e-TEALS no.15 | 2023
An **e**-journal of **T**eacher **E**ducation
and **A**pplied **L**anguage **S**tudies

Independent language study compared to communicative pairwork: effects on languaging and learning

Andrew E. Sampson | FLUP - CETAPS

Abstract

Adult EFL learners increasingly find themselves working through language-focused tasks alone, either because they are following a flipped classroom approach where such tasks are assigned for self-study, or because they are physically separated from other learners in socially distanced or online classrooms. Rooted in a Vygotskian (1978, 1987) sociocultural framework, the present classroom study assesses this shift away from communicative collaboration towards individual study by comparing classroom pairwork with individual task completion in terms of a) learners' languaging, the "process of making meaning and shaping knowledge" (Swain 2006, p. 98) observable in learners' Language-Related Episodes (LREs), and b) the learning of forms topicalised in LREs, as measured by post-tests.

Findings indicate that while individual LRE numbers did not differ significantly from LREs initiated by each learner in pairs, dyadic learners benefitted from the additive effect of two learners identifying different language issues. LREs resolved correctly and LREs characterised by elaborate engagement (evidencing self-regulation strategies) did not differ significantly between modes. While all learners generally responded to post-test items in agreement with LRE resolutions, dyadic learners attempted fewer items relating to their LREs, suggesting that learners in dyads may not always listen to or learn from each other. Pedagogical recommendations are proposed.

Keywords: languaging; engagement; SCT; pairwork; LREs

1 INTRODUCTION

One of the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic on face-to-face language classrooms was socially distanced learning, signifying less of the collaborative pairwork that typically characterises communicative classrooms, and greater individual task completion. Learners in classes that moved completely onto online platforms such as Zoom, or to a hybrid or blended system that involved some synchronous communication on an online platform combined with some independent study, also experienced an increase in the amount of time spent doing tasks alone. This move towards greater independent study was in fact already evident before the pandemic, and continues today, given the gradual shift towards flipped EFL classroom models (Linling & Abdullah 2023; Vitta & Al-Hoorie, 2020) that prioritise speaking practice during class time, with more form-focussed language tasks being assigned for homework. A pertinent question here is how task completion and learning differ when they take place individually, compared to when tasks are done collaboratively, for example in pairs. While a great deal of research has investigated dynamics of peer collaboration, tending to find benefits for collaboration in terms of learning gains (Philp et al., 2013), very little research has compared peer collaboration with individual learning.

This is a gap in the literature that the present study aims to fill. It does so by comparing the number and nature of Language-Related Episodes (LREs), instances in which "students talk about the language they are producing, question their language use, or other- or self-correct" (Swain 1998, p. 70), between individual learners attempting two tasks – a passage editing activity and a freer writing task – and pairs of learners attempting the same two tasks collaboratively. Learners' LREs provide evidence of their languaging, the "process of making meaning and shaping knowledge and experience through language" (Swain 2006, p. 98) rooted in a Vygotskian (1978, 1987) sociocultural framework, and encompass a variety of learner behaviours believed to be conducive to learning, such as metalinguistic discussions (Kim & McDonough, 2011), hypothesis testing and self-repair (Gilabert & Barón, 2013), and noticing the gap between students' own language and a target

language feature (Gass & Mackey, 2007). LREs may differ qualitatively in terms of their linguistic focus (e.g. grammar, lexis, or punctuation), whether the episode is resolved correctly or incorrectly, and the level of cognitive engagement observed in the episode –that is, how deeply the language form is focussed on.

In the following example (Excerpt 1) of a collaborative LRE a pair of Spanish-speaking adult learners of English, Paula and Paul (names throughout this paper have been pseudonymised) are completing a passage editing task in which they have been asked to identify and correct mistakes seeded by the teacher within a short text. Having identified the lexical error "*at* my country", which constitutes the beginning of an LRE, given that they are talking about language and other-correcting, the learners correctly resolve the episode by proposing the preposition "*in* my country". Their level of cognitive engagement in the episode – that is, whether the learners consider a range of alternative forms or give justifications for their decisions, or if they simply correct it without engaging in it deeply – is elaborate rather than limited, as they consider, and reject, the alternative form "on":

Excerpt 1:

Paula	It's better "not just English but other languages too, at my country" is in country
Paul	yeah I think so
Paula	in, in my country
Paul	yeah, I think in, or on
Paula	or in, on ...
Paul	yeah, I, I dunno, in, I think..
Paula	in my country

In the following example, conversely, the learners correctly resolve an episode about the grammatical error "*are* there a chance" by proposing the correct form "*is* there a chance", but there is no discussion about the newly proposed form. Cognitive engagement in this episode may therefore be said to be only limited, rather than elaborate:

Excerpt 2:

Paula "you put in your email, if I give you a buzz on your phone number are there a chance you tell me more", a chance, is there a chance
Paul yeah ...
Paula "you can tell me more?"

LREs also occur within the thinking of individual learners when they complete tasks alone, but are usually silent or sub-vocalized. To date, very few studies (Kim, 2008 and Swain & Lapkin, 1995 are two rare examples) have attempted to observe LREs in individual learners, and have done so by way of think-aloud protocols – that is, verbal reports produced by individual learners concurrently as they complete tasks. The present study therefore aims to add to this limited body of work by observing languaging in individuals, and comparing this to languaging in peer collaboration.

2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The present study was conducted within a Vygotskian sociocultural framework (1978, 1987) in which knowledge is constructed by learners (novices) in social collaboration with more capable individuals (experts). As language learners have different levels of expertise in different areas of linguistic knowledge, they can provide each other with support in the form of scaffolding (Wood et al., 1976), support and guidance that can aid the other learner's development from their current to potential level within what Vygotsky termed the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). Such peer scaffolding has been observed in a number of studies on learner collaboration (Donato, 1994; Ohta, 2000, 2001; Storch, 2002, 2005).

Vygotsky's sociocultural framework also includes the concept of inner speech, that is, silent talk with the self that occurs when individuals face

cognitively challenging problems. This aspect of sociocultural theory (SCT) makes it a suitable framework for also examining individual thinking and the LREs therein. Such an examination represents a theoretical difficulty, however: for a researcher to observe silent inner speech in an individual, it is necessary for this to be externalized through vocalization. Whether vocalized inner speech in response to a researcher's prompt can be considered equivalent to silent inner speech, which may differ in terms of its formal features, is an ongoing theoretical concern (Ellis, 2001; Jourdenais, 2001).

3 LITERATURE REVIEW

While the above-mentioned research by Swain & Lapkin (1995) observed individual LREs by way of a think-aloud protocol, the authors did not attempt to compare these with collaborative LREs. To date, the only published study that has compared individual with collaborative LREs is Kim (2008). In her study, Korean as a Second Language learners working in pairs were found to be able to collaboratively pool their knowledge and resolve the majority of their LREs, while individual learners left a greater number of LREs unresolved, since they had no further resources to draw on beyond their own knowledge. Test scores also indicated greater learning gains from episodes discussed in pairs than those languaged alone. However, Kim acknowledges the potential limitation of the think-aloud protocol as a data collection tool, which may have represented an additional cognitive demand placed on individuals, which was not experienced by learners working collaboratively.

In the absence of further studies comparing individual task completion and pairwork in terms of learner languaging and LREs, it is pertinent to also consider results from studies that have compared the accuracy, fluency and complexity of learners' language between the two contexts. Again, peer collaboration has generally been found to have a positive effect on learner output. Results from

Nassaji and Tian (2010), for example, indicate greater accuracy in cloze and text editing tasks completed by pairs than in those completed individually, although learning gains did not differ significantly between the two contexts. Likewise, in Basterrechea & García Mayo (2013), learners working collaboratively to reconstruct a text in a dictogloss (text reconstruction) activity demonstrated greater accuracy with the 3rd person -s morpheme than learners reconstructing the text individually. In Wigglesworth and Storch (2009), significantly more error-free clauses were found in collaboratively produced essays than in those produced individually, and pairs' LREs provided evidence of peer scaffolding that the authors believed were associated with greater accuracy. The literature also contains evidence of peer learning in an "undesired" direction: LaPierre (1994) found that learners who had incorrectly resolved LREs in a dictogloss task completed collaboratively then went on to apply the incorrect "knowledge" constructed during the task in a post-test, which strongly suggests the retention of collaboratively constructed knowledge.

Research on learner languaging has so far tended to analyse learners' LREs in terms of their quantity, linguistic focus (e.g., grammar or lexis), and whether they are resolved correctly or incorrectly. However, Storch (2008) identifies the need to examine LREs more closely in terms of how much learner engagement occurs in episodes, having observed in her own research the qualitative differences between episodes in which learners fully participate and consider a range of actions, and episodes in which a form is merely stated, resolved, and then not discussed further. Storch found greater learning and consolidation of forms in LREs characterised by elaborate engagement, which she operationalises as discussion of language items, seeking and offering explanations, and suggesting alternative options, than in LREs characterised by limited engagement, operationalised as learners merely stating a linguistic item without further discussion.

While some definitions of engagement have been proposed in the language literature – Philp & Duchesne (2016, p. 52), for example, define it as "a state of heightened attention and involvement", while Christenson et al. (2012, p. 817) assert that learner engagement "requires energy and effort" – the concept has been relatively under-researched in language classrooms, with only a handful of studies

(e.g. Storch, 2008; Baralt et al., 2016; Lambert et al., 2017) having attempted to operationalise and observe it. A wider consideration of what engagement is and how it can be observed within learner task performance can, however, be found in the education literature outside of Applied Linguistics. Cognitive engagement may be observed when learners create connections between concepts and ideas (Weinstein & Mayer 1986), compare, question and infer regarding the target language (Svalberg, 2009), rehearse, summarise and elaborate information (Corno & Madinach, 1983), provide collaborative support (Baralt et al., 2016) and stay on task despite distractions (Corno, 1993; Pintrich & De Groot, 1990).

In response to the small number of studies investigating the differences between collaborative and individual task performance in language classrooms from the perspective of learner languaging and/or cognitive engagement in tasks, the present study aimed to answer the following research question:

What are the differences between the LREs produced by individuals and pairs completing the same tasks, in terms of i) number; ii) correctness of resolution; iii) level of cognitive engagement; and iv) learning of the forms focussed on?

4 METHODOLOGY

4.1 Participants

Participants were 45 L1 Spanish adult learners studying at CEF B2 level (upper-intermediate) at a private language school in Spain. Thirty of these learners worked in 15 pairs in face-to-face group classes, while the other 15 learners worked independently, following the same course material online at home.

4.2 Tasks

The participants completed two tasks. The first was a language-focussed passage editing task (Appendix A) consisting of an email seeded with 30 errors to be corrected. Passage editing tasks have been demonstrated to focus learners' attention on form (Storch, 1997) and stimulate hypothesis testing (Mayo, 2002). The second task was a freer written composition (Appendix B) in which learners were asked to produce a letter for a local newspaper giving their opinion on a topic recently covered in the course material, namely whether smoking should be banned outright. Written compositions have been demonstrated to provide opportunities for focus on form (Swain & Lapkin, 1995) by eliciting talk about linguistic choices made.

Pairs in the face-to-face classes completed the two tasks collaboratively and were audio recorded, while individual participants completed the tasks alone at home, audio recording themselves as they verbalized their thinking while completing the tasks. The two tasks were not corrected by the teacher but kept for the purposes of analysis.

4.3 Post-test

One week after completing the passage editing task, learners individually completed a post-test (Appendix C), which required learners to edit a new passage containing the same number of the same types of errors as the passage editing task they had completed. The aim of the post-test was to trace possible associations between LREs in the passage editing task and learning of the forms topicalised, based on the theoretical assumption that if participants had languaged a form in the passage editing task and had either learned something new or consolidated existing knowledge in the episode, they would be able to recognise and correct a

similar or identical form in the post-test. Such learning or consolidation potentially included test items resolved *incorrectly* when the LRE had also been incorrectly resolved, as this would still demonstrate construction or consolidation of "knowledge", albeit in an undesired direction (Swain 1998). The written composition did not have a post-test.

4.4 Data analysis

All learner talk was transcribed according to Jefferson's (2004) conventions, and LREs therein were identified. Following Swain (1998), LREs were defined as instances where participants talked about the language they were producing and / or other- or self-corrected. Each LRE then underwent further classification regarding i) the correctness of resolution, ii) evidence of cognitive engagement, and iii) evidence of learning. Regarding i) correctness of resolution, each LRE was classified as resolved correctly, resolved incorrectly, or left unresolved. Regarding ii) evidence of cognitive engagement, this was classified as elaborate or limited. Following Storch (2008), limited engagement was evident when a linguistic item was stated without further deliberation, while elaborate engagement was evident when the LRE contained a metacognitive strategy, such as seeking and / or providing justifications for resolutions, reflecting on choices, noticing, or generating further options from which to choose. In pairs, some LREs were characterised as elaborate + limited, if one participant demonstrated elaborate engagement and the other only limited engagement. Excerpts 1 and 2, in the introduction to the present paper, illustrate coding decisions regarding correctness of resolution and cognitive engagement. Regarding iii) evidence of learning, each participant's post-test responses were compared to the transcript of his or her original passage editing task, to check if the participant a) attempted test items that corresponded to their LREs in the passage editing task, and b)

resolved each test item in the same way as the LRE had been resolved in the passage editing task.

Data for the dependent variables (numbers of LREs; resolution of LREs; cognitive engagement in LREs; test scores) were tested for normalcy of distribution. Unpaired *t*-tests (for normally distributed data) and Mann-Whitney U tests (for non-normally distributed data) were performed to test for statistically significant differences between pairwork and individual work.

5. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

5.1 Individuals produced significantly fewer LREs than pairs.

Table 1
Numbers of LREs

		LREs	M	SD
Passage Editing	Pairs (*n* = 15)	406	27.1	7.9
	Individuals (*n* = 15)	235	15.7	4.4
Written Composition	Pairs (*n* = 15)	234	15.6	7.9
	Individuals (*n* = 15)	129	8.6	4.1

Independent-samples *t*-tests revealed a significantly higher number of LREs at the $p < .05$ level of significance in pairs than individuals, in both passage editing (PE) ($t(28) = 4.48$, $p = .00012$) and written composition (WC) ($t(28) = 3.04$, $p = .0051$). Table 1 shows individuals produced an average of 16 LREs in the passage editing task and 9 in the written composition, compared to pairwork averages of 27 LREs in passage editing and 16 LREs in written composition. Therefore, more talk about language occurred when learners worked in pairs: two heads appear to be better than one, with two pairs of eyes potentially seeing different things. While there may be social pressure to communicate and verbalise thoughts even when both partners are in agreement, the additive effect of the two learners' contributions

means there is more talk about language – that is, more languaging – in pairs than in individuals. This finding supports the majority of previous studies, which also find benefits for pairwork compared to individual performance, although it is important to reiterate that most previous studies have compared the two modes in terms of the accuracy, complexity and fluency of output, rather than languaging.

5.2 Numbers of LRE initiations in individuals were similar to each participant's initiations in pairs.

Table 2
Identity of initiator of LRE

		LRE initiations	M
Participant1 initiates in pairs (*n* = 15)	Passage Editing	240	16.0
	Written Composition	97	6.5
Participant 2 initiates in pairs (*n* = 15)	Passage Editing	166	11.1
	Written Composition	137	9.1
Individual initiates (*n* = 15)	Passage Editing	235	15.7
	Written Composition	129	8.6

It is important to note, however, that individuals in fact identified language problems and vocalized their thoughts about these to a similar extent as *each one* of the two learners in pairs, as seen in Table 2, which shows the average number of LREs *initiated* by each participant in pairs, compared to individual LREs. The number of LREs produced by individuals was not significantly different from the number of LREs initiated by participant 1 or participant 2, as confirmed by independent-samples *t*-tests for PE ($t(43) = 1.19$, $p = .24$) and WC ($t(43) = 0.56$, $p = .58$). It therefore appears to be the additive effect of two learners working together that accounts for the higher total LREs numbers for pairs. This finding supports results from Fernández Dobao (2012, 2014) and Lasito & Storch (2013), in which

participants who pool their linguistic resources produced greater numbers of LREs.

5.3. Proportions of correctly resolved LREs were similar between pairs and individuals.

Table 3
LRE resolution

			LREs	% of total LREs	M
Correctly resolved	Passage Editing	Pairs (*n* = 15)	290	71.4%	19.3
		Individuals (*n* = 15)	159	67.7%	10.6
	Written Composition	Pairs (*n* = 15)	196	83.8%	13.1
		Individuals (*n* = 15)	115	89.1%	7.7
Incorrectly resolved	Passage Editing	Pairs (*n* = 15)	48	11.8%	3.2
		Individuals (*n* = 15)	24	10.2%	1.6
	Written Composition	Pairs (*n* = 15)	27	11.5%	1.8
		Individuals (*n* = 15)	7	5.4%	0.5
Unresolved	Passage Editing	Pairs (*n* = 15)	68	16.7%	4.5
		Individuals (*n* = 15)	52	22.1%	3.5
	Written Composition	Pairs (*n* = 15)	11	4.7%	0.7
		Individuals (*n* = 15)	7	5.4%	0.5

Regarding correctness of resolution, Table 3 shows that most of the episodes were correctly resolved, and no significant difference was found between pairs and individuals in the proportions of correctly resolved episodes in PE ($U(28) = 87.5$, $z = 1.02$, $p = .31$) or WC ($U(28) = 93.5$, $z = 0.77$, $p = .44$) This finding is contrary to Kim's (2008), where dyadic pooling of linguistic resources resulted in greater ability to correctly resolve LREs in pairs than in individuals. A possible explanation for the

finding of non-significant differences in this regard in the present study is that the proportion of correctly resolved episodes in individuals was based on significantly fewer *total* LREs. Individual learners, therefore, appeared to not even attempt to initiate episodes – at least not verbally – if they knew they would be unable to resolve them, and instead focused their attention on items they felt they would be able to correct. There is evidence in the transcripts of individual learners not vocalizing their thoughts about certain episodes, as in the following excerpt from Illanca's passage editing task:

Excerpt 3

> Illanca: "OK let me think... yes this is OK".

The pause between "think" and "yes" seems likely to contain unspoken thoughts that may constitute an LRE, but the limitation of the think-aloud protocol in individual learners may have constituted an impediment to observing it.

5.4 Cognitive engagement was similar between pairs and individuals.

Table 4
Cognitive engagement in LREs

			LREs	% of total LREs	M
Limited	Passage Editing	Pairs (*n* = 15)	177	43.6%	11.8
		Individuals (*n* = 15)	84	35.7%	5.6
	Written Composition	Pairs (*n* = 15)	144	61.5%	9.6
		Individuals (*n* = 15)	94	72.9%	6.3
Elaborate	Passage Editing	Pairs (*n* = 15)	126	31.0%	8.4
		Individuals (*n* = 15)	151	64.3%	10.1
	Written Composition	Pairs (*n* = 15)	54	23.1%	3.6
		Individuals (*n* = 15)	35	27.1%	2.3
Elaborate + Limited	Passage Editing	Pairs (*n* = 15)	103	25.4%	6.9
	Written Composition	Pairs (*n* = 15)	34	14.5%	2.3

The proportion of LREs characterized by limited engagement – that is, linguistic preferences were stated without further deliberation – did not differ significantly between pairs and individuals, as confirmed by Mann-Whitney U-tests at the $p < .05$ level (PE: $U(28) = 62$, $z = 2.07$ $p = .051$; WC: $U(28) = 67.5$, $z = 1.85$, $p = .064$). Most episodes in passage editing were characterized by elaborate engagement, with individual learners engaged cognitively in LREs to a similar degree as learners in pairs. Many individual elaborate engagement episodes took the form of a justification relating to the register of the text, as exemplified in the following extract:

Excerpt 4

> Ingrid: I think in this sentence is "if I would come to study with you, how much would I need to pay in total", it's, is not a correct form, because it's very informal to say to speak with the university so it think it's better if we put for example if I would come to study in your university

Vygotskian sociocultural theory (1978, 1987) helps account for the episodes characterized by elaborate cognitive engagement. Such episodes may represent evidence that concepts have been internalized by learners, that is, they have moved beyond what Vygotsky termed spontaneous concepts that learners can use without fully understanding their form, to scientific concepts, a formal awareness of which is demonstrated by way of the elaborate engagement. In the previous example, Ingrid not only chooses the more formal "at your university" over "with you", but is able to articulate here understanding of the effect of the change in register.

5.5 Most post-test items were resolved in agreement with LRE resolution.

Table 5
Post-test items corrected in agreement with LRE resolution

	Items attempted	Items corrected in agreement with LRE resolution	Items corrected in agreement, as a proportion of items attempted	Mean items per participant
Pairs (n = 30)	249	182	73.1%	6.1
Individuals (n = 15)	103	73	70.9%	4.9

The post-test required learners to individually correct a text that contained the same number of the same kinds of errors as the original passage editing task. Between 71% (in individuals) and 73% (in pairs) of corrections attempted were carried out in the same way that LREs had been resolved in the passage editing task, with no significant difference between individuals and pairs, as confirmed by a Mann-Whitney U test at the $p < .05$ level, $U(43) = 796$, $z = 0.014$, $p = .99$. This indicates an association between LREs and learning, with knowledge constructed or consolidated in the LRE during passage editing resurfacing on the post-test. The non-significant difference between pairs and individuals supports findings from

Nassaji & Tian (2010), who found no significant differences in learning gains between pairs and individuals who completed text editing tasks.

5.6 Forms languaged individually appeared to be more memorable than forms languaged dyadically.

Table 6
Post-test items attempted

	Items that corresponded to LREs	Items attempted	Items attempted as a percentage of items that corresponded to LREs
Pairs (*n* = 30)	614	249	40.6%
Individuals (*n* = 15)	201	103	51.2%

The open-ended nature of the post-test meant that learners could attempt as few or as many corrections as they wished. An inspection of the post-test items that corresponded to participants' LREs during the passage editing task, and of the proportion of these test items that were attempted, reveals that individuals attempted significantly more items that corresponded to their LREs than learners who had worked in pairs, according to the Mann-Whitney U-test ($U(43) = 129.5$, $z = 2.29$, $p = .022$). This may suggest that learners find it easier to remember forms worked through individually than learners who had worked in pairs.

If peer talk is in fact less likely to relate to subsequent receptive awareness of forms focused on than self-talk, this may lend support to Swain's (2013) observation that in peer interaction, not all speech is necessarily social, but may in fact be private, for the self. At times learners appear to be talking "to each other, but are in fact following their own agenda" (Swain, 2013, p. 201). Such an assertion relates to Vygtosky's (1987) concept of private speech, in which inner speech, that is, speech that has become internalized as a tool for the purposes of self-regulation, surfaces in order to aid the speaker in the resolution of cognitively complex tasks. In the peer-peer protocols there were a few examples of speech that appeared, on

the surface, to be socially directed, but may in fact have been vocalized speech for the self. In the following extract, for instance, Pablo vocalized a series of language issues (turns 1, 7 and 11), but resolved these himself. His speech was not, it would seem, socially directed. Patricia responded to Pablo's output (turns 2, 4, 6, 8, 10 and 12) but these responses did not contribute to the collaborative resolution of the LREs. Pablo followed his own agenda and decided on the words to write in order to complete the composition task:

Excerpt 5

1 Pablo	Erm, this idea... "there are people that defends the fact of smoking and where there are people who disagree", erm, agree where? Whereas?
2 Patricia	*aunque o algo así, no sé como decirlo* [although, or something like that, I don't know how to say it]
3 Pablo	whereas *mientras que* [whereas]
4 Patricia	Ah vale [ah OK]... *con esto* [with this] then
5 Pablo	OK "where there are people who agree whereas"
6 Patricia	Erm we could erm talk er we could say that erm, we
7 Pablo	We will ana
8 Patricia	Yes
9 Pablo	Analyse
10 Patricia	We?
11 Pablo	We will analyse the advantages and disadvantages
12 Patricia	ah OK, or
13 Pablo	Disadvantages of
14 Patricia	Or maybe, like, positionate us in the *en el medio tío* [in the middle, mate] in middle of these two ideas
15 Pablo	Disadvantages of smoking

Given the significantly fewer test items attempted following peer-peer LREs, it is possible that learners may not have always listened to each other's languaging, and LREs initiated and resolved by the same learner may not have always constituted learning opportunities for the interlocutor.

6 CONCLUSION

The conclusions and pedagogical recommendations that follow need to be considered within the context of a number of limitations to which the present study was subject. Firstly, the study employed a very narrow observational focus of learners working on tasks without any input from teachers, in order to compare unaided task performance between individuals and pairs. Real learning contexts, of course, are more complex and fluid than this, with learners being able to access input from teachers, other learners in the classroom and a range of learning resources. Secondly, individual learners in the present study were required to think aloud while completing the tasks, and this may have represented an additional cognitive demand that might have affected individual learners' languaging, as was the case in Kim (2008). In other words, the process of verbalizing may have been reactive (Ellis 2001; Jourdenais 2001) to the task at hand, and fundamentally changed the cognitive processes that occurred. Thirdly, the post-test was very similar to the passage editing task – necessarily so, in order to elicit corrections of the same forms as the task. This similarity, however, may have meant it was subject to the possible positive effect of task repetition, namely that repeated exposure to similar tasks improves learners' accuracy in relation to the forms therein (Gass, et al., 1999).

Within the context of those limitations, the key findings may be summarized as follows. The present study set about investigating the effects of increased individual language study time in socially distanced or online language classrooms, by comparing individual with collaborative task performance in terms of their LREs and the learning of the forms focused on. Findings suggest that pairs working collaboratively engage in significantly more LREs than individual learners, although the proportion of episodes resolved correctly, or characterized by elaborative cognitive engagement, does not differ significantly. Post-tests suggest individuals found their episodes more memorable for subsequent recall than learners who had worked in dyads.

Some tentative pedagogical recommendations may be proposed. Firstly, learners working at home alone could be usefully paired for some tasks, for example through Zoom, since the presence of an interlocutor appears to be positively associated with LRE occurrence. Secondly, given the lower LRE numbers in individual learners, these can be encouraged to be on the lookout for possible gaps and errors in their own knowledge – to take a more critical look at their own language – as this may result in more episodes. Thirdly, given the present evidence that learners do not always listen to or learn from each other's languaging in pairwork, teachers could provide guidance on how learners should interact with peers. Learners could, for example, be encouraged to adopt a more questioning role that invites their interlocutor to consider more appropriate or sophisticated language forms, and to make clarification requests and confirmation checks such as "so what you're saying is... so if I understand you correctly... so do you mean this?". This may help improve the quality of interaction in terms of the resolution of episodes, numbers of LREs characterized by elaborate engagement, and opportunities for peer learning, although future research would be needed to investigate the efficacy of such an approach.

REFERENCES

Baralt, M., Gurzynski-Weiss, L. & Kim, Y. (2016). The effects of task complexity and classroom environment on learners' engagement with the language. In M. Sato & S. Ballinger (Eds.), *Peer Interaction and second language learning. Pedagogical potential and research agenda* (pp. 209-240). John Benjamins. doi: 10.1075/lllt.45.09bar

Basterrechea, M. & Mayo, M. P. G. (2013). Language-related episodes during collaborative tasks: a comparison of CLIL and EFL learners. In K. McDonough & A. Mackey (Eds.), *Second language interaction in diverse educational contexts* (pp. 25-44). John Benjamins. doi: 10.1075/lllt.34.05ch2

Christenson, S., Reschly, A., & Wylie, C (2012). *Handbook of research on student engagement*. Springer. doi: 10.1007/978-1-4614-2018-7

Corno, L. (1993). The best-laid plans: Modern conceptions of volition and educational research. *Educational Researcher*, 22, 14–22

Corno, L., & Mandinach, E. (1983). The role of cognitive engagement in classroom learning and motivation. *Educational Psychologist* ,18, 88–108

Donato, R. (1994). Collective scaffolding in second language learning. In J. P. Lantolf & G. Appel (Eds.), *Vygotskian approaches to second language research* (pp. 33-56). Ablex.

Ellis, R. (2001). Introduction: Investigating form-focussed instruction. *Language Learning*, 51, 1-46. doi: 10.1111/j.1467-1770.2001.tb00013.x

Fernández Dobao, A. (2012). Collaborative writing tasks in the L2 classroom: Comparing group, pair and individual work. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 21(1), 40-58. doi: 10.1016/j.jslw.2011.12.002

Fernández Dobao, A. (2014). Vocabulary learning in collaborative tasks: A comparison of pair and small group work. *Language Teaching Research*, 18(4), 497–520. doi: 10.1177/1362168813519730

Gass, S., Mackey, A., Alvarez-Torres, M. J. and Fernández-García, M. (1999). The effects of task repetition on linguistic output. *Language Learning,* 49, 549–581. doi:10.1111/0023-8333.00102

Gass, S. & Mackey, A. (2007). Input, interaction and output in second language acquisition. In B. Van Patten & J. Williams (Eds.) *Theories in second language acquisition: An introduction* (pp. 175-200). Lawrence Erlbaum

Gilabert, R. and Barón, J. (2013). The impact of increasing task complexity on L2 pragmatic moves. In K. McDonough & A. Mackey (Eds.) *Second language acquisition in diverse educational contexts* (pp. 45-70). John Benjamins. doi: 10.1075/lllt.34.06ch3

Jefferson, G. (2004). Glossary of transcript symbols with an introduction. In G. H. Lerner (Ed.) *Conversation Analysis* (pp. 13-31). John Benjamins. doi: 10.1075/pbns.125.02jef

Jourdenais, R. (2001). Cognition, instruction and protocol analysis. In P. Robinson (Ed.) *Cognition and second language instruction* (pp. 354-376). CUP 10.1017/cbo9781139524780.014

Kim, Y. (2008). The contribution of collaborative and individual tasks to the acquisition of L2 vocabulary. *The Modern Language Journal,* 92(1), 114-130. doi: 10.1111/j.1540-4781.2008.00690.x

Kim, Y. & McDonough, K. (2011). Using pretask modelling to encourage collaborative learning opportunities. *Language Teaching Research,* 15(2), 183-199. doi: 10.1177/1362168810388711

Lambert, C., Philp, J., & Nakamura, S. (2017). Learner-generated content and engagement in second language task performance. *Language Teaching Research*, 21(6), 665–680. doi: 10.1177/1362168816683559

LaPierre, D. (1994). Language output in a cooperative learning setting: Determining its effects on second language learning. MA thesis, Ontario Institute for Studies in Education: University of Toronto.

Lasito, & Storch, N. (2013). Comparing pair and small group interactions on oral tasks. *RELC Journal*, 44(3), 361–375. doi:10.1177/0033688213500557

Linling, Z., & Abdullah, R. (2023). The impact of COVID-19 pandemic on flipped classroom for EFL courses: a systematic literature review. *SAGE Open*, 13(1), doi: 21582440221148149

Mayo, M. P. G. (2002). Interaction in advanced EFL pedagogy: a comparison of form-focused activities. *International Journal of Educational Research,* 37(3-4), 323-341. doi: 10.1016/s0883-0355(03)00008-9

Nassaji, H. & Tian, J. (2010). Collaborative and individual output tasks and their effects on learning English phrasal verbs. *Language Teaching Research,* 14/(4), 397-419. Doi: 10.1177/1362168810375364

Ohta, A. S. (2000). Rethinking recasts: a learner-centered examination of corrective feedback in the Japanese classroom. In J. K. Hall & L. Verplaeste (Eds.) *The construction of second and foreign language learning through classroom interaction* (pp. 47–71). Lawrence Erlbaum.

Ohta, A.S. (2001). *Second language acquisition processes in the classroom: learning Japanese*. Lawrence Erlbaum. Doi: 10.4324/9781410604712

Philp, J., Adams, R., & Iwashita, N. (2013). *Peer Interaction and Second Language Learning.* Routledge. Doi:10.4324/9780203551349

Philp, J. & Duchesne, S. (2016). Exploring engagement in tasks in the language classroom. *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*, 36, 50-72. Doi: 10.1017/s0267190515000094

Pintrich, P. R., & de Groot, E. V. (1990). Motivational and self-regulated learning components of classroom academic performance. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 82(1), 33–40. doi:10.1037/0022-0663.82.1.33

Storch, N. (1997). The editing talk of adult ESL learners. *Language Awareness*, 6(4), 221-232. doi: 10.1080/09658416.1997.9959931

Storch, N. (2002). Patterns of interaction in ESL pair work. *Language Learning*, 52, 119–58. doi: 10.1111/1467-9922.00179

Storch, N. (2005). Collaborative writing: product, process, and students' reflections. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 14(3), 153-173. doi: 10.1016/j.jslw.2005.05.002

Storch, N. (2008). Metatalk in a pair work activity: level of engagement and implications for language development. *Language Awareness*, 17(2), 95-114. doi: 10.2167/la431.0

Svalberg, A. M. L. (2009). Engagement with language: interrogating a construct. *Language Awareness*, 18(3-4), 242-258. doi:10.1080/09658410903197264

Swain, M. (1998). Focus on form through conscious reflection. In C. Doughty & J. Williams (Eds.) *Focus on form in classroom second language acquisition* (pp. 64-81). CUP

Swain, M. (2006). Languaging, agency and collaboration in advanced second language learning. In H. Byrnes (Ed.) *Advanced Language Learning: The contribution of Halliday and Vygotsky* (pp 95-108). Continuum. doi: 10.5040/9781474212113.ch-004

Swain, M. (2013). The inseparability of cognition and emotion in second language learning. *Language Teaching*, 46(2), 195-207. doi: 10.1017/s0261444811000486

Swain, M. & Lapkin, S. (1995). Problems in output and the cognitive processes they generate: a step towards second language learning. *Applied Linguistics* 16(3), 371-391. doi: 10.1093/applin/16.3.371

Vitta, J. P., & Al-Hoorie, A. H. (2020). The flipped classroom in second language learning: A meta-analysis. *Language Teaching Research*, 27(5), 1268-1292. doi: 10.1177/1362168820981403

Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). *Mind in society: The development of higher psychological processes*. Harvard University Press.

Vygotsky, L. S. (1987). *Thinking and Speech*. Plenum Press.

Weinstein, C., & Mayer, R. (1986). The teaching of learning strategies. In Wittrock, M. C. (Ed.), *Handbook of research on teaching and learning* (3rd ed., pp. 315–327). Macmillan.

Wigglesworth, G. & Storch, N. (2009). Pair versus individual writing: effects on fluency, complexity and accuracy. *Language Testing* 26(3), 445–466. doi: 10.1177/0265532209104670

Wood, D., Bruner, J. S., & Ross, G. (1976) The role of tutoring in problem-solving. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry and Allied Disciplines*, 17, 89–100. doi: 10.1111/j.1469-7610.1976.tb00381.x

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Passage Editing Task

Read this email from a student to a University Admissions Officer in the UK, and correct any problems / errors.

Remember to consider the full range of possible errors. These may include:

1. **Grammar**
2. **Vocabulary**
3. **Spelling**
4. **Punctuation**
5. **Style (formal / informal)**

Hi Mrs Horowitz,

Just writing to say thanks a MILLION for your email about language formation in your university. The language learning is really important for students here in spain, not just English but other languages too, at my country it is imposible to find good courses in Chinese or the Russian, although it depends of the place, so it'll be really cool to study these languages in your university. Which reminds me, can you give me an aproximate cost of the courses? If I would come to study with you, how much would I need to pay in total? If I pay a deposit now, how much time shall I have to pay the rest of the money? I'm sure the formation will be BRILLIANT, I'm really looking forward to studying in the uk, but apart from the studies, time for making leisure activities is also a priority for me. There were something in your email about what students can do in their free time at the weekends – if I give you a buzz on the phone number you put in your email, are there a chance you can tell me more?

Bye for now and see you soon!

Andy

P.S. Any recommendations for good places on the city to visit at night-time? We really want to take full advantage of our time in England!

Appendix B: Written Composition

Write a letter to your local newspaper giving your opinion about this topic:

"Should we ban smoking everywhere – even at home?"

You might want to include comments about the following:

- Health issues related to smoking
- The importance of individual freedom
- Taxes on cigarettes
- Plus any ideas of your own.

First, make notes and decide which ideas will go into each paragraph. Then write your letter, and try to give emphasis to your opinions. Finally, read and check your letter for mistakes.

Appendix C: Post-test

Read this email from a student to a University Admission Officer in the UK, and correct any problems / errors.

Remember to consider the full range of possible errors. These may include:

1. **Grammar**
2. **Vocabulary**
3. **Spelling**
4. **Punctuation**
5. **Style (formal / informal)**

Hi Mrs. Horowitz,

Just letting you know that I've now received the extra information you sent me about language formation on England, thanks a MILLION, once again. The university studies at spain are BRILLIANT for subjects like Enginneering , for the languages I think it's better in the UK, so it'll be really cool to study there. Any recommendations for an english certification to acredit previous formation? I have seen that we would make an English test in the first week, but what does it consist in? Before I leave Spain I'll check your website again to see if there is things I need to bring, and I should give you a buzz if I have any questions – any chance you can confirm if there are a phone number on your webpage?

Bye for now and see you soon,

Andy