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Department of Language and Literature Education  
**MASTER'S DEGREE IN TEACHING IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS,  
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# **The discussion of meaning and form in a dictogloss task**

FERNANDO ORTIZ FERNÁNDEZ

TUTOR  
CRISTINA ALIAGAS MARÍN

Barcelona  
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**UAB**  
Universitat Autònoma  
de Barcelona

## **Abstract**

The aim of this paper is to investigate the relation between meaning and form in the reconstruction stage of a dictogloss task in a CRL context. In this type of learning contexts, where subject knowledge and language are integrated, it is essential to find a balance between meaning and form in the activities carried out in class. Previous research has shown that the dictogloss task is an effective technique in not only promoting metatalk and peer learning, but also in drawing the learners' attention to the form while still being focused on meaning. The findings of this research suggest that, while this is true, the focus of the students in the dictogloss task is not arbitrary, and is influenced by a number of factors (nature of the output, chosen text, bias of the teacher and context of the activity) which can be modified to draw the students' attention towards more meaning-based or more form-based discussions, according to the objectives of the teacher.

L'objectiu d'aquest treball és explorar la relació entre significat i forma durant la fase de reconstrucció d'un dictogloss en un context d'aprenentatge de llengües ric en contingut. En aquest tipus de context d'aprenentatge on el contingut de la matèria i la llengua estan integrats és essencial trobar l'equilibri entre significat i forma en les activitats dutes a terme a classe. Investigacions anteriors han demostrat que l'activitat de dictogloss és una tècnica efectiva no només per promoure discussions sobre el llenguatge i aprenentatge entre iguals, sinó també per dirigir l'atenció dels aprenents a la forma sense perdre de vista el significat del missatge. Els resultats d'aquesta recerca suggereixen que, encara que això sigui cert, l'atenció dels estudiants en un dictogloss no és arbitrària, sinó que ve influenciada per diversos factors (la naturalesa de l'output, el text escollit, el biaix del professor i el context de l'activitat) que es poden modificar per orientar l'atenció dels estudiants cap a debats més centrats en la forma o en el contingut, depenent dels objectius del professor.

## **Key words**

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Dictogloss, meaning, form, language-related episode, CRL (Content-Rich Language Learning)

Dictogloss, significat, forma, episodis relacionats amb la llengua, CRL (Aprenentatge de llengües ric en contingut)

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## 1. Introduction and context

The present study sets out to investigate the relation between meaning and form in the reconstruction stage of a dictogloss task in a CRL context. In order to do so, I will first take an initial approach to the tension between meaning and form in the framework of Content-Based Language Teaching and describe the context of the target activity and the school where the data was gathered. Once the research questions have been stated, I will lay out the theoretical framework for this thesis and the research methodology. Then, I will present and discuss the results of the research. I will finally interpret these results to give an answer to the research questions.

### 1.1. *Meaning vs form in CBLT*

A central concern of research in the field of second language learning has been the question of how to balance form and meaning, and whether instruction should be form-focused or meaning-focused. In the context of language learning, meaning refers to *what* is being said; that is, the message that is being conveyed. On the other hand, form refers to *how* something is said; that is, the way in which a message is articulated.

There have been recent pedagogical initiatives which, based on the belief that form and meaning cannot be separated in communication, aim at giving equal importance to both by integrating them in what is known as Content-Based Language Teaching (CBLT). This is an umbrella term that encompasses different models of education in which second languages are taught through other subject areas, such as mathematics, science or music. This includes the French immersion model in Canada and the CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning) model in Europe, which has been widely accepted as an effective educational practice and has expanded steadily in school education of most European countries over the past two decades.

In the context of CLIL, “content” is closely related to “meaning”, and refers to the knowledge and skills related to the subject matter. That is, in a social science CLIL class, students will learn about the Industrial Revolution and about World War II. “Language” is closely related to “form”, and refers to the knowledge and skills related to the English language (or to the language in which the class is conducted). That is, in the same social science class, students will learn how to use the past tense, read years in English and topic-related key words such as *steam*, *coal*, *ally* and *atomic bomb*.

CLIL subjects are implemented by the content teacher, which means that there is a tendency to pay more attention to the content and disregard the form (Mohan, 1986). As a matter of fact, according to previous research, it appears that although the infusion of meaningful content does support the development of receptive skills, it is not sufficient to equally affect learner’s productive skills (Valeo, 2013). This means that learners become more proficient in understanding the target language, but not in writing or speaking, particularly with regard to grammatical accuracy. This could be due to the fact that content teachers teach grammar in a manner disconnected from the content (Swain, 1996).

On the other hand, in the language classroom there is a tendency to pay more attention to the form and overlook the fact that content is being communicated (Mohan, 1986). However, some researchers argue that only when the content has been successfully understood does the brain release resources to work on those formal traits of the language that build the message up (Escobar, 2012). One of the pedagogical proposals to balance meaning and form in the language classroom is CRL (Content-Rich Language Learning), according to which it is the content that determines the selection of the language items that will be taught. The main difference between CLIL and CRL is that CLIL is used to refer to lessons taught by content teachers in slots labelled other than language, whereas CRL is taught by English teachers in slots labelled “English” (Escobar, 2012).

## **1.2 Context of the activity**

In this study, the tension between meaning and form is explored within the pedagogical framework of CRL. The data on which the present research draws was gathered in an English class, implemented by an English teacher, but with a focus on content. More specifically, it was gathered in the context of a teaching unit about vertebrates, which was developed under the supervision of the biology teacher of the secondary school.

This teaching unit about vertebrates covers curricular areas related to English and to science, and it contributes to transversal competences as well. It therefore articulates a variety of pedagogical goals. As far as English is concerned, students would be able to describe animals and their characteristics using appropriate vocabulary, and they would be able to compare animals using a variety of structures (*both, neither, whereas*, comparative adjectives, etc.). As far as science is concerned, students would be able to classify vertebrates into different groups according to their characteristics, and would understand different natural phenomena related to vertebrates (for instance, metamorphosis, hibernation, etc.). For this purpose, students would also make use of digital tools and would organize and transform information into mind maps.

The specific activity that this paper focuses on is a dictogloss. The dictogloss was conceived as a renovation of the traditional dictation, which nowadays is usually considered an old-fashioned and rather sterile exercise in the context of language teaching (Kidd, 1992). In its primitive form, in a dictation the teacher reads a passage to the students slowly, and the students copy the passage word by word. This procedure may be useful to develop listening and spelling skills, but completely disregards the content of the passage and fails in promoting communication or interaction. However, there have been many pedagogical proposals that tweak the traditional procedure of a dictation and make it more effective in promoting meaningful communication between students. Wajnryb (1990) is credited with developing the dictogloss task, one of these spins on the traditional dictation.

There are several ways of carrying out a dictogloss task, but Jacobs & Small (2003) suggest doing it in five steps. First, the class engages in some discussion about the topic of the upcoming text, which may include discussing its formal aspects as well (text type, structure, language features, etc.). Second, the teacher reads the text aloud once at normal speed, and students listen but do not write anything. The text can be extracted from a real source or

can be written or adapted by the teacher, and its length depends on the students' proficiency level. Third, the teacher reads the text again at normal speed and students individually make brief notes about the main ideas. They are not expected to write down every word exactly as it appears in the text, but rather the key words to help them remember the content. Four, students work closely together in pairs or small groups to share their notes and cooperatively rewrite the text in full sentences, editing for accurate language, cohesion and inclusion of the main ideas. This reconstruction should retain the meaning and form of the original, but does not aim to be an exact copy of it. Finally, learners compare their productions with the original text and, with the help of the teacher, identify similarities and differences in terms of meaning and form.

Given the nature of the task, a dictogloss goes beyond developing listening and spelling abilities; it also promotes negotiation and communication among peers, as it forces students to interact and work together to solve the difficulties that arise in the reconstruction stage. These difficulties are both meaning-based and form-based: the students need to process the meaning of the original text deeply in order to be able to recall it with the only help of their notes, but they also need to activate their language skills to be able to reconstruct the text accurately in their own words. It also promotes the use of metalanguage to negotiate form and meaning in the collaborative reconstruction stage.

In the context of a teaching unit about vertebrates, the passage that was used for the dictogloss is a fable, and the choice of this text type was not arbitrary. First of all, the fact that the characters are animals allows students to make connections between the story and their knowledge of science. Fables also illustrate a moral, which introduces an ethical perspective to the story and helps instill positive beliefs and values in the students.

The fable used in this study aims at explaining the characteristics of two subclasses of mammals: monotremes and marsupials. The passage tells the story of Waddles the platypus, a monotreme, who, feeling lonely and bored, decides to look for new friends. He meets a beaver and a duck, animals with which the platypus shares many characteristics, but he is rejected by them because of their differences. He finally meets a kangaroo, a marsupial who will teach him the importance of respecting individual differences. As for language-related goals, the fable gives the students the opportunity to put into practice the use of past tenses in English and topic-related vocabulary (*lay eggs, beak, lungs, pouch, warm blood...*).

### **1.3 Context of the school**

The teaching unit was implemented in a public secondary school located in Barcelona. This school was created in the year 1996, and in the school year 2016-2017 it had 61 teachers and 702 students distributed in four lines of compulsory secondary education (ESO) and three lines of higher secondary education (*Batxillerat*). The social composition of the school reflects the make-up of the surrounding area: a medium-class neighborhood with 13,6% of foreign population and an average per capita income more than 20% lower than the rest of Barcelona, according to statistics released by Barcelona City Council in 2013<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.bcn.cat/estadistica/catala/dades/inf/barris/a2013/barri65.pdf>



As for the school's educational project, the organizational model is fairly traditional, which means that the departments of different academic subjects are separate and distinct, as opposed to using an interdisciplinary model (combining and integrating academic subjects) or a project-based learning model. However, there is one feature in their educational project that sets the school apart from other traditional centers and is of special relevance for the purpose of this paper: a powerful and well-developed CLIL program.

The CLIL program was first implemented in this school in the year 2007-2008 and its objective is to improve students' linguistic and communicative competence in English by implementing some of the subjects entirely in this language (music, social sciences, natural sciences and technology). The content teachers and language teachers hold weekly meetings to create the materials and developed a well-structured curriculum that effectively integrates the subject content and the language, and they design a range of activities to facilitate not only knowledge acquisition, but also foster student interaction and cooperation. Apart from English, the CLIL program of this school also aims at promoting French and German by offering these languages as optional subjects.

This CLIL program allows content teachers and language teachers to work closely together in a way that it is not only content teachers that benefit from the help of language teachers at the time of designing material and classroom dynamics; language teachers also have a wonderful opportunity to use curricular areas of the content subject to implement CRL teaching sequences. In this context, 1<sup>st</sup> ESO students, who were studying the invertebrate animals in their natural science class, were the perfect target for a CRL unit on vertebrates. This unit was implemented in two 1<sup>st</sup> ESO classes, with students around 12 years old. In one of the classes there were 27 students and in the other one there were 25 students.

#### ***1.4 Study aims and research questions***

This study seeks to explore students' discussion in the reconstruction stage of a dictogloss task to identify what type of interactions arise and whether they are more meaning-focused or form-focused. The role of the teacher implementing the dictogloss task will also be considered. The three questions which guided the research are the following.

1. To what extent do learners focus on meaning and on form in a dictogloss task?
2. What type of discussions does the dictogloss task prompt?
3. What can be done, as a teacher, to direct the focus of the learner towards form or towards meaning?

To answer the first research question, I conducted a statistical analysis of several groups of students interacting in the reconstruction stage of a dictogloss (quantitative analysis). To answer the second research question, I classified and analyzed these discussions according to their type (qualitative analysis). To answer the third question, I tried to identify the aspects related to the implementation or to the context of the activity that might have directed the focus of the students towards meaning or towards form, and suggested what modifications can be introduced to redirect the focus.

## 2 Theoretical framework

The balance of meaning and content has been thoroughly researched in previous studies. Valeo (2013), aware that CBLT contexts often overlook the importance of form and teach the target grammar disconnected from the target content, suggested that one way of promoting the development of grammatical accuracy in these contexts is to introduce a focus on form. This is based on the premise that, in a CBLT context, instruction that draws attention to both form and meaning is more effective than instruction that focuses exclusively on meaning.

In her research, 36 adults in two CBLT classes participated in a study in which one of the groups received content-based instruction with a focus on form while the other group received the same content-based instruction but with a focus on meaning only. The findings were surprising, as they indicated that content learning was not negatively affected by the inclusion of a focus on form (as it had sometimes been claimed by content teachers), but rather the opposite: there were remarkable improvements in language for both groups but especially significant gains in content for the form-focused group. This result suggested that strategies designed to draw learners' attention to form may have a positive impact on content comprehension in the context of CBLT programs.

Swain (2001) has also extensively studied the integration of meaning and form in immersion programs. Her study pointed at the importance of integrating the teaching of language and content in French immersion programs and suggested the use of tasks which, using content-relevant material, encourage students to focus on form. More specifically, she presented tasks to engage students in collaborative writing, and therefore in talking about content and the language to express that content.

When observing French immersion classrooms, Swain found out that there was considerable content teaching that occurred without paying attention to the accuracy of the students' language, and that whenever grammar was taught, it failed to connect form to their meaningful use. She also found out that immersion students spoke comparatively less frequently in the classes conducted in French than in the rest of the classes and that their utterances tended to be much shorter. Her observations led her to recognize that in immersion contexts, teaching grammar out of context is not sufficient for the development of grammatical accuracy and that the importance of output was often overlooked. According to Swain (2001, p. 48),

*The processes involved in producing language can be quite different from those involved in comprehending language. In listening, semantic and pragmatic information assist comprehension in ways that may not apply, or may apply differently in production, in that the semantic and pragmatic information can circumvent the need to process syntax. With output, however, learners need to move from the semantic, open-ended, strategic processing prevalent in comprehension to the complete grammatical processing needed for accurate production. Output, then, would seem to have a potentially significant role in the development of syntax and morphology.*

This was not the first time that Swain discussed the role of output: in previous studies (1995), she had already identified the three main functions that output has in second language acquisition. The first function is noticing, which means that learners notice a gap between what they want to say and what they can say while attempting to produce the target language, leading them to recognize what they do not know. The second function is hypothesis formation, that is, testing a hypothesis about comprehensibility or linguistic well-formedness as they stretch their new language to meet the communicative needs. The third function is metatalk, as learners reflect on their language use and that enables them to internalize linguistic knowledge.

Interestingly, Kowal & Swain (1994, 1997) have, in fact, researched the effectiveness of dictogloss tasks in immersion classes as an example of a task which encourages output, and therefore reflection on language form, while still being oriented to getting meaning across. Their findings showed that the dictogloss task effectively elicited metatalk, that students noticed things they did not know or could not say, and that they formulated and tested hypotheses using the tools at their disposal.

The effectiveness of the dictogloss task has also been thoroughly researched by other authors (Nabei, 1996; Jacobs & Small, 2003; Gallego, 2014; Kanazawa, 2017), and the conclusion that could be drawn from their studies is that the dictogloss is an effective technique in drawing the learners' attention to the form while still being focused on meaning. However, in the context of CRL, to what extent does that happen? What types of discussions does the dictogloss task prompt? Is it possible to direct the students' attention towards form or towards meaning?

### 3 Methodology of data collection, corpus and ethical issues

The data for the research was collected in March 2019 in a public secondary school in Barcelona (see section 1.3), in the context of a teaching unit on vertebrates framed in the CRLM methodology (see section 1.2).

This teaching unit was implemented in two groups of 1<sup>st</sup> ESO of 27 and 25 students respectively. However, at the time of collection, the groups were split in half, and so the target activity was carried out in four different groups. There are two reasons for this: first of all, having only half of the students in the class would reduce the background noise and make it easier to analyze and transcribe the recordings. Second, there would be more material to analyze and draw conclusions from.

The whole class was video recorded during the listening and note-taking stage of the dictogloss, and two pairs in each group were recorded during the reconstruction stage. One of the two pairs was video recorded using a portable camera and a tripod, and the other pair was audio recorded using a mobile phone. As this process was repeated in the four groups, it resulted in a total of eight pairs of students recorded during the reconstruction stage, with a total length of relevant discourse amounting to approximately two hours. All eight discussions have been analyzed and the instances where the students were talking about their output (language-related episodes, as will be developed in the next section) have been counted and classified. Furthermore, for the sake of clarity and exemplification, two of the eight group discussions have been fully transcribed and can be found in the annexed documents (see Annexes II and III). Additionally, and to facilitate the analysis of the output, the written productions of the students were also collected and scanned, amounting to a total of 42 productions. Table 1 summarizes the data collected.

Table 1  
Collected data

<i>Type of data</i>	<i>No. items</i>	<i>Approx. length</i>
Video recordings (listening stage)	4	75'
Video recordings (reconstruction stage)	4	70'
Audio recordings (reconstruction stage)	4	70'
Written productions	42	

All the information has been gathered taking care not to compromise the confidentiality of the participants. At the beginning of the school year, the school had obtained informed consent and explicit permission from families to record students for educational purposes. Furthermore, the information that could identify the school (name, district, etc.) has been omitted from the present paper and the names of the participants are not revealed in order to protect their privacy. Whenever an interaction or an utterance needs to be transcribed, the speaker will be identified as “student 1” (S1), “student 2” (S2), etc. The video and audio recordings will not be made public or shared in any way.

## 4. Analysis and discussion

In order to systematically analyze whether learners focus on form or on content in a dictogloss task, the present study takes language-related episodes as a unit of measurement.

A language-related episode can be defined as any part of a dialogue where students talk about the language they are producing, question their or others' language use or self-correct (Swain & Lapkin, 1998). This means that not every utterance is considered a language-related episode: they must begin with the identification of something related to output that needs to be discussed and finish once the discussion has been settled. Therefore, instances where learners are off-task are, of course, excluded from the language-related episodes, and so are those interactions where, despite being on-task, students do not focus on the output, but rather on other aspects of the completion of the task (for instance, keeping each other on-task, maintaining harmony in the group, etc.).

Language-related episodes involve the discussion of both meaning and form, but learners may emphasize one more than the other. For the purpose of coding the data, the classification of these language-related episodes draws on the categorization that Nabei (1996) uses in her paper, which is in turn adapted from Kowal & Swain (1994) and Swain & Lapkin (1995). In the study carried out by Kowal & Swain (1994), they establish three major categories of language-related episodes: meaning-based episodes, grammatical episodes and orthographic episodes. In the meaning-based episodes, students focus on the semantic components of the language; in the grammatical episodes, they discuss morphosyntactic issues (using specialized terminology or not); in orthographic episodes, the students' attention is drawn to the writing style.

However, given that the purpose of this paper is to study the tension between meaning and form, it is more appropriate to reduce the categories to two: meaning-based episodes and form-based episodes, the latter comprising grammatical and orthographic issues. This dichotomy reminds of the distinction of lexis-based and form-based episodes in the study by Swain & Lapkin (2001), but the nature of their lexis-based episodes is different from the meaning-based episodes considered in this paper, as it will be explained below.

Nabei (1996) further subclassified these language-related episodes in 12 categories. She identified 4 types of meaning-based episodes (confirmation of meaning, lexical consideration, vocabulary correction, and rephrasing), 6 types of grammatical episodes (tense, preposition, derivation, verb + preposition, conjunction and pronoun) and 2 types of orthographic episodes (spelling and punctuation).

Considering the focus of the present research, it is no easy task to determine if vocabulary issues should be included in meaning-based episodes or in form-based episodes. Three of the subtypes of meaning-based episodes proposed by Nabei (lexical consideration, vocabulary correction, and rephrasing) are indeed closely related to meaning, as they involve searching for vocabulary or choosing among competing vocabulary items. However, the lexical difficulties that the students in the present study encountered were not so much about choosing the right word to express what they wanted, but rather to find the English equivalent of a word in their native tongue. That is, students knew *what* they wanted to say

and what word they needed to say it; they just did not know *how* to say that word in English. As the focus is on the *how* and not on the *what*, it could be considered that lexical difficulties should be included in the category of form-based episodes instead of meaning-based episodes. This is also the reason why meaning-based episodes as they are considered in this paper differ greatly from the lexis-based episodes used by Swain & Lapkin (2001). As far as grammatical episodes are concerned, and given the scope of this paper, it is not relevant to distinguish them in such detail as Nabei did.

The categories of language-related episodes used in this analysis will therefore be as follows (see Table 2): meaning-based episodes (the students focus on the content of their text, on what they will write) and form-based episodes (the students focus on the language of their text, on how they will write it). Form-based episodes are subclassified in four categories: grammar (morphology and syntax difficulties), lexis (vocabulary difficulties), spelling (the writing of individual words) and discourse (the writing of the text as a whole, including punctuation, structure and genre).

Table 2  
Categories and subcategories of language-related episodes

Meaning-based episodes	
Form-based episodes	Grammar
	Lexis
	Spelling
	Discourse

## 4.1. Quantitative results

To answer the first research question and determine the extent to which learners focus on meaning and on form in a dictogloss task, I conducted a statistical analysis of the language-related episodes identified in the video and audio recordings. In this section, I will first consider the number of language-related episodes as a whole, classifying them into meaning-based or form-based. Then, I will move on to analyze in more detail how many instances of each subtype of form-based episodes have been identified (meaning-based episodes have not further subclassified for the purpose of this research, see Table 2).

A total of 135 language-based episodes were identified in the corpus. Table 3 illustrates the number of meaning-based episodes and form-based episodes per group, as well as the percentage of each type of episode with relation to the total.

Table 3  
Number and percentage of meaning-based and form-based episodes

	MEANING	FORM	TOTAL	% MEANING	% FORM
<b>Group 1</b>	8	28	36	22%	78%
<b>Group 2</b>	7	22	29	24%	76%
<b>Group 3</b>	7	18	25	28%	72%
<b>Group 4</b>	6	7	13	46%	54%
<b>Group 5</b>	2	11	13	15%	85%
<b>Group 6</b>	2	7	9	22%	78%
<b>Group 7</b>	4	3	7	57%	43%
<b>Group 8</b>	1	2	3	33%	67%
<b>TOTAL</b>	37	98	135	27%	73%

The first major finding is that there is a consistent tendency to focus on form rather than on meaning. If each group is considered separately, the percentage of form-based episodes is higher in all cases except for group 7; if the results are considered as a whole, form-based episodes account for 73% of the total language-related episodes. There may be 4 reasons for this tendency: the nature of the output, the characteristics of the text, the bias of the teacher and the context of the activity.

The first reason is the nature of the output. The dictogloss task, as it was carried out in the experiment, required the students to produce written language, and it was as the students wrote that they became aware of gaps in their knowledge (noticing), tried to work out possible solutions for the problems they encountered (hypothesis testing) and questioned each other about how to write (metatalk). Taking into account the characteristics of written discourse as opposed to oral discourse (words and constructions tend to be more carefully chosen, punctuation and spelling play a vital role, it can be modified once written, etc.), it seems only natural that the students tend to focus their attention on those aspects when producing written output.

The second reason is the characteristics of the text used. It was a fable, and one of the most relevant features of this text type is the profuse use of repetition as a rhetorical device. This means that the text was structured clearly and the key expressions to understand it were repeated multiple times. That, together with the projection of images on the whiteboard and the use of gestures by the teacher, made it easy for the students to follow and remember the storyline without much trouble. Therefore, the students did not encounter many difficulties regarding the content of the text, which allowed them to focus more on the form.

The third reason is the bias of the teacher. Before the reconstruction stage, the teacher who led the activity reminded the students that stories are written in the past, which served to draw the students' attention on language form. This introduction of a focus on form was suggested by Valeo (2013) as a way of promoting the development of grammatical accuracy in CBLT.

Finally, the fourth reason is the context in which the activity took place. It is important to remember that the dictogloss was carried out by an English teacher in a slot labelled “English”. This means that no matter how content-rich the content of the text was, the students’ expectations were that it was their command of English rather than their ability to recall the content of the text, or their science knowledge, that would be assessed.

A secondary but nonetheless interesting finding was that there was a wide range of student productivity in doing the task, which can be quantified by the number of language-related episodes that were identified in their discussions. For instance, although an average of 17 language-related episodes were produced by student pairs, there was a surprisingly high range of 36 to 3 episodes produced by individual pairs. The average number of meaning-based episodes was 5, with a range of 8 to 1, and the average number of form-based episodes was 12, with a range of 28 to 2. This issue had been observed in Swain’s (2001) research as well.

Groups 1, 2 and 3 (with a range of 36 to 25 language-related episodes) were rewriting the text collaboratively and spent most of the time on task. Groups 4 and 5 (with a total of 13 language-related episodes each) did collaborate to reconstruct the text, but spent more time off task than the first three groups. The analysis of the interactions that took place in groups 6, 7 and 8 (with a range of 9 to 3 language-related episodes) revealed that there was little or no real collaboration between the students when doing the task: one of them took the lead and made all the decisions individually while the other student copied what their partner had written without question. Although the quality of student interaction is not the focus of the present research, the results of the analysis are striking, and should serve as a reminder of the importance of using strategies to foster interaction and collaboration in the classroom.

### Form-based episodes

A closer look at form-based episodes shows different proportions in the aspects of language that students were discussing. Tables 4 and 5 show the number of form-based episodes according to its type, and the percentage of each type.

Table 4  
Number of form-based episodes by type

	GRAMMAR	LEXIS	SPELLING	DISCOURSE	TOTAL
<b>Group 1</b>	17	5	1	5	28
<b>Group 2</b>	8	3	4	7	22
<b>Group 3</b>	2	3	4	9	18
<b>Group 4</b>	3	1	1	2	7
<b>Group 5</b>	4	5	0	2	11
<b>Group 6</b>	3	1	2	1	7
<b>Group 7</b>	0	0	3	0	3
<b>Group 8</b>	0	1	0	1	2
<b>TOTAL</b>	37	19	15	27	98



Table 5  
Percentage of form-based episodes by type

	<b>GRAMMAR</b>	<b>LEXIS</b>	<b>SPELLING</b>	<b>DISCOURSE</b>
<b>Group 1</b>	61%	18%	3%	18%
<b>Group 2</b>	36%	14%	18%	32%
<b>Group 3</b>	11%	17%	22%	50%
<b>Group 4</b>	43%	14%	14%	29%
<b>Group 5</b>	36%	46%	0%	18%
<b>Group 6</b>	43%	14%	29%	14%
<b>Group 7</b>	0%	0%	100%	0%
<b>Group 8</b>	0%	50%	0%	50%
<b>TOTAL</b>	38%	19%	15%	28%

The proportion of each type of form-based episodes varies greatly depending on the group, but overall those related to grammatical issues were observed most frequently, followed by episodes related to discourse. It is also true, however, that grammatical, lexical and spelling episodes could be considered richer in terms of language learning, as the difficulty was often identified and solved by means of interaction, whereas episodes related to discourse tended to be one-sided, with one of the learners stating the punctuation mark or genre convention that should be used but not starting a rich, fruitful discussion with their partner.

As far as grammatical episodes are concerned, it is also relevant to identify how many of them referred to the use of the past tense. The findings are illustrated in Table 6.

Table 6  
Number and percentage of grammatical episodes related to the past tense

	<b>PAST TENSE RELATED</b>	<b>TOTAL GRAMMAR</b>	<b>% PAST TENSE</b>
<b>Group 1</b>	13	17	76%
<b>Group 2</b>	5	8	63%
<b>Group 3</b>	2	2	100%
<b>Group 4</b>	3	3	100%
<b>Group 5</b>	4	4	100%
<b>Group 6</b>	3	3	100%
<b>TOTAL</b>	30	37	81%

As Table 6 shows, episodes related to the past tense accounted for more than 80% of grammatical episodes, and only two of the groups discussed grammatical issues that were unrelated to the past tense. This shows that the bias that the teacher had introduced by reminding students that stories are written in the past was effective in drawing their attention to a specific aspect. This suggests that the instruction given by the teacher is key in determining the type of discussions and the focus of attention of the students, and by extension, it could be assumed that different kinds of instruction could guide the learners towards more form-oriented discussions or more meaning-oriented discussions.

## 4.2 Qualitative results

To answer the second research question and explore the type of discussions that the dictogloss task prompts, the language-related episodes identified in the reconstruction stage have been classified and analyzed according to their type. In the following section, I will discuss some of the most relevant language-related episodes identified for each type.

### 4.2.1. Meaning-based episodes

In many meaning-based episodes, the students have understood the text differently and struggle to come to an agreement on the storyline. They often confront their partner when they do not agree with their understanding of the story, dismiss their proposals and make an effort to explain and justify what they had understood. It is interesting to see that students tend to switch back to their mother tongue when discussing content-related issues. This is due to the fact that the target language does not play a role when it comes to discussions on the content, and learners feel more comfortable carrying out this discussion in their first language, as can be seen in Excerpt 1.

#### Excerpt

- 0 ..  
 0 ..  
 .. *eh, no, he couldn't be bothered*  
 0 ..  
 .. *it's not that he couldn't be bothered, he was bored because he had no friends*  
 0 ..  
 .. *he was bored and didn't want to find food by himself*  
 0 ..  
 .. *he couldn't be bothered to find food by himself*  
 0 ..  
 .. *it's not that he couldn't be bothered, you dumbass, he started swimming*

In other meaning-based episodes, students agree on how the story goes but need to decide what content should be mentioned and in what order the events take place. As can be seen in Excerpt 2, the interaction is focused on the negotiation of what information is relevant enough to be included in the reconstructed text and when it should be included.

#### Excerpt

- 0 ..  
 0 ..  
 .. *no, but first we have to write the "river in Australia" bit*  
 0 ..  
 .. *oh, OK*

It is also common for students to ask questions to their partners during the reconstruction stage. This can be done for the purpose of clarification (that is, to confirm that their understanding of the text is shared, as can be seen in Excerpt 3, where S1 confirms what the beaver in the story needed help for), or to request for help (as shown in Excerpt 4, where S1 makes a question about the what they should write next). Both of these examples

illustrate the importance of negotiating meaning to write a final text where the understanding of the content needs to be shared.

**Excerpt**

O ...  
 O ... *he wanted help to build his house, didn't he?*  
 O ...  
 O ... *yes*

**Excerpt**

O ...  
 O ... *OK, what should we write after "friends"?*

It is interesting to see that there are instances where students are discussing very subtle shades of meaning. In Excerpts 5 and 6, students are deciding what prepositions should be used to convey the exact meaning of the text they are reconstructing. In Excerpt 5, the students are not sure if the beaver lives near the river or in the river, and they eventually resort to the teacher to solve the problem. In Excerpt 6, S2 believes that it is important to specify the direction in which the beaver swims (up the river). S1 agrees that the beaver does swim up, but dismisses their partner's proposal to include it in the text because it is not relevant enough.

**Excerpt**

O ...  
 O ... *near. Not "in"*  
 S1 ...  
 O ... *eh... no, if you live in a-*  
 O ...  
 U ...  
 O ...  
 O ...  
 O ... *OK*

**Excerpt**

O ...  
 O ...  
 O ... *but he swam up*  
 O ...  
 O ... *whatever*

### **4.2.2. Form-based episodes**

#### **Grammar**

It is important to point out that discussions on grammar do not necessarily involve the use of specialized terminology. On many occasions, at the time of giving feedback to their partners on morphology or syntax, they rely on translation (as shown in Excerpt 13) or on other techniques that circumvent the use of abstract terminology.

As it was pointed out in the quantitative analysis section (see section 4.1), the main language focus of the dictogloss activity was the use of the past tense, and before the reconstruction stage, the teacher drew the attention of the students to the importance of using the past tense correctly in their text («remember, how do we write stories? In the past!»). The value that the teacher placed on the past tense served to frame the activity and to direct the students' focus during the writing stage, which explains why many of the grammatical episodes are related to the past tense (more than 80% of the total, as shown in Table 6). Excerpts 7 and 8 show to what extent the students placed the value on the past tense, which was central in many of their interactions.

Excerpt  
 O ...  
 O V  
 ... no, wait. No, because it has to be in past.  
 O  
 ... exactly  
 S2 no...  
 O  
 ... is "feels" correct?  
 U  
 O  
 U  
 O j  
 ... see? It has to be in past and that is not past.  
 O  
 ... and how is it then?  
 O  
 S1 ...  
 S ...  
 ... it's not "leaves" here either

Excerpt  
 O  
 ... it's "swam, swam" because it's past  
 O  
 ... exactly, it's with a

In Excerpt 7, one of the students suddenly realizes that the whole text should be in past and asks the teacher for confirmation. The teacher, after pretending not to understand the students when they didn't use English, tried to elicit the past tense of the verb *feel*. The students then start to modify what they had written up to then. This interaction clearly illustrates that both the students, who asked a question about the past, and the teacher, who tried to elicit the use of the past even when the question had not been explicit, were placing the same value on the correct use of the past tense. In Excerpt 8, even though they are not using specialized terminology, it is possible to see some very explicit use of grammar in the three forms of the verb *to swim*, which the student had probably learnt by heart.

Students are sometimes so focused on using the past tense throughout the whole text that they tend to produce hypercorrections (mistakes as a result of the over-application of a perceived rule in a conscious effort to avoid an error). In Excerpts 9 and 10, students are trying to apply the rules of the past tense in contexts where it is not correct. This also illustrates how powerful the bias that the teacher had introduced beforehand was.

#### Excerpt

O ...  
 O no...  
 O \_\_\_\_\_  
 .  
 .

#### Excerpt

O ...  
 T ...  
 O ...  
 U ...  
 S1 ... ‡ ...  
 U ...  
 S1 ...  
 U ...  
 O ...  
 U no  
 O ...  
 .

In any case, interaction is not always necessary for the identification of a language-related episode, and in some instances students self-correct or become aware of gaps in their knowledge while attempting to produce without the intervention of their partner. This is shown in Excerpt 11, where the student notices the grammatical mistake in their sentence and self-corrects it.

#### Excerpt

O ‡ ...  
 .

In spite of the fact that many of the form-based grammatical episodes that have been identified are related to the use of the past tense, this is not always the case. There is also evidence of discussions about other grammar-related issues that were not the main focus of the activity. Some examples are prepositions (Excerpt 12) and pronouns (Excerpt 13), among others. In Excerpt 12, one student was unsure of what preposition collocates with *time*, and their partner gives the answer. In Excerpt 13, learners are confused between the demonstrative *this* and the possessive *her*. They resort to translation to explain why the possessive and not the demonstrative was correct in their sentence. This reflection would have been correct had they used the masculine *his* instead of the feminine *her*.

#### Excerpt

O ...  
 O ...  
 S1 ...

Excerpt

O ... ..  
 O ... ..  
 O ... .. *is impossible* ... ..  
 O ... ..  
 O ... .. *why?* ... ..  
 O ... ..  
 S1 ... .. u ... ..  
 O ... .. *ah, no, you're right* ... ..  
 S2 ... ..  
 S1 ... .. no ... ..  
 O ... .. *meaning "his idea"* ... ..  
 O ... .. / ... .. O ... ..  
 O ... .. *no, because "this idea" means "this idea". It's "his idea". His idea was...* ... ..  
 S1 ... ..  
 S2 ... ..

### Lexis

As it has been said before, students' discussions on lexis are under the category of form-based episodes because the difficulties that the students encountered are not related to the *what* (the content that they want to express), but rather to the *how* (the words that they need to use to articulate their ideas).

As a matter of fact, most lexical episodes heavily rely on translation. The most usual pattern of interaction, occurring in 11 out of the 19 lexical episodes, is the following: first, one student asks how to say something in English and another student (or the teacher) provides the translation (or helps the student to work out the answer). Excerpt 14 is an example of a student providing the translation for their partner, while Excerpt 15 shows a similar interaction with the participation of the teacher, who takes advantage of non-verbal language to help the student recall a word.

- ... ..  
 O ... ..  
 O ... .. *that he had to change* ... ..  
 O ... ..  
 O ... .. *and how do you say that in English?* ... ..  
 S1 ... ..  
 - ... ..  
 O ... .. " ... ..  
 O ... .. *up* ... ..  
 U ... ..  
 O ... ..  
 U ... .. ( ... ..

In other cases, one student uses a word that their partner does not know and is asked for clarification on the meaning (Excerpt 16). There is also one example of students discussing the use of two words which are synonyms (Excerpt 17), which is proof that the dictogloss task is effective in promoting peer learning.

**Excerpt**

O: ...  
 O: ...  
 ... what does "thought" mean?  
 O: ...  
 ... he thought

**Excerpt**

O: ...  
 O: ... " ... "  
 ... that he was strange  
 O: ...  
 O: ...  
 ... and what's that?  
 S1: ...  
 ... weird  
 O: ...  
 ... isn't that "strange"?

Finally, there is also a very interesting example of students trying to rephrase something in their own words. As it was stated in the introduction (see section 1.2), the reconstruction of the dictogloss text should retain the meaning and form of the original, but does not aim to be an exact copy of it, which means that students are encouraged to use their own words to recast the idea of the original text. This use of paraphrasing is a valuable strategy that allows learners to get to the core of a complex message and manage to convey it using simple words and structures.

**Excerpt**

O: ... " ... "  
 ... refused  
 T: ...  
 O: ...  
 ... we can't figure it out  
 S1: OK... that beaver said no  
 T: for example! Very good, [name of the student]

**Spelling**

When learners encounter a difficulty regarding spelling, they often manage to find a solution quickly without the need to discuss much. In most cases, one student asks how to spell a word and the other student either spells it out letter by letter (Excerpt 19), pronounces it in a way that its spelling becomes clear (Excerpt 20), or shows the written word to their partner (Excerpt 21).

**Excerpt**

O: ... (" ... ")  
 O: ...  
 ... what, what?  
 O: ... -n- ...

Excerpt

0  
 ...  
 how do you write "once"?

0  
 S1  
 ...

0  
 0  
 0  
 0  
 ...  
 yes

Excerpt

0  
 ...  
 how do you write it?

0  
 ...  
 like this

Once more, it is also possible to find examples of language-related episodes even when interaction does not occur. In Excerpt 22, for instance, one student is thinking aloud and explicitly stating how a word should be spelt.

-  
 0  
 ...  
 "Australia" with capital letter...

### Discourse

Language-related episodes focusing on discourse refer to the writing of the text as a whole, which includes punctuation, structure and conventions of the genre. None of the students made any references to the structure of the text; that is, none of them explicitly referred to the title, the paragraphs, or to the importance of starting with an introduction and finishing with a conclusion.

They did, however, recognize that the text was a fable and that fables follow a set of conventions which they needed to respect. This was clearly shown in their use of "once upon a time" at the beginning of the text. In seven out of the eight groups, the students explicitly said that the first sentence should be "once upon a time", and the analysis of the scanned written productions reveals that the students in the group where this was not made explicit aloud were also aware of this formula and started their text in the same way.

-  
 u  
 S1  
 ...  
 so

The rest of the discourse-related episodes referred to punctuation. In the vast majority of the cases, these episodes were one-sided, with students individually reflecting on and explicitly stating the punctuation mark they should use but not developing into negotiation (Excerpts 24 and 25), but there are also instances where students ask their partner for help (Excerpt 26).



Excerpt	
0	I put three dots because it's like swam, swam...
0	put a period, put a period
0 -0	comma, a comma is better
0	# comma or period? Comma, right?
0	comma

This qualitative analysis of the language-related episodes reveals that the dictogloss task is effective in promoting fruitful discussions on both meaning and form and gives learners plenty of opportunities for peer learning. The fact that students need to produce oral and written output to complete the task has proved to have a positive impact on the students in terms of language use too. In many of the excerpts quoted above, in fact, it is possible to find examples of the three functions of output in second language acquisition identified by Swain (1995). Excerpts 11, 14, 17 and 18 are good examples of *noticing*, which means that while attempting to produce the target language, students notice a gap between what they want to say and what they can say. There are also very interesting examples of *hypothesis formation* and *hypothesis testing* in Excerpts 9 and 10, where learners try to stretch their language knowledge to express what they wish and test how comprehensible or how linguistically well-formed their output is. Finally, Excerpts 7, 8 and 13 are illustrative examples of *metatalk*, where learners are explicitly reflecting on their language use.

The dictogloss task requires collaboration and the production of output, which, as it has already been said, is effective to promote peer learning, hypothesis formation and reflection on language use. However, it is also true that learners are not always correct when solving the difficulties that they encounter (see Excerpts 9 and 13), and in some cases, they also fail to identify their mistakes. This is natural, but also indicates that there is a need for students to receive feedback on their productions.

Given the nature of the task, it is impossible for the teacher to give instantaneous feedback on the students' productions or on their hypotheses of how the language works. However, the final stage where learners compare their productions with the original text may help learners confirm or dismiss some of their hypotheses, and notice mistakes and gaps in their knowledge that they had not been aware of. Corrective feedback, that is, the teacher correcting the written productions of the students, would also serve the same purpose.

The need for feedback in the dictogloss task had already been highlighted by the developer of the dictogloss task Wajnryb (1990), who considers the correction stage as valuable as the interaction stage. Kowal and Swain (1994), Nabei (1996) and Valeo (2013) also mention the need for feedback, either in the follow-up discussion or in the teacher's corrections. According to Swain (2001, p. 60),

*Collaborative tasks should not be seen as 'stand-alone' activities. Teachers' availability during collaborative activities and their attention to the accuracy of the final product subsequent to the completion of collaborative activities are potentially critical aspects for students learning.*

## 5 Conclusions

The aim of this study was to investigate the relation between meaning (or content) and form (or language) in the reconstruction stage of a dictogloss task in a CRL context. The necessity to find a balance between both is premised on the belief that their integration is highly beneficial for the progress of learners in both language ability and subject knowledge, especially in the context of CBLT. For instance, Swain (2001) found that teaching grammar disconnected from the content is not enough to develop a high level of proficiency in the second language, and Valeo (2013) found that content instruction with a focus on meaning may enhance the comprehension of the content. On this basis, it is necessary to plan and implement learning activities that aim at integrating both content and language, and the dictogloss task, which is the focus of this study, is one possibility.

Answering the questions that guided the research,

### 1. To what extent do learners focus on meaning and on form in a dictogloss task?

The results of the analysis showed a consistent tendency to focus on form, with form-based episodes accounting for 73% of the total language-related episodes.

Four influencing factors were identified for this tendency in the context of the present research. First, the dictogloss task required written output, and written language requires a more careful look at the form than oral language. Second, the text used in the activity posed few difficulties in terms of understanding its content, which allowed students to focus on more challenging aspects such as grammar or spelling. Third, the teacher had drawn the students' attention to the form before the reconstruction stage by reminding them to use the past tense. Finally, given the context of the activity (implemented in an English class by an English teacher), the students expected that their language and not their knowledge would be assessed.

### 2. What type of discussions does the dictogloss task prompt?

The dictogloss task proved effective in drawing the learners' attention to the form while still being oriented to getting meaning across.

When they discussed the content of the text, learners sometimes confronted their partner when they did not agree with their understanding of their text and dismissed their proposals. In other instances, they agreed on what the content was but struggled to decide what information was relevant enough to be included and when it should be included. Students also asked their partner for help or for clarification, and their discussion sometimes developed to a negotiation of very subtle shades of meaning. Interestingly, the common denominator of all these instances was that learners switched back to their mother tongue, as the target language does not play a role when it comes to discussions on content.

When they were focused on the form of the text, they discussed grammar, lexis, spelling and discourse-related issues. This often happened without the use of specialized terminology. As for grammatical discussions, there were examples of difficulties related to

pronouns and prepositions, but the most common discussion (more than 80% of the grammatical episodes) referred to the use of the past tense, probably because the teacher made sure to draw their attention to it. Lexical discussions relied heavily on translation, with one student asking how to say something in English and another student providing the translation (or the teacher helping them work out the answer). As for spelling discussions, the most common pattern was the following: one student asks how to write a word and their partner spells it out letter by letter, pronounces it in a way that its spelling becomes clear or shows the written word to their partner. Discourse-related episodes included brief references to punctuation and to text typology, which were usually one-sided, with one of the students stating the punctuation mark or the formula (“once upon a time”) that should be used.

Findings show that the dictogloss task also promotes collaboration, negotiation and peer learning, and it being a task which requires output allowed students to notice gaps in their knowledge, formulate and test language hypotheses, and reflect on language use through metatalk. However, the analysis also raised two concerns regarding its implementation: first, it is important to use strategies that guarantee student engagement and collaboration during the task; second, feedback needs to be provided either in the follow-up discussion or in the teacher’s corrections.

### **3. What can be done, as a teacher, to direct the focus of the learner towards form or towards meaning?**

The results of the present research alone are not sufficient to give a consistent answer to this question, given that they only showed a tendency towards form in a very specific context. However, the four aspects that were believed to determine this tendency (see research question 1) may shed some light on what aspects of the implementation of the activity can be regulated to make it more meaning-oriented or more form-oriented, depending on the objectives of the teacher.

First of all, the nature of the output. Written language tends to make learners focus more on form, as words and constructions can be more carefully chosen and punctuation and spelling play an important role. However, the output of the dictogloss task does not necessarily have to be written. Learners can, for example, collaborate in the preparation of an oral reconstruction of the text to deliver in front of their classmates. They can also prepare some material (a drawing, a mind map) to guide and illustrate their presentation. As oral discourse is more spontaneous, chances are that students will focus more on the content during the preparation and the delivery of the speech. Another interesting idea to direct the students’ focus towards the meaning of the text would be to ask them to produce drawings or videos that would be projected while the text is being read, with the purpose of illustrating and accompanying the text.

Second, the text chosen for the activity. Texts can be challenging for many different reasons. A story, for instance, can be very simple in terms of content, but may contain complex vocabulary items or grammatical constructions (subordinate clauses, rhetorical devices, etc.). A text about mitosis, on the other hand, might be very straightforward in terms of language

(short sentences, simple verb tenses, etc.), but learners are bound to face difficulties at the time of understanding and recalling the content. One possibility to direct the students towards content or towards language is to give them modified input (Valeo, 2013). The teacher can simplify the language of a text to make sure that the students focus on the content, or increase the frequency of specific vocabulary items or grammatical structures to make them focus on the form.

Third, the bias of the teacher. The results of the present research, as well as previous research (see Swain, 2001), suggest that teachers can introduce bias to direct the students' attention to language or to form. This can be done, for example by explicitly telling students what the purpose of the activity is. If the dictogloss happens right after a lesson on mitosis and the teacher challenges the student to remember all the steps involved in the process, chances are students will focus on the content rather than on the form. In contrast, if the dictogloss happens after a lesson on the past tense in English and the teacher reminds them to watch out for irregular verbs, students will likely focus on the form. Another way in which the teacher can introduce bias is by providing corrective feedback with a focus on form or on content.

Finally, the context of the activity. Students' expectations play a crucial role in determining their focus of attention. If they are in a class labelled "science" with a science teacher, they will expect to be assessed on their knowledge of science. If they are in a class labelled "English" with an English teacher, they will expect to be assessed on their command of the language. These expectations are difficult to change unless the teacher establishes the assessment criteria of the activity beforehand and makes sure that students understand that content and language will be equally important (or not, depending on the objective of the teacher).

The dictogloss task undoubtedly takes the traditional dictation a step forward and succeeds in promoting communication between students and giving plenty of opportunities for metatalk and peer learning. However, the final conclusion that can be drawn from this research is that despite effectively drawing the learners' attention to the form while still being focused on the meaning, there are other factors (the nature of the output, the chosen text, the bias of the teacher and the context of the activity) that direct the students towards more meaning-based or more form-based discussions, and therefore define the learning goals of the activity. These factors need to be kept in mind at the time of implementing the dictogloss, and they can even be modified to meet the objectives of the teacher.

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## Appendix I – Symbols used in transcriptions

Adapted from the *Jeffersonian Transcript Notation System*. It is important to note that the parts where students are off task have been omitted from the transcription for reasons of space.

T	teacher
S1, S2, S3...	students
(.)	pause of no significant length
(# of seconds)	long pause, measured in seconds
xxx	unclear speech
<u>underlining</u>	rise in volume or emphasis
-	abrupt halt or interruption in utterance
...	prolongation of an utterance
(( ))	non-verbal activity
<b>bold</b>	another language is used
<i>italics</i>	English translation (when another language is used)

## Appendix II – Transcript of group 1

- 1 T by the way, remember (.) do we tell stories in the present? We tell stories in the...
- 2 S1 past
- 3 T past, so be careful with that
- 4 S1 **once upon a time**<sup>1</sup> (.) xxx a Waddles (.) lived in a river of Australia
- 5 S2 **espera, espera, vamo' a calmarno'**
- 6 *wait, wait, let's calm down*
- 7 es once upon a time, **comma**<sup>2</sup> (.) the Waddles who... lives... (.)
- 8 **pero** [name of the student] once upon a time the Waddles who lives
- 9 *but*
- 10 S1 who lives
- 11 S2 **live... lives... o sea, una s**<sup>3</sup>
- 12 *so an s*
- 13 S1 in a river of Australia
- 14 S2 **¿y si ponemos «lives alone in a river»? (.) no**
- 15 *what about writing*
- 16 S1 **después**<sup>4</sup> (.) that live alone and there is (.) very sad
- 17 *later*
- 18 S2 **¿cómo?**
- 19 *come again?*
- 20 S1 **that is very (.) is very (.) no (.) ¿cómo era?** Were<sup>5</sup> (.) that were very sad and bored
- 21 *what was it?*
- 22 S2 **that was**<sup>6</sup>
- 23 S1 ((checking what they had written up to then)) **lived, lived**
- 24 S2 **es verdad, lived**<sup>7</sup>
- 25 *you're right*
- 26 S1 lived alone and there were very sad and bored
- 27 S2 **es «was» (.) es «was», no «were»**<sup>8</sup>
- 28 *it's "was" it's "was", not "were"*
- 29 S1 **a causa (.) ¿cómo es «a causa»?**<sup>9</sup>
- 30 *due to how do you say "due to"?*
- 31 S2 **espera, que llego y te lo digo (.) lived alone ((writing)) and was (.) very (.)**
- 32 *wait, let me catch up and I'll tell you*
- 33 **decimos que swim up up up up, swim to the surface**<sup>10</sup>
- 34 *let's say that*
- 35 S1 eh... swim up up the river because they... busc-
- 36 S2 want... **espera**
- 37 *hold on*
- 38 S1 search a (.) a friends
- 39 S2 **pon punto, pon un punto**
- 40 *put a period, put a period*
- 41 S1-S2 ((reading what they have written so far)) **once upon a time, a Waddle who lived in a river of Australia that lived alone was very sad and bored**
- 42

<sup>1</sup> Form-based, discourse. The student identifies the characteristics of the genre.

<sup>2</sup> Form-based, discourse. The student explicitly states the punctuation mark they should use.

<sup>3</sup> Form-based, grammar. The student remembers to conjugate the verb for the third person singular.

<sup>4</sup> Meaning-based. The students decide what to write.

<sup>5</sup> Form-based, grammar. The student remembers that they need to use the past tense.

<sup>6</sup> Form-based, grammar. The student corrects their partner on the use of the past tense.

<sup>7</sup> Form-based, grammar. The students realize that they need to use the past tense in the whole text.

<sup>8</sup> Form-based, grammar. The student corrects their partner on the use of the past tense.

<sup>9</sup> Form-based, lexis. The student asks how to say a word.

<sup>10</sup> Meaning-based. The student suggests what they should write.



- 43 S2 **coma, mejor una coma**<sup>11</sup>  
 44 *comma, a comma is better*  
 45 swim to the surface for see  
 46 S1 no...  
 47 S2 **to saw** friends<sup>12</sup> (.) **venga, pon esto** (.) swam  
 48 *come on, write this*  
 49 S1 **swam** (.) and swam  
 50 S2 **no, swam to the surface**  
 51 S1 **to the surface**<sup>13</sup> (.) because they search  
 52 S2 to saw xxx  
 53 S1 because they search friends (.) because they don't have  
 54 S2 **no, pero no pongas «because they alone»**<sup>14</sup>  
 55 *no, but don't write "because they alone"*  
 56 S1 **es «swam, swam»** (.) **porque es en pasado**  
 57 *it's "swam, swam" because it's past*  
 58 S2 swim, swam, swum (.) **por eso, es la a**<sup>15</sup>  
 59 *exactly, it's with a*  
 60 saw a beaver  
 61 S1 eh... he swam to the surface because they search friends  
 62 S2 and he saw a beaver  
 63 S1 after...  
 64 S2 the beaver...  
 65 S1 no (.) after, the beaver  
 66 S2 **no, pero no digas lo que se encuentra después, ni qué pasa**<sup>16</sup>  
 67 *no, but don't say what he finds later, or what happens*  
 68 the beaver say  
 69 S1 **no, Waddle are happy because... no, were happy... was happy**<sup>17</sup> because they  
 70 **descubrió a... no, encontró a beaver y creía que se iban a hacer amigos, pero el**  
 71 **beaver...**  
 72 *found out... no, met a beaver and thought that they would become friends, but the*  
 73 *beaver...*  
 74 S2 ah, **ponemos** the Waddles was happy because<sup>18</sup>... but  
 75 *let's write*  
 76 S1 xxx **estaba**  
 77 *was*  
 78 S2 **was**<sup>19</sup> (.) bui... building... ((to the teacher)) [name of the teacher] **building in the past?**  
 79 T sorry?  
 80 S2 **building in the past?**  
 81 T so it's build, built, built  
 82 S2 ah, with t  
 83 T yes  
 84 S2 was (.) buil... **y construyen... mira**  
 85 *and they build... take a look*  
 86 T let's see  
 87 S2 **the Waddle want to be friends, but the beaver was building?**

<sup>11</sup> Form-based, discourse. The student states and self-corrects the punctuation mark they should use.

<sup>12</sup> Form-based, grammar. The student produces a hypercorrection when trying to use the past tense.

<sup>13</sup> Meaning-based. One student specifies a detail of the story and the other accepts the suggestion.

<sup>14</sup> Meaning-based. The student recommends their partner not to include something in the text.

<sup>15</sup> Form-based, grammar. The students discuss the correct use of the past tense.

<sup>16</sup> Meaning-based. The student recommends their partner not to include something in the text.

<sup>17</sup> Form-based, grammar. The student self-corrects in the use of the past tense.

<sup>18</sup> Meaning-based. The student switches to their mother tongue to explain the storyline.

<sup>19</sup> Form-based, grammar. The student helps their partner with the past tense.

- 88 T yes ((nodding))  
 89 S2 is buildingt...  
 90 T no, because we have "was" (.) was building  
 91 S2 t or...?  
 92 T no  
 93 S1 building<sup>20</sup>  
 94 S2 her... house (.) OK, comma<sup>21</sup>  
 95 S1 the beaver no...  
 96 S2 say the Waddle is so strange because they (.) they lay eggs **y no sé qué de milk**  
 97 *and something about milk*  
 98 S1 Waddle stay strange because the (.) beaver  
 99 S2 **pero pon después «so strange because» ta-ta-ta<sup>22</sup>**  
 100 *but then write "so strange because" yada yada*  
 101 S1 eh... beaver stay strange because  
 102 S2 the beaver say... **said<sup>23</sup>** to Waddle was so strange because  
 103 S1 **«beaver» es el castor eh<sup>24</sup>**  
 104 *"beaver" means the beaver,*  
 105 S2 **sí**  
 106 *yes*  
 107 S1 **vale**  
 108 *OK*  
 109 S2 because...  
 110 S1 they...  
 111 S2 he  
 112 S1 no, he  
 113 S2 he say<sup>25</sup> (.) because he lay eggs  
 114 S1 and beaver  
 115 S2 go (.) go to bite  
 116 S1 beaver (.) **se fue**  
 117 *went away*  
 118 S2 yes (.) and beaver go out  
 119 S1 ((to the teacher)) eh... how do you say "**y se fue**"?  
 120 *and he went away*  
 121 T oh... I don't remember  
 122 S2 how do you say "**i se'n va anar**" in English, please?  
 123 *and he went away*  
 124 T hmm... I don't know (.) what do you think?  
 125 S1-S2 go out?  
 126 T or maybe go a... ((waiting to see if they remember)) away?<sup>26</sup>  
 127 S2 away  
 128 T yeah  
 129 S2 in the past? is same, no?  
 130 T the past of go? what's the past of go?  
 131 ((both students nod))  
 132 S1 beaver went<sup>27</sup>  
 133 S2 away (.) **vale**

<sup>20</sup> Form-based, grammar. The student asks the teacher to enquire about the formation of the past.

<sup>21</sup> Form-based, discourse. The student explicitly states the punctuation mark they should use.

<sup>22</sup> Meaning-based. The student suggests what they should write.

<sup>23</sup> Form-based, grammar. The student self-corrects in the use of the past tense.

<sup>24</sup> Form-based, lexis. The student makes sure that their partner understands the vocabulary word.

<sup>25</sup> Form-based, grammar. The students come to an agreement on what pronoun to use.

<sup>26</sup> Form-based, lexis. The student asks the teacher how to say a word.

<sup>27</sup> Form-based, grammar. The students use the teacher's scaffolding to work out the past tense.

- 134 OK
- 135 the Waddles sad
- 136 S1 other day
- 137 S2 the Waddle... ¿continuar? ¿com es diu «continuar» in English?
- 138 continue? how do you say "continue"
- 139 S3 continue<sup>28</sup>
- 140 S1 Waddle continue
- 141 S2 the Waddle continue swimming
- 142 S1 continued<sup>29</sup>
- 143 S2 swimming and saw a duck ((both write))
- 144 ah, sawing food, sawing food, a duck sawing food (.) sawing for food<sup>30</sup> and Waddle
- 145 say if they can help (.) and
- 146 S1 wait, wait (.) Waddle continued swamming and saw a dog (.) a (.) a duck, saw for food
- 147 and Waddle (.) ¿qué más?<sup>31</sup>
- 148 what else?
- 149 S2 and Waddle xxx to help
- 150 S1 punto<sup>32</sup>
- 151 period
- 152 S2 the duck say no because
- 153 S1 says that...
- 154 ((both write individually))
- 155 is strange because (.) because (.) the Waddle
- 156 S2 they have fur
- 157 S1 because they (.) "have" no, "has"<sup>33</sup>
- 158 S2 has
- 159 S1 ¿cómo era?
- 160 what was it?
- 161 S2 f-u-r<sup>34</sup> (.) and the duck have (.) ¿plumas?
- 162 feathers
- 163 S1 and the duck have (.) has
- 164 S2 ((to the teacher)) how do you say "plumas"?
- 165 feathers
- 166 T ((asking a different student)) how do you say it?
- 167 S3 feathers<sup>35</sup>
- 168 S1 and duck has feathers
- 169 ((both writing))
- 170 S2 they are similar because they have beak (.) lay eggs
- 171 ((both write individually))
- 172 and the duck go (.) went away<sup>36</sup>

<sup>28</sup> Form-based, lexis. The student asks how to say a word.

<sup>29</sup> Form-based, grammar. The student corrects their partner on the use of the past tense.

<sup>30</sup> Form-based, grammar. The student confuses the verbs "see" and "search" but remembers that "search" takes the preposition "for".

<sup>31</sup> Meaning-based. The student asks what they should write next.

<sup>32</sup> Form-based, discourse. The student explicitly states the punctuation mark they should use.

<sup>33</sup> Form-based, grammar. The student self-corrects in verb coordination.

<sup>34</sup> Form-based, spelling. The student spells out a word for their partner.

<sup>35</sup> Form-based, lexis. The student asks the teacher how to say a word.

<sup>36</sup> Form-based, grammar. The student self-corrects in the use of the past tense.

## Appendix III – Transcript of group 4

- 1 T how do we tell a story?
- 2 S1 **pues once upon a time!**... ((both write))
- 3 *so*
- 4 S2 there was a platypus
- 5 S1 called Waddles (.) who lived in...
- 6 S2 and one day
- 7 S1 and wanted to go to a new place
- 8 S2 and one day went to-
- 9 S1 **o sigui, punt?** **llavors...**
- 10 *so period here, and then...*
- 11 S2 one day
- 12 S3 ((talking to partner)) **quería encontrar amigos**
- 13 *he wanted to meet friends*
- 14 S2 **no, quería comer pero dijo no, vamos a cambiar**
- 15 *no, he wanted to eat but said no, let's change*
- 16 **y se fue a comer a (.) buscar amigos**
- 17 *and he went off to eat to (.) find friends*
- 18 S1 **llavors posem** one day he decided to leave
- 19 *so let's write*
- 20 S2 **no, porque** he want to go to get food
- 21 *no, because*
- 22 and then he are bored, he want to change ((searches partner's approval))
- 23 S1 one day he was eating and suddenly wanted to go to another place<sup>3</sup> (0'30)
- 24 one day he was eating (0'20)
- 25 S2 ((talking to the teacher)) the platypus go to get food and he bored and he want to change
- 26
- 27 T ((gives a sign of approval))
- 28 S2 **¿ves? te lo dije**
- 29 *see? told you*
- 30 S1 **si es el que estem ficant,** one day he was eating
- 31 *but that's exactly what we're writing*
- 32 S2 eating no, **fue a buscar comida**
- 33 *he went to find food*
- 34 S1 **ay, bueno, pues** one day he was eating and wanted to go to another place<sup>4</sup>
- 35 *well, whatever, so*
- 36 S2 was (.) he was eating food
- 37 S1 OK, and wanted to go to another place
- 38 S2 **no, porque se aburría y dijo no, voy a buscar amigos**<sup>5</sup>
- 39 *no, because he was bored and said no, let's find friends*
- 40 S1 what the fuck? **o sigui, perquè no menja i ja està? quina manera de complicar-se la vida**
- 41
- 42 *I mean, why doesn't he eat and that's it? he's just making his life more complicated*
- 43
- 44 S2 **porque se aburría buscando comida solo**
- 45 *because he was bored looking for food all by himself*
- 46 S1 **a ver,** one day he was eating and...

<sup>1</sup> Form-based, discourse. The student identifies the characteristics of the genre.

<sup>2</sup> Form-based, discourse. The student explicitly states the punctuation mark they should use.

<sup>3</sup> Meaning-based. The students try to decide what happened in the story.

<sup>4</sup> Meaning-based. After asking the teacher, the students resume the discussion about what happened.

<sup>5</sup> Meaning-based. The student corrects their classmate.

