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A whole other story: the influence of task modality on the patterns of interaction of young EFL learners

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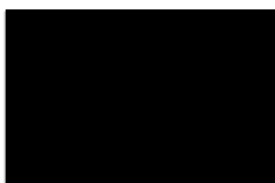


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Barcelona, a 19 de juny de 2023

Signatura:



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ABSTRACT

Research on Second Language Acquisition regarding task-based language learning and computer-mediated communication has been mainly conducted from a cognitive-interactionist perspective. Furthermore, there is a lack of studies that focus on the patterns of interaction young English language learners develop during pair work. This paper, which is part of a larger study on task-based interaction and production, assesses the influence of task modality on dyadic interaction through the lens of Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural perspective and an adaptation of Storch's (2002) model of dyadic interaction. The results show slight differences in the enactment of the tasks depending on the modality, but no change in the pattern of interaction itself.

Keywords: EFL, instant messaging, TBLT, patterns of interaction, young learners

RESUM

La recerca en matèria d'Adquisició de Segones Llengües pel que fa a l'enfocament per tasques en l'ensenyament de llengües i la comunicació virtual s'ha dut a terme principalment des d'una perspectiva cognitiva-interaccionista. A més, hi ha una manca d'estudis que se centrin en els patrons d'interacció que desenvolupen els infants que estudien anglès durant els treballs en parelles. Aquest treball, que forma part d'un estudi més ampli sobre l'enfocament per tasques en la interacció i la producció, analitza la influència de la modalitat de la tasca en la interacció diàdica a través de la perspectiva sociocultural de Vygotsky (1978), i d'una adaptació del model d'interacció diàdica d'Storch (2002). Els resultats mostren lleugeres diferències en la forma de dur a terme les tasques depenent de la modalitat, però cap canvi en el propi patró d'interacció.

Paraules clau: EFL, missatgeria instantània, TBLT, patrons d'interacció, aprenents joves

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1. INTRODUCTION

The cognitive-interactionist approach to Second Language Acquisition draws from several hypotheses, namely the input hypothesis (Krashen, 1985), the output hypothesis (Swain, 1995), the interaction hypothesis (Long, 1996), and the noticing hypothesis (Schmidt, 2001), to explain the importance of interaction in SLA. This is the main approach research has taken to task-based language teaching (TBLT) and computer-mediated communication (CMC) so far. However, there is another perspective that also emphasises the role of interaction in SLA: Vygotsky's (1978) Sociocultural theory (SCT).

As Katsuhiko (2011) points out, while the cognitive-interactionist perspective views language learning as 'mechanical' process of sorts through which the learner reaches the goal of SLA, Vygotsky's (1978) SCT understands language itself as a device for cognitive development. Therefore, cognitive-interactionist approaches place the focus on the individual and their internal processes, while SCT also includes dyads and larger groups in its scope and puts interpersonal interactions at the same level as internal processes, if not higher.

In the so-called age of information technology, interactions inside and outside language classrooms have changed and adapted to these advancements. As Loewen and Wolff (2016) argue, "there is a need for SLA theorists and researchers to continue to compare and contrast traditional means of communication with newer modalities." (p. 164). Indeed, several studies have been conducted in this direction that research field ssuch as negotiation (Yanguas, 2010) or feedback (Loewen & Wolff, 2016), but research that focuses on interaction itself is still scarce.

For a task to be considered as such, it must provide opportunities for true communication, that is, "true collaboration and learner interaction" (González-Lloret, 2020, p. 262); therefore, TBLT and CMC research would greatly benefit from delving further into the field of pair and group interaction as a medium of SLA and not only as its consequence. That is why the present paper will approach young English language learners' (YELL) interactions in face-to-face (FTF) and CMC contexts from a sociocultural perspective, drawing from Vygotsky's (1978) SCT and Storch's (2002) model of dyadic interaction.

2. VYGOTSKY'S SOCIOCULTURAL THEORY

Lev S. Vygotsky (1896-1934) was a Russian psychologist that studied cognitive development, particularly how culture and social interactions contribute to it (Gauvain, 2008), and following his findings he developed the SCT. In it, Vygotsky defended that intellectual development is the result of interacting with and being assisted by others, that is, cognitive development starts in the social environment and is later internalised. This process stands on three key concepts: mediation, regulation, and the zone of proximal development (ZPD).

In SCT, mediation refers to the learner's use of a variety of tools when interacting with the social world. These tools can be physical, such as flashcards or textbooks, or symbolic, such as language (Storch, 2017). Vygotsky emphasised language as a powerful cognitive tool that not only enables an individual to interact with the social environment, but also serves as a mean of self-regulation (Vygotsky, 1978).

Another key concept is precisely that of regulation, a type of mediation that involves breaking down a complex problem into more manageable parts and monitoring the actions taken to solve them. Regulation can be prompted either by another person (other regulation) or by the self (self-regulation). In children, self-regulation is often in the form of 'private speech', which is more like thinking aloud rather than speech with the intention of communication: the thinking process and self-directed questions are verbalised, without expecting or wanting the input of their peers. Usually, private speech becomes a more internal process as the child matures.

The zone of proximal development is less focused on the process of solving a problem, and more on the child's potential for learning when assisted by an expert or a more capable peer. Vygotsky defined the zone of proximal development as "the discrepancy between a child's actual mental age and the level he reaches in solving problems with assistance" (1978). The assistance, however, must be adequate: too much or too little assistance might hinder development. In an SLA context where peer assistance is encouraged, it is important to note that not all pair or group work is conducive to L2 learning (Storch, 2017). This is because the dynamics adopted by the participants also play a great role in their learning experience, regardless of their individual learning ability. Neomy Storch studied these patterns of interaction in the context of pair and group work and came up with a classification based on the power dynamics that originated in each pair's interactions. The following section will further explore Storch's findings on the patterns of interaction in pair work and how they have been key for this paper.

3. PATTERNS OF INTERACTION

As previously established, interaction is crucial for cognitive development and, consequently, language learning. Sato and Ballinger (2016) remarked that not only the amount but also the type of interaction will determine whether said interaction will turn into a successful learning opportunity or not. Drawing from Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory, in 2002 Neomy Storch carried out a longitudinal study on pair interaction among adult ESL learners, for which she designed a model to describe four different types of social dynamics that stemmed from peer interaction.

3.1. *Storch's classification*

In her seminal study on patterns of interaction in pair work, Storch (2002) approaches the analysis of the patterns of dyadic interaction from a qualitative perspective. She collected data from 10 pairs of adult students that were taking an English as a Second Language course at an Australian university. The participants were asked to complete isomorphic versions of three tasks—a short composition, an editing task, and a text reconstruction task—three times (two times in pairs and once individually), a week apart each. The tasks that were completed in pairs were audiotaped. Storch used the recordings of week two as data for her study. Moreover, she also used pre-test and post-test editing tasks, a survey, and her own observation notes as data sources. Then, Storch created a set of categories rooted in the salient features of the available data, rather than using pre-established categories, to identify patterns of dyadic interaction. The features that were observed were the following:

- a) How the learners approached the task
- b) What roles they assumed
- c) Level of involvement and contribution of each member to the task

On the basis of these features and the work of Damon and Phelps (1989), two axes were drawn: mutuality and equality (see Fig. 1). Mutuality refers to how much the participants engage with each other's contributions, whereas equality considers the "control or authority over the task" (Storch, 2002). Both axes ranged from low to high, and each quadrant corresponded to a category.

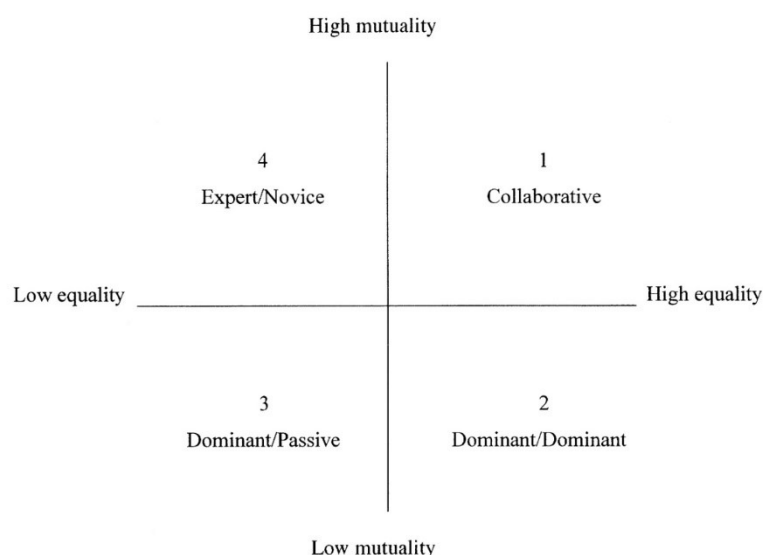


Figure 1 Storch's (2002) model of dyadic interaction

Therefore, Quadrant 1 (Collaborative) represents a style of interaction in which both participants engage with each other's contributions and share authority over the task, resulting in collaborative interaction.

Quadrant 2 (Dominant/Dominant) represents a style of interaction in which both members try to take control over the task and do not accept contributions other than their own. Storch notes that this dominant/dominant type of interaction often leads to arguments between the learners.

Quadrant 3 (Dominant/Passive) represents a style of interaction in which one member of the dyad takes control over the task and contributes to it, while the other member takes on a more passive role, simply accepting the dominant member's contributions with little to no engagement.

Last, Quadrant 4 (Expert/Novice) represents a style of interaction where a member of the dyad takes on the role of an expert—rather than dominant—and guides or assists the other member, who takes on the role of novice. The main difference between the expert/novice and dominant/passive patterns is that in the expert/novice interactive style there is high mutuality, they engage with each other's contributions and the expert encourages the novice to contribute to the task as much as they can, whereas in the dominant/passive there is no such engagement.

It is important to note that patterns of interaction are not only useful to categorise dyadic interactions, but also to predict whether an interaction will be fruitful in an SLA context or not. Studies have shown that collaborative and expert/novice patterns of interaction are more conducive to learning than dominant/passive or dominant/dominant ones (Storch, 2002; Ahmadian & Tajabadi, 2017).

3.2. *Patterns of interaction in young English language learners*

While most research on patterns of interaction is based on adult language learners (for example see these two fairly recent studies by Azkarai and Kopinska (2020), and Ahmadian and Tajabadi (2017)), there is very little research that focuses on the patterns of interaction of young language learners, more specifically young English language learners (YELLs). García Mayo and Imaz Agirre (2019), who pioneered this field of study, conducted a study on patterns of interaction and language-related episodes (LREs) in 32 pairs of EFL primary school children (aged 11-12). The participants completed an oral task and an oral-written task: the oral task asked the pairs to order detective-themed cartoon strips, while for the oral-written task they were given the profiles of four suspects (maintaining the topic of detectives) and they had to provide a written answer on who they believed to be the culprit. The study showed that YELLs' patterns of interaction of a collaborative nature were more frequent in same-proficiency pairs than in teacher or self-selected pairs when a written component was involved in the oral task. Ahmadian and Tajabadi (2017) found evidence of collaborative and expert/novice patterns being "associated with better learning outcomes" in the context of vocabulary acquisition. In this case, the participants were 18 pre-elementary school level students whose vocabulary acquisition was monitored by the researchers over the course of 6 sessions; they were put into 9 pairs, and in each session the participants were asked to complete a production task (completing drawings with missing parts) and a recognition task (finding the correct picture based on a prompt).

These studies, which are very relevant for this paper, suggest that patterns of interaction must be taken into account in TBLT contexts regardless of the age of the learners. For instance, Pladevall's (2021) longitudinal study, in which she noticed higher learning opportunities in collaborative and expert/novice dyads formed by students aged 9-10 at the first data collection, and 11-12 at the second one; Kos (2022), in a study with participants aged between 10 and 12, found that similar proficiency pairs developed pair dynamics that provided students with more learning opportunities, as opposed to different grade pairs, which had developed pair dynamics that did not prompt as many learning opportunities. This is evidence that interaction plays an equally essential role in YELLs' language learning as in that of adults; therefore, it is a decisive factor in how effective TBLT will be when addressed to young learners.

4. THE STUDY

4.1. *Introduction to the study and research questions*

The study carried out in this paper is part of larger study conducted by Dr. Elsa Tragant and Dr. Anna Vallbona titled “Task-based interaction and production: A comparison between Face-to-Face and text chat” with young learners of English in a primary school in Catalonia¹.

For this paper, a sample of the data collected in the larger study has been selected for analysis following a socio-cultural approach. The study focuses on the patterns of interaction exhibited by pairs of students while conducting a communicative task under two modalities. The following research questions have been posed:

- 1) Do patterns of interaction vary depending on the task modality: face-to-face and text chat?

Taking into account the studies that have been reviewed in the preceding section, I expect communication contexts to influence the pairs’ patterns of interaction. I believe the CMC context will lead to higher mutuality, which will benefit those participants that adopt more passive roles during FTF exchanges. Consequently, I expect a higher number of negotiation instances in CMC interactions.

4.2. *Methodology*

4.2.1. Context

The study took place towards the end of the third trimester of the academic year in a state-assisted, private co-educational school located in a middle-sized town in Catalonia. The school offers tuition from early years up to—and including—compulsory secondary education. Following the guidelines of the Catalan Educational Curriculum, the sample students involved in this study were being instructed in Catalan in all the curricular areas except for two subjects: Spanish and English. Spanish was taught for 3 hours per week regardless of grade, while the number of hours of English as a foreign language (EFL) varied in the primary stages: in first and second grades, the students were doing 2 hours of EFL per week, and from third to sixth grade they were doing 3 hours per week, as well as 1 hour of Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL), which was incorporated in a school project. All EFL classes were taught by primary teachers specialized in English.

¹ The larger study is part of a funded research project coordinated by Dr. Raquel Serrano and Dr. Elsa Tragant (ref ID2019-110536GB-I00)

4.2.2. Participants

For the main research project, 26 students of 6th grade of primary school were paired to form 13 pairs. These pairs were formed based on the scores the participants obtained in the Oxford Placement Test for Young Learners (OPTYL), so that dyads had approximately similar levels of proficiency. The test was administered by the researchers at the very beginning of the study.

Out of these 13 pairs, 3 pairs were chosen to be analysed for this paper. The criteria followed to select the pairs was the following:

- Most of the communication took place in English.
- Apparent variety in patterns of interaction. After a first reading of the transcriptions, 3 pairs were selected because they presented slight differences in their patterns of interaction.

Out of the three chosen pairs, two were composed of a female and a male participant (Laia and Bahir; Claudia and Santi) and one was composed of two female participants (Victoria and Sonia)². According to their answers to the questionnaire, the six participants have attended the school where the study was performed since 1st grade of kindergarten. Laia, Claudia, Santi, Victoria, and Sonia communicate exclusively in Catalan with their parents. Bahir communicates in Spanish and Darija³ with his father, and only in Darija with his mother.

Below are the specifics of the participants' exposure to the L2, additional information on their motivation for learning English, and the educational levels of their parents.

Pair 1: Laia & Bahir

Lidia has been taking extracurricular English classes since kindergarten (age 4) to practice and learn more. She does not speak English outside the academic environment. Both her parents went to college. She obtained an OPTYL score of 81⁴, equivalent to a B1 according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Language skills (2020).

Bahir does not take extracurricular English classes and neither does he speak English outside the academic environment; however, he watches YouTube videos of actors speaking in

² All names are pseudonyms.

³ Moroccan Arabic.

⁴ The scores for the OPTYL are automatically provided at the end of the test. While the maximum score is 80, some tests reported scores of 81. The issue was reported to the Oxford Placement Test Support Team.

English. Both his parents went to college. He obtained an OPTYL score of 79, equivalent to a B1.

Pair 2: Claudia & Santi

Claudia has been taking extracurricular English classes since kindergarten (age 5) to practice and learn more. She does not speak English outside the academic environment. Both her parents went to college. She obtained an OPTYL score of 61, equivalent to a B1.

Santi has been taking extracurricular English classes since kindergarten (age 4) to practice and learn more. He does not speak English outside the academic environment. Both his parents went to college. He obtained an OPTYL score of 60, equivalent to an A2.

Pair 3: Victoria & Sonia

Victoria has been taking extracurricular English classes since kindergarten (age 3) to practice and learn more. Outside the academic environment she speaks in English with a friend of hers. Her mother has not gone to college, and she answered she did not know whether her dad did. She obtained an OPTYL score of 72, equivalent to a B1.

Sonia has been taking extracurricular English classes since 1st grade of primary school to practice and learn more. She does not speak English outside the academic environment. Both her parents went to college. She obtained an OPTYL score of 81, equivalent to a B1.

4.2.3. Instruments

OPTYL, graded readers, worksheet with questions (last 2 will be described in the Procedure section).

A pre-task survey was handed out to all participants in order to get information on their general background (see Appendix A).

A worksheet (see Appendix C) was handed to all the pairs. In it were the questions the pairs of students had to answer in order to create a story, the communicative task students were asked to carry out in pairs.

4.2.3.1. The task

The task used in this study was based on four graded readers (see Appendix B) by Cadwallader (2009; 2010; 2011; 2014) that students had read in class before data collection took place. These graded readers were A1.1 level and contained 300 headwords. They included the same main characters (Uncle Jack and his three nieces) and depicted adventure stories involving

travelling to distant countries and environmental issues that had the same main narrative structure .

The task was carried out in pairs. Students were asked to create an imaginary story similar to the *Uncle Jack* adventure stories that had recently been read in class. The task consisted of answering a set of 8 questions that covered main elements of a story, such as where the problem was, what it was about, who the enemy was or how the problem was solved. At the time of completing the task as part of this study, they were already familiar with these questions since they had used them to work on their comprehension of the four previous graded readers.

The task can be described as ‘unfocused’ (as opposed to focused’) since it was designed to elicit language use in general, and as ‘opinion-making’ (as opposed to ‘information-providing’) since each pair of students was meant to come up with different answers to the eight questions and, therefore, a different story.

4.2.4. Procedure

The pairs were asked to perform the task twice in two different modalities (face to face and via instant messaging). Consequently, each pair of students created two stories. In order to perform the task, the participants were taken out of their class into smaller rooms that were usually used for meetings with parents. To account for order effects, a counterbalanced design was adopted: half the pairs performed the task face-to-face on day 1 and carried out the task via instant messaging the day after (day 2), while the other half of the students followed the reverse order.

In order to facilitate the creation of the stories, students were given three photos depicting different settings (i.e., a desert, an island, a forest, a big city, etc.) where the story could take place. Different sets of photos were used in days 1 and 2. When the task was performed face-to-face, the students were video recorded. When the task was performed via instant messaging, the students were placed in two different rooms and were told to communicate with each other via WhatsApp using a tablet. In this case, the participants were not video recorded, but the transcriptions and screenshots of the chat were saved. In both cases the researcher was outside the rooms, waiting for the students to finish. The participants were not given a time limit.

After the students had finished the task, they were asked to retell the story they had just created individually in front of a video camera, one of the researchers, and one of the participants in the study (different from the one they had created the story with).

The present study focuses on the stage involving the creation of the two stories and does not examine the retelling of the stories.

4.2.5. Data Analysis

There were three stages of data analysis. In the first stage, Storch's (2002) classification of the patterns of interaction was adapted to the decision-making task of the study. In the second stage, the students' FTF and CMC interactions were analysed and classified depending on the pattern of interaction they showed. In the third stage, these same interactions were analysed for differences in amount of negotiation of ideas.

Stage 1: adapting Storch's classification

Due to the nature of her study, Storch (2002) designed a classification of patterns of interaction suitable for interactions that take place in the context of adult learners carrying out a written exercise—more specifically a collaborative writing task. However, while the task designed for this study had a writing component, it was not a conventional writing task. This, together with the age of the participants' affecting what they said and how they said it, called for a reassessment of the classification.

The axis of equality in this case could not depend on the same factors as Storch's (2002). Because the task required the pairs to answer a set of questions, it was hard to determine who had control over the task. The solution was to substitute 'equality' with 'authorship': instead of assessing each participant's control over the task, authorship would be assigned depending on which participant's answer figured as final on the worksheet. Therefore, authorship was coded by question, using categories from 0 to 3:

0: The student does not contribute (no authorship)

1: The student provides an idea that is accepted by their partner without any negotiation of ideas

2: The student's idea prevails as final at the expense of their partner's own answer, which is either rejected or ignored

3: Both students collaborate to jointly come up with an idea

By classifying answers based on the level of engagement of the participants with their peer's input, the axis of mutuality could be kept as Storch (2002) had set it: mutuality would still be assessed by the participants' level of engagement with each other's contributions. For example,

when Pair 1 answers question 2 (“And how (a call, a letter...)?”), Laia provides the answer “a letter” and Bahir accepts it; there is no further discussion nor does Bahir provide an alternative answer. As a result, because the level of mutuality is low and Bahir does not contribute to the answer, his authorship falls under the ‘0’ category and Laia’s under the ‘1’ category.

However, using only these two variables the classification would be incomplete, as it does not take into account the level of engagement of participants whose answers had been discarded nor does it allow for a clear distinction between patterns of interaction; for example, expert/novice patterns where the expert prompts the novice to participate more could result in the majority of answers being accepted by the expert without further contribution, which using the current classification would assign a dominant role to the novice. To avoid misclassification, both FTF transcriptions and text chats were also analysed for key events during pair interaction such as:

- a) Participation encouragement
- b) Ignored contributions
- c) Criticism
- d) Assistance

By assessing the process beyond the immediate context of the final answers, the classification was further nuanced and, consequently, more clearly defined (see Figure 2).

Collaborative	Expert/Novice	Dominant/Dominant	Dominant/Passive
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High mutuality • Shared knowledge predominates • Instances of assistance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High mutuality • Authorship varies • Instances of participation encouragement and assistance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low mutuality • Individual authorship predominates • Instances of criticism 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low mutuality • Individual authorship predominates • Instances of ignored contributions and criticism

Figure 2 Storch's (2002) dyad interaction classification adapted

Stage 2: analysis of the pairs' patterns of interaction in face-to-face and text chat contexts

Once a new approach to Storch's (2002) classification had been decided, both the transcriptions of the pairs' face-to-face interactions and the WhatsApp interactions were analysed and classified as collaborative, expert/novice, dominant/dominant, or dominant/passive. Several rereads were needed of the face-to-face interaction transcripts, due to the difficulty in applying

the ‘authorship’ index. Moreover, it was often necessary to verify a participant’s intentions behind certain productions in the transcription by referring to the video recordings.

Stage 3: comparing patterns of interaction in face-to-face and text chat contexts

After locating occasions where the participants engaged in negotiation of meaning both in the face-to-face and in the text chat interactions, same-pair interactions were compared to determine whether there had been any changes in amount of negotiation of ideas between contexts.

5. RESULTS

The results of the analysis will be presented per pairs, comparing the patterns of interaction of the same pair in different modalities. A table has been made for each interaction of each pair, using the authorship categories defined in the methodology section to code the answers. Each answer is indicated in the table as ‘A’ followed by the number of the question they answered. For example, answer to question number 1 is indicated in the table as ‘A1’.

5.1.1. Pair 1: Laia and Bahir

Pair 1 carried out the task through text chat the first time and FTF the second time. As shown in Table 1, authorship of the answers in the CMC context is mainly individual with one member of the dyad accepting the other’s contribution without further discussion (category 1). There are only two instances of collaborative answers (category 3) and one of a disputed answer (category 2).

	A1	A2	A3	A4	A5	A6	A7	A8
Laia	0	1	0	1	0	3	0	3
Bahir	1	0	1	0	1		2	

Table 1 Pair 1 Text chat answer authorship

For the most part, Laia and Bahir approach the task through text chat by taking turns providing an answer. Answers for questions 6 (“Who was the enemy?”) and 8 (“How did Uncle Jack and the children solve the problem?”) are built collaboratively, merging ideas, and coming to an agreement. In excerpt 1, the messages the two students wrote regarding question 8 are reproduced⁵.

⁵ Message timestamps have been included in the CMC excerpts.

Excerpt 1 (Answer 8)

99 [15:34:20] L: I say they solved the problem giving Uncle Peter to the police or do you have a better idea?

100 [15:34:27] B: they called the police

101 [15:34:59] L: Ok that sounds good

102 [15:35:13] B: and they arrested PETER

103 [15:35:20] L: OK

104 [15: 36:07] L: They arrested PETER

In the process of answering question 7 (“Who helped Uncle Jack?”), however, Laia’s idea is ignored. Bahir insists on a different character helping Uncle Jack, which prompts a playful argument between them that ends just as quickly as it begins. In the end, Laia accepts Bahir’s answer without insisting on her own contribution.

Excerpt 2 (Answer 7)

81 [15:28:31] L: I say the stranger

82 [15:28:36] B: King kambogoo

83 [15:28:55] L: NOW KING KAMBOGOO?

84 [15:29:13] B: 🤪 YESSSSSS

85 [15:29:21] L: Hey calm down

86 [15:29:40] L: don’t say bad words

87 [15:29:53] B: shhhhhh 🐱

88 [15:30:00] L: ?

89 [15:30:48] L: but ok, lets do KING KAMBOGOO 🤪 🤪

Throughout their text exchange, Laia continuously encourages Bahir’s participation explicitly (see Excerpt 3) and implicitly (see Excerpt 4). She solves his vocabulary doubts and even anticipates them by providing translation before Bahir asks (see Excerpt 5).

Excerpt 3

20 [15:11:48] L: who called uncle Jack

21 [15:12:03] L: what is your idea

Excerpt 4

8 [15:08:49] L: we should choose an animal

9 [15:09:04] L: or something else

Excerpt 5

53 [15:21:02] L: or you did tht on pourpase

54 [15:21:12] L: (expresament)

Despite 50% of the overall authorship belonging to Bahir (Figure 3), Laia adopts the role of expert and guides him through the task. Therefore, this interaction has been classified as expert/novice, as it displays high mutuality, participation encouragement and assistance.

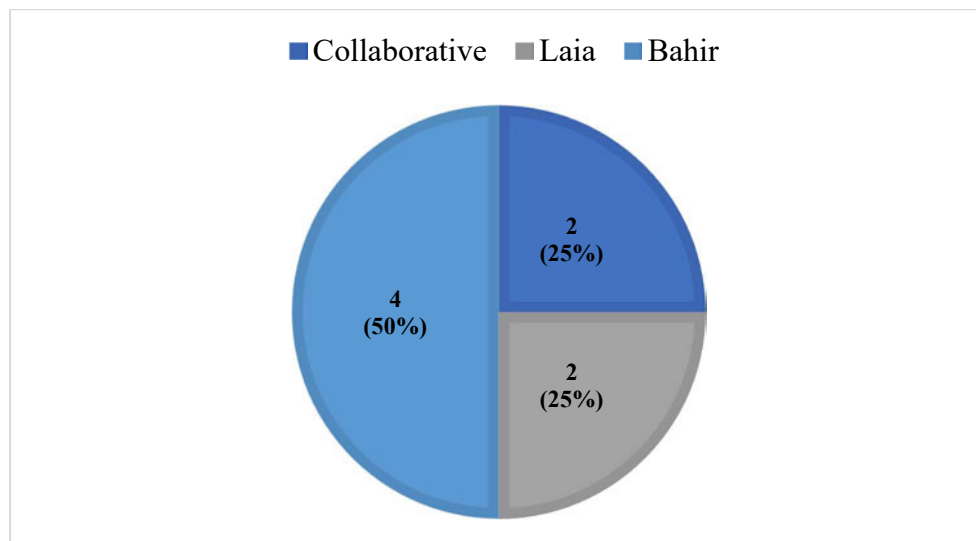


Figure 3 Pair 1 Text chat overall authorship

Regarding their FTF interaction, there is a shift towards a more collaborative pattern of interaction, as evidenced by Table 2 and Figure 4. Even if their answers remain mainly individual, their collaborative answers increase by 1. There is one instance of disagreement.

	A1	A2	A3	A4	A5	A6	A7	A8
Laia	3	1	3	0	1	1	0	3
Bahir		0		2	0	0	1	

Table 2 Face-to-face interaction results

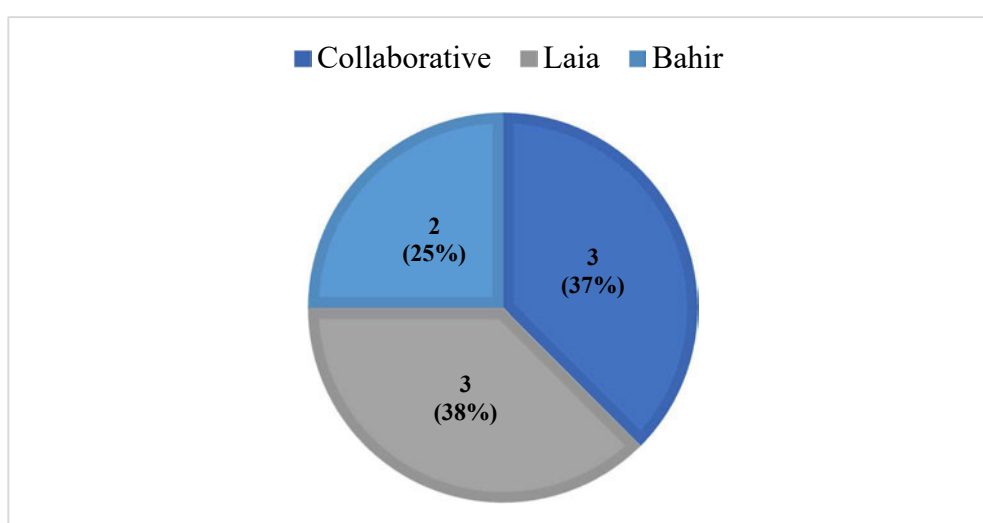


Figure 4 Pair 1 Face-to-face overall authorship

When discussing answer 3 (“Where was the problem?”) there is an overlapping in which Bahir suggests ‘In Africa’ and Laia ‘In a beach of Morocco’. However, the answer to this question has been decided at the beginning of the task, when Laia asks Bahir what he wants the setting of the story to be, and why (Excerpt 6). The answer ‘the beach’ is accepted by Laia (Excerpt 7). Therefore, the final answer is in fact the result of merging both contributions.

Excerpt 6

- 7 B: Because euh we... we read some stories of Africa and some stories of the Antarctic, we can do another thing, something new.
- 8 L: [The beach?
- 9 B: Like at the beach.] Yes.

Excerpt 7 (Answer 3)

- 40 B: Wait.] “Where was the problem?” In Morocco (/mə'ɾɒk/).
- 41 L: [In Africa.
- 42 B: In a beach] of Morocco (/mə'ɾɒk/). So let's write it. Okay, what's the name. Euh, we will see it later.

Answer 4 (“What was the problem?”) results from a disagreement. Two ideas are put forward to answer the question. Bahir wanted “bad men creating a bad shark”, but Laia disagrees (Excerpt 8); while she is trying to explain her idea, Bahir keeps insisting on his. In the end,

Laia concedes and accepts Bahir's suggestion (Excerpt 9). The answer is written down and not discussed further.

Excerpt 8 (Answer 4)

53 B: That that there are some bad men creating a robot-shark.

54 L: A what?

55 B: *Un tauró-robot*.

56 L: Ah, nah. Maybe that the- there are some bad men who are like...grabbing the euh

Excerpt 9

62 L: Alright so, they are creating a big shark that they...and they want eat...and they wanted to eat the people that swim on the beach.

While Bahir's overall authorship decreases if we compare Figures 3 and 4, it is noticeable in the FTF transcript that he shows higher initiative than through text chat, which leads to slightly more collaboration and slightly higher engagement with Laia and her contributions. As for Laia, in the FTF modality she is open to Bahir's suggestions but does not hesitate to 'guide' him towards an answer she deems good enough, as seen in Excerpt 10.

Excerpt 10

21 B: *Isabel* of...of United Kingdom?

22 L: But, no, something that has more beaches I think because in United Kingdom they don't really talk about the beaches. Like...from Hawaii?

If we compare both modalities, we can see that her authorship increases in the FTF context because she deviates a little from the role of expert—answering some questions immediately after reading them aloud—but does not abandon it completely: she still encourages Bahir and assists him when needed. As a result, the pattern of interaction has been classified as leaning more into collaborative, but still expert/novice.

5.1.2. Pair 2: Claudia and Santi

Pair 2 carried out the task first in a FTF context and then in a CMC context. Their FTF interaction consists of as many collaborative answers as disputed ones, and two instances of answers agreed without any negotiation of ideas (see Table 3).

	A1	A2	A3	A4	A5	A6	A7	A8
Claudia	1	0	2	3	2	3	3	2
Santi	0	1	0		0			0

Table 3 Pair 2 Face-to-face interaction results

Their interaction is characterised by the lack of proper engagement on Claudia's part. For answers 3 ("Where was the problem?") and 5 ("Who did Uncle Jack travel with?"), Claudia downright ignores Santi's contributions. In Excerpts 11 and 12 are reproduced the transcriptions of these instances, which refer to answer 3 and answer 8 ("How did Uncle Jack and the children solve the problem?") respectively.

Excerpt 11 (Answer 3)

18 S: ((whispering)) In the beach. In the beach.

19 C: In an island (/ 'aisland/).

Excerpt 12 (Answer 8)

46 S: *Sí, més o menys. Bé, però per això, la serp tampoc entén, saps? Vull dir, és com, la serp deixar-la anar cap a cap al seu camí, saps?*

47 C: *Separar- No, fer...perquè és com que e- els the bad boys we caught (/ 'kæʃɪd/) the snakes and les van posar amb caixes i les van enviar amb l'avió. Parar l'avió, si no, seria, saps? O jo què sé, parar el cotxe*

Santi disagrees with her on answer 8 and tries to insist on changing it but is ignored once again. He reluctantly accepts her contribution in the end and is even criticised by Claudia for his 'lack' of participation (Excerpt 13).

Excerpt 13 (Answer 8)

53 C: And then pacted (/ 'pæktɪd/) with with the bad boys and the- *per què no facin més allò, saps? And they pacted (/ 'pæktɪd/) with the bad boys for... for... they... they don't do this, no...?*

54 S: *Sí, sí.*

55 C: *Que com tu no ho dius...*

56 S: *Vale.*

Claudia shows this attitude throughout their interaction; even when the final answer incorporates Santi's idea, it is either because Claudia reformulates it or includes it as part of her own contribution, but there is no acknowledgement that it is Santi's original contribution. For instance, this is what happens with answer 4 ("What was the problem?"):

Excerpt 14 (Answer 4)

- 21 C: “What was the-” The snakes are in extinction (/’ɛkstɪŋksɪən/). ((J writes))
 And...((inaudible whispering)) *què més podem de posar?*
- 22 S: Mn...and the snakes
- 23 C: Are disappear (/dɪsə’pɛr/)-
- 24 S: Catch the... the... the brother. Ah, no.
- 25 C: No.
- 26 S: The snakes.
- 27 C: No, one...The bad boys, the bad boy are catching the snakes.
- 28 S: Vale.

In the process of coming up with this answer, Claudia suggests the snakes are in extinction. Santi tries to add on to her idea and have the snakes catch the brother (see lines 22 and 24), but Claudia seems to reject his contribution explicitly; however, when she reformulates her answer, she incorporates part of Santi’s suggestion (catching). The result is the final answer.

Figure 5 shows Claudia having half the overall authority over the answers, and Santi only a 13%. Due to the low mutuality displayed through the interaction, and Claudia’s criticism and disregard of Santi’s attempts at contributing to the task, their FTF interaction was classified as dominant/passive. While Santi does attempt to participate, Claudia forces him into the passive role and does not let him properly engage with her or the task.

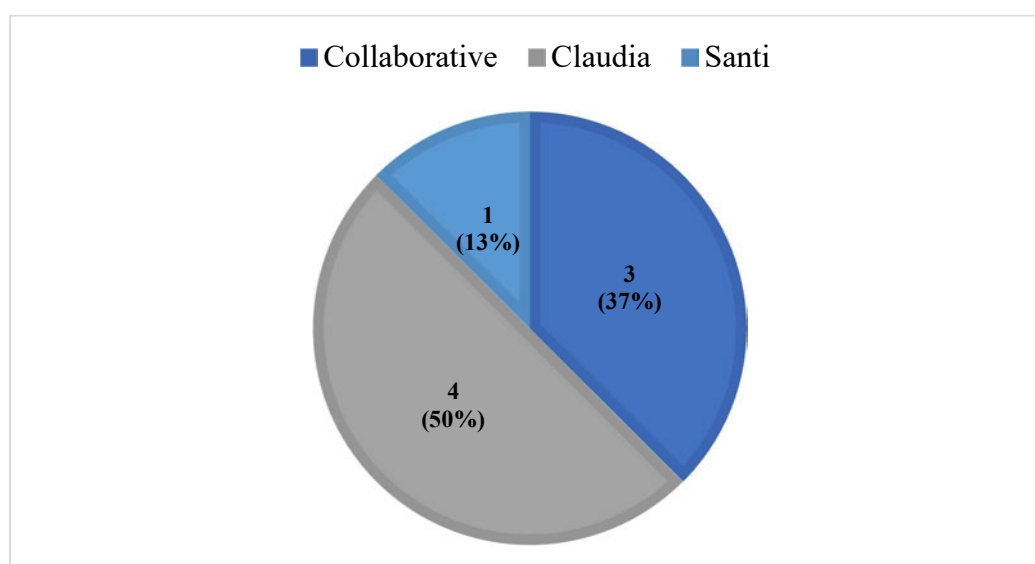


Figure 5 Pair 2 Face-to-face overall authorship

Claudia and Santi’s text chat interaction shows a clear difference in authorship if we compare Tables 3 and 4. Santi opts for typing the questions and accepting Claudia’s answer without discussion or engagement.

	A1	A2	A3	A4	A5	A6	A7	A8
Claudia	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Santi	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Table 4 Pair 2 Text chat interaction results

At the beginning of the interaction, Claudia types the question and Santi replies repeating it (Excerpt 15). From then on, the same pattern repeats throughout their interaction: Santi types the question, Claudia answers, Santi accepts with “ok”.

Excerpt 15 (Answer 1)

- 4 [10:36:29] C: who called ncle jak
5 [10:36:32] C: ?
6 [10:36:32] S: who called uncle jack about a problem

The extent of Santi’s disengagement is evidenced in the process of coming up with answer 5 (“Who did Uncle Jack travel with?”), when he does not wait for Claudia to complete her contribution before accepting and moving on to the next question (see lines 23 and 25):

Excerpt 16 (Answer 5)

- 19 [10:39:04] S: who did uncle jack travel with
20 [10:40:02] S: ?
21 [10:40:03] S: ?
22 [10:40:12] C: Go in the desert and
23 [10:40:29] S: ok
24 [10:40:38] C: And lookid the cat
25 [10:40:39] S: who was the enemy????

Far from moving away from the dominant/passive pattern of interaction, the comparison of both modalities shows that Santi seems to take control of his ‘passive’ role and leave all decision-making to Claudia, who does not argue or try to change the situation. With no mutuality whatsoever, complete individual authorship, and no other instances of key events during pair interaction to provide nuance besides Santi actively taking on the passive role, the interaction was classified as purely dominant/passive.

5.1.3. Pair 3: Victoria and Sonia

Pair 3 carried out the task through text chat the first time and face-to-face the second time. In the CMC context they take turns typing the questions and answering them, which accounts for the mainly individual authorship over the answers shown in Table 5. The only exception being answer 4 (“What was the problem?”), which is built collaboratively.

	A1	A2	A3	A4	A5	A6	A7	A8
Victoria	1	0	0	3	0	0	1	1
Sonia	0	1	1		1	1	0	0

Table 5 Pair 3 Text chat interaction results

Nevertheless, answers that belong to only one participant are all agreed-on, there are no instances of disputed answers. Moreover, overall authorship is almost equal, with Sonia having authorship over only one more answer than Victoria (Figure 6).

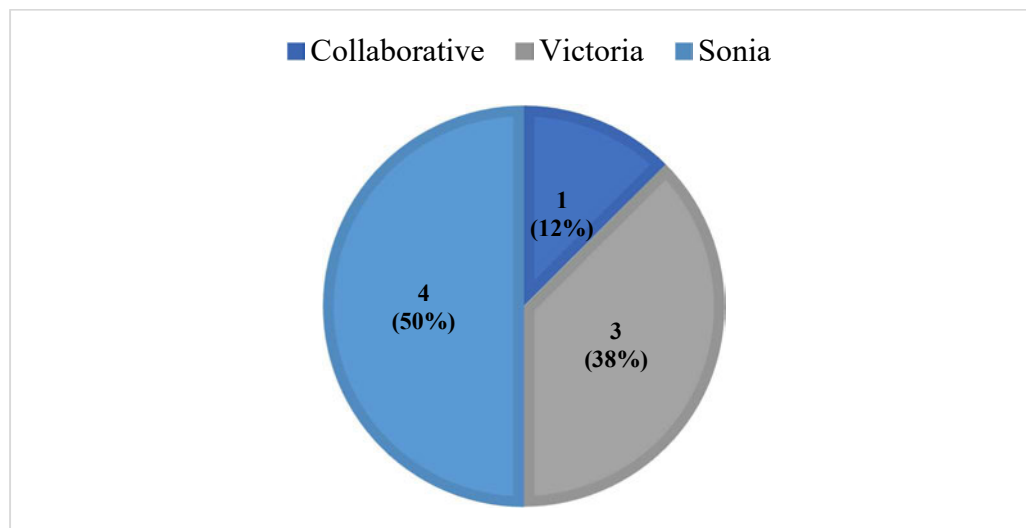


Figure 6 Pair 3 Text chat overall authorship

There are also instances throughout their interaction where they express approval of the other’s contribution beyond simply accepting it as seen in Excerpts 17 and 18.

Excerpt 17

- 11 [15:14:50] V: we can invent a problrm whic some animal
- 12 [15:14:56] V: like elephants
- 13 [15:15:12] S: i like the idea

Excerpt 18

15 [15:15:48] S: uncle jack and the elephants

16 [15:16:08] V: Yes i like

There is yet another evidence of collaboration and engagement, where Victoria seems to get stuck with answer 4 (“What was the problem?”) and Sonia proposes a different solution without explicitly disagreeing with her or disregarding Victoria’s original idea, as seen in Excerpt 19. This leads to building the answer together by adding onto the other’s contributions in a ‘yes, and...’⁶ manner:

Excerpt 19 (Answer 4)

[15:20:33] V: Meibi 1 elephant gous to the school and i dond knou

[15:21:03] S: maby they don’t have water in africa and they are daying

[15:21:12] V: yes

[15:22:00] S: an then the teacher call uncle jack and they jo to help

[15:22:24] V: Yes, he travelled whith the kids and whith grumpy

[15:22:34] S: yes

During this interaction, Victoria and Sonia showed high mutuality. Even if answer authorship is mainly individual, they support and assist each other, and the number of answers per participant is balanced. Therefore, the text chat interaction has been classified as collaborative.

Victoria and Sonia’s FTF interaction results show a significant increase in collaborative answers (see Table 6) in comparison to their CMC interaction. Out of 8 answers, 7 are collaborative and only 1 is individual. The individual answer will be specifically discussed later on, as it is a special case.

	A1	A2	A3	A4	A5	A6	A7	A8
Victoria	3	3	3	3	3	0	3	3
Sonia						1		

Table 6 Pair 3 Face-to-face interaction results

⁶ ‘Yes, and...’ is a term used in improvisation theatre. It is a rule by which players must accept the idea their performance partner(s) offer and build on it.

In comparison to their interaction in the CMC modality, Victoria and Sonia exhibit a different type of collaboration that takes advantage of the FTF nature of the interaction: while in the CMC context their collaboration was based on taking turns typing and answering the questions, in the FTF context their answers are built in a ‘yes, and...’ manner or by providing the same idea at the same time. Sometimes both methods occur in answering the same question. For example, in answering question 1 (“Who called Uncle Jack about the problem?”) Victoria and Sonia build upon each other’s contributions, which in the end leads to providing the same answer at the same time, as seen in Excerpt 20.

Excerpt 20 (Answer 1)

- 26 V: Yes,] I understand you. euh and the capitan (/ˈkapitan/) of the [boat
27 S: Boat] it’s calling...
28 V: call call Uncle Jack and say I go I go to choqué (/tʃo ˈke/) ((laughing))
29 S: I’m very very close to the...
30 V: To the
31 S: Statue of Liberty
32 V: And I can’t (/kænt/)...
33 S: And I can’t [stop
34 V: stop] the [the boat
35 S: boat.]

While most of the answers are built this way and the collaborative feature is reflected in the final answers on the worksheet, the same cannot be said of answer 6 (“Who was the enemy?”). The answer on the worksheet is only a character’s name: “Gorge.” Victoria and Sonia come up with a longer answer that explains who “Gorge” is in a similar way as the other answers, accepting their peer’s contribution and continuing to formulate an answer from there. When Sonia suggests they give the character a name and proposes “Gorge,” Victoria agrees. Therefore, even if the longer answer was built collaboratively, authorship has been assigned to Sonia because only her contribution is written down as the final answer with no reference to the previous ideas they had provided during the process of building the answer. Excerpt 22 illustrates the collaborative nature of the process leading to—but not included in—the answer:

Excerpt 22

- 82 V: In the motor and the boat can’t stop.
83 S: Can’t stop. So who is the enemy xx?

- 84 V: The people who helps the capitan (/ 'kapitan/).
- 85 S: Put a name, I don't know. Maybe...
- 86 V: Mn...
- 87 S: George? ((laughing))
- 88 V: *Vale*.

Mutuality during their interaction was very high at all times, authorship was predominantly shared (see Figure 7), and this key event further supported the classification of Pair 3's FTF interaction as purely collaborative.

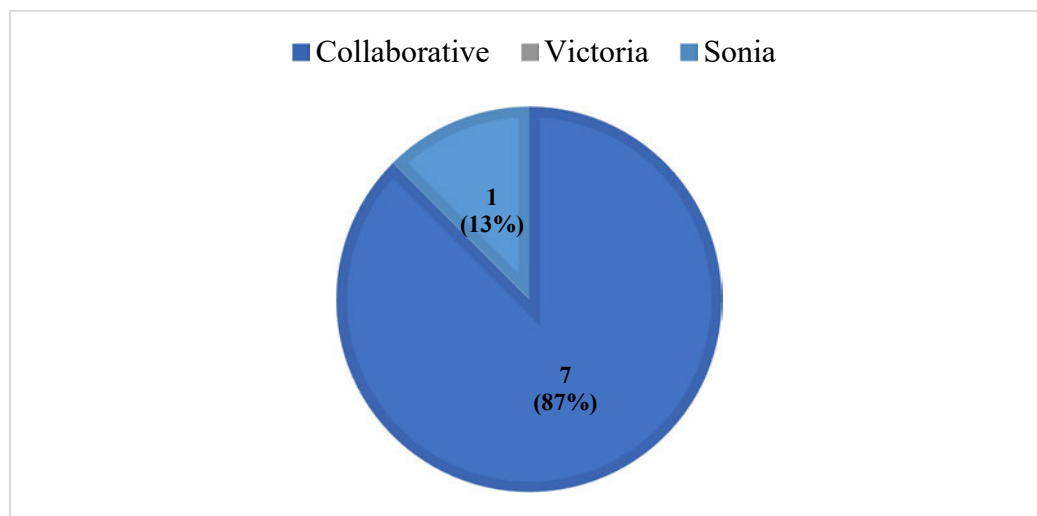


Figure 7 Pair 3 Face-to-face overall authorship

The results of answer authorship in the CMC context are very different from those in the FTF context but are compensated by the support and assistance Victoria and Sonia provide to each other. This means that the difference is not in the pattern of interaction but in how the task is enacted: they adapt how they collaborate and share the workload within the limits of each modality.

6. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The results of the study show that the dyads' patterns of interaction do not radically change depending on task modality; however, they do show signs of being influenced by it. Pair 1's expert/novice pattern of interaction was positively affected by the change of modality and displayed slightly more collaborative features in the FTF context. Pair 2's dominant/passive dynamic was further emphasised in their text chat interaction, where the characteristic lack of engagement of the passive role was performed to the full by Santi. The members of Pair 3

maintained a collaborative pattern of interaction in both modalities by adapting the manner in which they collaborated to the possibilities and peculiarities of each context.

Overall, the CMC context seems to emphasise the distinctive features of each interactional style analysed: the roles are more clear-cut as the participants cannot act in response of their peers' non-verbal cues, language production is kept to a minimum, and there is no immediate response to potentially face-threatening acts. This is precisely why the FTF context is conducive to higher instances of collaboration in all three interactions, because the participants' sense of responsibility towards their partners is higher, and they can rely on intonation and body language to navigate the interaction.

The study is not without its limitations; only three pairs have been analysed, and there is no information on the interpersonal relationship between the members of the dyads, which might also influence the dynamics they developed. Moreover, the OPTYL only recognised pre-A1 to B1 levels of proficiency, which means that some participants could already have an English language proficiency level beyond B1 at the time of the study. It is important to note that, while not a limitation per se, adapting Storch's (2002) model of dyadic interaction to be applied to interactions originated in the context of an *oral task* with a written component proved to be an unexpected challenge. It would be interesting to conduct further research that takes into consideration this study's limitations and overcomes them.

Nevertheless, this study provides additional insight into the importance of patterns of interaction, which might prove useful to EFL teachers that implement TBLT, especially if there is the intention of assigning tasks that require the students to interact in CMC contexts. If teachers were to be trained in the usage of different CMC resources, and made aware of the value of collaboration, they could pair students in a way that boosts their language learning and cognitive development (Vygotsky, 1978).

In conclusion, by adapting and applying Storch's (2002) model of dyadic interaction to the context of a study involving an oral task with a writing component, this paper has joined in on the ongoing discussion on the importance of interaction in SLA. The results point at slight differences in task enactment, but no significant changes have been observed in the patterns of interaction themselves. Role characteristics of pair interaction dynamics seem to be accentuated in CMC contexts, which would help teachers determine which pairs of students work better together, while the increase of language production in FTF contexts could result in higher language learning opportunities. Properly combining both modalities could enhance the

effects of TBLT, encouraging traditional language teaching to open its classrooms to more interactive approaches, as well as paving the way for TBLT to be performed online with classmates outside class time or even with students from other schools.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: General background questionnaire

Nom i cognoms

Grup

1. Des de quin curs estudies a FEDAC Vic?

.....

2. Si has anat a una altra escola de Primària, digues a quina:

.....

3. Quina llengua o llengües parles normalment amb el teu pare?

.....

4. Quina llengua o llengües parles normalment amb la teva mare?

.....

5. Vas a classes d'anglès fora de l'escola?..... Des de quan?

.....

Si vas a classes d'anglès, perquè et sembla que hi vas?

- a) per saber-ne més
- b) perquè l'anglès et costa
- c) a

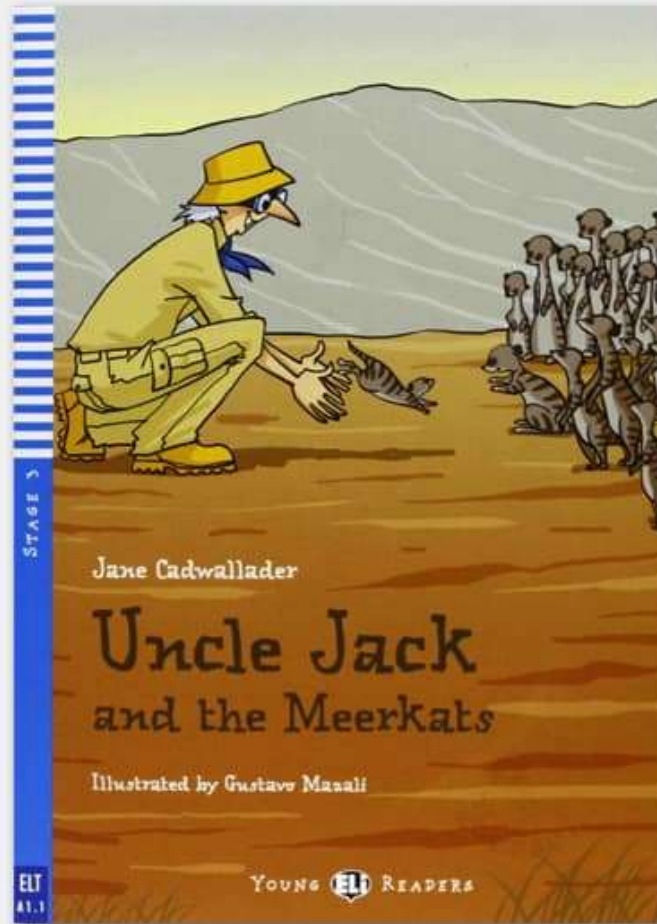
6. Parles en **anglès** sovint amb algú **fora de l'escola**?..... Amb qui?.....

7. El teu **pare** va estudiar a la **universitat**? Sí No No ho sé

8. La teva **mare** va estudiar a la **universitat**? Sí No No ho sé

Moltes gràcies per respondre 😊!!

APPENDIX B: Cover of one of the graded readers





Who called Uncle Jack about a problem?

Hi's brother

And how (a call, a letter...)?

a call

Where was the problem?

in a island

What was the problem?

Snakes are extinction with
the bad boy caught snakes

Who did Uncle Jack travel with?

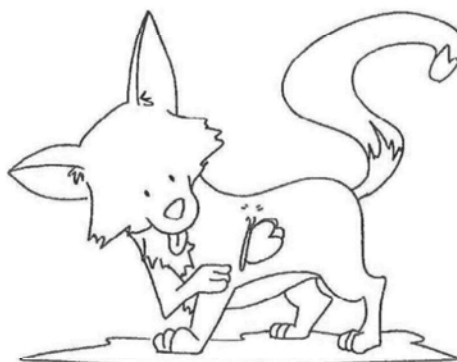
Stop the bad boy
to don't catch the
snakes

Who was the enemy?

the bad boy

Who helped Uncle Jack?

May, Dr. Sy, Giovanni, Simon
and his brother



How did Uncle Jack and the children solve the problem?

Stop the coraid catch snakes and put
in they house and parted with the bad boy



UNCLE JACK

and l'estatua de la lliuertat



Who called Uncle Jack about a problem?

The capitan of the boat

And how (a call, a letter...)?

A call

Where was the problem?

I new York

What was the problem?

The problem is that the boat is very close to the estatua de la lliuertat and it can't stop

Who did Uncle Jack travel with?

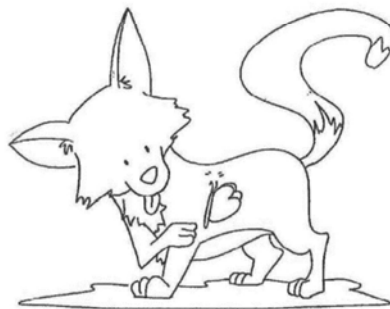
With the Kids and Grumpy

Who was the enemy?

Gorge

Who helped Uncle Jack?

The sister of the capitan and the capitan



How did Uncle Jack and the children solve the problem?

Uncle Jack saw the problem in the mechanism and the sister of the capitan now how to solve the problem and solved the problem. Then the boat stopped

UNCLE JACK WITH THE KING OF MOROCCO



Who called Uncle Jack about a problem?

The King of Morocco

And how (a call, a letter...)?

a letter

Where was the problem?

in a beach of Morocco

What was the problem?

That some bad men were creating a big and bad shark so it would eat the people that was swimming in the beach

Who did Uncle Jack travel with?

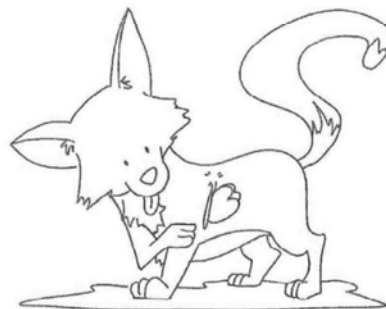
With Jim, Max, Daisy and Grumpy

Who was the enemy?

Some bad men and the queen of Morocco

Who helped Uncle Jack?

The King of Morocco and some soldiers from another country



How did Uncle Jack and the children solve the problem?

The soldiers went to the palace where the queen lived and arrested her. Some soldiers captured the shark and put it into captivity. Uncle Jack, the children and Grumpy found the bad men and took them to prison.