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Comparing student-selected and teacher-assigned pairs on collaborative writing [Recurso electrónico] / Seyedeh Hamideh Mozaffari

Este artículo se encuentra disponible en su edición electrónica. Su acceso electrónico es a través del enlace de 'Acceso al documento'.

References: p. 512-514

Despite the preponderance of theoretical and empirical evidence that suggests the use of pair/group work to promote second language learning, it is still unclear who can best form high performance groups. Should students be allowed to choose their working partners, or should teachers themselves assign students to pairs? This study set out to compare the nature of student-selected and teacher-assigned pairs while they were engaged in collaborative writing. All learner talk was audio recorded, transcribed and analysed for the quantity, type and resolution of language related episodes (LREs) as well as the patterns of dyadic interaction. Furthermore, the study examined the texts produced using both quantitative and qualitative measures. Our findings suggest that the teacher-assigned pairs generated significantly more LREs than the student-selected pairs, while there was no significant difference in the patterns of interaction between the two pairing methods. Meanwhile, the qualitative analysis of learner talk revealed a considerable amount of off-task behavior among the members of student-selected pairs. Moreover, as far as the outcome of pair work (collaborative writing) was concerned, the teacher-assigned pairs noticeably outperformed the student-selected pairs on measures of fluency and accuracy. Also, they produced significantly better texts in terms of organization, grammar and vocabulary.

Language teaching research. – 2017 (July), v. 21, n. 4, p. 496-516

1. Language related episodes (LREs) 2. Outcome of pair work 3. Patterns of dyadic interaction 4. Student-selected pairing method 5. Teacher-assigned pairing method

2

Contextualization and authenticity in TBLT [Recurso electrónico]: voices from Chinese classrooms / Qi Chen, Clare Wright

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References: p. 533-535

In view of ongoing debates about the future of task-based language teaching (TBLT) in contexts of English as a foreign language (EFL), we present a detailed case study of teacher beliefs and practices regarding TBLT conducted in a secondary school in mainland China with a long history of communicative and task-based teaching approaches. We used a mixed-methods approach to gather a broad range of triangulated data, combining individual interviews, material analysis and observations coded using a novel task-focused version of the scheme 'Communicative Orientation of Language Teaching' (COLT). Quantitative and qualitative findings revealed positive beliefs about TBLT principles in general, reflecting strong institutional support for communicative teaching. However, there was marked variability between beliefs and practices in using tasks, especially with beginner-level learners. Most teachers demonstrated an intrinsic lack of confidence in using tasks as more than a communicative 'add-on' to standard form-focused teaching. We argue that this demonstrates a need for building teacher autonomy, in implementing TBLT, even in supportive settings, to support successful authentic contextualizing TBLT principles in different EFL contexts.

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1. Case study 2. China 3. EFL 4. Task-based language teaching 5. Teacher beliefs and practices

3

The effects of meaning-focused pre-tasks on beginning-level L2 writing in German [Recurso electrónico] : an exploratory study / Zsuzsanna Abrams, David R. Byrd

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References: p. 449-452

Most studies on task-based language learning focus on the oral performance of advanced level learners of English as a second language (ESL), while little research examines the written performance of beginning language learners in non-ESL contexts. This exploratory study aims to address this gap, by examining the effect of pre-writing tasks on second language (L2) writing among 24 first-semester learners of German. One group

completed collaborative, meaning-focused pre-writing tasks, while the comparison group completed grammar-focused activities, also in pairs. In line with task-based language research, learners' performance was analysed in terms of complexity, accuracy, fluency, and lexical richness, as well as a global measure of quality, to reflect the multi-componential nature of L2 performance. The results suggest that collaborative, meaning-focused pre-writing tasks improved grammatical accuracy and lexical richness, as well as the overall quality of learners' writing. The findings also offer insights into the effectiveness of using CAF and measures of communicative adequacy for analysing beginning L2 performance.

Language teaching research. – 2017 (July), v. 21, n. 4, p. 434-453

1. CAF 2. Communicative adequacy 3. Lexical richness 4. Pre-writing 5. TBLT

4

Learner attention to form in ACCESS task-based interaction [Recurso electrónico] / Phung Dao, Noriko Iwashita, Elizabeth Gatbonton

Este artículo se encuentra disponible en su edición electrónica. Su acceso electrónico es a través del enlace de 'Acceso al documento'.

References: p. 475-479

This study explored the potential effects of communicative tasks developed using a reformulation of a task-based language teaching called Automatization in Communicative Contexts of Essential Speech Sequences (ACCESS) that includes automatization of language elements as one of its goals on learner attention to form in task-based interaction. The interaction data collected from a class for English as a second language (ESL) over a four-week period was analysed for incidence, outcome and characteristics (i.e. focus, initiation, response, and turn length) of language-related episodes (LREs) operationalized as evidence of learner attention to form. The results showed that during ACCESS task-based interactions, learners attended to form as reflected in a large number of LREs. Despite being brief, a majority of these LREs were correctly resolved, self-initiated, self- and other-responded, and focused on the target linguistic item: past-tense verbs. These results are discussed in terms of the potential effects of ACCESS task principles, different task features (i.e. task complexity, pre-task modeling, speaker role and group size), and learners' approach to tasks on the incidence and characteristics of LREs.

Language teaching research. – 2017 (July), v. 21, n. 4, p. 454-479

1. ACCESS 2. Attention to form 3. Classroom 4. Peer interaction 5. Repetition

5

Task repetition effects on L1 use in EFL child task-based interaction [Recurso electrónico] / Agurtzane Azkarai, María del Pilar García Mayo

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References: p. 493-495

Research has shown that tasks provide second language (L2) learners with many opportunities to learn the L2. Task repetition has been claimed to benefit L2 learning since familiarity with procedure and/or content gives learners the chance to focus on more specific aspects of language. Most research on task repetition has focused on adult populations, but child learners are an under-researched group. The same goes for first language (L1) use during L2 interaction, which has been mainly studied among adult L2 learners whereas little is known about L1 use among child L2 learners interacting while they complete communicative tasks. This study explores to what extent and for which purposes children in an English as a foreign language (EFL) setting use their shared L1 (Spanish). Furthermore it also considers how task repetition (exact vs. procedural task repetition) influences their L1 use. Forty-two EFL learners worked in pairs while they completed a spot-the-difference task twice. Our findings showed a significant decrease in L1 use when learners repeated the task in the two conditions but a minor effect of task repetition on the functions the L1 served.

Language teaching research. – 2017 (July), v. 21, n. 4, p. 480-495

1. Children 2. EFL 3. Interaction 4. L1 use/functions 5. Negotiation 6. Task repetition
