierrez, 2008).⁴ Foreign language teachers may tap on the L1 intelligence of the learners to approach and appreciate L2 learning (cf. Brook-Lewis, 2009).

1.2 *Digitalizing foreign language learning*

There is a form of discourse intelligence in L2 learning which concerns producing linguistic expressions that are appropriate and functional in accordance with the communicative expectations of the speech community. Until recently, print materials were the main type of study materials in mass education. Printed materials, as learning resources, are now quickly being replaced by new formats of media for literacy encompassing a hybrid of colored pixels, sound bytes, animations, and memes⁵ etc. (Lankshear & Knobel, 2006). Currently, digital discourse is generated at little additional costs to print media through information and communication technology (ICT) mechanisms, such as a laptop connected to Singapore's broadband internet. There is good documentation for innovative language learning projects which have utilized digital learning platforms in teaching delivery in Singapore (Chan & Kim, 2004) and abroad (Davies & Merchant, 2006).

The evolving epistemology of digital language literacy as discussed in Lankshear & Knobel (2003, 2006) has generated considerable impact on L2 pedagogy. A correlate of the way in the process of generating digital content has become commonplace, on digital platforms such as *Facebook* and *Myspace*, is that these become avenues for prospective employers to search for and read the profiles of potential employees. This leads to the need for the proper management of individual cyberspaces (Norman, 2008). More specifically, a number of web-based technologies are becoming common, including: Web log, Wiki (collaborative web site construction), RSS (Really Simple Syndicate) and AJAX (Asynchronous JavaScript and XML) (Li, Lau, Shih, & Li 2008). This is relevant to the local educational context in Singapore where digital platforms are seen as important sites for learning at all levels in the educational system in Singapore.⁶ The IDA

(Infocomm Development Authority of Singapore) launched the *Next Generation Nationwide Broadband Network* (Next Gen NBN) on 17 Sept. 2009, which was seen as being in line with the business, learning and social needs of Singapore and was designed to equip 60% of the physical addresses in Singapore with ultra-high speed broadband access.

I argue that an informed understanding of web-based discourses squarely aligns Malay learning with contemporary language pedagogy. This view aligns with the fact that digital epistemologies are part of contemporary culture, demonstrating further that digital means are meant for creating more than discerning truths (Lankshear & Knoble, 2003). The use of digital media as a synthesizer for various discourse production platforms transforms linguistic-culture into an aggregation of different varieties of discourses. The production of digital epistemologies is testified to by the knowledge creation, inherent in the manufacturing of cultures on the silver screen by big business in Hollywood, Bollywood, Hong Kong and Taiwan cinematography.

The notion of contemporary literacy, at the turn of 21st century, can be argued to refer to the convergence of various modalities that are ever changing in form and content (Lankshear & Knobel, 2003). It is evident that those involved in language learning and teaching cannot afford to ignore the potentials in digital discourse production with internet-powered tools. Moving beyond the paper and pen paradigm, web-based discourses offer contemporary means for education, either at home or in school (Buckingham, 2007). In support of this it has been noted that studies of Cantonese immigrants in USA have indicated that digital platforms, such as chat rooms and fan-based websites, play a significant role in providing a forum for discourse production in American English for both male and female learners. This leads to them gaining a mastery of English in education and leisure (Lam, 2004).

2 Digital literacy as social development

Despite obtaining good grades in a series of Spanish examinations, Kimberley Brook-Lewis (2009) reported that she found her years of individual Spanish learning experience in face to face learning in the classroom confusing and experienced feelings of sadness in relation to the process. Her learning of Spanish had been L2-centered and based on the immersion approach. In contrast, mutual dependence in mediated interaction, namely coexistence with people, either with those we agree with or those we are not in agreement with is part of digital literacy (Drotner, 2008). Agreeing to disagree aligns with the fact that we live and work in an inherently collaborative infosphere (Rabkin, 2006).⁷ Ironically, however, language learners may move reluctantly into clusters of four or five in the first three weeks. The anxiety of socializing in language classroom parallels *mixophobia*, i.e. fear of mingling with each other among city dwellers (Bauman, 2007). Digital literacy offers an alternative to circumvent face-to-face anxiety while maintaining a fair amount of simulated verbal interaction in language learning.

Incorporating digital literacy in L2 learning is to value-add because it enhances the ICT capacity of in the delivery of language learning programs. In line with the necessity for young Singaporeans to manage voluminous information online, digital Malay lessons, for example, increase the learners' digital versatility. Critical management of information, or a lack of it, is aptly exemplified through the example of stereotypical perception of British Muslims. The tendency of indiscriminately subscribing to media information has generated a convergence of 'minority' with 'Other' discourse in the UK (Poole, 2002). I advocate adopting a Vygotskyan perspective on social development, and propose that incorporating digital pedagogy into Malay teaching invigorates discourse intelligence. The following sequence of terms taken from David Block (2003, p. 101) express this concept:

Need → Objective → Motive → Goal → Action

This pattern of learning motivation can be managed through digital platforms as educational paths to harness social interactivity in the interests of L2 learning. L2 learners are led to create,

discuss and extend ideas online to arrive at a high developmental order similar to real world interaction (Thorne, 2003). An immediate impact of horizontal interactivity in the teaching context concerns the exclusion of top-down guidance, which may not do justice to individual learning (Kalantzis & Cope, 2008). I argue that caution regarding constructivism in the interest of superior learning insights should be welcomed in L2 learning. Fine tuning individualized pedagogy in the name of social learning development would keep a one-size-fit-all pedagogy at bay.

Two main areas require our attention in ensuring a match between the learning progress with the ideas involved in Activity Theory. Firstly, the selection of cultural tools as suitable objects for improvement for both the representation and the embodiment of knowing; and secondly, the development of a systemic cycle moving towards knowledge building (Wells, 2002). The concept of Multiple Intelligences MI (Gardner, 2006) needs to be cited when considering the selection of cultural tools which are relevant. Matching the different predispositions of individual learners with appropriate corresponding modalities is necessary in order to augment the learning process. Individualized pedagogy in relation to MI is a doubtful concept according to some experts who claim that the different intelligences delineated in MI reflect a discrete body of traditional knowledge (Buckingham, 2007). Be that as it may, such observation does not alter the fact that learners do not share an identical beginning in (language) learning (cf. Schiffler, 2001). The following sub-sections chronicle the assignment of oral presentation to inculcate a critical-creative stance of (new) discourse intelligence. The spiral of knowing takes to its own course according to the blogging L2 methodology selected for L2 discourse production.

3 Prelude to digital literacy

This section contains the outline for a second-level Malay module. Apart from a final written assessment, the formative measurement evaluates vocabulary retention, grammar and comprehension as well as higher linguistic orders, such as oral skill and critical-creative presentation of ideas in L2. Part D is a measurement of higher language skill complementing grammatical and comprehension measurements:

- A. Progressive Quiz 10%
- B. Class Participation 10%.
- C. On-line assessment 20%
- D. Group Oral Presentation 20%

Conducting the L2 project with web log is a means to Part D. Compared to Wikispaces, the digital platform is more stable with fewer technical glitches. QwikiWiki as digital learning tool, for example, is susceptible to online crashes, web spiders and web worms (Farabaugh, 2007) with additional applicative restrictions in Wiki reported in Farmer (2006).

In the project, L2 learners are required to generate ideas to identify a topic of interest for oral presentation. A constructive exploitation of Activity Theory for individualized learning is carried out by means of a web log giving rise to the term *blog-projecting*.⁸ Blog-projecting online is a participatory process with digital media leading to 'prod-using' (producing and using) as its activity for developing L2 intelligence. Debunking the myth that all learners are homogeneous knowing agents, blog-projecting shifts the trajectory of learning from static diversity to dynamic divergence (Kalantzis & Cope, 2008). A learner-centered outlook, thus, underlines the *modus operandi* in addressing multiple knowing preferences by means of intelligent web-based discourse production. L2 learners find their individual entry point, respectively to produce discourse intelligence at varying levels of competencies.

3.1 Blog-projecting Malay literacy

The underlying interactive process inherent in blog-projecting Malay is emphasized here due to my conviction that Web 2.0 is more than just a warehouse of digital gadgets. A typology of spatial collaboration for teacher-learner interaction, self expression, dialogue, archiving knowledge and structured learning (Todorova, Valcheva, & Nikolova, 2008) creates possibilities for progressive discourse with the application of Web 2.0. Participation in the virtual learning space also decentralizes learners as autonomous agents of knowledge owning, by engineering diverse knowing alternatives creating a further set of insights. It has been argued that collaboration is the participatory prerogative for knowing and that it is congruent with the capacity for enquiry (Wells, 2002).

It is apparent that a blog has more in-depth interactivity compared to a bulletin board by virtue of its archiving machinery customized for revisiting previous journaling (cf. Farmer, 2006). Studies of Malay blogging show that one feature of them is a mixture of creative and ritualistic blogging, however, what has often escaped the attention of researchers I suggest is the motivating effect of blogging by the teacher to explain, inform, suggest online towards 'prod-using' the production of L2. During blogging the physical and psychological learning distances disintegrate into a symphony of asynchronous dialogues. The relationship in this learning development may be likened to a joint activity in knowledge building (Wells, 2002). A common ground between L2 bloggers and the teacher emerges in a digitally mediated environment complementing the conventional vertical flow in teaching and learning. Mirroring a blend of assisted and autonomous competencies in digital literacy, keen L2 learners blog and look forward to receiving comments from the teacher (Kalantzis & Cope, 2008).

Whilst taking part in digital discourse production, L2 learners play multiple roles as discussants, researchers, planners, managers, and discourse users 'prod-using' L2 online. Amidst the constructive learning noise of blog-projecting, however, it is also important to preempt the development of ICT-related cacophony amongst the learners. This is necessary not least because the concept of *good student* conceals unrealistic assumptions about their pre-existing skills and general academic literacy.⁹ More on this point is found in reflections on implementing blog-projecting in section 4.0 below.

3.2 Quantifying digital Malay literacy

By virtue of Web 2.0 being a collaborative environment, all bloggers are aware of its hyper-public nature. The learners' are informed that their digital entries are susceptible to comments from any interested reader worldwide. An interested commenter, in turn, needs to provide an email and name before s/he could say anything to the blogger. In fact, blogging is that much exciting precisely because of the possibility of receiving comments as part of the interactivity. The following table documents digital Malay literacy in this project in order to introduce further discussion on blog-projection in relation to the number of entries by male and female participants.

<i>Blog URL</i>	<i>Number of Entries</i>	<i>Sex</i>
http://sillycow87.wordpress.com/	5	F
http://mengeblog.wordpress.com/	12	F
http://melayu85.wordpress.com/	10	M
http://pendingthoughts.wordpress.com/	4	F
http://key8531.wordpress.com/	8	F
http://dudieboy.wordpress.com/	16	M
http://shahirah.wordpress.com/	6	F
http://reynardlve85.wordpress.com/	8	M
http://sanju0323.wordpress.com/	10	F
http://chestar.wordpress.com/	22	M
http://tanchunhao.wordpress.com/	8	M
http://themalayblog.wordpress.com/	14	F
http://mariambeard007.wordpress.com	25	F

<i>Blog URL</i>	<i>Number of Entries</i>	<i>Sex</i>
www.amymalay.wordpress.com	10	F
http://u0406346.wordpress.com/	11	M
http://woodblock.wordpress.com/	6	F
http://cherylcheryl.wordpress.com/	4	F
http://xu2le.wordpress.com	2	F
http://gilbertbelajarbahasamelayu.wordpress.com	5	M
http://u0503083minqi.wordpress.com	9	F
http://u0502840.wordpress.com	12	F
http://bingdelearnsmalay.wordpress.com/	6	M
http://alibuabua.wordpress.com/	5	F
http://iloosion.wordpress.com/	10	M
http://boonpin.wordpress.com/	9	M

Table 1: A quantified display of digital Malay literacy

Over 25 learners blog-projected Malay for the Part D of the Malay module. The gender ratio of the 25 bloggers is 15 females to ten males. A total of 132 entries come from 15 female bloggers. In contrast, a total of 105 entries are written by 10 male bloggers. On average each female blogger contributes 8.8 entries compared to 10.5 entries from the male bloggers.

Initial observations suggest that female Malay learners tend to be less regular with blog-projecting. The quantitative differences between the genders in terms of blog entries, however, should not be mistaken as an indication of male dominance in blog-projecting in Malay literacy in an institutionalized environment. In fact, the difference of 1.7 entries was interpreted as a reflection of gender similarities indicating that only slight verbal differences exist between male and female learners of L2 in the cohort. When human-computer interactivity becomes commonplace in our daily lifestyles gender differences in computer use and skill are negligible (Norman, 2008). Any claim of gender bias is of little validity, especially when the context-dependent variables are ignored. The context-sensitive factors may be significant in one instance but muted in another as illustrated in many stereotypes related to gender difference (Cameron, 2007).

3.3 Integrating digital Malay literacy

It would not be appropriate in an article of this sort to provide details of all the web logs mentioned in section 3.2, especially as each blog-based projecting is unique. Instead, I will describe one example of digital Malay literacy. A learner, identified here as A, blogs on his lack of an idea for his oral presentation. Then the conceptual difference between a local seafood restaurant and a western dining chain specializing in fish as a cultural tool is illustrated. In terms of content, A's comprehension between *restoran makanan laut tempatan* (local seafood restaurant) and *pusat makanan segera* (fast food center) is improved upon in 'prod-using' *Fish & Co*. In terms of format, the teacher's electronic comments trigger a chained ideation on A's part, leading to an aggregated in-between-media transaction of L2 learning. This signifies further the instability of digital genre for L2 literacy. In terms of process, the media-staggered enquiries create self-paced asynchronous literacy development representative of late bilingualism in L2 learning.

More interestingly, in terms of medium, doing and making digital L2 literacy in this case is not an exclusive Web 2.0 affair. Similar to the belief that inclusion of L1 in L2 acquisition is conducive to L2 learning, the use of a Malay bilingual dictionary is incorporated by A while 'prod-using' Malay forming a jagged chain of on and off line literacy making. In other words, blog-projecting Malay literacy encompasses the use of print media when A was off line and electronic mailing when A returns online:

<i>Participants</i>	<i>Integrated Media Experience</i>	<i>Projecting Learning</i>
 Blogger A 	Blog Entry of possibilities for projecting	Asynchronous initiative
 Lecturer B 	Comment on the blog entry	Asynchronous guided-responsive
 Blogger A 	Responding email to the Comment	Asynchronous guided-reactive
 Lecturer B 	Explanation of different references	Asynchronous descriptive
 Blogger A 	Contemplation with Bilingual dictionary	Asynchronous reflective

Table 2: Online-Offline Confluence of Asynchronous Language Learning

The correspondences between A and B (the teacher) are arranged with the older message preceding the newer. To facilitate the discussion, responses from B are italicized in contrast to those from A:

Hi Encik B, (Encik = mr.)

Sorry I can't understand this line of your comment.

Fish & Co bukan restoran makanan laut tetapi Makanan Laut Segera Cara Barat di Singapura golongan mewah. (A's email on 23 January 2008 9:26 PM)

To assist A in firming his concept of food outlets B clarifies the references between the different terms:

Yes you almost got it all right

Restoran makanan laut means seafood restaurant

But F&Co is a fast food outlet hence restoran makan segera cara barat (western style) You use tempatan = local, but local seafood is the ones like chilli crab, at Punggol or Geylang so it's western rather than local

Golongan mewah is upper class, because two people celebrating birthday at F & C is about \$78.00, is it cheap? (B's email on 24 January 2008 9:15 AM)

Based on the excerpt above, A gains a clearer conceptual difference between the two types of eatery and continues his 'prod-using' of L2 literacy, chalking 22 entries in total in the entire Malay blog-projecting. The closing turn from A to B in the correspondence signifies a transformative experience from passive thinker to an active seeker due to asynchronous exchanges:

Okay thanks Encik B

Just to clarify. Fish & Co. is not a fast food outlet, "Semi-fine" dining in a sense. Usually a Seafood Platter for two costs around \$40. So unless, upon order of a few starters and desserts, I think it shouldn't cost as much as \$78.

I'll research more on the place, and hopefully the ideas will flow in well.

Anyway, learned much from your explanation/translation. Thanks. (A's email on 24 January 2008 1:58 PM)

Although the exchanges above are a progressive discourse on the select cultural tool, this search exploration demonstrates that blog-projecting Malay lacks spontaneity due to a protracted response time. The delay in the mono-medium asynchronous embodiment of knowing becomes the impetus for A to seek an alternative. A range of telecommunication, email, and written feedback among others are invoked doubling as a learning aid. Email exchanges play the role of catalyst in knowing the inter-subjective L2 cultural tool, which begins with blog-projecting Malay. In the A's knowledge production, ancillary emailing becomes the embodiment of knowing through which A not only becomes a recipient but a contributor of his L2 learning.

Since the constraints of curriculum time in both lectures and tutorials are not conducive to free pace learning blog-projecting becomes relevant for streamlining learning according to the individual pace of L2 comprehension. The use of emails accelerates blog-projecting L2 literacy affecting an integrated 'prod-using' with A oscillating as sender and receiver of emails in a reciprocal fashion. The repetitive interactivity engenders an augmented knowing on the learner's part. A hybrid of L2 activities thrives with asynchronous platform equipped with additional online ancillary support. A's L2 development with blog-projecting transforms reading into rewriting online not least rewriting L2 comprehension is part of emailing and blogging.

A case against blog-projecting may be equating the 'prod-using' with storing old wine in new bottle (Lankshear & Knobel, 2006). Such skepticism if adhered to strictly removes the opportunity for socialization, namely agreeing with disagreement on and off line. Without the digital 'prod-using', A may succumb to a face saving tendency, reinforcing sterile silence. As a sounding board, blog-projecting offers a less self-conscious alternative to developing Malay intelligence. We shall say no more than that the digital new bottle makes the old wine look appetizing and inviting.

3.4 *Digital tertiary learning*

Generation Y language learners' varying preferences in e-learning may require the application of different online tools including YouTube, Web log, Movie Studio, Instant Messaging, Email, Podcast, Chatroom, Online-Forum, Flickr, Facebook, MySpace etc. (cf. Buckingham, 2007; Farabaugh, 2007; Lankshear & Knobel, 2003, 2006). The experience from blog-projecting suggests that Web log is not only a platform for language literacy but relevant to tertiary learning in the following areas:

1. The intersection of digital technology for a paperless, weightless and seamless space of learning management accessible at all the computer users on campus.
2. The reflective capacity intrinsic to web log may be a digital site to vent possible frustration online. A release of emotional apprehension is a healthy development among undergraduates in line with the world celebration of mental health day. The learner below, for example, claims that she dislikes blogging in her first blog entry. Such emotional expression allows for subsequent entries of a series of ideas to research on Malay kampung (kampung culture). Retrieved on 22 Jan 2008 from <http://u0502840.wordpress.com/>:

Saya tidak suka blog ini. [I don't like this blog] (First Entry)

(Project members) Ahli projek saya mahu membuat tentang Kampung aktiviti. We have not thought of what to do individual. We are intending to do research first before starting. Z has suggested us to look into areas like food, handicrafts, family ... etc. (Subsequent entry)

3. Blog technology serves to realign learning at tertiary level as a versatile digital manager to archive formative and summative measurements. Journaling as a meta-learning device may represent a congruent knowledge development through the duration of a degree (O'Donnell, 2006).
4. As an interactive avenue for sharpening academic and creative thoughts not least blogging is fostering the dialectics of communication and conceptualization. Web log is a digital catchment of external input for knowing hence a valuable for thought expansion. Reverberating and extending the spiral of knowing (Wells, 2002), rudimentary knowing may be recorded, constructed, deconstructed and reconstructed in contiguity.

4 Reflecting on blog-projecting

Following the discussion on method, content, format and process in the previous sections, this section examines the implementation of blog-projecting. When considering improvements and

innovations in language pedagogy, it would be sensible to acknowledge the possible learning pitfalls rather than to believe in one be all end all pedagogy, if there is ever one. The discussion in this section is useful when considering the design of more refined web-based language learning applications. Since a language learning ecology is unique any generalization is a simplification in need of improvisation at the time of implementation.

Blog-projecting commenced with a 30-min introduction session in the computer lab. The learners were required to provide the URL of a web log for tracking purposes. One web log URL appeared electronically following the lab session with two more on the following day. Despite up to three electronic reminders, less than fifty percent of the cohort initiated Malay literacy online in the first three days following the introduction. The first reminder showed a pioneering attempt from a peer was important not least as it served as an update for four absentees. The second reminder shared a productive ancillary exchange was intended as motivation. Functioning as catalyst, the third reminder contained an online meme culled from a newly created blog.

The uptake on projecting Malay remained gradual consisting of 11 URLs initially throughout the first two weeks after the commencement of blog-projecting. This low uptake might have been considered to be a subjective negative judgment. Learners' enquiries regarding the stipulated number of blog entries indicated a mindset which understood limits on the regulation of knowledge. Projecting Malay seems to be a quantitative L2 development. A unidirectional online interactivity remains the main pattern of blog-projecting. Digital Malay literacy in this case does not penetrate beyond individualistic learning practice. The lack of horizontal interactivity and the reluctance in cross-blogging may be attributable to two factors.

Firstly, a balancing gap between procedural and propositional knowledge in digital Malay literacy exists. Emotional stress resulting from blog-projecting Malay digital literacy for the first time is real, not least constructing linguistic scripts grammatically and generating digital representation of the scripts accurately requires a balance of both procedural and propositional knowledge (Lankshear & Knobel, 2003). The preference for the paper and pencil method of some learners positions digital Malay literacy as an ill fit for developing L2 intelligence. Secondly, blog-projecting is a type of online performance. Cues to one's personality are visible in digital Malay literacy hence interacting online is experienced as a threatening experience to some learners who dread exposure to loss of face.

Mirroring the development of discourse intelligence, the online literacy behavior varies from individualized blogging to distinct journaling *per se*. Some blog entries contain expressions of identity in the forms of meme, photos, personal reflection and learning laments. An indirect advantage is a multimodal reflection of creative knowledge construction. Contemplating the intricacies of cultural ceremony, styling the name of the team, sourcing of pictures and selecting accurate Malay compound (XY structures) and Malay occupation terms are some of the learning activities.

A common class blog for disseminating the objectives of doing-learning L2 discourse online proves useful to garner receptivity. As the Malay saying goes, *bak nyiru bak tampian, bak guru bak anak sasian*, (the learner's performance is greatly influenced by their guru), a do-what-I-do approach is necessary to solicit common participation in digital Malay literacy. On closer examination, reflective Malay 'prod-using' among the language learners could change the attitude from being anti-online journaling at first to committed blogging subsequently as indicated in 3.4.

There is no one methodology could manage all the learning styles in a (foreign) language classroom. The delight of some learners in knowledge creation may seem to others a cognitive burden or make them loath to develop L2 intelligence. In line with what was said in section 2.0, that collaboration is a prerogative to knowing and survival, blog-projecting is capable of offering an interactive space for L2 learners to co(r)respond among peers in the learning community as well as with external readers. The power of interactivity is inbuilt in the machinery and is awaiting utilization and optimization by the user.

5 Concluding remarks

There is as yet no literature on the scientific comparison of the amount of productive learning generated in 45-minute face to face contacts and 'prod-using' L2 in blog-projecting literacy. Digital literacy may be equally conducive to L2 acquisition, if not more so. Overcoming the physical and temporal barriers typical to language learning, 'prod-using' digital literacy with blog-projecting reaps not only online but off line applied linguistic stimulation. The dynamic divergence of multiple learning styles represents a plurality of learning interests. Digital literacy befits heterogeneous learning trajectories in developing new discourse intelligences. In the midst of blog-projecting, language learners and teacher alike activate many modes of Malay discourse processing. Evident from the learners' blog entries, L1-L2 intersubjective discourse intelligence expands in a multimodal direction, namely face-to-face interaction, asynchronous blogging, email enquiries, checking up print material as well as individual reflexivity.

Similar to the ways that L1 intelligence develops, the development of L2 involves a range of applied language skills, namely telling-listening, showing-seeing, mimicking-doing, instructing-performing, exposing-observing, reading-hearing-memorizing etc. A rudimentary thought may undergo reconstruction developing digitally and physically into varying ideas leads to multidirectional shifting of realities. The cultural tool improvement exercise in blog-projecting literacy enacts various truth making processes. It is doubtful whether foreign language learning in late bilingualism should ever be thought of as a linear process. The non-linear development of L2 discourse intelligences through blog-projecting Malay online is indeed an opportune and versatile pedagogy.

Notes

¹ L2 refers to either a foreign language or a second language although in the context of this discussion it is Malay as a foreign language for learners are already bilingual upon enrolling in the Malay module at National University of Singapore (NUS)'s Centre for Language Studies (CLS).

² *Nasi lemak* is a staple diet of white rice cooked with coconut milk originally served with banana leaf and Malay chili paste known as *sambal*. *Nasi lemak* is no longer a meal for breakfast currently available from many famous 24-hour *nasi lemak* stalls at various hawker centers around Singapore. The Malay verb *layang* (soar), on the other hand, is reduplicated to denote kite. Borrowing from Malay, *layang* by itself is a colloquial reference for *kite* in Cantonese, Hokkien, and Teochew spoken in the region of Southeast Asia.

³ The blank slate idea might work if we liken L2 learning to filling *empty* minds with new words and idiomatic expressions; as well as learning interaction likened and limited to voice regurgitation among zombie-like learners.

⁴ Affordance is defined as a particular property of the environment that affords further action but does not cause or trigger it (see details in Ganem Gutierrez, 2008). Many a times, the use of L1 as an affordance in the L2 classroom is unacknowledged as if the L2 teaching and learning could automatically be conducted in the target language devoid of L1. The L2-only pedagogical standpoint only perpetuates an either-or learning myth.

⁵ The term meme is used to refer to contagious patterns of cultural information, which are passed from mind to mind and generate and shape the thinking patterns, behavior or actions of a social group (Knobel & Lankshear, 2006). Examples of memes include popular tunes, catch phrases, clothing fashions, architectural styles, ways in doing things, icons, jingles etc.

⁶ In the Global Leaders Forum 2007, Bill Gates declared Singapore's Crescent Girls Secondary School as mentor school for schools of the future around the world. There are 12 mentor schools identified by Microsoft Corp. as achiever within the respective education system worldwide. Viewed as regional leaders, the educational innovations of mentor schools maintain a global interest replicable by other schools.

⁷ The need to cooperate with others is crucial for survival since time immemorial and more so in the current global village. The notion *global village* is revived following an infectious financial turmoil collapsing Lehman Brothers on 15 September 2008 and the bailout of AIG (American International Group) on 16 September 2008.

⁸ *Blog-projecting* does not refer to the process of undertaking a project but rather putting forth an idea in the process of discourse production. The term is all the more apt when the projection is digitalized with Web 2.0 hence double projecting: mediating a representation at cognitive level; and launching the idea in the

cyberspace for conceptual expansion. Blog-projecting Malay has a pedagogical intention of producing varying ideas in meeting the motive and goal components of Activity Theory.

⁹ It should be borne in mind that academics themselves took many years to perfect their attitudes and values hence it is rather unfair to expect even the well-educated students to learn in the same developed manner (Haggis, 2003). The names that appear here are pseudonyms.

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