

## UNIT 4

### SO WHAT'S IN FOR ENGLISH TEACHERS?

Although *The Ribbit-Ribbit Pond* is a book also intended for parents to read it with their children, my main interest was to create an EFL material deliberately designed to develop students' intercultural communicative competence, attending to the principles of translanguaging. In this regard, the book presents a number of possibilities in terms of teaching content that English teachers can explore and exploit in the classroom. The teaching content in the book is explored in this chapter in terms of vocabulary and grammar, two spinal axes of the teaching of English.

Source: González, I. (2021) *The Making of the Ribbit-Ribbit Pond: Nurturing Children's Intercultural Communicative Competence through a CREDIBLE Project*. PG Dissertation for Masters in Crosscultural and Applied Linguistics, University of Sydney.

Available at: <https://www.academia.edu/49674264/>

[The\\_Making\\_of\\_the\\_Ribbit\\_Ribbit\\_Pond\\_Nurturing\\_Childrens\\_Intercultural\\_Communicative\\_Compotence\\_through\\_a\\_CREDIBLE\\_Project](https://www.academia.edu/49674264/)

## LESSON 1: THE LANGUAGE OF MY PROJECT

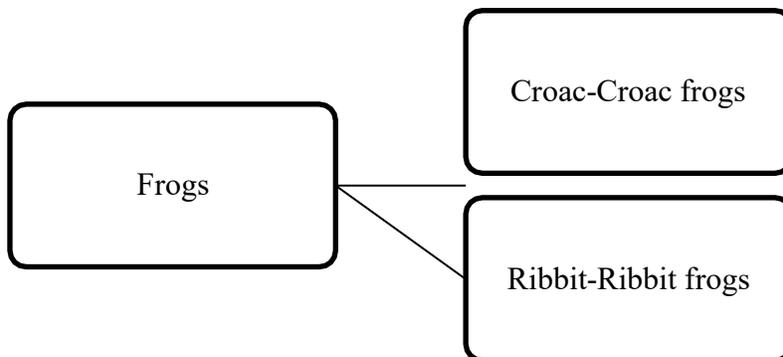
### 1. Vocabulary

Because the book is intended for children, the discussion of the vocabulary they can be taught with the book is limited to content words. In this regard, taxonomic relations of classification and composition can be made about the entities discussed in the story, which prove useful to access the teaching potential of the book in terms of vocabulary.

The first classification taxonomy built in the book is the one dividing frogs into two classes: the Croac-Croac frogs, and the Ribbit-Ribbit frogs (see Figure 29). This gives teachers the opportunity to explore the differences in onomatopoeic words English and Spanish use to refer to the sounds made by animals, including words such as “meow” and “miau” for cats, or “woof” and “guau” for dogs, and so forth; simultaneously, the teaching of such words implies the teaching of the names of animals in English other than frogs, expanding students’ knowledge on this topic, which is appropriate for young learners.

**Figure 29**

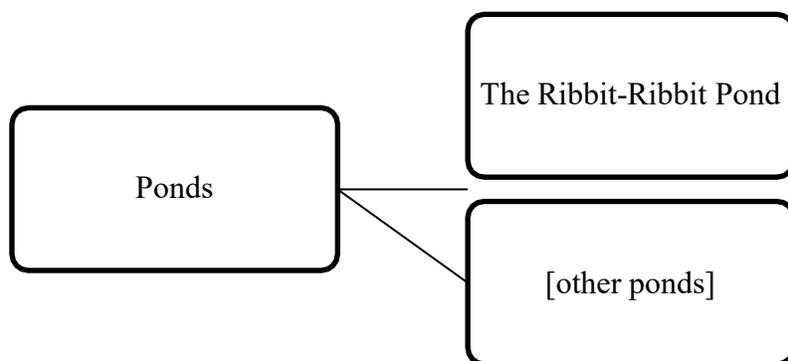
*Classification of frogs*



The second classification taxonomy building the field of the story is related to types of ponds (see Figure 30). This taxonomic relation could be used by the teacher to exemplify the relationship between different countries and different languages, thus exploring vocabulary in English related to countries and languages. Alternatively, teachers could associate the pond with animals other than frogs, and they could even expand on other natural habitats of animals.

**Figure 30**

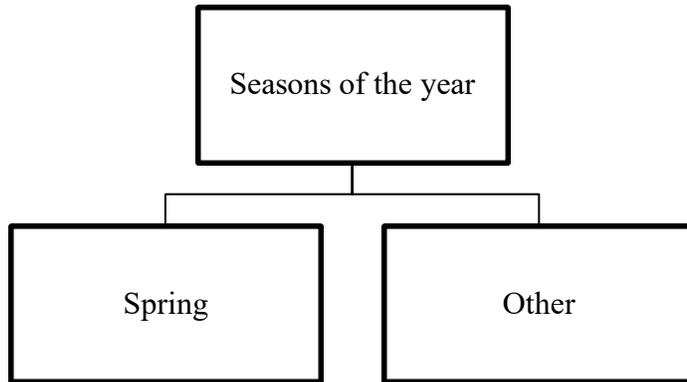
*Classification of ponds*



With regard to composition taxonomies, the first one identified in the story deals with the seasons of the year, providing teachers with the opportunity to teach learners the other seasons elided in the story (Figure 31). Similarly, they could expand on the different times of the day, that is morning, afternoon, evening, and night (Figure 32), and on vocabulary related to weather conditions such as rainy, sunny, cloudy, among other words (Figure 33).

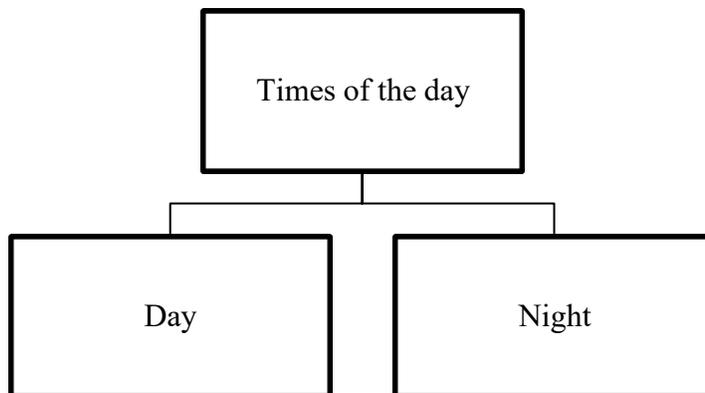
**Figure 31**

*Composition of seasons of the year*



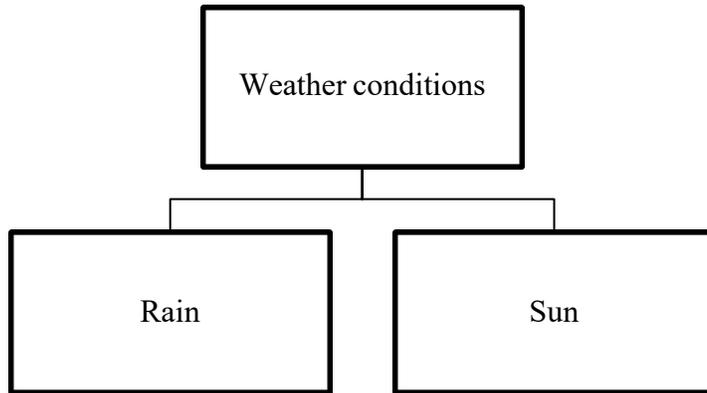
**Figure 32**

*Composition of the day*



**Figure 33**

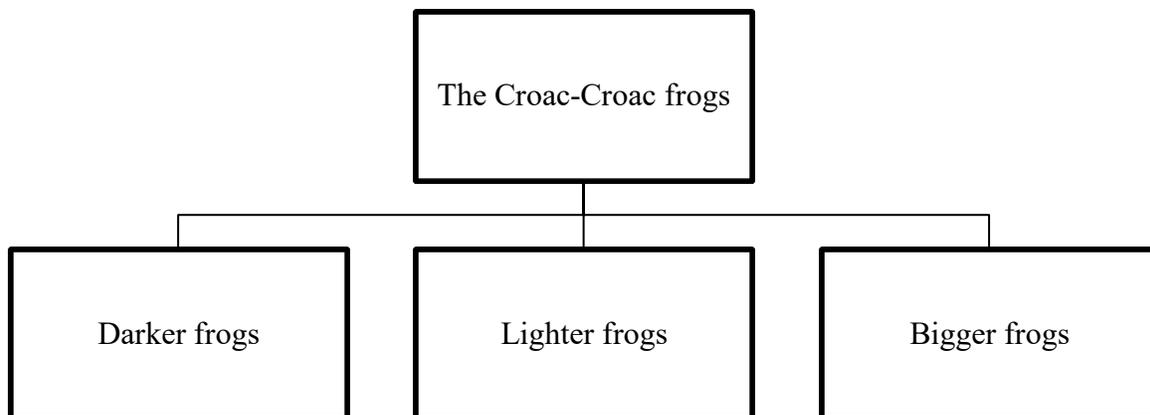
*Composition of weather conditions*



The last composition taxonomy depicts the different groups of frogs that are part of the Croac-Croac frogs in terms of their physical characteristics (Figure 34). These are all listed in the complication stage of the story, which means that this stage can be used by the teacher to introduce new adjectives to describe people, animals, and objects.

**Figure 34**

*Composition of the Croac-Croac frogs*



Apart from entities, the text is also rich in verbs as portrayed mainly by the resolution stage (see Table 10); different events are included in this stage, giving the opportunity to teachers not only to teach action verbs, but also to explore verbs expressing feelings such as love, hate, like, among other.

**Table 10***Verbs in the 'events' phase*

Stage	Phase	Text
Resolution	Events	We all can <b>jump</b> very high. We all can <b>swim</b> very fast. We all can <b>sing</b> very loud. We all <b>love</b> the smell of flowers. And we all <b>like to keep</b> our bodies warm in the cold winters. We all <b>love</b> the sunrise. We all <b>love</b> the sunset. And we all <b>enjoy eating</b> the same insects.

## 2. Grammar

As is typical of narratives, my narrative exhibits several instances of verbs in the past tense, including the past forms of the verb “be.” *The Ribbit-Ribbit Pond*, therefore, can be a good resource to exemplify to students how sentences in the past tense can be written. Based on my own experience as a language teacher, however, this verb tense is not very likely to be taught to young learners, especially in EFL contexts, which is why this and other verb tenses are not further explored in this section as a potential teaching content. Yet, other simpler grammatical structures can be recognised in the book, which are now addressed.

The main teaching content potential of the book in terms of grammar can be found in the Events phases. In the case of the Complication stage of the story, the Events phase displays two major grammatical contents that can be exploited by teachers: quantifiers, and comparative forms of adjectives; the former have been bolded in Table 11, while the later have been underlined.

**Table 11**

*Grammatical teaching content in the Complication stage*

Stage	Phase	Text
Complication	Events	I could not help but notice that the newcomers were different. <b>Some</b> of them were <u>darker</u> . <b>Some</b> of them were <u>lighter</u> . <b>Many</b> of them were <u>bigger</u> . And the way they spoke was <u>funnier</u> .

As for the Events phase in the Resolution stage, two grammatical contents can be identified, as well. On the one hand, this phase can be used to teach students how to express abilities with the modal verb “can;” on the other, it can also be used to teach how to properly use verbs to express general likes and preferences on combination with nominal groups or verbs ending with the –ing suffix. Table 12 presents the examples of the first grammatical content in bold, while the instances of the second content have been underlined.

**Table 12**

*Grammatical teaching content in the Resolution stage*

Stage	Phase	Text
Resolution	Events	We all <b>can jump</b> very high. We all <b>can swim</b> very fast. We all <b>can sing</b> very loud. We all <u>love the smell of flowers</u> . And we all <u>like to keep our bodies warm</u> in the cold winters. We all <u>love the sunrise</u> . We all <u>love the sunset</u> . And we all <u>enjoy eating</u> the same insects.

### 3. The language in your project

It is still important to reflect on the language you have used in your project in order to make it appropriate to your audience.

In my case, my story corresponded to a narrative intended to be read by children in companion with adults. In order to suit the requirements of this genre and of my target audience, the story was mostly written in the past simple tense with simple vocabulary for children to understand. When proofreading your project, therefore, I advise you to bear the following questions in mind:

- a) What are the requirements of your target audience in terms of language?

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- b) Is the vocabulary you used appropriate for your audience? Are you using too many technical words? Do you need to simplify the vocabulary?

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- c) Are the grammatical structures you used appropriate for your audience? Do you need to simplify them?

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**d)** What are the requirements of your genre in terms of language?

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**e)** Is the vocabulary you used appropriate for this genre? Are you using too many technical words? Do you need to simplify the vocabulary?

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**f)** Are the grammatical structures you used appropriate for this genre? Do you need to simplify them?

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