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Master's Degree in Teaching English in Secondary
Schools, Vocational Training and Language Centers

The role L1 has in student- student interaction in EFL classes

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Master's Dissertation



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1. ABSTRACT

This research paper explores the L1 interactions of eleven Catalan students, aged between 15 and 16 years, engaged in pair or small group work during a communicative task in the L2 classroom. The data were gathered in a state secondary school in Greater Barcelona and the participants collectively carried out six different activities, such as a collaborative writing. The study outlined in this dissertation is based on observations of the L1 interventions employed by the learners to prepare the L2 task production. The interventions are analyzed to determine the various functions or roles the use of L1 may have. It also examines the ways in which L1 use can provide opportunities for L2 learning, using video and audio recordings. Findings show that the use of L1 in L2 classes has a positive impact on the tasks production, as well as on the L2 learning.

Keywords: L1 use, student-student interaction, EFL, L2, foreign language teaching, communicative tasks.

RESUM

Aquest document de recerca explora les interaccions en L1 d'onze estudiants catalans, d'entre 15 i 16 anys, que treballen en parella o en grup reduït durant una tasca comunicativa a l'aula d'L2. Les dades es van recollir en un institut públic de secundària de l'àrea metropolitana de Barcelona i els participants van dur a terme, col·lectivament, sis tasques diferents, com per exemple una redacció en grup. L'estudi descrit en aquest treball està basat en observar les interaccions en L1 utilitzades pels estudiants per preparar la producció de tasques en L2. S'han analitzat les intervencions per determinar diverses funcions o rols que pot tenir l'ús de l'L1. També examina les maneres en les quals aquest ús pot conduir a l'aprenentatge de l'L2, utilitzant gravacions de vídeo i àudio. Els resultats mostren que l'ús de l'L1 a les classes d'L2 té un impacte positiu en la producció de les tasques, com també en l'aprenentatge de l'L2.

Paraules clau: ús de l'L1, interacció entre estudiants, EFL, L2, ensenyament de llengua estrangera, tasques comunicatives.

2. INTRODUCTION AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

There is some discrepancy regarding the use of L1 in English as a foreign language settings. For many years, language teachers felt the “pressure” to do teacher-centered classes to ensure the L2 was being used. Oftentimes, this meant they were reluctant to do group work because they felt that they could not control the language used in class. Nevertheless, some studies, such as Brooks (1992) or Pica and Doughty (1985), argued that group work is critical in EFL classes because it is when “the negotiation of meaning and the expression of personal ideas most naturally occur” (Alley, 2005, p. 250).

There are two key schemata which bring us to the two different perspectives of learning a language. Dooly and O’Dowd (2018) explain these two main foci thus:

Following Cook and Seidlhofer’s (1995) categories of ways in which language (and subsequently language education) have been theorized, Larsen-Freeman underscores their two most contrastive perspectives: “language as a rule-governed discrete combinatory system” and “language as a social fact” (p. 157). It can be argued that these two contrastive views of language still hold strong on general perspectives regarding how language should be taught and in many cases are the two main pillars in the same course – contradictory as that may seem. As Larsen-Freeman points out “many teachers teach their students both structures and how to communicate” (p. 158) and “many of the educational developments, both old and new, are widely practiced today” (p. 163). (p. 20)

In relation to what is previously explained, there is the cognitivist perspective, in which the “interaction hypothesis” plays a key role. This theory, largely attributed to Krashen (1985), talks about the learning process beginning with comprehensible input for the student. This input is filtered by the learner through his/her feelings, sensations, anxieties, intelligence, abilities (cf. Krashen’s affective filter hypothesis, 1981) which leads to the intake phase, in which the learner processes all the information and he/she becomes aware of what he/she does or does not know.

Finally, there is the last phase which is the output, where the student's production occurs and so does most of the interaction (Moore, 2016).

On the other hand, there is the sociocultural perspective in which the students learn the language through the communication between themselves and the other classmates, oftentimes, working in groups or pairs. As Dooly and O'Dowd point out, this viewpoint has been extensively applied and in different ways.

In his overview of language teaching methodologies, Thornbury (2013) separates 'communicative methodology' from 'communicative learning theory' (CLT). He is careful to point out that 'communicative methodology' covers a lot of ground – from a more 'radical' (cf. Allwright, 1979) or 'strong form' (cf. Prabhu, 1987) interpretation of communicative methodologies, with the major (and sometimes only) aim being communication in the process of learning, to a more 'creative compromise' that "interweave[s] several strands – grammatical, lexical and functional- into one integrated course design" (p. 189). (2018, pp. 20-21).

The authors go on to highlight that "no matter which stance one takes on CLT, its impact on language education (...) has been extensive" and is "one of the most widely accepted methods in foreign language teaching education" and forms many language teacher education courses "in combination with socio-cultural, socio-constructivist learning theories" (Dooly & O'Dowd, 2018, p. 21).

In any case, both cognitivist and sociocultural perspectives give importance to interaction, even though it has a critical influence in the sociocultural approach because it is where the learning takes place.

Regarding the more socio-interactional approach, there has been some disagreement about the use of the mother tongue (L1) in L2 classes (Galali & Cinkara, 2017). Some teachers are reluctant to use the L1 in class and they try to oblige students to speak in English all the time in the belief that this will create a lot of output and will ensure that learners practice the target language with their classmates and the teacher. However, there are other teachers who think it is good

to let the students speak in their L1 between themselves so they can formulate the tasks they are working on, and then they eventually can explain or present results or output in English (Bhooth, Azman & Ismail, 2014; Swain & Lapkin, 2000; Tognini & Oliver, 2012).

Is it a mistake to let students to express themselves and talk to the other classmates in their L1 when they are working in groups doing some tasks or projects in L2 classes? In this study, these interactions between some teenage students will be analyzed in order to explore the role L1 has in L2 classes. The research questions pursued in this paper will be the following:

- Why do the students talk in their L1 while they are working in groups in L2 class?
- What is the role that L1 has in these interactions?
- Can L1 use help in L2 learning?

In order to answer these research questions, this study will analyze the ways in which the selected group of English learners use their L1 during tasks aimed at L2 production. It will take into account some aspects such as “task management”, “vocabulary and meaning” or “off-task talking”.

The aim of this analysis is to be able to explore: how the use of L1 and the shift between L1 and L2 that students do when they work in groups or pairs can help (or not) in L2 learning, and in the case that it proves to be useful, how this knowledge can be transferred to L2 pedagogical approaches.

3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Two main opposing approaches can be found concerning the use of L1 in learning and teaching English as a foreign or second language, which are the monolingual and bilingual approaches. On the one hand, the advocates of the monolingual approach believe that L1 has no role in L2 classes due to the fact that if the mother tongue is permitted, they would not take the opportunity to practice the target language and their level would not improve. On the other hand, the proponents of using the L1 in the L2 classroom view that its use helps students learn L2 more effectively (Bhooth, Azman & Ismail, 2014; see also Borràs & Moore, 2019; Llompart, Masats, Nussbaum & Moore, 2019; Moore & Nussbaum, 2013; Moore, Nussbaum & Borràs, 2013a, 2013b; Vallejo & Dooly, 2019).

Throughout history, different teaching methods have been employed in EFL classes. The first one was Grammar Translation Method (GTM) in which the L1 was crucial for the students to learn the target language and their level was measured depending on how good their translations may be. Another method, which is totally opposite to the GTM, is the Direct Method, which prohibits the use of L1 in peer interactions and teacher-learner interactions. Some other methods used are Communicative Language Teaching Approach, Audio-Lingual Method and Silent Method, in which the L1 was allowed to facilitate the students' language learning (Galali & Cinkara, 2017).

Nowadays, some of these methods are still in use, however, as Nunan (cited in Galali & Cinkara, 2017) declared "many researchers now believe that seeking a perfect language-teaching method for all situations is futile" (p. 55). Different methods can be used in many situations, if L1 is excluded from students' learning, many of the previously explained techniques and other ones will be sacrificed for teaching the target language, because the L1 will not be permitted.

These theoretical and practical shifts have had an impact locally as well. Some years ago, the Catalan curriculum was changed and nowadays assessment is expected to be based on different competences that students should have so, instead of doing

exams, teachers use the final products of projects and tasks as assessment. The current Catalan curriculum for foreign languages at obligatory secondary education describes the communicative and linguistic competence as “the ability to express and interpret concepts, thoughts, feelings, facts and opinions in an oral and written language”¹ (Generalitat de Catalunya, 2015a, p. 44). For that reason, the *Catalan Book of the Basic Competences* for foreign languages (2015b) gives a crucial importance to the first dimension, the oral communication, which includes the oral understanding, oral expression and oral interaction. According to this document, “the three competences described in this dimension are of fundamental importance throughout the entire teaching-learning process of the foreign language” (Generalitat de Catalunya, 2015b, p. 7). The main objective is understanding and communicating in the new language. It also explains that “the rest of dimensions need oral communication so that they can be achieved effectively” (p. 7).

A socio-cognitivist approach implies that the students’ capacity to form and express opinions, feelings and ideas improves thanks to the communicative and linguistic competence which is developed in group situations. Group work in learning also stems from considerable research on collaborative learning (CL).

The core notions of CL have been introduced into TESOL contexts, principally based on the sociocultural and social constructivist premises that learner interaction facilitates language learning. CL in TESOL has been further boosted by communicative language teaching (CLT) approaches such as task-based language teaching (TBLT) and computer-supported collaborative learning (CSCL). (Dooley, 2018, p. 2)

Group work is seen as critical to second or foreign language acquisition because it is directly related to interaction which is a key aspect for oral communication and learning (Alley, 2005; Generalitat de Catalunya, 2015b).

¹ Due to a lack of official English translations available of Generalitat documents, translations have been provided by the student-researcher

Studies on f2f oral production through collaborative learning indicate that peer-to-peer mediation helps improve language-learning level with more incidences of lexical and syntactic negotiations, higher metalinguistic awareness, self-correction and autonomy in self-regulation. (Dooly, 2018, p. 3)

In the classroom, during group activities, interaction is really significant for students to receive feedback from other classmates and it also helps them with language acquisition. "It provides them with opportunities to receive valuable input and to try out language that they are in the process of acquiring" (Tognini & Oliver, 2012, p. 53). The feedback other learners give to them push students "to make their output more precise, coherent and appropriate" (p. 54).

Group work moves the responsibility of starting a conversation from the teacher to the learners and promotes more turn taking, greater negotiation of meaning and more frequent use of confirmation checks. The quality of language practice is also improved as peer tutoring is a constant feature of group exchanges. However, group work will only work if students are prepared for working in groups and the activities are the appropriate and well detailed with a lot of accuracy (Alley, 2005).

It has been argued that the typology of the collaborative partners influences the final impact. One of the most significant factors is that the pairs or groups should have a "collaborative orientation" (Watanabe & Swain, 2007) towards the activity. Those displaying a "collective" identity are more likely to share their knowledge and co-construct resolutions to a range of language items. (Dooly, p. 3)

This implies that the activities for group work must be carefully planned by the teacher. Also, as Alley (2005) has underscored, "Teachers [...] have to establish firm time limits and checkpoints" (p. 251), otherwise group work will probably not work.

Although group work can be a relevant supplement that enhances the learning process, some teachers reject group activities in their classes because they believe that students are acquiring one another's mistakes, using L1 excessively and wasting time on off-task talking. However, sometimes their discourse is about the task and/or the meaning of some words or phrases which are crucial to successfully

completing the activity (Alley, 2005; Masats, Nussbaum & Unamuno, 2007, Moore, Borràs & Nussbaum, 2013a, 2013b).

If students share an L1 it is usual that some interactions occur in that language. As Tognini and Oliver (2012) state “the use of L1 is part of formal and informal interaction between child and adult peers in immersion and in conventional classroom second language learning contexts” (p. 55). However, Krashen (1981) (cited in Tognini & Oliver, 2012) believes that the maximum exposure of L2 is needed for successful L2 learning. This view has been shared by the *Catalan Book of Basic Competences* which states that “the communication of the teacher must be in the language the students are learning” (Generalitat de Catalunya, 2015b, p. 7). Krieger (2005) (cited in Galali & Cinkara, 2017) believes that instead of facilitating target language acquisition, the use of L1 makes learners feel they can depend on their mother tongue. For that reason, he also suggests that teachers should guide the students to identify when to use their L1 and when to avoid this use. Regarding a limited use of L1, there have been different studies conducted by various researchers, with similar conclusions. Lin (2005), Kim and Petraki (2009), Mahmoudi and Amirkhiz (2011) and Hidayati (2012) support the notion that teachers utilize the L1 for “translating new ideas, concepts, and vocabulary terms as well as for classroom management and instructional purposes” (Galali & Cinkara, 2017, p. 55).

Various researchers such as Bhooth, Azman and Ismail (2014), Iswati and Hadimulyono (2018), Storgh and Wigglesworth (2003), Galali and Cinkara (2017) and Tognini and Oliver (2012) coincide on the fact that the use of L1 is an effective tool to assist learners and it may be beneficial if its use is correctly managed. They also agree that L1 can be very useful if it is used in appropriate ways and at appropriate times. Its use should decrease when the students’ target language level increases because students should be exposed to the target language as much as possible, within their window of comprehension- during L2 learning. As Booth, Azman and Ismail (2014) stated “a limited and systematized use of L1 is recommended if there is a need” (p. 77). This is also supported by Galali and Cinkara

(2017) who add that L1 should be considered as “a tool to be employed on an as-needed basis” (p. 62).

Some experts, such as Cook (2001), Tang (2002) and Schweers (1999), believe that “L1 is significant to be used during problem-solving tasks as it will highly aid learners to accomplish the tasks successfully” (cited in Iswati & Hadimulyono, 2018, p. 126) and L1 facilitates students’ learning, so most of them demanded it to be used during L2 classes. Moreover, as Galali and Cinkara (2017) observed, most teachers believe that “L1 use can aid students in acquiring fluency and it can facilitate English language acquisition” (p. 55).

When group work is carried out in L2 classes, students use their L1 for different purposes: (a) enlisting and maintaining each other’s interest in the task; (b) developing strategies to make a difficult task more manageable; (c) keeping focus on the goals of the task and (d) finding ways to address specific problems, concentrating on some aspects of grammar and vocabulary (Storgh & Wigglesworth, 2003; Bhooth, Azman & Ismail, 2014; Tognini & Oliver, 2012). Swain and Lapkin (2000), apart from some of these functions, mention the interpersonal interaction, which includes disagreements and off-task exchanges. Bhooth, Azman and Ismail (2014) also talk about ‘*cooperation among learners*’ which is promoted through L1 in students sharing their ideas, asking for clarification, finding new words in L2, helping each other, processing difficult concepts and translating new words. However the management of collaborative learning (CL) in the classroom can present challenges for the teacher.

Research into collaborative learning in TESOL indicates that there are many benefits but at the same time, there are notable hurdles for teachers and learners. Difficulties may emerge due to cognitive complexities of the collaborative activities as well as unfamiliarity with new social interaction required to carry them out, such as difficulties in articulating ongoing understanding about the joint activity (for example, specific discourse related to discipline knowledge as well as language associated with knowledge building needed for reflection). (Dooley, 2018, p. 4)

Brooks, Donato and McGlone (1997) (cited in Alley, 2005) propose two different categories for group interactions. These two functions are: (a) metacognitive talk, students talking about how to do a specific task; and (b) metatalk, students talking about their own talk. Metacognitive talk refers to the initial work of an L2 group, which is establishing priorities and procedures. Even though the members of the group may already have some explanations and instructions about the task, the students reformulate it to create a mental image for themselves. This means that “the group participants speak in order to act rather than act in order to speak” (Alley, 2000, p. 252) and this speech about the task is usually in their native language. Metatalk includes “assessing one’s comprehension of a text, identifying sources of difficulty, and isolating problematic portions” (Alley, 2000, p. 252). When the difficult parts of the text are identified, members of the group can predict the information using their knowledge and the visual clues to deduce the actions, relationships and story line. Even when metacognitive talk and metatalk are carried out on the L1, both categories are crucial to helping the participants of the group define what they do and do not know.

The use of L1 allows the students to express themselves and leads to positive attitudes toward the English learning process because it provides a sense of security. Besides, it fosters a positive affective learning environment, especially in the beginning and intermediate classrooms (Bhooth, Azman & Ismail, 2014). The native language use allows students to analyze language and work “at a higher level than would be possible were they restricted to sole use of their L2” (Storgh & Wigglesworth, 2003, p. 760). Antón and DiCamilla (1998) (cited in Tognini & Oliver, 2012) suggest that learners use the L1 to clarify and build on the other students’ possible solutions to explicit problems throughout the task.

Although the majority of the reasons why students tend to use their L1 in peer interactions during group work are related to task procedure, they also use their native language to talk about personal things. The findings of Galali and Cinkara’s (2017) study indicate that the participants generally use their L1 in social interactions while explaining personal things to their partners. Students make a

functional distinction between L1 and L2: they reserve L2 for academic topics and L1 for social interaction. L2 is supposed to require more complex syntax and vocabulary, while L1 generally makes less complex demands on speakers, which make Blanco-Iglesias, Broner and Tarone (1995) (cited in Tognini & Oliver (2012) conclude that a critical influence on the use of L1 seems to be “learners’ lack of the L2 vernacular required for informal peer interaction” (p. 57) which is indispensable, in teenagers, for creating and maintaining the identify of a group.

Various studies mentioned above (Bhooth, Azman & Ismail, 2014; Iswati & Hadimulyono, 2018; Swain & Lapkin, 2000; Storgh & Wigglesworth, 2003; Alley, 2005; Galali & Cinkara, 2017 and Tognini & Oliver, 2012) agree on the fact that L1 has a positive role in L2 learning: it supplies scaffolding to students who have lower level of L2 by making the classroom environment and the target language comprehensible. Swain and Lapkin (2000) state that without the L1 use, the students may not accomplish the tasks as effectively, or perhaps it might not have been accomplished at all. They conclude saying that L1 “could contribute to learning and, therefore, should not be prohibited” (Tognini & Oliver, 2012, p. 56).

4. METHODOLOGY

4.1. Contextualization

The aim of this study is to know in what cases the students use their L1 when they are working in groups or pairs and the reasons they do it, and also to discover in what sense it is positive (or detrimental if that is the case) for their L2 learning.

The data were collected in a Catalan state secondary school located in Greater Barcelona. The school has been open for more than 70 years. It is a large institution and offers four groups per level in lower secondary education (*ESO*) and two groups per level in upper secondary (*Batxillerat*). The school is located in a neighborhood in which most of the population is from a middle to higher socioeconomic background. The center places a lot of importance on language education and, apart from English, the students also have the opportunity to learn Italian and French.

4.2. Participants

The participants of this study were teenagers from a 4th year ESO English class, between the ages 15 and 16 years. In 3rd and 4th year, the English students are divided into levels to make the class more homogeneous, even though in a same class you can still find differences between some students' level. The selected class was supposed to be the lower level of 4th year (level B1 according to the Common European Framework of Reference).

The selected students who will appear in the recordings comprised 11 EFL students. Of this total, 3 were males and 9 females. All of them were the same age and they were in the same class, however, their L2 levels were different due to the fact that some of them had the opportunity to study English in private language schools. All the participants spoke the same mother tongues (Spanish and Catalan) which made it easier for them to speak in their native language(s) if they needed some help or they did not understand something.

4.3. Data Collection

Data used for the present study consisted of five video recordings and an audio recording of students working in small groups or pairs. All the recording are student-student interaction, there are only few occasions where the student-researcher intervenes in the conversation.

The selected participants were asked to do various activities. Three of these activities were created by the two student-researchers, students of the Master's Degree in Teaching in Secondary Schools who were doing an internship in the school, as part of the teaching unit created to be carried out during the second practicum. The other two activities are apart from this teaching unit: one is a video recording of a four-student group who was doing an activity called "true or false sentences". The other activity is the audio, which is a task carried out in pairs in which the students had to analyze the teacher's feedback of one writing they had already done (both activities will be explained thoroughly below).

The first recorded activity, which was done at the beginning of the first practicum and was not part of the teaching unit, was a warm-up task. It was prepared as a way of introducing the students to the new unit they would be working on during the following classes, and was about the brain. The students, working in groups of four, were given some pieces of paper with curious facts about the brain. Then, the learners had to read them and decide whether they were true or false, stating the reasons why they thought so. Once all the groups finished, the teacher checked all the class results out loud. The participants of this activity were Laura, Dani, Sandra and Aina (all the students' names have been changed to protect their identities).

The second activity, which was part of the teaching unit, was a jigsaw reading. The jigsaw reading consisted in dividing one text in different parts (A, B, C and D in this case). The teacher split the class into groups of 4 members, each student had to read one part of the text and try to understand it so they could explain it to the rest of the group. Each text had some yellow words (which were considered more difficult or more specific) and they had to find out what they meant if they were

unsure. For the first part of the activity, which was reading each part of the text, the member of the group who read the A part joined the other students who read the same part. They talked about that part, they helped each other to understand it perfectly and to become experts of that paragraph, so it would be easier for them to explain it later. The participants of this activity were Sandra, Alicia, Cristina and Júlia.

The third task is the continuation of the second activity, the jigsaw reading. Once all the members had read their parts (A, B, C or D), they went back to their initial group and explained the text and the words to their classmates so all of them knew what the four texts said. The participants of this activity were Laura, Jordi, Gerard and Carla.

The aim of the forth activity was to create a mind map with some ideas about a festival or tradition. In groups of four, the students had previously read a text about New Year's Eve in Rio, analyzed the different parts of the text and checked what information each paragraph contained. With all of the members of the group, they had to choose one tradition and then look for information about the selected festivity and structure the mind map with all the data each paragraph was supposed to have. The participants of this activity were the same as the previous one.

The fifth task was the continuation of the previous activity, the mind map. In this activity, once they had the mind map clearly done in group, each member had to write individually one of the paragraphs they had decided. They already had all the information each paragraph should have so they only had to write it. The participants of this activity were the same as the third and the forth activity.

In the last activity, which was only audio recorded, two of the selected students had to compare the teacher's feedback they received from the correction of their writings. In a previous lesson, they had had to write about a sport, which was a topic they had already worked in class. The recordings were made during a discussion process in which the language learners had to try to identify the mistakes

they have made in the written text and then try to correct them with the help of their partner. The participants of this activity were Jordi and Maria.

In order to carry out the recordings, a mobile phone was placed on a table in front of the group, so all the members faced it. In some recordings, it was the first time the students were recorded so they were not used to it, and they seemed to feel nervous. Sometimes they were even talking or gesticulating to the camera as if the teacher could see them through it. After some time spent recording, it seemed that the students felt more comfortable while they were working with the mobile phone in front of them.

In the first two classes, before recording the participants, the student-researcher instructed the students to act in a natural way, as if the mobile phone was not there. The students were also told that these recordings were used solely for academic purposes. Before recording the students, the student-researcher made sure that the students had all signed consent forms to be photographed or recorded on school premises. After recording, due to ethical reasons, identifying features of the students have been erased and the names of the participants were given pseudonyms. This was also the case for any names mentioned in the transcripts. The videos have been only seen by the author/researcher in order to do the transcripts. The transcripts have been done following an adapted version of the Jeffersonian system of transcription (Jefferson, 2004).

4.4. Data Analysis

Swain and Lapkin (2000, pp. 257-258) found three principal purposes for which students used their first language: (1) moving the task along, (2) focusing attention, and (3) interpersonal interaction. They established some coding categories which revealed five functions that are identical to those which will be used in this current study:

1. Moving the task along

(a) task management

2. Focusing attention

(a) vocabulary search

(b) focus on form; explanation; retrieving grammatical information

3. Interpersonal interaction

(a) off task (includes L1 vernacular use)

(b) disagreement

The peer interaction data will be analyzed using these five functions due to the fact that the two studies are closely related; both of them analyze the use of L1 in group work in second or foreign language learning, although the target language in the study is different. Swain and Lapkin (2000) focused on some pairs of French students doing a jigsaw and a dictogloss, which coincide slightly to the activities in this current study. The obtained information through these categories will help to answer the initial questions and proposals mentioned at the beginning of this study. Swain and Lapkin (2000) added two more functions in the first category: (a) sequencing (figuring out the order of events) and (b) retrieving semantic information; understanding pieces of information; developing an understanding of the story. They will not be analyzed in this study because they do not fit in the activities carried out in the data.

Other studies have taken a similar idea to analyze their data. Storch and Wigglesworth (2003) have adapted some of the functions: (1) *task management*, (2) *task clarification*, (3) *vocabulary and meaning* and (4) *grammar*. Some other studies such as Tognini and Oliver (2012) also talk about these principal purposes.

Along a similar vein, the data of this study are analyzed in the following way: first of all, the recordings were watched carefully in order to take notes of the significant points for this study, especially the parts in which the participants are talking in their native language. The significant points are based on the different categories, specified above, established by Swain and Lapkin: (a) moving the task along which includes task management, i.e., getting themselves started and managing linguistic and organizational aspects of task completion; (b) focusing attention, which

includes vocabulary and grammatical search or explanations of some difficult aspects of the task or the text; and (c) interpersonal interaction, which can be off-task speech, i.e., talking about personal things or some other explanations, which are not related to the task; or disagreement.

Once the significant points were identified, the fragments were classified in these categories in order to make a deeper analysis and to have it clear for the following part of this study (discussion and conclusion).

5. ANALYSIS

The following part presents an analysis of the interactions between 11 grouped students while they work together through various tasks. The objective is to observe when the participants use their L1 during the realization of these activities in L2 classes and the ways these L1 interactions are useful to improving L2 learning.

Five video recordings and one audio recording were analyzed in advance and the functions for which students used their first language, such as task management, vocabulary search, explanation, off task and disagreement (Swain & Lapkin, 2000), were identified and put into categories.

The excerpts of the activities are classified into the categories mentioned in the previous section and analyzed bearing in mind the functions, rather than analyzing activity per activity highlighting the functions that appear.

5.1. Moving the task along

5.1.1. TASK MANAGEMENT:

In most of the activities, the students' interactions which are related to task management are turn taking and clarifications of the task. In the first two activities, the participants spend most of the time speaking in their L2, so we can hardly find occasions in which they talk about task management in Spanish or Catalan (L1). However, in the third, fourth and fifth activities, all the student's interactions are in their L1, they only speak in English (L2) when they are writing the task.

In activity 1, the participants decide that each sentence must be read by one different member of the group, and Sandra starts taking the first one, so they already know how to develop the task. The only occasion the participants talk in L1 about someone's turn is when Laura takes one sentence and gives it to Dani because it is his turn and she says:

- (1) LAU **Té. Ho llegeixes tu?** ↑
 Take it. Do you read it?

At the beginning of the second activity, once all the participants have already read the text individually, they do not know exactly what they have to do. It is when they talk in Spanish about which is the purpose of the task and Cristina starts by asking what they have to do (*What the f* do we have to say?*). She thinks they have to write an opinion essay (*Do we do an opinion essay?*), but Sandra clarifies that they have to share the words they do not know (*I think we have to say the words we don't understand*). This contribution helps them to do the activity properly.

- (2) CRI **¿Qué c* tenemos que decir?** ↑
 What the f do we have to say?*
 SAN **Nos ha dicho que leamos**
 She said we have to read
 CRI **¿Hacemos una opinión?** ↑ ((she laughs))
 Do we do an opinion essay?
 SAN **Creo que tenemos que decir las palabras que no entendamos**
 I think we have to say the words we don't understand
 ALI Yes

In the activity number 3, Laura, unconsciously, is the member of the group who is managing the task. Every time the other participants start talking about other things (sometimes related to the task and sometimes not), she talks a little bit with the other ones, but then she tries to focus the rest of the group on the task again as we can see in the following excerpts. In excerpt (3) she asks who the B is to make him or her continue with the activity, and in excerpt (4), after talking about other things, she pushes the rest of the group to keep on the task.

- (3) LAU **Si: ¿Quién es el B?** ↑
 Yes. Who is the B?
 GER Who is the B?
- (4) LAU **Bueno (.) seguimos**
 Well, let's carry on.
 CAR **¿Qué pasa?** ↑
 What's wrong?
 LAU **Nada (.) Nada (.) Hemos cambiado de conversación en tres segundos (.) sigue**
 Nothing, nothing. We've changed the conversation in three seconds. Keep
 (.) sigue
 going, keep going.

When all the members have explained their text to the others, the student-researcher explains that they have to answer some questions about the text

without looking at the papers. The participants read the first sentence and try to answer it, but they have not completely understood the task and they wonder themselves what they have to do (*"How?"*, *"what's that?"*, *"it makes no sense"* and *"it doesn't say anything about that, huh?"*). These interventions are done in their mother tongue until Carla finally understands that the question can be related to any of the paragraphs they have explained (*"Ah, of the group!"* and *"Ah, I thought it was about the ones we have read"*).

- (5) CAR **¿Cómo?** ↑
How?
 LAU **Yo que sé**
I dunno
 GER **Pero ¿esto de qué es?** ↑
But, what's that?
 CAR **Pero no tiene sentido**
But, it makes no sense
 JOR **No (.) No ha dicho nada de esto (.) eh?** ↑
No. It doesn't say anything about this, huh?
 CAR **Ah (.) del grupo!**
Ah, of the group!
 LAU **Oui**
Yes
 CAR **Ah (.) me pensaba que era de los nuestros**
Ah, I thought it was about the ones we have read

Then Laura leads the participants to complete the task, which is reading the questions, by saying *"So let's answer the questions"* and she starts reading the first one.

- (6) LAU **Pues respondemos las preguntas (.) Primero (.) ¿Quién ha dicho que no va a volver a hacer algo porque no le gustó?** ↑
So let's answer the questions. First, who said he/she would not do something again because he/she didn't like it?

In the fourth activity, the students have to decide and contrast a lot of things and information, that is the reason why they try to manage the task several times. First, Laura wants to know if there is some voluntary who wants to start reading the text to decide what information each paragraph contains. They do not know exactly what they have to do: Laura explains *"we have to read first"* but Gerard specifies that *"we have to say what each paragraph is"* and finally Carla offers herself as a

voluntary (“Well, I can do it more or less, I’m not a professional but maybe I can say something”).

- (7) LAU **¿Quién quiere empezar explicando? ↑ No pienso hacerlo todo (.) Hazlo tú**
 (referring to Gerard)
Who wants to start explaining it? I’m not doing everything. You start
- GER The first paragraph is the introduction, **venga va.**
Come on.
- LAU **Hay que leer antes**
We have to read first
- GER **Tenemos que decir qué es cada párrafo (.) qué es**
We have to say what each paragraph is. What it is
- LAU **No (.) Ya (.) ya (.) pero ¿quién quiere hacer el primer párrafo? ↑**
No. Yes, yes, but who does the first paragraph?
- CAR **Bueno puedo hacerlo yo (.) más o menos tampoco soy profesional pero igual**
Well, I can do it more or less, I’m not a professional but maybe
puedo decir algo (.) Vale (.)
I can say something. Okay

Once the participants have read and analyzed the text, they have to decide what tradition or festivity they are going to write about. Laura proposes to write about the Pride Festival, Carla agrees and, in consequence, the other two members agree as well. Before starting the next task, Jordi does not know exactly what they have to do so he asks it and Laura tells him “we have to choose a festivity or tradition to do...” and Carla finishes the sentence “to write”, but Laura clarifies the answer and she adds “in theory we have to write about the Pride. Then, look for information about it using our mobile phones and then write it”.

- (8) JOR **¿Qué tenemos que hacer? ↑**
What do we have to do?
- LAU **Tenemos que escribir una: (.) Hay que escoger un festival o tradición para**
hacer:
We have to write a... We have to choose a festivity or tradition to do...
- CAR **Para escribir**
To write
- LAU **Que en un principio tenemos que hacer el Pride (.) Luego (.) buscar**
In theory we have to write about the Pride. Then, look for
información sobre ella usando el móvil y luego escribirla
Information about it using our mobile phones and then write it.

When the students start writing, the members who are more active and involved in the activity are Laura and Gerard. Laura writes the mind map and Gerard helps her do it by asking her some questions to give her more ideas, for example:

- (9) GER **Pero ¿qué hacen en ese festival? ↑ ¿Qué celebran? ↑**
But, what do they do in this festival? What do they celebrate?

In contrast to the previous activity, in the activity 5 the participants barely talk about task management. They know that each member of the group has to write one paragraph of the text, bearing in mind the mind map they have previously done with all the characteristics of the Pride Festival. They have decided that each paragraph will talk about one different day of the Pride, as Carla says “*so each one writes a different day*”. Before starting to write, Carla asks Laura “*How are you doing it? First point?*” and she explains that “*I have divided the things that... Then the proclamation, the demonstration...*” and she also suggests “*I have to do the introduction, that is so you can join this with this*”. Apart from these interventions, the only thing they say about task management is, when each of them finishes, asking the others who the next writer is.

- (10) CAR **Vale (.) com ho estàs fent? ↑ (.) Primer punt? ↑**
Okay. How are you doing it? First point?
- LAU **Yo he dividido las cosas que: (.) que: xxx (.) luego el pregón, la manifestación...**
I have divided the things that...xxx Then the proclamation, the demonstration...
- CAR **Vale pues cada persona que haga un día**
Okay, so each one writes a different day
- LAU **Vale (.) Bueno yo tengo que hacer la introducción (.) o sea que esto podéis juntarlo con esto**
Okay. Well, I have to do the introduction, that is so you can join this with this

The last activity, even though it is very short, the two participants try to speak in English, but for one of them, Jordi, it is difficult to speak in his L2 so sometimes they mix the two languages. Maria is fluent in English so she is the one who takes the role of managing the task and, when it is Jordi's turn to speak, she pushes him saying “*Speak!*”.

- (11) MAR **Habla! ↓**
Speak!
- JOR **No ↓**
 ((Both students laugh))

After that, Jordi tries to explain the mistakes she has in her composition but as Maria sees it is being hard for him, she indicates what he has to say (“*Say that*”) so they can finish the task.

(12) MAR [Di esto ↓
Say that
JOR Sí ↓
Yes

5.2. Focusing attention

5.2.1. VOCABULARY SEARCH:

In general, even though in the second and the third activity there are words marked in yellow, which are considered to be a little bit more difficult, the participants barely talk about the vocabulary, just in a few occasions.

In the activity 1, the students have some doubts about one sentence which says “Your brain weighs approximately the same as a packet of sugar”. It is Laura’s turn and while she reads the sentence, she says the verb “weighs” in a lower voice, Sandra repeats it in a proper pronunciation and then translates it into their L1. After that, Laura finishes reading the sentence and Sandra asks “*What’s its weight?*” (referring to a packet of sugar). Then, Aina does not know what “a packet of sugar” is and Sandra answers “*a lump of sugar*” but Aina is not convinced with the answer and she makes the direct translation to “*un paquet*” (*a packet*).

(13) LAU Your brain (.) weighs? ↑
SAN Weighs
LAU What? ↑
SAN **Pesa**
Weighs
AIN What? ↑ ((focusing on the activity again))
LAU [Your brain weighs approximately the same as a packet of sugar
SAN **Cuánto pesa?** ↑
What’s its weight?
AIN I don’t know... What is a packet of sugar?
SAN **Un terrón de azúcar**
A lump of sugar
AIN No!
LAU xxx

the other participants. Laura does not know how to translate it into Spanish and finally Gerard translates it as “*cuales*”.

In the fifth and sixth activities, the participants do not ask anything about vocabulary.

5.2.2. FOCUS ON FORM, EXPLANATION, RETRIEVING GRAMMATICAL INFORMATION:

From these sections, this study will only talk about the explanations because the other categories do not appear in the data. The participants do not talk about the form of the words or sentences nor the grammar due to the type of activities, which do not require this sort of information.

In the first activity, the participants give quite a few explanations because that is the requirement of the task: they have to justify why they think the sentences are true or false. Most of them are related to the brain, which is the topic of the unit, for example, the first explanation we can find is the one that Laura does in relation to the sentence “Your brain does not need a constant supply of oxygen. Five minutes without oxygen won’t cause problems to your brain”. With the intervention of the excerpt (16) she wants to support the fact that this sentence is false.

- (16) LAU **El oxígeno (.) ai (.) el cerebro no funciona sin oxígeno (.) para esto estamos respirando (.) para dar oxígeno al cerebro**
The oxygen, ai, the brain doesn’t work without oxygen, that’s why we breath, for giving oxygen to the brain.

Another example is related to one sentence we have seen in the previous part, the one which talks about the weight of the brain (“Your brain weighs approximately the same as a packet of sugar”). Sandra thinks the sentence is false and, to convince the other participants, she mentions that “*the brain doesn’t weigh so much*”.

- (17) SAN **[El cerebro no pesa mucho**
The brain doesn’t weigh so much

There are also some explanations which do not make much sense in the context they are said. It is the case of one of Sandra’s interventions. The participants are talking about one sentence that says “Brain cells eat themselves when they don’t

have any other source of energy. So, in very real ways, dieting, especially low-fat diets, can force your brain to eat itself". Their interventions are related to cells, dieting and brain, and suddenly Sandra says "*dolphins use (the brain) more than all of us*", when she says that the other ones laugh and even Dani asks "*Is it related to it?*" and Sandra, confused, answers that she does not know ("*So I dunno*").

(18) SAN **Los delfines usan más que todos nosotros.**

Dolphins use (the brain) more than all of us.

AIN I don't know bu:t...

DAN **[¿Qué tiene que ver? ↑**

Is it related to it?

SAN **Pues no sé ((laughs))**

So I dunno

In the second activity, the participants only make some comments about the text they have read because Cristina says she has not understood it. She says that the text says something about bread and salt and Sandra explains that in Russia giving bread and salt is polite when you have hosts at home.

The third activity consists in explaining to the other members of the group what their text is about. The participants spend the whole recording speaking in their L1 so all the explanations about the texts are in Spanish or Catalan. For example, Carla talks about Japan and mentions some peculiarities about it, as well as Laura, who talks about Marrakesh and Jordi about Ireland.

In the fourth and fifth activities, the students talk about the Pride Festival because they have decided to write about it. When they chose it, Jordi and Gerard do not know what it is, so Laura looks for photos of it in her mobile phone and Carla explains to them that it is a festival where there are people who are gay and lesbian, as we can see in excerpt.

(19) CAR **Festival de todo esto de ga:ys (.) lesbiana:s y todo esto**

Festival of all of this, of gay and lesbian, and everything related

Jordi asks Laura if it is like a demonstration, but Laura explains to him that it lasts a whole week, from 15th to 29th of June, and there are some concerts of different artists like Rosalía, apart from some speeches and the demonstration.

5.3. Interpersonal interaction

5.3.1. OFF-TASK:

The majority of the off-task talks are related to the topics of the activities or to the fact the participants are being recorded. For example, in activity 1, Aina and Dani hit each other, Dani replies that it has been recorded and Aina adds that it is for the university, so he must behave himself.

- (20) ((Dani hits Aina's face and Aina hits Dani back))
DAN **Està gravat (.) eh? ↑ Està gravat**
It's recorded, uh? It's recorded
AIN **Dani (.) macho (.) Això és per la universitat (.) Comporta't**
Dani, dude. That's for the university. Behave well!

In the activity 2, at the end of the task, one of the participants, Cristina, is wondering if they have been recorded or it is just fake. They joke about the fact she has just said that and if it is true that the mobile phone is working, people from university will see that conversation, which is similar to what happens in the recording of the first activity.

- (21) CRI **Pero ¿nos estás grabando? ↑ ¿No tienen el móvil apagado? ↑ Porqué igual es una trampa**
But, are they recording us? Isn't the mobile off? Because maybe it is a trick
((Júlia looks at the mobile phone, laughing, and waves to it))
ALI **¿Este video dónde va después? ↑**
Where is this video going to then?
CRI **Es que cómo pongan esto en la universidad ((laughs))**
If they are going to project it at the university....
ALI **Ya: (.) ya:**
Yes, yes
JUL **Pues entonces va a salir que "como pongas esto en la universidad:d" ((all the girls laugh))**
So then they are going to see "If they are going to project it at the university..."

In activity 3, they only talk about the recording when one of the members of the group, Jordi, is using his mobile phone and Laura reminds him it will be seen by the teachers, but Jordi replies the camera does not focus on him.

- (22) LAU **Jordi (.) Jordi (.) Te están grabando y pueden decirte que estás usando el móvil**
Jordi, Jordi. They are recording you and they can say to you you're using your mobile phone

JOR **Ya (.) Yo no estoy (.) No estoy** ((referring he doesn't appear on the image))
Yes. I am not... I'm not

In activity 4, while Gerard and Laura are preparing the mind map for the task, Carla is coloring with some of Laura's felt-tip pens, and then she notices she is being recorded and Jordi reminds her as well.

(23) CAR **Me están grabando como estoy pintando la::**
They are recording how I color the...

JOR **Te están grabando (.) eh? ↑**
They are recording you, huh?

CAR **Acabo de decirlo**
I have just said so.

In the audio recording of the activity 6, when it is Jordi's turn his first intervention is asking if it is obligatory to speak in English and Maria answers "yes, it is". After that, Jordi says he does not want to speak and he asks if they are being recorded, Maria's answer is the same as the previous one, and he starts speaking with some difficulties.

However, in activity 5, which is the task with more off-task talk, students do not pay attention to the fact there is a mobile phone recording them, and they do not talk about it.

Apart from the attention to the mobile phone, the students' interactions are about some other things which are sometimes related to the topic of the task. For example, in activity 4, the text explains curiosities of other countries and the paragraph which talked about Japan mentioned the toilets. Carla starts talking about some toilets that clean you when you use them and Laura confirms it saying "So they exist, huh?". Then Carla says that she does not like them, Laura asks her, with irony, if she has ever used them. They only spend some seconds talking about it and then they continue with the task.

(24) CAR **Sí (.) son raros (.) esos que se:** ((moves her hands)) **te lavan**
Yes, they are weird. These ones that... clean you

LAU **Pues existen (.) eh? ↑**
So they exist, huh?

CAR **Ya: (.) pero no sé (.) no me gustan**
Yes, But I dunno... I don't like them

LAU **¿Los has probado? ↑**

Have you used them?
 CAR **¿Qué?** ↑
 What?
 LAU **¿Los has probado?** ↑
 Have you used them?
 CAR **No (.) pero me parece una chorrada**
 No, but I think they are nonsense

In activity 4 and activity 5, the participants are working on the Pride festivity and, apart from doing the mind map and the writing they are asked to, two of the members of the group, Carla and Laura, spend some time talking about personal experiences in the Pride Parade of previous years. They are also planning the one for that year, for example, explaining the clothes they are going to wear and the people they are going with.

However, sometimes they also talk about some other things such as, marks of some other exams, a notebook one of the participants have in activity 2 or Carla, in activity 4, talks about some felt tip markers that Laura has in her pencil case. In activity 1, they barely use the L1, but when it is Dani's turn to read, he says he forgot his glasses, so he cannot read ("*I don't have my glasses and I don't...*"), but the girls do not believe him and ask him to be quiet and not to tell lies.

(25) DAN **No porto les ulleres i no...**
I don't have my glasses and I don't...
 SAN **[Tu no portes ulleres!]**
You don't wear glasses!
 AIN **[Ah, si, si... Les ulleres ((with irony))**
Ah, yes, yes... The glasses
 DAN **Jo porto lentilles**
I use contact lenses
 SAN **CÁLLATE!** ((addressing to Dani))
Be quiet!
 AIN **A ver? ↑ Tu ets tonto ((laughing))**
Let's see. You're silly
 SAN **Eso es mentira**
You're lying

In the task number 5, even the students have to work in groups, they have to do paragraphs of the text individually, one by one. Laura and Carla start talking about the Pride Parade and other related things but then they start explaining to each

other what clothes they are going to wear for the graduation and look for different outfits on their mobile phones.

5.3.2. DISAGREEMENT:

About the participants' disagreement with the opinion of the other students, we can only find one occasion, at the beginning of the activity 1, when Laura does not understand the aim of the task. They have to decide whether the sentences are true or false, but Laura insists that they are facts, so all the sentences are true.

- (26) SAN Left-handed people use the right side ↓ (.) side of the brain more than right-handed people
AIN No: ↓
SAN Yes
LAU Yes (.) facts
AIN Ah **vale** (.) right (.) left
Okay
LAU **Son hechos**
They're facts

The participants decide the sentence is true, so Laura is content with the decision because she thinks they are factual so all of them are true. However, when Aina reads the second sentence, the other members of the group think it is false and Laura repeats the same "*they are facts*" and adds "*Teacher said that*" to emphasize her thought. Finally, Sandra explains to her what the aim of the task is, which is to say whether the sentences are true or false.

- (27) AIN Your brain does not need a constant supply of oxygen (.) Five minutes without oxygen (.) won't cause problems to your brain
SAN [False
LAU **Tío (.) son hechos (.)** °La profe lo ha dicho° (.) They are facts
Dude, they are facts. Teacher said that.
SAN Yeah (.) but you have to say if it's true or if it's not
AIN It's true or it's not true? ↑

6. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

After analyzing the results of the collected data, several relevant conclusions can be taken. It is also necessary to go back to the articles mentioned in the theoretical framework in order to complete this final discussion and to answer the research questions.

6.1. Research questions and findings

First of all, we will focus on answering the research question laid out at the beginning of this study. There are three questions:

- **Why do the students talk in their L1 while they are working in groups in L2 class?**

As it has been seen during the whole project, especially in the analysis, there are several reasons students talk in their L1. First of all, L1 use makes the learners feel more comfortable and helps them to develop strategies to make difficult tasks more manageable. Moreover, it also helps them to keep focus on the goals of the task, also known as task management, as we have seen in the analysis and to find ways to address specific problems, such as vocabulary and grammar (Antón & DiCamilla, 1998).

- **What is the role that L1 has in these interactions?**

The roles that L1 has in student-student interaction are the functions and categories seen in the analysis section: (a) Moving the task along which includes task management and task clarification. It helps the students to clarify what they are supposed to do. Sometimes with the teacher's explanation it is not enough for them to understand what the task is about, L1 helps them to make sure all the members of the group know exactly what the activity consists of and it is also useful to distribute the roles each member have or the parts each of them have to prepare. Regarding the analysis, the activity 4 is the one where more task management is carried out in comparison with the other activities, probably because of the task in which the participants have to prepare a mind map about a festivity looking for

information on Internet. The task requires organization and, Laura, one of the group members, takes the control of the task and tries to organize the information with the help of her partner Gerard.

Another function seen in the gathered data is (b) vocabulary search. In this function, L1 is used to translate the words the students do not understand. In the analysis, it is seen that most of the students resort to this option when they do not know the meaning of a word (such as “wealth”, “astonished”, “to weigh” or “to make my jaw drop”), but in one occasion, in activity 2, one of the participants asked for the meaning of the word “whereas” to the student-researcher. She could just translate it, but she tried to explain the meaning to the students, giving examples to make it easier to understand. As Booth, Azman and Ismail (2014) and Galali and Cinkara (2017) say, the L1 use should be proportional to the L2 level of the students, the more target language level the students have, the less mother tongue use. The student-researcher considered the participants could understand the explanation of the word in the L2, so she did not translate it. She followed what the *Catalan Book of Basic Competences* states: “the communication of the teacher must be in the language the students are learning” (Generalitat de Catalunya, 2015b, p. 7)

The L1 can also be useful to do some (c) explanations about the task or some aspect worked in the activity, such as explaining the characteristics of the Pride to make it easier when doing the mind map, or summarizing the text to other student who has not understood it.

Another function the L1 use has is (d) the off-task talk which requires more informal social interactions and students associate it to their L1 (Galali & Cinkara, 2017). Off-task talking is when students talk about other things which are not related to the final task, such as some objects they have near them like the notebook in activity 2, some previous experiences like the Pride in activities 4 and 5, or some personal events they have like the final graduation in activity 5.

We have also seen that sometimes the students use their L1 when they (e) disagree about some aspect of the task or something another member of the group has done

or said. However, taking into account the data collected in this study, students barely use the L1 for this function.

In general the more common and the more used categories are (1) moving the task along, including task management; (2) focusing attention, especially the explanations; and (3) off-task talk.

- Can L1 use help in L2 learning?

Going back to the previous two research questions helps to answer this one. L1 has a lot of advantages and roles which help to facilitate L2 learning. As Iswati and Hadimulyono (2018) say “L1 is significant to be used during problem-solving tasks as it will highly aid learners to accomplish the tasks successfully” (p. 126), so the fact that students accomplish the activity means they know how to do it and, in consequence, they have learnt or, at least, understood the things they have worked on. For example, regarding the vocabulary or grammar search, even though the students learn a new word by its translation, or learn a new English grammar concept explained in their L1, they have already learn it and it will help them in the future when they will have to use it because they will already know what it means.

L1 use provides scaffolding for students who have lower level of L2 by making the classroom environment and the target language comprehensible. It also helps the students who do not feel comfortable with the task and group environment. Maybe, if they could not use their L1, they would feel even worse. (Bhooth, Azman & Ismail, 2014; Iswati & Hadimulyono, 2018; Swain & Lapkin, 2000; Storgh & Wigglesworth, 2003; Alley, 2005; Galali & Cinkara, 2017 and Tognini & Oliver, 2012).

6.2. General conclusions

Apart from the research questions, there are some other conclusions which are worth mentioning.

Brooks, Donato and McGlone (1997) distinguish between metacognitive talk and metatalk and the data analyzed in this project corroborates this notion. At the beginning of the activity 2, all the members of the group talk about what they are

supposed to do, which is reading and understanding the text and explaining the meaning of the yellow words, which represents metacognitive talk. On the other hand, metatalk would be represented when, in the same activity, Cristina says she has not understood the text, Sandra and Alice give some explanation about the paragraph, and then Cristina, who is not convinced, says she is going to read again.

Even though most of the participants work on the activities, there are two tasks which are not finished: the third and the fifth ones. In activity number 3, the students do not finish the questions they have to answer about the text they have read and, in the activity number 5, the participants do not have time to finish the collaborative writing, one of the members of the group cannot do her part. This fact brings to some conclusions stated below.

Peer-to-peer interactions help improve language-learning level and language acquisition (Dooly, 2018; and Tognini & Oliver, 2012), but group and pair activities must be the appropriate and well detailed with a lot of accuracy as well as the time limits and the checkpoints (Alley, 2005). If it is not prepared like this, students spend more time doing some other things, such as off-task talk. Apart from having the activities, the time limits and detailed checkpoints, it is important that students are prepared to work in groups (Alley, 2005). Group work can have a lot of benefits but sometimes there are also hurdles due to the fact that students are not familiarized with new social interaction required to carry the activities out (Dooly, 2018). That is what maybe happens to Jordi and Dani, two students who hardly participate in the activities; perhaps they do not feel comfortable with the task or with the rest of the group and it supposes a difficulty for them to join in the activity.

In relation to the participation of the students in the tasks, there are some students who speak more L2 depending on who they are working with. For example, Laura spends almost the whole activity 1 speaking in English while, in the third, fourth and fifth activity, she speaks Spanish all the time, except when she is writing the mind map in the activity 4. The same happens to Jordi, in activities 3, 4 and 5; he speaks in Spanish however, in activity 6, he tries to speak in English even though it is very

hard for him. Another example is Sandra. She tries to speak in English during the whole activity 1, but in activity 2, she is with her friends in the same group and she speaks more Spanish than the previous activity.

As Krieger (2005) says, the L1 should not be prohibited but the teacher should guide the students to identify when to use their L1 and when to avoid its use. Other authors, such as Bhooth, Azman and Ismail (2014), Iswati and Hadimulyono (2018), Storgh and Wigglesworth (2003), Galali and Cinkara (2017) and Tognini and Oliver (2012), support the idea of using the L1 in appropriate ways and appropriate times. Sometimes the freedom of using the mother tongue whenever the students want brings to the fact they start off-task talk and then they do not finish the task.

According to the Catalan new curriculum, instead of exams, teachers use the final products of projects and tasks as assessment (Generalitat de Catalunya, 2015a). If teachers had to assess the tasks carried out during the recordings, only some of them could be taken into account because the students did not have enough time to finish the activities 3 and 5. If this kind of assessment is used, it is very important that the teachers explain the task and its conditions to the students. They have to make sure the learners know the time they have to do it and that it will be part of the assessment, so they have to try to finish the task within the time limits.

6.3. Data limitations

Due to the lack of available recording equipment, only one or two groups per class could be recorded. The student-researcher's mobile phone was the only gadget available to record the students, so only one group was being recorded at a time. The quality is not the optimum one and, although the group was isolated at the front of the classroom, there was some background noise because the other groups were carrying out the tasks at the same time. This meant that sometimes it was difficult to transcribe the students' discourse because it was difficult to understand. This was a limiting factor as it was perhaps not placed close enough to make out all group members' discourse equally.

A possible solution to this limitation would have been to remove the group studied to another room to complete the task as there were three adults at that moment (two student-researchers and one teacher) or to have a better camera which would capture the sound with higher quality.

Another limitation was the time available for recording the students. The student-researcher had to take advantage of the little time spent in the school doing the teaching unit, which was only four weeks and for that reason no more time was available to record more activities.

6.4. Further research

As it has been stated in the previous section, some participants speak more L1 or L2 depending on the members of the group they are working with. It probably occurs because the others members of the group have a better L2 level and can understand them much better or because they feel more comfortable with them and feel more secure, even though they make some mistakes. It would be beneficial to analyze the pedagogical implication in group work, in other words, the importance of grouping the students. It would be interesting to organize different groups during some task and record them to see how they act with some particular people and the results they get working in that specific groups. It would be very useful when doing activities where group work is required because it could help teachers organizing and classifying the students to get a better attitude of the students towards the activities, a better L2 acquiring and better final tasks or projects results.

During this study, there have been some aspects which have not been analyzed due to the time and activities limitation, such as retrieving grammatical information, focusing on form and also the disagreement. For further studies, it would be interesting that another kind of activities were prepared so these functions could be further analyzed.

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8. APPENDICES

8.1. Transcription Symbols

Adapted from the Jeffersonian Transcript Notation System.

Convention Name	Use
T	Teacher
Ss	Students
(.)	A brief pause, usually less than 2 seconds.
(# of seconds)	A number in parenthesis indicates the time, in seconds, of a pause in speech.
↓	Indicates falling pitch or intonation.
↑	Indicates rising pitch or intonation.
:::	Indicates prolongation of a sound.
Xxx	Speech which is unclear or in doubt in the transcript.
((text))	Annotation of non-verbal activity.
[]	Indicates the start and end points of overlapping speech.
ºtextº	Indicates whisper, reduced volume or quiet speech.
-	Indicates an abrupt halt or interruption in utterance.
ALL CAPS	Indicates shouted or increased volume speech.
<u>Underline</u>	Indicates the speaker is emphasizing or stressing the speech.
In bold	Words in Spanish or any other language.
<i>In italics</i>	Translation in English of the Spanish or Catalan words.

8.2. Sentences of the activity 1: true or false sentences

1. The human brain will grow three times its size in the first year of life. It continues to grow until you're about 18 years old.
2. The brain can't feel pain. It interprets pain signals sent to it, but it does not feel pain.
3. The human brain begins to lose some memory abilities by your late 30s.
4. The human brain gets smaller as we get older. This usually happens sometime after middle age.
5. During the mummification process, Egyptians would usually remove the brains through the nose.
6. Alcohol affects your brain in ways that include blurred vision, an unsteady walk, and more. These usually disappear once you become sober again. However, if you drink often for long periods of time, there is evidence that alcohol can affect your brain permanently.
7. Your brain uses 20 percent of the oxygen and blood in your body.
8. Your brain weighs approximately the same as a packet of sugar.
9. Your brain does not need a constant supply of oxygen. Five minutes without oxygen won't cause problems to your brain.
10. Brain information travels up to an impressive 430 kilometers per hour. This is faster than Formula 1 race cars.
11. Your brain can process an image that your eyes have seen for as little as 13 milliseconds — less time than it takes for you to open and close your eyes.
12. In general, women's brains are 10% bigger than men's, even after taking into account larger body size.
13. Left-handed people use the right side of the brain more than right-handed people.

14. People who are between 18 and 34 are more forgetful than people who were born between 1946 and 1964. They are more likely to forget what day it is or where they put their keys than their parents!

15. Brain cells eat themselves when they don't have any other source of energy. So, in very real ways, dieting, especially low-fat diets, can force your brain to eat itself.

16. We only use 10% of our brain.

17. If you were drinking alcohol and don't remember what you did last night, it's not because you forgot. While you are drunk, your brain is incapable of forming memories.

18. The brains of introverts and extroverts are not measurably different.

19. The human brain is capable of 1,016 processes per second, which makes it far more powerful than any existing computer.

20. Think you're in control of your life? Don't be so sure. 95% percent of your decisions take place in your subconscious mind.

21. Of the thousands of thoughts a person has every day, it's estimated that 20% of this mental chat/ is negative — self-critical, pessimistic, and fearful.

Answers

3. 20s

12. The other way round

21. 70%

18. They are


8.3. Texts of the activities 2 and 3: Jigsaw reading

TEXT A Jordan

Have you ever been to Russia? If you're meeting someone there or if you're a student who wants to spend some time with a Russian family, there is one thing you should have in mind before **setting foot in** the land of eternal winter. In my case, nobody had told me about a peculiar and customary tradition of the Russians and I was **astonished** when the family I was staying in gave me bread and salt when I arrived. Yes, you read it well. Bread-and-salt.

I found out later that it's a traditional Russian custom to welcome guests with bread-and-salt. Bread represents **wealth** and well-being whereas salt is believed to protect against evil spirits and hostile influences. Offering your guests bread and salt is a way to establish a bond of trust but if it's rejected it can be considered an insult. According to this traditional custom, the biggest reproach that can be said to an ungrateful person is "you have forgotten my bread with salt"


Luckily, I didn't reject the offer and ate my bread-and-salt but I'm happy I had to do it only once. It's definitely not the best dish in the world.



TEXT B Sarah

Some of my friends, who had already travelled to Japan, gave me good pieces of advice before flying to the Asian island and a few **warned** me about some aspects of the Japanese culture. They told me about some curiosities of the country, such as how healthy the food is supposed to be and how incredible it is to use the toilet there. I found it surprising that all my friends insisted on the toilet and I didn't understand what they meant until I landed in Japan and used the toilet at Narita airport. The first time I saw it, I thought I had been transported to a science fiction movie setting. The seat toilet was warm and it came with a bidet and some music so that people couldn't hear you using the toilet.

When I thought that nothing else could surprise me, I saw **something that made my jaw drop**. I knew I would find queues but I never imagined that the Japanese would line up for everything. At the airport train station, people stood in line to get on the train. Here in the United States, this is totally unthinkable and people will even **elbow** you to get on the train first!



TEXT C Patrick

One of the things you should ask yourself when you go abroad is: what do I have to **bear in mind** before travelling? That's exactly what I didn't do and when I landed in Morocco, I suffered the consequences.

I went to Morocco to visit a friend who lives there with his family and he invited me to spend one weekend at his home. I remember that, when I arrived, I was tired because of the flight and I didn't pay attention to the fact that they took their shoes off inside home, so I didn't remove them and I spent about an hour walking on my shoes in their house!

The problem is that it wasn't my only **blunder**. It was lunch time and I was starving, so they offered me a cup of tea and some food. Obviously, I didn't think about what hand I had to use to touch my cup or the fruit and bread, and I used both, right and left, unconsciously. Suddenly, I saw that their faces changed, my friend **turned pale** and he started waving so that I would stop. Later, he told me Moroccans use their left hand for dirty jobs, and that it's extremely rude to shake hands, eat, leave a tip or give a gift with your left hand.

TEXT D Violet

I spent several months in Ireland, working as an au pair and I could notice some different manners from my own country, Spain. Both are European countries and, apparently, they are supposed to have a lot in common, which in fact is true, but there are also some peculiarities.

I was **minding** two kids and I had to take them to school, which meant I had to drive. The roads are really narrow and sometimes there isn't enough space for two cars, so you have to drive at low speed. It is proper etiquette in Ireland to acknowledge other drivers, either by raising a hand or simply **twitching your finger** from the steering wheel, even if you don't know the driver, Irish people greet others on the road this way and it is the polite thing to do.

Irish people spend a lot of time at the pubs, they love socializing with others, and there is one pub etiquette you must know: when in the company of a group of friends at a pub, a system of "rounds" is used. Each one pays a round for the rest of the group and takes turns so if you don't make an offer to buy a round, you might be considered rude. So, don't be **miserly**!

8.4. Teachers feedback of the writings commented in activity 6

Maria's writing:

Last Saturday I had a match and it was so ~~entertaining~~ ^{entertaining} SP.
we gain 3-0.
I was playing at the match, one boy came to me so fast ~~at~~ and fell me down to the floor, when I looked down I saw my leg and it was dislocated. It was really sore, everyone ~~there~~ ^{was} around me looking at my leg, the coach ~~that~~ ^{he} was so stress, he ~~was~~ ^{is} studying SP medicine career so he fix it up ~~for me~~. It was still really sore but I ~~kept~~ ^{kept} playing because I didn't want to ~~lose~~ lose this important match. The next morning I had aching muscles but my leg was fixed, so I'm so happy.

- entertaining
- studying.

Jordi's writing:

LAST Day I have seen the ^{Tennis} tenis SP match at my school. There was a lot of students and ~~the~~ teachers, everyone was enjoying the match and ~~there was playing~~ ^{WO} my classmate ^(Alex) against the other class student. At the start of match Alex was playing very well. Every one was saying that Alex will be win the match. After some time he jumped to shoot ~~to~~ the ball and he got some ~~one~~ affected on his leg ^{punc} but he get easy that affected and start playing again SP after some time again happened CP that and this time ^{against} his ~~leg~~ leg was broken ^{happen} and every body was crying ~~and~~ ~~get~~ ^{get} 1