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Examining Form-Focused Interactions in Peer Collaborative Dialogues within an EFL Context

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Abstract. The learning process relies heavily on classroom interactions and peer learning. Consequently, it is vital to integrate peer interaction into second language learning environments. This research, grounded in sociocultural theory, examined how students focused on form while working together on pair/group activities during their regular English classes. The data collection involved audio recordings of student dialogues. The study included 22 seventh-grade English foreign language students in the Sultanate of Oman who participated in collaborative tasks as part of their mandated curriculum. The researcher analyzed the students' collaborative dialogues for language-related episodes (LREs). The results indicate that the students produced 152 LREs within 140 minutes, which were categorized. The analysis revealed a higher occurrence of phonological LREs compared to morphosyntactic or lexical LREs. Other-initiated LREs slightly outnumbered self-initiated LREs. The students successfully resolved the majority of LREs. The study highlights English foreign language learners' ability to recognize, tackle, and solve various linguistic issues during peer collaborative dialogues. The researcher suggests that English foreign language educators should encourage peer interaction in their classrooms by offering students the necessary support and scaffolding for metalinguistic discussions in the second language, through clear instructions and guided pre-task training on collaborative dialogues, to optimize the benefits of peer interaction in English foreign language English foreign language contexts.

Keywords: peer interaction; sociocultural theory; focus on form; collaborative dialogues; language-related episodes; English foreign language context

1. Introduction

The main objective of language acquisition is to enable the effective expression of thoughts, ideas, and feelings to others. The sociocultural theory (SCT) emphasizes communication as a crucial element in language learning. Consequently, second language (L2) learning can be enhanced by encouraging students to interact with

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their classmates or instructors. The SCT posits that "a significant amount of language learning occurs through social interaction, in part because interlocutors modify their language to make it more understandable for learners" (Aimin, 2013, p. 165). Vygotsky (1978) proposed that children develop their understanding of meaning and thought processes through social construction and engagement with their environment. This underscores the significance of social interaction and collaborative meaning-making, suggesting that learning occurs through shared experiences in social contexts.

While Vygotsky's initial research centered on children acquiring first language, his concepts can also be extended to L2 acquisition. In Oman, English is considered to be a foreign language and is not commonly used in everyday communication among locals. Students typically encounter English only in a classroom environment. As a result, classroom interactions play a crucial role in English language acquisition as students learn both the language structure and its appropriate communicative use through exchanges with their instructors and classmates. While previous research on classroom interaction has primarily concentrated on teacher-student dynamics, emphasizing the actions of educators (Cazden, 2001), less attention has been paid to peer-to-peer interactions (Martin-Beltrán, 2017).

2. Literature Review

Interaction is a key component of the SCT. From a sociocultural viewpoint, "interaction has been analyzed as an opportunity for learners to scaffold each other and to collaborate in the solution of their language-related problems" (Dobao, 2016, p. 34). Interaction serves as an essential tool for operation within the zone of proximal development (ZPD). It is crucial to recognize that interaction plays a vital role in second language acquisition contexts for multiple reasons. First, it enables collaborative problem solving, as students become aware of their language challenges when engaging in problem-solving tasks. In this regard, interaction allows learners to tackle language difficulties and develop new linguistic structures. Second, interaction generates private speech, which enhances language development by enabling learners to master new language forms and verbal behaviors (Ellis, 2003). Third, interaction provides opportunities to learn, as students focus on processes and practices during pair and group activities (Putney et al., 2000). Finally, interaction fosters L2 development by offering learners opportunities to engage in creative meaning-making exercises.

Collaborative interaction is crucial for providing students with opportunities to use language, while receiving appropriate scaffolding support from more proficient peers. The teacher's role is a critical factor in the success of peer interaction as teachers structure the classroom to encourage such interactions through pair and group work (Al-Buraiki, 2023). It is essential to examine the impact of collaborative interactions within the ZPD in promoting L2 development. Scaffolding within the learners' ZPD involves more competent learners assisting less competent learners in completing specific tasks. Some sociocultural researchers (Donato, 1994; Ohta, 2001) have contended that individual learners exhibit unique strengths and weaknesses that differ from their

peers. Consequently, when collaborating, learners act as both novices and experts, enabling them to provide scaffolded assistance to one another. When learners of similar proficiency levels collaborate, they still contribute their own knowledge and experiences, helping them jointly construct new language knowledge (Donato, 1994; Ohta, 2001; Swain & Lapkin, 1998).

In research on adult learners, Ohta (2001) found that, in dialogic activities, even less proficient learners could support their more proficient counterparts. Pair work interaction is characterized by collaborative dialogues (CDs), which are conversations in which participants actively engage in problem-solving and knowledge construction (Masuda & Iwasaki, 2018; Swain, 2000). In these dialogues, spoken output can be challenged, expanded, or dismissed. These interactions, involving the joint creation of meaning, are viewed as catalysts of language acquisition and growth (Swain & Watanabe, 2013). The CDs provide opportunities for learners to identify linguistic issues, rebuild language knowledge, and reorganize output. Swain and Watanabe (2013) noted that CDs can encompass various subjects, including language, mathematics, and physics. During these exchanges, one or both participants may alter their understanding or gain deeper insight into a specific topic or phenomenon (Swain & Watanabe, 2013).

A significant aspect of CDs is the concept of languaging and language-related episodes (LREs) (Iglesias-Diéguez et al., 2025). Studies on CDs have explored how L2 learners assist each other in oral L2 production, collaborate during form-focused activities, and work together on various L2 tasks (Mitchell et al., 2013). Swain (2006) emphasized the importance of verbalization, termed 'languaging', whether it involves self-talk or communication with others. Languaging is defined as the "process of making meaning and shaping knowledge and experience through language" (p. 98). It refers to "the activity of mediating cognitively complex ideas using language" (Swain & Lapkin, 2011). The term languaging conceptualizes language as a process or verb, rather than as a product or noun (Swain & Lapkin, 2011).

Swain and Watanabe (2013) stated that languaging aims to resolve complex cognitive problems, with language serving as a mediating tool. They classify languaging into two categories: 'Talking with (or writing to) others and talking with (or writing to) oneself' (p. 1). The former is exemplified in CDs and interpersonal communication, whereas the latter encompasses private speech and intrapersonal communication. Both forms of languaging are directed toward solving cognitive challenges.

According to Sato and Viveros (2016), the most suitable method for evaluating collaborative learning and collaborative dialogue (CDs) is the analysis of LREs. Swain and Lapkin (1998) described LREs as "any part of a dialogue in which students talk about the language they are producing, question their language use, or other- or self-correct" (p. 326). Many researchers, including Swain and Watanabe (2013), have employed LREs "as a unit of analysis to operationalize the construct of collaborative dialogue" (p. 3). Swain and Watanabe suggested that

LREs exemplify the ongoing process of L2 learning and are valuable for comprehending both the process and outcome of L2 acquisition.

In CDs, the quantity and characteristics of LREs are closely linked to the learners' language proficiency. Leeser (2004) conducted a study using a dictogloss task and discovered that high-high pairs generated significantly more LREs than low-low and high-low pairs. Comparable results were reported by Kim and McDonough (2008), Watanabe and Swain (2007), and Williams (1999, 2001), who observed that the overall number of LREs tended to be higher for more proficient interlocutors. Additionally, the type of task influences the occurrence of LREs, as demonstrated in various studies (Aksoy-Pekacar, 2024; de la Colina & Garcia Mayo, 2009). These studies have shown that written tasks typically produce more LREs than oral tasks. Text reconstruction tasks have been found to elicit more LREs than opinion-gap tasks. Previous studies on languaging have investigated various aspects of LREs, including their categories (Swain & Lapkin, 1995, 1998, 2002), results (Kim, 2008; Kim & McDonough, 2008; Leeser, 2004), and impact on language development (Kim & McDonough, 2011; Swain & Lapkin, 2001). By analyzing language use in different tasks, researchers have identified several types of LREs. Swain and Lapkin (1998) categorized LREs into three groups: (1) lexis-based, focusing on vocabulary discussions; (2) form-focused, addressing spelling, morphology, and syntax; and (3) discourse based on discourse markers and sequencing.

Researchers have also examined how LREs affect the resolution of the language problems encountered by learners. Studies have revealed three potential outcomes of LREs: correct resolution, incorrect resolution, and no resolution (Kim & McDonough, 2008, 2011; Leeser, 2004). In the first scenario, learners successfully address a linguistic problem. In the second, they choose an inaccurate target form and, in the third, they fail to resolve the problem and may proceed with the task. Research has demonstrated that CDs contribute significantly to the simultaneous occurrence of language use and learning. For instance, Swain and Lapkin (1998) and Williams (2001) provided evidence supporting learners' ability to apply the knowledge gained from resolving LREs to similar situations. Basterrechea and Leeser (2019) noted a positive correlation between the production of grammatical LREs in oral interactions and subsequent text reconstructions. They also observed a positive relationship between the correctly resolved grammatical LREs and the number of correct instances of the target form in the reconstructed text.

The present study is of particular importance for EFL teachers, who are encouraged to incorporate CDs into daily classroom instruction to support ongoing language learning. Curriculum developers may consider integrating CD opportunities when designing English syllabi, particularly for young adolescent learners. Given this context, the current study examined CDs among young adolescent EFL learners working in pairs and small groups in Oman, addressing the following research question:
To what extent does collaborative pair and group work enable learners to focus on the formal properties of their L2 in an EFL Omani school setting?

3. Research Methodology

3.1 Research Design and Context

This study employed classroom discourse analysis as a research approach to investigate the nature of student-student interactions within group work activities, utilizing audio-recorded conversations for data collection and analysis. This study focused on how learners use language to co-construct meaning, negotiate understanding and support and scaffold each other's learning. This approach is based on the SCT, which considers interaction as fundamental to cognitive development (Vygotsky, 1978). This study also drew on the work of Swain (2000) on exploratory talk and collaborative dialogue.

The research was conducted in a Cycle 2 school (grades 5–10), located in Oman's north Al-Batinah governorate. The participants were 22 female Grade 7 students from a single class, aged between 12 and 14 years. All participants were Omani nationals and native Arabic speakers who had been learning English as a foreign language since Grade 1. Their English proficiency was described as elementary by their class teacher. The students were taught using the English for the Me curriculum developed and distributed by Oman's Ministry of Education. English classes were held five times weekly, with each session lasting 40 minutes. The students had been classmates since Grade 5, ensuring their familiarity with one another.

3.2 Data Collection Tools and Procedures

The researcher explained the study procedures and what was expected from the teacher and the students. A tentative schedule of class contact was prepared and agreed upon with the teacher. During the collaborative peer interactions, the learners sat in their pre-arranged groups but worked either in pairs or in groups, based on the given instruction by the teacher. The students' collaborative activities were audio-recorded for all tasks.

Audio recordings were made of the students performing collaborative tasks to examine how they addressed linguistic challenges beyond their individual abilities. The researcher selected unit three (Exciting Environment) from the syllabus to ensure that the students had already received adequate orientation to the new school year, as they had already been exposed to the first two units in the syllabus. The choice of tasks from the students' textbooks ensured the learners' familiarity with the topic. Research has suggested that elaborate discourse is more likely to occur with familiar topics (Leeser, 2007). The researcher focused on the students' linguistic discussion of L2 formal properties. The researcher assumed a non-participatory observer role, refraining from intervening in the student interactions except for classroom management issues. The teacher maintained a typical instructional role, explained the tasks, and offered necessary support to students.

3.3 Research Validity and Reliability

Research studies must be rigorously conducted to have an effect on a particular field concerning theory and practice (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). Establishing

validity and reliability makes the findings and conclusions "ring true to readers, practitioners and other researchers" (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015, p. 238).

In the present research study, the researcher emphasized the methodological rigor that focused on what the researcher could do to ensure trustworthiness in the study (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). Creswell and Miller (2000) proposed eight validation strategies: prolonged engagement and persistent observation, triangulation, peer review or debriefing, negative case analysis, clarifying researcher bias, member checking, rich, thick description, and external audits (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). To meet the strategy of achieving a rich, thick description, the researcher of the present study provided a detailed description of the participants and setting under study. Creswell and Creswell (2017) explained that such a procedure enables readers to apply the research findings in different contexts and determine the generalizability of the findings.

In establishing the reliability of research, Creswell and Creswell (2017) emphasized the importance of detailed field notes. This was achieved by employing a high-quality tape to record and then transcribing the contents of the tape. To capture a complete and comprehensive picture of the students' collaborative peer interactions, the researcher used high-quality audio recorders, which specifically recorded each group discussion with minimum background noise.

Creswell and Poth (2016) also suggested using computer programs "to assist in recoding and analyzing the data" (p. 253). In the present study, the researcher transcribed the classroom audio recordings verbatim, including linguistic and non-linguistic elements. Listening to the oral recorded scripts several times led to more reliable written transcripts. Creswell and Poth (2016) highlighted the significance of blind coding, in which the individuals responsible for coding and analyzing data have no prior knowledge about the research questions or the expectations of the project. The researcher did not communicate the research questions to the coders when giving training sessions, nor when providing them with written instructions. According to Creswell and Poth (2016), reliability in research refers to the consistency and stability of the data analysis outcomes across multiple coders who code the same datasets. Regarding the data coding in the present research, two independent scorers coded the data for the categories of the transcribed dialogues, and inter-scorer reliability was calculated using a simple percentage agreement.

3.4 Data Analysis

After transcribing the dialogues, the researcher and two research assistants began identifying the LREs. In essence, LREs encompass instances in which learners discuss their language production by questioning, self-correcting, or correcting others (Swain & Lapkin, 1995). It is important to note that LREs are not synonymous with learner error. Williams (2001) clarified that "learner errors do not always result in an LRE. Someone must respond to it in order for an LRE to ensue; indeed, this response is what identifies it as an LRE" (p. 329). Accurate determination of the start and end points of language episodes is, therefore,

crucial. As García Mayo and Azkarai (2016) explained, "An LRE started when a participant raised a concern about language and finished when they had moved on to a new conversational topic or when the participants moved on with the task at hand" (pp. 248–249).

3.5 Framework and Identification of LREs

This study employed a modified version of a well-established model to identify, code, and analyze the LREs. This model, originally developed by Varonis and Gass (1985) and later expanded by Shehadeh (2001), consists of "four functional primes" (p. 435). These components include a trouble source (TS), an initiator that can be either self-initiated (SI) or other-initiated (OI); the outcome is categorized as correctly resolved (CR), incorrectly resolved (IR), or unresolved (UR); and the reaction to the outcome (RO) comprises either a comprehension signal (CS) or a continuation move (CM). Figure 1 illustrates the adapted model used in this study.

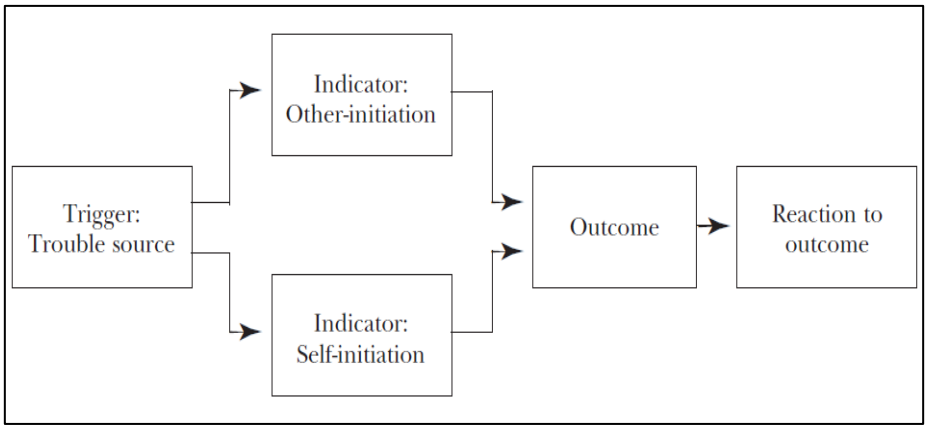

Figure 1: A model for coding LREs (Shehadeh, 2001, p. 436)

The source of a trouble can be identified by the speaker (which is SI) or the listener (which is OI). Once a linguistic issue is recognized, efforts are typically made to address it. The outcome may result in successful resolution (correct or incorrect) or it may remain UR. The final step in this linguistic process is an optional response to the outcome, occurring before resuming primary discussion. This response can be manifested as either an indication of comprehension or a continuation of discourse.

In this study, Shehadeh's model (2001) was systematically utilized to identify and categorize the occurrences of LREs in the students' CDs. Each LRE was identified and classified, starting with the emergence of a TS, followed by the initiation of the repair (either SI or OI), and concluding with an outcome. For instance, when a student mispronounced a word and their partner corrected it and the first speaker demonstrated their understanding in turn, the coding of this episode was (OI + CR+CS).

4. Research Findings

The study involved 22 students divided into five groups of four to five members each. These groups completed 10 selected tasks, generating 50 recordings. Audio

recordings were made of the students working collaboratively. However, six tasks were not properly recorded, leaving 44 for transcription. The analysis covered 140 minutes of recorded peer interactions. Of the 44 recorded CDs, four lacked any LREs, likely due to the simplicity and brevity of the tasks. Consequently, 40 tasks were included in the final analysis and findings. Descriptive statistics, including frequencies, were obtained. A comprehensive overview of all the recordings is provided in Table 1.

Table 1: Figures illustrating the recording details

No. of tasks	No. of groups	No. of students	Well-recorded tasks	Tasks with LREs	Peer interactions recorded (minutes)	Average length of peer interaction (minutes)	Total LREs	Average LREs per minute
10	5	22	44	40	140	3.2	152	1.1

Subsequently, the researcher analyzed the transcripts of the recorded conversations, which solely represented peer interactions, to address the research question. The findings were analyzed descriptively using basic frequency analysis and illustrative figures. During the analysis, the researcher categorized the LREs into lexical, morphosyntactic, and phonological types. Regarding initiation, the LREs were classified as either SI or OI. In terms of outcome, the LREs were identified as CR, IR, or UR. Concerning the RO, the researcher differentiated between CSs and CMs. Table 2 shows the frequencies of the LREs across the four phases of TS, initiator, outcome, and RO.

Table 2: The Distribution of LREs Across the Four Phases in the Model

	Trouble source			**Initiator**		**Outcome**				**R. to outcome**	
	[1]L	[2]M.S		[3]P	[4]SI	[5]OI	[6]CR	[7]IR	[8]UR	[9]CS	[10]CM
	15 (9.9%)	21 (13.8%)	116 (76.3%)	70 (46.1%)	82 (53.9%)	117 (77%)	33 (21.7%)	2 (1.3%)		122 (80.3%)	30 (19.7%)
Total	152			152		152				152	

1L refers to lexical / 2M.S refers to morphosyntactic / 3P refers to phonological / 4SI refers to self-initiation / 5OI refers to other-initiation / 6CR refers to correctly resolved / 7IR refers to incorrectly resolved / 8UR refers to unresolved / 9CS refers to comprehension signals / 10CM refers to the continuation move.

4.1 Analysis of LREs in Relation to Model Phases

The investigation identified a total of 152 LREs, as presented in Table 1. Table 2 and Figure 1 demonstrate that phonological LREs were the most prevalent, constituting 76.3% (116 instances), followed by morphosyntactic LREs at 13.8% (21 instances), and lexical LREs at 9.9% (15 instances). Regarding initiation, interlocutor-initiated LREs comprised 53.9% (82 episodes), while SI LREs constituted 46.1% (70 episodes). The majority of LREs (77%, 117 episodes) were CR, with 21.7% (33 episodes) IR, and only 1.3% (2 episodes) remaining UR. Reactions to outcomes were classified as either CSs or CMs. Comprehension signals were predominant, representing 80.3% (122 episodes) of all LREs, compared to CMs at 19.7% (30 episodes). The subsequent sections provide a more detailed examination of LREs in relation to TS.

4.2 Lexical LREs: Initiation, Outcome, and Reaction Analysis

This section examines in greater depth the lexical LREs observed during the peer interaction exercises. Table 3 presents a comprehensive breakdown of these episodes, focusing on their initiation, outcome, and subsequent reactions.

Table 3: Lexical LREs in relation to the initiation, outcome, and reaction to the outcome

Initiation		Outcome			Reaction to outcome	
Self	Other	Correctly resolved	Incorrectly resolved	Unresolved	Comprehension signal	Continuation moves
6(40%)	9(60%)	11 (73.3%)	3 (20%)	1 (6.7%)	11 (73.3%)	4 (26.7%)
Total L-LREs		15				

Table 3 presents a comprehensive breakdown of the lexical LREs, encompassing their initiation, outcome, and subsequent reactions. The total number of lexical LREs was 15. The data indicate that OI L-LREs were more prevalent, accounting for 60% (nine instances), compared to SI L-LREs at 40% (six instances). Regarding the resolution of L-LREs, a significant majority (73.3%, 11 instances) were CR, substantially exceeding IR cases (20% or three instances) and the single UR case (6.7%). In terms of student reactions to the outcomes, CSs were predominant, occurring in 73.3% of the cases (11 instances), while CMs were less frequent, appearing in only 26.7% of cases (four instances). These findings suggest that most students successfully addressed lexical LREs and responded appropriately to the results.

4.3 Morphosyntactic LREs: Initiation, Outcome, and Reaction Analysis

This study also examined morphosyntactic LREs in the context of peer interactions during collaborative activities among EFL learners in an Omani school environment. Table 4 presents the findings related to the initiation, outcome, and ROs of the morphosyntactic LREs, focusing on their occurrence and resolution during pair and group work.

Table 4: Morphosyntactic LREs in relation to the initiation, outcome, and reaction to the outcome

Initiation		Outcome			Reaction to outcome	
Self-	Other-	Correctly resolved	Incorrectly resolved	Unresolved	Comprehension signal	Continuation moves
5 (23.8%)	16 (76.2%)	20 (95.2%)	1 (4.8%)	-	16 (76.2%)	5 (23.8%)
Total M.S-LREs		21				

As shown in Table 4, 21 morphosyntactic LREs were identified. Regarding the initiation of linguistic problems, OI M.S-LREs were more prevalent, occurring 16 times (76.2%), while SI LREs appeared only five times (23.8%). The resolution of M.S-LREs was either correct or incorrect, with the majority being resolved correctly in 20 instances (95.2%), and only one episode being resolved incorrectly (4.8%). Concerning the students' responses to the outcomes, CSs were more

frequent, appearing in 16 instances (76.2%), whereas CMs were observed in only five episodes (23.8%).

4.4 Analysis of Phonological LREs: Initiator, Outcome, and Reaction

This section examines the identified and analyzed phonological LREs. Table 5 presents the data on the total number of phonological LREs, their initiation, outcomes, and subsequent reactions. This information is essential for understanding how students interact when confronted with phonological issues and their efficacy in resolving them.

Table 5: Phonological LREs in relation to initiation, outcome, and reaction to the outcome

Initiation		Outcome			Reaction to outcome	
Self-	Other-	Correctly resolved	Incorrectly resolved	Unresolved	Comprehension signal	Continuation moves
59 (50.9%)	57 (49.1%)	86 (74.1%)	29 (25%)	1 (0.9%)	95 (81.9%)	21 (18.1%)
Total P-LREs		116				

As shown in Table 5, phonological LREs occurred 116 times. The initiation of these linguistic issues was almost equally distributed between SI (59 instances, 50.9%) and OI (57 instances, 49.1%) P-LREs. Regarding the resolution of P-LREs, students successfully addressed 86 cases (74.1%), whereas 29 instances (25%) were IR. A single P-LRE remained UR, representing 0.9% of the total. In terms of student responses to the outcomes, CSs were more prevalent (95 instances, 81.9%) than CMs (21 instances, 18.1%).

The analysis employed Shehadeh's (2001) model, revealing that phonological LREs are more prevalent than morphosyntactic and lexical LREs. Other-initiated LREs (82) outnumber SI LREs (70). Regarding outcomes, the majority (117) of LREs were CR, 33 were IR and only two were UR. In terms of reactions, 122 were CSs, and 30 were CMs. Lexical and morphosyntactic meta-talk exhibited a higher frequency of LREs initiated by others. However, phonological LREs demonstrated no clear preference, with the initiations almost equally distributed between the students and their interlocutors. Across all LRE types, the students successfully resolved most instances. Their reactions predominantly displayed CSs rather than CMs, suggesting significant emphasis on language understanding and processing across all three LRE categories.

5. Discussion

The prevalence of 152 LREs during pair and group work indicates that the students demonstrated attentiveness to the linguistic forms and invested considerable effort in focusing on the language structure. The distribution of LREs varied across the tasks, likely because of the nature of each task and its potential to elicit linguistic forms. For instance, task 10 generated 37 LREs, significantly more than the other tasks which produced between nine and 19 LREs. This task required students to discuss the given adjectives, convert them to comparative forms, and complete the rules for making comparative adjectives in various cases. Students encountered difficulties correctly reading the lengthy grammatical

points and selecting appropriate words to complete the rules. The teacher assisted each group in reading and rule completion. The task included five items in the grammatical rules for discussion and completion, resulting in a relatively high task demand and consequently, more LREs compared to other tasks.

In discussing the frequency, types, and nature of the LREs created in EFL contexts, it is important to identify the factors that may influence the characteristics of LREs. Collins and White (2019) argued that "a learner-centered approach may not in itself be sufficient for students to generate attention to language and offer assistance on their own" (p. 23). Other factors may influence the characteristics of LREs, such as teacher task setup, pre-task modelling, and the students' self-access to resources.

The frequency of discussing linguistic issues may be determined by the nature of the instructions given to the students to complete each task, the nature of the tasks, and how the students manage and carry out group work. In the present study, to keep students focused on achieving the goal of each task, the instructions did not explicitly direct them to talk about their language choices. In comparison, Swain and Lapkin's (2001) study and Leeser's (2004) study drew the participants' attention to focusing overtly on form. For example, Swain and Lapkin (2001) asked learners explicitly to talk about the target language forms. They stated, "discuss among yourselves the grammatical decisions you take, and think, above all, about the reflexive verbs that you have just looked at" (p. 115). Similarly, Leeser (2004) instructed the learners to "say aloud everything that they were writing down and reflect aloud as to why they chose certain forms over others" (p. 63).

The nature of a task can influence the occurrence of LREs during collaborative group activities (Gass & Mackey 2012). Certain tasks elicit more LREs than others, which can be attributed to the linguistic challenges inherent in completing each task. This observation aligns with the findings of Philp et al. (2013) and Aydin and Aydin (2020). Philp et al. (2013) determined that tasks with high cognitive demands and extended planning periods generated more LREs than simpler tasks. Similarly, Aydin and Aydin (2020) observed an increase in LREs as task complexity increased, with students producing more LREs to address linguistic difficulties. Task modality, written vs. oral, may affect the frequency, nature, and resolution of LREs (Martínez-Adrián & Gallardo-del-Puerto, 2024; Suzki, 2025).

The setting and data collection methods can influence the characteristics of LREs. In laboratory studies, participants interact with researchers or other students in controlled environments that differ from those in actual classrooms. Experimental studies often involve researcher-designed activities that do not reflect typical classroom exercises. In contrast, the current study was conducted in a real classroom setting to capture authentic collaborative peer interactions.

This emphasis on phonological language needs over morphosyntactic and lexical issues during peer collaborative dialogue contrasts with much of the existing research on adult learners (Collins & White 2019; Kim & McDonough 2011; Philp

et al. 2013; Yilmaz 2011). For instance, Yilmaz (2011) found that lexical LREs are more frequent than orthographic or grammatical LREs. The type and structure of the tasks influence the frequency and type of linguistic issues that capture the students' attention. Interactive tasks involving writing generate different language episodes than those that focus on speaking and dialogue. Writing-based tasks tend to produce more grammar-related episodes (Swain & Lapkin, 2001; Yilmaz, 2011), whereas speaking-oriented tasks, as observed in this study, can lead to a higher number of pronunciation-related episodes.

Although the current study and Collins and White's (2019) research share methodological and contextual similarities, their findings differ regarding TS types. While Collins and White observed a higher frequency of lexical-related language episodes than morphosyntactic and phonological ones, the present study found that phonological-LREs were more prevalent than morphosyntactic-LREs and lexical-LREs. In Collins and White's study, lexical-LREs encompass students seeking or offering suitable words, comprehending word meanings, and selecting multiple words. Their results indicated that 80% of the LREs were lexical, 14% morphosyntactic, and 6% phonological. These contrasting outcomes may be attributed to the differences in task implementation between the two studies. One key distinction is that the current study incorporated pre-task instructions in the target language and structure, which heightened the students' focus on pronunciation accuracy rather than on debating lexis, morphology, or syntax. This pre-task-guided teaching produced an attention-enhancing effect.

The results of this study align with previous research findings (Collins & White, 2019; Edstrom, 2015; García Mayo & Zeitler, 2017; Kim & McDonough, 2011; Leeser, 2004). Both the current study and Collins and White's (2019) research demonstrated that participating students were able to resolve over 75% of the linguistic issues. Kim and McDonough (2011), investigating the influence of pre-task modelling on collaborative learning patterns and benefits, discovered that Korean EFL learners CR a larger proportion of LREs after receiving pre-task modelling. Their study shares similarities with the present research, as both involved female EFL middle-school learners as the participants. However, Kim and McDonough employed specific tasks to gather data, including dictogloss, decision-making, and information gap activities. In Leeser's (2004) study, students CR 76.81% of the LREs encountered while reconstructing the target passage, IR 12.32%, and left 10.87% of them UR.

Edstrom (2015) demonstrated that triads successfully resolved the majority of LREs. Similarly, Mayo and Zeitler's (2017) investigation revealed that students could correctly address most lexical LREs (83) in both group and pair activities, with 22 and 10 episodes IR and UR, respectively. Basterrchea and Leeser's (2019) study showed comparable results, with learners correctly resolving 76 LREs, while 17 were IR and seven remained UR. The high rate of LRE resolution in this study suggests that students actively contributed to collaborative work. Additionally, it provides valuable insights into how learning opportunities emerge through peer interactions (Kos, 2020).

LREs were categorized as either SI or OI based on their initiation source. The OI LREs (82) outnumbered the SI ones (70). Further examination revealed that linguistic issues were raised either by seeking assistance or offering help (see Figure 2). These findings regarding the initiation phase differ from those of Collins and White (2019), in which SI LREs were more prevalent. Shehadeh (2001) noted significantly more self-initiations, leading to a successfully modified output compared with other initiations. Shehadeh argued that this result indicates the importance of self-initiations in promoting modified output and the necessity for learners to have the time and opportunity to address their own linguistic errors. In the current study, most participants had trouble identifying linguistic problems in their own speech, relying on others (peers or teachers) to highlight these issues. One possible explanation for this finding is that students who made language errors may have been unaware of their mistakes and believed that their utterances were correct.

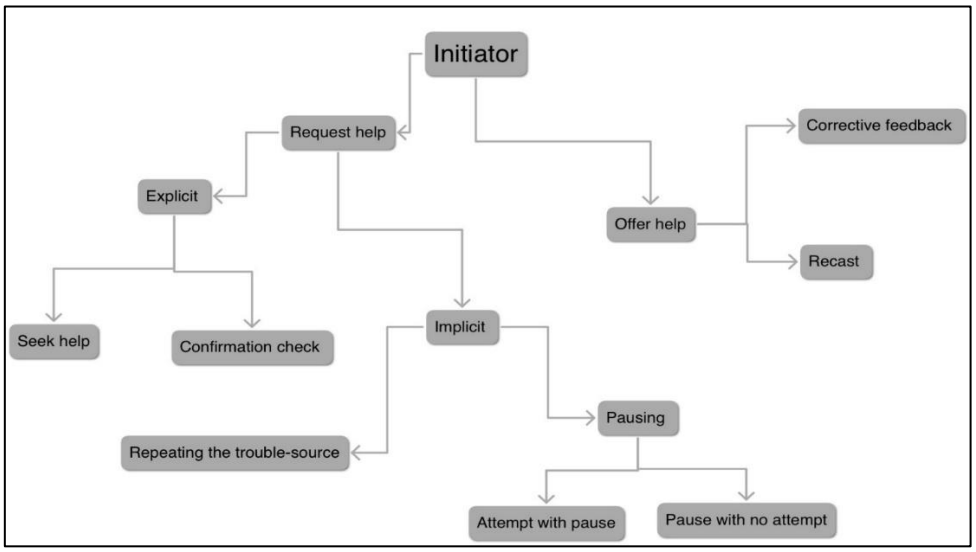

Figure 2: Means of self- and other-initiations

In analyzing the responses to the outcomes, CSs were more prevalent (122, 80.3%) in LREs than in CMs (30, 19.7%). Comprehension signals involved the participants using specific indicators to demonstrate their understanding and confirmation after correcting a problematic element. Conversely, CMs occurred when the participants proceeded with their discussions without explicitly demonstrating comprehension. Both types of responses conveyed the semantic equivalence of 'alright' and 'I agree with'. While CSs incorporate subtle cues to progress, CMs feature explicit indications to proceed. The categorization of CSs and CMs, accompanied by examples, are illustrated in Figure 3.

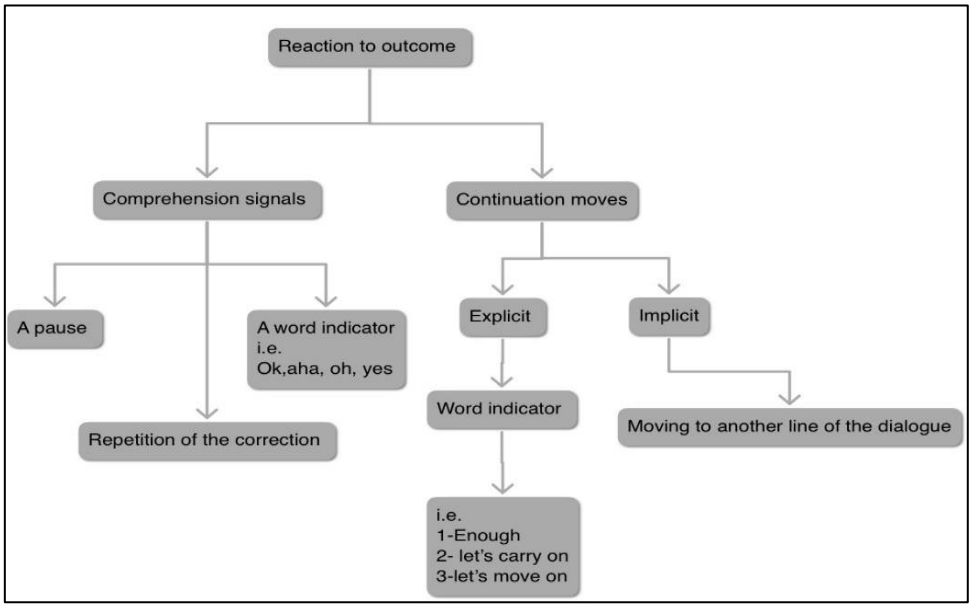

Figure 3: Classifications of comprehension signals and continuation moves

This study employed Shehadeh's (2001) four-phase model of LREs, which has not been previously utilized in other studies. Consequently, comparing the final phase, reaction to the outcome with earlier research is not feasible. Although Shehadeh (2001) adapted Varonis and Gass's (1985, p. 75) model for SI and OI modified output, he describes the last phase as "an optional unit of the routine" (p. 436) and provides minimal discussion on it, offering only two examples in the appendix. This study utilized Shehadeh's (2001) model to identify, code, and analyze LREs, as illustrated in Figure 1. The 152 identified LREs were aligned with the model, further validating their efficacy in LRE analysis. Based on the findings of the study, the model was expanded to include additional details in the third (outcome) and fourth (RO) phases. Figure 4 shows the proposed extended version of the model.

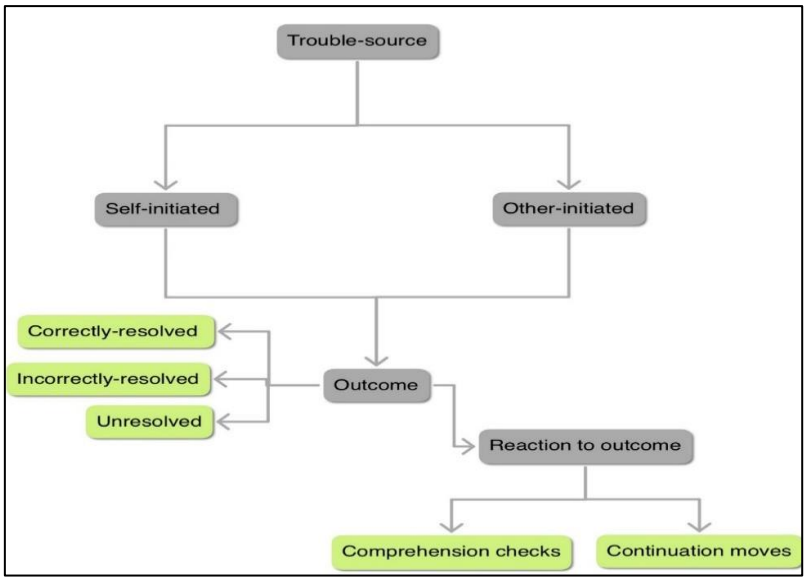

Figure 4: An adapted version of Shehadeh's (2001, p. 436) model

In this study, the mediating roles of peer interaction were evident in the efforts that the students demonstrated to learn English. The students' dialogic processes played a crucial role in motivating them to engage in second language acquisition through modified input, output, and feedback (Al-Buraiki, 2023). The study found that, in many instances, the students' interactions demonstrated a high level of scaffolded performance, with peers providing error correction and other forms of support that were beneficial for language learning. Through their engagement in peer interaction, the students took on more responsibility for their learning. The collaboration among the learners motivated a great deal of modified input, output, and feedback, all of which played a mediating role in their L2 development (Al-Buraiki, 2023).

The findings of the present study confirm the use of several scaffolding techniques. Linh (2020) listed the techniques as, "instructing, feeding back, giving of hints and explaining in peer interaction through speaking tasks" (p. 89). For example, the learners frequently used questioning and explaining techniques to scaffold each other while completing the tasks. The students' peer interaction motivated them to scaffold each other, resulting in the co-construction of language and knowledge, particularly in terms of phonology, lexis, morphology, and syntax.

6. Study Limitations

The present study has several limitations that should be mentioned. One of the challenges was the difficulty of getting the consent of parents and teachers to videotape the students' interactions. Hence, the researcher opted for audio recordings as it was not possible to video capture all groups and pairs. Relying only on audio recordings posed the challenge of not always being able to identify who was speaking, and some lines of the dialogues were unintelligible partly due to the background noise generated by other groups/pairs who were close, and partly due to the low voice of the students. It is recommended that future studies in CDs try to utilize video recordings to capture all verbal and non-verbal communication.

Another limitation was the small sample size, consisting of 22 students and one classroom teacher, within a specific contextual setting. It is important to exercise caution when attempting to generalize the findings of this study as a result. Future researchers interested in investigating classroom interaction and collaborative learning with the intention of drawing more generalizable conclusions should carefully consider their study designs.

7. Conclusion

The present study explored the LREs that EFL students produced while engaging in CDs. The research data were collected using audio recordings of the students' dialogues. The analysis revealed a higher occurrence of phonological LREs compared to morphosyntactic or lexical LREs. The OI LREs slightly outnumbered the SI LREs. Students successfully resolved the majority of LREs. The findings demonstrated that adolescent learners in EFL settings address linguistic issues during peer CDs and can resolve most encountered problems. These findings

have theoretical and practical implications for the implementation of collaborative peer tasks in L2 classrooms. Learners demonstrated the ability to overcome linguistic challenges through peer support and assistance.

A potential area for further research is to explore how teachers can effectively encourage students to broaden their focus to encompass phonology, morphology, syntax, and lexis. One approach involves focused instruction, in which teachers emphasize task-relevant language to promote an awareness of linguistic issues. Additionally, teachers may direct the students' attention to problematic aspects of grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation. The researcher posits that these findings should motivate EFL educators to incorporate task-based peer interactions into their classrooms. This can be achieved by providing learners with the necessary scaffolding and support for metalinguistic discussion in L2 through clear instructions and guided pre-task training on CDs. Finally, combining student collaboration with appropriately challenging tasks and thoughtful peer groupings is likely to generate more LREs, increase scaffolding, and ultimately enhance L2 learning and development.

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