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# Pedagogy of multiliteracies in CLIL: Innovating with the social systems, genre and multimodalities framework

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## Abstract

More than two decades after the conceptualization of “A pedagogy of multiliteracies” (PoM) by the New London Group (1996), the world has witnessed much pedagogical innovation in literacy education and radical technological advancement. However, few studies have shed light on how PoM can be actually practiced in non-western contexts. To fill this gap, this article proposes the social systems, genre and multimodalities framework as an instructional toolkit to practice PoM in English as an additional language contexts. To this end, the learning process of 240 Hong Kong secondary school students enrolled in an English-medium small private online course was investigated. The results show that PoM helps the students construct new learner identities and facilitates their content and language knowledge development. My study suggests that PoM can be enriched by offering students practical analytical toolkits and a multimodal autonomous learning environment.

**Key words:** pedagogy of multiliteracies, content and language learning, self-directed learning, small private online course, popular culture

## Résumé

Plus de deux décennies après la conceptualisation de la pédagogie des multilittératies (PdM) par le New London Group (1996), le monde a été témoin de nombreuses innovations pédagogiques et avancées technologiques. Cependant, peu d'études ont révélé comment pratiquer réellement la PdM dans des contextes non occidentaux. Pour combler cette lacune, cet article propose le cadre théorique systèmes sociaux, genre et multimodalités pour pratiquer la PdM dans des contextes où l'anglais est une langue additionnelle. À cette fin, le processus d'apprentissage de 240 élèves du secondaire de Hong Kong inscrits à un petit cours privé d'anglais en ligne conçu avec la PdM a été étudié. Les résultats montrent que la PdM aide les étudiants à construire de nouvelles identités d'apprenants et facilite le développement de leur apprentissage de contenu, ainsi que leurs compétences linguistiques. Mon étude suggère que la PdM peut être enrichie en offrant aux étudiants des outils analytiques pratiques et un environnement d'apprentissage multimodal autonome.

*Mots-clés : pédagogie des multilittératies, apprentissage intégré du contenu et des langues, apprentissage autodirigé, petits cours privés en ligne, culture populaire*

### 摘要

在新倫敦學派提出『多元識讀教學法』(PoM)後的二十多年，科技蓬勃進步，教學創  
新層出不窮，但似乎鮮有探討在非西方環境中如何實踐多元識讀的研究。在此背景下，  
本文提出在以英語為附加語言環境中進行多元識讀教育的框架“SGM”。為此，本文  
以SGM框設計一個以英語為教學媒介的小規模限制性在線課程(SPOC)，並研究240  
位香港中學生參加此在線課程的學習過程。結果表明，多元識讀教學法可助學生建構  
新的學習者身份並促進其學科知識和外語能力的發展。本文最後建議多模態的分析框  
架及多模態自主學習環境可豐富，提高多元識讀教育的效能。

**關鍵字：**多元識讀能力，內容與語言整合學習，自我導向學習，  
小規模限制性線上課程，流行文化

### ***Introduction***

Literacy, generally defined as the ability to read and write, constitutes a set of skills that are essential for academic and life success. To support literacy development is therefore one of the primary objectives of school education. The 21st century witnessed rapid development of digital and mobile technologies, including the internet and social media, which have drastically changed the nature of texts and literacy practices (Lankshear & Knobel, 2006). In contrast to written texts with language being the main semiotic resource, there has been a wide variety of texts and literacy practices which are often multimodal, and produced and distributed electronically. In other words, students need to be equipped with new reading and writing skills. It was against this background that the New London Group (NLG) proposed an international project of “A pedagogy of multiliteracies” (PoM) to embrace the multiplicity of communication channels (hence “literacies”) and propose that students need to learn and innovate patterns of meaning-making practices with *situated practice, overt instruction, critical framing and transformed practice* (NLG, 1996, pp. 85–88). However, few studies have shed light on how PoM can be actually practiced nor students’ experience with PoM outside of the English-speaking countries, particularly in content subject classrooms. Additionally, it is found that students and teachers outside the English-speaking countries do not see how multiliteracies pedagogy could be compatible with the local education contexts (e.g., Kohnen & Adams, 2019).

In view of such a research gap, in this study I shall address these issues by innovating with a pedagogical and analytical framework to practice PoM with English as an additional language (EAL) students from Hong Kong in a content and language integrated learning (also known as English-medium instruction in Hong Kong) small private online course about popular culture. The course

featured a stronger component on content knowledge while also having subject specific English support in the forms of glossary at the end of each session (i.e., unit of work) and a built-in online English-Chinese dictionary. Inspired by critical discourse analysis, cultural studies and systemic functional linguistics (SFL; Halliday, 1985), the social systems, genre and multimodalities (SGM) framework and resource kit (Lin & Liu, 2020) were developed for scaffolding EAL students' critical analysis of popular cultural texts. I will also analyse how the students respond to the SGM framework (Lin & Liu, 2020) and explore its effectiveness in improving students' second language, content knowledge and critical awareness development in achieving the principles of PoM.

### ***Content and language integrated learning***

In recent decades of globalisation, bilingual academic programs where teaching and learning are conducted in students' second language (L2) have become popular in different parts of the world for their potential in fostering students' multilingual and multicultural development. Content and language integrated learning (CLIL) in which "a foreign language is used as a tool in the learning of a non-language subject in which both language and the subject have a joint role" (Marsh, 2002, p. 58) is one such approach. Research regarding teaching and learning of CLIL in various sociolinguistic settings has revealed considerable challenges in curriculum planning and classroom teaching (e.g., availability of teaching resources, amount of teaching time and students' learning diversities). One major issue has to do with challenges to study the language as a foreign language (Meyer et al., 2015).

Recent developments in CLIL have benefitted teachers and students with the conceptualization of translanguaging (García & Li, 2014) by making content and language learning more explicit with the spontaneous multilingual, multisensory and multimodal meaning-making processes that transcend the named language boundaries (e.g., Lin & He, 2017; Liu, 2020). Echoing with Halliday's (2013) "trans-semiotic view," Lin (2015) has coined the notion of *trans-semiotizing* as further a development of translanguaging, which is used to describe "a whole spatial repertoire of visuals, human bodies, gestures, eye-gaze, etc." using verbal as well as non-verbal meaning-making resources within and beyond the sign maker (Lin, 2019, p. 11). In multilingual and multicultural settings, translanguaging and trans-semiotizing are found to serve important pedagogical and social functions (Lin & He, 2017); providing pedagogical scaffolding for learning both content knowledge and academic language as well as affording identity and culture affirmation. For example, in Hong Kong junior secondary classrooms, Liu (2020) has delineated the feeling-meaning making in CLIL classrooms by coordinating the prosodic features and bodily movements and drawing upon the classroom clock, the screen, visualizer

and worksheets, suggesting that translanguaging and trans-semiotizing should be incorporated as planned, systematic pedagogy for teaching and learning in CLIL. Another example is work by He and Lin (2020) that shows that Hong Kong teachers facilitated the South Asian minoritized students' development of disciplinary literacy skills using systematically integrated multimodal and multilingual support afforded by the multimodalities/entextualization cycle (MEC) in CLIL classes. However, there is a lack of research on how best to encourage students' explicit and optimal use of their whole semiotic repertoires in CLIL. In light of the close relationship between pedagogical practice and learning outcomes, such an area is worth research attention in order to augment our knowledge of the use of multimodalities as a potentially effective teaching approach in CLIL classrooms.

### ***Achievement and issues with pedagogy of multiliteracies (PoM)***

More than two decades after the New London Group's conceptualization of PoM, the world has witnessed unprecedented change of socio-political conditions and radical technological advancement. PoM proposes integrating four principles in teaching and learning: situated practice (i.e., connecting to students' everyday practices); overt instruction (i.e., explicit teaching of new concepts and knowledge); critical framing (i.e., engaging students in unpacking the underlying, implicit meaning); and transformative practice (i.e., transforming particular meaning-making patterns from one text to another) for social justice in education.

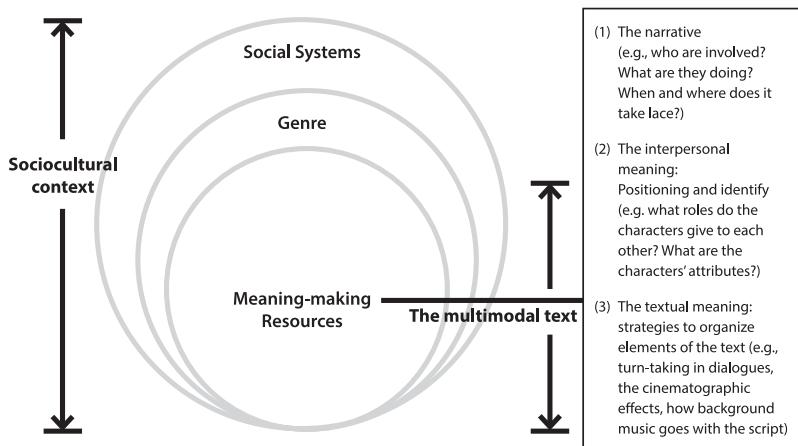
PoM has advanced and revolutionized the ways in which literacy is understood and taught in different parts of the world. Critical literacies and multiliteracies have also once been at the forefront in the Australian National curriculum reform and pedagogical innovations in foreign or heritage language instruction (e.g., Giampapa, 2010; Kuo, 2012; Leander & Boldt, 2012; Angay-Crowder et al., 2013; Ruan, 2015; Kim & Xing, 2019). In particular, the guiding framework of the *four resource model of literacy* (Freebody & Luke, 2003) has been used for improving curriculum and instruction in many parts of the world. A gender critical literacy program at a university in Taiwan following the four-resource model, for example, has been found to be effective in engaging first-year English as a foreign language (EFL) university students to actively rethink gender roles. However, it is also suggested that more popular cultural texts from students' lives can be used in the classroom and that the uniqueness of students and experiences should be at the centre of such programs (Kuo, 2012). As another example, a digital storytelling summer programme which was designed based on the four elements of PoM and involved written narrative, orchestration of text, image and sound, and reflection was found to be an empowering venue for second-language learners and teachers

as they were allowed to recreate their multilingual and multicultural identities (Angay-Croder et al., 2013).

However, few studies have shed light on how PoM can be practiced nor students' experience with PoM outside of English-speaking countries, particularly in content subject classrooms. Additionally, it has been found that students outside the English-speaking countries do not see how multiliteracies pedagogy could be compatible with the local education contexts (Kohnen & Adams, 2019). For example, in English lessons in Mainland China designed with frameworks of SFL and PoM, it was found that although the new media resources facilitated situated practice and transformed practice, the overall lessons were fraught with imitation of "native" pronunciation and decontextualized grammar drilling, thus lacking in critical framing and transformed practice (Qi et al., 2015). Kim and Xing (2019) also provide evidence that the challenges of practising PoM in teaching Chinese literacy to culturally and linguistically diverse students in Canada would result in a lack of critical framing and transformed practice. English language teachers in Mainland China were also reported to encounter problems when enacting PoM in English lessons in Mainland China. These problems included limited exposure to English, limited life experience and subject knowledge, limited questioning skills, limited information and technology skills and devices, and limited teamwork skills. As a result, they yearned for more practical guidelines and professional support for practicing PoM amid the national curriculum reform which was enacted in 2011 (Sun, 2019). In other words, with technological advancement, the challenge to practicing PoM was not about the "what" (i.e., what resources to use) but the "how" (i.e., how to use such resources) of PoM, which points to the need for developing feasible practical frameworks of PoM and systemic research on multiliteracies pedagogy.

### ***The social systems, genre, and multimodalities framework***

Inspired by the four principles of PoM, critical discourse analysis, cultural studies and SFL, the SGM framework and toolkits have been developed for scaffolding EAL students' critical analysis of popular cultural texts by the teaching team of a general education course on critical readings of popular culture at the University of Hong Kong (Lin & Liu, 2020) and later refined in a small private online course (SPOC) based on similar content. In the SGM framework, the social systems (i.e., "S") refer to the institutions, social relations, social values and subjectivities constructed in the popular culture text; the genre (i.e., "G") refers to the typical patterns of organizing meanings for the audience; and the meaning-making resources (i.e., "M") include the narrative, the language features and multimodal features (e.g., the kinetic features and cinematography) (Figure 1).



**Figure 1**  
The SGM framework  
(Lin & Liu, 2020)

Specifically in this study, the social systems refer to the social world created in the popular cultural texts that guide the audience to feel the feelings, dilemmas, conflicts or desires of the characters. Elements of the social systems refer to institutions (e.g., the political or economic systems), the social relations including the social, ethnic and gender groups, social values and subjectivities in the Foucauldian sense denoting the kind of “self” produced by the political and socialization forces of institutions and regulations. A genre is a typical way of organizing meanings for the audience, under which there can be sub-genres with typical features and organizing structures. The meaning-making resources are what makers and writers of pop cultural texts use to tell their story and to engage and impress the audience. Examples of meaning-making resources include film-making language/techniques such as the use of different types of shots, camera angles, editing techniques and linguistic techniques such as designing different speaking/speech styles (Table 1). In the course students were guided to observe how these techniques were used in the text and the effect on the audience or how it could be done differently with a different impact. The SGM framework (Lin & Liu, 2020) has potential in realizing three key aspects of PoM: overt instruction can be realized by making explicit the multimodal resources (i.e., “M”) employed in the pop cultural texts; critical framing can be realized by engaging students in relating the multimodal resources to the social systems (i.e., “S”); and transformed practice can be realized when students are equipped with knowledge about pop cultural genre elements and structures and critical awareness of embedded ideologies. The aspect of situated practice can

**Table 1**  
 The SGM framework in the SPOC  
 (Lin & Liu, 2020)

Components of the SGM framework	Meaning
S (social systems)	the institutions (e.g., the political or economic systems), social values and subjectivities
G (genre)	a typical way of organizing meanings for the audience, under which there can be sub-genres with typical features and organizing structures
M (meaning-making resources)	meaning-making resources employed, including the narrative, the interpersonal relationship among the characters, the turn-taking in dialogues, the cinematographic techniques and the background music.

be realized by the SPOC platform itself as it connects to students' prior everyday experience of using e-learning tools, online discussion forums and video sharing platforms which are key components of the SPOC.

### **Method**

This research was part of a university's large-scale teaching development project. The project aims to facilitate and improve technology-enriched teaching and learning including developing and offering massive open online courses (MOOCs) and SPOCs. The offering of the SPOC concerned (Critical Reading for Popular Culture) lasted for 13 months from December 6, 2016 to January 31, 2018 on Open edX, during which the SPOC was offered twice, first mainly to Grade 10 or 11 (Form 4 or 5) students from English-medium secondary schools and then mainly to those from Chinese-medium secondary schools. Another reason why students from Chinese-medium secondary school were enrolled in the study as the second group of learners was because they were usually considered less capable to learn content subjects via English in view of their lower overall academic performance at primary school. Ethical approval with informed consent forms was obtained by school teachers and students who agreed to join the research component of the SPOC project.

The SGM framework and toolkit (Lin & Liu, 2020) were used in the SPOC in designing curriculum for different popular culture texts and guiding students' critical analysis of popular cultural works. The SPOC had five sessions,

**Figure 2**

The SPOC interface  
(Lin & Liu, 2020)

each of which offered three to four short lecture video clips in English (with subtitles), short quizzes, explanation on relevant cultural studies theories in English, exemplars of the final assignment and an online discussion forum (Figure 2). At the end of the SPOC, students were engaged in collecting samples of multimodal popular cultural texts in various genres such as television dramas, advertisements, commercials, movies, fiction, pop music and new media genres and producing reflections and critical commentaries following the SGM framework (Lin & Liu, 2020). 240 EAL Hong Kong Chinese senior secondary

school students of differing academic achievement levels signed up for the SPOC. Therefore, the English-medium SPOC on popular culture was able to provide a rich data source to understand the praxis and effect of PoM in self-directed content and language integrated learning. The study thus attempts to address the following questions:

1. What were the processes through which the EFL secondary students learnt the content and language in the SPOC?
2. How effective was the PoM realized via the SGM framework in facilitating development of students' content and language knowledge in the SPOC?

At the beginning of the SPOC, students were invited to voluntarily attend a semi-structured interview about their perceptions of learning English and studying English-medium content subjects or CLIL. After submitting their assignments, they were also invited to attend a second semi-structured interview with guiding questions identical to the first one. All interviews were conducted in Cantonese, the students' home language, transcribed and translated by the research team. For confidentiality reasons, all student and teacher names are replaced by pseudonyms. The interview data and the assignments were collected and analysed with SFL (see Table 2 for the scheme for analysing discourse data). Specifically, discourse analysis on the interview data will focus on language features constructing the experiential and interpersonal meaning (e.g., what the students thought about learning and their evaluation on themselves) while the analyse on student works will also examine the textual meaning (i.e., the organization of meaning-making resources) to evaluate their multiliteracy development in English. In what follows, I will present discourse analyses of the individual interview and assignment data which showcase some of the learners' everyday language practice (Spolsky, 2009) and delineate the emergent themes which are manifested in their learning processes.

## **Results**

Students' learning process and their responses to the interviews demonstrated a series of practices entraining multiple semiotic resources and responding to principles of PoM. Two female students in the SPOC, Emily and Adele were chosen as the focal participants in the analyses of interviews, the discussion form and the writing assignment as they participated in all the learning and research activities of the project (including the pre- and post-interviews, the forum discussion, after-reading exercises and the writing assignment) although other learners' learning processes were also examined. Both of them came from the same traditionally Chinese-medium secondary school in the second

**Table 2**  
 Scheme for analyzing discourse data  
 (Fang & Schleppegrell, 2010, p. 593)

Questions about text	Types of meaning	Functional language analysis strategies
Content: What is going on in this text? Who does what to whom, how, when, and where?	Experiential meaning	Analyze process types with accompanying participants and circumstances
Organization: How is this text organized?	Textual meaning	Analyze clause themes Analyze cohesive devices such as pronouns and conjunctions
Style/voice: How does the author of this text interact with reader? What is the author's perspective?	Interpersonal meaning	Analyze mood Analyze modality Analyze word choices

run of the SPOC and were identified as hard-working mid-achieving students by their teacher.

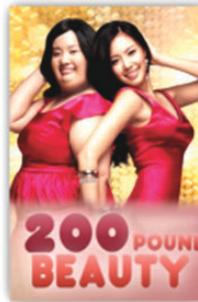
### Active participation from learners with less CLIL experience

In order to obtain an overview of all the learners' learning processes (research question 1), learning analytics data or quantitative metrics about learners' activities generated by the online course system (Clow, 2013) was retrieved from the YouTube page where most of the lecture video clips were saved and the Open edX where the SPOC was operated. It was found that the learners recruited from the traditionally English-medium senior secondary schools in the first presentation of the SPOC had better performance in content and language attainment in the assessment tasks. For example, an English-medium secondary school student used a variety of linguistic resources (see Figure 3 for part of the analysis made by the learner) to construct patterns of interpersonal and textual meanings characteristic of English academic writing: abstract nouns (e.g., "psychological struggles," "affinity" and "climax") and cohesive devices (e.g., "due to" and "however") to connect complex ideas in a combination of coordination and subordination. However, their activity on the platform was significantly less active than learners from Chinese-medium senior secondary schools in the second run of the SPOC.

Specifically, learners from Chinese-medium senior secondary schools in

**Critical Analysis on Movie 200 Pounds Beauty**

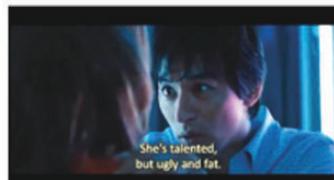
*200 Pounds Beauty*, a famous Korean movie produced by *KM Culture* and *REALise* in 2006. It describes the psychological struggles of an overweight girl, Hanna, who tries to undergo plastic surgery for a complete change of her outlook. Originally Hanna is a backstage singer for Amy, a beautiful lady with poor voice and limited musical talent. She always dreams to be a front-stage singer but she knows it is impossible due to her appearance and huge body size. She is still satisfied with her job as she naively thinks that Sang-Joon, the handsome music producer, will admire her voice as long as she puts full effort on singing. However, it is only a one-side love. During the birthday party of Sang-Joon, Hanna notices that she is just a product for making money but has no meaning to Sang-Joon at all. This dealt a severe blow to her self-esteem and leads to her thought of undergoing plastic surgery. After this successful turning, she becomes an elegant lady and is invited to be the front-stage vocalist. The movie ends with Hanna discloses her secret.



At the start of the story, the movie focuses on the personalities of Hanna and Amy, by taking many close shots on their actions, so as to show the differences between them. It creates a contrast between them, emphasizing inequality in appearance: Hannah has talent in singing while Amy does not; Hannah is willing to work hard and treat others by heart while Amy is self-centered and bad-tempered, but it turns out Amy gains more opportunities due to her appearance. This brings audience an ironic fact that in the society one's face or body shape determines his/her fate.

When the story introduces Sang-Joon, Hanna's one-sided lover, it even creates a lowly image of Hanna. Sang-Joon has no feeling towards Hanna but Hanna is willing to devote all her effort on music only wants to gain recognition from him. An affinity is built up from Hannah to the audience due to her purity in character, which makes the audience to follow the feelings of Hannah.

The climax of the story begins when Hannah listens to the whispering between Amy and Sang-Joon during Sang-Joon's birthday party. "You think I like her? Be grateful she's coming to us. Then teach her a lesson. Why are you crying? Hanna is the one to be crying. She is

**Figure 3**

An example of the SGM critical analysis

the second run invested more time and effort on the online CLIL learning. Although the enrollment number was lower in the second run (30 in the second run vs 210 in the first), there was a much higher percentage of active learners who attempted at least one quiz (i.e., 57% in the second run vs 29% in the first run) and course completers who got over 60% for quizzes (i.e., 33% in the second round as compared to 7.6% in the first run) among the second-run enrollees, who came from traditionally Chinese-medium secondary schools (Table 3). Additionally, nearly half of the registered learners from traditionally Chinese-medium schools submitted the critical analysis/reflections and spent much more time per visit (i.e., 85:06 minutes). In the first run, each registered learner visited the platform webpages about 30 times on average while in the second run the average number of visits per learner amounted to about 88 times.

**Table 3**  
Summary of the first and second run of the SPOC

	First run	Second run
Enrollment	210	30
Active learners	60 (about 29%)	17 (about 57%)
Course completers	16 (7.6%)	10 (33%)
Assignment submission	5 (2.3%)	13 (43.3%)
Total visits	6,348	2,656
Average time per visit	15:51 minutes	85:06 minutes

### The semi-structured interview

Semi-structured interviews were carried out with the students before and after the SPOC learning to understand the learners' learning process (research question 1). Before the SPOC, students showed strong motivation in learning the English subject but revealed their low self-efficacy in learning. They would associate learning English literacy mainly with exam preparation. Some of them also expressed a dislike for learning English-medium subjects, but in spite of this expressed willingness to improve their performance in these subjects. The following four excerpts showcase Adele's perceptions about her learning experience and capability before the SPOC.

#### *Instrumental goals of improving English skills*

During the interviews before the SPOC, this group of secondary students constantly expressed their instrumental goals of learning English in order to fulfil the minimum English requirement that is required to be admitted to government-

funded undergraduate programs. The following is an excerpt of the group interviews with Emily and Adele in which they framed the learning of English literacy skills solely as part of the preparation for university entrance exams.

### Excerpt 1

Turn	Speaker	English translation	Cantonese utterances
1	Interviewer:	Do you like to learn English, why? And why do you like learning English?	妳鐘唔鐘意學英文?點解? 同埋鐘意嘅話點解?
2	Adele:	So-so I think. I mainly learn English because of the exams. But my English foundation is very poor. That's why I have to learn more English to improve. Also er the minimal requirement of the Hong Kong exam, the minimal passing grades are 3322. In order to fulfill this goal I have to learn English.	我覺得一般般啦。主要噃其實為咗考試。但噃我英文個底好差所以呢要學多啲、多啲嘅英文去增進下自己嘅英文。而且, 呢, 噃香港考試, 即噃考試最低嘅合格率都噃三三二二。為咗達到三呢個目標所以要學習英文。
3	Interviewer:	So how would you describe your English proficiency?	咁, 呢, 呢會點形容你嘅英文水準?
4	Adele:	Very poor.	好差。
5	Interviewer:	Very poor? What do you mean by very poor?	好差? 好差嘅意思唧噃咩啊?
6	Adele:	Maybe around level two.	可能level two。
7	Interviewer:	You mean in DSE?	妳意思噃DSE入面?
8	Adele:	Yes, in DSE.	DSE。
9	Interviewer:	Um, so do you want to improve it?	呃, 呢, 呢想唔想improve?
10	Adele:	Yes.	想。
11	Interviewer:	Why?	點解呀?
12	Adele:	For the sake of the examination.	為咗考試。
13	Interviewer:	Only for the exam?	淨噃為咗考試?

...

Turn	Speaker	English translation	Cantonese utterances
14	Adele:	Yes. Because I think English is really difficult. Um ... Yep, also in Hong Kong, it's hard to find a job without good English skills.	喺。因為我覺得英文真喺好難。呃, 嘸囉。而且喺香港呢個地方如果無咗英文嘅話其實好難去搵工做。
15	Interviewer:	So have you tried any method to improve your English? And was that successful?	咁你有冇試過咩方法或者技巧去改善你嘅英文? 同埋你用啲個方法成唔成功?
16	Emily:	Do more past exam papers.	做多啲past paper。
17	Adele:	Do more past papers. Yes, I mean do more exercise, on different aspects.	做多啲past paper。 唧係做多啲練習, 喺唔同方面。

At the beginning of the excerpt, Adele described learning English as a means to fulfill the university entrance requirement of obtaining Level 3 in the English subject exam in the Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education (HKDSE), i.e., the minimum English language requirement for admission to government funded university in Hong Kong, and thus did not like learning English very much (Turn 2). She even mentioned it for three times, in Turns 2, 12 and 14. When subsequently asked about giving a self-evaluation of her English skills (Turn 3), Adele expressed an extremely negative view “very poor” (Turn 4) and specified it with a bare-pass grade (i.e., “level two” in Turn 6) of the English subject in HKDSE. While she expressed strong desire to improve her English skills, Adele also positioned English skills as something hard to obtain and yet necessary for finding jobs in Hong Kong (Turn 14). However, she reported that her way of improving English skills was limited to making prepare for exam and echoed Emily’s view when saying “do more past papers” in Turn 17. In so doing, Adele and Emily jointly constructed the experiential and interpersonal meanings associated with English literacy development as challenging and depressing exam paper drilling for better education and career prospects, resonating with the instrumental goal of many other EFL students learning English/English-medium studies (e.g., Liu, 2019; Tsui & Ngo, 2017). It can be seen that their understanding and imagination about English literacies not only revolved around the dominant print-based literacy, but was also mainly circumscribed by those assessed by the university entrance exam.

*Desire to improve subject-specific English by joining the SPOC*

When asked about her own academic English proficiency and how it could be improved, Adele expressed negative self-evaluation with regards to her English skills again and that her way of improving academic English was to attempt the SPOC in the study.

**Excerpt 2**

Turn	Speaker	English translation	Cantonese utterances
1	Interviewer:	So how would you describe, for example, your English proficiency in your content subjects?	咁你會點樣去形容你喺學嘅如果啲content subject 嘅時候你嘅英文程度？
2	Adele:	Very poor.	好差。
3	Interviewer:	Very poor again?	又係好差呀？
4	Adele:	This is a very realistic problem.	呢個係一個好現實嘅問題。
5	Interviewer:	OK, so do you want to improve it?	Ok, 咁你想唔想去改善呢？
6	Adele:	Of course, or else I won't be, yep ... (Interviewer recall: interviewee's body gesture means "be here joining this program..")	當然, 如果唔係我都唔會。係。

Prior to this excerpt, Adele revealed she also had experience of learning content subjects (i.e., one of her elective subjects such as business and accounting and financial studies) via English. Although she also negatively described her subject-specific English as very poor again (Turn 2), she used both her words and body language to communicate that the primary intention to join the SPOC was to improve her capacity and academic English to study English-medium content subjects.

*Expanded understanding about English literacies*

After the SPOC, the researcher also conducted a semi-structured group interview (with seven students in a group due to arrangement of the school teacher's arrangement) in a classroom of the Chinese-medium secondary schools. They described their learning strategies, such as watching the video clips with the subtitles and checking new words with the dictionary embedded in the course-ware. In particular, Emily showed an expanded understanding of English lit-

eracies in appreciating the SPOC as a way to learn new content (“the cinematic techniques”) as well as the traditional print-based English literacy skills (i.e., “different English new words”) as opposed to a narrow imagination about English learning before the SPOC:

I think the videos let me learn more than English. For example, the cinematic techniques in the movies and strategies to attract the viewers. I also learnt lots of different English new words.

(Original Cantonese utterances: 我覺得啲啲短片令我學識咗  
啲其他嘢,唔係淨係英文咯。比如話,電影入面可以有啲麼野拍攝手  
法啊,比較吸引到人哋。同埋,都係學識咗好多唔同嘅生字。)

[Emily, Group Interview 1]

In addition, some students were also seen taking initiative in making new usage of features of the SPOC platform (e.g., the English subtitles of short lecture clips that introduced theoretical concepts allowing for overt instruction). In particular, a male student, Vincent, described below how he developed his own self-study patterns and made the CLIL e-learning platform better suit his learning needs. He drew upon multimodal practices (e.g., “viewing the clips,” “track the subtitles” and “Google Translate”) to develop English multiliteracy skills (i.e., “the pronunciation and the rhythmic patterns,” “increase my vocabulary,” “practice using those new words” and “reading comprehension”) and broke away from the monolithic experiential meaning relation between English learning and exam paper drilling.

The benefit of using the SPOC is that I can track the subtitles while viewing the clips. I can also pay attention to the pronunciation and the rhythmic patterns. The speed of the videos is fast but there are lots of expressions worth studying, through which I can increase my vocabulary and motivation to learn. Besides, you need those sentence patterns and vocabulary when answering questions. If there are new words, you can try Google Translate and you may practice using those new words in doing reading comprehension on the SPOC.

(Original Cantonese utterances: 我覺得啲啲短片令我學識咗  
啲其他嘢,唔係淨係英文咯。比如話,電影入面可以有啲麼野拍攝手  
法啊,比較吸引到人哋。同埋,都係學識咗好多唔同嘅生字。)

[Vincent, Group Interview 1]

#### *Desire for scaffolding for print-based English literacy skills*

In the comment above, the student pointed out that he could learn more about new academic English expressions with the multimodal lecture video clips (e.g., with images, sounds and subtitles) and then consolidate this knowledge

by completing other tasks on the SPOC. In so doing, he was not learning English in order to take exams and passively taught different exam-tackling skills (as those Emily and Adele described in the pre-SPOC interviews) but also an agentive learner with the awareness and capability for planning and implementing active language studies. However, another male student, Simon, voiced some negative views about the SPOC:

The videos there are interesting but I don't like the English subject much, particularly when I have to spend extra time, because my other school subjects take time, too. I would rather read long passages than learning via the SPOC videos. When learning English, I would focus on reciting vocabulary and sentence patterns, like those for argumentative essays and useful for writing composition and doing reading comprehension.

(Original Cantonese utterances: 影片係有趣, 但我自己唔係咁中意英文嘅, 因為要特登再擺時間。因為仲有其他科要再擺時間。睇片去理解, 不如睇篇文去理解。我會注重背vocab。背一啲sentence patterns、議論文果啲。對作文有用嘅, 同埋做reading嘅時候都會見到類似嘅。)

[Simon, Group Interview 1]

From the comment above, it could be seen that Simon constructed negative interpersonal meaning ("don't like") and semantic connection between the SPOC and the school English curriculum ("don't like the English subject") when asked to comment on his learning experience. He also showed strong preference for traditional print-based literacy skills (e.g., "I would rather read long passages than learning via the SPOC videos" and "focus on reciting vocabulary and sentence patterns.") He was therefore seen as rejecting the multimodal presentation of the subject content, embracing the print-based mode and the instrumental value of literacy education.

### **Final assignments and online discussion posts**

In order to investigate the impact of PoM on the students' language and content attainment in CLIL (research question 2), the final assignments (i.e., the critical analysis following the SGM framework) and the students' posts on the SPOC's online discussion forum were collected for a discourse analysis based on three aspects of SFL (i.e., the experiential meaning, the interpersonal meaning and the textual meaning). Although all learners who participated in the SPOC were required to submit a critical commentary written based on the SGM framework (Lin & Liu, 2020) about a pop culture text (e.g., a mini-movie commercial), not all students managed to formulate a complete analysis. While some students from the traditionally English-medium schools composed a detailed analysis, only one of the learners from the traditionally Chinese-medium school

was able to write up such an analysis (Figure 4). Although Emily and Adele only wrote reflections on the learning process instead of critical SGM analyses, their use of language in both the reflections and online posts (see Appendix) has made rich experiential, interpersonal and textual meaning in a way similar to that of academic English writing. In terms of the experiential meaning shown by the semantic domain, degree of specialisation and angle of representation, Emily used “movie,” “media,” “types of movies” and “movie-making” to construct the semantic meaning of “genre.” In addition, she used “culture values and knowledge” to respond to “social system” and “storyline,” “picture” and “the plot or certain words” to construct the component of “meaning-making resources” in the SGM framework (Lin & Liu, 2020). In the online posts, she drew upon both subject-specific and general academic vocabulary to discuss the movie stages, racism, orientalism and print advertisements, e.g., “set up,” “complications,” “aftermath,” “orientalism,” “racism,” “genocidal actions,” “institutionalized racism” and “intertextual light and background information.” In terms of angle of representation, it could be seen that she used mainly relational (e.g., “I think the movie is a great media to spread a positive message.”; “There are many types of movies,” “it is manifestation of culture values” and “It is not only made for fun”) and mental verbs (e.g., “I think”) (except the post describing a movie) for sharing her thoughts which resembles the process type pattern in research writing (e.g., Martínez, 2001). In terms of interpersonal meaning, she drew upon positive adjectives (e.g., “great” and “positive”), semi-formal language and the first person pronoun for discussing her thoughts to construct a positive and personalized authorial stance. In terms of the textual meaning, Emily deployed many more subordinated clauses (e.g., “produced by,” “were systematically massacred” and “based on their race or ethnicity”) as well as more abstract noun phrases (e.g., “perception, superiority of one race over another,” “ideologies,” “discrimination and prejudice” “action,” “narrative,” “typefaces of the slogan” and “the rhetorical device”) in the online posts than in the reflection, thus making the online posts more abstract and technical than the reflection. This can be seen as being a result of receiving more modelling of academic language use from learning resources on relevant discussion topics.

In analysing Adele’s reflections and posts, we can see that although her English proficiency was lower than Emily’s, she still managed to express her feelings about completing the SPOC and her desires for learning English, contradicting her self-evaluation comment before the SPOC that her English proficiency was extremely low. Albeit with grammatical errors in writing, Adele discussed current socio-political issues and shared her feelings about them in English with some technical terms. This could be more cognitively and linguistically demanding than completing the English language subject exam papers,

**Critical Analysis on the mini-movie commercial -True Move**

The movie is about a boy who has been paid by a man when he was caught stealing medicine for his injured mother in a store and caught by the shopkeeper. 30 year later, the boy became a doctor. He saved the man who paid the money for him. .

Second, I will analyze this movie with the SGM toolkit. The story is very touching and educational. They were just a few civilians, because the little boy stole the medicine and had a conflict. The social situation in the old age of the film was not very good. Everyone was dressed in a very humble way, doing some small business. The light in the film is used very well, and the picture is dark yellow when the little boy is caught. When the little boy who became a doctor saved the man, he was photographed from the bottom and molded into a successful man. The shot from the bottom can create a sense of success, ability, and wisdom. .

Besides, the middle-aged man was willing to help people in any time, and was saved by the little boy later. I think it also sends a concept to the audience that the Thai people believe in fruit retribution. The little boy's role is portrayed as the character of gratitude. The man in the movie holds up a family, and it can be seen that the man's position in the society and in the family was more important than a woman. .

Background music is also one of the most important points that can drive the audience. For example, when the little boy was caught and the man fell ill, the

music was miserable and slow. And when men have enough money to operate, music is more cheerful. When music is heavy, the heart of the audience changes with the music. .

The movie is a symbol of the man cooking work. When he dropped the film cooking tool, it is a symbol of he fell ill. And it can be seen that the policy of the government was not perfect at that time. The poor people fell ill and had no proper funding. They could only live alive and wait for death. Overall, the movie is very easy to make the audience understand and it's educational, just like the end of the movie-giving is the best communication. |

**Figure 4**

A high-achieving learner's final assignment in the second run

which Adele had previously taken as the sole purpose of learning English in the interview prior to studying the SPOC. For example, in her reflection, she positively discussed her gains in the course (i.e., the experiential and interpersonal meaning), e.g., learning some sociocultural knowledge as well as the positive values she learnt from the mini-movie commercials viewed in the course with cohesive devices, e.g., “firstly” and “secondly” and some abstract lexical items and nominalization, such as “sympathy” and “concerning” (i.e., the textual meaning). In the online post, she also deployed some subject-specific vocabulary, e.g., “neoliberalism,” “human rights,” “capitalism” in Post 1 and “elements of racism” in Post 2 while discussing her views with everyday experience. She was also seen using a range of modal expressions, “would,” “can” and “cannot.” Additionally, Adele still saw English as the primary means for upward social mobility after the SPOC learning, as can be seen in this statement: “I hope the course can make me improve my English because I think English is important for us to learn. It can help me to work well in the future.” However, she had already expanded her linguistic repertoire (e.g., using the subject-specific vocabulary item such as “neoliberalism”) beyond the required knowledge of the English subject exam.

*Discussion and implications:**Developing an autonomous space with rich scaffolding for authentic meaning-making in CLIL*

The learning analytics data, interviews, students' written work and discussion forum posts reveal that PoM, as realized by the SGM toolkit (Lin & Liu, 2020) and the SPOC, has important positive outcomes for facilitating content and language integrated learning with a group of EFL secondary school students in a non-western context. The SPOC and the SGM toolkit (Lin & Liu, 2020) have facilitated the EFL learners to recognize the multiplicity of meaning-making channels. In particular, it should be noted that the learners from the second run of the SPOC actually faced twice the amount of unfamiliarity and challenges: from learning the subject knowledge in a less familiar language, i.e., English, and from the rather unfamiliar content of the SPOC. Particularly, each session of the SPOC began with familiar everyday pop culture texts but concluded with abstract critical cultural studies theories and concepts that were seldom seen in most secondary school curricular. However, a large proportion of these students managed to complete the course. In addition, they were learning in a stressful, hypercompetitive education system, with the pressure of obtaining a high enough grade in the university entrance examination lingering in their mind everyday (as communicated by Adele, Emily and their classmates in the interviews) and they were constantly considered less capable in view of their overall academic performance to benefit from English-medium instruction. However, their achievements and performance in the PoM-inspired SPOC have destabilised such stereotypes about medium of instruction in Hong Kong. As indicated by the learning analytics, they were earnestly engaged in studying the cultural studies knowledge in the English-medium SPOC, strategically planning their learning schedule (e.g., visiting the SPOC platform every few days rather than just before the closing date) and judiciously arranging their learning activity sequence for learning and practicing new academic English and content knowledge (as evidenced by Vincent in the interview), demonstrating their potential and capability to not just learn English but also to learn other content through effectively. Although they were not yet able to write extended critical analysis on pop culture examples, many of them managed to formulate critical reflections on race, class and gender ideologies embedded in multimodal semiotics and everyday life. In so doing, they managed to challenge the identity binaries and social positioning (Bucholtz & Hall, 2010) incurred by the schooling system (i.e., more capable English learning at English-medium schools vs less capable English learners learning at Chinese-medium schools) by constructing multiple, heterogeneous learner and audience identities and widening their engagement with English literacies: from a less capable stu-

dent studying English only for passing university entrance exams to an active learner who takes ownership of learning English and English-medium subjects and expresses inner voices via English and different modalities.

The results suggest that PoM realized in the form of the SGM framework (Lin & Liu, 2020) in a self-directed learning space helps students to imagine new learner/audience identities, enhance individual agency in content and language learning, facilitate critical awareness and increase their academic English knowledge. This study provides evidence that the PoM proposed by the New London Group is still current, not only in learning literacy, but also in learning content subjects. However, as demonstrated by the implementation of the SPOC with the SGM toolkit (Lin & Liu, 2020), it can be enriched in the following ways: (1) providing school teachers and students with detailed frameworks and practical toolkits to unpack the multimodal texts; (2) providing an autonomous and scaffold-rich learning space for designing their own learning and making genuine meaning where students can explore their own learning pathway and communicate their inner voice, love, hate and desires aside from what and how the dominant schooling system and the high-stake examinations desire them to learn, read and write. In such an autonomous space designed with PoM, there are multimodal learning materials and toolkits for unpacking such materials, but it is up to learners to explore, arrange and define what they are doing. Such a space for autonomous learning and authentic meaning-making in CLIL and English literacy curricula may seem unstructured and chaotic in the first place, but it enables learners to freely develop semantic relations between the known and the unknown that sustains their critical literacy development. However, due to the limitation of sample size and time constraint of the current study, future research is needed to examine the effectiveness of the SGM framework (Lin & Liu, 2020) in CLIL in other regional or national contexts.

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**Appendix:****Emily's and Adele's commentaries and online forum posts**

[Author's note: The errors and mistakes in students' writing are left intact.]

**MOVIE (Final assignment written by Emily)**

I think the movie is a great media to spread a positive message. There are many types of movies, for example, action, comedy, horror... The viewer can gather as much as they need. Also, we can know more about other country landscapes, humanities, customs, and even some of the newest technology of movie-making.

What is the role of the movie? It is not only made for fun or relaxation but also it is manifestation of culture values and knowledge. Some movies are teaching us in both positive and negative ways so it can help us reflect on ourselves. We will be touched by the plot or certain words in the movie to get to know more philosophies on life which can give ourselves inspiration. We cry and laugh at the progress of the storyline which shows that the film not only brings me the stimulus of the picture, but also the emotional resonance.

**Post 1 by Emily (2018-01-31, 10:53:23)**

Q2: Can you identify the six stages in the "Hollywood Movie Formula" with your favorite movie? Answer: "Get Out" is a 2017 American horror film written and directed by Jordan Peele.

**Set up:** Black photographer Chris Washington reluctantly agrees to meet the family of his white girlfriend Rose Armitage.

**New situation:** Chris Washington and his girlfriend Rose Armitage drove to hometown of Rose's suburban town over the weekend and Chris thought his skin color will be the of her family's discrimination. Fortunately, they aren't and very friendly and wanted to rest assured. One night, Rose's mother uses hypnosis made him quit smoking.

**Progress:** Chris observed that the demeanor of Georgian black housekeeper Joe King and black Gardett Walt was rather weird and Dozens of wealthy white people arrive for the Armitages' annual get-together. They take an interest in Chris. While Chris was away, Dean held a mysterious auction for Chris, while a blind art dealer, Jim Hudson, auctioned the auction.

**Complications and higher stakes:** Chris realize the problem and while he is packing to leave, Chris finds photos of Rose in prior relationships with black people, including Walter and Georgina. Chris felt a fear after reading, want to leave the house quickly, but when he came to the door, Rose and the family finally showed up and banned him from leaving the house, and Chris also fail sleep because of hypnotized.

**Aftermath:** Chris get out the risk smoothly and kill their family step by step for his life. Chris begins to strangle Rose, but stops. Rod arrives in a police car and Chris drive away.

**Post 2 by Emily (2018-01-31, 12:14:05)**

**Orientalism:** Mulan (1998 film) is a 1998 American animated musical action comedy-drama film produced by Walt Disney Feature Animation for Walt Disney Pictures. That movie which is written by west and about a legend in China which are written by west. Also, the Chinatown exists throughout the world, including Asia, Australia, the Americas, Africa and Europe. It includes Orientalism and the foreigners' perception of China.

**Racism:** in the Second World War, Holocaust refers to the genocidal actions of nearly 6 million Jews in Nazi Germany and its collaborators, from 1941 to 1945, the Nazis persecuted all ethnic and political groups in Europe, and Jews were systematically massacred in the largest scale in history. I think it is racism because the belief in the superiority of one race over another, which often results in discrimination and prejudice towards people based on their race or ethnicity, the Holocaust is a classic example of institutionalized racism which led to the death of millions of people based on race.

**Post 3 by Emily (2018-01-31, 13:09:13)**

Q1: Can you identify meaning-making resources of a print advertisement? Answer: We should see the **action** that is the **narrative** that the print ad portrays also we should look into **typefaces of the slogan and the rhetorical device** to reinforce the message. In print ads, we should notice what sorts of background information that shapes audience understanding is inherent in print ads, such **intertextual light and background information** may serve to **perpetuate certain ideologies or cultural values**.

**Reflections (Final assignment written by Adele)**

Firstly, I learn some knowledge in this course. For example, I have learnt some vocabulary and other social things. Secondly, I like the most parts of course is the mini-movie commercial as it can make me feel touched. Also the mini movie can increase our sympathy. If we help each other, the people would help us too when we have hardship. It can enhance the people to concern and care more about other people. Concerning the society is more important. It is sincerely hoped that the people can help more necessary people. Although we need to care about ourselves first, we can also take care of other people. So I think this course is very useful. Not only it can make us to learn some vocabulary, but also other social and special knowledge. It is good for us to do. Lastly, I hope the course can make me improve my English because I think English is important for us to learn. It can help me to work well in the future. In addition, I think it is an international language so we need to learn it.

**Post 1 by Adele (2018-01-31, 17:01:40)***Pros and cons of neoliberalism*

Firstly, I think the pros of neoliberalism that it can protect human's rights as it competes with the government. It is good for capitalism. Secondly I think the cons of neoliberal-

ism are that it would make uneven between poor and rich people. It cannot protect the society's interest and ignore some people in the competition.

**Post 2 by Adele (2018-01-31, 17:22:01)**

*Racism*

Yes, I come across pop culture works that have elements of racism. Also when I work part-time, I saw a man from another country. Then, other people have discrimination against him.