

Collaborative Output Processing
in
Web-based English Language Learning Scenarios

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Abstract

This thesis focuses on proving the potential of web-based collaborative output processing for the development of communication with a focus on form in second language learning. A comparison between teachers' and learners' perception of current and ideal second language learning and teaching practices with modern Second Language Acquisition views suggests cross-cultural collaborative writing experiences in the wiki space can be highly meaningful, in particular when integrated in blended language learning scenarios, because they facilitate authentication, collaboration and autonomy. Case study evidence is provided in favour of the potential of peer review helped by a meta-space that facilitates languaging and pushes output, and consequently higher-level critical thinking mirrored in successful revisions and concrete learning outcomes.

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1 Introduction

Someone once said education is not designed for modest ambitions. One of the reasons for this is that, to remain meaningful, pedagogy must be permanently questioned and adapted to the constant changes in society to suit the needs and purposes of the learners it is shaping. In the 21st century we must rethink pedagogy in an era of ubiquitous computing: “As the Internet has matured we find ourselves immersed in a multiplicity of content, communities and communication tools...Many technologies have found their way into ubiquitous use in our daily lives, yet they are often overlooked, or even avoided, in the classroom” (Kessler, 2012a: p. 6).

Integrating technologies into language learning and teaching practices is a requirement for learners to authenticate these practices; but doing so is also a way of preparing learners to face the demands of the world of today in terms of autonomy and collaboration, principles which research on learning and teaching English as a Second Language (ESL)¹ considers paramount.

Web 2.0 and all the forms of social interaction it offers discloses completely new possibilities regarding such a framework. Wikis emerge as a promising tool in this context. Research suggests they may not only enable us to better understand the effects and effectiveness of digital media in output-oriented language learning centred upon principles and approaches advocated by modern Second Language Acquisition (SLA) views, but also be a very effective medium in the development of communication with a focus on form through collaborative output processing, which current thinking in SLA methodology also favours.

The challenge that needs to be faced, with regard to the full integration of digital media into language learning, is to define appropriate frameworks for research into the actual processes that learners go through when participating in learning opportunities of the kind outlined in this chapter [output-oriented learning via Web 2.0 social software]. The use of social software tools, such as wikis...do offer some support for such research, as processes of output-production are often traceable and, therefore, become observable. Text entries into a wiki, for example, can be looked at from the very first draft up to the final version. Consequently, all edits can be considered in terms of what they document and represent as far as acts of languaging are concerned. Research of this kind is much needed in order to broaden the understanding of the effects and effectiveness of digital media in output-oriented, creative and participatory language learning. (Rüschhoff, 2009: p. 57)

This PhD thesis aims to investigate collaborative output processing in web-based English language learning scenarios on the basis of a language learning and teaching framework previously observed to be considered relevant, coherent, efficacious and successful by learners and teachers across Europe.

¹ In this PhD thesis the term *second language* is used in connection with the learning of English as a language that is not one's mother tongue and is being learned as a second (similarly, third, fourth, etc.) language, in English or in non-English speaking countries, in both classroom and beyond-the-classroom contexts. To my mind, the term *second*, in opposition to *foreign*, to a certain extent relates to a more natural way of learning a language that is not one's mother tongue, advocated in this PhD thesis, which develops from communication and is not classroom-bounded. Exceptions are made to the use of these terms to reflect the view of other authors, who might make a distinction between *foreign* and *second* language learning. Braj Kachru's view is an example of such an exception. According to Kachru, English would be a (or rather *the*?) second language in countries in which it has an administrative status (see Footnote 2, p. 10).

I shall first outline a best-practice language learning and teaching frame of reference in the light of current SLA research. I will then investigate the perception of teachers as concerns the availability and implementation of e-learning equipment and applications as well as teacher training in the same field. This investigation shall offer insight into the sustainability of implementing language learning and teaching settings along the lines of SLA findings as well as into the language learning and teaching principles and approaches celebrated by the teachers of today. A case study shall follow that will allow me to examine the conditions and strategies learners consider essential for successful language learning, and the learning outcomes they identify in the framework outlined. This will enable comparison with the language learning framework proposed by SLA research as well as by ESL teachers.

On the grounds of the language learning and teaching schema projected by researchers, teachers and learners, I shall explore the potential of web-based collaborative writing in blended ensembles for language learning. I will give particular attention to the possibilities and constraints identified by learners in wiki-based peer-writing processes with regard to the reflective development of communication with a focus on form.

2 Principles and approaches in second language learning and teaching

Language learning has often been described as one of the most impressive mental operations of the human kind in view of the complexity of grammatical structures, the size of the mental lexicon, and multiple functionality learners of any language are confronted with...As a result, a lot of controversy has arisen as to how a language can best be learned. (Rüschhoff, 1999: p. 81)

What theories should inform language learning practices? What issues arise in this context and how can they be solved? In this chapter, I will discuss language learning and teaching principles and approaches that provide orientation for the blended learning practices that are the subject of my study. Emphasis is placed on reflective and authenticated content and language integrated learner-centred collaborative task-based practices. Peer negotiation centred upon autonomous co(n)textualised meaning co-construction emerges as essential. Language appropriateness plays a role of paramount importance.

2.1 The communicative approach

Languages are generally used to communicate, no matter whether we are talking about the English Language or a sign language. It is therefore obvious that language teaching and learning should serve this purpose and focus on developing learners' skills to communicate. However, it seems this has not always been that evident.

In fact, until the paradigm shift brought about by Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) in the 1970s, school language learning and teaching had mostly followed a grammar-based paradigm. CLT opposed a focus on grammar and centred majorly upon language use. The works of Austin, Halliday, McIntosh and many others in the 1960s and 1970s had prepared the ground for this revolution in the field of Applied Linguistics.

It was mainly Hymes's work on the idea of *communicative competence*, based on a critique of Chomsky's notion of *competence* and *performance*, which raised language educators' awareness. Chomsky had used *competence* to refer to speakers' knowledge of language and *performance* was related to their actual use of language.

Linguistic theory is concerned primarily with an ideal speaker-listener, in a completely homogeneous speech community, who knows its language perfectly and is unaffected by such grammatically irrelevant conditions as memory limitations, distractions, shifts of attention and interest, and errors (random or characteristic) in applying his knowledge of the language in actual performance. (Chomsky, 1965: p. 3)

Hymes, on the other hand, considers *competence* comprehends knowledge and use. He believes Chomsky's conception "omits almost everything of sociocultural significance" (Hymes, 1972: p. 280): "It is, if I may say so, rather a Garden of Eden view. Human life seems divided between grammatical competence, an ideal innately-derived sort of power, and performance, an exigency rather like the eating of the apple, thrusting the perfect speaker-hearer out into a fallen world" (p. 272). Although Hymes admits the validity of Chomsky's conception for linguistic research purposes, he considers it very limited, in particular within the field of linguistics aiming at

children's language development (p. 270). For Hymes the idea of communicative competence is based upon an integrative perspective of language and language acquisition. The sociocultural facet of language is as important as its grammaticality. Communicative competence should be centred on the diversity of a community for one to be able to see its homogeneity and learn from it. This is why he argues against Chomsky's notion of perfect competence, homogeneous speech community, and independence of sociocultural features (p. 274). Hymes's idea of competence suggests a real speaker with (tacit) knowledge and ability for use rather than an ideal speaker-listener and the idea that knowledge stands for competence instead of being a part of it. This is why performance has no negative connotation for him, as for Chomsky. Chomsky regards primary linguistic data as "fairly degenerate in quality" (Chomsky, 1965: p. 31) because performance does not reflect his *ideal speaker* and is, thus, not perfect. For Hymes "a model of language must design it with a face toward communicate conduct and social life" (Hymes, 1972: p. 278), otherwise the speaker will not be able to show feelings/intentions such as rejoice or persuasion: "A performance, as an event, may have properties (patterns and dynamics) not reducible to terms of individual or standardized competence. Sometimes, indeed, these properties are the point (a concert, play, party)" (p. 283). What is more, real speaker-listeners are able to, from a finite experience of speech acts, derive grammar that is *appropriate* in their community. In his book entitled *On Communicative Competence*, Hymes (1972) explains:

We have then to account for the fact that a normal child acquires knowledge of sentences, not only as grammatical, but also as appropriate...This competence, moreover, is integral with attitudes, values, and motivations concerning language, its features and uses, and integral with competence for, and attitudes toward, the interrelation of language with the other code of communicative conduct. (pp. 277-278)

In short, Hymes suggests that for language and for other forms of communication (culture) four questions arise:

1. Whether (and to what degree) something is formally *possible*;
2. Whether (and to what degree) something is *feasible* in virtue of the means of implementation available;
3. Whether (and to what degree) something is *appropriate* (adequate, happy, successful) in relation to a context in which it is used and evaluated;
4. Whether (and to what degree) something is in fact done, actually *performed*, and what its doing entails. [emphasis in the original] (p. 281)

...

In sum, the goal of a broad theory of competence can be said to be to show the ways in which the systematically possible, the feasible, and the appropriate are linked to produce and interpret actually occurring cultural behaviour. (p. 286)

All in all, language use contemplates cultural language knowledge and content in a context. These aspects cannot be dissociated. Saville-Troike sketches the relationship of domains of communicative competence as follows:

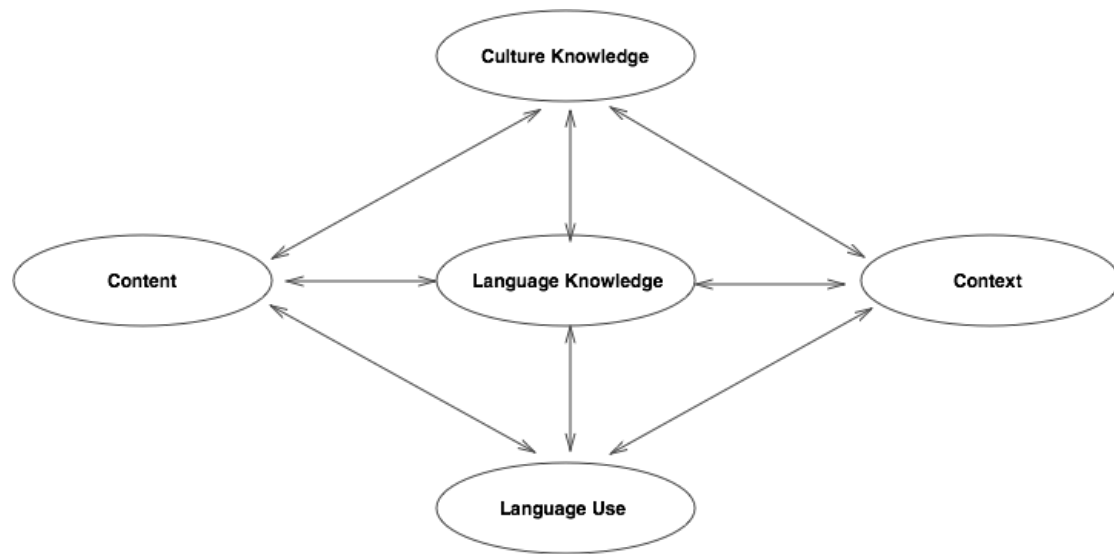


Figure 2.1 Relationship of communicative domains (Saville-Troike, 2007: p. 134)

Hymes's work, mostly descriptive, suggests a sociocultural theory that affects linguistics in general. In the 1980s, Canale and Swain integrate Hymes's work in a second language learning and teaching context. After analysing Chomsky's competence-performance distinction and the assessment of the validity of his hypothesis by other authors, Canale and Swain conclude that communicative competence is "...the relationship and interaction between grammatical competence, or knowledge of the rules of grammar, and sociolinguistic competence, or knowledge of the rules of language use" (Canale & Swain, 1980: p. 6). In their work their final theory states that communicative competence entails grammatical competence (knowledge of lexical items and of rules of morphology, syntax, sentence-grammar semantics, and phonology), sociolinguistic competence (sociocultural rules of use and rules of discourse) and strategic competence (verbal and non-verbal communication strategies to handle breakdowns in communication which can be related to both grammatical and sociolinguistic competency). Based on Hymes's theory, they highlight the importance of grammatical correctness and appropriateness when learning a language, but state that "[t]here is no strong theoretical or empirical motivation for the view that grammatical competence is any more or less crucial to successful communication than is sociolinguistic competence or strategic competence" (Canale & Swain, 1980: p. 27) and that the primary goal of a communicative approach should be the integration of these three without overemphasising any of them. Some years later, in his work entitled *From communicative competence to communicative language pedagogy*, Michael Canale uses the example of the procedure to obtain a driving license to illustrate the need of the combination of correctness and appropriateness: both the knowledge-oriented test and the skill-oriented test are essential to ensure the quality of the driver (Canale, 1983: p. 16). Much of previous research on communicative skills had ignored grammatical accuracy and knowledge of utterance appropriateness to a sociocultural context.

These are the guiding principles for a communicative approach pointed out by Canale and Swain in 1980:

- a) The three main competencies entailed in communicative competence – grammatical competence, sociolinguistic competence and strategic competence – should be integrated.
- b) The communication needs of the learner must be attended regarding the fact that they constantly change.
- c) Interaction should be meaningful and authentic.
- d) Aspects of communicative competence of the learner's native language should be used for second language learning.
- e) Communication-oriented second language learning should be interdisciplinary and draw as much as possible on other areas; second language culture is as important as language since it provides learners with the sociocultural knowledge needed for understanding the social meanings or values of utterances. (Canale & Swain, 1980: p. 27-28)

These assumptions lead us to three concepts of paramount importance in the context of a communicative approach to language learning and teaching: *collaboration*, *autonomy* and *authentication*.

First, Canale and Swain argue that grammatical competence, sociolinguistic competence and strategic competence cannot be seen in isolation, otherwise learners will probably master decontextualised grammar and lack the sociocultural knowledge for understanding and producing appropriate language as well as the strategies required to solve communication issues. This suggests that second language learning must echo the integrativeness of culture and language or content and language. In fact, Canale and Swain understand that the interaction of communicative competence with other systems of knowledge (e.g. world knowledge) is observable in actual communicative performance. What is more, "...the relationship between a proposition (or the literal meaning of an utterance) and its social meaning is variable across different sociocultural and discourse contexts, and...communication involves the continuous evaluation and negotiation of social meaning on the part of the participants" (p. 29). This concern about the unpredictability of language does not only prove the need to develop one's sociolinguistic and strategic competence; it also implies that meaning negotiation plays a role of paramount importance in this development. The expansion of the learners' strategic competence, for example, is most likely to be achieved through real-life, meaningful communication that goes beyond conventional classroom practice. *Collaboration* offers great potential for the enhancement of second language communicative competence as collaboratively solving real-life tasks strongly facilitates, or even demands, the negotiation evoked above.

Second, Canale and Swain claim teachers shall play the role of instigators of and participants in learners' meaningful communication, which places learners at the centre of their learning process. Collaborative practices encourage learners to develop their learning autonomy by looking for the support/resources they deem suitable for what they acknowledge as their communicative needs and purposes. *Learner autonomy* (Holec, 1981) implies learners assume responsibility for their own learning. It implies self-direction and reflection. The guiding role of the teacher is overriding in this context. Holec, who first coined the term *learner autonomy* in the 1980s, concedes the need for a 'helper' in the 1990s, a fundamental step for the concept of *guided autonomy*. Teachers must instigate their learners to gain awareness of and direct their

learning process fittingly. They can do so by creating enriching opportunities such as meaningful collaborative learning settings. This brings me to the next concept, *authentication*.

Third, *authentic* texts are suggested to be used in the second language classroom from the beginning because "...the second language learner cannot be expected to have achieved a sufficient level of communicative competence in the second language...if no knowledge of probability of occurrence is developed in the three components of communicative competence" (Canale & Swain, 1980: p. 31). Learners need to be in contact with real language to be able to find patterns, be it in terms of grammatical, of sociolinguistic or of strategic competence, hence the role of resources learners can authenticate in the development of communicative competence.

It is Little who analyses *autonomy* from a broader point of view and clearly relates it to *collaboration* and *authenticity*. For him autonomy is not the same as independence. In fact, interdependence in the form of interactive collaboration is considered crucial for learning. Authenticity plays a role in the development of communicative competence as well: "...authentic texts have the capacity to draw language learners into the communicative purpose of language teaching..." (Little, 1997: p. 225). In his book about *The Role of Authentic Texts* McGarry (1995) also claims that encouraging students to take responsibility over their work is likely to turn them into more active learners, determining what, how and when they learn.

A point needs to be made here so as to explore this idea of *authenticity*. Authenticity mostly refers to the truthfulness of origins – *authentic* generally means *genuine*, *real*, and *not fake*. In other words, when researchers address the importance of authentic texts, they, in most cases, mean real texts, which were not created for the sole purpose of being read and interpreted by learners. Widdowson, however, places a primary emphasis on the potential of texts to be made real or, in his own words, *authenticated* by the learner, and therefore become coherent discourse rather than just merely authentic: "This is not, let me emphasise again, a matter of simply presenting authentic user language, but of presenting language that learners can authenticate for themselves" (Widdowson, 2003: p. 115). Learners authenticate a text not because it is real, genuine, but rather because they are able to relate it to their own experience. And this means going a step further in understanding language learning and teaching – again, it means focusing on the learners, on their experiences, needs and purposes. In this thesis I shall use the term *authentication* rather than *authenticity*, except when referring to other authors' views. Canale and Swain's understanding of communicative competence places a stress on the need for learners to autonomously make language real and their own while interacting with it.

Canale (1983) adjusts the model suggested by Canale and Swain (1980) and adds one more domain to communicative competence: the discourse competence, previously integrated in sociolinguistic competence, which comprises the notions of cohesion and coherence.

The impact of these theories on documents regulating today's learning and teaching practices is controversial. Leung (2005) claims that the transfer of the concept of communicative competence initially developed by Hymes for ethnographic research into pedagogy produced abstracted contexts and idealised social rules of use-based (English language) native-speakerness. He explains that Hymes "...advocated the need to investigate and understand language use in specific social and cultural contexts...[and that the] social now resides in the

pedagogic projections of the expert knower, the expert teacher” (Leung, 2005: p. 127). According to Leung, the main problem resides in the abstract construct of the native speaker, which “...would only make sense if we specify individual/s or group/s of native speakers and the contexts of language use” (p. 130). Grammatical competence itself, among the four sub-components of communicative competence discussed earlier, is not as straight-forward as it may seem, since it is not language-based but variety-based (p. 130). Leung seems to speak of a native-speaker orientation in Canale and Swain’s work, that is, Canale and Swain’s understanding of *appropriateness* is in reality “native-speaker appropriateness” whereas for Hymes appropriateness in language use is mostly empirical and related to going out and engaging in actual social interaction. According to him, such prescriptivism in the pedagogic space may mislead students as to what appropriateness among speakers of English really is (pp. 131-132). This is related to Widdowson’s (Howatt & Widdowson, 2004) notion of authentication. Social interaction between teachers and students should obviously be “...influenced by participants’ perception of their role and interest in context, participant power differentials, localized social practices and cultural values, and a whole host of other contingent matters...” (Leung, 2005: p. 137). Leung therefore advocates the need for *convivial communication*:

Under contemporary conditions, it seems absolutely necessary for the concept of communicative competence to attend to both the standard and local Englishes, and to tune in to both established and emergent forms and norms of use. Through the adoption of different sets of intellectual sensitivities and sensibilities [that allow us to view the knowledge of other societies with a more open mind]...we can begin to de-reify culture-, context- and time-bound notions of linguistic correctness, social and cultural appropriateness, real-life feasibility and possibility in a convivial mood...The objectification and reification of curriculum knowledge largely based on native-speaker idealizations and the reduction of the social to mean classroom interaction have effectively insulated the concept of communicative competence from the developments in English and the myriad ways in which it is now understood and used in different contexts. Theoretically as well as pedagogically, there is every reason to reconnect with the social world if the concept of communicative competence is to mean anything more than a textbook simulacrum of Englishes in the world. (Leung, 2005: p. 139)

The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), a comprehensive descriptive schema that provides a common basis and language for the elaboration of syllabuses curriculum guidelines, course books, teacher training programmes and language examinations (Leung & Lewkowicz, 2012), and which claims to be built on the concept of communicative competence, considers *communicative language competences* entail linguistic, sociolinguistic and pragmatic competences (Council of Europe, 2001: p. 13-14).

Figure 2.2 sheds light on what each one of these comprises. According to Leung and Lewkowicz (2012), “[a]n expanded notion of communicative competence for curriculum design and assessment that takes account of the contingent nature of social interaction would need to turn to participatory engagement as an additional index” (Leung & Lewkowicz, 2012: p. 15), bearing in mind the fact that the notion of participation itself is an abstraction which would need to be operationalised. The CEFR does not overtly address social relationships in interaction (including classroom interaction) in which sociocultural factors affect participant discourse but rather addresses situation language use. In other words, it does not

adequately capture the agentive and contingent nature of co-constructed meaning-making and meaning-taking in social interaction, particularly in situations where high levels of ethnolinguistic diversity are fast becoming a norm. We suggest that for benchmarking curriculum and assessment frameworks such as

the CEFR to be relevant, they need to be empirically investigated and theoretically critiqued on a regular and systematic basis (p. 1).

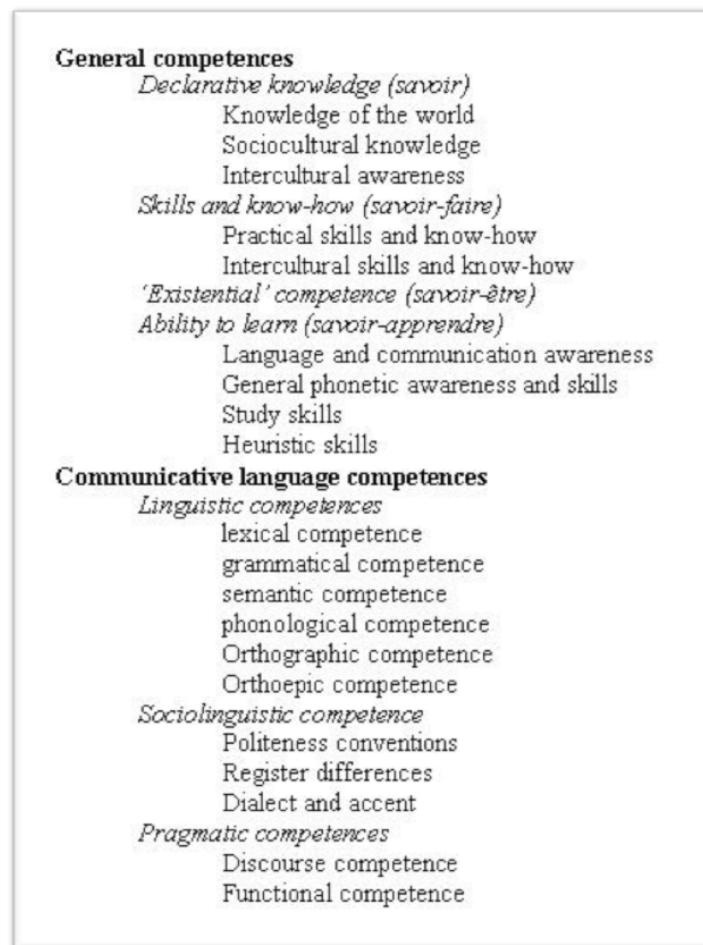


Figure 2.2 CEFR's user/learner's competences (Council of Europe, 2001)

Leung (2005) objects to conformity to native-speaker norms because it is not in line with this idea of ethnolinguistically diverse meaning co-construction. For Widdowson this conformity to native-speaker norms "...has ideological implications...the authoritarian imposition of socio-cultural values which makes learners subservient and prevents them from appropriating the language as an expression of their identity" (Howatt & Widdowson, 2004: p. 361).

These views are connected with the changes brought about by globalisation in the status of the English language: "The number of first-language (L1) speakers in the inner-circle countries is currently about the same as the number of second-language (L2) English speakers in the

outer-circle countries”² (Crystal, 2003: p. 141), not to speak of the number of people speaking English in the expanding circle, all logically leading to the emergence of *new Englishes*. This scenario led many authors to claim the relevance of English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) – “English when it is used as a contact language across linguacultures whose members are in the main so-called nonnative speakers” (Jenkins, 2006: p. 157) –, which produced the need “...to reflect on the consequences that the global spread of English is likely to have on the conceptualization, development, and teaching of English” (Seidlhofer, 2004: p. 209):

The existence of ELF is not intended to imply that learners should aim for an English that is identical in all respects. ELF researchers do not believe any such monolithic variety of English does or ever will exist. Rather, they believe that anyone participating in international communication needs to be familiar with, and have in their linguistic repertoire for use, as and when appropriate, certain forms (phonological, lexicogrammatical, etc.) that are widely used and widely intelligible across groups of English speakers from different first language backgrounds. This is why accommodation is so highly valued in ELF research. At the same time, ELF does not at all discourage speakers from learning and using their local variety in local communicative contexts, regardless of whether this is an inner, outer, or expanding circle English. (Jenkins, 2006: p. 161)

This new perspective on English communication and, consequently, on English language learning generated suggestions for pedagogical reform by English teachers and teacher educators. Despite (due to?) the openness concerning what ELF actually is, these suggestions gave rise to a “...reserved, even negative reception...” (Kohn, 2015: p. 1). Kohn (2015) argues “...for a reconciliation between ELT [English Language Teaching] and EFL and the implementation of a pedagogical space for ELF-related learning activities that enable pupils to focus on their own ELF-specific creativity within an overall Standard English (SE) orientation” (Kohn, 2015: p. 1). He understands that the “my English” condition is not an option but part of our human nature in the constructivist understanding:

Your ownership of a language is established through such a process of individual construction, influenced and shaped by what you are exposed to, where you come from, and where you want to be; and all this in social collaboration with the people you (want to) communicate and interact with. It is in this social constructivist sense that the English I acquire and develop is my own; inevitably different from any target language model no matter how strong the orientation. (Kohn, 2015: p. 7)

The example of the process of language acquisition of immigrants in second language acquisition settings is very elucidating of this condition since it is influenced by the socio-psychological development of their requirement profile (Kohn, 2011). Based on a social constructivist and developmental perspective on ELF, Kohn thus proposes a challenge to ELT professionals: adopting a weak SE orientation that acknowledges a common creative force underlying a learner’s language development, therefore new learner autonomy. Learners shall not engage in an “imitation-based cloning process” typical of a behaviourist language learning setting in which they comply with SE teaching norms imposed on them. Teachers shall not teach ELF either, they shall teach for ELF communication. Learners’ SE orientation shall mark a

² “The inner circle refers to the traditional bases of English, where it is the primary language: it includes the USA, UK, Ireland, Canada, Australia and New Zealand. The outer or extended circle involves the earlier phases of the spread of English in non-native settings, where the language has become part of a country's chief institutions, and plays an important 'second language' role in a multilingual setting: it includes Singapore, India, Malawi and over fifty other territories. The expanding or extending circle involves those nations which recognize the importance of English as an international language, though they do not have a history of colonization by members of the inner circle, nor have they given English any special administrative status. It includes China, Japan, Greece, Poland and (as the name of this circle suggests) a steadily increasing number of other states” (Crystal, 2003: p. 60). Crystal uses Braj Kachru’s model.

direction for their social constructivist learning activities in line with the “my English” condition outlined above. This implies highlighting communication as in communicative teaching or Content and Language Integrated Learning approaches and allowing certain mistakes that do not affect communicative success. Learners have to “...develop a positive non-native speaker feeling of agency and ownership, of self-confidence and satisfaction” (Kohn, 2015: p. 14). These are all related: “Speaker satisfaction is the force that links creativity with autonomy” (Kohn, 2014b: p. 2). Besides being learners, learners are speakers who do not speak like their teachers. In more practical terms, Kohn (2015) suggests:

- a) awareness-raising activities to make learners attentive and responsive to LF manifestations they might meet as well as to develop their tolerance towards them;
- b) comprehension activities for learners to be able to cope with ELF-specific issues e.g. unfamiliar pronunciation, unclear meanings, weak coherence;
- c) production activities to develop learners ELF-specific production skills, in particular pragmatic fluency, which “...is facilitated by a focus on form with an overall communicative and weak SE orientation” (Kohn, 2015: p. 14).

Kohn proposes a primary focus be placed on authenticated natural interaction that generates incidental language learning, and a secondary focus on pushed output processing and *languaging*, in particular on noticing, “talking-it-through” and solving language-related problems (Swain, 2005)³. E-learning is said to offer immense possibilities to facilitate the implementation of such activities and foci, e.g. assisted-corpora tools, communication-oriented platforms, virtual environments, etc. The case studies to be analysed in this PhD thesis shall offer insight into this.

2.2 The constructivist approach

The ideas of “co-constructed meaning-making and meaning-taking” (Leung & Lewkowicz, 2012: p. 1) as well as of “appropriating the language” (Howatt & Widdowson, 2004: p. 361) are closely connected to a constructivist approach to language learning and teaching. Kohn’s proposal of reconciliation between ELT and ELF (Kohn, 2011, 2014b and 2015) is based on a social constructivist and developmental perspective on ELF.

In an article entitled *Teaching English as a foreign language in accordance with Social-constructivist pedagogy*, Castro (2013) identifies a problem affecting Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) that social-constructivist pedagogy may help solve as well. Student-teacher discourse is not taking place, or at least not effectively, and so no real opportunities for learning are afforded. Castro claims that there is a trend towards book-centred didactics. Teachers understand that their main role is to decipher the course book to the students and thus often resort to their L1⁴. Assessment too becomes affected since students “...are forced to repeat the same exercises that will later on appear in the test...[and teachers] pretend that this shall result in actual learning...” (p. 106). According to him, just like any other instance of

³ See chapter 2.5 for a better understanding of this secondary focus.

⁴ This does not necessarily mean the L1 should not be used in the learning of a new language. The utility of such an approach shall be discussed in chapter 2.3.

teaching and learning, TEFL should be informed by the principles of social-constructivist pedagogy, otherwise it will fail to succeed, as real communication will not occur. Castro suggests what he calls a 'social constructivist rendition of TEFL' (p. 110), in other words, that English be taught as an International Language (TEIL). He further suggests, "English teaching should examine the internationality of its target language in the light of the sociological causes of which it is actually a consequence...international capitalism, a variable that any social constructivist orientation soon comes to disclose" (p. 111). From a pedagogical standpoint, such a view calls for reflective, critical didactics. Castro provides the example of Huang's study from 2012 in which EFL students train themselves in writing reflectively on how international dynamics impinge on their local, Chinese contexts. This study shows how students become motivated by the fact that the language used to discuss the topic is coherent with the topic itself. The stress is on the social-constructivist idea of constructing knowledge which can be authenticated by the autonomous learner, of having learners taking ownership of English by allowing them "...to voice, reflect and negotiate collectively their own relationship with the target language" (p. 113), it is about making the social relevance of the instructional content clear. This will surely trigger language production in the target language and, as Castro concludes, "[a]t the same time, the English language would begin to be less foreign" (p. 115). Appropriating the language as an expression of our identity means we do not need to conform to native-speaker norms when learning English (Widdowson, 2004) – ethnographic diversity can then be taken into account (Leung, 2005; Leung & Lewkowicz, 2012).

Constructivism is a theory of perception, comprehension and learning that started as a psychological and philosophical theory and was later adapted to the learning and teaching context. There were many contributions to the birth of Constructivism as a learning theory. One of them is Reader-response Criticism with its peak in the 60s and 70s with names such as Stanley Fish or Roland Barthes and *The Death of the Author* (1967). This literary school builds on the role of the reader for the meaning of the literary work. It is the reader who constructs this meaning on the basis of his or her life experience. On the other hand, the reader's experience prompts meaning construction, thus there is a text rebirth every time a different reader reads it. This is why Roland Barthes goes as far as to announce the author's death.

This idea of meaning construction based on one's own previous experience is the starting point of a constructivist view of learning. This notion dates back to Cognitivism or Cognitive Psychology, with Bartlett (1932), who found that when he asked people to reproduce an unfamiliar story they had read, people changed it to fit into their existing knowledge, and Neisser (1967), who first presented a compelling alternative to Behaviourism. Cognitivism mainly claims that information processing depends on previous knowledge and that knowledge construction is based on strategies derived from experience. Cognitivism as a learning theory is developed by Rumelhart and Norman (1975) and then further by Norman (1982). It is Jean Piaget, however, who is normally said to be the founder of Constructivism as a learning theory, with the development of his theory of cognitive development. In the fifties he coins three concepts to explain the way children master the construction of their own knowledge (Piaget, 1954): *assimilation*, *accommodation* and *equilibration*. Whereas *assimilation* describes the process of applying existing knowledge structures to new knowledge, i.e., using our existing knowledge structures to understand world events, *accommodation* refers to changes in mental structures to

incorporate external reality when the attempt to assimilate reality is fruitless and causes unbalance. *Equilibration* corresponds to the attempt to find a balance between assimilation and accommodation in order to progress. Rumelhart and Norman (1976) later structure learning slightly differently: *accretion*, as the process of introducing new knowledge structures into existing ones; *structuring*, as the reflective introduction or creation of new structures when the existing ones are not sufficient to interpret the material to be acquired; and *tuning*, which corresponds to constraining and generalizing the knowledge within the schemata of memory. This last stage of learning makes the use of knowledge more efficient, e.g. a beginner and an expert might both perform a task with perfect accuracy, but with marked qualitative difference.

Yet, what implications does all this have on learning practices? Autonomous interaction with authenticated input gains yet another dimension as in constructivist learning pupils are expected to learn by doing, by experimenting and shaping their outer and inner world. In a paper entitled *Der Konstruktivismus: Ein neues Paradigma in der Fremdsprachendidaktik*, Dieter Wolff (1994) is one of the first to introduce "...constructivist ideas as opposed to traditional instructivist theories of language learning and criticised the fact that instruction and transmission-based modes of learning still dominated even the communicative era" (Rüschhoff, 1999: p. 79). He introduces knowledge construction as the best foundation for language learning in the 21st century (Rüschhoff, 1999: p. 79), highlighting the principles of "learner orientation, process orientation and learner autonomy" (Wolff, 1994: p. 407). Wolff describes the constructivist classroom as follows: "In einem nach konstruktivistischen Prinzipien gestalteten Unterricht wird das Klassenzimmer zur Lernwerkstatt, werden die Lernenden zu Forschern, die selbständig Wissen zusammentragen, analysieren und bearbeiten..." (Wolff, 1994: p. 422). But implications go further beyond this.

According to constructivist principles, learning is first of all subjective. Thus, learning processes and products, just like the reading of a literary text under Barthes's understanding, vary from person to person even if occurring within the same context. Learning occurs through meaning construction based on previous personal knowledge and experimentation. It occurs by interrelation and not through transmission as in instructivist teaching. Learners are no islands – their background is part of their learning process. Learners authenticate their learning by relating it with their experience. All these conditions prove the need for differentiated learning – for every learner is a unique being.

A constructivist theory of learning and teaching understands knowledge as something mutable that demands constant updating. Learning is a never-ending active and dynamic process: learning means restructuring existing knowledge. Learning is also interdisciplinary and multidimensional. Developing learning strategies and metacognitive abilities is part of the learning process: learners' self-regulation and self-direction are essential. According to this view, learners need to assume responsibility for their learning to be able to continuously (re)assess it. Here resides a great part of their autonomy. They know not only what they are learning, but also the purpose of it, as well as the means by which they are learning it. Motivation is generated not only by learners' responsibility over their learning, but also because tasks and materials are authenticated by the learner and the classroom is linked to the external world – their learning is contextualised and knowledge is an integrated whole, not an accumulation of parts. Materials should therefore

present content from different perspectives. The only possible learning goal is the subjective construction of the world to subsist as a system capable of reproducing and maintaining itself. In order to achieve this crucial purpose, specific goals can be set such as the acquisition of skills and pieces of knowledge that might be needed in real life. Environments ought to be kept complex, as this is how they are in reality. The well-known proverb *Give a man a fish and he will eat for a day; teach him how to fish and he will eat for a lifetime* illustrates the concept of lifelong learning very well and brings me to the next point.

In a constructivist setting, learning is a combination of learners' autonomy and social interaction. On the one hand, learners rule over their learning process; on the other hand, they must negotiate meaning to expand their construction of meaning.

Lernen ist ein vom Lerner eigenständig gesteuerter Konstruktionsprozess, der auf dem individuellen Lernerwissen aufbaut und daher zu unterschiedlichen Ergebnissen führt. Es ist eingebettet in soziale Kontexte, die Interaktion mit anderen ist von großer Bedeutung. Es ist ein Produkt der Selbstorganisation des Lernenden und kann nur in Eigenverantwortung durchgeführt werden. Lernen kann von außen nur marginal beeinflusst werden. (Wolff, 1994: p. 415-416)

Collaboration is therefore crucial for learners to confirm the construction of their environment. Group work fosters deeper analyses, problem solving and attempts to put knowledge construction into words, inductive rather than deductive thinking. All these processes contribute to the development of learning awareness and further knowledge construction (Wolff, 1994). This is very important since knowledge is mutable and more important than merely accumulating knowledge is to acquire the necessary skills to constantly build on existing knowledge. Constructivist and communicative views of language learning and teaching suggest teachers cannot play a role of knowledge transmitters, they must be instigators of learning because, as previously said, "Lernen kann von außen nur marginal beeinflusst werden" (Wolff, 1994: p. 416). Teachers are not "...the sole source of language information..." anymore (Warschauer & Healey, 1998: p. 58). They are mediators, facilitators of the learning process.

Martel (2000) presents a helpful summary of principles of learning and teaching practices in the constructivist paradigm by comparing it with the instructivist view of learning in three dimensions (Figure 2.3): Individual dimensions, Social dimensions, and Tools and technologies. It is rather interesting to think of a supportive environment vs. a hierarchic one, and of a teacher who is a collaborator, a facilitator and sometimes even a learner, because knowledge is a dynamic process that evolves over time and culture and to which the teacher too has to adapt. This is why the teaching focus must be placed on the creation of relationships. This understanding brings about different relationships and collaboration modes. According to Rüschoff, the teachers' main goal in today's and tomorrow's world is to "...assist learners in their need to develop strategies of knowledge retrieval, production and dissemination" (Rüschoff, 1999: p. 80) because there is nothing such as "an easily controlled [objectivist] learning scenario" (Rüschoff, 1999) anymore. It is all about providing the learners with the tools to engage in learning as a lifelong process rather than offering them concrete pieces of knowledge which may swiftly become obsolete. Communicative competence too is enhanced by the language awareness and learning competence purported by a constructivist view of learning (Rüschoff, 1999).

	Constructivist practices	Instructivist practices
Individual dimensions		
1. Role of learner	Active constructor of knowledge Collaborator Sometimes an expert	Person who listens Always a learner
2. Conception of learning	Transformation of information into knowledge and meaning Based on observation, background and context	Accumulation of information
3. Basis for cognition	Interpretation based on background knowledge and beliefs	Accumulation based on past acquired information
4. Type of activities	Learner-centered, varied, according to learning style Interactive relationship	Teacher-centered Didactic relationship Same exercise for all
5. Type of environment	Supportive	Hierarchic
6. Type of curriculum	Resource-rich, activity-based Provides access to information on demand	Pre-established and fixed, needed resources only
7. Flow of activities	Self-directed flow	Linear and teacher-directed flow
8. Proof of success	Quality of comprehension and constructed knowledge	Quality of information remembered
9. Evaluation	In reference to competencies developed Portfolios	In reference to information Tests asking for short answers Standardised tests
Social dimensions		
1. Conception of knowledge	As a dynamic process that evolves over time and culture	A static truth that can be acquired once and for all, independent of the learner
2. Role of the teacher	Collaborator, facilitator, sometimes learner	Expert, transmitter of knowledge
3. Emphasis of teaching	Creation of relationships Answer to complex questions	Memorization Accent on raw information
4. Main actions	Work in co-operation Project development or problem resolution	Individual readings and exercises

	Hands-on, problem-centered	
5. Social model	<p>Community model, sense of ownership</p> <p>People act on their environment and are not only dependent on it; learner as agent extracting and imposing meaning</p> <p>Develop autonomy, metacognition and critical reflection</p>	<p>Classroom model</p> <p>People as recipients of transmitted knowledge</p>
6. Role of play	Play and experimentation as valuable forms of learning	<p>Play as wasted time</p> <p>Experimentation limited</p>
Tools and technologies	Varied: Computers, video, technologies that engage learner in the immediacy they are used to in their everyday lives, books magazines, periodicals, stills, photographs, films, etc.	<p>Pencils, notebooks, texts</p> <p>Few films, videos, etc.</p>

Figure 2.3 Constructivist vs. instructivist paradigm (Martel, 2000: pp. 56-57)

Rüschoff (1999) was concerned about the separation between theoretical principles and considerations and their practical implementation. He bases his distinction on the definition of the difference between constructivism and constructionism suggested by Papert in 1991. For Piaget constructivism is the theory that knowledge is constructed by the learner and not supplied by the teacher. Constructionism suggests that the learner is engaged building something external or at least shareable, such as a sand castle or a computer programme, which brings about a model based on a “cycle of internalization of what is outside, then externalization of what is inside and so on” (Papert, 1991: p. 3). Rüschoff thus proposes finding appropriate tasks which get the learner to do this in a learning setting: problem-solving tasks, hypothesis formation and validation, for example. Constructionism rests upon authenticated task-based learning that stresses transparent play and experimentation. Again relevance is placed on “...adding to and increasing the cognitive apparatus of the learner, constant cognitive growth and cognitive flexibility being of the utmost importance for living and learning in the knowledge society⁵” (Rüschoff, 1999: p. 84). Rüschoff introduces the term *template-based learning*, which “...entails the principle that any material we provide learners with should be open and flexible, but also provide learners with a frame to assist them in structuring and co-ordinating acts of knowledge construction” (p. 85). Templates as a reflective tool mainly aim at providing “...a framework for gathering information, stimulating recall of prior knowledge, and for guiding processes of knowledge construction”. They foster autonomy and authentication. I shall carry on using the term constructivism throughout this thesis even if, in a practical learning scenario, it should be understood in the sense of Papert’s or Rüschoff’s constructionism.

⁵ Rüschoff prefers the term *knowledge society* to *information society* (Rüschoff, 1999).

One last remark as regards this apparently clear separation of constructivist and instructivist language learning and teaching practices must be made. On the one hand, the implementation of social constructivist language pedagogy is not absolute; it must take learning objectives, procedural conditions and contextual constraints into account to succeed. On the other hand, practices which are apparently instructivist can be optimised if merged with constructivist language learning and teaching tasks. I shall use the example of memorisation in the shape of the so-called drill-type activities. If learners authenticate their input, these drilling exercises may be useful for learners to derive their own language patterns from the input given and thus build on their socioculturally-adapted communicative linguistic and strategic knowledge, as a communicative approach suggests. Kohn (2006: p. 3) makes a distinction between high-level (HLC) and low-level construction (LLC). According to him, if we understand learning to be construction, we should be concerned about using the constructive potential of activities correctly. Therefore, both high-level construction exploration and low-level construction processes can support constructivist learning. For example, making learners become more autonomous might demand LLC processes. What I am advocating here is, consequently, adequate pedagogical mingling and balance. Newmann and Wehlage's (1993) define Higher-Order Thinking and Lower-Order Thinking as follows:

Lower-Order Thinking (LOT) occurs when students are asked to receive or recite factual information or to employ rules and algorithms through repetitive routines. As information-receivers, students are given pre-specified knowledge ranging from simple facts and information to more complex concepts. Students are in this role when they recite previously acquired knowledge by responding to questions that require recall of pre-specified knowledge.

Higher-order thinking (HOT) requires students to manipulate information and ideas in ways that transform their meaning and implications, such as when students combine facts and ideas in order to synthesize, generalize, explain, hypothesize, or arrive at some conclusion or interpretation. Manipulating information and ideas through these processes allows students to solve problems and discover new (for them) meanings and understandings. (Newmann & Wehlage Wehlage, 1993)

However, LOT practices can also strongly contribute to the development of the learners' communicative competence and consequently performance. They are not necessarily less constructivist, since they enable learners to grasp language and construct the set of rules they deem necessary to facilitate their output processing, for example, if appropriately embedded pedagogically, as in the example above about drills. The role of pedagogical integration shall be investigated in the case studies this thesis centres on.

2.3 *Content and Language Integrated Learning*

Castro's (2013) proposition presented in the previous chapter places an emphasis on the fact that TEFL must integrate content and language because such integration will facilitate social-constructivist teacher-student interaction in the target language. Mehisto, Marsh and Frigols define Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) as "...a dual-focused educational approach in which an additional language is used for the learning and teaching of both content and language" (Mehisto, Marsh & Frigols, 2008: p. 9). CLIL, a bilingualism-derived concept, was coined in Europe in 1994 but the history of CLIL is longer than that, as "[t]he first known CLIL-type programme dates back some 5000 years to what is now modern-day Iraq" (p. 9). The authors also mention the use of Latin as a second language to teach

content. The Canadian immersion programmes starting in the 1960s belong to the most recent and influential examples in the history of CLIL⁶.

CLIL is an educational approach based on the rationale that “...learners will develop communicative competence through actually using the language as a medium of learning more efficiently than through the explicit language instruction received in traditional EFL classes” (Dalton-Puffer & Nikula, 2006: p. 241). Several contributions in research backed this belief: the idea of the importance of communicative competence, i.e., that knowledge of language is generated by participation in meaningful communicative events; Second Language Acquisition (SLA) theories which spread the notion that meaningful interaction and comprehensible output (Swain, 1985) are essential for language learning⁷; sociocultural and constructivist views on language learning as and happening through a social (collaborative and interactive) process (p. 241-242).

According to CLIL, language should not be learnt *per se*, but always in connection with specific content. CLIL involves learning a curricular subject through an additional language, e.g. English Biology teaching in Portuguese schools, but CLIL is an umbrella term covering a myriad of educational approaches – immersion, bilingual education, multilingual education, language showers and enriched language programmes – that allows for low to high-intensity exposure to teaching/learning through a second language (Mehisto, Marsh & Frigols, 2008).

Content drives CLIL. This is an essential concept, and it is one which often differentiates CLIL from approaches like content-based language education. The balance may differ according to model, or even according to what is being done in a specific class. *It is the blend that matters*, not the time attributed to each. [my italics] (Marsh, 2009)

An example of a CLIL setting would be a school in France in which some curricular subjects are not taught/learnt in French but in English. There are several understandings of where the lesson focus should be placed. In a first approach to CLIL there is a focus on subject learning and language is learnt incidentally/naturally through use (bilingual education). A second, language-driven approach embraces more traditional language grading and adjusts content and tasks to suit the current language level. In a third approach the focus is placed on both language and content learning (content-based/content-driven language learning) (Coyle, Hood & Marsh, 2010), and language is discussed when necessary, that is, when any content-based issue prompts it. For example, students sit in a Geography class in Japan. It becomes clear to the teacher that learners are not succeeding in analysing a chart in English. Language input such as useful collocations for graphic analysis as “The chart shows a slight decrease in the number of...” must be provided to facilitate this process. In this case, the subject is the main lesson focus but one can and should turn language into a topic. Again, authentication plays a very important role: language should be discussed, deepened if the learner feels the need to. This urge must arise from subject discussion. For example, students’ wish to be able to engage on a fruitful debate about Dolly, the first cloned sheep, in their Biology lesson, will generate a demand for lexical work on Genetics. In such an approach “...the focus of the classroom shifts from language to

⁶ See Mehisto, Marsh & Frigols (2008) for more on the history of CLIL.

⁷ See chapter 2.5 for more on these theories.

achieving something concrete with the language...” (Lasagabaster & Sierra, 2009: p. 13). In fact, “...students are likely to learn more if they are not simply learning language for language’s sake, but using language to accomplish concrete tasks and learn new content.” (Mehisto, Marsh & Frigols, 2008: p. 11-12). CLIL epitomises a task-based learning approach centred on authenticated tasks. The learners’ involvement contributes to the development of their self-confidence and autonomy towards lifelong learning. The challenge is to identify the language necessary for effective content and language learning. This appears to be the most appropriate CLIL model within a communicative and constructivist view of learning since it facilitates the development of learning and teaching according to the needs of learners as interactive agents of knowledge construction, and learner autonomy lies in their ability to take charge of their own learning (Holec, 1981).

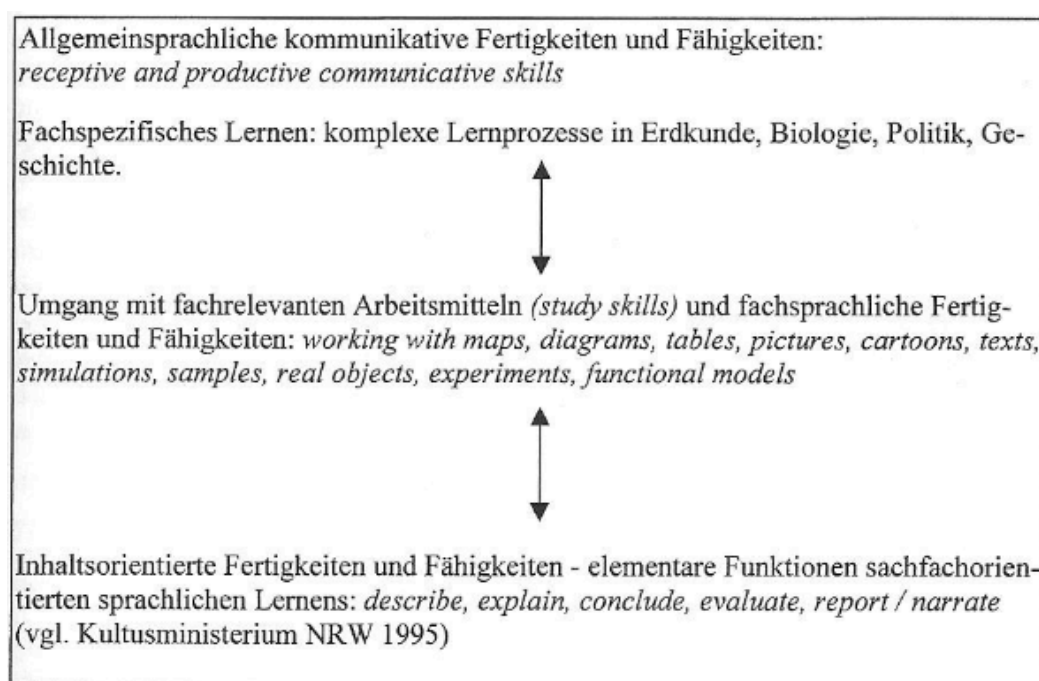


Figure 2.4 Relationship field of CLIL (Biederstädt, 2000: p. 129)

Such a model implies language across the curriculum. It fosters the recognition and manipulation of the connection between form and function by students since the second language is mastered in terms of action and discourse. Students make decisions and reflect on them. The fact that such contexts trigger metalinguistic awareness is of extreme relevance. Only by reflecting about the language and the language learning process can learners develop skills that prompt lifelong learning. Mehisto, Marsh and Frigols (2008) point out three CLIL foundation pieces: content, language, and learning skills, “...the cognitive and social skills and habits required for success in an everchanging world” (Mehisto, Marsh & Frigols, 2008: p. 12). Subject learning always involves language learning and vice-versa (Vollmer, 2000: p. 63), with core processes such as describing, explaining, concluding and assessing playing a main role. CLIL is based on the

co-construction of understanding and learning through the creation of “...meaningful connections between the learner’s lives and the content being taught in school” (Mehisto, Marsh & Frigols, 2008: p. 26) and by providing not only rich *input* but also opportunities for rich *intake* and *output* in a learning environment with a multiple focus. In such a model content and language get involved in a relationship of mutual demand in which the main challenge is

...kognitiv-konzeptuelle Anforderungen im Umgang mit Sachwissen an Sprachfunktionen generalisierender Art zu koppeln und deren Realisierung fremdsprachlich aufzubauen und sicherzustellen..., weil auf diese Weise die Mehrzahl der Lerner am Ende das erforderliche Wissen besser konstruiert und damit besser integriert und behält. (Vollmer, 2000: p. 67)

Biederstädt’s diagrams (Figure 2.4 and Figure 2.5) also illustrate this relationship.

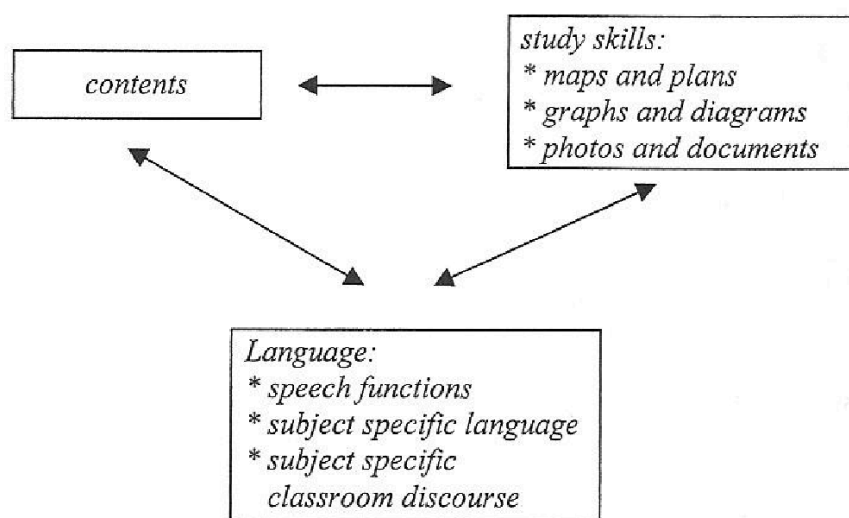


Figure 2.5 Content, language and learning and work techniques (Biederstädt, 2000: p. 129)

Another advantage of CLIL is that it fosters multilingualism: “[w]hen you look at good CLIL methods you will see ‘trans-linguaging’ used, which is the systematic use of more than one language. This is one mechanism to diminish...frustration” (Marsch, 2009) and to cut on the “...potentially alienating effects of monolingual teaching...” (Hall & Cook, 2012: p. 286). In fact, although *monolingual teaching*, i.e., the use of one’s new language only (vs. *bilingual/multilingual teaching*), was considered superior from the late nineteenth century onwards, comparing the learners’ own language and the new language later proved helpful in identifying points of difficulty for speakers of a particular language (Hall & Cook, 2012). Code choice and code-switching have thus become “...increasingly de-stigmatised beyond the classroom...” (p. 278). *Crosslingual* and *intralingual* teaching (i.e., bilingual/multilingual and monolingual respectively) are not, however, to be seen as opposites, but rather to form a continuum to suit specific learning purposes and contexts (Hall & Cook, 2012). Several current studies point out the usefulness of the transfer from the L1 in learning the L2, the L3, etc. In fact, constructivist views of learning suggest effective learning depends on the engagement of prior knowledge. On the other hand, exposure to CLIL enhances the L1, mainly due to the development of metalinguistic awareness in a focus-on-form approach to language learning and

teaching. Besides, a lack of proficiency in the L2 could be solved with the help of the L1 and the use of constructivist methodologies and scaffolding, the support given during the learning process to meet the needs of the student with the intention of helping him/her achieve his/her learning goals. Understanding functional patterns and lexis common to several languages facilitates learning.

One of the characteristics of European CLIL lies in the fact that learners will have had and continue to have the opportunity to develop their L1 in tandem with the L2. We assume that L1 academic knowledge will aid the learners in the elaboration of responses, indeed we would go so far as to say that it is crucial...the student texts should contain examples of rhetorical structures which they have acquired in L1 content learning yet which they have also recognised in, and can apply to, L2 content learning. (Lorenzo & Moore, 2010: p. 26)

The authors claim there was positive transfer between L1 and L2 knowledge in their study and thus conclude that "...integration [should] include and incorporate L1 development – after all, the goal is *bilingual* education [italics in the original]" (p. 34). This is in line with the idea that native-speaker models of English are no longer desirable (Leung & Lewkowicz, 2012; Hall & Cook, 2012). What is more, in a CLIL setting, language, content and learning skills must develop integratedly and in an intercultural environment (Castro, 2013; Müller, 2000):

Constructivism claims that all learning has to be embedded within contexts or cultural environments allowing interactions between participants which form a culture of learning...person, activity, and setting are indivisible and...cognition and culture form a unit. (Müller, 2000: p. 47)

The ability to interweave two or more languages in the L2 user's mind in terms of, for example, vocabulary, syntax, phonology and pragmatics was already advocated by authors such as Weinreich in the 1950s under the name of *compound bilingualism* (Hall & Cook, 2012), which means there is a fused representation of the languages in the brain. This is also in line with Castro's view (2013) that English teaching should be based on the internationality of the language in the capitalist sociological context of today. CLIL is among the three concepts in foreign language didactics Wolff (2000) considers may contribute to multilingualism. *Begegnungssprachenkonzept* (exploring the multicultural and multilingual potential of heterogeneous groups of learners) and learner autonomy are the other two.

In this connection, Breidbach (2000) points out the need for *bicultural competence* besides bilingual competence. The development of an intercultural communicative competence appears as essential (Leung & Lewkowicz, 2012; Hall & Cook, 2012; Castro, 2013). Communication-oriented second language learning should be interdisciplinary and draw as much as possible on other areas (Canale & Swain, 1980: p. 27-28). Mehisto, Marsh and Frigols claim that "[f]usion has become a fact of life. The fusion in CLIL has emerged to help young people build integrated knowledge and skills for this increasingly integrated world" (Mehisto, Marsh & Frigols, 2008: p. 7). This mingling of experiences is of paramount importance to ensure language learning is not totally informed by the classroom setting.

The language that learners get exposed to and are required to use in CLIL classrooms may thus be far removed, pragmatically, from language use in other settings. ...[W]hile being established as meaningful contexts for language use, CLIL classrooms still remain classrooms with their specific institutional constraints on discourse practices. ...[A]wareness of [this]...should serve as a starting point for considering which pedagogical action would best ensure students' access to a maximally rich linguistic learning environment within the constraints of the institutional context in question. (Dalton-Puffer & Nikula, 2006: pp. 263-264)

In fact, contextual features of individual classrooms often shape student production. For example, the object of directives (demand for information/action), the type of classroom register (instructional/regulative), the type of addressee (teacher or student), the age of students and the matrix culture (L1) interact with speakers' use of directives and affect their directness choices. Students are more direct in class than in their personal sphere/social talk because requests for information, for instance, have a central status in classroom interaction in which the institutionally-defined role relationship between teachers and students does not need to be negotiated (Dalton-Puffer & Nikula, 2006). This idea that language used in CLIL classrooms can be pragmatically removed from language use in other settings is in line with Leung's (2005) understanding that the kind of language taught in class is mostly discriminative of ethnographic variation and thus grammatically and lexically removed from real use, which, from his point of view, results from a distorted understanding and implementation of Hymes's notion of communicative competence, which comprehends sociolinguistic knowledge.

Online cross-cultural collaboration, for example, may help overcome this problem, as this thesis shall demonstrate. First, online communication is real and natural in the fact that it assumes a major role in our daily lives. Second, contact with people who speak a different L1 creates a genuine urge to communicate in the L2, in this case English, and facilitates interaction with different varieties of English, also English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) (Leung, 2005; Kohn, 2015), and thus social relationships in interaction (Leung & Lewkowicz, 2012). This is very important in a CLIL scenario since active learning with a focus on negotiation through peer co-operative work is one of the core features of CLIL methodology (Mehisto, Marsh & Frigols, 2008: p. 29). Collaboration ensures students get practice in directing their speech not only to the teacher but also to each other (Dalton-Puffer & Nikula, 2006). It is also important to notice that despite the fact that the language that learners get exposed to and are required to use in CLIL classrooms may be removed, pragmatically, from language use in other settings,

...CLIL teaching offers relatively more interactional space for students..., affording them with a range of communicative intentions that are not typical of most EFL lessons. Because the language of instruction is usually L2 for both learners *and* teachers an enhanced discourse space seems to be possible...That is, students' more active role in CLIL lessons as compared to L1 or EFL lessons may reflect their ability to appropriate for themselves a certain level of expertise in language matters vis a vis their instructors... [emphasis in the original] (Dalton-Puffer, Nikula & Smit, 2010: pp. 279-280)

In fact, recent studies show CLIL students develop their strategic competence better and, what is more, use a wider range of lexical and morpho-syntactic resources in more elaborate and complex written structures. They also show greater accuracy regarding not only tenses but also spelling in their written production and are abler to fulfil their communicative intentions (Dalton-Puffer, Nikula & Smit, 2010). So far, CLIL experience shows little or no impact on dimensions beyond sentence level such as cohesion, coherence, discourse structuring, paragraphing, register awareness, genre and style (Dalton-Puffer, Nikula & Smit, 2010).

In short, CLIL offers great potential for communicative and constructivist language learning and teaching based on learner authentication, autonomy and collaboration. The emphasis must be placed on *integrating* language and content, on achieving "a fusion of content and language (e.g. Coyle, Hood & Marsh, 2010: p. 41-45) rather than a simple combination of the two elements" (p. 288). The shortage of CLIL teachers – teachers need to master both the required language and

the content – and the lack of materials are two drawbacks of CLIL that cannot be ignored (Mehisto, Marsh & Frigols, 2008).

2.4 The lexical approach

It is clear that learning a language has, first of all, a communicative purpose, and to communicate we need words. Or at least this is the first thing that comes to my mind when thinking of a language: words, vocabulary. Yet, language teaching practices in schools tend to somehow be centred on teaching words to fill in grammar sets instead of focusing on enriching students' knowledge of collocations such as *fast food* and *a quick meal*, as opposed to **quick food* and **a fast meal*, or idioms like *barking up the wrong tree*. Grammar is valued over lexis when grammar is, in fact, much more abstract than lexis. A grammatically correct sentence will sound awkward if collocational preferences are violated. When, as children, we start to speak, it is not (correct) isolated grammar which first comes out but rather lexical chunks which we intuitively learn from our surroundings. We rapidly learn which words like each other, which words are sticky: "You shall know a word by the company it keeps" (Firth, 1957: p. 11). This suggests communication precedes and is the basis of grammatical competence.

Lewis (1993) suggests a lexical approach to language acquisition and language learning. According to him, children *acquire* language through a subconscious process during which they are unaware of grammatical rules, as when they acquire their first language, and simply know what is and what isn't correct. They *learn* a language, on the other hand, as the result of direct instruction in the rules of that same language.

The basic principle of the lexical approach is that "[l]anguage is grammaticalised lexis, not lexicalised grammar" (Lewis, 1993: p. 34). Lewis regards language as a set of words which are semantically rather than functionally tied. In other words, lexis is essential in creating meaning and grammar plays a compliant managerial role – it enables language to function. Therefore, fluency goes far beyond mastering grammar rules and a list of words, even if providing students with de-contextualised words at an elementary stage may accelerate their ability to communicate. Lewis makes the difference between vocabulary and lexis: "Lexis is not another word for vocabulary – it is a much richer concept..." (p. 193). There is much more to lexis than simple lists of words, nouns or verbs.

Lewis sees language as composed of lexical chunks which are most often multi-word and in which grammar as structure is subordinate to lexis. The term *chunking*, coined by Nattinger (1988), refers to how lexical items are stored in the memory. Bareggi explains:

Lexical items have the same generative power as grammar patterns, if not more. They allow the production of natural successful language. This contention is supported by data from statistical analysis of language. Analysing millions of occurrences of a language, one can indeed draw the conclusion that we do speak in pre-patterned chunks. It thus becomes necessary to identify these chunks and learn to use them correctly. (Bareggi, 2006: p. 2)

Lexical chunk is an umbrella term meaning any pair or group of words which tend to be found together, or in close proximity, any ready-made building blocks we would generally be able to recognise and reconstruct without hearing how the speaker finishes it. And "[l]exical items, with the exception of single words, are by definition relatively fixed multi-word combinations"

(Lewis, 1993: p. 124). Lewis claims “[i]t is the co-textual rather than situational elements of context which are of primary importance for language teaching...Sub-sentential and supra-sentential grammatical ideas are given greater emphasis, at the expense of earlier concentration on sentence grammar and the verb phrase” (Lewis, 1993: p. vii). The emphasis Lewis places on the co-text as opposed to the context of words derives from his corpus orientation. Krashen’s *Comprehensible Input Hypothesis* from the 1980s had already suggested that *comprehensible input* is essential for second language acquisition. By *comprehensible input*, Krashen meant input containing contextual information that helped make unacquired grammar comprehensible⁸ (Krashen, 1985). Widdowson’s differentiation between *text* and *discourse* hinted at in chapter 2.1 is equally relevant. Whereas *text* “...deals with patterns of the frequency and co-occurrence of linguistic features...”, *discourse* “...deals with the way language keys into context, with the pragmatic use of language in the transaction of social business, the interaction of social relations, the negotiation of indexical meaning of different kinds...” (Widdowson, 2003: 79). The former is related to performance and the latter to appropriateness in Hymes’s structured understanding of communicative competence (Hymes, 1972 – see chapter 2.1). Widdowson obviously claims for a shift in language learning from a focus on the performed, or even possible, to a focus on what is appropriate and can be authenticated. In his lexical approach to language learning, however, Lewis is mainly concentrating on the opposition *grammaticalised lexis* vs. *lexicalised grammar* and uses a corpus orientation, which obviously centres on the *co-text*, to validate his theory.

Lewis understands lexical items as “socially sanctioned independent units” (Lewis, 1993: p. 90), which can be words or consist of multi-word units. He names the different kinds of lexical items as follows:

- a) Words: the most basic and familiar kind of lexical item can have zero or low information content (*with, of*) or high information content (*book, advert, oscillate*); Lewis believes, however, “...that a great deal of language is stored in units larger than the individual word” (Lewis, 1993: p. 92);
- b) Multi-word items: marginal cases and overlapping categories;
- c) Polywords: mostly composed of two or three words, polywords may belong to any word class and the meaning of the whole word may range from transparent or totally opaque with regard to the meaning of each component word (*taxi rank, look up to, of course, the day after tomorrow*);
- d) Collocations: collocations are message-orientated and describe the way individual words co-occur with others; they may vary from free (totally unexpectedly novel, as dictated by the creative, grammatical, competence-based pole of language) to fixed (rigidly institutionalised or ossified form), which is a kind of polywords; one element of a collocation pair may strongly, or even uniquely, suggest the other element, but this degree of fixedness is non-reciprocal (as in *rancid butter*); collocations and individual words differ from institutionalised expressions, discussed below, mainly in that they are

⁸ See chapter 2.5.1 for more on Krashen’s theory.

related to content expressed rather than to what the language user is doing (complaining, contradicting, etc.);

- e) Institutionalised expressions: essentially pragmatic in character, they enable the language user to manage aspects of the interaction; they may be sub-categorised as follows:
 - i. Short, hardly grammaticalised utterances (*not yet*);
 - ii. Sentence heads or frames (*That's all very well, but...*);
 - iii. Full sentences easily recognised as fully institutionalised.

Lewis is nevertheless somewhat careful about this categorisation:

Immediately we see that the categorisation is fuzzy edged, and a matter of interpretation rather than objective fact... We fortunately, are not looking for rigidly defined categories, only useful ways of grouping... almost all grammatical categorisation has fuzzy edges; it comes as no surprise that attempts to categorise lexis raise similar problems. (Lewis, 1993: p. 93)

Lewis believes vocabulary teaching is usually directed at naming more and more objects. However, lexical chunks integrate other words traditionally associated with grammar and function words that have signification as well. These are connectors, intensifiers, auxiliaries, determiners and prepositions. In fact, for Lewis, “[c]ontextualisation means noting the *situation* in which the word may occur, but most importantly noting *the co-text with which it can regularly occur*” [emphasis in the original] (p. 103). A very good example provided by the author shows words carry more meaning than grammar and so, in general, words determine grammar: it will be quite easy to predict which sentence one would come up with by having to use the words *miss*, *last* and *bus* since there are only two or three probable utterances: *Hurry up or we'll miss the last bus* or *Sorry, I missed the last bus* are probably the ones that first occurred to you. Pragmatic inferences are very important, for the same reason real texts taken out of a newspaper relevant to the learner are much more important than any text created to be part of a course book only. We base our language production on stored mutable and variable, because evolving, lexical chunks. Again, only through contact with real language variation and mutability can learners have access to real English (Leung, 2005). For Lewis, listening is essential to acquire/learn a language and grammar/vocabulary is a continuum rather than a dichotomy. The role of grammar as a *receptive* skill must be recognised. Lewis's view of language, and thus language acquisition/learning, is intimately related to Hymes's notion of communicative competence, as opposed to Chomsky's, in that there is nothing such as perfect competence in real world – sociocultural features shape competence and thus performance. It is not very useful to insert new words into the gaps of mastered sentence frames because the objective of successful, efficient communication is not to produce possible grammatically correct sentences but rather probable, natural utterances: “Language is recognised as a personal resource, not an abstract idealisation” (Lewis, 1993: p. vi). Chomsky's famous sentence “Colourless green ideas slept furiously” serves as an example, since it is grammatically correct and possible but rather unlikely to be used (Bareggi, 2006): “...communicative power...precedes and is the basis, not the product, of grammatical competence” (Lewis, 1993: p. vii).

This theory obviously implies a major shift in the focus of language teaching from the learning of grammar rules to the learning of these chunks, in which “[a] central element of language teaching is raising students' awareness of, and developing their ability to 'chunk' language successfully” (Lewis, 1993: p. vi). Lewis recognises the utility of institutionalised expressions,

for example, for increasing the elementary student's communicative resources swiftly (p. 95). The following sheds light on the extent to which Lewis's understanding of language affects language learning practices:

...an important part of language acquisition is the ability to produce lexical phrases as unanalysed wholes or 'chunks', and that these chunks become the raw data by which the learner *begins to perceive patterns, morphology, and those other features* of language traditionally thought of as 'grammar'. Within such a model, phrases acquired as wholes are the primary resource by which the syntactic system is mastered. Language can be analysed at many different levels but...this does not necessarily imply that it is always useful to analyse it, nor, more importantly, that mastering the language involves 'assembling' it from its smallest component parts. Language teaching – often obsessed with teaching rather than learning – may have introduced counter-productive methodology by insistence on this essentially synthetic approach. (pp. 95-96)
...historically we have studied language by breaking it into the wrong bits – words and structures...A parallel may help clarify the radical nature of the shift in perception – imagine English analysed by syllables, rather than words. [my italics] (p. 104)

When suggesting specific language teaching exercises ruled by a lexical approach, Lewis points out lexical phrase drills in which lexical phrases are learnt as unanalysed wholes as well. Once again, both high-level and low-level construction practices are interwoven: at an elementary stage it might be useful not to analyse the lexical chunks that are to be acquired whereas at other stages reflection with the aim of developing language awareness appears as essential. In this case, exploring the environment in which words occur can be a practical way of implementing a lexical approach to language learning, therefore a CLIL setting might favour a lexical approach to language learning:

'[t]he low frequency words...do not deserve teaching time, but gradually need to be learned. The most effective way of dealing with them is for learners to work on strategies for learning and coping with them'...Effective vocabulary learning is favoured by deep processing, as advocated by cognitive linguistic approaches...In Boers & Lindstromberg's opinion, cognitive linguistic motivation, which is defined as the phenomenon whereby 'linguistic form betrays an analogy to extra-linguistic phenomenon', may help learners. The two authors consider as types of cognitive linguistic motivation meaning-meaning connections, form-meaning/meaning-form connections, and form-form connections. [my italics] (Bozzo, 2012)

On the other hand, following from the previously suggested fact that language evolves, teaching is a naturally evolving process as well. Teachers ought to adapt their practices to the natural evolution of lexical chunks: "Evidence from computational linguistics and discourse analysis [must] influence syllabus content and sequence" (Lewis, 1993: p. vi).

Again, the L1 can obviously play a role in learning the new language since it will enable learners to understand the idea of lexical chunk. And by being aware of lexical chunks in their own language learners will more easily learn the new language by comparison:

It is not a matter of word-for-word but of chunk-for-chunk comparison. So, next time your students ask 'How do you say X in English?', don't answer directly – even if it is an apparently 'easy' word – but take the question as an opportunity to analyse the Italian [equivalent to L1 in this context] word in all its meanings, collocations, fixed expressions, etc. Then compare all that to its corresponding English meanings, collocations, fixed expressions, etc....What you will almost certainly discover is that there is seldom a word-for-word correspondence. (Bareggi, 2006: p. 3)

Lewis claims that (1) developing the students' ability to use an L2 dictionary as a learning resource to investigate word grammar, collocational range, separability of phrasal verbs, etc. and (2) helping them identify lexical phrases in text are two skills central to the Lexical Approach (Lewis, 1993: p. 132).

One last aspect requiring reflection concerns Lewis's belief that, for language acquisition not to be biased or defective, both spoken and written resources are required. He adds, however, that because producing written text is mostly a highly self-conscious, reflective, non-spontaneous activity, this is an area of language where learning can contribute directly to more effective performance, and thus acquisition. The role of writing in optimising language performance and acquisition is rather pertinent for the case studies to be presented in this thesis, as we shall see.

2.5 Collaborative output processing

2.5.1 From Input to Output – communication with a focus on form

An issue regarding second language acquisition which deserves special attention and is of major importance for this study concerns the role played by input and output. For two reasons, Krashen's *Comprehensible Input Hypothesis* from the 1980s must be analysed: (1) he considers input to be at the centre of second language acquisition; (2) he claims that output/production is not required for second language acquisition but results from acquisition.

As far as (1) is concerned, Krashen claims second language acquisition occurs the same way as first language acquisition, namely through receiving *comprehensible input*, i.e., by understanding language “containing unacquired grammar with the help of context, which includes extra-linguistic information, our knowledge of the world, and previously acquired linguistic competence” (Krashen, 1985: p. 2). What Krashen means by this is that we understand input that contains structures at our next level of competence – “We move from *i*, our current level, to *i* + 1, the next level along the natural order [suggested by Chomsky], by understanding input containing *i* + 1” (p. 2). This means contextual information helps make input at a ‘next level’ comprehensible.

The second reason (2) why Krashen's theory of second language acquisition must be analysed has to do with Krashen being categorical that input is an ‘essential environmental ingredient’ and that two-way interaction can be an excellent way of obtaining comprehensible input because there is more negotiation of meaning, but that two-way interaction is not necessary for language acquisition:

...we acquire spoken fluency *not* by practising talking but by understanding input, by listening and reading. It is, in fact, theoretically possible to acquire language without ever talking...[Output] will also affect the *quality* of the input directed at the acquirer. Conversational partners often try to help you understand by modifying their speech (‘foreigner talk’). They judge how much to modify by seeing whether you understand what is said, and also by *listening to you talk*...Engaging in conversation is probably much more effective than ‘eavesdropping’ for language acquisition. In conversation, the second language acquirer has some degree of control of the topic, can signal to the partner that there is a comprehension problem, etc. In other words, he can manage and regulate the input, and make it more comprehensible...Hence the indirect contribution of speech. [emphasis in the original] (Krashen, 1982: pp. 60-61)

Whereas Krashen's belief that comprehensible input is essential for language acquisition proves very relevant, the idea that output is not the cause but the result of acquisition proves less solid. Long (1983) claims that modifications of the interactional structures of the conversation by native speakers addressing non-native speakers are more important in making input

comprehensible than modifications of the input itself (Krashen's *foreigner talk*). Modifications of the interactional structures of the conversation would include strategies to avoid conversational problems, tactics to repair the discourse when problems occur, and strategies and tactics, which serve both functions (Long, 1983: p. 126). So, in short, language that contains some new element but is still understood by the learner because of linguistic, paralinguistic or situational clues, or world knowledge backup, is *comprehensible input* for Krashen and *negative input* for Long, that is, feedback to the learner which through explicit corrections as well as confirmation and clarification checks indicates that output was unsuccessful. Two concepts emerge from Long's understanding that opened the way to new insights: interaction and negotiation of meaning.

It is in this connection that Swain formulates the *Comprehensible Output Hypothesis* (Swain, 1985) drawing on the French immersion programmes in Canada, which show some unexpected outcomes. She explores the learning context of French immersion students – children whose first language is English but are learning French as a second language in the school setting of a French immersion programme in Canada. These students have been receiving considerable comprehensible input in French for almost seven years but still do not succeed in fully acquiring the target system. These immersion pupils are observed to be on native speaker level as regards reception skills; with regard to their production skills, however, they are not, even if proving more proficient than regular learners of French as a Second Language. On the one hand, "...it seems likely that the diet of comprehensible, noninteractive, extended discourse received by the immersion students may account – at least in part – for their strong performance in this domain [that of discourse competence] relative to native speakers" (Swain, 1985: p. 247); on the other hand, however, immersion students tend to perform more poorly than native speakers in the grammatical competence (also in the grammatical aspects triggered by the sociolinguistic and discourse competences). Swain therefore understands that the wealth of comprehensible input these students are being exposed to is not enough to acquire a language in all its dimensions and that *output processing* is fundamental in this regard. She understands that French immersion students are not being given sufficient opportunities for *comprehensible output*, claiming such opportunities would foster the grammatical competence by moving the learner from a purely semantic language analysis (as prompted by the sociolinguistic and discourse competences) to a syntactic language analysis. Swain realises comprehensible input is not the only causal variable in second language acquisition and that comprehensible output plays a major role in this regard. She observes that both Krashen and Long overstated the impact of comprehensible input (and the related impact of interaction in which meaning is negotiated) on grammatical development. Based on a theoretical framework of linguistic proficiency that considers second language acquisition includes the acquisition of grammatical, sociolinguistic, strategic and discourse competence (Canale & Swain, 1980; Canale, 1983), she points out three functions of output *beyond that of enhancing fluency*, i.e., that relate more to accuracy, as enhancing fluency does not necessarily improve accuracy (Swain, 1995):

- a) *The noticing/triggering function (consciousness-raising role)*. Producing language (*vocally* or *subvocally* [Swain, 1995: p. 125]) makes learners aware of their linguistic problems. This may trigger cognitive processes conducive to generation of new

knowledge or consolidation of acquired data. Swain gives examples of cognitive processes learners engage in when they notice their problems: "...extending first language knowledge to second language contexts; extending second language knowledge to new target language contexts, and formulating and testing hypotheses about linguistic forms and functions" (Swain, 1995: p. 130), which leads to the second function of output. In a study about noticing, Izumi & Bigelow place special emphasis on finding out whether output actually promotes noticing of form. They become aware of the relevance of *extended* opportunities to produce output and receive appropriate input in improving the use of form (Izumi & Bigelow, 2000).

- b) *The hypothesis-testing function.* Language production enables the testing of a hypothesis about comprehensibility or linguistic well-formedness. Swain provides evidence for this aspect by saying that if learners were not testing their means of expression either semantically or morphosyntactically, they would not change their output in response to clarification or confirmation requests. She adds that learners only modify the part of their output that corresponds to their hypothesis to meet communicative needs; "...they may output just to see what works and what does not" (Swain, 1995: p. 132). Output modification is therefore more likely to happen if *pushed*.
- c) *The metalinguistic function (reflective role).* Output fulfils a metalinguistic function, as it enables learners to use language to reflect on language produced by others or themselves (Swain, 2005). This enables them to control and internalise linguistic knowledge and may thus be considered the pedagogical means by which it is ensured that the other two functions operate.

Swain does not claim that any or all of these functions operate whenever learners produce the target language but she argues output allows for the development of communication with a focus on form (Swain, 1995). Learners often claim to understand their interlocutors when, in reality, they do not. The assumption of an interaction input hypothesis that the exchanges themselves are facilitative to grammatical acquisition presupposes that the learner can pay attention to meaning and form simultaneously, which seems unlikely. According to Swain, the learner can only concentrate on form after understanding content and not the other way round, which means that interaction and meaning negotiation are essential for the grammatical competence to be developed.

In sum, output may stimulate learners to move from the semantic, open-ended, non-deterministic, strategic processing prevalent in comprehension to the complete grammatical processing needed for accurate production. Output, thus, would seem to have a potentially significant role in the development of syntax and morphology, a role that underlies the three functions of output... (Swain, 1995: p. 128).

In addition, collaborative practices enable incidental attention to form in accordance with the needs and interests of students:

While not explicitly addressing CBI [Content-Based Instruction], Ellis (2006) states that 'focus on form can be incidental, where *attention to form in the context of a communicative activity is not predetermined but rather occurs in accordance with the participants' linguistic needs as the activity proceeds*' (p. 100-1). This flexible approach to addressing grammar concerns would alleviate problems of inappropriate matching between the grammatical focus of lessons and the needs and interests of students (Garcia Mayo, 2002). One approach to introducing such flexibility into the language classroom is to employ collaborative practices and principles into the learning process. [my italics] (Kessler, 2009: p. 80)

For Swain, the role of output goes beyond generating comprehensible input. Although it does not negate the importance of input or input comprehension but complements and reinforces it (Izumi & Bigelow, 2000), the three functions of output outlined above demonstrate that there are roles for output in second language acquisition that do not depend on comprehensible input.

Output pushes learners to process language more deeply (with more mental effort) than does input. With output, the learner is in control...learners can play more active, responsible roles in their learning. In speaking or writing, learners can 'stretch' their interlanguage to meet communicative goals. They might work towards solving their linguistic limitations by using their own internalized knowledge, or by cueing themselves to listen for a solution in future input. (Swain, 1985: p. 127)

The three functions of output outlined trigger "...a shift in meaning from output as a noun, a thing, a product to output as a verb, an action, a process" (Swain, 2005: p. 2). Swain argues that comprehensible output is a necessary mechanism of acquisition, independent of the role of comprehensible input, which is generally missing in typical classroom settings, language classrooms and immersion classrooms included. She realises that Canadian immersion students do not talk as much in French (second language) as they do in English (first language) and that, most importantly, teachers are not as demanding in terms of accuracy or sociolinguistic appropriateness. As Long previously indicated with regard to language classes, in content classes, and so immersion classrooms, teachers talk and the students listen, and there are not many exchanges in which teacher and student are conversational equals. Therefore, immersion students have little opportunity to participate in two-way, negotiated meaning exchanges in the classroom in comparison to 'street learners' of the target language (Swain, 1985).

One of the contributions of output in second language acquisition is that of generating the *contextualised* and *pushed* language use Swain is describing here. She observes that immersion students are not being given *adequate* opportunities to use the target language in the classroom context nor being *pushed* in their output. On the one hand, "...in listening (and also reading), semantic and pragmatic information assist comprehension in ways that may apply differently in production in that they can circumvent the need to process syntax" (Swain, 1995: p. 127). On the other hand, immersion students have been developing strategies for getting their meaning across to teachers and peers, which suggests little social or cognitive pressure to produce language that reflects more appropriately or precisely their intended meaning: they are not being pushed to being more comprehensible. Again, this means that although immersion students receive *comprehensible input*, they do not receive much *negative input*, and even though they have considerable written practice in precise and appropriate meaning conveyance, they have limited opportunity regarding speaking skills (Swain, 1985).

Simply getting one's message across can and does occur with grammatically deviant forms and sociolinguistically inappropriate language. Negotiating meaning needs to incorporate the notion of being pushed towards the delivery of a message that is not only conveyed, but that is conveyed precisely, coherently, and appropriately. Being 'pushed' in output...is a concept parallel to that of the *i + 1* of comprehensible input. Indeed, one might call this the 'comprehensible output' hypothesis. (Swain, 1985: p. 249)

2.5.2 Peer interaction and *linguaging*

It has been suggested that when processing their output in speaking and writing, learners are pushed to stretch their interlanguage to meet communicative goals. Vygotsky's studies from the

1930s (Vygotsky, 1978) point to the role of intrapersonal and interpersonal interaction in the development of mental skills, and consequently to the relevance of dialogic interaction for second language acquisition. Vygotsky places great emphasis on private speech, a form of speech children use to control thought and behaviour that adults also make use of, when facing a more complex task, for example. Swain's belief that producing language vocally or subvocally makes learners aware of their linguistic problems, as in the noticing/triggering function of output, is based on Vygotsky's argument. Vygotsky suggests that cognitive processes, presumably including language development, arise from the interaction that occurs between individuals within the same *Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD)*. Learners become able to solve problems beyond their developmental level through interaction with an *expert* that provides assistance, either the teacher or a more capable peer within the same ZPD. When they collaborate and interact to solve linguistic problems, dynamic ZPDs are created in which cognitive processes are successively externalised and internalised. ZPDs are dynamic because they are created in response to different expertise. The role of expert is not always played by the same pair or group member. It is fluid. Bruner (Wood, Bruner & Ross, 1976) calls this assistance *scaffolding*. Peer interaction pushes externalisation«--»internalisation processes (see Papert, 1991) in which language works as a mediator for linguistic problem-solving. The result is the development of social and cognitive skills. Swain (1995) argues output facilitates this process:

Through a process of appropriation, what originated in the social sphere comes to be represented intra-psychologically, that is, within the individual...one general process of development, from inter-mental to intra-mental... (p. 135) The output brought about through the *collaborative dialogue* may allow learners *the necessary support to outperform their competence and in the process develop their interlanguage*. [my italics] (Swain, 1995: p. 137)

Swain uses Donato's concrete evidence (Donato, 1994) to illustrate Vygotsky's theory that interaction between peers within the same ZPD favours language acquisition: "...of the outcomes of the thirty-two cases of collective scaffolding observed in the planning session, 75% were used correctly one week later" (Swain, 1995: p. 138). She also refers back to McDonough's research (McDonough, 2001) in which it was found that learners who produced modified output were more likely to learn the modified items than the ones who did not (Swain, 2005). In Loewen's study (Loewen, 2002), too, both uptake and successful uptake were more likely to occur in response to elicitation moves in which students were pushed to modify their output (Swain, 2005). In her writings, Swain provides varied evidence of language learning derived from interaction among speakers during problem-solving tasks: in most of the cases, one week after discussing a meaning or formal issue, learners recall what they consider to be the correct option after negotiation.

Swain finally realises that the kind of speech learners produce when working on a task collaboratively, either by reflecting on their language production when engaged in meaning negotiation or by performing problem-solving tasks, is an expanded form of private speech and enhances learning. She calls this *linguaging*: "Linguaging is an important part of the learning process as it transforms inner thoughts to external knowing, and conversely transforms external knowing into internal cognitive activity" (Swain et al., 2009: p. 5). In her article entitled *Linguaging, Agency, and Collaboration in Advanced Second Language Proficiency*, Swain addresses the difficulties of finding a suitable term for her study focus by claiming that output

does not allow for the image of language as a cognitive activity (Swain, 2006). She goes on to her new term:

Over time, the word ‘*linguaging*’ emerged. For me, it conveyed an action – a dynamic, never-ending process of using language to make meaning...*linguaging* is a process which creates a visible or audible product about which one can *language* further. (p. 97)

To avoid confusion with other uses of the term in research, Swain explains that “I am using it to refer to *producing* language, and, in particular, to producing language in an attempt to understand – to problem-solve – to make meaning” [emphasis in the original] (p. 96). Swain places an emphasis on communication with a focus on form, that is, communication in which both fluency and accuracy assume equal standards. She assumes that “...the capacity for thinking is linked to our capacity for *linguaging* – the two are united in a dialectical relationship” (p. 95). Through the process of *talking-it-through* (Swain & Lapkin, 2002), one *re-linguages*, that is, re-cognises and re-structures one’s knowledge by *linguaging*. This is clearly in line with a constructivist view of learning. Swain calls it the *coming-to-know-while-speaking* phenomenon, as we come to a new understanding, a new insight: “...we can observe learners operating on linguistic data and coming to an understanding of previously less understood material. In *linguaging*, we see learning taking place” (Swain, 2006: p. 98). In fact, in the examples she provides from her studies, “...the students’ post-test results are directly traceable in, and to, the dialogue – the *linguaging* – of the students” (Swain, 2006: p. 105). Learning becomes permanent through the process of *talking-it-through*.

In one of her studies Swain names five types of *linguaging*: (1) paraphrasing; (2) inferencing, which consists of (a) integration, (b) elaboration and (c) hypothesis formation; (3) analysing; (4) self-assessment; and (5) rereading (Swain et al., 2009: p. 11). These actions assign a new role to learners. They act over their environment by perceiving, analysing, rejecting, accepting, deciding, etc. This is what Swain (2006) calls *agency*. Even if teachers’ monitoring might be needed to make sure learners move in the right direction and learn right (Brooks & Swain 2009), Swain’s empirical studies provide clear evidence that students can learn from the act of teaching other peers, as “...L2 learning ‘occurs *in* interaction, not *as a result of* interaction’...” [emphasis in the original] (Swain, 2007: pp. 138-139). Swain explains that the outcomes of *linguaging* for the learners participating in her study were two-fold:

First, their *linguaging* articulated and transformed their thinking into an artifactual form, and as such it became available as a source of further reflection. Through it, these students created new meanings and understandings – that is, they learned both through and about language. (Swain, 2006: pp. 106)

In a study from 2009, Swain et al. conclude that students who *language* more, learn about the grammatical concept of voice in French with greater depth of understanding than the ones who *language* less. What is more, both immediate and delayed post-tests show there is an evident relationship between the quality and quantity of *linguaging* and performance. *Linguaging* is hence suggested to be a key element on the internalisation process of L2 grammatical concepts (Swain et al., 2009).

A last remark must be made here concerning Swain’s *Comprehensible Output Hypothesis*. Whereas Krashen is mostly concerned with receptive skills, in particular listening, when proposing his *Comprehensible Input Hypothesis*, Swain’s studies are obviously oriented by

production skills. They tend to be based on collaborative writing tasks which students *language* about, that is, in which writing and speaking become intertwined because learners *language* about written language. Writing together tends to elicit collaborative dialogue as the students discuss how best to represent their intended meaning (Swain, 2005). *Languageing* facilitates the kind of self-reflection some authors only attach to writing:

...analytic thinking followed the acquisition of written language 'since it was the setting down to speech that enabled man clearly to separate words, to manipulate their order and to develop syllogistic forms of reasoning' (Goody, 1977: 11). Goody goes on to make even larger claims about the ways in which the acquisition of writing, which permits man to reflect upon what he has thought, has permitted the development of cognitive structures which are not available to the non-literate. (Brown & Yule, 1983: pp. 12-13)

The interaction of learners working together in collaborative writing tasks can offer insight into the social and cognitive processes involved in language learning: "[t]he unit of *analysis of language learning* and its associated processes may...more profitably be the *dialogue*, not input or output alone" [my italics] (Swain, 1995: p. 142).

The type of interaction taking place plays a determinant role in this context. In her analysis of patterns of interaction in ESL pair work, Storch (2002) identifies four distinct patterns of dyadic interaction distinguishable in terms of equality and mutuality (Figure 2.6) and suggests that certain patterns are more conducive to language learning than others.

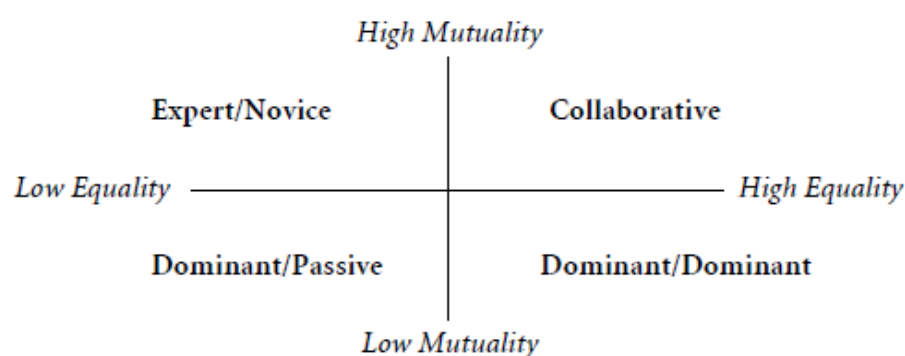


Figure 2.6 A model of dyadic interaction (Storch, 2002: p. 128)

The following elucidates her understanding of *equality* and *mutuality* as well as the different profiles and patterns of interaction:

...the term collaborative describes a pair working together on all parts of the task...and where learners are willing to offer and engage with each other's ideas..., thus creating and maintaining...a 'joint problem space'...During these negotiations, alternative views are offered and discussed, leading to resolutions that seem acceptable to both participants...[In] a pattern of interaction labelled 'dominant/dominant'...both participants contribute to the task, there is unwillingness or inability to fully engage with each other's contribution. The discourse...is marked by a high level of disagreements and inability to reach consensus...participants may [also] contribute equally to the task, but there may be very little engagement with each other's contribution...[In the] label 'dominant/passive'...[the] dominant participant...takes an authoritarian stance and seems to appropriate the task. The other participant seems to adopt a more passive, subservient role. There is little negotiation...[In the] category 'expert/novice'...although one participant seems to take more control over the task, unlike the dominant/passive scenario, this participant acts as an

expert who *actively encourages* the other participant (the novice) to participate in the task. [my italics] (Storch, 2002: p. 128-129)

Storch bases her study on Vygotsky's assumption that there is a Zone of Proximal Development within which an abler member (*expert*) may provide graduate assistance to a *novice*. In her data analysis of interaction excerpts, Storch focuses on a particular expert/novice pair, Yong and Ed, in whose relationship the expert tries to involve the novice in the interaction and provides assistance that will help the novice learn from the interaction (Storch, 2002). In her study, "[i]n the case of the expert/novice pattern, one learner assumed an expert role, and emulating the role of the expert in traditional expert/novice relationships (e.g. parent-child, teacher-student), provided contingently responsive scaffolded assistance to the less able peer" (Storch, 2002: p. 148). In collaborative patterns, the expert role is fluid with either peer adopting the role. All of this suggests that peers might be able to replace the teacher in offering scaffolding. Language is seen as providing mediation for the interaction which enables the *expert* and *novice* to plan, coordinate, and review their actions. What is more, learners may play the role of *expert* in turns and learn from their learner or teacher role. The same conclusion is presented in Brooks and Swain's study (2009) as the *linguaging* of the students to make meaning and solve problems is examined: learners become more expert as expertise shifts from one learner to the other and the *linguaging* involved in the creation of and response to expertise seems to contribute to learners achieving more advanced levels of language. In fact, when no expert for a specific linguistic problem emerges in a pair of learners, in other words, the learners cannot build a ZPD, other sources of expertise may be necessary to generate the activity required to construct the ZPD. Still, learners are the first source of expertise, not the teacher (Brooks & Swain, 2009).

Brooks and Swain observe "...that the less known the language item, the more sources of expertise and the more activity were needed to create the ZPD and move from the interpsychological (social) to the intrapsychological (individual)" (Brooks & Swain, 2009: p. 29). In their study, sources of expertise included peers, reformulation by an outsider to the peer dyads, and the researcher in an augmented stimulated recall. However, Brooks and Swain also observe that the most effective expertise emerged in interaction between peers. Only-peer interaction resulted in the highest accuracy in the post-tests. Storch sees plenty of potential in the category *expert/novice* as well as in collaborative dyads as she concludes there was more evidence of transfer of knowledge in these than in the dominant/dominant and dominant/passive dyads (Storch, 2005). Based on Storch's patterns of interaction (Storch, 2002), Watanabe and Swain also find out later that when learners engage in collaborative patterns of interaction, they are more likely to achieve higher post-test scores regardless of their partner's proficiency level (Watanabe & Swain, 2007). Learners can benefit from other learners within the same ZPD through scaffolding that can be gradually removed as students internalise information and develop autonomous strategies. The question is whether there is a need for instructional scaffolding, that is, for teachers to be involved in providing support such as resources or guidance on the development of cognitive and social abilities when students are first in contact with new knowledge or skills, or whether teachers' intervention should be restrictive for students to find the most appropriate form of support and self-direction themselves. From the benefits of peer review concretely Storch (2005) highlights "...raising students' awareness of audience considerations (Leki, 1993), and at the same time...develop analytical and critical reading and

writing skills (Nystrand & Brandt, 1989)...on all aspects of writing: content, structure and language” (Storch, 2005: p. 154). She places an emphasis on the process of co-authoring, which, she believes, “...fosters reflective thinking, especially if the learners are engaged in the act of explaining and defending their ideas to their peers...learners consider not only grammatical accuracy and lexis but also discourse”. In Storch’s study about collaborative writing (2005) she compares individual and collaborative writing by analysing the writing process, the final product and the students’ reflections and comes to the following results:

- a) Individuals took shorter to compose the text and composed longer texts even though the pairs spent more time on the activity.
- b) Texts composed by pairs appeared more accurate and complex, i.e., contained more clauses, in particular dependent clauses.
- c) Individual writers tended to produce overly detailed texts whereas pairs had a clearer focus.
- d) Finally, in a 5-scale global evaluation schema to evaluate content and structure of the text and task fulfilment, the average qualitative score was 4.1 for the texts produced by pairs and 3.3 for individually produced texts.

This suggests collaborative writing produces better outcomes, even if students spent little time on the planning and the revision phase in favour of the writing phase, in which most pairs deliberated over language use. In a descending order, their attention was divided into 1) generating ideas, 2) language, 3) interpreting the graphic prompt, and 4) the structure of the text. For Storch, there is no doubt that

...pair work provides the learners opportunities to co-construct texts, pool their linguistic resources (collective scaffolding), and thus compose more linguistically complex and grammatically accurate texts. Peers may also provide each other with explanations...and reassurances. (Storch, 2005: p. 166)

Storch analyses the students’ attitudes towards collaborative learning as well and realises that

- a) all students were positive;
- b) some students believed pair/group work is best relegated to oral activities;
- c) some students expressed some reservations about the experience which stemmed from
 - i. lack of confidence in one’s own language skills,
 - ii. concerns about criticising others,
 - iii. a view of writing as an individual activity;
- d) the reasons presented for this to be a positive experience mainly related to the pooling of resources and the opportunities to observe and learn from each other both because
 - i. it fostered the exchange of ideas and
 - ii. it improved their grammatical accuracy and taught them vocabulary;
- e) some students thought collaborative writing is a fun, novel activity.

As a conclusion of her study, Storch recommends further investigation about the effects of collaboration on the product with a larger sample size or longer texts (Storch, 2005: pp. 168-169). The literature also identifies some constraints to the potential of peer review: students’ limited knowledge of the target language and its rhetorical conventions, which affects the appropriateness of peer feedback; the tendency for peers to primarily focus on surface language issues; the predisposition to provide unclear and inappropriate comments when involved with

larger issues concerning content, organisation and content development; being hostile or over-critical or feeling ridiculed and becoming over-defensive; different cultural views of sociolinguistic rules of peer communication and good writing; not acknowledging peer qualification for criticising one's writing when coming from teacher-centred cultures (Rouhi & Vadafar, 2011). Compared to the benefits, however, these obstacles do not seem significant. In fact, they show the need to engage in the promotion of additional dimensions of social and cognitive development, as the case studies to be presented in this thesis shall illustrate.

2.6 The task-based approach

Since interaction was proven essential by SLA research, it is vital to explore the potential relationship between task and acquisition. By examining how task design and implementation affect interaction, in particular meaning negotiation, the use of communication strategies, and the communicative outcomes, it will be possible to improve course design and language teaching methodology (Ellis, 2003).

Task-based Language Learning (TBLL) consists of performing meaningful tasks that *push* the use of real-world language. Emphasis is placed upon the task outcome and on fluency rather than on language accuracy. Language is learnt throughout the whole process of accomplishment of the communicative outcome of a task primarily centred on meaning. The aim of tasks is to afford opportunities for learners to enhance their competence in activities that emphasise *using* rather than *learning* language, although some temporary shifts to more language-focused activities may be introduced, as shall be analysed later. In general, however, TBLL advocates unintentional learning situated within authenticated activity, context and culture, in line with a CLIL view.

There are many definitions of 'task'.

Ellis (2003) defines *task* as a work plan which engages learners in processing language pragmatically so as to achieve an outcome that can be assessed in terms of whether the correct or *appropriate* propositional content has been delivered. The learners' attention is drawn to meaning and to making use of their own linguistic resources, even if the task design may predispose them to opt for particular forms. Language use should resemble the way language is used in the real world. A task can involve productive or receptive, and oral or written skills as well as various cognitive processes (Ellis, 2003: p. 16).

Nunan (2004) defines *task* very similarly:

A pedagogical task is a piece of classroom work that involves learners in comprehending, manipulating, producing or interacting in the target language while their attention is focused on mobilizing their grammatical knowledge in order to express meaning, and in which the intention is to convey meaning rather than to manipulate form. The task should also have a sense of completeness, being able to stand alone as a communicative act in its own right with a beginning, a middle and an end. (Nunan, 2004: p. 4)

Several ideas are shared by both definitions: learners engage in tangible pragmatic work throughout which they use the target language meaningfully and real-world-like to fulfil it; language is mostly a means and not an end. This is in line with Swain's conception of peer interaction in which learners *language* about language to fulfil a given collaborative written task. Various authors (Ellis, 2003; Peris, 2004; etc.) suggest the means to develop the kind of L2

proficiency needed to communicate fluently and effectively are tasks. Peris sees a task as an approach focused on the naturally-occurring collaborative *construction* of texts by which one internalises the way language functions:

Una tarea no es un método: no hay en ella nada preestablecido en lo que se refiere a contenidos de trabajo y técnicas que aplicar.

Una tarea responde a un enfoque:

Hablar una lengua no es codificar y decodificar mensajes como podría hacerlo una máquina suficientemente desarrollada, sino construir conjuntamente con el interlocutor el sentido de los textos (orales y escritos) que se utilizan y se producen.

Aprender una lengua es ir interiorizando progresivamente las unidades de sus diversos niveles de descripción (el textual, el nocio-funcional, el morfosintáctico, el léxico, el fonético, el grafémico) y sus diferentes usos mediante su efectiva utilización para comunicarse.

...

El propósito de las metodologías comunicativas, y en especial el de las tareas, consiste en reproducir en la clase las situaciones de uso natural, sin renunciar a las ventajas que ofrece el marco del aula. (Peris, 2004)

The core of the task, i.e., the heart of the task towards which all activities are headed is a real-world communicative product based on interaction. In real life we also learn a language by interacting. Hence, activities taking place before and after this core product complete the learning process and, integrated with it, constitute the task, a dynamic working unit in which (the achievement of) a product demands certain activities. These other activities, which Ellis calls form-focused exercises, thus become deemphasised but help prepare the task, a meaning-focused exercise in Ellis's terminology. In other words, form-focused activities are conducive to and converge in the task. Widdowson prefers *pragmatic-meaning-focused* and *semantic-meaning-focused* to *meaning-focused* and *form-focused*. Ellis claims it is only a matter of terminology (Ellis, 2003: p. 3). Peris makes a comparison which makes the relationship between these different activities more clear: “[El producto]...[a]ctúa como una especie de locomotora que arrastra el tren del aprendizaje: la carga, sin embargo, no va en el producto, sino en los vagones que aquel arrastra, especialmente en los vagones de la capacitación: es ahí donde se producen los procesos de aprendizaje” (Peris, 2004). Learning is incidental and occurs throughout the whole *process* of task completion. On the basis of Swain's studies, Ellis says, however, that learning may obviously also imply a secondary focus on language, a temporary shift from the role of language user to the role of language learner. Ellis's studies suggest that such shifts do not undermine the overall communicativeness of a task (Ellis, 2003: p. 26). For example, in her ‘task cycle’, Willis (1996) includes a language-focus phase and foresees further possibilities for attention to form. Using concrete teaching and learning examples Willis explains that she

...envisages a ‘task cycle’ consisting of three broad phases: (1) pre-task, (2) task, and (3) language focus. There are opportunities for attention to form in all three phases. In the pre-task phase one option is for the teacher to highlight useful words and phrases. The task phase ends with a ‘report’ where the learners comment on their performance of the task. In the final phase, learners perform consciousness-raising and practice activities directed at specific linguistic features that occurred in the input of the task and/or in transcripts of fluent speakers doing the task. (Willis, 1996: p. 33)

In some CLIL approaches to language learning, temporary shifts from the role of language user to that of language learner are, as pointed out in chapter 2.3, considered germane. What is more, this rebirth of a focus on form does not in any way clash with Nunan's belief that the task should

be able to stand alone as a communicative act in its own right with a beginning, a middle and an end. On the contrary, previous and post-activities ensure learners learn throughout, that they are more prepared to engage in the fulfilment of the product and able to meta-assess learning (Peris, 2004). Peris (2004) proposes the term *tarea* (task), *tarea de aprendizaje* (learning task) o *tarea de aprendizaje comunicativa* (communicative learning task) to denominate the group of activities; *producto* (product) to name the final task; and *actividades* (activities) to denominate the exercises which precede and follow the product. He also considers the term *tareas capacitadoras o posibilitadoras* (preparation tasks) should be replaced by *actividades previas o derivadas* (pre and post-activities) because these activities do not only enable the consecution of the product, they are part of the task and, what is more, of the learning process. In addition, they are not only limited to pre-activities, they can also proceed or develop from the product and play a metacognitive role:

...abriendo el espectro de actividades que el alumno puede realizar en el desarrollo de una tarea, no solo incluiremos aquellas que le capaciten para elaborar el producto final, sino todas aquellas otras que, con ocasión de realización de ese producto, mejoren, potencien o enriquezcan su aprendizaje. Por lo tanto, las habrá que serán de base fundamentalmente lingüística (aprendizaje de vocabulario, de usos lingüísticos, de destrezas comunicativas...), pero podrá también haberlas de tipo metacognitivo, de automonitorización del aprendizaje, de colaboración entre iguales, de evaluación del proceso, etc.). (Peris, 2004)

Every activity has a linguistic, a communicative, a collaborative, a metacognitive, or any other purpose. When setting up a task, one must consider its goal and then structure it accordingly (Peris, 2004). The following dimensions should be born in mind when creating a (whole) task: “(1) the scope of a task, (2) the perspective from which a task is viewed, (3) the authenticity of a task, (4) the linguistic skills required to perform a task, (5) the psychological processes involved in task performance, and (6) the outcome of a task” (Ellis, 2003: p. 2), in order to meet the following criteria:

- a) A task is a workplan.
- b) There is a focus on meaning.
- c) It involves real-world processes of language use.
- d) It can involve any of the four language skills.
- e) It engages cognitive processes.
- f) It has a clearly defined communicative outcome. (Ellis, 2003)

Clearly, emphasis is put on meaning, on the use of real-world language and on the enhancement of (meta)cognitive processes. The following are some examples of real-world tasks suggested by Ellis:

‘Painting a fence’, ‘dressing a child’, ‘borrowing a library book’, etc. are activities that occur in day-to-day living. The ‘survival tasks’, for example, filling in various kinds of official forms, which are common in ‘second’ (as opposed to ‘foreign’) language classes, are further examples of real-world tasks. (p. 6)

As accounted for by the examples given, the term *real-world tasks* implies that these tasks are important to cope with any communicative situation which is *likely to arise in real life, in our daily routine*. Peris (2004) calls them *actividades sociales* (social activities). This sort of tasks fosters the development of both discourse strategies (negotiation of meaning) and communication strategies (self-help/strategic competence) – they *push* output and help develop semantic connections in the learner's mental lexicon and skill in word formation (Ellis, 2003). A TBLL thus facilitates communicative and constructivist practices, CLIL, a lexical approach to

language learning and teaching and, finally, comprehensible input and output. Choosing one or the other task essentially depends on these three considerations, says Peris (2004):

- a) The level of motivation it arouses in the learners.
- b) The extent to which it shall contribute to the achievement of the goals of the curriculum followed by the students.
- c) The level of difficulty it may represent to the learners.

With regard to understanding motivation, Dörnyei's 'L2 Motivational Self System', a tripartite construct made up of the components (1) *Ideal L2 Self*, (2) *Ought-to L2 Self* and (3) *L2 Learning Experience*, offers a promising perspective. Learners can be influenced by internalised or extrinsic types of instrumental motives. They can be motivated by internalised and integrative factors such as their wish to fulfil their *Ideal L2 Self*, i.e., their desire to bring their actual and ideal L2 selves closer, and their *L2 Learning Experience*, i.e., their immediate learning environment and experience (e.g. the impact of the teacher, the curriculum, their peer group, the experience of success). The innovation in Dörnyei's model lies in the role played by the students' learning environment, which has direct impact on the initial motivation of some learners to learn a language. This motivation "...does not come from internally or externally generated self images but rather from successful engagement with the actual language learning process (e.g. because they discover that they are good at it)" (Dörnyei, 2009: p. 29). An extrinsic type of instrumental motive is the learners' urge to match their *Ought-to L2 Self*, i.e., "the attributes one believes one ought to possess to meet expectations [by friends, parents and other authoritative figures] and avoid possible negative outcomes" (p. 29). The first component of Dörnyei's tripartite construct, the *Ideal L2 Self*, allows for the creation of a language learning vision and for imagery enhancement and the third component of the system, the *L2 Learning Experience*, enables the development of a myriad of techniques that can foster motivation, whereas the source of the second component, the *Ought-to L2 Self*, does not lend itself to obvious motivational practices. Teachers can elaborate on the first and third component to the benefit of language learning processes. For example, the construction of the *Ideal L2 Self* can be facilitated by the teacher by assisting the learners in (1) constructing their *Ideal L2 Self*, i.e., creating their vision, (2) strengthening their vision to a sufficient degree of elaborateness and vividness, (3) making their *Ideal L2 Self* plausible by, for instance, drawing timelines into the future involving role models and negative forces, (4) activating the *Ideal L2 Self* through warmers and icebreakers or communicative activities, (5) developing an action plan, (6) considering failure, that is, energising the vision with awareness of the limitations of not knowing languages or the result of not achieving one's *Ought-to L2 Self*, for instance (Dörnyei, 2009). Awareness of how to use this motivational model to arouse L2 learner motivation will certainly make the job of selection of a task in detriment of another an easier one. This system also shows that the considerations Peris (Peris, 2004) points out should be taken into account when making this choice are interwoven.

It was said above that a TBLL approach places a focus on meaning rather than on form. This is mainly so because an emphasis on formulation (form) may lead to disfluency as explicit knowledge is not amenable to rapid development. Implicit knowledge, on the contrary, rests on ready-made exemplars (let us recall Lewis's lexical chunks) which enable fluency. Therefore, if

learners are unable to draw on a rich exemplar-based system to ease the processing load because they are too focused on formulation rather than on conceptualisation, they will not be fluent for the reason that they are trying too hard to be accurate. However, it was also said that some authors admit the need to temporarily focus on language explicitly. In fact, a focus on conceptualisation (content) only may lead to lack of accuracy. Swain advocates this focus on form in communication. *Stretching one's interlanguage* (Swain, 1985) presupposes there is movement from the memory-based system (on which fluency relies) to the rule-based system (on which accuracy relies) and vice-versa (Ellis, 2003). Ellis suggests varying the kinds of tasks learners are asked to perform, for example: learners can be given time to plan before they start to speak or just as they speak, and they can engage in corrective monitoring of their production (Ellis, 2003) – these pre-, online and post-product activities all have a different impact on fluency. Whereas *strategic planning* (pre-planning) has a positive impact on fluency, *online planning* (planning along the task) has a negative impact on fluency since learners are too focused on accuracy. Whether or not *strategic planning* has any effect on accuracy depends on a variety of factors. In short, it is possible to influence the product that results from a task by manipulating these activities. If learners are assigned a reasonable length of time to plan and are given guidance in how and what to plan, sentences will be more complex and their lexis wider, Ellis claims.

Overall, a task-based framework for learning stimulates meaningful language use and creates a natural desire in the learner to improve upon language in an environment which aids natural acquisition. In language learning and teaching, a task-based approach is the fulfilment of interactional views, of a communicative approach to language learning. Such an approach is also supportive of the development of language and language learning awareness since it suggests communication with a focus on form: “...en lugar de ir de la lengua a las actividades, se les hace ir de las actividades a la lengua” (Peris, 2004).

The latest publications by public education organisms advocate a task-based communicative learning approach, in particular the CEFR (see Council of Europe, 2001), which provides the guidelines for today's language learning and teaching practices across Europe. This matter has been receiving the attention of authors of didactic material and publishing companies as well, which contributes to the fact that most of today's coursebooks follow the task cycle envisaged by Willis (see Peris, 2004; Council of Europe, 2001). In line with communicative and constructivist frameworks, learners are asked to be agentive, to be active, to participate, to take the initiative, to make decisions, and the teachers to organise, monitor, support, guide (Peris, 2004). Notwithstanding, research has so far been product-oriented and has thus neglected the process: “We need to know more about what learners do when they plan strategically and online and how they orientate while performing a task” (Ellis, 2003: p. 138). These are some of the aspects to be examined in this PhD thesis.

3 E-learning-enhanced second language learning

Computers, Internet and, in particular, social interaction in the web offer pedagogic affordances for facilitating language learning from knowledge (vocabulary, grammar, etc.) to skill development and communication practice. Therefore, and because these resources have become so natural in our society, teachers are required to reflect on their implications for language learning in order to consistently adjust their pedagogic action. Although the dominance of ICT in today's routines is indisputable, its integration in language learning practices is far less obvious as ICT demands facing second language learning from a rather different perspective. This chapter shall offer insight into the pedagogical potential of e-learning for enhancing second language learning.

3.1 The development of CALL

Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL), the use of computers and their various applications for language learning and teaching, began in the 1960s when some North American Universities developed and implemented language courseware to support language teachers in their second language classes. CALL-related research as well as organisations followed. This opened the way to the international relevance of CALL.

The history of the development of CALL offers insight into its nature⁹. Warschauer (1996) categorises the development of CALL in three phases: *behavioristic CALL*, *communicative CALL* and *integrative CALL*. According to him, although these phases are distinctive, entering a new phase does not necessarily mean rejecting the programmes and methods of a previous one, also because the acceptance of a new phase is a slow and uneven process. The phases of CALL development proposed by Warschauer show CALL was strongly influenced by the evolution of different approaches to language learning. The key features of each phase are summed up below (Warschauer, 1996):

1st phase – *behavioristic CALL* – conceived in the 1950s and implemented in the 1960s-1970s: this phase rested upon the dominant behaviourist theories of learning of that period. It was then believed that repeated exposure to the same material was advantageous or even crucial for learning, and that the computer was ideal for such learning because it would not weary of repetition. Besides, a computer offered non-judgmental feedback and enabled students to work at their own pace, allowing class time for other activities. The programmes were therefore characterised by repetitive language drills (“drill and practice” or, derogatively, “drill and kill”). This was the case with the PLATO system, for example, which included vocabulary drills, short grammar explanations and drills and translation tests. Considered ideal for carrying out repeated drills, computers worked as tutors, that is, as vehicles for delivering instructional materials to the student, with no place for interaction or student decision. In the late 1970s and early 1980s, the

⁹ See Kohn (2009) for an overview of the evolution of CALL.

ground was set for a new phase when behaviouristic approaches to language learning started losing credibility at both the theoretical and the pedagogical level and the microcomputer was introduced.

2nd phase – *communicative CALL* – protuberant in the 1970s-1980s: this phase rested on the communicative approach to teaching according to which authentic communication was needed, which drill and practice programmes of the previous decade did not facilitate. Students were not constantly judged, evaluated or rewarded with congratulatory messages anymore, and a greater variety of student responses were accepted. Skill practice in a non-drill format was introduced, e.g. courseware for paced reading, text reconstruction, language games. The role of the computer was elevated. It was now seen as a tutor, combined with enough student choice, control and interaction, as a stimulus for students' discussion, writing or critical thinking, and as a tool that empowered students to use and understand language via word processors, spelling and grammar checkers, concordancers, etc. CALL was then framed by constructivist and communicative ideas and evolved towards authentication and autonomy. Some drill and practice programs were also used in a more communicative trend – the boundaries were not tightly drawn. The pedagogic purpose of the activity, in this case the way software was set to use by the teacher and students, was decisive. In fact, by the end of the 1980s, it was felt that computers were being used in a disconnected manner, thus failing central aspects of the language teaching process. A number of educators sought more integrative practices, for example by using the TBLL approach.

3rd phase – *integrative CALL* – from the end of the 1980s to the date of Warschauer's article (1990s): this phase rested upon multimedia computers and the Internet. Hypermedia enabled multimedia resources to be linked together, which enabled more authentic learning environments because, like in the real world, listening was combined with seeing. Skills were thus more easily integrated. Students had great control over their learning, e.g. by asking what to do, what to say, asking for a translation, controlling the level of difficulty of the lesson, etc. The focus was on the content with a secondary stress on form and learning strategies, e.g. through background links to grammar explanations, vocabulary glosses, etc. to support the foreground lesson. In the case of the programme *Dustin*, a simulation of a student arriving at a U.S. airport, students had to find transportation to the city, check in at a hotel, etc. Unfortunately, most classroom teachers did not have the knowledge or time to make such programmes, even if simple. Commercial developers, on the other hand, often missed sound pedagogical goals, and costs were too high. The main handicap of such programmes, however, concerned their level of intelligence. They were obviously unable to assess the user's spoken input beyond correctness, i.e., in terms of appropriateness. Although multimedia facilitated skill integration, the integration of meaningful and authentic communication into all aspects of the language learning curriculum was seldom considered.

Warschauer previewed the major impact of communication and Internet on language learning. He knew these would be a step forward regarding integrative CALL. He considered Computer-Mediated Communication (CMC), which became widespread in the 1990s, to be the computer application to that date with the greatest impact on language teaching (Warschauer, 1996). In fact, CMC finally allowed language learners to communicate asynchronously (e.g. per

e-mail) or synchronously (e.g. using MOOs¹⁰). This enabled not only one-to-one but also group communication, which encouraged new learning interaction modes. The ease in sharing lengthy documents facilitated collaborative writing. Also, the World Wide Web (WWW) enabled students to autonomously and swiftly access authentic material such as newspaper articles or radio broadcasts to meet their needs and, what is more, to share their resources. All this facilitated an integrative approach to technology that enabled several language skills to be practised simultaneously, and communicative competence, collaboration, authentication and autonomy to be fostered. Still, it was the way the computer functions were all put to use that counted: only good pedagogy enables good learning opportunities (Warschauer, 1996).

Particularly interesting is Bax's (2003) critique of Warschauer's (1996) phases of CALL. A new outline emerges from his evocative criticism to Warschauer's historical phases of CALL that considers new developments and adds some more information to Warschauer's analysis (Figure 3.1).

Restricted, Open and Integrated CALL: an outline

Content	Type of task	Type of student activity	Type of feedback	Teacher roles	Teacher attitudes	Position in curriculum	Position in lesson	Physical position of computer
<i>Restricted CALL</i> Language system	Closed drills Quizzes	Text reconstruction Answering closed questions Minimal interaction with other students	Correct/incorrect	Monitor	Exaggerated fear and/or awe	Not integrated into syllabus—optional extra Technology precedes syllabus and learner needs	Whole CALL lesson	Separate computer lab
<i>Open CALL</i> System and skills	Simulations Games CMC	Interacting with the computer Occasional interaction with other students	Focus of linguistic skills development Open, flexible	Monitor/ facilitator	Exaggerated fear and/or awe	Toy Not integrated into syllabus—optional extra Technology precedes syllabus and learner needs	Whole CALL lesson	Separate lab—perhaps devoted to languages
<i>Integrated CALL</i> Integrated language skills work Mixed skills and system	CMC WP e-mail Any, as appropriate to the immediate needs	Frequent interaction with other students Some interaction with computer through the lesson	Interpreting, evaluating, commenting, stimulating thought	Facilitator Manager	Normal part of teaching—normalised	Tool for learning Normalised integrated into syllabus, adapted to learners' needs <i>Analysis of needs and context precedes decisions about technology</i>	Smaller part of every lesson	In every classroom, on every desk, in every bag

Figure 3.1 CALL phases (Bax, 2003: p. 21)

Bax's outline of CALL development seems more appropriate than Warschauer's. He also suggests three phases of CALL development but divides and names them differently: *restricted CALL*, *open CALL* and *integrated CALL*. His first phase is equivalent to Warschauer's. His

¹⁰ A MOO, emergent in the 1990s, is a text-based online virtual reality system to which multiple users (players) are connected at the same time. MOOs are network-accessible, multi-user, programmable, interactive systems which serve the construction of text-based adventure games, conferencing systems, academic environments (distance education) and other collaborative software ("MOO," n.d.). They became popular for their interactive and collaborative real-life nature mainly.

second phase, as its name tells, is not restricted to a closed relationship between computer and student with limited possible reactions. It is mainly characterised by interaction, although mostly with the computer, and no integration into the syllabus or into the physical classroom takes place. His last phase, as its name suggests, integrates different tools/resources, (language) skills, interaction modes, tasks and different types of feedback. However, what is more innovative about this last phase is, on the one hand, the fact that CALL emerges from the learners' needs, and, on the other hand, the assumption that it *integrates* into the lesson and is *normalised*. By *normalised* it is meant that CALL is not something extra or optional, nor is it something to exist in isolation from other classroom activities or on its own. If *normalised*, CALL becomes a natural part of any lesson: "This concept is relevant to any kind of technological innovation and refers to the stage when the technology becomes invisible, embedded in everyday practice and hence 'normalised'" (Bax, 2003: p. 23).

According to Bax, we are still functioning within the second approach, *open CALL*, our goal obviously being *integrated CALL* and *normalisation*. This state of affairs does not seem to have changed since 2003. For most teachers and schools, normalisation has not happened yet. The analysis of a questionnaire-based survey on the use of educational e-learning equipment and applications in second language classes in chapter 5 shall support this assumption.

Some years later, Erpenbeck and Sauter (2007) suggest the existence of four phases of e-learning (Figure 3.2). The last one, New Blended Learning, is characterised by the use of social software. This phase is associated to knowledge management and the development of skills for lifelong learning. This change was envisaged by Warschauer (1996) and considered by Bax (2003).

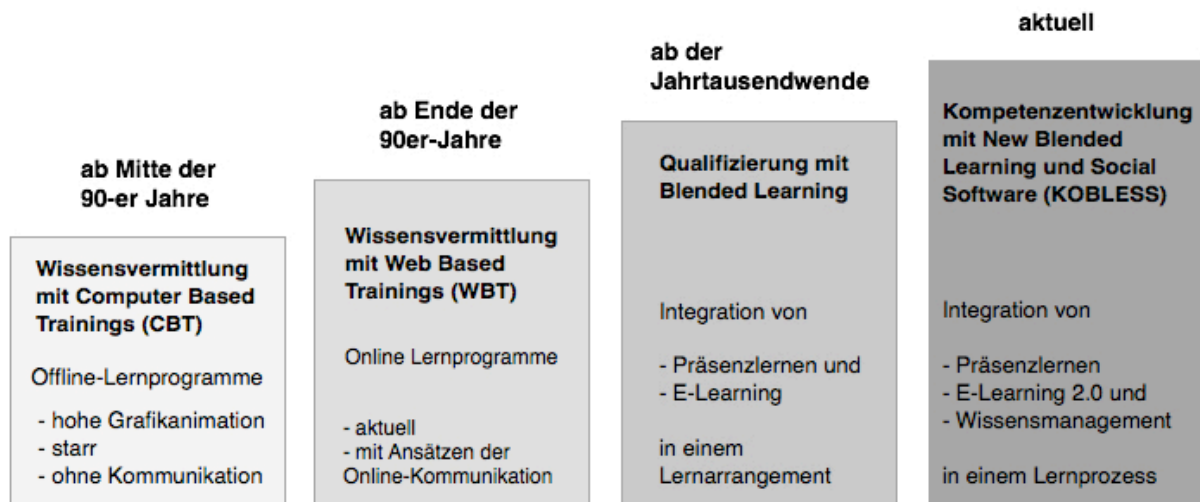


Figure 3.2 The four phases of e-learning (Erpenbeck & Sauter, 2007: p. 146)

The distinction between e-learning and blended learning and the implications of social software for learning shall be explored in the next chapters, but the idea that information technologies contribute to competence development is relevant at this stage:

Awareness raising is one of the major aims of a learning scenario based on constructivist theory, particularly in view of the constant integration of new technologies into the day-to-day life of the knowledge society. Salomon & Gardner describe the impact of information technologies on human mental capacities as very

significant; ‘...information technologies allow individuals to accomplish tasks that might otherwise be difficult or even impossible to contemplate, and they affect not only knowledge structures, but also cognitive operations’... (Rüschhoff, 1999: p. 84)

Knowledge is evolving so rapidly that it should not be understood as composed of separate parts but rather as interdisciplinary. A new form of human inquiry is emerging that draws upon boundary-crossing knowledge and relationships; “[m]emorization is less important in this information rich time than effective search strategies, and students need the ability to respond and adapt to changes rather than training in a single way to approach a task” (Warschauer & Healey, 1998: p. 58). The following two types of e-learning tools are in line with this need to develop lifelong language learning skills: (1) corpus search tools and (2) authoring tools.

Corpora are compilations of *naturally occurring* texts, which can be pedagogically explored for language learning. In 1991 Johns coined the term data-driven learning (DDL) to mean “the use in the classroom of computer-generated concordances to get students to explore regularities of patterning in the target language, and the development of activities and exercises based on concordance output” (Johns & King, 1991: iii). Corpora allow learners to learn the language via a personal inductive process by analysing that *natural* text and deriving the abstract rules that govern *natural* language. Corpora enable learners to develop a sense for socially-established real language while directing their learning process. Corpora show what is typical or common in the language, thus enabling learners to find patterns of use (Bernardini, 2004; Mauranen, 2004). They therefore help learners develop both language and language learning awareness.

Both written and spoken corpora have their advantages. The following are simple examples of the most typical uses of a corpus for text production and comprehension:

1. Most often for text production:
 - seeking confirmation to their own intuition,
 - checking variants suggested by reference works (dictionaries, wordlists),
 - checking which prepositions and/or adjectives go together with a term,
 - checking different uses of certain terms,
 - looking for idiomatic expressions,
 - learning how to use a new expression.
2. For text comprehension: trying to figure out the meaning of an expression from the context. (Mauranen, 2004: p. 95)

Pedagogically annotated corpora offer an array of options to enhance language learning. Obviously, if teachers are unable to use corpus-based tools to explore language, they will not do so with their students (Mukherjee, 2004).

The adoption of corpora for language learning suggests a shift from deductive to inductive learning and to a lexical approach to language learning, since it is by analysing language that learners understand the chunks the target language is organised in and its patterns. What is more, according to a constructivist approach centred on learning by doing, it is by discovering the linguistic rules themselves that students shall remember and use them. Most texts in coursebooks are usually adapted and abridged, whereas authentic corpora contain variation, the same variation that can be found in real language. Only by contacting with that variation can learners

have access to real English (see Leung, 2005 in chapter 2.1). Many teachers, however, see variation as too complex, subtle or as meaningless to be born in mind when designing teaching materials, and as impeding fast language learning. This way learners will not understand appropriateness (Conrad, 2004).

In consequence, such a constructivist lexical approach not only facilitates the enhancement of cognitive skills but also does away with Noam Chomsky's idea of an ideal speaker-listener independent from external conditions. An emphasis is placed on *appropriateness*, though not necessarily on Hymes's *appropriateness*, which relates to *context*, to "...the way language keys into context, with the pragmatic use of language in the transaction of social business, the interaction of social relations..." (Widdowson, 2003: p. 79). In fact, in DDL, *appropriateness* is connected to the information the *co-text* provides concerning naturally occurring, as opposed to ideal, language.

In fact, according to Widdowson (2003: pp. 78-79), corpus descriptions focus on Hymes's concept of *performed*, "...whether (and to what degree) something is in fact done, actually *performed*, and what its doing entails" (Hymes 1972: 281 – see chapter 2.1), on text, rather than on discourse. Widdowson believes corpora are *genuine* material, not necessarily authentic (Widdowson, 2003; Widdowson, 2004). For a corpus to be authentic, it must be contextualised, authenticated by us, i.e., we must be aware of its context. What is more, we must be part of a specific discourse community to understand complex sociocultural knowledge implicit in it: "If you are not in the know, much of the significance of [the] passage of real English will be lost on you" (Widdowson, 2003: p. 98). Affective significance, for example, can have a certain weight in this – it is the realisation of this significance that makes the text real, turning it into discourse (see chapters 2.1 and 2.4):

Unless it is activated by this contextual connection, the text is inert. It is his activation, this acting of context on code, this indexical conversion of the symbol that I refer to as discourse. Discourse in this view is the pragmatic process of meaning negotiation. Text is its product. (Widdowson, 2004: p. 8)

Authentic discourses then "...depend on the specific ways in which language is made communicatively appropriate to context" (Widdowson, 2003: p. 93). For Widdowson, corpora consist of texts, products of language use sequestered from any communicative situation; thus, transcribed texts are *stabilised* versions of speech. Language learning, however, is concerned with discourse, with language use in particular communicative situations, with the development of the knowledge and skills needed to produce and understand discourse. L2 learners will not find it easy to reconstruct the discourse in the texts in a corpus when they are not their addressees. Therefore, it is important for learners to feel familiar with the topic and acknowledge its relevance, i.e., if there is a coherent overall theme around the texts entailed in the corpus learners, they will find it easier to construct their own individual context (Braun, 2005). A corpus-based approach (i.e., 'vertical reading'¹¹) needs to be complemented with a discourse-based approach (i.e., 'whole-corpus reading'), focused on the analysis of linguistic

¹¹ 'Vertical reading' is used to find patterns in language use, either by the analysis of word frequencies in a certain context, by looking into co-text, i.e., searching which words tend to 'surround'/co-occur with a specific word (Key Word in Context – KWIC), or by comparing different usages of the same word, etc. Applications that make use of concordancing techniques are known as concordancers. This shall be further explored when providing concrete examples of the use of authentic corpora for pedagogic purposes.

means of expression in relation to their communicative (situational) and cultural embedding (Braun, 2005).

Web-based systems for assisted access to corpora make it possible to explore the pedagogical potential of corpora in a way that is relevant to the learners. They offer corpus tools from transcription to annotation, management of enrichment resources and corpus search that enable the text to be activated in a familiar and to the learners interesting sociocultural and communicative/situational embedding. SACODEYL¹², which stands for “System Aided Compilation and Open Distribution of European Youth Language”, is an EU research and development project (October 2005 - September 2008) that presents an innovative ICT-based solution for the compilation and pedagogical, language learning-oriented exploration of linguistic teen talk oral corpora. It is an example of a web-based system for assisted access to corpora in several languages. It consists of online corpora of video interviews with teenagers integrated in the context of language education – topics include home and family, present and past living routines, hobbies and interests, holidays, school and education, job experiences, plans for the future as well as controversial issues such as binge drinking. ELISA and BACKBONE are examples of other corpora that also adopt a thorough conceptualisation of the corpus process from compilation to annotation, enrichment and search with the overall objective of helping “...teachers and learners proceed from decontextualized textual data to context-embedded discourse...”, thus facilitating and promoting learner authentication (Hoffstaedter & Kohn, 2009: p. 294). ELISA¹³, which stands for “English Language Interview Corpus as a Second-Language Application”, is an online corpus of video interviews with English native speakers from different age groups and different walks of life who speak different varieties of English while talking about various topics related to their jobs and professions. The ELISA approach was further developed, both in terms of design and corpus tools, in SACODEYL, which then opened the way for BACKBONE¹⁴. BACKBONE is an EU LLP/Languages project (January 2009 - February 2011) that aims to provide second language teachers in CLIL settings with innovative language learning solutions. To achieve this goal, pedagogic corpora of spoken interviews about cultural and special-subject topics with adult speakers were created. ELISA was also integrated. The linguistic focus is on pedagogically neglected languages including lesser taught languages (Polish and Turkish), regional & socio-cultural varieties of more frequently taught languages (English, French, German and Spanish), and European non-native speaker *Englishes* for lingua franca purposes. They are examples of corpora with different pedagogical foci – both content (topics) and form (varieties of English) vary. It has been suggested before that the utility of corpora draws from their pedagogical quality. We shall look into SACODEYL as an example.

SACODEYL corpora are annotated with regard to characteristics which were thought to be relevant for language learning purposes, e.g. topic, grammar, lexis, discourse markers,

¹² See <http://www.um.es/sacodeyl/> [Retrieved December 5, 2014].

¹³ See <http://projects.ael.uni-tuebingen.de/elisa> [Retrieved December 5, 2014].

¹⁴ See <http://projects.ael.uni-tuebingen.de/backbone/moodle/>; <http://webapps.ael.uni-tuebingen.de/backbone-search> [Retrieved December 5, 2014].

variety/style, and CEF level. The SACODEYL Annotator (Figure 3.3) allows for personal customisation, i.e., any teacher can annotate the interview transcripts according to the characteristics they consider pedagogically most relevant for a specific target group or learning purpose (Hoffstaedter & Kohn, 2009). A pedagogically motivated online search facility enables teachers and learners to browse a selected corpus, search for passages that display certain thematic and/or linguistic properties, or run lexical searches (concordances, co-occurrences) in combination with a specific thematic focus.

In SACODEYL, for example, users can scroll through the interviews, see a picture and a summary of each one of them and access the selected interview, either in form of a transcript or video clip. This offers teachers and learners the opportunity to combine reading and listening in a vivid experience of real discourse, and may help overcome the problem discussed by Widdowson (see Widdowson, 2003: pp. 93-109; Widdowson, 2004: pp. 17-57). Having access to a video and not just to a sound file brings users closer to this material, as more senses are stimulated.

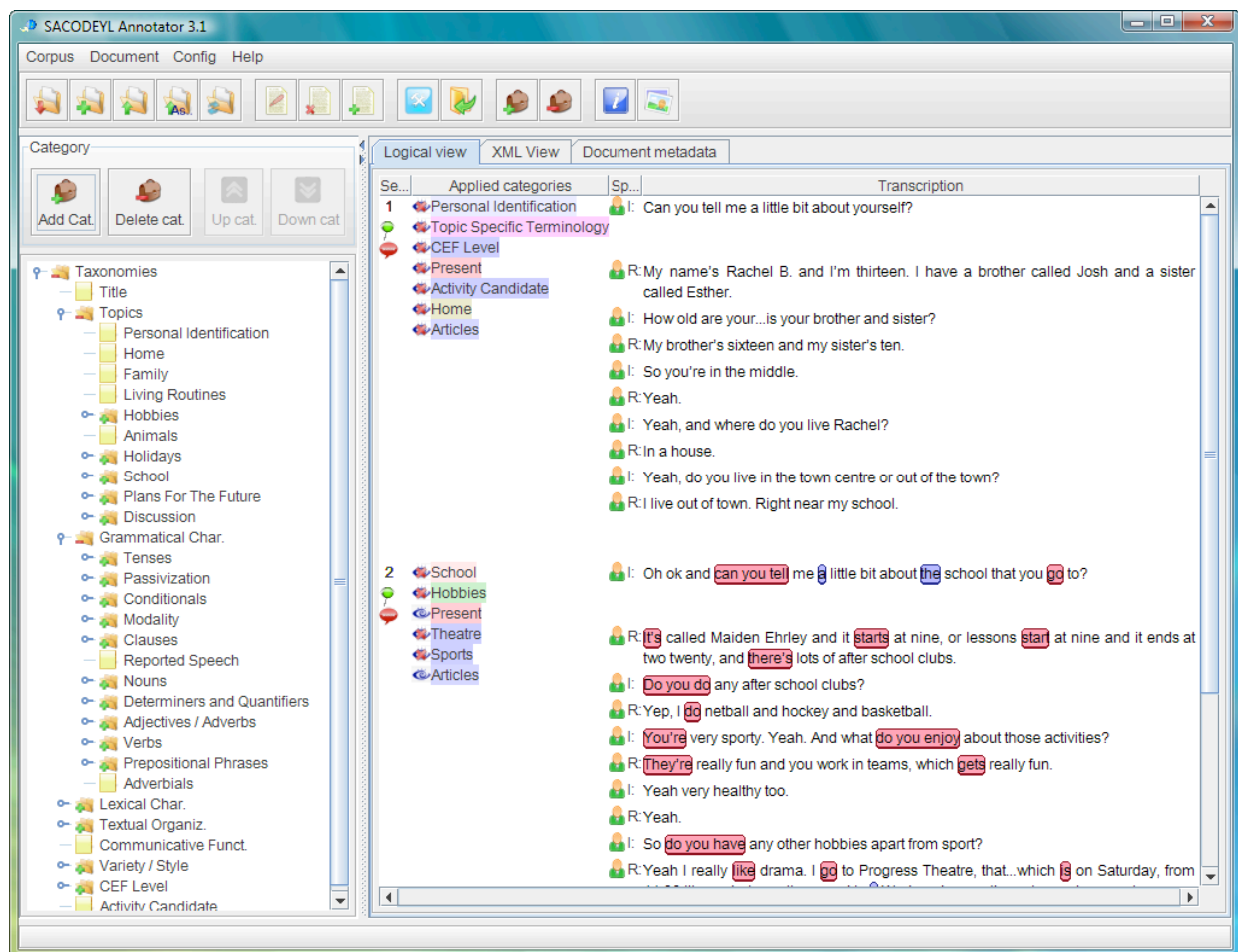


Figure 3.3 The SACODEYL Annotator

Under SECTION SEARCH a category tree can be found. The items in this category tree can be ticked according to what the user wishes to search for (e.g. looking for texts about hobbies)

that contain modal verbs). It is possible to tick more than one item at once. The search mode defines whether only texts containing all the selected categories should be shown or texts containing only one of the selected options as well. It is also possible to opt for looking for any section or only for sections containing a (specific) resource sheet. Finally, by ticking the box ‘search in results’, one can search further within the results.

The CO-OCURRENCE function (Figure 3.4), on the other hand, enables the user to look for sections containing one or more words that co-occur, that is to say, co-exist in the same section. This search might be limited to a specific topic or grammar aspect, again by ticking a category. The search scope can also be limited to one section, one interview or a specified number of sentences. Additionally, the use of the asterisk (*) and of the question mark (?) enables the user to look for variations: an asterisk replaces any number of characters and a question mark replaces one single character (e.g. in the English corpus, entering the characters ‘s?ng’ would enable the user to find ‘sing’, ‘sang’, and ‘sung’).

The screenshot displays the 'Co-Occurrence' search interface. At the top, there are navigation tabs: 'Home', 'Corpus: EnglishCorpus', 'Resources', and 'Help'. Below these are sub-tabs: 'Browse', 'Section Search', 'Co-Occurrence', 'Word Search', and 'View Lists'. The main search area includes a 'Search words' field containing 'Reading', a 'Category Filter' tree with 'Home' selected, and a 'Search scope' dropdown set to 'Specified number of sentences'. The 'Sentences' field is set to '3', and the 'Case-sensitive' checkbox is checked. A 'Search!' button is visible. Below the search area, a results section shows '48 Result(s)' and a 'Text Fragment(s)' list. The first few fragments are:

Interviewer1: And apart from shopping how do you feel about **Reading** as a place to live for girls of your age?

Viveca: I love **Reading**

Megan: Yeah same I really like it

Viveca: I love **Reading**

Megan: Yeah same I really like it

Interviewer1: What do you love about it?

Interviewer: Ok so, when you go into town, do you enjoy **Reading** as a place? Can you tell me what you like about **Reading** or what you don't like about **Reading**?

Ellen: I like it cos it's big and there's loads of places you can just go and hang out you don't have to do anything.

Can you tell me what you like about **Reading** or what you don't like about **Reading**?

Ellen: I like it cos it's big and there's loads of places you can just go and hang out you don't have to do anything. But it could probably be better if there was actually more stuff to do cos there's not... if you're just going out with your friends you basically have the choice you can go to the cinema or hang around the shops for a couple of hours, but there's not actually that much to do.

But it could probably be better if there was actually more stuff to do cos there's not... if you're just going out with your friends you basically have the choice you can go to the cinema or hang around the shops for a couple of hours, but there's not actually that much to do.

Mimi: Well, I think it's good because if you go to a town somewhere else in England you'll see there aren't many shops there isn't a great... But in **Reading** you've got two shopping malls so, got quite a good selection of shops.

Mimi: Well, I think it's good because if you go to a town somewhere else in England you'll see there aren't many shops there isn't a great... But in **Reading** you've got two shopping malls so, got quite a good selection of shops.

Interviewer: Yeah.

But in **Reading** you've got two shopping malls so, got quite a good selection of shops.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Figure 3.4 The co-occurrence function

When ticking the box ‘Case-sensitive’, the user is deciding that upper and lower case play a role when finding words (e.g. the search tool will make a difference between ‘Reading’, the town, and ‘reading’, the gerund form of the verb ‘to read’ – Figure 3.4). Finally, the ‘Include alternatives’ option is used to decide whether or not to search for spelling variations that were

entered in the transcription phase, such as the English spelling variation ‘want to/wanna’ or ‘because/’cos’.

This function enables teachers to decide exactly what they want to show their students by combining, for example, ‘drinking’ and ‘smoking’.

The WORD SEARCH (CONCORDANCE in Backbone) function (Figure 3.5) enables the user to see the context (co-text) that can surround a word.

The screenshot shows a web interface for a word search function. At the top, there is a navigation bar with 'Home', 'Corpus: EnglishCorpus', 'Resources', and 'Help'. Below this is a menu with 'Browse', 'Section Search', 'Co-Occurrence', 'Word Search', and 'View Lists'. The 'Word Search' section is active, showing three input fields for 'Word 1', 'Word 2', and 'Word 3'. 'Word 1' contains the text 'eat'. To the right of these fields is a 'Category Filter' section with a 'Categories' button. Further right are settings for 'Context Length' (set to 8), 'Sort Order' (set to 'First left then right'), 'Case-sensitive' (unchecked), and 'Include alternatives' (checked). A 'Search!' button is at the bottom right of this section.

Below the search interface, the results are displayed in a table with 9 rows. The table has four columns: 'Left Context', 'Match', and 'Right Context'. The 'Match' column contains the word 'eat' in all lowercase. The 'Left Context' and 'Right Context' columns contain snippets of text from the corpus.

Left Context	Match	Right Context
take a nap laughs. To go home and shopping, relax or see a film or eat.	eat	a big lunch and just pass out on
two hours or so and then come home, d come home and have a snack laughs, go shopping, relax or see a film or home and maybe watch a bit of telly, or something and you 're trying to	Eat	at restaurants like Pizza Hut , MacDonalds and if again laughs , do some homework and then maybe something , and then I would go swimming for . Eat at restaurants like Pizza Hut , MacDonalds and
hour, where we have half of it, you and photos. And we stuff our faces. You	eat	something and then sometimes I have friends over and everyone ' s like smoking in your lunch and the other half you do homework lots of food ? Yeah

Figure 3.5 The word search function

This function offers the user options similar to the ones previously presented, except that in this case it is possible to select the number of context words that should appear and in which order.

VIEW LISTS gives us a list of the most commonly used words and their frequency. When clicking on a word, its context of use is presented as in WORD SEARCH. This function enables us to focus on collocations that are typical of teenagers’ daily speech, for example.

Such web-based systems for assisted access to corpora facilitate a lexical approach to language learning and teaching. They enable learners to autonomously explore the corpus in a *discovery learning* fashion which might stimulate their resilient technophobia to such tools while helping them reach appropriateness:

Web-based feedback, which primarily utilizes concordance software, enables students to have access to copious, authentic, and numerous instances of particular features on large collections of wordlists and texts...Web-based feedback is greatly empowered by a discovery-based approach which gives EFL novice writers a cognitive support to reach decisions about making appropriate choices of language rules. (Rouhi & Vadafar, 2011)

Discovery learning activities are strongly recommended by the Council of Europe because they foster autonomy and self-direction. They favour learner-centred, open-ended, tailored learning practices. In the context of such practices, teachers become learning experts, rather than language experts trying to create artificial tasks to provide learners with information they already

have (Bernardini, 2004). The access to corpora enables learners to learn by doing according to their specific needs and purposes. In addition, "...sufficient scaffolding through concordance activities actuates students' ZPD to focus on linguistic forms, helps students develop effective learning strategies..., raises language awareness..." (Rouhi & Vadafar, 2011).

SACODEYL also offers links to pedagogically relevant complementary resources such as video and sound, ready-made corpus-based language learning tasks and instructions for exploratory and communicative e-learning activities. The resource sheets are usually based on video selections and their transcripts. They aim at developing reading and listening skills as well as grammar and lexical knowledge. Authentication is a key word: students can engage in exercises based on videos of people of their age across the globe talking about topics of their daily routine. SACODEYL communicative exercises shall be explored in the next chapter.

Authoring tools, the second e-learning tool I proposed to give some insight into, enable teachers to create their own customised learning and testing materials in a "do-it-yourself" (DIY) fashion.

Authoring tools allow the authors of the course to decide on its structure and contents, thus contributing to their autonomy. Authoring tools can be used by non-programmers. They enable teachers to create and exercise their pedagogic power. They can either create courses from the scratch or adapt existing learning packages. This way, teachers can engage in differentiated learning by adapting modules to individual learners or groups of learners. They can also add other resources and contribute with items of their own. They can create keys and make them available or not according to their purpose. The possibilities offered by these tools suggest teachers must rethink their role. By assuming the role of authors, teachers open the door to learner-centred approaches: "Teachers need to be AUTHORS!" (Kohn, 2008: p. 157).

A more advanced level of autonomy can be achieved through the exploration of multimedia authoring tools by the learners (Kohn, 2008: p. 164), i.e., learners can create their own course or specific activities and explanations by accessing the editing mode. As facilitators of the learning process, teachers are responsible for providing learners with access to substantial and appropriate resources as well as guiding them. The nature of these tasks fosters learning and language awareness.

The possibilities are immense and vary according to the authoring software in use. Telos Language Partner (TLP)¹⁵ is an example of such a tool (Figure 3.6). This template-based authoring tool, created by the Steinbeis Transfer Center Language Learning Media, is intended to help teachers bridge the gap between available corpus data and the specific learning needs of their learners, from practicing listening, reading and writing skills to the development of grammatical and lexical knowledge. TLP offers linguistic and cultural learning support through explanations and exercises, as well as, most importantly, through look-up facilities that stimulate autonomy.

Both tutors and learners have access to a very wide assortment of exercises that can be used to customise materials such as video clips. These are real video clips that can be easily

¹⁵ See <http://www.sprachlernmedien.de/learning-modules/telos-language-partner/> [Retrieved December 5, 2014].

authenticated by students since they are likely to belong to the same discourse community as the video speakers. What is more, learners are given the opportunity to practise communication skills based on communicative materials.

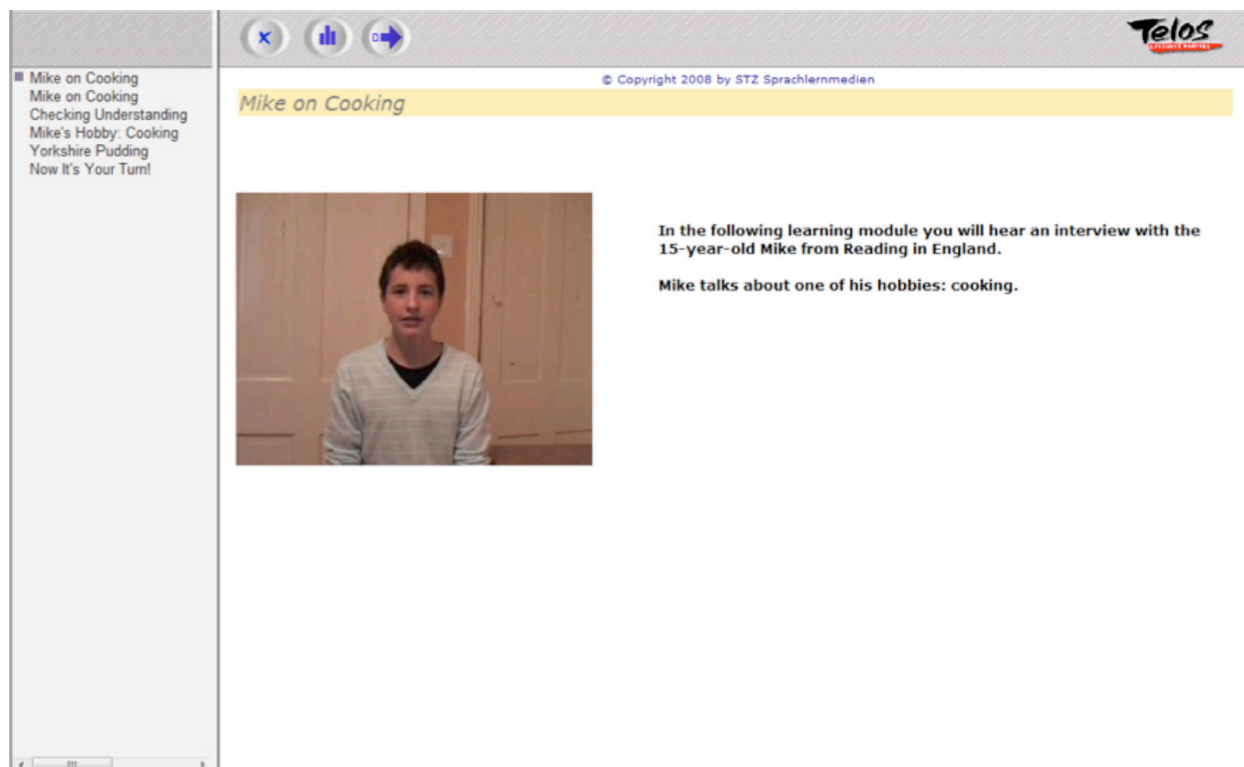


Figure 3.6 TLP learning module sample

From the perspective of the target user of an activity created by a teacher or tutor, TLP enables learners to gain control over their own learning by deciding when, where and what activities to perform according to their own needs and purposes, in particular in the case of self-study modules. Additionally, students can be in charge of and assess their own learning. They are able to go forward and backward and thus choose the task they would like to perform first; they can check the correction of their answers by referring to the key; they are able to see the scores of a specific exercise as well as their general module scores; optionally, they can leave the module and decide to save the data on their local machine to request feedback and/or correction from their tutors. When watching a video or listening to a dialogue, for example, students may also choose between having subtitles/a transcript or not, and most transcripts offer the possibility to see a translation. In some cases, passages are highlighted and learners can compare their pronunciation with the representation. They can listen to the whole dialogue or to individual speaker turns and play as well as record the speaker turns themselves – comparison with the model will provide correction for their pronunciation. These are some further benefits of such tools.

Nowadays there are obviously much more sophisticated authoring tools available. Dictera, for instance, is based on collaborative content development. Another example is Easygenerator. TLP shows how pedagogically engaging a simple do-it-yourself instrument can be.

The e-learning tools presented – corpus search and authoring tools – shed some light into how the development of CALL can facilitate learner and teacher autonomy, authentication and a lexical and constructivist approach to language learning and teaching. Despite the wide range of such enriching e-learning resources, CALL is said not to have become normalised yet. On the one hand, “[w]e are obviously living in fastpaced times: tools and environments are pronounced dead before they have been properly used and explored” (Kohn, 2014a). On the other hand, there are accessibility-related issues. This shall be explored in chapter 5. Another reason for this seems to lie in the controversy around CALL as isolated practice. CALL appears to still be associated to e-learning language classes in which students sit in front of a computer and solve exercises the computer provides feedback on, rather than to a more communicative and collaborative setting in which computer-mediated language learning activities are intertwined with conventional ones to the best of the learners’ needs and abilities and guided by the teacher. In fact, technology is not to be seen as the only factor to learning success; it requires pedagogical contextualisation. It was this lack of integration which led to a general rejection of e-learning even before it started to flourish and open up to more promising blended and integrative practices. Technology was and is not supposed to embellish the lesson but to serve a clear pedagogic purpose in the lesson (Warschauer, 1996; Bax, 2003): “The hardest challenge thus remains pedagogy, not technology” (Kohn, 2001: p. 45). The function of technology is not to replace conventional learning and teaching practices or the teacher, but to be an asset for learning and teaching with teachers as facilitators, as stimuli, as guides for learning. The TESOL technology standards provide benchmarks for English teachers and learners in all teaching contexts across the world. The four goals to bear in mind in writing teacher preparation set by them illustrate some gaps of this e-learning phase and give insight into the next phase of e-learning, blended learning (see Figure 3.2): (1) Language teachers acquire and maintain foundational knowledge and skills in technology for professional purposes, (2) Language teachers integrate pedagogical knowledge and skills with technology to enhance language teaching and learning, (3) Language teachers apply technology in record-keeping, feedback, and assessment, (4) Language teachers use technology to improve communication, collaboration, and efficiency (Kessler, 2012b: pp. 220-222). *Applying, using technology to improve processes and results* and *integrating* are key words in the next phase of e-learning and shall guide the case studies in this thesis.

3.2 Blended Language Learning

Blended learning is the didactic integration of e-learning – forms of learning and teaching that involve Information and Communication Technology (ICT) – with conventional learning, in a complementary attempt to make the best of both approaches without falling into the weaknesses each one of these systems may have.

Expanded in the 90s, e-learning had been expected to have taken over learning by the 21st century, but, as said before, it lacked pedagogical contextualisation. Individual learning needs

and goals were ignored and some facilities were potentially restrictive. E-learning was not embedded in conventional classrooms – it was rather opposed to it – and it was failing to succeed as an isolated form of learning (Kohn, 2006). E-learning consisted of learning via computer, mostly with no integration with face-to-face communication and collaboration. E-learning was an input-heavy form of content learning that lacked situational embedding. This made it more difficult for learners to authenticate discourse. Still, educators feared e-learning made them lose their place in teaching.

The need to integrate e-learning with face-to-face communication and collaboration with peers and teachers was fulfilled by blended learning. Blended learning emerged as an attempt to add didactic power to technologies by assigning a new relevance to human agents. Technology started to be understood not as an end *per se*, but rather as a means to achieve an end: “The focus...is not on choosing ‘the right’ or ‘the best’, ‘the innovative’ as opposed to ‘the traditional’ media for presenting learning content; it is rather on creating a learning environment that works as a whole...” (Neumeier, 2005: p. 165).

Blended learning offers a blend of online and face-to-face phases. This enables learners to learn regardless of time and place and in collaboration with others, by matching the facilities offered by the context to their needs and goals. This possibility transforms learning into something universal and therefore profitably global – worldwide learner communities can be brought together to engage in collaborative knowledge construction and skill development. In a blended learning setting learners find it easier to authenticate discourse: “...creating a virtual presence is hardly enough; what counts in the end is meaningful interaction that adds value to what people are aiming to achieve in their real lives” (Kohn, 2014a).

Blended learning offers the required didactic conditions for the application of e-learning (Kohn, 2006). An example of a blended learning setting is the Flipped Classroom. The Flipped Classroom model is based on delivering instruction online to students sitting in their homes and moving the learning activities which would traditionally be homework into the classroom, thus the term ‘flipped’. In opposition to traditional learning and teaching approaches, students’ first exposure to study material occurs at home. They watch lectures at their own pace and communicate with peers and teachers via online discussions. This demands lower levels of cognitive work and thus less help or scaffolding than the next phase, engagement with the concept. Therefore, it can be done at home. The next phase occurs in the classroom, under teacher face-to-face guidance and usually in the shape of creative, collaborative activities that enable students to explore what they have learnt at home. Students solve problems (assignments, labs, tests) face-to-face in class. Applying acquired knowledge to solve problems demands higher levels of cognitive work and thus more scaffolding. Hence, it is essential that students can receive instant and personalised feedback from both the teacher and peers, that is, that concepts can be revisited when they notice they are unclear by trying to apply them. Such a learning and teaching model facilitates the implementation of a differentiated learning approach:

Although it is difficult to appeal to the learning styles [assimilators, convergers, divergers and accommodators¹⁶] of every student in the classroom, the inverted classroom implements a strategy of teaching that engages a wide spectrum of learners. New learning technologies make it possible...Evidence suggests that students generally preferred the inverted classroom to a traditional lecture...(Lage, Platt & Traglia, 2000: 41)

In fact, it is believed that students are less likely to feel frustrated in such an approach (“Knewton Infographics: Flipped Classroom,” n.d.). A high school near Detroit, which had one the highest failure rates in the region, offers some evidence of this since failure and dropout rates improved dramatically after *flipping* the process (Majumdar, 2014), even if other factors co-influenced the change.

However, it seems that this type of classroom mostly benefits less able students since students are not asked to make use of higher level thinking at home, on their own, that is, they are not able to test acquisition by dropping the scaffolding. In fact, the main problem of this apparently good blend of high-level and low-level construction with a focus on interactive and hands-on activities in class is that it misses out on one of the main advantages of e-learning, i.e., its constructivist nature. If all teachers decide to tell their students to watch their lectures at home, learners will spend their evenings watching online videos instead of making use of all the other much more attractive, engaging and learning-facilitative ICT resources available. Furthermore, there is a need for resources to be kept in a pedagogically-fitting way, i.e., in an integrated and contextualised manner that facilitates the integration of the videos watched, the discussions held online and the problems solved in class, etc.

These limitations again direct our attention to the need for pedagogically-successful learning contexts. EVIVA¹⁷, “Evaluating the Education of Interpreters and their Clients through Virtual Learning Activities”, an EU project (January 2013 - December 2014) that focuses on 3D virtual worlds specifically designed and customised to cater for the learning needs and requirements of interpreter education, resorted to an adaptation of the original Flipped Classroom model as the project framework: interaction was taken home. The EVIVA evaluation studies demonstrated real integration ensures the authentication of learning and thus its success. Preparatory classroom activities and reflective follow-up sessions play a fundamental role in this regard:

...these ‘flipped’ activities always need to be seen as part of the entire blended learning ensemble. Preparatory classroom activities are implemented to prevent weak virtual learning. This involves helping students to understand the conditions and processes of interpreting, to become aware of their own learning needs and requirements of success, and to fully grasp the virtual task at hand. Recordings of the virtual sessions combined with informal learner journals provide input for reflective follow-up sessions with the interpreting tutor. The significance of these follow-up activities is twofold: for students they contribute to awareness raising and ‘learning to learn’; for teachers they open up a window for assessment. (Kohn, 2014a)

TILA¹⁸, “Telecollaboration for Intercultural Language Acquisition”, is another EU project (January 2013 - June 2015) that tried to delegate to a virtual learning environment the tasks and

¹⁶ “Assimilators and convergers take in information through abstract conceptualization, whereas divergers and accommodators take in information through concrete experiences. Convergers and accommodators process information via active experimentation, but divergers and assimilators process information through observation and reflection” (Lage, Platt & Traglia, 2000: 32).

¹⁷ See <http://www.virtual-interpreting.net/eviva-project/> [Retrieved December 5, 2014].

¹⁸ See <http://www.tilaproject.eu/moodle/> [Retrieved December 5, 2014].

activities that a traditional classroom may not support sufficiently, in other words, by using communicative virtual learning environments to explore and study how telecollaboration tools and environments can be used to enhance second language learning and teaching. The final assessment of this study was highly positive.

A blended learning scenario which makes the best of both modes should be a step towards Bax's *integrated CALL*: it must *pedagogically integrate* the two learning modes (e-learning and conventional learning) according to the needs of the learner, be based on interaction both with the computer and with other students, and be *normalised*, a normal part of teaching. Unfortunately, one thing is to explore blended learning situations in the context of a project, quite another is to implement them in the real world of educational institutions (Kohn, 2014a). Since blended learning emerged to 'save' e-learning, for many it does not have the appeal of innovation and, in many cases, rejection remains. Most teachers acknowledge the potential of ICT, but are still sceptical, if not afraid, of them, in most cases because they lack the skill to use and integrate them, not to mention to assess the impact of learning situations such as the one posed within the EVIVA project. The survey in chapter 5 shall shed light on this. Another reason for this still *non-normalised* state of affairs is that the task of designing blended learning curricula or settings is not an easy one. In Australia, the so-called *educational designers* are skilled in the technologies and pedagogies that support blended learning and provide some assistance to the teacher in the design of learning tasks as well as in the selection of suitable technologies. Barbaux, from the University of Sydney, examines the relationship between the teacher/subject expert and the educational designer, as well as collaborative relationships between teachers, and argues for more integration and collaboration, since (1) "the construction of a coherent continuum of blended learning activities mobilises a diversity of fields of expertise...that combine disciplinary content, pedagogy and technology, and their intersecting areas" (see Figure 3.7) and (2) "[t]he process of educational design is inquiry-based, interactive, learning-centric rather than content-centric, and calls for a flexible, multi-skilled and pro-active team-approach" (Barbaux, 2011).

Despite all difficulties in implementing blended learning, the advantages are clear: in such a learning ensemble the benefits of e-learning (anywhere and anytime) mingle with the physical anchor of conventional learning; face-to-face interaction and synchronous or asynchronous computer-mediated interaction coexist and blend into each other; various learning skills are enhanced; numerous interactional patterns emerge (around, with and through the computer) and thus more learner and teacher roles (Neumeier, 2005). This last aspect is quite pertinent since the emergence of e-learning gave rise to discussions about the new minor role of school and teachers as well. Curiously, Wolff had suggested that e-learning opened new roles for school as a learning setting (Wolff, 1994: p. 416) and Martel had assured the role of the teacher was not disappearing, but becoming far more complex instead, because flexibility was in high demand (Martel, 2000: p. 69). This is suggested by Kohn too: "...teachers will not be replaced by the computer...teachers who are able to make best use of its potential in pedagogically relevant ways will have a significant advantage over those who are not" (Kohn, 2001: p. 47).

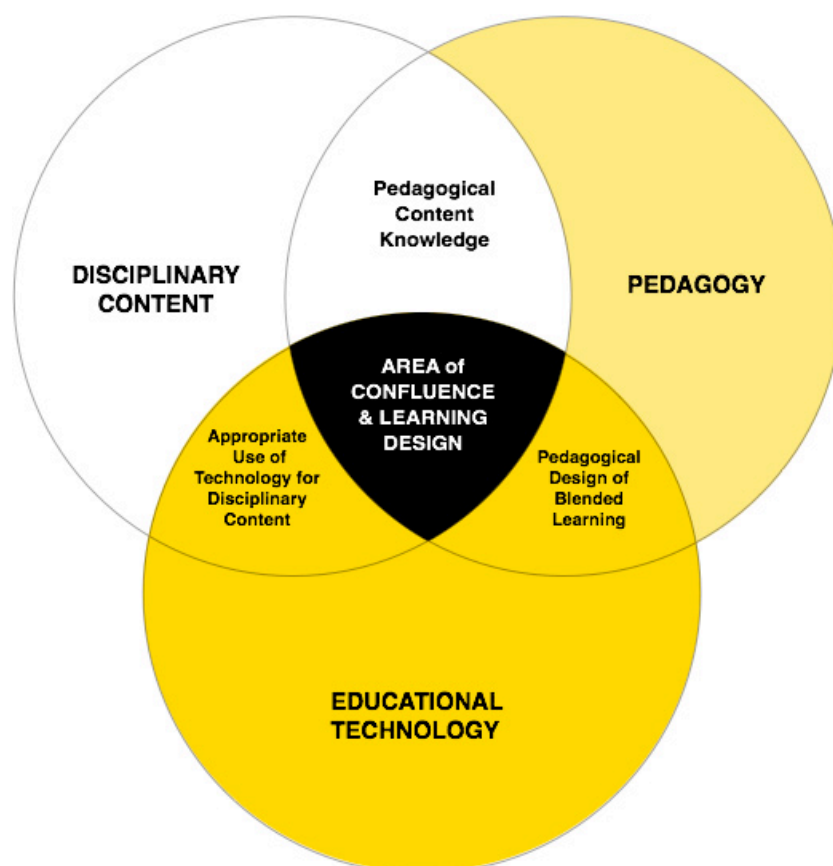


Figure 3.7 Areas of expertise and their confluence (Barboux, 2011)

All the above is of major importance for a *language* learning setting. The relevance of blended language learning (BLL), i.e., the importance of integrating language e-learning practices with conventional language learning and teaching modes, can be seen in the extent to which it enables the accomplishment of the aims and principles of a modern second language class (Kohn, 2006). BLL facilitates the implementation of the learner-centred practices advocated in this thesis: it makes it possible for learners to authenticate language learning material and activities by connecting and integrating them with their life through real interaction with other students in the target language, which also contributes to the development of their intercultural awareness; it enables new communicative interaction modes and therefore collaborative practices in the target language; it facilitates autonomous language learning through the increase of the learners' responsabilisation for and awareness of their language knowledge and skill enhancement, in particular because blended learning allows for optional and obligatory learning material and communication channels as well as offers immense look-up facilities (Neumeier, 2005). A blended language learning setting enables learners to, through interaction with technologies, play with language in a constructivist sense and therefore actively find their way to learn a language, i.e., to engage in the construction process of their own learning reality, while incorporated in the context of a more human classroom composed of real classmates and teachers.

The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) places the use of technologies among the general competences to be developed by the *language* learner, namely

under ‘heuristic skills’ (see Council of Europe, 2001), which supports the importance of the exploratory, experimental, investigative activities suggested before for the development of cognitive skills. As advocated by the CEFR, blended language learning allows language learners to develop both linguistic skills and other competences such as ICT skills or learning awareness in a reciprocally enriching process needed for lifelong learning (Little, 1997):

...a ‘virtual’ target language community, available to language learners anywhere in the world. If we can have a ‘virtual’ target language community, however, we can also have a ‘virtual’ self-access centre. That offers exciting possibilities for second and foreign language learner-users. But they will be able to benefit from those possibilities only if they are critically aware of their learner-user status and have been given the tools that enable them to use that awareness as the basis for continuing personal enrichment. (Council of Europe, 2001: pp. 235-236)

To illustrate the direction he expected *integrative CALL* to take, Warschauer (1996) too showed how the Internet, merged with other technologies, was used to help create an integrated communicative environment for EFL students in Bulgaria based on a collaborative, interpreted study of contemporary American short stories. E-mail communication, concordancing and audiotapes were enhanced by an array of classroom activities such as in-class discussions and dialogue journals. In fact, “...corpus-learner, and indeed corpus-teacher interaction are not replacements for learner-learner and teacher-learner interaction...” (Bernardini, 2004: pp. 32-33). Learning must be organised as a pedagogic blend of online and offline, classroom and homework activities (Hoffstaedter & Kohn, 2009). The potential of SACODEYL, for example, lies in its pedagogic embedding, which enables learners to authenticate the materials they have access to. The exploratory and communicative exercises (Figure 3.8) offered by SACODEYL are suggestions of how teachers can use the SACODEYL search tool for the best of their purposes, mostly integrating the corpus with face-to-face interactive content and language integrated activities. In Figure 3.8, an example of a task-based communicative exercise, the co-occurrence search tool is used in the pre-task phase of a communicative activity. This is an example of how corpus search activities can become part of a blended language learning task. Another example of meaningful integration is the use of corpora such as SACODEYL to create Telos language packages, for instance, by embedding corpus search in language focus exercises that precede or follow the watching of a video interview and a checking-understanding activity. Resorting to other environments can extend possibilities further:

...the actual pedagogic exploitation of the annotated and enriched interview corpora is further enhanced by a Moodle-based e-learning environment, which helps teachers to provide and monitor authenticated learning opportunities that combine language-focused Telos tasks with collaborative learning and communicative interaction. (Hoffstaedter & Kohn, 2009: p. 301)

Topic Area 6: Discussion Topics	
Communicative Exercise	
CEF level: B2	
Task Topic 6-C6	
Activity	The value of computer-mediated communication
Task	Some of the interviewees talk about using the internet to chat with friends and to make new friends using social network sites. Listen to what they say about using the internet and discuss in small groups what you think the benefits and the drawbacks are if you use the internet for making friends.
How to go about	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Go to the 'Co-Occurrence Search' tab and type "<i>internet friends</i>" into the search box. • Set the search scope to 'One Section'. • Look at the results and listen to Ellie, Claudia, and Josie talking about how they use the internet. Write down the types of websites and social networks that they mention. • Get in groups of 4 and discuss what you think of using the internet for making new friends and for maintaining friendships: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What do you think are possible benefits? - What do you think are possible drawbacks? • Present your results to the others in class.
Teacher hint	The activity can be extended into a more general discussion on the value of computer-mediated communication.

Figure 3.8 Sample of a SACODEYL communicative exercise

The Learning Management System (LMS) Moodle¹⁹ (Figure 3.9), also known as Course Management System (CMS) or Virtual Learning Environment (VLE), is an open source web application that can be used by educators to create effective e-learning sites that facilitate pedagogical integration. The term 'Moodle' is an acronym for Modular Object-Oriented Dynamic Learning Environment. This course host is already in use in many schools and universities across the globe. Its main pedagogical online support functions include the following:

- a) course editing and administration;
- b) authoring and integration of pedagogical instructions and multimedia learning resources;
- c) tutorial guidance through communicative contact (via e-mail, forum and chat) as well as learning control support (via feedback, evaluation and tracking statistics);
- d) facilitation of autonomous learning through a variety of learning activities, in particular forums and chats, written assignments and assessments, (collaborative) glossaries and wikis.

¹⁹ See <http://www.moodle.org> [Retrieved December 5, 2014].

Moodle offers several resources and activities to create a course. The following were used in the courses to be analysed at a further stage of this thesis:

- a) Label – a resource to create instructions for activities or other resources; labels allow for a pedagogic embedding of the activities;
- b) Link – a resource to create a link to a website or upload a file; links enable teachers to associate Moodle activities and resources with other useful tools and materials such as self-study learning packages;
- c) Forum – an activity for users to exchange ideas structured in discussion topics; forums are a strong form of communication²⁰;
- d) Wiki – an activity to write collaboratively; wikis enable users to add, delete or edit text by other users and so weave a text together²¹;
- e) Chat – an activity that enables learners and teachers to chat online; access to past sessions is also possible;
- f) Book – a multi-page resource in the form of a structured book; books can be linked to other activities and easily printed;
- g) Mind map – an activity to collaboratively collect vocabulary in the shape of a mind map; mind maps are composed of words or expressions normally arranged around a central world by semantic association;
- h) Glossary – an activity to collaboratively collect vocabulary in the form of a glossary; glossaries can contain definitions, translations, usage examples, associated words, etc.;
- i) Game – an activity to play a vocabulary game such as *Hangman* or *Crossword* which is usually based on the vocabulary collected in a glossary; games enable users to test the knowledge of the vocabulary collected;
- j) Assignment – an activity that enables teachers to collect work from students, review it and provide feedback including grades; assignments can be uploaded, done online or offline;
- k) Journal – an activity that enables students to write a personal journal their teachers can give feedback on; journals can be used to reflect on the learning process;
- l) Questionnaire – an activity that consists of a questionnaire normally used to assess the course; it is more advanced than the Feedback activity and, unlike the Survey activity, based upon pre-set questions, it allows users to create their own questions.

²⁰ Erpenbeck and Sauter (2007) point out three different types of forums: *Fachforen* – discussion that demands a certain expertise –, *Diskussionsforen* – discussion of open questions resulting from group work, for example – and ‘*Cafeteria*’ – informal discussion among the participants (p. 240). Their potential for the development of different language and social skills is evident. See Erpenbeck & Sauter (2007: p. 239-241) for further information on forums.

²¹ Wikis shall be extensively explored in the upcoming chapters.

Wide Minds - The Human Face of Digital Learning

WiMi ► Multilingualism

Online Users
(last 3 minutes)
Mariana Esteves

People
Participants

Activities
Assignments
Chats
Choices
Forums
Glossaries
Hot Potatoes Quizzes
Mindmaps
Quizzes
Resources
Wikis

Administration
Turn editing on
Settings
Assign roles
Grades
Groups
Backup
Restore

Topic outline

WiMi work group on multilingualism

Our mission is to demonstrate and evaluate the pedagogic potential of elearning contents and activities in pilot courses (> WiMi workpackage description). A special focus is on content and language integrated learning (CLIL), pedagogic corpora and web-based communicative interaction in Moodle (> Kurt's presentation).

Our tasks include in particular the following ones:

1. Conducting a web-based audit on elearning infrastructures and activities in secondary schools
2. Providing teacher training and support
3. Setting up and running pilot course activities
4. Producing a guidance manual for teachers
5. Presenting and disseminating showcases of best practice

News forum
Rebecca's ideas 06.12.08
Food for Thought
Work group discussion forum
Forum - Brainstorming ideas for piloting

1 WiMi workshop on multilingualism (Tübingen, 6/7 Feb 2009)

crew invoice for the Tübingen workshop
Moodle manual for learners Jan 09
Moodle manual for teachers Jan09
Kurt Kohn 2008: WiMi pedagogic corpora

Latest News
Add a new topic...
22 Feb, 07:54
Polly Seton
logo more...
21 Feb, 10:21
Kurt Kohn
Checking email 090220
more...
13 Feb, 17:25
Kurt Kohn
Checking the email
function more...
Older topics ...

Upcoming Events
There are no upcoming events
Go to calendar...
New Event...

Quickmail
Compose
History

Figure 3.9 Moodle sample

Here are some additional activities which can also be useful:

- a) Choice – an activity similar to a poll in which students choose one of the possibilities offered by the teacher; the choice activity can be used for decision making, to stimulate thinking or gather research data;
- b) Quiz – an activity that allows the teacher to create quizzes with different question types; quizzes can be used as comprehension exercises or tests, for example;
- c) Light-box gallery – a resource to create a photo gallery.

Functions/activities can be activated according to the needs of users and depending on the Moodle version being used.

This user-friendly open-source solution offers varied activities with great potential for blended learning practices. It enables the teacher to pedagogically integrate all activities and resources in one platform. It facilitates the combination of online and face-to-face activities via instructions (*labels*). The customisation and flexibility offered make it possible for the teacher to cater to diverse language learning and teaching needs (Kohn, 2012). Moodle offers a pedagogic solution for concepts such as the Flipped Classroom both because of the pedagogic embedding of the online and in-person activities and because it works as a pedagogically organised and contextualised repository of required resources, thus enabling e-learning to be used to its full potential. In the courses that serve as data for the empirical studies of this thesis, Moodle was used as a pedagogical control centre for e-learning and blended language learning scenarios.

Moodle facilitates communication, social construction and shared processes in addition to comprehensive data gathering for action research (Bozzo, 2012). It eases the implementation of the three key principles of communicative and constructivist language learning: autonomy, authentication and collaboration. Collaboration and authentication are facilitated by the pedagogic integration of the activities offered by this learning environment (e.g. forums, wikis, etc.). Learner autonomy is achieved through place and time emancipation as well as increased agency and responsibility over the learning process (Kohn, 2006). Teacher autonomy is also attained through time and place flexibility as well as through the possibility to create blended courses. Authoring tools and the integration of self-designed courses in learning management systems such as Moodle help teachers deviate from becoming passive agents of ready-made technological solutions (see Kohn, 2006). Teachers can make use of genuine communication material and turn it authentic for their learners in a content and language task-based approach to language learning that suits their learners' needs (see Kohn, 2008). This will be one of the purposes of the case studies under analysis in this PhD thesis.

3.3 *Web 2.0 and web collaboration*

As suggested in chapter 3.1, CALL is under permanent evolution. This development is surely dependent on the enhancement of ICT, and today on the enhancement of the web in particular. The upgrade from Web 1.0. to Web 2.0 plays a role of major importance in this regard²². It does not represent a technical update, but a change of direction – Web 2.0 is not only a technology, but an attitude as well (Lomicka & Lord, 2009).

Web 1.0 offered the user a passive role only, i.e., users could view webpages but not contribute to their content, this being done by a few webmasters solely. Although Web 1.0 already facilitated access to authentic materials from real contexts, information was read-only and thus unidirectional, i.e., static.

The term Web 2.0 was coined by Darcy DiNucci in 1999 and became prominent with the O'Reilly Media Web 2.0 Conference in 2004. Web 2.0 is a new version of the World Wide Web. It is the social web. Ordinary people can now easily communicate, publish and share information. Whereas Web 1.0 demanded self-installation, Web 2.0 offers "...numerous pre-installed social software applications, public platforms and community spaces..." (Rüschhoff, 2009: p. 46) as well as account synchronisation opportunities that make its use much more accessible. Web 2.0 is dynamic – it places strong emphasis on *ongoing* processes based on social interaction through which knowledge is under constant discovery and construction. *Interoperability*, in Wikipedia's words ("Web 2.0," n.d.), is the most defining feature of Web 2.0. Facebook is a good example of how people can contribute to processing, editing, deleting, adding and disseminating content. Further examples are other networking sites, the blog, the

²² Web 3.0, a web that is able to make suggestions to users based on their previous preferences and choices recorded through cookies, is also already in motion. Experts believe Web 3.0 will be a web in which computers generate new information and perform for the user ("Web 3.0," n.d.). This is a step towards the semantic web, "...a system that enables machines to 'understand' and respond to complex human requests based on their meaning" ("Semantic Web," n.d.).

forum, Skype, the wiki, among many others. Lomicka and Lord quote Wikipedia's definition of the term, according to which Web 2.0 aims at enhancing "...creativity, communications, secure information sharing, collaboration and functionality of the Web" (Lomicka & Lord, 2009: p. 1). They point out that the term *Web 2.0* illustrates the emergence of many new forms of social interaction, and stress the new role of the user, now at the centre of the web. Through this new web, users become participants.

All these developments towards 2.0 collaborative practices offer great possibilities for blended language learning in particular. They enable, for example, the combination of web-based corpus resources with tools for computer-mediated communication (CMC) (Kohn, 2012). Rüschoff claims, "[a]ll this can be seen as a fitting setting for the implementation of collaborative, output-oriented learning experiences into language learning by means of digital media" (Rüschoff, 2009: p. 46).

In Kessler and Bikowski's view, "[w]hile some may have considered autonomous learning to be an isolating activity in the past, others recognize that technology may promote more social opportunities for autonomous language practice and interaction" (Kessler & Bikowski, 2010: p. 42). As hinted at in chapter 3.1, Erpenbeck and Sauter (2007) suggest e-learning is now undergoing a phase centred on competence development with New Blended Learning and social software (see Figure 3.2), which results from the global demand for innovative learning concepts and the current need to develop one's skills rather than knowledge. This phase consists of the integration not only of face-to-face learning with e-learning 2.0 but also with knowledge management in a single learning process: the goal is not to collect knowledge but to use Web 2.0 tools such as wikis and weblogs to achieve systematic skill development and thus successfully explore the ability to network (Erpenbeck & Sauter, 2012). The authors refer to a new learning theory emerging in the context of these recent additions called Connectivism. In Connectivism learning takes place through networking experience, teachers play the role of trainers and are responsible for creating networks, stimulating reflection and connecting learners, and problem solving occurs in and through networks with emphasis on self-directed learning processes (Erpenbeck & Sauter, 2007: p. 159). If exposed to such a learning context, learners can build their own personal learning environment through the combination of different resources and connect through learning communities based on dialogic interaction. Life today demands authenticated activity centred upon realism, relevance, construction and socialisation. Web 2.0 has the potential to facilitate this skill development so much needed for lifelong learning. In fact, Web 2.0 enables learners to gain a more agentive power over their learning: "[w]e have now become the crowd with the wisdom" (Lomicka & Lord, 2009: p. 4). Teachers, on the other hand, have the duty to make learning shareable and more open now that most of these kinds of social interaction have become a normal part of students' lives, and must evidently monitor learning.

This makes clear that learning practices involving Web 2.0 tools foster not only autonomy and authentication but also and above all communication and collaboration (Lomicka & Lord, 2009): "Innovative Kommunikationsinstrumente des Web 2.0 sind für dieses kooperative und kollaborative Lernen gut geeignet, weil sie die aktive Teilnahme der Lernenden an Kommunikationsprozessen fördern" (Erpenbeck & Sauter, 2007: p. 159). In opposition to a Web 1.0 setting, Web 2.0 offers learners the possibility to autonomously engage in global real-life

written and spoken interaction/collaboration, via both synchronous CMC, such as Messenger chats or Skype conversations, and asynchronous CMC, such as forum discussions or wiki collaborative writing. Both types of CMC facilitate interaction and collaborative language learning and thus offer immense benefits for language learning.

Relevant language learning activities include, for example,...forum discussions of a subject or language-related topic, collaborative creation of multimedia wiki documents, conversations in Skype, or blog entries reflecting on learning challenges and strategies...flexible opportunities for authenticated written and spoken production...particularly suitable for ensuring a more balanced distribution of reception and production activities than is usually possible in a face-to-face classroom setting. (Kohn, 2012: p. 4)

Reflective journals, forum discussions, Skype conversations, etc. shall be very important elements for the studies to be presented in this thesis; the creation of wiki documents shall be paramount. By reaching both asynchronously and synchronously interactive audiences, learners gain a new type of control over their learning and develop/articulate different competences. Whereas synchronous CMC enables a focus on communication, asynchronous CMC allows for more focus on form because there is more time available for reflection (Schultz, 2005; Kessler, 2009; Rüschoff, 2009; Khoii and Arabsarhangi, 2011). They complement each other.

The contribution of Web 2.0 for learner-centred collaborative language learning practices is obvious: Web 2.0 facilitates different collaboration/interaction modes and roles within a global community that uses real language in a real cultural context, which gives students the opportunity to develop not only their language skills but also their intercultural awareness while improving their language learning skills for life in a process they direct and authenticate.

Many have attempted to define *collaboration*. Beatty and Nunan, for example, define *collaboration* as

...a process in which two or more learners need to work together to achieve a common goal, usually the completion of a task or the answering of a question (Benson, 2001). Collaboration is manifested in the actions a learner takes when working with others and can be evidenced, for example, as a willingness to listen to others' ideas, suggestions and opinions so that they can be discussed and integrated into further actions, such as decisions about how to complete a task. (Beatty & Nunan, 2004: p. 166)

The social space offered by most Web 2.0 platforms facilitates this type of collaboration in which negotiation leads to further action in a process attempt to fulfil a task. This same space creates an urge to be *collaborative* rather than *cooperative* in Beatty and Nunan's view. From their point of view, "...cooperation only requires that learners work together, each learner completing a part of the task, rather than negotiating with others about all aspects of the task, as is necessary in collaboration" (Beatty & Nunan, 2004: p. 166). In the eighties, Damon & Phelps (1989) had already defined three patterns of interaction in line with this idea: *peer tutoring*, *cooperative learning* and *peer collaboration*. Kessler and Bikowski elaborate on these concepts and present four types of collaboration identified in Parks, Hamers and Huot-Lemonnier's research (2003). Beatty and Nunan's distinction between *cooperation* and *collaboration* is again implicit:

- (1) joint collaboration is 'two or more writers working on the same text who assume equal responsibility for its production...although individual contributions to the finished product may vary';
- (2) parallel collaboration is 'two or more writers who, although working on the same text, do not assume equal responsibility for its production...although again, individual contributions to the final product varied';

(3) incidental collaboration is ‘generally brief, spur-of-the moment requests for help directly related to the writing task at hand’; and

(4) covert collaboration is ‘getting information from documents or other linguistic or nonlinguistic sources during the process of producing a text.’

These types of collaboration may not be apparent in all collaborative writing contexts. (Kessler & Bikowski, 2010: p. 43)

The main strength of Web 2.0 tools is precisely the space for negotiation they offer and which is implied in the notion of collaboration put forward by research as most fruitful (*collaboration, peer collaboration, joint collaboration*). Chapter 2.5 has already offered insight into the fundamental role of output processing for language learning and showed how peer interaction and collaboration can be paramount in this regard. Web collaboration can offer additional advantages to a conventional second language learning context that go beyond not having to work together “...with pencil and paper or sending email attachments from one group member to another...often considered too time intensive and tedious” (Arnold, Dukate & Kost, 2009: p. 115).

To illustrate some of the remarkable things increased (web) collaboration has allowed us to do, Kessler provides two notable examples: first, Wikipedia; second, the worldwide response to the earthquake in Port Au Prince in Haiti in which online volunteers collaboratively constructed maps for on-the-ground volunteers to use in their rescue efforts (Kessler, 2012). The fact that web collaboration can take place in a worldwide context makes it more likely for learners to engage in real communication than when being involved in standard class interaction: “One obvious benefit of technology for language learning is the creation of opportunities for students to use language in authentic contexts” (Kessler, 2009: p. 79). Online collaboration enables learners to go beyond their classroom boundaries, manage their time and space availability outside class and even engage in cross-cultural interaction. This makes collaboration more meaningful, therefore more motivating.

Web collaboration, and collaborative writing in particular, offers a myriad of advantages presented in the literature (see Kessler & Bikowski, 2010; Kessler, Bikowski & Boggs, 2012). When students have their own space to collaborate, they build stronger ties. The sense of ownership they gain encourages extensive utilisation of the learning space and the learners’ willingness to interact increases together with their sense of equality and interest for what others produce. Web collaboration fosters negotiation and unpredictable online communication. It allows more appropriate feedback and revision and a faster response time, potentially increasing motivation and creativity. It promotes learner autonomy since it allows increased student control and the use of a wider variety of linguistic strategies. Students enjoy engaging in the writing process, having their information publicly displayed and being responsible for it. They can work on a text that is always available to all users simultaneously and enjoy great research opportunities. Finally, studies have demonstrated improved fluency and accuracy through multiskilled web collaboration environments. Forums, online chats, blogs or wikis are some examples of platforms for web collaboration, with collaborative writing assuming an outstanding position, even if the spoken register has earned its place. In fact, some researchers found out a clear cross-skill influence in the fact that online writing on chats, for example, can improve oral proficiency skills. Technology has changed the nature of contemporary written language.

Texting language, for example, resembles a blend of written and spoken discourse. It enables a type of language creativity that is probably most possible when writing intersects with other language skills. Integrating skills may enable one skill to provide guidance for the development of another. Writing, in particular, is suggested to help develop all language skills because it enables experimentation and fosters language reflection which can be transferred to other language skills (Kessler, 2012: p. 217-218). The most promising web collaborative tools demand and allow for the negotiation deemed necessary for collaboration (vs. cooperation) to succeed: "...software that requires a minimum of verbal interaction generates very little, while having students write a joint report or otherwise produce something collaboratively results in a substantial amount of interaction" (Warschauer & Healey, 1998: p. 62). This is the same interaction that will foster communication with a focus on form.

The development of students' linguistic skills has been traced back to the possibilities web collaboration offers with regard to authentic reflective peer collaborative learning practices in which learners can apply their autonomy and self-direction. Meaning and form negotiation all along the collaborative process are facilitated by the discussion amenities offered by the Web 2.0 collaborative tools, mostly based upon social interaction. Therein lies the pedagogical potential of web collaboration for language learning: in the fact that it allows learners to, through collaboration and communication, focus on meaning, on form and on the language learning process.

...CMC fosters negotiation (Blake, 2000; Lee, 2002; Smith, 2003), allows increased student control (Chun, 1994), and promotes a wider variety of linguistic strategies (Smith, 2003). Negotiation in the target language has been identified as significantly contributing to language learning through *enhanced semantic understanding* (Long, 1981; Long & Robinson, 1998), *morphosyntactic understanding* (Loschky, 1994) and a *greater awareness of a language learner's role in learning* (Vygotsky, 1978). [my italics] (Kessler & Bikowski, 2010: p. 44)

Bozzo's study about the collaborative construction of glossaries provides some concrete example of this within a lexical approach to language learning:

[a]ctively exploring the workings of the lexicon enhances the students' awareness of the chunkiness of language, favours the transformation of linguistic input into intake (Lewis 1997 [7]), and helps understand the communicative and pragmatic functions of lexical units. (Bozzo, 2012)

This same negotiation generates a general kind of language awareness which "...goes beyond just functional and linguistic knowledge but offers learners the opportunity to integrate the target language into their mental and communicative system" (Rüschhoff, 2009: p. 46). Intercultural awareness is a very important dimension of this awareness (Rüschhoff, 2009: pp. 46-47).

In a study about project-oriented, many-to-many collaborative writing, Kessler, Bikowski and Boggs (2012) analyse the process to plan and report on a research project for academic purposes in a Web-based word processing tool. In their conclusions, they claim students focused more on the process than on the product in comparison to Storch's study from 2005 (see chapter 2.5.2): "[t]he teams' contributions illustrate the preparation, planning, and recursive revision practices associated with the process-based writing and demonstrate how students negotiate the space between simultaneously being a member of a group and an autonomous writer" (Kessler, Bikowski & Boggs, 2012: p. 104); teachers play the role of facilitators of the learning process by "helping students achieve course goals while allowing them flexibility in how they approach

tasks” (Kessler, Bikowski & Boggs, 2012: p. 94). This suggests web collaboration unveils a whole new role for teachers as well.

Chapter 4, about the pedagogical potential of wikis as collaborative writing tools, shall offer deeper and more practical insight into how the learning validity of computer-mediated language learning is significantly enhanced by Web 2.0 and web collaboration. In fact, chapter 4 emerges from the assumption by Storch (2005), Kessler, Bikowski and Boggs (2012) and other researchers in the field of collaborative writing that research on students’ perceptions of collaborative writing projects as well as on the nature of the collaborative writing process and product has received little attention. From their point of view, collaborative writing does not take place as often as it should considering its benefits: “a review of the literature reveals that collaborative writing in the L2 writing classroom is advocated though underutilized” (Kessler, Bikowski & Boggs, 2012: p. 93). Kessler, Bikowski and Boggs go on to suggest that “...future language teaching and learning will be informed by the co-evolution of collaborative writing tools, student use of these tools, and pedagogy as influenced by these tools” (Kessler, Bikowski & Boggs 2012: p. 104), and illustrate this dynamic relationship with the following chart:

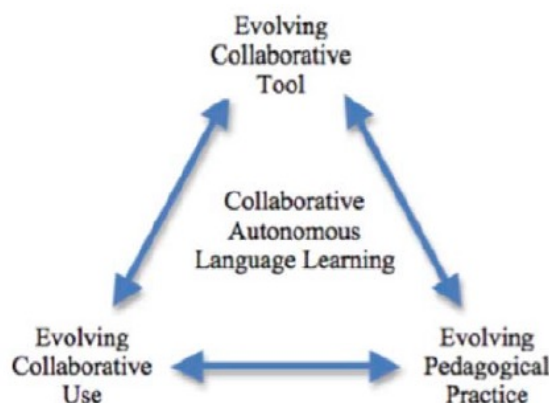


Figure 3.10 Co-evolution of collaborative autonomous pedagogy (Kessler, Bikowski & Boggs, 2012: p. 105)

They explain that these evolving tools allow many-to-many and simultaneous collaborative opportunities that face-to-face or shared document conventions restricted to pair work before. As these opportunities arise, it will be increasingly important for students to develop their autonomous language learning abilities as they collaborate. This shall be possible by proposing collaborative writing projects that enable students to practice autonomy in these spaces, to have input into expected outcomes, and to maintain flexibility in tool use and interaction (Kessler, Bikowski & Boggs, 2012: pp. 105-106):

By promoting the practice of larger group writing projects that capture these new potential benefits of synchronous collaboration, we will better recognize their role within the teaching of second language writers...Utilizing emerging collaborative writing technologies without adapting pedagogical writing practices inhibits the potential of this co-evolution [represented in Figure 3.10]. (Kessler, Bikowski & Boggs, 2012: pp. 105-106)

This is what the case studies under scrutiny in this thesis aim at.

4 The pedagogical potential of wikis

The literature up to date addresses collaborative writing in wikis as a superior process. In this chapter I intend to give insight into the nature of wikis and their potential for process-centred learning. I will also provide an overview of features and inherent processes of this type of composition environment that demand (further) research.

4.1 The nature of wikis

Current ESL methodology suggests language learning rest on knowledge construction. Task-based scenarios rooted in the output hypothesis have been seen as triggers of this language learning paradigm and as the strength of digital media and technology-enhanced tools. Web 2.0 offers easily-manageable innovative possibilities regarding task-based output-oriented language learning with platforms and tools centred on collaborative knowledge construction and knowledge sharing. Platforms such as wiki spaces “...provide an appropriate framework for more authentic and more real-life-like learning experiences than in the past” (Rüschhoff, 2009: p. 43), in particular because they enable learners to engage in the negotiation of meaningful and comprehensible output and thus grow cognitively and linguistically through reflective and collaborative learning (Rüschhoff, 2009). Referring to wikis, Rüschhoff suggests that research is needed “...to broaden the understanding of the effects and effectiveness of digital media in output-oriented, creative and participatory language learning” (Rüschhoff, 2009: p. 57). Kessler and Bikowski suggest that “[c]ollaborative writing in autonomous wiki space is likely to be different from other contexts such as f2f in class collaborative writing, email exchanges or other CMC-based collaborations” (Kessler & Bikowski, 2010: p. 44). Erpenbeck and Sauter (2007) claim wikis foster collaborative learning processes that go beyond processes based on addition, as in forums, for example.

A *wiki*, which in Hawaiian means “fast, fast”, is a web-based asynchronous authoring platform which enables all entitled users to collaboratively produce text. Wikis enhance creativity through contact with others’ ideas. Different writers can access it from different locations and at different times, notice changes previously made, and negotiate meaning and form to, taking advantage of “...the ease of textual changes in electronic writing...” (Arnold, Ducate & Kost, 2009: p. 133), constantly re-edit the text towards a pleasing final outcome. Erpenbeck and Sauter assign the following characteristics to wikis: openness, transparency, continuous feedback, simplicity, diversity (new categories and links are always possible), dynamism, up-to-datedness and finally identification, in the sense of empathy (Erpenbeck & Sauter, 2007: pp. 243-244)²³.

²³ My translation.

There are several types of wiki platforms (Figure 4.1 and Figure 4.2). On Wikispaces (Figure 4.2), for example, each page contains four main tabs – Page, Discussion²⁴, History and Notify Me –, besides other functions. Under Page learners are able to write and edit text; under Discussion they have a standard forum; under History each edit can be tracked back to the individual author, learners can see every previous version of that page, compare it to any other version and even revert to one of them in a transparent and efficient way; and finally, under Notify Me, they can choose to monitor pages by being notified every time there is a page or discussion edit. Wikis are technically user-friendly. The editing buttons are analogous to the ones found in Microsoft Word and all other functions are easily visible and accessible through one-click actions. Wikis can serve different purposes from the creation of standard texts to the making of encyclopaedias or glossaries, the compilation of documentation or result presentation. They can be used for educational, professional or personal purposes. Initially used in business settings as collaborative software, wikis were soon acknowledged as naturally suited for educational purposes (Arnold, Dukate & Kost, 2009: p. 117). Setting up and maintaining a wiki space is very easy. It is possible to set up a wiki on an existing platform for educational purposes, for example, or to use it directly from the source.

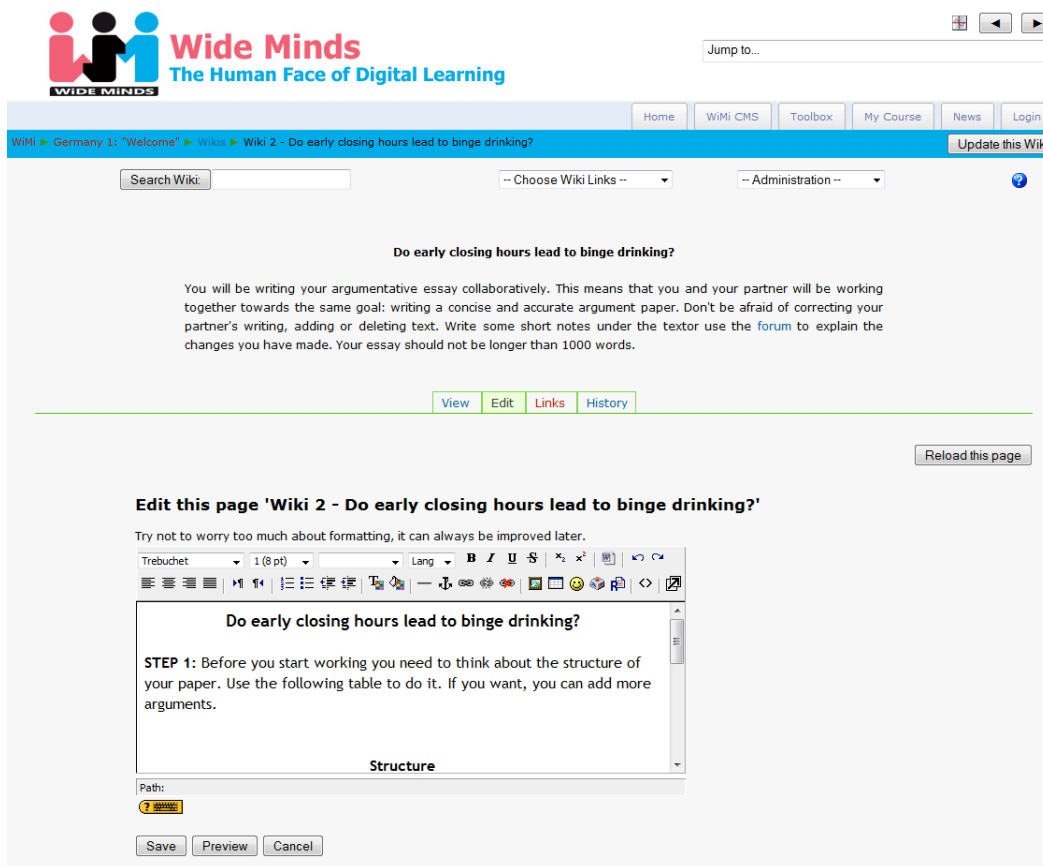


Figure 4.1 Wiki sample 1 (Moodle)

²⁴ It must be noted that not all wiki platforms offer this possibility. For example, Wikispaces (Figure 4.2) does, but the Moodle wiki (Figure 4.1) does not. A closer analysis of other platforms such as Mediawiki, Tikiwiki and Wikispaces proved the latter offered a higher number of functions and was user-friendlier, as shall be explored in chapter 6.2.

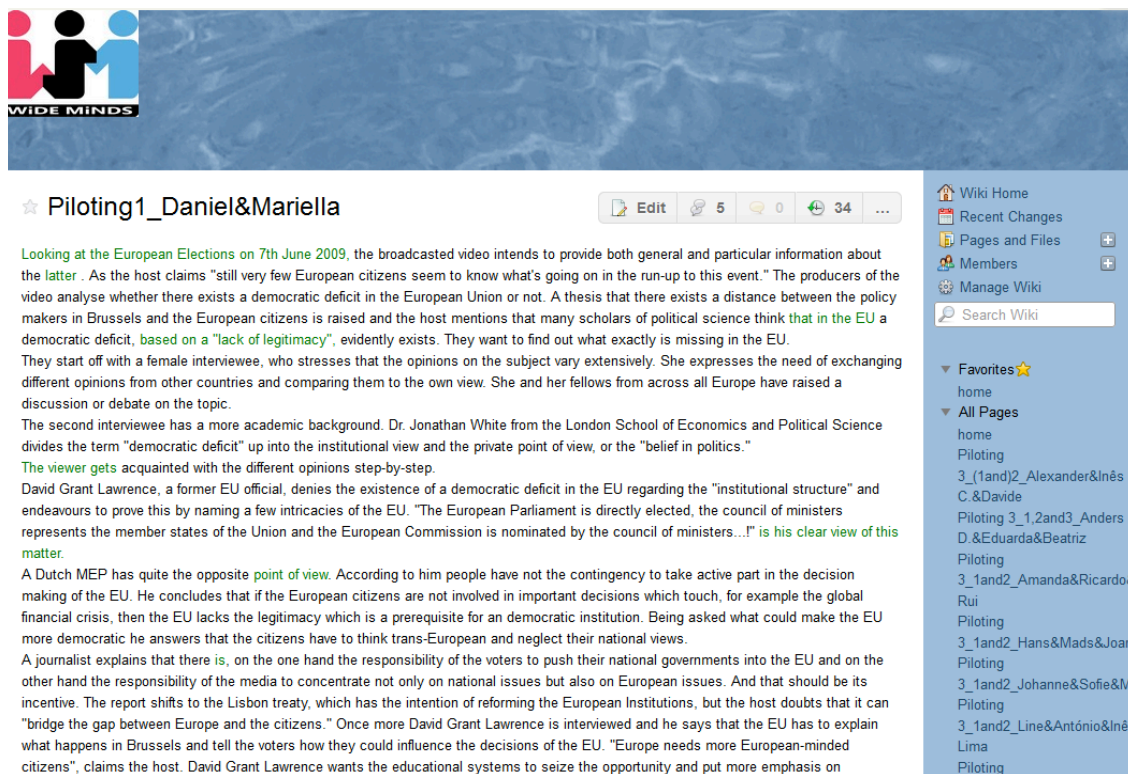


Figure 4.2 Wiki sample 2 (Wikispaces)

In blended learning scenarios, “[w]iki pages provide the opportunity for teachers to embed comments on the students' work and return the assignments to them, without the red ink scribbles that necessitate lengthy, time-consuming, and often wasteful retyping. The on-line submission of assignments saves class time...” (Khoii & Arabsarhangi, 2011). They can be used to work on tasks in pairs or groups, to support processes and projects, to document or to present results. They foster skill development through self-organised learning and group processes (Erpenbeck & Sauter, 2007). Wikis help develop both personal/social and professional competences:

Wikis fördern die oft konfliktären und hoch emotionalen Interaktionen zwischen den Nutzern. Mit ihnen werden insbesondere die sozial-kommunikativen Kompetenzen gefördert, da sich die Lerner kreativ miteinander auseinandersetzen müssen. Über wikis können auch fachlich-methodische Kompetenzen gefördert werden, da die Lerner Wissen sinnorientiert einordnen und bewerten müssen... O'Reilly beschreibt den Lernprozess mit Wikis als die Nutzbarmachung der kollektiven Intelligenz. Das Ergebnis ist eine Potenz und nicht die Summe... Damit sind Wikis ein hervorragendes Instrument zur Förderung der Kompetenzentwicklung im Netz. (Erpenbeck & Sauter, 2007: pp. 248-249)

The use of wikis facilitates the transition from individualised learning to a more social construction of knowledge (Duran et al., 2012: p. 315). Furthermore, the sort of asynchronous communication offered by wikis fosters the participation of users who in synchronous settings would be more reserved (Erpenbeck & Sauter, 2007). Creating a wiki collaboratively encourages its members to change, edit, and add to its content, and therefore overcome the apprehension usually felt in revising another person's text (Arnold, Dukate & Kost, 2009).

Kessler claims that this accessibly and extensively open nature of wikis makes it a temptation for users to construct misleading information, but concludes that this openness to collaboration may

also result in the rapid correction of such erroneous information (Kessler, 2009). In fact, the possibility to discuss, change, add or delete text in any way and any time, without losing track of editions, enables learners to openly experiment with language without necessarily falling into anarchy (Erpenbeck & Sauter, 2007) and here lies one of the main assets of wikis. What is more, a wiki-enhanced language learning scenario with a focus on the production and sharing of output enables the processes and results of learning to become tangible.

4.2 Process-centred learning in wikis

Wikis “...epitomize the enhanced interconnectivity of Web 2.0 tools and have transformed the online diffusion and construction of knowledge with their capability for many-to-many publishing” (Arnold, Ducate & Kost, 2009: p. 117). Wikipedia is the best example of this new phenomenon²⁵. Erpenbeck & Sauter stress the truly collaborative and constructivist nature of wikis as well when describing them as learning tools that facilitate democratic collaborative problem-solving learning processes (Erpenbeck & Sauter, 2007). This idea that wikis trigger constructivist practices is also expressed by Duran et al. (2012) with regard to teachers and ultimately to learners: “...teachers who incorporate wikis and other types of technologies are more likely to use constructivist pedagogical approaches in their teaching (Rakes, Fields, & Cox, 2006)” (p. 315). The transparency of this collaborative writing tool – learners are able to keep track of changes through information about what was added or deleted, when and by whom – and, in particular, the space it offers for changes to be discussed trigger meaning and form negotiation, and “a real dialogue about writing to get assistance from real readers is viewed constructive” (Moloudi, 2011). This real, authenticated audience encourages collaboration and communication, and enables learners to become critical readers of both self and other’s composition. Wiki collaborative text production is seen as a dynamic constructivist process unavailable before.

Im Web 1.0 wurden die Inhalte als geschlossene Sachtexte...erstellt...Der Autor schreibt den Text, liest Korrektur, lässt einen Redakteur überarbeiten und veröffentlicht. Dieser ‚starre‘ Text wird archiviert und steht zum Abruf im Netz bereit. Kommentare werden entweder direkt an den Autor gesandt oder über Rezensionen veröffentlicht bzw. in wissenschaftlichen Arbeiten bewertet. In Wikis sind die Texte dagegen Momentaufnahmen eines inhaltlichen Stromes, ihre Struktur kann sich laufend verändern...Dadurch entsteht ein ‚lernender Inhalt‘...Die Inhalte sind nicht mehr das Ergebnis eines einzelnen Autors, sondern eine echte Gemeinschaftsleistung...Deshalb können Wikis einen wichtigen Beitrag zur Entwicklung der Unternehmenskultur leisten. (Erpenbeck & Sauter, 2007: pp. 242-243)

Wikis are representative of some of the most defining characteristics of Web 2.0, for example interoperability and user-centredness. They foster collaborative creative learning processes in which learners share information and experiences as well as opinions and critical thinking towards a collective product: “Der Schwerpunkt liegt dabei weniger auf der Weitergabe von bewertetem Wissen als auf der Kommunikation von Sachwissen” (Erpenbeck & Sauter 2007: p. 244).

²⁵ See <http://www.netzthemen.de/sterz-wikipedia/inhaltsverzeichnis> for more on Wikipedia [Retrieved December 5, 2014].

Wikis encourage a focus on a skill in high demand nowadays – writing: “Richard Lanham (1993) argues strenuously for the integration of computers into the humanities, and particularly into the writing curriculum, noting that ‘The students we teach...are going to live – they live now – in a world of electronic text’” (Schultz, 2005: p. 121). The growing use of instant messaging as well as of social networks such as Facebook or of blogs, tools that require different kinds of text production and interaction, illustrates the increasing importance of writing today and shows the need to develop writing skills of various sorts. In addition, the role of writing practice in retrieving knowledge and developing various skills is also patent in the literature and, consequently, in learning a second language well:

Writing...involves not just a graphic representation of speech, but the development and presentation of thoughts in a structured way. Writing is especially important for the instruction of second language learners for three reasons: first, writing well is a vital skill for academic or occupational success, but one that is especially difficult for second language learners to master; second, writing can be an effective tool for the development of academic language proficiency as learners more readily explore advanced lexical or syntactic expressions in their written work; third, writing across the curriculum can be invaluable for mastering diverse subject matter, as written expression allows learners to raise their awareness of knowledge gaps, abstract problem-specific knowledge into schemas that can be applied to other relevant cases, and elaborate mental representations of knowledge that can be more easily retrieved, while simultaneously allowing teachers to better understand the students’ state of knowledge and thinking process and thus adjust instruction as necessary. (Khoii and Arabsarhangi, 2011)

What is more, “[r]esearch into collaborative writing suggests that collaboration contributes to increased complexity in writing (Sotillo, 2000) and higher quality of writing (Storch, 2005) and can also be a source of student motivation (Kowal & Swain, 1994; Swain & Lapkin, 1998)” (Kessler & Bikowski, 2010: p. 43). Also, “[d]eveloping collaborative autonomous language learning abilities within writing projects [using emerging technologies such as Web-based word processing tools] allows students to prepare for new and unanticipated writing opportunities” (Kessler, Bikowski & Boggs, 2012: p. 106).

Yet, in wikis learners do not simply write. The word *writing* is, in this case, multidimensional, because learners share the writing in an environment in which changes are discussed, made and seen by various participants. In fact, the opportunity to transparently negotiate writing without being confined to physical or time constraints is one of the factors that deem wikis so attractive and particularly valuable in a language learning setting. As suggested in chapter 2.5, when engaging in text negotiation, learners are pushed to *language* through and about language in context to convey a precise, coherent and appropriate message. In addition, while attempting to fulfil an intention of improving meaning and form construction through discussion, learners are actively processing output that pushes them to process language more profoundly. This way learners develop not only their fluency but also their accuracy (Swain, 1985). In revising a text, this occurs two-fold because they are explicitly and implicitly attending to meaning and form. The functions offered by wikis suggest these collaborative tools may be more powerful than mere peer review in a conventional classroom and facilitate a “...shift in the teaching of writing from an end-product approach...to a process approach” (Schultz, 2005: p. 121). This has to do with the *organic* nature of wikis and the fact that learners can use them to suit their needs and purposes: “Wiki-Systeme ermöglichen...Lernprozesse in einer dynamischen Struktur, die sich den Bedürfnissen und Zielen der Lerner anpasst” (Erpenbeck & Sauter, 2007: p. 247). Integrating wikis ”...into content and language classrooms makes the lessons more interesting

and enables students to develop more comprehensive homework with *deeper understanding*” [my italics] (Khoii & Arabsarhangi, 2011). This is a forte of wikis.

Wikis expose learners to learning tasks and situations they would engage in in the real world and in which they can use real language as active and productive agents. This enables them to develop an integrated set of skills which, combined with language awareness, prepare them to interact and communicate in a meaningful and appropriate manner in a specific context. It also allows them to become autonomous learners who are capable of self-directing their learning experiences. This agency (Rüschoff, 2009) stimulated by wiki spaces is essential in modern second language teaching methodology contexts. It is by authenticating and acting over knowledge that we learn. The way learners interact, seek and use resources, schedule work, manage time, set priorities, or any other actions tutors may not have envisioned, are some examples of autonomous decisions learners are required to make when writing a text collaboratively in wiki space. What is more, wikis allow learners to use the learning strategies they deem more suitable to their own learning profile and develop not only knowledge and skills but also motivation and confidence (Littlewood, 1996) because they are not constrained by the presence of their peers and there is more time to engage in revisions (Moloudi, 2011).

4.3 Review of the literature: research in demand

In a study aimed at providing detailed data regarding learner collaboration on a wiki in the context of culture projects in undergraduate classes of German as a second language, Arnold, Dukate and Kost (2009) show research on wikis is in the very early stages, as opposed to research on pencil-and-paper or word-processing writing. In addition, they claim that

[w]hile there has been a growing number of publications describing pedagogical implementations of wikis...researchers are just beginning to examine how L2 learners work with wikis [and] [t]o evaluate the effectiveness of wikis as an educational writing tool, we need a greater understanding of the process as well as the final product of this type of composition environment. (Arnold, Dukate and Kost, 2009: p. 122)

The authors investigated the revision behaviours of intermediate L2 learners using a wiki as a writing tool, specifically the frequency, the type and the quality of revisions, while exploring the difference between structured and unstructured instructional approaches and the learners’ perceptions of the project. They concluded that the range of revisions was higher than for pencil-and-paper writing. They also found out that cooperation prevailed over collaboration, and that meaning-changing additions prevailed over deletions and formal revisions. As for the latter, they included grammar, spelling and lexical changes, and 66% per cent of the revisions produced correct results, which is “...an encouraging rate, especially considering...students received either no help or only global teacher feedback concerning their mistakes” (p. 135). Learners only infrequently revised the stylistics of their texts. The instructor-guided approach did not encourage significantly more stylistic or meaning-changing revisions but stimulated formal revisions, which were also more accurate. The project was positively perceived by the students, problems having to do with group members who did not contribute their share. The students who had no teacher guidance felt they would have benefited from more teacher feedback. They conclude, “...wikis can serve as an effective educational tool to foster writing skills and revision behavior”, but suggest future research should investigate whether the fact that addition prevailed

over revision, i.e., cooperation over collaboration (see chapter 3.3), is due to the language (L2) or the assigned nature of the writing. They propose "...that one way to promote a more intense engagement with the text is to have learners collaborate on all stages of the writing process (planning, writing, and revising)..." and hypothesise "...that such collaboration can create a sense of co-ownership of the text and lead to more intensive revisions of language as well as content and structure" (p. 117). They also acknowledge that a larger sample and more homogeneous groups would have provided more conclusive results, thus hoping other researchers continue to add to their understanding of the wiki composition process.

Kessler (2009) developed a study on student-initiated attention to form within the collaborative construction of a wiki among pre-service Non-Native Speaker English teachers at a Mexican university. These pre-service teachers were participating in an online content-based course aimed at improving their language skills while studying the cultures of the English-speaking world. The course was delivered through a Moodle-based course management system and the wiki, intended to serve as a final product of the class, allowed students to collectively define the term *culture* throughout the course. The researcher aimed to investigate whether the participants would initiate attention to form, how accurate their revisions would be and what their postings could reveal about the students and their 15-week-long collaborative process. Kessler's research was based on findings indicating that "...inductive, or student-initiated, attention to grammar may be most effective..." because it is determined by communicative needs (Kessler, 2009: p. 79). In order to generate "a sense of responsibility for the ongoing maintenance and revision of the document" in the students (p. 82), there was intentionally no intervention from the teacher. Students did not show readiness to correct form in an autonomous task, which suggests students "achieved an acceptable threshold of accuracy for the context in which they were working. In fact, it seems that they may establish different thresholds for different settings and tasks" (p. 91). Kessler therefore concludes that tolerating some errors may contribute to the development of autonomy through autonomous tasks because "[s]tudents were not distracted by the errors due to the lack of severity, and they were much more focused on addressing issues of meaning and design" (p. 91). He further concludes,

...[students] may not have the inherent willingness to strive for total accuracy. They may benefit simultaneously from autonomous contexts in which they do not feel compelled to strive for accuracy as well as contexts that provide explicit demands for accuracy...This may indicate that certain tasks and environments require more explicit practices and related expectations. (p. 92)

Kessler's findings are in line with Arnold, Dukate and Kost's (2009) with regard to the role of the teacher in students' initiated attention to form in wiki collaborative writing contexts but Kessler also considers a different context of study might lead to different findings:

...even students at this advanced level of proficiency [NNS EFL pre-service teachers in Mexico] may need more teacher intervention or grading incentive when working in autonomous environments. Constructing alternate wiki-based tasks with varying degrees of teacher intervention while maintaining a modicum of autonomy for students may also contribute to a better understanding of the optimal role of a teacher in creating and maintaining autonomous learning environments. If an increased level of accuracy were determined to be necessary, perhaps students could be encouraged to attend more to accuracy. Perhaps the inclusion of non-Spanish speakers, or even native English speakers, would motivate students to strive for greater accuracy...Future research will certainly contribute to interesting variations of this collaborative construction task, including the degree of intervention by teachers. (p. 92)

It should be noted that, in Kessler's study, peers were not afraid of correcting each other and

peer-editing addressed form more frequently than self-editing. In opposition to previous studies, however, this many-to-many collaborative writing did not contribute to increased grammatical accuracy. Still, students showed ability to quickly correct the grammatical errors they had made in the autonomous task in the follow-up interviews. In line with previous research, Kessler also suggests, “[f]uture researchers may also consider holding students accountable for the whole of a text, rather than the small portions they choose to edit...” (p. 92).

In another study, Kessler and Bikowski (2010) analysed data collected in a similar context: a 16-week online course focused upon teaching English through the content of culture, attended by pre-service English teachers at a Mexican university. This time the target was attention to meaning in a similar task: building a class wiki defining the term *culture*. The authors concluded that each of the three phases of the students’ wiki collaboration (build and destroy; full collaboration; informal reflection) appeared to represent an increasing comfort with the collaborative task. In addition, they concluded that the willingness to interact in a relationship of equality and interest in others’ contributions grew with collaboration. They noticed that, after a student posted a personal reflection of the course at the end of the wiki, others followed. They therefore propose a framework which acknowledges the importance for students to develop collaborative and autonomous language learning abilities in a CALL context:

...the role of a collaborative learner...[is] between both elements of autonomy as a communicator and autonomy as a learner. By utilizing learning strategies along with communication strategies within a collaborative context, the collaborative learner requires the same characteristics of willingness and ability identified by Littlewood (e.g. motivation/confidence and knowledge/skills). In this model, autonomy as a collaborative learner depends on: (1) the ability to use language to independently contribute personal meanings as a collaborative member of a group; (2) the ability to use appropriate strategies for communicating as a collaborative member of a group; (3) the willingness to demonstrate these abilities within the group. (Kessler & Bikowski, 2010: p. 53)

Yet, they also observed that students working in autonomous spaces tend to become involved in tasks that require less critical thinking: “Synthesis – a higher order critical thinking skill – would have served the evolution of the wiki well on many occasions, but students instead introduced new information or deleted extant information” (p. 52). Hence, Kessler and Bikowski suggest that students need to become aware of the potential of autonomous learning spaces and that a way to increase incidental collaboration in a wiki setting would be

...to create a *meta-space* for students to explicitly ask and answer questions. This type of space could allow students to more completely examine their ideas before making changes to the wiki, perhaps leading to higher-level critical thinking. [emphasis in the original] (p. 53)

They add that for students to confidently develop their collaborative autonomous language learning abilities, they need to be prepared for the linguistic expectations of the task and be given the opportunity to “...exploit the language and technology skills they have within the [by instructors or designers] anticipated and unanticipated potential of the new learning spaces” (p. 56). Kessler and Bikowski are concerned with skill development resulting from the learning process rather than with the final product: “The quality of the final wiki... may not be significant...students may benefit more from the liberation associated with the process” (p. 56). They leave some more hints with regard to aspects that research needs to explore further, and explain that analysing language acts in wiki space is another way of investigating the nature of collaborative autonomous learning within computer-mediated contexts (p. 56).

In a study to investigate Face-to-face Peer Review and Online Peer Review and their effectiveness on Malaysian undergraduates' writing in English at Universiti Putra Malaysia, Moloudi (2011) also suggests, "deeper analysis of the peers' comments as well as of the actual changes incorporated into the students' essays will definitely provide deeper insight of the peer review as a complicated and multidimensional process" (Moloudi, 2011). Rüschoff had already hinted at the utility of such research some years before:

The use of social software tools, such as wikis..., do offer some support for such research [into the actual processes that learners go through], as processes of output-production are often traceable and, therefore, become observable. Text entries into a wiki, for example, can be looked at from the very first draft up to the final version. Consequently all edits can be considered in terms of what they document and represent as far as acts of languaging are concerned. (Rüschoff, 2009: p. 57)

Moloudi also places emphasis on the pedagogical relevance of providing learners with clear and comprehensive instructional guidelines as well as ongoing teacher supervision along the process of peer review in order to ensure success.

Khoii and Arabsarhangi's study aimed to demonstrate the effect of wiki collaborative environments on the improvement of Iranian EFL learners' writing skill. Results demonstrate that "learners who were exposed to collaborative learning through the wiki environment outperformed those who experienced writing without the wiki or individually [in writing skill]" (Khoii & Arabsarhangi, 2011).

All these studies about wikis and peer review show that there is still little research in this field. Furthermore, although studies to date strongly suggest the potential of wikis in second language learning, the size and scope of the research samples up to the present time do not allow for conclusive results yet. Further research is needed to confirm the existing results, to further explore wiki-based language learning settings and come to conclusions with regard to the right conditions to take advantage of the full potential of this tool. In fact, it is necessary to deepen the understanding of the nature of collaboration in wikis and to determine the ideal conditions for collaboration in wikis to succeed. It is fundamental to explore the potential of peers to take a teacher role in such a context. It is vital to stimulate collaborative language acts about the writing process. An analysis of what learners tend to language about as well as whether increasing comfort in collaboration stimulates further *languaging* will prove useful. Finally, investigating whether this meta-space leads to higher-level critical thinking mirrored in successful formal revisions and concrete learning outcomes may be a very important contribution for second language learning and teaching.

At the same time, these findings suggest the need to change classroom practices as well. This has serious implications for teacher development. Duran et al.'s study (2012) reporting on a district-wide research-based professional development (PD) concerning practice in wiki integration that included 207 teachers and administrators provides evidence that "...research-based PD can foster teacher learning and a sustained change in classroom practice" (Duran et al., 2012: p. 327). This study represented an attempt to address gaps in existing PDs. Although there has already been a shift in focus to the design of PD targeted to help teachers integrate technology in the classroom, training still often focuses on learning to use the technology rather than learning how to teach with the technology. This particular PD focused specifically on helping teachers learn how to use wikis across the curriculum. The teachers

participating in the wiki PD had multiple opportunities to engage in hands-on learning with the technology. They were exposed to a variety of learning experiences over a 6-month timeframe. The wiki activities demonstrated projects in specific curriculum areas relevant to them. The teachers involved realised that using wikis with their students would require them to take on different roles in the classroom. The participants significantly improved their basic and technical wiki skills. This might be why the majority of teachers (57%) continued to use their wiki sites after the formal PD ended. Continuity also suggests these teachers acknowledged the potential of wikis as a learning tool. This result was found to be associated to the strong support teachers received from the district throughout the project as well: “The fact that the district purchased a district-wide site license from Wikispaces to give teachers and administrators access to this tool was a clear indication that the use of wikis was valued and expected” (p. 327). Another factor that accounted for this continuity was that “the tool was fairly easy to learn and had broad application across the curriculum and grade levels” (p. 328). The participants who did not continue to use the wiki pages they created during the course of the PD felt the need to have a mentoring structure incorporated that would help with the integration of wikis into classroom instruction. This study advocates teachers not only need to learn to use the technology but also to learn how to teach with it through hands-on learning, exposition to a variety of learning experiences and demonstration in specific curriculum areas relevant to them, for them to realise the need to play different roles in the classroom. The survey also suggests receiving governmental support and incorporating a mentoring structure play a fundamental role. Finally, it hints at a broad acceptance of wikis as valuable learning and teaching tools.

The research focus of this PhD thesis was determined by the aspects this literature review indicates are in demand.

In chapter 5, I shall concentrate on teacher perception of the use of educational e-learning equipment and applications in second language classes across Europe by means of a survey. Particular attention will be given to e-learning equipment and applications available to and used in school or at home, to teacher training on educational ICT received, to use and evaluation of e-learning within specific pedagogic contexts and areas, and to the need for changes or improvements regarding e-learning in schools and teacher training in this field.

Chapters 6 and 7 shall be based on learner perception. They analyse three case studies with students with a broad spectrum of ages, nationalities, language proficiency levels and educational institutions. Chapter 6, an analysis of Case Study 1, will give insight into what learners consider to be the conditions and strategies for language learning, and their learning outcomes. These shall be the research questions guiding this case study. Chapter 7 examines Case Studies 2 and 3, which aimed to further explore learning in web collaborative spaces, with specific attention to wikis as writing platforms that facilitate learning-conducive collaborative output processes. Case studies 2 and 3 were designed and implemented on the basis of the conclusions drawn from literature review to this point specifically, as well as on the basis of the conclusions reached in chapters 5 and 6. The following research questions guided these two case studies: What possibilities and constraints do learners identify in wiki-based collaborative processes? What new roles does the wiki space unveil for peers? Does the wiki space facilitate

linguaging and what is its impact on text construction? What is the focus of wiki-space revisions, their contribution to self-reliance and accuracy enhancement and what factors are they affected by?

5 Teacher perceptions of e-learning – a survey

This chapter will focus on the state of affairs regarding the use of educational e-learning equipment and applications in second language classes across Europe from the perspective of language teachers. It will be based on the analysis of an online survey. This analysis will be divided into the following main sections: survey context, objectives and approach, the availability and use of e-learning equipment and applications, pedagogic contexts and impact of the use of e-learning, the use of e-learning from home, changes and improvements required in this field and, finally, teacher training. The findings of this study will be compared with Bax's outline of the phases of CALL development to deepen our understanding of the CALL phase we are undergoing: *integrated* or *open CALL*.

5.1 Context

Bearing in mind all the possibilities offered by the emergent technologies for enhancing language learning and teaching and the assumption that CALL has not been normalised yet, it appeared as essential to analyse the state of affairs regarding the use of e-learning equipment and applications in second language classes as well as teachers' preparation and readiness to use such resources in detail. Considering the relevance of the analysis of the use of ICT for developing second language writing skills for this particular thesis, as Duran et al.'s study (2012) also suggests, it was particularly concerning that,

[i]n spite of a wealth of research into the increasing variety of writing activities in language classrooms, there has been little written about the role of technology in the preparation of language teachers focused upon varied forms of writing using new and emerging tools [e.g. forums, blogs and wikis]. (Kessler, 2012b: p. 213)

The analysis of such a state-of-affairs was facilitated by collaboration with the European Comenius Network project Wide Minds²⁶.

Wide Minds – The Human Face of Digital Learning (WiMi) brought together 14 project partner countries, supported by a European educational project. WiMi was officially funded by the EACEA from 2008 to 2011 but carried on with many of its activities without additional funding until 2013. Its chief goal was to foster as well as guide and support school partnerships on developing e-learning and multilingualism. As a geographically and culturally balanced network, WiMi had partners based in public authorities, teacher training institutes, and universities in 14 different countries, as well as seven partner schools and two associate partners all around Europe. WiMi promoted conferences on e-learning and multilingualism in partner countries. These conferences were aimed at helping school representatives from all around Europe find suitable partnerships. WiMi also helped schools obtain grants to fund their work and international mobility. In addition, in these conferences, attendees were provided with an introduction to ICT tools such as Moodle to foster and support collaboration with an emphasis on

²⁶ See <http://www.wideminds.eu/cms/> [Retrieved December 5, 2014].

intercultural dialogue. WiMi thus developed Regional Coordinating Centres (RCCs) responsible for creating partnerships, and had its own partners provide ICT training and support locally as well as in international conferences.

As a WiMi partner, the University of Tübingen (Germany) coordinated workpackage 5 of this network, *Developing multilingualism through digital content*, which I, as a research fellow at this institution, also assisted. The University of Tübingen was therefore one of the institutions responsible for providing ICT training and support to other partners as well as schools involved in partnerships. This workpackage focused on testing e-learning models and strategies which might be suitable for blended language learning in primary and secondary school settings. Special attention was given to authenticated language learning in CLIL contexts in which culture and subject-specific contents were taught. In this connection, pedagogic interview corpora available from the European Lifelong Learning Programme projects SACODEYL and BACKBONE played a key role. Pedagogic communication and interaction were facilitated through the e-learning platform Moodle²⁷. The target group of this particular workpackage consisted of schools and teachers in (at least) five Wide Minds partner countries: Cyprus, Czech Republic, Finland, France and Spain. The main workpackage tasks were:

- a) to carry out an audit with regard to the implementation and use of educational ICT in language learning;
- b) to explore different approaches to supporting language learning through e-learning and CLIL in the light of current research;
- c) to train Wide Minds RCC coordinators in Cyprus, Czech Republic, France and Spain;
- d) to support, monitor and evaluate course activities in (at least) five pilot schools;
- e) to develop a guidance manual and disseminate models of good practice via the Wide Minds website, on DVD and dissemination conferences.

In order to fulfil the first task (a) and assess the use of e-learning equipment and applications in second language classes, teachers from various European countries were contacted by WiMi partners and asked to answer an online questionnaire entitled “The use of educational e-learning equipment and applications in foreign language classes”. Such a survey was essential for WiMi to be able to provide educational professionals with the training and support mechanisms necessary to develop e-learning, or rather blended learning, and multilingualism on the basis of the current state of affairs in this field.

5.2 Objectives and approach

The survey “The use of educational e-learning equipment and applications in foreign language classes” was designed and carried out to better understand whether language teachers and students have sufficient access to e-learning equipment/applications for e-learning to be successfully implemented (chapter 3). It was also intended to give insight into the quantity and quality of the training in this field teachers have access to (chapter 4.3). What is more, this survey should show whether e-learning is implemented according to a best-practice framework

²⁷ See <http://www.wideminds.eu/moodle/> [Retrieved December 5, 2014].

resting on the principles of autonomy, collaboration and authentication (chapter 2). Finally, it should shed light on whether we are already in the period Bax referred to as *integrated CALL* and whether CALL is yet normalised or not.

This questionnaire aimed to examine the following aspects in a language teaching and learning setting:

- (1) E-learning equipment and applications available to and used in school or at home
- (2) Use and evaluation of e-learning within specific pedagogic contexts and areas
- (3) Need for changes or improvements regarding e-learning in schools
- (4) Teacher training on educational ICT.

The questionnaire (see Appendix A) was structured as follows:

- (0) Background information
 - (a) pupils' age range
 - (b) type of school
 - (c) country
 - (d) city
 - (e) language(s) taught
 - (f) language(s) taught with ICT support
 - (g) participation in teacher training on educational ICT (nature of the training and interest)
- (1) E-learning equipment and applications available to and used by language teachers
- (2) Pedagogic contexts of e-learning use
- (3) Using e-learning from home
- (4) Changes or improvements in schools with regard to e-learning use.

This web-based audit questionnaire was composed of questions that combined Likert-scale questions (five ordered response items from 1 – negative – to 5 – positive), binary questions (yes-no), open-ended questions and comments. It was answered by language teachers only. The questionnaire was available online from November 2008 to February 2009. The answers to the questionnaire were collected, analysed and compared.

The total number of teachers answering the questionnaire was 215. Teachers came from various countries, 11 in total (Figure 5.1), which covers a great part of Europe. However, the teachers' origin was not very homogeneous. For example, 49% of the respondents were from Cyprus and there were less than 1% of participants from Poland. This gives rise to some limitations with regard to comparisons between countries.

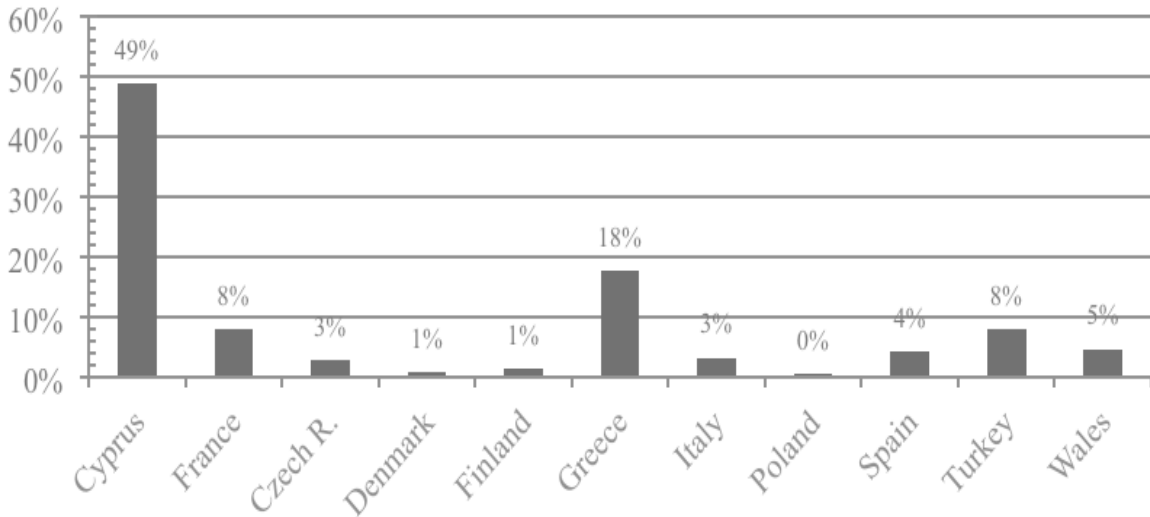


Figure 5.1 Teachers' origin

A total of 66% of the teachers worked in primary schools and 38% in secondary schools, which means that some teachers taught both levels. This referred to teachers from Turkey (Adiyaman) – 2%, France (Saint Junien, Egletons) – 1%, Czech Republic (Olomouc) – 1%, and Greece (Pella and Aridea, Athens, Soufli and Didimoticho) – 2%. The teachers also listed 4% of other types of schools; 1% simultaneously selected secondary school. The sample therefore comprehends all school levels and types, although in somewhat heterogeneous numbers. Primary and secondary schools are represented in fairly high numbers (Figure 5.2).

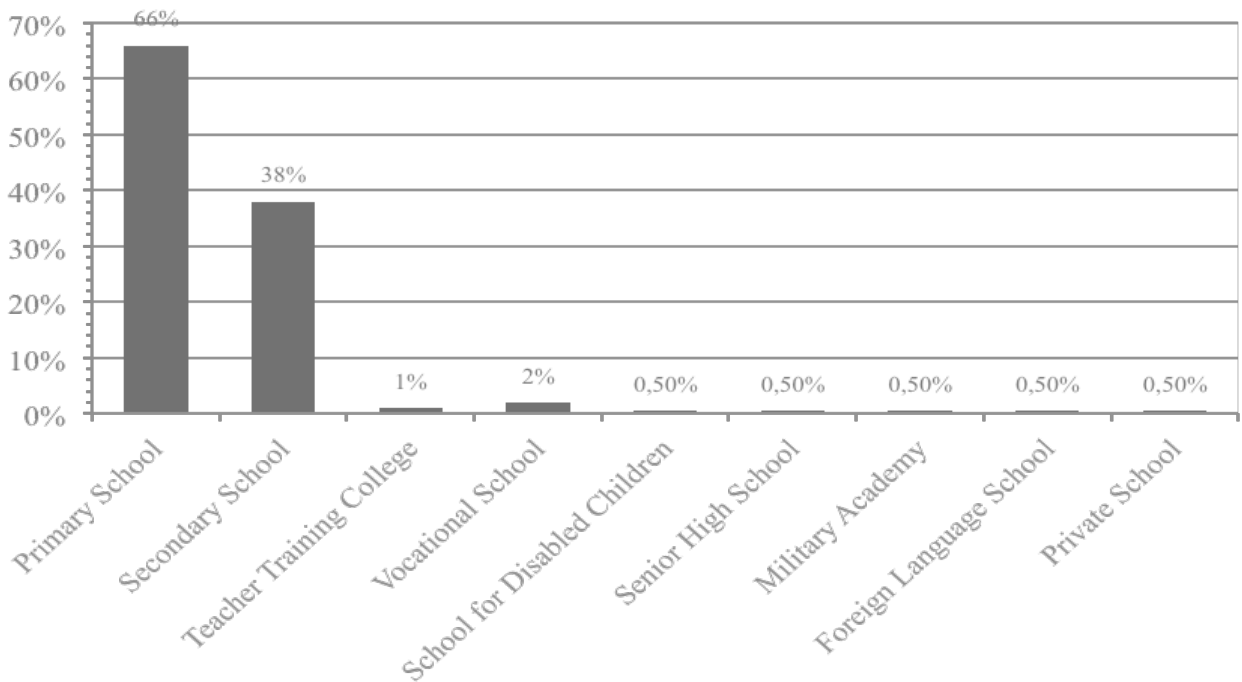


Figure 5.2 School types

The age of the students taught by the respondents varied from 3 to 18, with only 2% of the respondents teaching adults. This is useful because most of the case studies of this PhD thesis focus on the same age group and it will thus be possible to draw useful conclusions to support them.

As for the languages taught by these teachers, the majority of the respondents (85%) taught English (Figure 5.3).

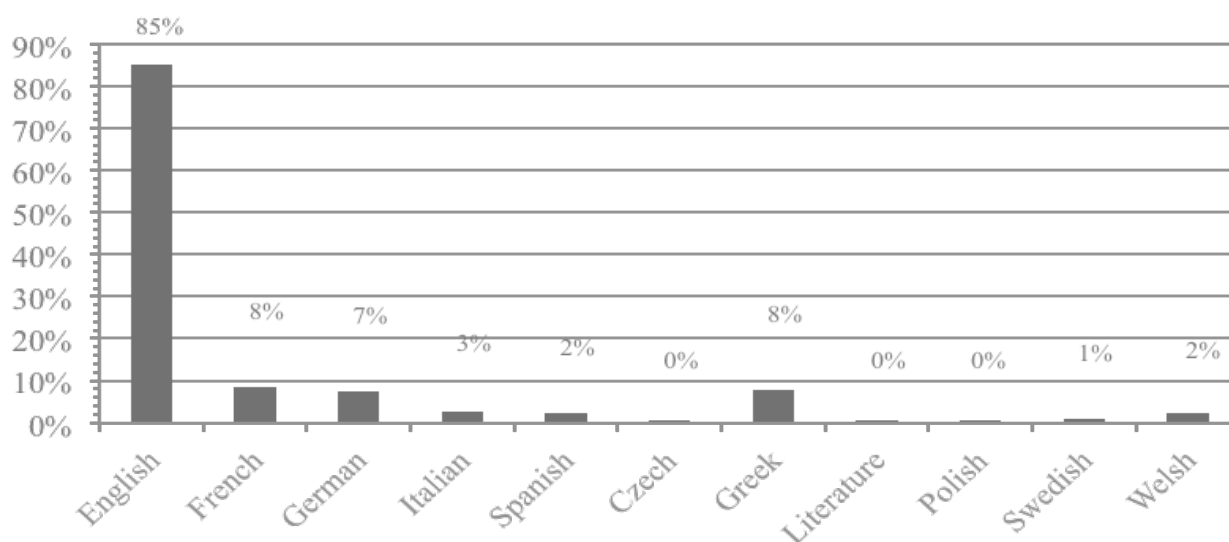


Figure 5.3 Language(s) taught

When asked about the languages they taught with ICT support, 66% mentioned English (Figure 5.4). Therefore, 77% of the English teachers used ICT in their lessons. This is a considerable number. Of all the language teachers, 22% answered they used no ICT in their language lessons. The frequency and type of ICT use shall be examined in the next chapter.

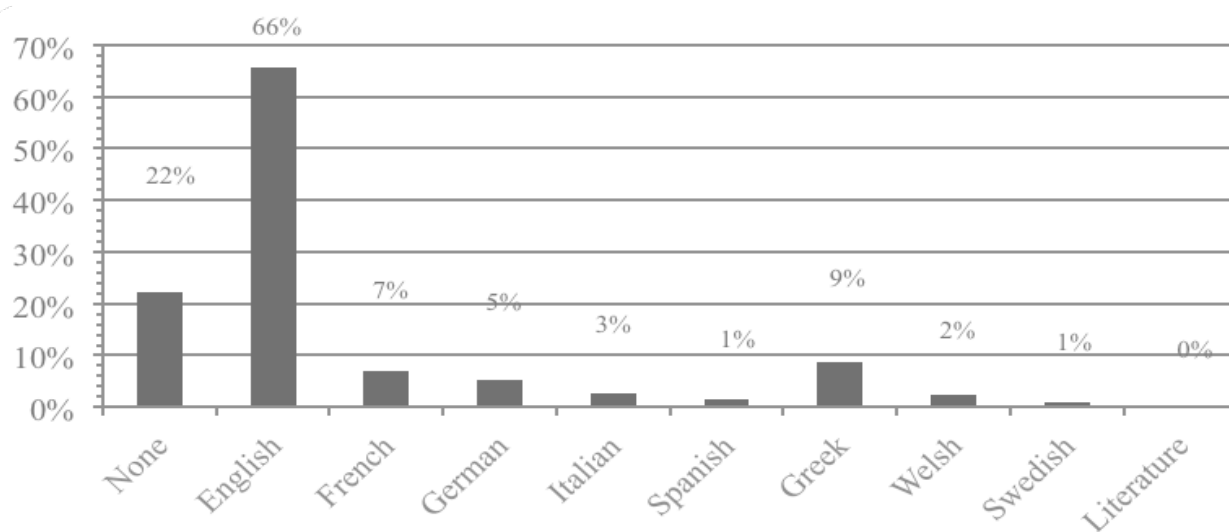


Figure 5.4 Language(s) taught with ICT support

A last aspect must be considered which, to a certain extent, affects reliability. Although only about 8% of the teachers said they taught Greek, approximately 9% said they taught Greek with ICT support. Since both these questions were mandatory, this incompatibility must be related with deficient mastery of the English language or insufficient engagement in the questionnaire. As both respondents were English teachers, answered no optional questions and provided very short comments, the latter seems to be the case.

5.3 E-learning equipment and applications

The second part of the questionnaire concerned e-learning equipment and applications available to and used by language teachers. These were the examples provided as orientation for the respondents: PC and data projector, PC pool/computer lab, Internet/web access, Content Management System (CMS), e-learning platform/learning management system (LMS) (e.g. Moodle, Blackboard, WebCT), multimedia learning software/packages, video conferencing, e-mail, chat, forum, blogs, wikis.

To the question ‘Are e-learning equipment and applications available for language learning in your school?’, 76% of the teachers answering the questionnaire said e-learning equipment and applications were available for language learning in school (Figure 5.5), which suggests that there are still schools in which it would not be technically feasible to consider e-learning practices on a daily basis.

The respondents were then asked to specify the e-learning equipment and applications available. On the one hand, nearly all schools were said to have a computer laboratory with Internet access. Some teachers specifically mentioned language computer laboratories. However, answers that resembled the following one were frequent: “PC+data projektor and internet access available in the library and in the computer lab which (both of them) is not always accessible due to its use from other classes/schools²⁸” (Dimitra, Greece). This gives insight into these teachers’ reality, i.e., often the equipment exists but is not really available for use when required. On the other hand, although all classrooms appear to be equipped with a data projector, in most classrooms there seems to be no computer at all, as only computer laboratories are mentioned. When there is, classrooms are mostly said to offer one to four not always functioning computers only (“internet and a few computers, rarely disposable” [Nadia, France]), i.e., students would be able to work in groups, not in pairs, which restricts the teacher’s pedagogical options.

All classrooms appear to be equipped with multimedia learning software and e-mail seems to be available in most educational institutions. Yet, only approximately 19% referred to video conferencing, chats, forums, blogs or wikis.

In general, equipment seems to be insufficient for language students to use the computer throughout the lesson on a regular basis, and most equipment and applications available do not enable frequent interaction with other students or the kind of integrated language skill work

²⁸ All the comments by survey and case study participants throughout this paper are verbatim responses, i.e., no corrections were made to the original text.

specifies for the period he designates *integrated CALL*, in which mixed skills are integrated with the language system and tasks suit the learner’s immediate needs (see Figure 3.1).

A question concerning the actual use of e-learning equipment and applications followed: ‘Do you use e-learning equipment and applications in your own language classes?’. In this section about 62% said they did, which leaves me with about 38% of teachers claiming they use no *e-learning equipment and applications* in their language classes (Figure 5.5) while only 22% had said they used no *ICT* in their language lessons (Figure 5.4). This means teachers probably acknowledge a difference between using ICT or e-learning equipment and applications, and believe that they are not always using e-learning resources when making use of ICT. In fact, *e-learning* is a broader term as it refers to the use of electronic media and information and communication technologies (ICT) in education. *E-learning* refers to a didactic application of ICT.

Availability		Use	
E-learning equipment and applications available	76%	E-learning equipment and applications used in language classes	62%
E-learning equipment and applications not available	24%	E-learning equipment and applications not used in language classes	38%

Figure 5.5 Availability and use of e-learning equipment and applications

When asked to specify which e-learning equipment and applications they used in their own language classes, most of these 62% teachers mentioned the use of a computer laboratory and Internet access, but then listed activities such as Power Point presentations or picture projection. Some others only mentioned equipment such as CD/VCD/DVD-players or even tape-recorders. What is more, teachers reiterate it is not easy to have access to such equipment and applications: “THESE DEVICES ARE IN THE LAB, NOT IN CLASSES, SO WE CAN UTILIZE THEM RARELY” (Elif, Turkey). Two issues must be considered regarding these answers. First, most teachers have limited access to e-learning equipment and, therefore, to e-learning practices that suit their learners’ needs in due time or place. Second, most of the resources mentioned are either outdated or not in line with the type of equipment or applications under scrutiny in this PhD thesis. In fact, Web 2.0 offers far more than some of the obsolete resources listed by the respondents. This ties in not only with these teachers’ restricted access to equipment and applications but also with their knowledge about them. Nonetheless, resources such as multimedia learning packages, e-mail and blogs were also cited. The following answer, for example, suggests the use of e-learning resources that foster autonomy, self-direction and collaboration in authenticated settings and that develop mixed skills:

The above mentioned Internet resources (WSOY and Perunakellari websites + others), as well as Alfasoft-software are used regularly. We also do projects which involve making short films or audio tapes, which the children edit themselves, sometimes adding subtitles etc. For this, we use Windows MovieMaker, Pinnacle, Audacity, etc. Projects also include PowerPoint presentations. Our school is also involved in a two-year Comenius project (www.chart2008.eu.tt), in connection of which there is a lot of online

co-operation, such as online surveys, sharing pictures and presentations, and Email (or traditional letter) penpals. (EevaLiisa, Finland)

Yet, they do not have the same potential as the type of resources Web 2.0 offers either, because the tools presented do not demand interaction or collaboration to reconstruct knowledge as forums or wikis do. In fact, only a minority of teachers mention wikis, probably because wikis, their concrete application and their assets in the context of language learning are unknown to them. This gives further evidence of the need to explore this field in detail (see Duran et al., 2012).

The question that followed asked the teachers to grade specific equipment according to frequency of use with pupils: ‘Do you use the following equipment with your pupils? Please indicate how often you use them (1=*never* to 5=*regularly*).’ (Figure 5.6).

E-learning equipment	1	2	3	4	5	Total	Mean Value
PC + data projector in classroom	56	50	48	25	26	205	2,6
Internet + data projector in classroom	65	56	40	25	14	200	2,3
PC pool/computer lab in school	67	45	38	24	22	196	2,5
Internet in PC pool/computer lab in school	70	39	39	25	23	196	2,5
PC at home (teacher)	5	8	14	22	159	208	4,5
Internet at home (teacher)	7	7	14	20	159	207	4,5
PC at home (pupils)	34	57	49	38	12	190	2,7
Internet at home (pupils)	37	58	51	31	17	194	2,7

Figure 5.6 Teachers' use of e-learning equipment

Teachers mostly use their own home equipment rather than the school equipment. This is probably related to the previously reported limited access to this equipment in school. Western countries rated the first two topics higher, that is, they use PC and data projector as well as Internet in the classroom with their pupils more often, which shows the relationship between a country’s level of human development and the access and use of ICT. Teachers believe most students have no computer or Internet access at home (Figure 5.14).

The next question aimed to assess the frequency of use of software with pupils: ‘Do you use the following e-learning applications with your pupils? Please indicate how often you use them (1=*never* to 5=*regularly*).’ (Figure 5.7). Numbers indicate that the majority of teachers had never used most of the applications suggested with their pupils. It is also important to notice that the number of teachers answering each question significantly varied (Figure 5.7). Most of them expressed their opinion concerning Internet/web sites & contents, multimedia learning software/packages or e-mail, but only 168 (78%) commented on Content management system and 179 (83%) on wikis. Again, these figures indicate that teachers were likely not to know the application that well or at all. In fact, in average most of the applications listed were rated very low (Figure 5.7). In descending order, Internet/web sites&contents, e-mail and multimedia

learning software/packages are used at times, whereas in average most of the other applications such as CMSs, LMSs, video conferencing, chats, discussion forums, blogs, podcasts or wikis are hardly ever used.

E-learning applications	1	2	3	4	5	Total	Mean Value
Multimedia learning software/packages	64	45	51	23	16	199	2,4
Internet/web sites & contents	34	45	48	39	38	204	3,0
Testing/assessment (offline/online)	103	43	23	17	10	196	1,9
Content management system (CMS)	132	16	9	8	3	168	1,4
Learning management system (LMS)/e-learning platform, e.g. Moodle	135	22	15	7	2	181	1,4
Video conferencing	142	22	11	9	2	186	1,4
E-mail	80	38	26	18	36	198	2,5
Chat	141	9	12	13	18	193	1,6
Discussion forum	143	22	8	9	6	182	1,5
Blogs	144	17	6	11	7	185	1,5
Podcast	147	17	9	4	3	180	1,3
Wikis	132	22	9	10	6	179	1,5
Others	83	9	6	5	1	104	1,4

Figure 5.7 Teachers' use of e-learning applications

Answers show that, in most cases, ICT is neither a small part of these lessons nor a normal part of teaching, as in the period Bax refers to as *integrated CALL* (see Figure 3.1). What is more, the kind of ICT used is mostly not interactive or integrative. Only about 20% of these teachers who claimed to teach English with ICT support did explicitly mention ICT which fits into Bax's characterisation of this period, for example Moodle or Blackboard²⁹, wikis, blogs, e-mails, chats, forums. There is only one teacher who taught a language other than English with the help of ICT who specified *social networks*. It should not be ignored, however, that teachers were given a list of examples of equipment and applications at the beginning of the questionnaire that surely biased their answers, but it is also true that some teachers also listed CD/DVD-Players or even TVs, not given as examples in the questionnaire and obviously unrelated to the type of ICT aimed at in this survey.

²⁹ The Blackboard Learning System is a virtual learning environment and course management system along the lines of Moodle.

5.4 Pedagogic contexts and impact of e-learning use

The third part of the questionnaire centred upon pedagogic contexts and evaluation of use. Teachers were first asked about the frequency of use of e-learning activities in specific pedagogic contexts: ‘In which pedagogic contexts (in school with the entire class, in school in project groups, as part of homework, others) do you use e-learning? Please indicate how often you use them (1=*never* to 5=*regularly*).’ As it can be seen in Figure 5.8, the mean value of use of e-learning in school with the entire class is higher than its use in school in project groups, which, in turn, is more recurrent than the use of e-learning as part of homework. In addition, there are more teachers who had never used e-learning activities in project groups (28% of the question respondents) than teachers who had never used them with the entire class (16%) (Figure 5.9). What is more, only 10% of the teachers claimed to regularly use e-learning activities as homework. These data are in line with the lack of computers in the classroom and at the students’ homes, but they also suggest teachers opt for more directed practices, probably in order to make a more controlled and thus facilitated use of e-learning. For example, it is easier to manage an entire class than different project groups, since managing group work can be an additional burden to the constraints of e-learning use.

	In school with the entire class	In school in project groups	As part of homework	Others			
1	33	1	55	1	62	1	50
2	48	2	33	2	53	2	12
3	46	3	40	3	42	3	11
4	33	4	42	4	27	4	5
5	44	5	29	5	20	5	5
Total	204	Total	199	Total	204	Total	83
Mean Value	3,0	Mean Value	2,8	Mean Value	2,5	Mean Value	1,8

Figure 5.8 Use of e-learning activities per pedagogic context

Teachers who never used e-learning activities	
with the entire class	16%
in project groups	28%
as part of homework	30%

Figure 5.9 Teachers' inexperience with e-learning per pedagogic context

The second question in this third section of the questionnaire assessed how beneficial the use of e-learning within certain areas is according to teachers (1=*not at all* to 5=*very much*). As we can see in Figure 5.10 (highest numbers marked in bold), the majority of the respondents opted for a 4 or a 5 in all areas except for speaking, the mean values indicating no value below 3. This

suggests a generally positive attitude towards e-learning. The mean values disclose the following descending order: vocabulary (4,3), listening comprehension (4,2), intercultural competence development (4,0), reading comprehension (3,9), language testing and CLIL (3,8), grammar, writing and communicative interaction (3,6), e-portfolios (3,5), and finally speaking (3,0). Although rating is biased by each teacher's (un)familiarity with e-learning, it should be noticed that vocabulary not only generally obtained high ratings but also the highest average rating. This supports the idea that e-learning may facilitate a lexical approach to language learning. Speaking is the area for which e-learning was considered to be least suitable, with substantial distance from vocabulary. Curiously, this is the skill most often listed in the respondents' fields of interest for ICT training workshops (see chapter 5.7). This is probably so because teachers were still unable to see how e-learning could contribute to the development of this language area. The impact of e-learning on writing and communicative competence, however, cannot be disregarded nor can its high potential for the development of the intercultural competence. A higher rating of writing and communicative interaction was expectable but the type of e-learning applications used by these teachers (Figure 5.3) does not enable them to gather more positive evidence concerning these areas as very few use wikis, forums, chats, etc.

Areas	1	2	3	4	5	N/A	Total	Mean value
Grammar	0	7	14	19	9	0	49	3,6
Vocabulary	0	2	6	15	26	0	49	4,3
Listening comprehension	2	0	9	15	23	0	49	4,2
Reading comprehension	0	7	11	10	21	0	49	3,9
Speaking	6	13	12	10	8	0	49	3,0
Writing	2	9	11	13	14	0	49	3,6
Language testing	2	4	11	19	13	0	49	3,8
E-Portfolios	5	8	9	9	17	1	49	3,5
Communicative interaction	5	8	6	13	17	0	49	3,6
Intercultural competence development	3	3	8	10	24	1	49	4,0
Language learning with cultural or subject-specific content (CLIL)	4	2	10	15	18	0	49	3,8
Others: surfing the net for specific purposes	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	4,0

Figure 5.10 Benefit of e-learning within specific areas

The previous chapters set up best-practice language learning scenarios which assume e-learning facilitates the achievement of certain pedagogic aims, but how relevant are those pedagogic goals and approaches in language classes from these teachers' point of view (1=*not at all* to 5=*very much*)? This was the third question of this part of the questionnaire. Their perceptions are presented in Figure 5.11.

Pedagogic goals and approaches	1	2	3	4	5	N/A	Total	Mean value
Grammar and form	2	5	8	24	10	0	49	3,7
Communicative competence	1	0	1	10	37	0	49	4,7
Intercultural competence	2	2	13	14	18	0	49	3,9
Teacher-centred approaches	8	18	15	5	3	0	49	2,5
Learner-centred approaches	1	2	4	19	23	0	49	4,2
Autonomous learning	3	4	14	17	11	0	49	3,6
Authenticity of learning materials & activities	1	4	11	18	15	0	49	3,9
Explorative learning	2	6	8	15	17	1	49	3,8
Collaborative learning (in pairs, groups)	1	3	11	14	20	0	49	4,0
Task/project-based learning	2	9	11	14	13	0	49	3,6
Others: recording of shooting videos on a specific topic	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	4,0

Figure 5.11 Relevance of specific pedagogic goals/approaches

With the exception of teacher-centred approaches, with a mean value of 2,5, all the other pedagogic goals/approaches reached a mean value above 3,6 and thus constitute these teachers' requirements of success, whose rating, on the other hand, is very much in line with the principles of best practice proposed in chapter 2, in descending order: communicative competence; learner-centred approaches; collaborative learning; intercultural competence and authenticity of learning materials and activities; explorative learning; grammar and form; autonomous learning and task/project-based learning; and finally teacher-centred approaches. One question remains and that is whether teachers rated these goals/approaches according to their requirements of success only or to their actual performance as well. Do they believe that a lesson *should not* be too teacher-centred? Or rather, *are* their lessons mostly learner-centred? If the answer to the latter is positive, were teachers able to assess themselves neutrally? The analysis of this questionnaire provides no answer for these questions. However, the fact that these teachers perceive these to be best-practice teaching and learning principles is complementary data for this study and offers authentic support for the statements in chapter 2.

In a fourth question in this section, teachers were asked whether they associated strengths and opportunities with using e-learning applications and contents for language learning purposes (1=*not at all* to 5=*very much*). Figure 5.12 indicates most answers were positive but the data is not indicative of a trend.

The mean value of 3,2 sheds light on these teachers' opinion: in general e-learning is thought to offer strengths and opportunities for language learning purposes, but the average rating is not very high. Again, teachers are likely to lack knowledge about the real application of e-learning.

1	30 (17%)
2	20 (11%)
3	40 (23%)
4	54 (31%)
5	33 (19%)
Total	177
Mean Value	3,2

Figure 5.12 Strengths/opportunities of e-learning

This time, however, a comment field followed the question, so the respondents had the opportunity to specify their answers, which offers additional perspectives on the data in Figure 5.12. In fact, although some examples provided by teachers in this comment field are, as previously said, unrelated to the phase of e-learning advocated here, Bax’s *integrated CALL*, they indicate teachers view e-learning as able to fulfil the principles of autonomy, authentication and collaboration discussed in chapter 2. This first quote alone gives evidence of this:

These applications and contents motivate the kids, allow them to learn *independently* and find and evaluate information critically. They also offer a ‘*real*’ way of *communicating* in foreign languages, as opposed to the more traditional classroom teaching methods; they get to actually use their language skills in *real* situations instead of just practicing and simulating conversations in a classroom with other native tongue speakers. [my italics] (EevaLiisa, Finland)

First, the respondents said e-learning applications and contents strongly contributed to the development of learners’ autonomy and thus self-confidence in a setting in which teachers become facilitators, mediators of the learning process: “With the help of the e-learning applications students become more eager to use language. Their personal hesitations about the language learning is overcome.” (Ali, Turkey), “...genuine, immediate, comprehensive and up-to-date data (most of it, at least). Access to fathoms of knowledge which were unreachable before. The teacher becomes a facilitator or a mediator to knowledge rather than a provider of knowledge” (Mohamed, France). Learners get involved in a process of self-discovery and reflection, in which language awareness plays an important role: “...enhances pupils’ understanding of the language, provides huge amounts of support for pupils” (Laurence, Wales). According to teachers, learners become able to assess their own learning, which enables them to autonomously direct their learning throughout their lives: “...to be able to research and spend time on the learning process; use english to communicate on a wider level...” (Zoe, Cyprus).

Second, the participants claimed that the use of authentic material based upon real language led to relevance in learning: “gives teaching a new dimension, displays relevance and the contemporary element of the subject” (Mary, Wales), “E-learning can give my pupils the opportunity to use the language in a more vivid environment either through the use of games with immediate responses or through chatting with pupils from other countries in which case they will realise why they learn this language.” (Helen, Greece), “makes language learning fun and more appealing, use of up to date realia makes pupils realise the point of learning a language

(email, videoconferencing)...” (Laurence, Wales), “getting in touch with really-spoken English, access to breaking news, using the net as a living encyclopedia” (Caterina, Italy). Learners develop other skills, such as research skills (designated ‘key qualifications’ by one of the teachers), which are of high importance nowadays. Additionally, e-learning enables communication to be synchronous or asynchronous, which makes it real and broader. Learners are able to widen their (educational) experiences through their exposure to variety. E-learning resources – according to one of the participants ‘reliable resources’ – are of various sorts and of easy and fast access (“It is fast and more reliable [reliable]. teachers and Pupils do not waste” [Ertan, Turkey]), which fosters differentiated learning through “lifelong learning personalized tasks for pupils...” (Eija, Finland):

[F]or different learning types there's a different task - interactive tests or quizzes for remedial grammar sessions. On line exercises differ in degree of difficulty, catering for the needs of children with learning difficulties, on line ppt presentations to consolidate or explain points further through graphics, pictures and sound. Advanced students explore texts and do editing of different sources. (Eleni, Cyprus)

In addition, learning becomes multicultural learning. Communication with native speakers appears as an asset of this multicultural dimension.

Third, learners develop other attitudes: they become more critical and more cooperative. In their answers, the respondents stated e-learning kept learners updated and made them spend more time on learning as well as overcome xenophobia and technophobia. Most of the teachers alleged that these applications and contents stimulated and motivated learning, which seems to lie on the power of technology itself and enables learning to be fun. In this relaxed environment learners are “...freed from the constraints of the classroom and a ‘tight’ syllabus” (Vasiliki, Greece). This particular teacher places great emphasis on collaboration and discovery-based learning practices:

In all cases [Regardless of the learning style], collaborative learning is in order and teamwork spirit is number one priority. Unmotivated students get their interest stimulated when they do something different which requires their individual exploring of sources, no matter how difficult this exposing to the broader language use can seem. (Eleni, Cyprus)

Interaction helps with pronunciation and intonation, and the access to multisensory information allows for more global learning.

According to the respondents, the main result of all these strengths and opportunities is the increase in lesson effectiveness. Above all, students were said to be able to strengthen structures and enlarge their vocabulary, which, again, suggests the propensity of e-learning for a lexical approach to language learning.

Teachers were also given the opportunity to reflect about any weaknesses or threats of using e-learning for language learning purposes: ‘Do you associate weaknesses and threats with using e-learning applications and contents for language learning purposes (1=*not at all* to 5=*very much*)?’. By observing Figure 5.13, one can easily see most teachers perceive few constraints. The mean value of 2,3 confirms most teachers hardly associate weaknesses or threats with using e-learning applications and contents.

1	65 (38%)
2	37 (21%)
3	41 (24%)
4	22 (13%)
5	8 (5%)
Total	173
Mean Value	2,3

Figure 5.13 Weaknesses/threats of e-learning

Only 38% of the teachers who answered this question provided a comment as well. The given answers converge on two main ideas.

First, teachers claimed that there was no Internet filter at their school and students did not always use computers or Internet appropriately, or visited inappropriate sites and used applications unrelated to their lesson. In chapters 3 and 4, it was claimed that the use of ICT needs to, firstly, be delimited by specific purposes and learning goals, and, secondly, be guided by the teacher, who should monitor its use.

Second, the use of ICT was pointed out as time-consuming for students and teachers. Lesson time is spent on guiding students through the realms of the online activities, and teachers need to spend time on online lesson preparation for ICT to be worthwhile. In fact, both teachers and students need to learn how to use specific hardware and software before getting to the actual learning purpose and taking advantage from it. When any technology is used for the first time, in our daily lives even, it is always time-consuming, but is the effort not mostly worth it? Besides, most teachers stated that students were often given insufficient time to explore contents and applications or to find answers by themselves and assess the whole learning process. In fact, there must be place for this whole process to occur. As said previously, there is a need to focus on the learning process rather than on a learning product.

Some more constraints were mentioned, although less frequently. Many students do not have a computer or Internet at home; hence, some teachers see it as discriminating that learners are required to use ICT as part of their homework. This may set a good opportunity for group homework and the exploration of the advantages of learning with and from peers within the same ZPD (see chapter 2.5). Also, city or school libraries and laboratories often offer facilities to overcome this deficiency. Furthermore, schools lack enough resources or ICT support to solve technical problems. These technical problems lead to teachers' lack of confidence in using e-learning resources and come forward as one of the greatest weaknesses in the use of ICT. As Barbaux (2011) argues (see chapter 3.2), the process of using e-learning resources in language learning mobilises a diversity of fields of expertise (see Figure 3.7) and the process of educational design is inquiry-based, interactive and demands a multi-skilled and pro-active team-approach. Therefore, more integration and collaboration are required between the teacher and an educational designer, whose existence seems to be becoming more and more desirable, as

well as among teachers. Another possibility is for teachers to assume the role of educational designers themselves.

In their answers, the respondents also brought up other issues such as:

- a) absence of face-to-face communication as well as isolation and passivity originated in non-communication, addiction to ICT and lack of physical exercise;
- b) fear of not coming to grips with computers;
- c) “inappropriate, outdated and biased websites...” (Elisavet, Cyprus) with ready-made questions that block creativity, “death by PowerPoint...” (Laurence, Wales), “pupils printing information without checking or even understanding what they have researched” (Wendy, France), unawareness of the difference between web language and formal language, “short span memory and low attention to spelling” (Oscar, Spain);
- d) parents doing the exercises themselves;
- e) and finally, swarming classrooms not allowing for an adequate working atmosphere.

This is where blended learning steps in. In this PhD thesis, e-learning is not suggested as homework but as part of a blended learning ensemble. Permanent learning and teaching in a collaborative blended learning setting in which teachers play a monitoring role will surely increase teachers and students’ confidence. E-learning tasks require thought-through classroom management. Choosing project groups carefully– which 28% of the teachers claimed to have never resorted to (Figure 5.8) –, assigning some students the role of guiding their classmates through the tasks and setting up specific times for each activity in advance may help.

5.5 Using e-learning from home

The topic dealt with in this chapter has been gradually advanced throughout chapter 5. Answers to previous questions have already offered some insight into the use of e-learning from home. Results demonstrated that most teachers tend to use their own equipment rather than institutional one (Figure 5.6). This is particularly true of non-Western countries in which there are insufficient facilities available. Results also revealed that teachers seldom use e-learning activities as part of homework (Figure 5.8). It was found that this was probably related to the fact that teachers believe many students have no computer, let alone Internet access at home (Figure 5.6).

The last question of the fourth part of the questionnaire, focused on using e-learning from home, demanded from teachers that they pointed out the number of students taught by them they thought had computer and Internet access at home in percentage spans: ‘How many of your pupils do you think have computer and internet access at home?’. The results can be observed in the following figure (Figure 5.14).

Even though the number of teachers answering the questionnaire per country varied enormously, an analysis of the nationality of the participants answering each question leads to the conclusion that most teachers choosing 0-20% are mainly Turkish or Greek and that teachers from countries such as Finland or Denmark predominantly opted for the percentage span 80-100%. Choices by teachers from other countries such as France or Spain tend to depend on the city teachers work

in. An example is Cartagena (Spain), with 80-100% of students having computer and Internet access at home, as opposed to Murcia, on the 40-60% level. These figures seem to depend on both countries and regions. Therefore, they shall not be analysed from a general European perspective.

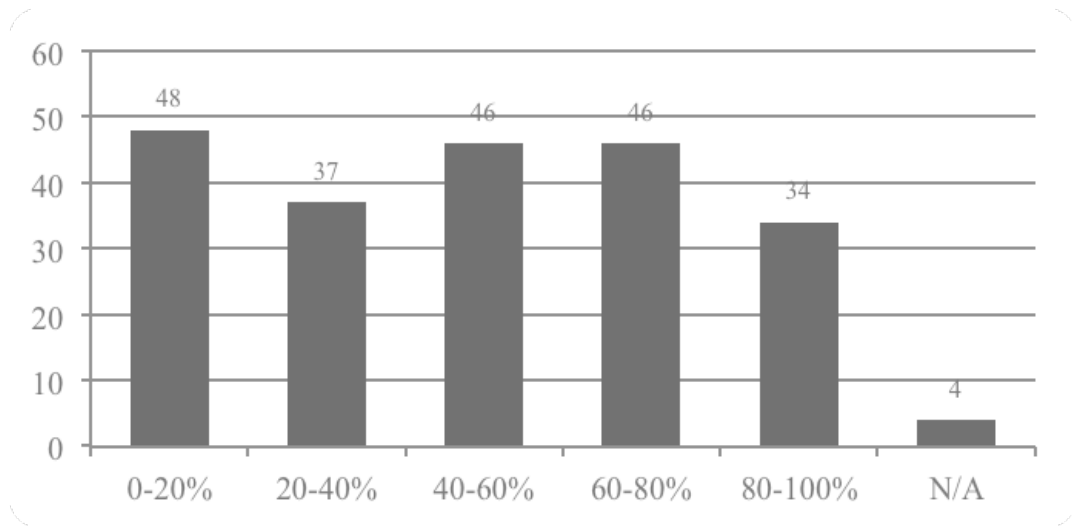


Figure 5.14 Pupils' computer and Internet access at home (teachers' perception)

The fact that not all students around Europe have computer and Internet access at home might be the reason why 56% of the respondents chose 'no' when confronted with the preceding question: 'Do you provide your pupils with e-learning applications and materials for working from home?' (Figure 5.15). Only 32% answered yes.

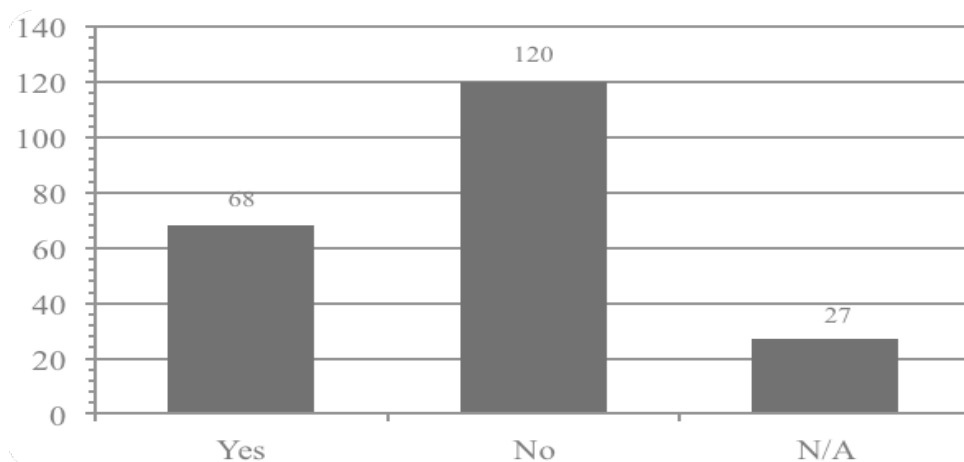


Figure 5.15 Provision of e-learning resources for pupils to work from home

And what kind of homework do they give their students? In the comment box teachers mentioned the following e-homework tasks:

- a) asking students to do Internet research for school projects (e.g. for the school magazine) or international projects (e.g. eTwinning projects), sometimes guiding them through a set of web links for them to choose from: “when doing a project Ss [students] are expected to do research at home” (Eleni, Cyprus), “web pages to search so that they can do their projects” (Katie, Cyprus);
- b) providing students with (mostly motivating) websites that can be easily authenticated by students for collecting specific written or visual information or doing online exercises said to entail games, songs, video-clips, grammar exercises, quizzes and self-assessment interactive tests; websites mainly contain news or texts about the students’ favourite actors, films, music hobbies, etc. – teachers seem to use the websites suggested by the coursebook as well as DynEd³⁰, frequently pointed out;
- c) affording DVDs, CD-ROMS “with learning activities and games” (Christina, Cyprus), CDs with scripts of lessons taught and listening activities, computer programmes with games and exercises and animated films;
- d) using Moodle, blogs, e-mails, chats or wikis – only three teachers, about 5% of the teachers who specified the kind of homework they gave their students, mentioned the use of a Moodle platform, blogs, e-mail or chats, and no more than one, less than 2%, mentioned the use of wikis: “Nowadays I’m creating a wiki <http://ourwikilessons.wikispaces.com> and a blog <http://englishcanbefun.wordpress.com> as a way of improving their working from home” (Maricarmen, Spain); “specific software and homework using Moodle” (Jo, Spain); “Moodle platform, email to students from other countries, educadional software to improve their English” (Adamantia, Cyprus); “websites ask for email communication attachments research” (Zoe, Cyprus); “Websites, blogs...” (Johanna, Greece); “usually articles for further reading, or on line magazines, sites where they can chat, read about their favourite actors, films, music, hobbies, etc. (Lefkothea, Greece).

Some teachers tend to lead their students to use ICT in a discovery-learning fashion, through projects, self-assessment materials or, in very few cases, more interactive tools such as Moodle, blogs, e-mails, chats or wikis. Yet, some others are still very attached to DVDs, CDs or CD-ROMs. These resources do not have the same potential to be authenticated by students or to develop their autonomy or collaborative skills as the previous ones. What is more, many of these teachers do not seem to guide their students through resources, leaving them to use ICT as they please. This, however, is also related to the fact that, as stressed by the majority of the participants, for access reasons these activities are often voluntary. Nevertheless, it is still true

³⁰ “*DynEd International, Inc.* was founded in 1987 by a team of language teachers, engineers, and artists. It produced and brought to market the world’s first computer-assisted language teaching CD-ROM and received a patent for its innovative design...DynEd has the world’s most comprehensive lineup of award-winning computer-based English Language Teaching (ELT/ESL) solutions. DynEd’s courses cover all proficiency levels and include a range of age-appropriate courses...DynEd courses are supported by an award-winning Records Management System, Mastery and Placement tests, extensive teacher-support materials, including lesson plans, teacher-training, mentoring, and a newly released Teacher Training Course that helps teachers blend technology into their teaching” (“DynEd,” n.d.).

that most teachers consider it beneficial that their pupils have access to learning software at home.

Indeed, when answering the question ‘Do you consider it beneficial for your language classes that your pupils should have access to computer, internet and learning software at home? (1=*not at all*...5=*very much*)’, 62% of the teachers opted for ‘very much’. Only one person, that is, 0,5% of the teachers, selected ‘not at all’ (Figure 5.16).

1	1 (1%)
2	11 (5%)
3	21 (10%)
4	44 (22%)
5	126 (62%)
Total	203
Mean Value	4,4

Figure 5.16 Students’ home e-learning access

The mean value for this question is 4,4, which shows nearly every teacher believes it is very beneficial for students to have access to e-learning from home. Only 29% of the teachers answering that question added comments with regard to advantages and/or problems that concerned it. A special emphasis was placed on the fact that the use of Internet should be monitored. Furthermore, most teachers again stressed that homework requiring the use of ICT cannot be made compulsory since a high percentage of students has neither Internet connexion nor computer at home. Some respondents also claimed that the major problem is that teachers need to be trained on how to use ICT effectively first – this topic will be discussed in detail in chapter 5.7. In addition, some participants suggested that “[p]eople should have access to learning methods and techniques of other countries” (Ertan, Turkey) and that “[p]upils should be integrated into teaching groups in Europe” (Bekir, Turkey), again emphasising the need for intercultural collaboration in order to make e-learning more efficient and meaningful, as advocated in previous chapters.

5.6 Changes and improvements

Finally, the last part of the questionnaire concerned changes or improvements and was composed of one single question, namely ‘Should the use of e-learning in schools be changed or improved?’. For teachers’ guidance, some examples of fields they could comment on were provided: school politics, organisation of teachers’ workload, technological infrastructure, pedagogic approaches & strategies, teacher education, continuous teacher support and collaboration in teacher networks.

This question was answered by 186 teachers. Only one of them said no changes or improvements were needed. The majority stated that all the aspects suggested in the question should be changed

or improved “...to be in line with the new trends of our century” (Monica, Cyprus): “e-learning at schools should be improved as it will improve students and teachers' motivation and thus both parts can reach their aims” (Ertan, Turkey). Nonetheless, some aspects were more often commented on than others. Teacher education, technological infrastructure and school politics were the most frequently addressed issues:

First of all there should be provision of the relative *equipment* for the application of e-learning at schools. In addition, not only should there be a computer lab at all schools but also provision of *time* allocated to language learning. E-learning requires extra time given for language learning. As a next step *teachers* should be *trained* to use e-learning as a teaching tool but also be *supported* continuously through seminars at their workplace in order to feel more confident and ready to achieve their teaching aims. [my italics] (Helen, Greece)

First, the respondents claimed additional and continuous teacher training is essential. They suggested training on adequate use of ICT should be part of their education and serve second language teaching purposes: “my teaching education at university concerning ICTs was non-existing. Teachers need more training and support” (Bettina, Spain); “teachers should be given a laptop with efficient software. They should learn to use a computer as part of their curriculum” (Jeremy, France). It would have been insightful to know the time period in which Bettina graduated. Alessandra (Italy) focused on middle-aged teachers only by saying, “middle aged italian teachers need support in order to be updated through workshops...” Andreas (Cyprus) claimed that teacher training on the use of ICT “...should be part of a broad innovation scheme across the curriculum, after a sound in-service training”. Marcela (Czech Republic) related the topic to her own personal experience on the subject just like Bettina: “I would like to be educated more in this area, be a part of some seminars (but purely practical) so that I could use the new strategies and types of teaching activities in the classrooms”; Elena (Cyprus) agreed that “...practice should be given to the teachers”. In fact, teachers tend to believe “...it's just a matter of time before the computer takes over the learning process. The teacher remains indispensable, so he is compelled to know how to operate the computer. Teachers should be ITC-trained non stop” (Wendy, France), “it's absolutely necessary, if we want to stand in a classroom and communicate with our pupils.” (Johanna, Greece). Other respondents also insinuated, “...teachers must be directed to use technilogy [technology] more effectively...” (Mahmut, Turkey), “...use sophisticated technological techniques and the students need to have fun and learn” (Bekir, Turkey), “e-learning in schools should be imporved [improved] with continuous teacher support and teacher ongoing professional development. Seminars, conf[e]rences, and workshops shoul[d] be organised to demonstrate examples of *good practice* on how to the use of ICT can foster effective langiage [language] teaching and learning” [my italics] (Elisavet, Cyprus),

Second, as concerns technological facilities, there are not enough computers in the classrooms, computer laboratories are not fully equipped, there is often no broadband Internet, most equipment is outdated and there is a need for more software programmes for students. The teachers' comments provide evidence of this: “There are no language rooms in any gymnasium. No computers, no projectors nothing.... How can we, teachers, use e-learning equipment and applications?” (Christia, Cyprus); “All classrooms should be equipped with a PC with Internet Access and a projector (the labs are not always sufficient, because other teachers uses them)...” (Marianthi, Greece); “more computeur are essential in classroom ,school...must...offer

computer to pupils” (Annelaure, France); “more computers at school, maybe one in each classroom” (Eva, Czech Republic); “the fact that in our school there is limited internet connection most of the days, restricts us from planning a lesson in computer lab, using internet” (Stella, Cyprus); “Last year we did not have a computer in the class. This year we have, but with no internet access!!!” (Vasiliki, Cyprus). There is also some spontaneous concern with students not having computer or Internet access at home. Teachers believe school must suppress this shortage: “To start with, it would have been great to have a computer lab, so the whole class would be able to do some work or be able to interfere in the pedagogical processes [process], since most of the pupils don’t have access to a pc at home, or the internet.” (Emily, Cyprus); “all students, including those who do not have the financial means to buy a PC, should have access to technology at school” (Vasiliki K., Cyprus). What is more, teachers claimed there should be laboratories specifically dedicated to language learning: “I would increase the number of computers or create special language labs with computers [computers] at schools” (Ludmila, Czech Republic); “Foreign Language teachers should have their own classroom equipped with computers” (Anthoula, Greece).

Third, some teachers expressed a clear concern with regard to school politics, as in the following examples:

School politics need to be much facilitating. It is too often difficult to do things regarding [due to] very complex training laws. Allowing pupils to have blogs or email addresses shouldn't be that difficult and I really feel it is in my school!!! I also feel I spend too much money on getting the proper equipment myself. It is expensive and we are spending our money for teaching use... it is not being considered at all! (Laurence, France)

Yes, but that means higher costs both for teachers and pupils as they have to keep in touch with technological advances. That implies some kind of real government help to make things change. (Thibaut, France)

Nadia, also from France, approached the issue of *expenses* not being supported by the government as well: “it should be improved of course. But... no money, and nobody to take care of the installations [facilities] (that's free work !)”. This is also the case in Finland (“more money to have more equipment” [Eija, Finland]) and in Wales (“...if finance was available, pupils could work on an individual structured programme scheme on individual laptops...” [Mary, Wales]). This obviously has a strong impact on students’ minds as well, as suggested by this teacher: “...Our classes are also too crowded but above all, some students still think the computer is only for playing and not for learning while it can be both” (Bettina, Spain). Bettina was not the only teacher referring to the *size of classes*: “I could use it more if I had less pupils...” (Patricia, France). Onur (Turkey) stated, “...there must be more useful and effective computer labs installed and the *time tables* should be more wide to use them” [my italics]. *E-mail or blog access*, as suggested before by Laurence (France), is another issue. From these teachers’ point of view, it should be allowed: “pupils' access to email and blogs as it is currently not accessible to them because of school policies” (Angelique, Wales); “the school systems and...e-mail access needs to be improved considerably in order to reduce stress” (Isabel, Wales). This is definitely an issue in Wales, as answers by several Welsh teachers suggest. One last topic with regard to school politics concerns the *curriculum*: “...teachers should be given more freedom about which units to cover so that they can take their time to use ICT” (Margarita, Cyprus). This seems to be an issue in Cyprus in particular, as several teachers from the same island country complained

about it: “There should be an overall improvement of the syllable [syllabus] of the lessons taught, including the continuous use of e-learning activities” (Mike, Cyprus) or “e-learning should be introduced into the schools’ curriculum” (Marios, Cyprus), and “the technological level of pupils...sholud [should] be improved...” (Onur, Turkey).

Further comments explore the need for collaboration in teacher networks, which is supportive of initiatives such as Wide Minds: “...collaboration in INTERNATIONAL teacher networks sharing *best practices*...” [my italics] (Eija, Finland); “...useful school webs with *Moodle*...” [my italics] (Oscar, Spain); “Teachers should create a *forum/wiki* to share ideas on the matter” [my italics] (Adamantia, Cyprus); “A good idea is having a discussion *forum* for teachers providing ideas for pedagogic approaches and strategies and FAQs for educational and technological issues, which will allow teacher support by specialists and developing collaboration between (and maybe even developing new) teacher networks” [my italics] (Demotiko, Cyprus); “Teachers’ knowledge and understanding of e-learning varies greatly and therefore the expertise within schools varies widely – this is something that could be addressed. More use could be made of *video conferencing* for training purposes. Close ICT links could be established between cluster schools” [my italics] (Sharon, Wales) [my italics]. E-learning resources such as Moodle, wikis, forums or video conferencing emerge as both means and ends of networking, which is further evidence of the potential of these tools in language learning and teaching collaborative practices. Moreover, there is a focus on the necessity to find objective pedagogical purposes for the use of ICT in language learning.

The first aspect discussed, additional and continuous teacher training, is also often followed by reflection on the need for continuous technological support: “...teacher training and help desk for technological matters need to be arranged” (Theo, Greece); “...technological support/computer experts” (Theodora, Greece); “technical support is necessary so that we may approach IT colleagues without feeling guilty about disturbing them” (Zoe, Cyprus). Again, educational designers and the integration of these professionals with teachers who also collaborate among themselves (Barboux, 2011) seem to be in serious demand.

The third aspect examined, school politics, on the other hand, was frequently accompanied by comments on how essential it is to stimulate teachers to use ICT and produce digital learning material, namely by having their work recognised: “I think that the use of e-learning in schools should be improved by school politics. The teachers need support [for] their work because if our work is recognised we will try to do better every day and our students will have more materials to learn [from]” (Maricarmen, Spain); “...the digital learning material that some teachers prepare all by themselves must be appreciated and maybe the headmaster or sb [somebody] in charge must encourage teachers to work via ICT” (Marianthin, Greece). Still with regard to school politics, teachers demanded a reorganisation of their workload as well, in particular because their workload is substantial and they consider e-learning rather time-consuming: “...more time for planning...” (Eija, Finland), “decrease of teachers’ workload in order to have time to organise and prepare lessons with the use of ICT” (Nicoletta, Cyprus) and “...give support to the children when using the computers in the classroom” (Skevi, Cyprus).

Last, a few teachers claimed the use of computers and Internet must be monitored: “Internet should be monitored” (Jerzy, Poland) and “...use of PCs within the school by students in controlled areas” (Joanna, Greece).

One of the respondents went beyond all these constraints to say that it is up to teachers, and consequently students, to have the enthusiasm and engagement to embrace the new possibilities offered by e-learning:

...It is a new challenge for both teachers and students and, I'm sure, this entails greater enthusiasm from both parties. As for the repercussions, i.e. teachers' workload, education, support, technological infrastructure, etc, they're just technicalities to be easily overcome should there be enthusiasm, motivation and the challenge of stepping into a new era of both teaching and learning which offers more possibilities. *A good teacher is first a good learner themselves.* [my italics] (Vasiliki, Greece)

The teacher who wrote the next comment does not set apart the need to be provided with continuous teacher education on this matter, to have teachers' workload differently managed or facilities improved. Still, what she puts more emphasis on is collaboration among teachers for sharing innovation, and so I shall conclude this chapter:

The internet can provide a most powerful tool in language teaching in many ways. It remains for the teachers to really *understand* that shift happens and technology is the key to lifelong learning. We should *collaborate* more, but most importantly, *time* should be given for teachers in a busy workday, to have discussions and trial lessons on applications to learn to use these more confidently. *Infrastructure* is important and it is getting better. We need more to be done in this respect but I am grateful to see things taking shape and moving forward at a quicker pace. *Continuous teacher education* is important but most importantly, what really makes the difference, is for teachers to share their knowledge and expertise with their colleagues, create a think tank of creativity and innovative motions. [my italics] (Eleni, Cyprus)

5.7 Teacher training

The need for teacher training was one of the main concerns expressed by teachers at the end of the questionnaire when asked to comment on the need for changes or improvements with regard to the use of e-learning (see chapter 5.6). The first part of the questionnaire, centred on gathering background information about the teachers, ended with questions on teacher training on educational ICT.

In chapter 5.2 it was said that 22% of the language teachers answered they made no use of ICT in their language lessons. It seems that this is not only related to the lack of e-learning equipment and applications – this is the case for 46% of the participants –, but also to the fact that they have never really participated in teacher training activities concerning educational ICT (Figure 5.17).

Approximately 57% of the teachers answered that they had never participated in teacher training activities associated to educational ICT and 95% of the teachers who had said they used no ICT in their language classes claimed they had never participated in teacher training activities connected with educational ICT. This might be one of the reasons for not using it, since training should enable teachers not only to become acknowledged with ICT but also to learn how to teach with technology in order to feel comfortable with the possibility of using it (see Duran, et al., 2012). Obviously, two reasons may be behind this deficit: no access to training or no interest in taking part in it.

In fact, only 77% of the total number of respondents assumed to be interested in taking part in a teacher-training workshop on educational ICT. Do the other 33% believe that they have already had enough training activities related to educational ICT or do they have no interest in doing so? An amount of about 24% of the teachers who had said they had never participated in teacher training activities stated they had no interest in taking part in such a workshop. Unfortunately, no place for comments was provided in this question, so there is no data concerning these teachers' motivations. What is true, however, is that 16% of the teachers who said not to be interested in taking part in teacher training activities related to educational ICT are the same teachers who stated that there were no e-learning equipment or applications available for language learning in their schools. This is obviously a serious obstacle to consider.

Teacher training and variables	
No ICT used in language classes + no e-learning equipment/applications available	46%
No past teacher training on educational ICT	57%
No ICT use in lessons + no past training	95%
No interest in training	77%
No past training + no interest in training	24%
No interest in training + no e-learning equipment/applications available	16%

Figure 5.17 Teacher training and variables

Only about 43% of the teachers said they had already taken part in teacher training activities associated to educational ICT. Despite being asked to specify the kind of ICT training they had participated in, most teachers only provided very general seminar names and did not specify the type of resources or tools they learnt to use. The ones who did mainly referred to software/hardware such as PowerPoints or interactive whiteboards or to learning how to use authoring tools such as Hot Potatoes. Out of the ones who answered this question, there were fewer than 5% of references to learning management systems such as Moodle or other Web 2.0 resources such as blogs, wikis, podcasting and about 1% references to e-mail or Skype. This is a one-time occurrence: "...Seminars by British Council on integrating ICT into EL classrooms (use of blogs, wikis, podcasting, videoconferencing, Internet, LMS [Moodle]), etc." (Elisavet, Cyprus).

Teachers who showed interest in a workshop were then asked to specify topics they considered relevant. Approximately 19% of the teachers who showed interest in a workshop on educational ICT listed networking, communication and social interaction (video conferencing, e-mails, chats, forums, blogs, wikis), the type of tasks entailed in Bax's proposal for *integrated CALL*. About 14% mentioned digital white boards, audio editing and recording tools, WebQuests, e-portfolios and test and assessment tools. About 10% indicated authoring tools and e-learning platforms, resources that facilitate best-practice teaching and learning principles (see chapters 2 and 3).

Although answers covered all the main skills, there was a main emphasis on activities that foster speaking, which shows a trend towards communication-oriented second language learning,

facilitated by the type of tools and tasks listed above: “communication and social interaction, e.g. video conferencing, e-mail, chat, forum, blogs, podcasts and wikis. -learning management systems (LMS), e.g. e-learning platforms like Moodle” (Sinan, Turkey); “development of students' communicational abilities (Ariadni, Greece); “communicative teaching of English” (Maria, Cyprus). Many respondents claimed that there should be a focus on language, literature and culture and they also suggested some thematic areas such as science, environmental issues, racism, road safety, traditions and hobbies, thus showing some interest in CLIL practices. Largely speaking, however, most respondents were very general in their options, e.g. “How to use the internet in class Which computer-based programmes to use to support learning” (Alexandra, Greece). This is particular true of teachers who had never participated in such training workshops and again gives evidence of unfamiliarity with the most recent developments in the field of language learning ICT, if not ICT at large. These teachers' requirements are obviously rather basic and focus on grammar and vocabulary consolidation and extension mainly.

5.8 Conclusions

First, with regard to the availability of e-learning equipment and applications for language learning at school, 24% of the teachers answered negatively, which means that there are still a reasonable number of schools across Europe which do not offer the required facilities for the implementation of e-learning practices. On the other hand, the schools which have equipment and applications available do not seem to offer the conditions for the successful implementation of e-learning since equipment is scarce and availability is not a synonym for easy access. In addition, teachers only refer to the availability of applications such as multimedia learning software and e-mail, but not of video conferencing, chats, forums, blogs or wikis. Also, 62% of the total amount of teachers answering the questionnaire said they used e-learning equipment and applications in their own language classes, but most of the resources pointed out were either outdated or not facilitative of e-learning practices that foster autonomy, collaboration or authentication. The answers that followed suggest this is related to teachers' unawareness of the existence of tools such as content management systems or wikis. Teachers from Western countries said they used PC and data projector as well as Internet in the classroom with their pupils more often than non-Western teachers, but, in general, teachers used their own home equipment more often than the school equipment and believed most students had no computer or Internet access at home. Since most respondents lack knowledge of e-learning applications and their schools and students are short of the facilities required for the successful implementation of e-learning, it can be concluded that we are not in the period Bax refers to as *integrated CALL* yet (see chapter 3.1). CALL has still not been normalised.

Second, in connection with pedagogic contexts and impact of e-learning use, it was observed that teachers tend to opt for more directed practices when using e-learning – with the entire class rather than in project groups, for example. On the other hand, the focus of the respondents' answers on vocabulary suggests e-learning might facilitate a lexical approach to language learning. Also, they rated the impact of e-learning on improving writing and communicative interaction higher than its impact on speaking, which supports the claims in chapters 2 and 3.

Moreover, the best-practice teaching and learning principles identified by these teachers are also in line with the framework suggested in chapter 2: process-centred learning and teaching practices based on a communicative and constructivist lexical approach developed by means of autonomous, collaborative and authenticated content and language integrated tasks. In addition, the strengths and opportunities of e-learning observed are connected with the principles of autonomy, collaboration and authentication previously proposed as well. Most teachers hardly associate weaknesses or threats with using e-learning applications and contents. A few teachers showed concern for its inappropriate use and pointed out e-learning as time-consuming for both teachers and students, stressing that students must be given enough time to focus on the learning process. Besides some other minor weaknesses or threats, the fact that not all students have computer or Internet access at home was also suggested as a constraint together with the circumstance that teachers are not provided with enough resources or ICT support. Bearing the whole chapter in mind, it seems these teachers' requirements of success differ from their actual performance, that is, although they prefer learner-centred practices, they opt for working with the entire class rather than in project groups, for example. It should be noted, however, that this might be related to the limitations presented.

Third, as far as using e-learning from home is concerned, only 32% of the respondents said to provide their pupils with e-learning applications and materials for working from home even though most teachers found it very beneficial for students to have home access to e-learning. Again, this is connected with the students' lack of facilities at home – or, at least, these teachers' perception of it –, and values are related to the country's human development index and vary across Europe. Therefore, in order not to differentiate between their pupils, teachers tend to set optional e-homework. Once again, this time in the e-homework they set, some teachers lead their students to using ICT in a discovery-learning fashion, through projects, self-assessment materials or more interactive tools such as Moodle, blogs, e-mails, chats or wikis, but some others are still very devoted to the very obsolescent DVDs, CDs or CD-ROMs only. One more time, for several reasons already evoked, there is a difference between the principles the respondents claim to guide their teaching practices and their actual performance.

Fourth, 99% of the teachers who answered the last part of the questionnaire, which was about changes and improvements they considered to be in demand, affirmed the use of e-learning in schools should be changed or improved, in particular as regards teacher education, technological infrastructure and school politics. Besides supporting previously drawn conclusions, teachers' comments in this section of the survey clearly endorse the idea that we are not in Bax's *integrated CALL* period yet. This is not only linked with the state of affairs with regard to school facilities; it is closely tied to the lack of government backing as regards both teacher education and school politics. Some solutions proposed refer to collaboration in teacher networks via Moodle, forums, wikis or video conferencing. Curiously, these tools would facilitate the fulfilment of Bax's *integrated CALL* period (see Figure 3.1). Some more enthusiastic views based on intrinsic motivation also suggest approximation to Bax's view. The changes and improvements these teachers recommended are a good summary of the action that needs to be taken for integrating e-learning within an overall blended learning approach.

Finally, the need for teacher training was one of the main concerns expressed by teachers. The fact that a number of language teachers used no ICT in their language lessons is related to lacking knowledge and practice on the matter. Their levels of participation in training activities associated to educational ICT are very reduced. In fact, 96% of the teachers who said they did not use ICT in their lessons also stated to have not taken part in such training sessions. Furthermore, bearing in mind the answers of all respondents, from those who claimed to have participated in such training, there were fewer than 5% references to learning management systems such as Moodle or other Web 2.0 resources as blogs, wikis, podcasting, and about 1% references to e-mail or Skype. Indeed, most teachers showed interest in participating in a workshop on networking, communication and social interaction (video conferencing, e-mails, chats, forums, blogs, wikis), and also authoring tools and e-learning platforms. All this confirmed the hypothesis that not using ICT is often related to not having the knowledge to use it. On the other hand, general answers by teachers who had never participated in any workshop of the kind also show their unfamiliarity with the most recent developments in the field of language learning ICT. 24% of the teachers who never participated in such workshops are not interested to do so, but 16% of the teachers who showed no interest also stated there were no e-learning equipment or applications available for language learning in their schools. It can thus be drawn from this analysis that both the resources and the knowledge about educational ICT are not enough across Europe, as well as that shortage of resources often generates lack of interest and that lack of knowledge frequently leads to diminutive use.

A comparison with more recent studies proves the prevailing weaknesses in the fields analysed in this chapter. An example is the study entitled *Survey of Schools: ICT in Education. Benchmarking access, use and attitudes to technology in Europe's schools*, which was carried out by the European Schoolnet and the Department of Psychology and Education of the University of Liège (Belgium) for the European Commission in February 2013. This survey points out that there has been an improvement since the 2006 Report but numbers are still low in all areas assessed in this chapter, i.e., not only concerning equipment, but also building capacity for ICT pedagogical expertise at school level, government policies, etc. The types of ICT this thesis focuses on are hardly acknowledged by teachers – they acknowledge school Virtual Learning Environments at the most. The same study also identifies very large differences between countries in all the above-mentioned areas.

Although the *Survey's* evidence points to progress as regards infrastructure, such policy efforts nevertheless still need to be increased if the majority of students, at all grades, are to be in highly *digitally supportive schools*...Policies to support better infrastructure are still needed, and as a matter of urgency in those countries lagging far behind others. (European Commission, 2013: p. 17)

A theory-practice conflict, as well as potential for change, is detected.

The *Survey* findings make the case for developing concrete policies and actions substantially to increase ICT based learning activities during lessons, *exploiting the full potential of ICT to support students' in-depth learning and construction of knowledge* through the use of simulation tools, learning/serious games, data-logging software, etc. ...a large majority of both school heads and teachers are **positive about ICT use** – for retrieving information, doing exercises and practice, and *learning in an autonomous and collaborative way* – **and its impact: on motivation, achievement, transversal skills and higher order thinking skills**. Both school heads and teachers strongly agree about ICT's use in T&L being essential for students in the 21st century. [my italics] (pp. 18 and 20)

This chapter analysed the current situation concerning the use of e-learning in schools across Europe, which proved far below the state of affairs needed for it to be successfully implemented, in particular in a blended learning environment. In general, language teachers and students have insufficient access to e-learning equipment/applications as well as to training. Teachers' actual performance seems to be affected by the constraints presented and mostly differs from their requirements. In fact, their requirements of success are in line with the best-practice framework suggested in previous chapters and let envisage an implementation of e-learning according to the principles of autonomy, collaboration and authentication if knowledge, skills and facilities are at hand. It is now necessary to understand whether the current state of affairs suits the learners' needs and purposes. Do they perceive the current system to provide the ideal conditions for their learning? And do they perceive such a system to produce learning outcomes? These are the questions to be analysed in the first case study of this thesis.

6 Learner perceptions of e-learning – a case study

This chapter will be centred on Case Study 1 (CS1) of this PhD thesis. This case study is based on the analysis of the results of the implementation of e-learning courses in Germany. These e-learning courses were designed in light of, on the one hand, the best-practice principles outlined in chapters 2, 3 and 4 and, on the other hand, the conclusions drawn from the analysis of the impact of the implementation of a blended language learning course in France, which will also be introduced here. By examining the learners' reaction to the language learning and teaching framework implemented, it was possible to find out the language learning conditions and strategies learners consider learning-conducive. I will begin this chapter with an overview of the context, the objectives and the approach of this case study. I will then examine the learners' perspectives on e-learning and the evolution of their perception throughout the courses. A more detailed insight into the learners' views on the e-learning activities they were exposed to shall then shed light on whether the learners show preference for a communicative constructivist orientation. Finally, a close look into what the learners perceive to be the learning outcomes of these activities will help complete and validate the language learning and teaching framework set.

6.1 Context

The empirical study CS1 was prompted by and integrated in the courses that took place within the scope of Wide Minds, in particular workpackage 5, both presented in chapter 5.1. When fulfilling further objectives of workpackage 5 other than the ones explored in the previous chapter, the data gathered prompted relevant hypotheses. Some of these objectives consisted of exploring different approaches to supporting language learning through e-learning and CLIL in the light of current research, training Wide Minds RCC coordinators and supporting, monitoring and evaluating course activities. The hypotheses prompted by the data gathered were also suggested in the literature and required confirmation and testing.

After the audit of the application of digital educational content in the context of language learning across Europe, the survey presented in chapter 5, a first workshop took place at the University of Tübingen (Chair of Applied English Linguistics) from 5th to 8th February 2009.

Within the Wide Minds workpackage 5, project schools had to implement multimedia/e-learning activities as part of their blended language learning courses. The project aimed to have 80% satisfaction with the new methodology and 80% confidence at using it. The main goals of this workshop were to meet with Wide Minds RCC coordinators, explore the language learning potential of multi-media, e-learning and pedagogic corpora, identify areas of application and specify pilot activities.

After an overview of pedagogical principles and best-practice requirements in e-learning-enhanced second language learning, the participants were introduced to the tools and contents available for their pilot course activities. These included the following:

- a) the pedagogic interview corpora ELISA, SACODEYL and BACKBONE;

- b) ready-made language learning packages created with the help of the authoring software Telos Language Partner;
- c) the e-learning platform Moodle.

The workshop was attended by teachers and teacher educators from Cyprus, Czech Republic, Finland, France and Spain and first concentrated on the workpackage objectives and approach as well as on pedagogical principles and requirements of best practice in e-learning-enhanced second language learning.

Next, the attendees were introduced to the pedagogic corpora listed above as well as to Telos packages³¹, which were explored together with e-learning hands-on activities on Moodle³².

Finally, a strategically most important workshop task was to specify and draft pilot courses based on the tools and materials that had been put forward before. The participants were able to share knowledge and exchange opinions and by the end of the training all of them had sketched out a course that suited their needs and showed their understanding of the materials and tools presented.

The next step after the workshop was for participants to implement their pilot courses as well as train teachers in their home country with the purpose of expanding piloting. In that process, some participants also added completely new courses to their repertoire.

All these training and implementation activities were in line with the *Components of Effective Professional Development for Technology Use* (North Central Regional Educational Laboratory, U.S.A., 2000) Duran et al. (2012) used as the conceptual framework of the professional development activities implemented from 2009 to 2011 (see chapter 4.3): (a) connection to student learning, (b) hands-on technology use, (c) a variety of learning experiences, (d) curriculum-specific applications, (e) new roles for teachers, (f) collegial learning, (g) active participating of teachers, (h) ongoing process, (i) sufficient time, (j) technical assistance and support, (k) administrative support, (l) adequate resources, (m) continuous funding, and (n) built-in evaluation. Mentoring was also made available all along the three-year duration of the workpackage *Developing multilingualism through digital content*.

A teacher trainer at the University of Limoges, France, created one of the courses generated after the workshop, *English for Beauticians – Nail Care*³³. This particular course was based upon principles of special interest for this thesis.

On the one hand, it was built on the grounds of CLIL. Instead of learning English through any topic in a traditional coursebook, the students were asked to engage in a task-based course for Beauticians leading to a presentation on a particular aspect of Nail Care. The students could easily authenticate the course, and the final task in particular, because they were studying to become beauticians who might be asked to deal with foreign customers. Through exposition to a

³¹ See <http://www.sprachlernmedien.de/learning-modules/telos-language-partner/> [Retrieved December 5, 2014].

³² See the Demo Modules and Sandbox used for practice and as examples for the courses to be created next at <http://www.wideminds.eu/moodle/course/view.php?id=28> [Retrieved December 5, 2014].

³³ See <http://www.wideminds.eu/moodle/course/view.php?id=42> [Retrieved December 5, 2014].

content-driven language learning approach, the students should develop communicative competence by using the language as a medium of learning.

On the other hand, it was based on collaborative work, for which it made use of Moodle activities such as the mind map, the glossary, the forum and, most importantly, the wiki. I had a special interest in these because of the benefits the literature suggested they would offer.

The participants of the course *English for Beauticians – Nail Care* were a homogeneous group of 20-year old female students. These students were attending a two-year course on Beauty Therapy leading to a National Higher Diploma at Ecole Sylvia Terrade in Brive la Gaillarde, France, a private school specialised in beauty, well-being and hairstyle. Only 7 students took part in the course. They had attended English classes at school for 8 years. Their level varied from A2 to B1, according to the CEFR. As their teacher only saw her students 40 hours/year, divided into 2 hours/week every second week for 20 weeks from September to June (exceptions: 3 weeks in March and 1 week in June), she decided to implement a blended language learning course on nail care for students to be able to work at home as productively as in class. Their teacher believed vocabulary and written work online would enable students to be better prepared for oral production in class. The course took place from February to April 2009.

It was already said above that the final task of this *English for Beauticians* course was an oral presentation on an aspect of nail care. In order to successfully accomplish the task, students were required to fulfil several activities that should prepare them for it. These activities were based on gaining a first insight into the topic *nail care* through reading; on consolidating and extending their vocabulary on the subject; and on writing a short collaborative presentation on a nail care aspect. The teacher planned a blended learning course in which she used both online and face-to-face activities: the students' oral presentation, the final task, took place in class, but most pre-activities occurred online as well as off-class and were Moodle-based. The online part of the course (Figure 6.1), obviously more relevant for the purposes of this PhD thesis, was structured as follows:

- a) a text on nail care for students to read about the subject;
- b) a mind map to *collaboratively* fill out with vocabulary from the text previously read;
- c) a forum for students to find writing peers within the class with the same nail care interest – the working topic should be chosen from the list that followed;
- d) a list of texts on different nail care issues for students to analyse and choose from for upcoming written and oral presentations;
- e) a wiki for registering final pair formation (names and topics);
- f) a wiki to *collaboratively* write a short presentation on the topic chosen by recalling information that had been collected so far;
- g) an assignment to be marked by the teacher for submitting the individual draft of an oral presentation to be held in class on a different topic from the one chosen for the previous activity but from the same list of topics;
- h) a glossary to *collaboratively* gather all the helpful vocabulary used and associate it with the French translation and a sentence in English with the word in context;
- i) a crosswords on the words or expressions students had previously added to the glossary to test lexical acquisition;

- j) individual questions and a questionnaire set up by the course teacher for students to provide feedback on the course and assess it.

ENGLISH FOR BEAUTICIANS: LEVEL 2

Here is a short course for you to develop your knowledge in nail care. Follow the steps carefully.


A: Visit the website Nail Care Guide by clicking on the following link. Browse through the pages so as to get an idea of the content. Try and memorize some vocabulary.

 [Nail Care Guide website](#)

B: Brainstorming

What do you remember about what you have read?

Let's check your memory by filling out the following mindmap with the vocabulary you remember.

 [Nail Care vocabulary](#)

C: Finding your topic and your partner

Now register on to the forum so as to tell everyone which of the following nail care tips you would like to focus on. Then try and find a friend who shares the same interest as you. You will have to work in pairs.

[Can Nails Reveal about Your Health?](#)

[What Causes Ingrown Nails?](#)

[Nail Care FAQ](#)

[Well-Groomed Hands](#)

[Splitting Nails Solution](#)

[Nail Weekly Maintenance](#)

[Nail Care Commandments](#)

[The Solution for Splitting Nails](#)

[DIY Nails](#)


[Nail Reference Guide](#)

[Fingernails](#)

[Emergency Nail Repair](#)

[Nail Survival Guide](#)

[Caring Your Long Nails](#)

 [Nail Care Tips FORUM](#)

Now that you have found a friend and know your topic of interest, please let me know by registering on the following sheet:

 [Group registration](#)

D: Use the following collaborative tool to write your small presentation together. Make sure your language is simple but accurate!

 [Wiki group A](#)

 [Wiki group B](#)

 [Wiki group C](#)

 [Wiki group D](#)

 [Wiki group E](#)

E: Assignment

Now prepare your draft for the oral presentation in the following assignment which will be marked. It is due before Monday, March 9, 2009 and the oral presentation will take place on Wednesday, March 11, 2009.

 [Assignment Nail Care](#)

Figure 6.1 *English for Beauticians – Nail Care Course on Moodle*

In short, the Moodle course had the following structure³⁴:

- a) a link to a website containing a Nail Care Guide;
- b) a mind map on nail care;
- c) a forum to find a working partner;
- d) a list of links to websites on different nail care topics of interest;
- e) a wiki for pair work final registration;
- f) four wikis for each pair of students to write their presentation;
- g) an assignment for students to submit the individual draft of the oral presentation to be held in class;
- h) a glossary on nail care;
- i) a crosswords on the glossary words/expressions;
- j) four choice-activities and a questionnaire.

The course followed the three phases that compose the ‘task cycle’ suggested by Willis (1996), with various opportunities for attention to form and a ‘report’ for performance assessment and awareness rising. First, students had to select useful nail care-related words or phrases from their readings on the topic. By having to authenticate and choose a particular aspect of nail care to work on, they had to reactivate the lexis they had just worked on. This is one of the options Willis suggests for attention to form in the pre-task, the first phase of her ‘task cycle’. The task, the second phase, consisted of writing a presentation on the topic chosen by recalling information collected to that point. The glossary and the crosswords, which students had to focus on after the task itself, enabled learners to again focus on language and fulfil Willis’s third phase of her ‘task cycle’, language focus. They performed “...consciousness-raising and practice activities directed at specific linguistic features that occurred in the input of the task” (Willis, 1996: p. 33). Finally, the individual questions and the questionnaire on the course fulfil the end of the task phase, the second phase, with a report “...where the learners comment on their performance of the task” (Willis, 1996: p. 33), albeit in a different order to the one proposed by Willis.

To gather data for my study, I decided to create two questionnaires, one for the learners and another one for the teacher, to assess their experience. Activities h) to j) were implemented by the course teacher after I had designed the questionnaire succeeding the course; hence, they do not appear in the course layout presented in Figure 6.1. The learner questionnaire was structured as follows (see Appendix B):

(1) Personal preferences and usability

- a) Enjoyment of working with e-learning materials and activities in the classroom

³⁴ See description of Moodle activities in chapter 3.2.

- b) User-friendliness and ease to handle of the overall Moodle course as well as of every activity in separate (link, mind map, forum, wiki and assignment)
- c) Problems encountered
- d) Clarity of instructions and problems faced
- e) Integration of e-learning materials and activities in the lesson

(2) Learning

- a) Interest and motivation concerning the overall course as well as every activity in separate
- b) Their relevance for learning
- c) Enjoyment of individual and collaborative e-learning activities
- d) Impact on English
- e) Impact on language skills/areas (writing, speaking, listening, reading, grammar and vocabulary)

(3) The role of the teacher, learning awareness and content

- a) Need and availability of teacher support
- b) Autonomy experienced
- c) Learning beyond English (history, geography, etc.)

(4) Level of difficulty, time investment and general assessment

- a) Level of difficulty of the materials and activities
- b) Time invested in relation to learning outcomes
- c) Impact on learning in comparison to standard lessons.

The teacher questionnaire (see Appendix C) followed the same structure and questions, except that it focused on the teacher's experience and on her perception of the impact of the course on the students. In addition, it contained more suitable terminological expressions, such as CLIL instead of "learning about other things...", which had been meant to be clear for students. The teacher questionnaire also included a clear question concerning the development of the learners' learning awareness, language learning awareness and self-study abilities. Moreover, it questioned the teacher about her intention to use the same materials and activities in the future as well as about her impression on her particular need for (further) teacher training.

The questions represented a mixture of Likert-scale questions (1 representing very negative and 5 very positive impressions), binary questions (yes-no), open-ended questions and comments. Only four students answered the learner questionnaire.

In the following I shall present some conclusions drawn from the analysis of the students' performance data on Moodle, their answers to the post-course questionnaire as well as informal e-mail contact with the teacher and her answers to the post-course questionnaire. Only answers and comments considered relevant and pertinent for the present study were taken into account in these considerations. This evaluation provided insightful conclusions that guided the setting up of Case Study 1.

An analysis of Figure 6.2 shows the students (S) taking part in the *English for Beauticians – Nail Care* course who answered the questionnaire found the e-learning activities (1=*not at all* to

5=*very much*) interesting and motivating (3,8). In descendent order, they also found them relevant (3,4), learning-conducive (3,2) and user-friendly/easy to handle (2,9). The average rating of these characteristics was 3,3, which is rather positive. The highest rating went to interest and motivation (3,8) and the lowest one to user-friendliness and ease to handle (2,9). This is probably linked with the fact that the students were in contact with such materials and activities for the first time and their weekly classroom hours allowed for little time to engage in getting to know practicalities about them. Yet, all these ratings were positive.

E-learning materials and activities (student and teacher perception – S/T)	Interesting and motivating		User-friendly and easy to handle		Relevant		Learning-conducive		Mean Value	
	S	T	S	T	S	T	S	T	S	T
Overall Moodle course	3,5	5	2,8	5	3,3	5	3,0	4	3,2	4,8
Link	3,5	2	3,0	5	3,3	4	3,0	2	3,2	3,3
Mind map	3,8	3	2,8	3	3,5	3	3,0	2	3,3	2,8
Forum	3,8	4	2,3	4	3,5	5	3,0	2	3,2	3,8
Wiki	4,3	5	3,5	5	3,5	5	3,5	4	3,7	4,8
Assignment	3,8	4	3,0	5	3,5	5	3,5	3	3,5	3,3
Mean value	3,8	3,8	2,9	4,5	3,4	4,5	3,2	2,8	3,3	3,9

Figure 6.2 Evaluation of e-learning in the *Nail Care* Course

The wiki activity achieved the highest average rating (3,7), not to say that it attained the highest rating in all characteristics, even if together with another activity at times. It is important to notice that the learning-conduciveness of the wiki activity was assessed with 3,5. Stephanie claimed that “to work in group allows to correct herself mutually and to explain the error which he has had there”. This was also their teacher’s perception (see T in Figure 6.2): the wiki was the only e-learning activity/material rated with a 5 by the course teacher when assessing motivation. In general, the teacher’s average assessment of her students’ perception was higher than the students’ perception itself, but their average rating of interest and motivation coincides and their preference for the wiki activity as well.

As for the forum, the teacher’s average rating was 3,8, the highest rating after the wiki, but the students’ rating was 3,2, which was not very positive if compared with that of other activities. In fact, one of the students explained, “[it]...al[l]ows to progress in English”; conversely, it was also said that too many posts led to lack of transparency, in particular when they were not structured into discussion topics. A student explained that this was due to the circumstance that forums are mostly two-dimensional. Some others said forums did not allow for idea development and that no more posting took place for fear of idea repetition. What is more, the forum was the collaborative activity students believed demanded more teacher support. It must be added, however, that the students had to use a forum of the type Erpenbeck and Sauter call ‘*Cafeteria*’ (see Footnote 20, p. 60), in which they informally discussed what topic they would like to write about. In fact, despite the negative aspects presented, students found this less academic use of the

forum was a good way to improve their English skills. After all, dealing with organisational issues is also a part of language learning.

In the students' comments, the mind map was regarded as not having produced any learning outcomes and the questionnaire rating was 3,3. This was also the opinion of the course teacher, who stated, "all activities are relevant, but some need to be done in class. i believe that the mindmap should have been filled out in class, as an initial brainstorming, launching them on the subject". She assessed this activity with a 2,8.

The glossary was not assessed in the questionnaire because, as said before, the course teacher introduced it when the questionnaire had already been designed. Fortunately, the students only answered the questionnaire after doing the glossary activity, so they took the initiative to comment on it. In fact, it was positively assessed, mainly because of the possibility of endless addition of words. Their teacher also agreed that the glossary strongly contributed and could further contribute to improve the learners' vocabulary: "i think they liked the fact that they could immediately see the others' added words...so they quickly had a pool of vocabulary. i have just discovered the "games" activity, which i believe is great, so i added a crosswords enabling them to check their vocabulary yesterday".

All the respondents found blended language learning helped the students learn faster than conventional lessons, even if they often referred to how time-consuming such a course is. Students averagely rated the integration of the materials and activities into their lesson with a 3.8 (1=*not at all* to 5=*very well integrated*) and their teacher opted for a 5. What is more, in the comment field, one of the students stated that she thought she had evolved, suggesting that the use of an integrated task-based approach is more conducive to learning. As for learning outcomes in particular, a student stated she improved "the vocabulary and my written English" (Celine). Informal contact with the course teacher suggested she also considered such an environment enhanced learners' opportunities to produce language and highlighted vocabulary and written work in this regard. In the questionnaire, she also rated reading high (see T in Figure 6.3). Curiously, the language areas assessed with the highest ratings by the students as far as improvement (1=*not at all* to 5=*a lot*) is concerned were vocabulary and speaking (see S in Figure 6.3). From this, it can be drawn that, although the online part of the course contained no speaking section, the pre-task activities had a direct impact on their spoken performance in their final task, the oral presentation of an aspect of nail care. This suggests e-learning may have more potential regarding the enhancement of speaking skills than the teachers who took part in the survey about the use of ICT educational e-learning equipment and applications in second language classes discussed in chapter 5 supposed. The course teacher also made a comment with this regard, regretting the fact "...that the course did not offer any oral work, but that [is] what "blended" is all about, to my mind. It enabled them to be way more efficient when it came to doing their oral presentation. So yes, e-learning is an excellent tool to enhance the learner's opportunities, but it cannot replace the class!". This shows the course teacher evaluated speaking with a 1 because she assessed e-learning in isolation, without taking the impact of e-learning on classroom activities into account.

The circumstance that students might have realised this impact of pre-task activities on their oral presentation should not be disregarded because it shows awareness of their learning process. In fact, their teacher rated the effect of e-learning on the students' language learning awareness with a 4. She claimed, "...the main positive aspect is that the students have been able to work on their own [self-study ability], thus increasing their language learning awareness without even knowing so... i am sure this would become more blatant as we go on working with the platform". Actually, students claimed to have felt more autonomous when using e-learning materials and activities and to have enjoyed it. Stephanie said this was because "i do more attention my errors". This also suggests the activities leading to the final task, with a communicative focus, also demanded attention to form, thus prompting the students to recognise the importance of a communicative approach with a focus on form, which they did.

Language areas (student and teacher perception – S/T)	S	T
Writing	3,8	4
Speaking	4,0	1
Listening	3,0	1
Reading	3,8	4
Grammar	3,0	2
Vocabulary	4,0	5

Figure 6.3 Impact of the *Nail Care* Course on different language areas

Students stated they preferred individual (4,0) to collaborative activities (3,25) (1=*not at all* to 5=*very much*), but they rated collaborative activities very high (see Figure 6.2). In fact, although they initially deemed individual work an essential condition for successful performance, the course participants seemed to be overwhelmed with the potential of the online collaborative activities even if not always aware of it. This means that, in this regard, their requirements of success were not in line with their performance. Students claimed individual activities allowed changes and a better understanding of errors. They also stated that, in collaborative activities, there was always a person who worked more. Finally, they said that working collaboratively was harmed by the difficulty to be online at the same time. However, when indicating their preferences, students mainly pointed out the forum and the wiki: "Gusta la rubrica 'forum', 'wiki' y 'mindmap' porque es util para cambiar mas informaciones y el vocabulario del tema" (Florine); "i did like the forum, the wiki and the assignment. I did dislike the link because sometimes it 's not interesting and very difficult to understand when person is bad in english" (Letitia). Their teacher assessed the potential of e-learning collaborative activities with a 5 and individual activities with a 3 only.

Several aspects must be considered here. The students who took part in the *Nail Care* course were motivated by the materials and activities proposed because they were relevant for their learning process. This seems to be related to the authenticity of the topic and materials used,

which were chosen according to the students' field of study, Beauty Therapy. The authenticity of the type of activities chosen, in particular the written and spoken presentations in English, which they may well need in their professional life, as they were probably able to sense at this age, seems to also have played a role in their perception. Students claimed the activities were well integrated into their lesson as well, and agreed to the assumption that a blended learning setting was more conducive to learning than a conventional classroom context. In fact, the course participants were able to see the impact of their online learning on their face-to-face spoken interaction/production. Moreover, the language areas students claimed to have developed more are very indicative of the efficiency of a task-based approach. Indeed, they conceded that the reading and, above all, the contextualised lexical and writing pre-activities helped prepare their final communicative task. What is more, students acknowledged the relevance and impact on learning of collaborative over individual activities, in particular with regard to wikis, which they rated as the user-friendliest, the most interesting and the most motivating as well as the most learning-conducive collaborative activity (in this case, together with the assignment to submit a draft of the oral presentation) amongst the ones they were exposed to. Most interesting was the fact that at least one student saw the potential of wikis for peer review and for reflection on language construction and learning. The students', and their teacher's, assessment of the collaborative activities also provided some hints concerning aspects to be further explored, such as the need to improve the mind map and glossary activities, namely by adding verification through a follow-up activity. The configuration of forum activities also requires adjustment. The fact that students felt and enjoyed autonomy, also because, as Stephanie suggested, they acknowledged its influence on their attention to form in the process of collaborative output production, was a key conclusion as well. It seems that the possibility to simultaneously be autonomous and collaborate enabled the students to direct their learning according to their natural learning preferences, that is, to focus on form even when developing communication skills. In reality, according to Swain's empirical studies, explored in chapter 2.5, peer collaboration *pushes output* and thus *linguaging*, making learners aware of their linguistic problems and therefore learn while producing output and communicating. Notwithstanding, no studies have investigated the applicability of these theories to an e-learning scenario, let alone to the use of wikis in particular, which these beauticians-to-be see as offering immense potential.

6.2 Objectives and approach

The conclusions drawn from the *Nail Care* course raised some possibilities in demand of confirmation. On the one hand, these possibilities concerned the conditions and strategies learners deem essential for language learning to occur; on the other hand, the learning outcomes they aim at. Learners aim at learning outcomes they authenticate. Bearing in mind a constructivist view of learning that considers learners construct their own learning, it was essential to confirm whether learners saw the pedagogical purpose of the framework suggested in chapters 2 and 3. Such a view claims learners shall only succeed in learning if the conditions and strategies they are exposed to suit their needs and purposes.

It was also paramount to investigate the applicability of the output hypothesis to an e-learning scenario and confirm the conclusions of most recent research, in particular with regard to wikis (chapters 3 and 4).

Furthermore, it was necessary to understand whether learners perceived the current system, in particular the present state of affairs, which the survey on the use of educational e-learning equipment and applications in second language learning classes across Europe gave insight into (chapter 5), to provide the ideal conditions to achieve the learning outcomes required by their same needs and purposes.

As introduced in chapter 4.3, research built on three case studies. Each case study developed from the conclusions of the preceding case study, which enabled hypotheses to be confirmed as well as excluded. Therefore, the learning context under scrutiny in each case study was successively narrowed down towards more and more clear-cut objectives. Case Study 1 was consequently guided by the following primary research questions, which were central and basic to the comprehensive investigation outlined to this point in this thesis:

1. What do learners consider to be the conditions and strategies for language learning?
2. What do learners regard as their learning outcomes?

To find the answers to these fundamental questions, two courses were designed and implemented which were mainly guided by the hypotheses prompted by the course presented in the previous chapter, *Nail Care*: the e-learning activities presented are motivating because they are authenticated by the learners; a blended learning setting is more learning-conducive than a conventional one; a task-based approach to e-learning facilitates communicative tasks; collaborative activities are more relevant and learning-conducive than individual ones; wikis and wiki activities are the user-friendliest, the most interesting, motivating and learning-conducive amongst the ones presented, and offer great potential for peer review and language construction in particular; the mind map, the glossary and the forum also offer potential but activities require adjustment; the e-learning collaborative activities presented generate autonomy and trigger attention to form during output production; students are able to simultaneously collaborate and be autonomous, and to focus on form while communicating.

The courses were entitled *Binge Drinking* and *European Elections 2009*, according to the topics they addressed. They were designed and implemented by me in Germany as further pilot courses of the Wide Minds workpackage 5 project. The participants were German university students who had studied English at the University of Tübingen in Germany for at least a semester and had accepted my e-mail invitation to enrol on the courses. The e-mail explained that students would have the chance to improve their English and ICT skills through work on the Moodle platform, which were the reasons that led students to volunteer for the pilot courses. They were informed that the data of this course would be used for an empirical study. Their level of English was quite homogeneous but higher than that of the French students; it varied from B2 to C1 (CEFR). This enabled me to test the activities and tools at a different proficiency level.

There were eight students participating in the *Binge Drinking* course. The group was aged 19 to 24 and composed of two males and six females. Only half the students had already spent some time in an English-speaking country. This course took place from March to May 2009.

There were four participants aged 19 to 22 enrolling in the *European Elections 2009* course, one male and three females. Three of these students had already participated in the *Binge Drinking* course and the fourth had volunteered to but had not been able to attend it. The *European Elections 2009* course took place from May to June 2009 and was an attempt to explore some Moodle activities which had not been used in the *Binge Drinking* course or had been used but demanded further observation.

The research methodology used was based on a qualitative approach. Research within Case Study 1 built upon the following types of data:

- a) the answers to the pre-course questionnaire (Appendix D);
- b) the comments in the journals on Moodle;
- c) the processes and products of the wiki, forum, Skype, chat, book, glossary and mind map activities;
- d) the answers to the post-course semi-structured interview (Appendix E);
- e) data from participant observation throughout the course (course performance, informal contact per e-mail or in the course news forum, activity guidance in the forums, journals, etc.) and throughout the interviews (free observation of spontaneous speech).

The research questions drove the data analysis.

Both courses took place in an e-learning context with no face-to-face contact other than that of a first meeting and a post-course interview. As the courses were not part of the University English course programmes the students were attending and they were sitting at different homes, in some cases far away from each other, e-learning seemed appropriate. This setting enabled me to compare e-learning to blended learning. A first face-to-face meeting was held, which had two purposes:

- a) to concretely explain the background, nature and goals of the empirical study to the students;
- b) to train them on the use of SACODEYL, ELISA, selected Telos learning packages and the main Moodle activities and features – this was achieved through access to the WiMi Moodle platform and demonstration modules in WiMi Pilot Course Germany 1³⁵ they had previously been enrolled on.

The attendees showed enthusiasm about e-learning as well as about all the materials and tools they were introduced to. They were incited to ask any question they might have and then asked to answer a simple pre-course questionnaire focused on their personal profile and learning background. This questionnaire aimed to provide further information for the course design since “...it is of paramount importance to form an image of one’s learners (i.e., through the use of questionnaires or observation) before engaging in the course design in order to secure ‘learner fit’...” (Neumeier, 2005: pp. 167-168). The three students who did not attend the meeting answered the same questionnaire per e-mail. This pre-course questionnaire focused on the following data (see Appendix D):

³⁵ See the Demo Modules at <http://www.wideminds.eu/moodle/course/view.php?id=48> [Retrieved December 5, 2014].

- (1) Personal profile: name, e-mail, age, nationality, phone number, gender, mother tongue, comments;
- (2) Learning profile: degree and semester enrolled on, previous English learning experiences (time and place), perceived level of English proficiency according to the CEFR, view on e-learning, preferences concerning topics and language skills to work on, comments.

The students' view on e-learning was provided in the shape of a written comment which should also shed light on their English proficiency.

The answers provided by the students in this questionnaire offered insight not only into the participants' personal profile but also into their learning profile, presented above. The second part of the questionnaire, which was about the students' learning profile, helped me design the course to be implemented especially with regard to the skills they hoped to see developed and the topics they would more easily authenticate.

When asked to point out the language skills they would like to work on, all respondents referred to writing, mostly in the first place and with emphasis on academic writing, and five of them mentioned speaking. Grammar, vocabulary and reading were only mentioned once. This indicated that the students' interest was in line with mine, as their core needs seemed to concern production and interaction and not comprehension skills. This I regarded as an asset for my research on output processing. During the meeting it was also noticeable that most students were not acquainted with the term *binge drinking*, suggested in the pre-course questionnaire as one of the examples of topics that could be addressed, even though some of them might have been confronted with the implications of this issue. It was also noticeable that this topic would be easily authenticated by them, as corroborated by one of the students after the course had started: "I was very excited to finally be able to work on the binge drinking issue, since my stay in London last weekend showed my [me] much of its ugly dimensions" (Daniel T.). The course thus focused upon writing an argumentative essay on binge drinking because most of the students referred to academic writing as a skill they would like to develop. As for the second course, the European Elections 2009 were approaching and seemed to be a controversial topic, which made them a suitable focus for the course. Also, three learners had specifically pointed out politics as a topic they would like to work on. What is more, the students' study fields could be easily linked to such an option: politics, philosophy, history, and economics, among others. All this data enabled me to outline task-based courses centred on the three considerations deemed essential by Peris (2004): the level of motivation the task may arouse in the learners, the extent to which it shall contribute to achieving the aims of the curriculum followed by the students, the level of difficulty it may represent to them (see chapter 2.6).

The information collected via the first meeting and the pre-course questionnaire indicated *Binge Drinking* should be aimed at developing the learners' skills to discuss several dimensions of binge drinking.

*Binge Drinking*³⁶ was a task-based course as well. I decided the task phase (see Willis, 1996: p. 33) should consist of the collaborative writing of an argumentative essay on one of these questions: *Is binge drinking a social problem? Do early closing hours lead to binge drinking? Is binge drinking a problem in Germany? Is binge drinking a generation problem?* It was essential to enable students to discuss form and content while writing the argumentative paper and hence regularly meta-assess learning (see Peris, 2004) through negotiation of meaning (see Ellis, 2003: p. 100), i.e., to enable students to achieve consensus concerning structure, lexis, style, etc. during the writing process. This should also provide insight into whether offering them the possibility to *language* replaced the need for face-to-face meetings. The task phase ended with students commenting on their performance of the task (see Willis, 1996: p. 33; Peris, 2004).

In order to successfully fulfil the task, the course participants were asked to engage in a pre-task phase. It was important to understand the concept *binge drinking* both in origin and in a real-life context, to be able to discuss the topic openly and in an informal way, to consolidate and extend vocabulary on the subject, to be aware of how to structure an argumentative essay and fill it in with content. There was space for attention to form in this phase as well.

The task cycle closed with collaborative speaking activities (see Ellis, 2003: p. 100) and opportunities for reflection on the whole learning process as well as the product (see Peris, 2004).

This workplan (see details on the next page), with a clearly defined communicative outcome, was intended to fulfil a focus on both meaning and form, involve real-world processes of language use and all the four language skills, as well as engage students in cognitive processes (see Ellis, 2003: p.2).

For a pedagogic integration of the various activities, Moodle seemed to be a suitable option, also because it offered a variety of collaborative activities which students from the *English for Beauticians – Nail Care* course had considered motivating and learning-conducive, and two tools at least, the forum and the journal, which permitted reflection.

Binge Drinking (Figure 6.4 and Figure 6.5), the first course, started with viewing-comprehension exercises followed by language focus on modification and a self-discovery research exercise on the topic *binge drinking*. This was achieved through a self-study Telos learning module based on a video interview on binge drinking to an English pupil.

Students had then to engage in a written topic discussion to expose their own view on binge drinking as well as present and comment on articles they had read on the matter when doing the first activity. A Moodle forum with different threads appeared as the best solution for this activity.

A further viewing exercise followed which had a lexical focus on ‘drinking’. In order to accomplish this, students were invited to engage in a SACODEYL corpus-based activity via a link which provided them with one more video interview on the topic and with some concordance lines for ‘drinking’ for them to see the context the word usually appears in.

³⁶ See <http://www.wideminds.eu/moodle/course/view.php?id=48> [Retrieved December 5, 2014].

Learners were then exposed to further vocabulary focus for consolidation of the words and expressions previously learnt. To achieve this purpose, a Moodle mind map was created. Students had to collaboratively collect all the vocabulary concerning binge drinking they had learnt to that point.

The course task consisted of a written collaborative (pair) assignment. Students had to write an argumentative essay on one of the topics listed above (see p. 120), which explored different binge-drinking-related issues. For this, students had to sign up for one of the topics in a wiki (each topic should be chosen by 2 students for a writing pair to emerge), they had to access a link to a website on how to write an argumentative paper, enter their own wiki (one per pair) to structure it as on the website and then write it. Finally, students were asked to upload the final version of it by means of a Moodle assignment activity which enabled me to correct, comment and assess their work. Since students should be able to discuss the writing process all along, another forum was created for the purpose. As suggested in Arnold, Ducate and Kost (2009), students were required to use computer-mediated exchanges (e.g. forum and notes at the bottom of their wiki) to discuss organisational, meaning and formal aspects.

Individual written reflection on pair writing followed. This was facilitated by a Moodle journal and triggered by the following introduction: “In this journal you will be able to freely reflect on your new experience: using a wiki to write a text collaboratively”.

Learners were then invited to take part in a spoken discussion of a binge-drinking-related topic assigned to each pair by the teacher, for students to work on a topic that differed from the focus of their essay. Skype emerged as the perfect tool for this activity. Students had to use a forum activity to find a suitable day and time for their session and then access another Moodle assignment activity to upload their Skype session sound files with any comments they wanted to add. They recorded these files by plugging in a free version of the Pamela Recorder. This free software device records a call into an mp3-format under permission. As it only allowed 15-minute-long recordings, students had to reinitiate it every 15 minutes. Again, I was able to comment and mark their work online.

Finally, learners were asked to reflect on the speaking activity as well as on the overall course writtenly. This reflection was again facilitated by a Moodle journal created for this purpose. The journal offered the following trigger: “How did you enjoy your Skype session? To what extent do you think the activities you had done previously helped you improved your speaking performance?”.

Binge Drinking



When we met, most of you did not seem to know what 'binge drinking' was. Let's see what you can find out about it!

WEEK 1

Step 1: Working with a learning module

Click on the following link and follow the instructions of the learning module.

 [Learning module – Beatrice on Binge Drinking](#)

Step 2: Discussing 'binge drinking'

Now that you already know what binge drinking is, what do you think about it?

Use the information you found when going through the last step of the learning module to discuss binge drinking with your peers. Click on the following [forum](#) and participate in the various discussion topics. You can also add a discussion topic yourself!

 [Forum – Binge Drinking](#)

Step 3: Watching a video and collecting vocabulary

You will be watching a video clip and having a look at binge drinking-related vocabulary. Follow the instructions below.

Instructions:

First Part

1. Click here to open [Sacodeyl search tool](#):

 [Sacodeyl Search Tool](#)

2. Select "EnglishCorpus" and click on "Go!"

3. Select "Co-Occurrence".

4. Type 'binge drinking' in the box called "Search words" and click on "Search!" (orange button).

5. Click on the second text fragment and then on "Go to section" in the upper right corner.

6. Click on "View clip" and listen to Olivia's opinion on smoking and drinking. You can choose whether to follow the transcript or not.

Second part

1. Now select "Word Search" and type 'drinking' in the box "Word 1".

2. Change the "Context Length" to 15 and click on "Search!".

3. Have a look at the words that normally come up with 'drinking'. You will need them for the next step.

Third part

Click on the following mindmap and collect all the vocabulary related to 'drinking' you have learned in this course so far. Don't forget to use the saving icon before you leave the mindmap. You can use the "insert" key on your keyboard to add new branches.


 [Mindmap – Drinking](#)

Figure 6.4 Binge Drinking Course (week 1) on Moodle (CS1)


WEEK 2

Step 4: Writing an argumentative essay

You will now be writing an argumentative essay on binge drinking. Click on the following wiki and choose a topic you would like to write about. You will be working in pairs, so each topic can only be chosen by two students.





 [Wiki – Choosing your topic](#)

You normally divide an argumentative essay into 3 main parts: introduction with thesis statement, body paragraphs with specific arguments and conclusion. The following link might help you structure your argumentative essay better.

 [Introductions, Body Paragraphs, and Conclusions for Argument Papers](#)

Now that you know who you are working with and how to structure your essay, look for your wiki out of the following ones and start working. You can use the [forum](#) below to decide who is writing what part of the paper, exchanges ideas or discuss the form, the content or the style of your paper with your partner.


 [Forum – discussing the argumentative essay](#)

-  [Wiki 1 – Is binge drinking a social problem?](#)
-  [Wiki 2 – Do early closing hours lead to binge drinking?](#)
-  [Wiki 3 – Is binge drinking a problem in Germany?](#)
-  [Wiki 4 – Is binge drinking a generation problem?](#)

During the whole week you can use the following journal to reflect on this collaborative activity. What does it mean to write something together? Does it work? What problems are you facing? What advantages do you see? Express yourself freely!

 [Journal – Reflecting about writing in pairs](#)

Upload your essay for comments and grade by clicking on the following assignment as soon as you have finished it.

 [Assignment – Uploading your final essay](#)

WEEK 3


Step 5: Speaking about binge drinking

It's time for speaking now! Go through all the instructions for this week before you start working.

You will be using Skype to discuss a topic with a partner you have been assigned. Have a look at the table below and see what topic you will be talking about and with whom.

Is binge drinking a social problem?	Daniel Schleich and Tanja Matheis
Do early closing hours lead to binge drinking?	Daniel Tuttenuj and Dorothee Rapp
Is binge drinking a problem in Germany?	Katharina Licht and Svenja Menke
Is binge drinking a generation problem?	Mariella Stihler and Stephanie Stokker

Use the [forum](#) below to decide when you will be having your Skype session.

 [Forum – When will you be having our skype session?](#)

If you still don't have Skype, make sure you install it. Tell your partner your Skype ID and add him/her to your contact list. You will be recording your Skype call and uploading it here later. To install a call recorder, please follow the next steps:

1. Turn Skype on.
2. Go to "Tools" and click on "Do More". Click on Pamela Call Recorder and execute it. Any time you make a call, Skype will ask you if you want to record it and the person you are talking to will also be asked for permission. When you finish your call, you will have a sound file you can use as you want.

NOTE: For the ones who have downloaded Skype very recently, Pamela Call Recorder is not available for free anymore. Hopefully your partner has access to it and s/he can record the call. If not, contact your teacher for another programme. Also, this free version only records for 15 minutes. In case you talk longer, you just have to end the recording and start it again. At the end you will have several sound files.

It might be useful for you to review vocabulary and ideas before having your skype session. Have a look at your classmates' wikis and forums. The main point of your call is to discuss the topic you were assigned but you can also use it to get to know each other better. Record the whole call.

After having your Skype session, use the following link to upload your sound file(s).

 [Assignment – Uploading your skype session](#)

Step 6: Wrapping up your course

Just before you finish this course, use the following journal to reflect on its impact on your learning.

 [Journal – Reflecting about the speaking activity](#)

Figure 6.5 *Binge Drinking Course (weeks 2 and 3) on Moodle (CS1)*

In short and practical terms the Moodle course was structured as follows:

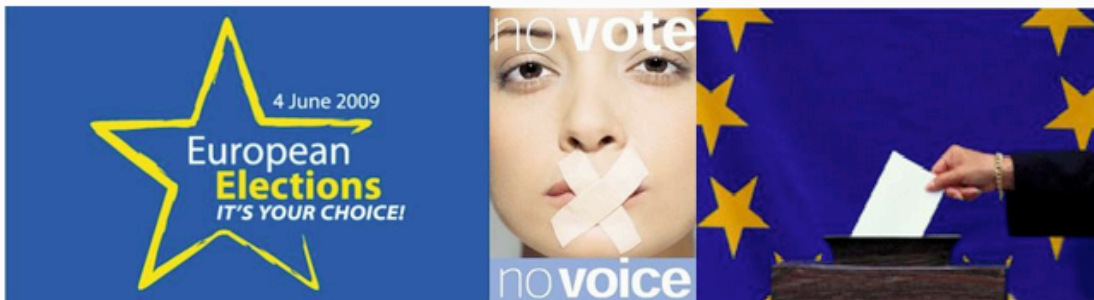
- a) a link to the learning module;
- b) a forum to discuss the topic *binge drinking*;
- c) a link to SACODEYL for a corpus-based activity;
- d) a mind map to collect *drinking*-related vocabulary;
- e) a wiki to sign up for a writing topic;
- f) a link to the website on how to structure an argumentative essay;
- g) a forum to discuss the writing process;
- h) four wikis for each pair of students to write their argumentative essay;
- i) a journal to reflect on the collaborative writing activity;
- j) an assignment to upload the essay final version;
- k) a forum to arrange to meet for the Skype session;
- l) an assignment to upload the recording(s) of the Skype session;
- m) a journal to reflect on the Skype speaking activity.

The second course, *European Elections 2009*³⁷, also a task-based course, aimed at developing the learners' skills to discuss issues raised by the European elections 2009. The task consisted of summing up a video on the topic, which focused on the issue of 'democratic deficit' and hence debated several other aspects, such as the need to learn languages to raise one's awareness of the elections process. To accomplish the task, the course participants were requested to take part in a lexis-centred pre-task phase. Post-task written activities followed which allowed students to freely discuss the topic again, this time in a more informal way they should authenticate, as well as to expose their views on the topic in a formal and structured way. Both post-task activities should help learners assess their learning of the topic. For more introspective data to be collected and for students to comprehensibly reflect on the task-based process they were engaging in, all the activities, pre and post, and the course as a whole were an object of reflection. For reasons pointed out above with regard to the *Binge Drinking* course, the *European Elections 2009* course was also e-learning-based only. Again, the course was Moodle-based, first because this platform enabled students to have all activities pedagogically integrated and second because it enabled me to test some further Moodle activities.

The *European Elections 2009* course (Figure 6.6 Figure 6.7) started with self-reflection practice to assess every activity of the course as well as the course as a whole. This was facilitated by a Moodle journal, which could be updated by the students after each activity and enabled teacher feedback to stimulate further reflection. Students were asked to comment on aspects such as motivation, collaboration, learning outcomes and learning awareness.

³⁷ See <http://www.wideminds.eu/moodle/course/view.php?id=48> and http://marianaesteves.wikispaces.com/Piloting+Germany+1_2 [Retrieved December 5, 2014].

European Elections 2009



Sources: euractiv.com, denbighshire.gov.uk and mayorwatch.co.uk


The European Elections are approaching. What do you know so far? Are you able to speak about it in English?

IMPORTANT NOTE: Use the following journal to write about every activity of this course throughout the whole process.


 Journal – Reflecting about the activities of the course

WEEK 1: May 28th – June 3rd

Step 1: Listening and vocabulary

Do you like watching videos?  Watch the video below and use the glossary to collect all the **election**-related vocabulary you can find. You can also watch any other videos or read any other articles you think are related to the topic in order to enrich it. Feel free to add any words that you already know.



 Glossary – Elections

You can now test your knowledge of the new vocabulary by playing the hangman. It will be based on the entries you and your classmates added to the glossary. You can come back to this activity any time. Have fun!

 Hangman – Elections

Figure 6.6 *European Elections 2009 Course (first part) on Moodle (CS1)*

WEEK 2: June 3rd – June 10th

Step 2: Writing a summary

How do you like wikis? 🤖 You will now be writing a summary of the video you have watched. Click on the following link, log in and look for the page with your name under 'Navigation'. You will immediately see whom you will be working with.

NOTE: Use 'Seite' to write your text, 'Diskussion' to talk about the changes (form, content or style) and 'Verlauf' to see your partner's changes. You must use 'Diskussion' or 'a note about this edit for the page history log' (when you edit text under 'edit this page') to document all the changes you make (either to your text or to your partner's).

 [Wiki – Writing a summary](#)

Step 3: Chatting about the elections

Everyone likes chatting... 😊 Use the following chat to discuss about the European elections:

- What do they actually mean for Europe?
- Who do you think will win the elections?

Use the [forum](#) below to decide on another date that suits you all. You can also have various sessions and interact in a group of three or four or even pairs, as the chat allows you to see past sessions.

 [Forum – Deciding when to chat](#)

 [Chat – Discussing the European elections](#)

Figure 6.7 *European Elections 2009* Course (second part) on Moodle (CS1)

Learners were then asked to engage in a viewing activity on the topic *elections*, with further optional viewing and reading, for lexical consolidation and extension on the matter. For this purpose, I uploaded to the Moodle platform a video on the European elections 2009 building on issues such as 'democratic deficit'. I then created a Moodle glossary for students to collect all the election-related vocabulary they could identify in the video and for which they should write a definition. Following the positive assessment of the glossary/word search activity in the *Nail Care* course, I decided to introduce a Moodle Hangman-game based on the glossary entries the students had produced in the *European Elections 2009* course and which they could access repeated times, in order to help students reactivate and assess lexical knowledge.

The course task consisted of a written collaborative (pair) assignment. In pairs determined by the teacher (so they would differ from groups in the *Binge Drinking* course), students had to write a summary of the video they had previously watched. They were given the incentive and opportunity for discussion. For reasons particularly connected with handiness, a link to Wikispaces was created on Moodle. This had to do with the fact that the Moodle versions used in the course (Versions 1.8.1 to 1.8.11) did not offer the possibility of discussion. For the *Binge Drinking* course, the Moodle wiki had been used in association with a Moodle forum, but students had claimed it was not practical to constantly switch between two different Moodle activities and therefore pages. Such a measure had a confusing effect and resulted in limited negotiation. In addition, the tracking function of the Moodle wiki was rather poor, since the whole paragraph would be marked green or red when words had been added or deleted respectively, and users had to identify changes themselves. Consequently, I looked into Mediawiki, Tikiwiki and Wikispaces. Mediawiki, the platform used for Wikipedia, was very user-friendly and offered a discussion function but it did not enable the participants to swiftly see the author of a comment. Tikiwiki was not very user-friendly and only the course administrator

was able to leave comments. Wikispaces, on the other hand, allowed students to easily (by means of tabs) switch between the editing page, the discussion page (on which comments were organised into discussion topics with information concerning the subject, the author, replies, views and the last message), the history page (which selectively marked added text green and deleted text red and enabled the user to see wikitext and visual changes), and finally a monitoring page (which enabled users to monitor specific pages by e-mail or using feeds). The fact that Wikispaces integrated edition and discussion functions was decisive when choosing the most suitable wiki for the *European Elections 2009* course. Hence, for this course I used Wikispaces. Students were invited to use the discussion tab to talk about changes (form, content or style) and the history tab to see their partner's changes. They were told they had to use the discussion tab or 'a note about this edit for the page history log' when they edited text under 'edit this page' to document all the changes they made, either to their text or to their partner's.

After the completion of this task, students were asked to engage in an informal discussion about the European elections, in particular about what students thought the elections meant for Europe and whom they believed would win them. This activity should make the students able to discuss a current issue unreservedly by resorting to what they had learnt so far. A Moodle chat associated to a forum to decide when to meet up for the chat session seemed to be a good option for this activity.

A second collaborative writing assignment was implemented as a classroom activity. In a group of four, students had to formally write about the European elections 2009 following a previously defined framework. The Moodle book activity seemed to suit this purpose because it enabled students to feel they were contributing to the writing of a book and required them to be more formal due to its layout and the chapters preset by the teacher. These were the chapters the book was divided into: *1 Introduction*, *2 The importance of the European Elections 2009 for the future of Europe*, *3 The importance of the European Elections 2009 for the world*, *4 Polemic Aspects of the European Elections 2009*, *5 Winners and Losers of the European Elections 2009* and *6 Conclusion*.

This is a clear overview of the Moodle course layout:

- a) a journal to reflect on the course activities;
- b) an embedded video about the European elections;
- c) a glossary to collect *elections*-related words or expressions;
- d) a hangman activity to test vocabulary acquisition;
- e) a link to Wikispaces to write the summary of the video;
- f) a forum to arrange to meet for a chat session;
- g) a chat to discuss about the European elections.

The students' journals, the post-course interviews and participant observation provided very rich introspective data about the participants' perceptions. With regard to the *Binge Drinking* course there were four students writing in the journal about the wiki writing activity and three in the

journal about the Skype speaking activity. As for the *European Elections 2009* course, all participants wrote in the course journal, although not all of them commented on every activity.

After the *European Elections 2009* course, the students participated in an interview. This post-course interview had a basic script (see Appendix E³⁸) that, as in grounded theory, was adapted throughout its course. Theory was generated by data which naturally developed from the course of events and was then marked and grouped into similar concepts. The interviews were sound-recorded for subsequent analysis. Four students took the interview. The interview was intended to shed light on (1) the students' understanding of conditions for successful learning, in particular concerning the best-practice principles under scrutiny in this PhD thesis, and (2) their perception of the impact on their learning of the activities performed, i.e., whether these fulfilled the principles they considered essential for learning to occur. The first script of the interview asked students to

- (1) define collaboration, name collaborative course activities and justify their choice;
- (2) assess CLIL and its impact on learning motivation;
- (3) explain reasons behind revision of a particular piece of text on the *European Elections 2009* wiki, make a final revision and justify editions; evaluate wiki course activities, especially on the grounds of collaboration, CLIL and learning outcomes;
- (4) reflect on the importance of fluency/correctness according to communicative contexts and models; assess their English proficiency based on their needs and purposes; evaluate the Skype activity, specifically with regard to collaboration, CLIL and learning outcomes; explain passages from the Skype sessions and learning perceived;
- (5) evaluate the *Binge Drinking* forum activity, essentially regarding collaboration, CLIL and learning outcomes; explain reasons behind forum participation (task design, teacher feedback, etc.); assess forum collaborativeness and its impact on learning.

For obvious reasons, this interview placed a stronger focus on collaborative speaking and writing activities, the wiki, the forum and the Skype activities. Pushed-output activities were aimed at providing introspective information concerning learning and language awareness by means of *linguaging* as well as at offering insight regarding learning outcomes.

6.3 Perspectives on e-learning

This chapter offers insight into the course participants' perception of e-learning before, throughout and after the course.

³⁸ I decided to include the original version of the interview script in the appendices. The questions in this appendix were directed at the students *ipsis verbis* whereas the bullet points were intended to provide me with guidance as an interviewer. They consisted of aspects I aimed to explore with the interviewees in this semi-structured interview. Most of them were research/subject-specific terms I did not want to use with the students directly. These aspects should be reformulated for the interviewees' understanding in case they did not spontaneously address them when answering that particular question. Yet, they would be more obvious for me during the interview than any other rephrasing I might have used with the students.

The paragraph the students wrote about their perception of e-learning in their pre-course questionnaire proved quite insightful as concerns the students' view on e-learning before taking part in the course. The course participants believed in the role of e-learning in their learning process. Mariella says, "...it is nowadays almost unthinkable to learn without e-learning." For Dorothée, "e-learning is a modern way to practice foreign languages. Especially English...practice online *will become in the future* an important way to learn something" [my italics]. And Stephanie thinks, "e-learning is necessary in our todays every day life because of the digitalization". It must be said that these students' statements suggest they mostly share the view that e-learning is a far-away object (see my italics before) or at least not fully in use yet: "...I am very excited to participate in e-learning because I have never actually done anything like that. I think in these days it is very important to use different kinds of media for one's studies" (Svenja), "I have hardly done e-learning" (Daniel T.), "I have not had any practice with e-learning yet" (Katharina), "Honestly I don't have any precise idea about what we're going to work on" (Tanja). Their views are in line with Bax's claim that we are still in the phase of Open CALL. Still, the students felt curiosity about the promising potential of e-learning, in particular with regard to e-learning outcomes: "I am very excited to see how this is going to be and in how far we can improve our language" (Svenja).

Students were able to compare e-learning to conventional learning and see its advantages. Some examples are its rapidity, its power to unveil more complex issues, the fact that access can take place any time, the possibility to easily access resources and the option to have instantaneous or, as a minimum, quick feedback: "...it is a good aide for faster learning. It also makes handling of the topics easier" (Daniel T.); "the wide range of media given can help a lot to ease, structure and make understandable complex issues one has to learn" (Mariella); "the biggest advantage to teaching in class is the 24/7 availability. Your teacher can post exercises or texts on the learning platform and you have the choice when to work on them. The possibilities to quickly exchange materials for, e.g. a presentation could make a student's life easier" (Daniel S.); "you can do tasks online, write essays and learn vocabulary. Sometimes it will be corrected automatically or later by someone else" (Dorothée).

Yet, learners tended to see e-learning as a complementary resource ("good aide") that still required face-to-face communication in conventional lessons for collaboration to succeed:

...e-learning is a great opportunity to gather with other fellow students online and exchange opinions on a certain topic...But we should never forget that the in class interaction between teacher and students or between the students itself is more beneficial... (Daniel S.)

How did the students' perception of e-learning evolve throughout the courses? The analysis of the students' comments in their course journals and answers in the interviews as well as participant observation and informal contact with them provides information on this. In his journal of the *European Elections 2009* course, Daniel S. complements his view: "this online project might not be the ultimate solution for a collaborative work. The ideal solution would definitely be working in class. Direct and fast exchange of arguments would be decidedly better". When assessing this particular opinion, it might be important to consider this student's situation. On the one hand, one of his last collaborative experiences in the course had not been very successful with regard to collaboration, as his peer did not collaborate as much as he

expected her to. He found it very difficult to get hold of her and did most of the work himself. On the other hand, his health condition – Daniel S. suffered from leukaemia – confined him to his home for a long period of time. Despite being convenient, e-learning with no face-to-face contact led him to further isolation. This negative experience of trying to contact someone and not being able to, as well as the permanent lack of social contact might be some of the reasons which justify his negative perspective of e-learning in contrast with conventional learning. It should be added that Daniel S. often exchanged e-mails with me to discuss not only technical and language aspects but also emotional issues. Despite all this, it must be said that Tanja also claims that an online class does not offer the chance to really get in touch with people and that this kind of contact is needed for collaboration to function. In the journal of the *Binge Drinking* course in which students should reflect about the (Skype) speaking activity, Tanja acknowledges, “the skype session was an important part in the process of collaborative learning because we were able to communicate with each other, like in a discussion in class”, but also stresses, “...learning on an online portal limits social contacts and lively conversations”. In her journal of the *European Elections 2009* course, she adds,

I feel that an online class doesn't offer the chance to really get in touch with people, which should be part of collaborative learning, too... I'm now thinking of a concept for the collaborative e-learning courses, to give some sort of an overview at the end. Every activity should probably include a skype or chat session as a weekly 'check-up' so that people do not lose the other users' ideas and opinions...even an online course can't exist without oral or at least real-time simultaneous communication of the participants.

Tanja seems to feel online communication misses out on some dimensions of interaction, which affects collaboration. In her post-course interview she explains that interpreting body language is part of the learning process, so face-to-face encounters are needed. She points out that these encounters are also needed to discuss activities and outcomes in a way Skype and wiki activities do not enable learners to. Tanja cannot see the full potential of tools such as Skype, but acknowledges its authenticity and thus utility in an e-learning context, at least for a “weekly check up”. Daniel S. is a full supporter of face-to-face interaction too, but points out Moodle as a solution for specific situations such as his. Since his health condition did not enable him to go to University, e-learning became a very comfortable solution for him. He understands that Skype emerges as a replacement in such cases. In his pre-course questionnaire, he suggests, “programs, such as Skype or ICQ provide the students with the contingency to exchange thoughts in real time” and in the journal of the *Binge Drinking* course, when assessing the Skype activity, he emotionally claims, “after the many months I could not attend classes or lectures, the skype sessions were like a revelation... I felt that Tanja and I had a real conversation...”. In his journal of the *European Elections 2009* course, Daniel S. again relates the potential of e-learning to his health condition by saying, “in my situation this online project is the perfect way to continue my studies in some way and having a task. Large distances can be overcome with such an online platform like moodle...”, and actually stresses, “...it's an interesting experience to work on a certain topic via Skype”. He also refers to the utility of such a tool in other contexts when he explains that for technical reasons his partner and he had to switch from the wiki discussion forum to Skype where they “...could discuss the summary and the amendments” during the wiki writing activity. In the journal of the *European Elections 2009* course, Daniel S. is happy that “the work with moodle will help me in my future studies because many lecturers post their scripts on a moodle and communicate to a certain [certain] extent with their students”. In the

journal of the *Binge Drinking* course about the Skype session, Svenja also states, “it was nice to actually talk to the partner and hear her voice because it is more personal than just communicating over e-mail”. In fact, in her interview, Svenja claims not to be disturbed by not working face-to-face, and explains that not knowing each other makes it easier to correct one another. She says that may help to preserve one’s face. She suggests Skype as a solution for students who require face-to-face collaboration. In a nutshell, most students seem to feel e-learning can only work to its full potential if in a blended setting in which people are offered the possibility to engage in face-to-face interaction, communication and collaboration. This type of spoken exchange is less conducive to misunderstandings, in particular because other factors such as body language support communication.

I shall now have a look at the learners’ assessment of the different e-learning activities from the point of view of the language skills they develop. I will begin with speaking activities and will therefore recall the Skype, the chat and the wiki activities.

In fact, Skype plays a role of paramount importance as a tool for speaking activities. The course participants acknowledge the potential of Skype speaking activities, claiming it is the closest they can become to a face-to-face experience. They see these as real-life experiences that enable them to be in different places and still engage in communication, which they deem essential for successful collaboration. Together with face-to-face sessions, Skype speaking sessions might be a way to not only counter-balance the social dimension e-learning tends to lack but also to develop speaking skills. In the journal of the *Binge Drinking* course in which the participants had to reflect about the Skype speaking activity, Tanja comments on the impact it had on the development of her speaking skills, also from a motivational point of view:

I really liked the skype session even though or maybe because speaking - among writing, reading and listening - is the weakest of my language skills. My partner did great - thanks, Daniel, for so much reading! - which means we had a lot to discuss. Also, the speaking activity has been the most interesting and exciting so far because I've never done that before... I learnt not to be too shy while speaking...I think I mostly learnt from the skype session for Daniel was a motivated partner. We gave each other valuable inputs.

The potential of such a speaking activity seems to also lie in mutual motivation, which pushes output. This is Daniel S.’s opinion as well, as the following quotation from the same journal suggests:

The topic was important for me, of course, but I had such a fun to talk to Tanja and exchanging arguments that I would put emphasis on the talking. I learnt a lot. First and foremost, I got to know my own speaking abilities. I'm not shy anymore to use English, it's not such a horrible pidgin anymore and my brains are enlightened. I felt that Tanja and I had a real conversation which means that both could answer the questions right away and nobody was bothere[d] about the answer. I[t] was simply one of the greatest experiences for me in the last few months. Obrigado!

Daniel places emphasis on the authenticity of the Skype speaking task, regardless of the topic or the correctness of the answer. For him it was important to speak for the sake of speaking and thus develop this particular skill in English by means of practice. In his post-course interview, Daniel S. explains he got better throughout the activity, mainly because he became more and more confident through practice by realising he could make himself understood. Daniel S.’s successful *L2 Learning Experience* and the even stronger desire it generated in him to reduce the discrepancy between his actual and *Ideal L2 Self* (Dörnyei, 2009) play a role of paramount

importance in his motivation (see chapter 2.6). In her interview, Tanja adds that she thinks the Skype activity was very collaborative because both interveners had to talk and react on the spot.

Both the chat and the wiki, especially the discussion function, also played a role in developing speaking skills because the tone students assumed in their writing was rather conversational (see ‘cross-skill influence’ in chapter 3.3), but there are no student comments in this direction. Also, when writing the summary of the video, students had to report what was being said.

Let me now have a look at writing activities. These include the forum, the wiki and the book activities. The journal activity shall also be assessed because, despite having a metafunction, it triggered writing skills as well.

The value of wiki writing activities is highly recognised. The students acknowledge several advantages concerning both tool handiness and the contribution of such an activity for their language learning process. In fact, wikis impose no time or place limits, since students can access them anytime and anywhere. However, this obviously applies to any e-learning activity. But by using wikis learners can easily upload information such as text, picture or video, which they cannot do when they write on paper. Besides, the possibility to play with colours, fonts, etc., enables a better overview of their work. On the other hand, with regard to their learning process, students state wikis allow for easy addition and edition when compared to paper revision: “...everyone is free to post his or her idea and others can add something and correct something” (Dorothee in the *Binge Drinking* course journal about the pair writing activity). Online they can write and edit endlessly, Mariella suggests in her interview, and feel no time pressure, Svenja says in hers. This is so because the wiki writing activities they engaged in could be concluded within a time span that exceeded the lesson time usually allowed for such activities. In contrast, they do not need to write as much because everything can be edited instead of constantly rewritten in its full extension. Students can therefore focus on quality. They also find it very useful that they can track changes through the wiki history.

According to them, the edition and history functions offered by wikis enable them to learn from constant revision with time intervals. In her journal about the experience of using a wiki to write a text collaboratively, in the *Binge Drinking* course, Svenja explains, “I contributed my part, he corrected me, I looked over his work and tried to correct him. I learned quite a lot”, and Daniel S. claims, “...the experience to correct the other writer or to learn from his or her arguments is exciting”. In the journal of the second course, Svenja again says, “I got practise in writing a summary which is very important especially because my partner corrected my mistakes”. In her interview, she explains wiki writing activities exceed paper writing activities because you can correct the text, talk about the changes, see them and thus focus on the process more easily. In her interview, Tanja explains she did not know what to use the discussion function for. This is one of the reasons why she placed so much emphasis on the history function. She only used the discussion function to let her partner know she had taken action, instead of using it to discuss different points of view concerning content, form, style, etc.

This again demonstrates that the students find they need external communication to make decisions. Online discussions lack liveliness and rapidity. Body language does not play a role in online discussions and it is difficult to address people on account of anonymity. In the *European*

Elections 2009 journal Tanja explains why anonymity can be a problem – it is not easy to understand and deal with people’s intentions:

Unfortunately, writing an essay collaboratively online involves the following problem: Generally, if you work in groups, it can be difficult to motivate all participants to work on the project because some group members are rather dominant and ambitious while others chose to be ‘laid-back’ and procrastinate. Since we’re dealing with this online, in an anonymous area, it’s even more difficult to address people.

What is more, “...everyone has a different schedule and can just go to the Internet when they are free”, so “it is rather difficult to meet at exactly one time” (Dorothee and Daniel S. in the same journal). Students find it difficult to have a proper discussion because they need to rely on each other’s availability to keep it going. All this has an impact on collaboration because the exchange process, and hence the learning process, are determined by the type of collaboration taking place.

However, although students do not like the delay in achieving a final outcome, as Daniel S. explains in his interview, it is as true that it can positively influence the writing process. Students gain distance from their text and go back to it over and over again, which contributes to continuous text improvement, as Daniel S. corroborates. Moreover, it seems the possibility to write and edit permanently also makes it difficult to divide the work into equal parts, but do they have to be equal? In the journal of the *European Elections 2009* course, Tanja explains she was happy that Svenja provided a framework for their summary and she mostly made adjustments. Despite all the negative comments concerning the lack of face-to-face interaction, it must be stressed that learners still find discussing the writing process online was successful: “discussing in the forum worked out quite good because Daniel gave me feedback and we commented on each other’s ideas” (Tanja in the *Binge Drinking* journal) and “we used skype, email and wiki to communicate which was an interesting experience because in the past when I worked with a partner or a group we met up to talk about the work. However, it worked this way just as well” (Svenja in the same journal).

One other aspect said to have affected this type of collaborative activity was the students’ different proficiency level. Daniel S. explains this in the same journal: “when you are good at grammar and the other writer isn’t that might raise some problems Or the other one makes mistakes while correcting your faults”. In addition, Tanja claims partners need to be at the same or a similar proficiency level for the full potential of wikis to be fulfilled. Nonetheless, the effect on collaboration can be positive since this gap forces learners to compromise: “The two fellows have to find a solution everyone can accept” (Daniel S.).

Curiously, most disadvantages pointed out regarding the wiki writing activities are double-sided and the fact that they resulted in learning must be highlighted. One last concrete example concerns the need students felt to switch from colloquial, when discussing the text, to academic language, when writing it, and the fact that they became aware of this change and thus of the existence of different registers for different contexts, as Daniel S. explains in his interview.

With regard to the change from the Moodle wiki in the *Binge Drinking* course to Wikispaces in the *European Elections 2009* course, Tanja expressed her opinion in her journal, but did not reach a conclusion concerning whether this was a good option or not. She seems to have preferred Wikispaces, but switching between portals – Moodle and Wikispaces – was not handy:

It is sometimes confusing to switch between portals. I like the functions of Wikispaces though – as soon as you learnt how to work with it, it enables you to cooperate with your wiki partner easily. For example, it is now easier to track [track] down changes your partner made because they are highlighted...[but] it was a challenge to switch between portals and...get precise information from the clip while writing the summary.

In her interview she again says having changes highlighted is really useful. Uploading the video clip onto Wikispaces editing page could have easily solved the problem of switching between platforms, which Tanja in her interview calls “jungle”.

The book activity followed the wiki experience and so students inevitably compared the potential of these two tools. In general they came to the conclusion that the book activity does not have the same potential as wikis. In fact, students had to be assigned teacher roles on Moodle to be able to use this tool, which suggests this is a teacher rather than a student resource³⁹. Indeed, it can be very useful for teachers to present structured contents. The book activity seems to offer the advantage of a framework students have to follow as well as the benefit of mirroring many different opinions in a single finalised version with the appearance of a true book. Nevertheless, all students sensed this activity lacked collaborative potential. It is not possible to discuss ideas or keep track of changes as in wikis, Tanja explains in her journal. She further claims that the text lacked cohesion for there was no communication platform. Furthermore, four might be too high a number of participants for such a collaborative activity: “...it is becoming rather anonymous...Every single part/chapter has to fit...the ideas of four persons easily diffuse though...”, Tanja says in the same journal. The book activity was the last one in the course and was only used in the *European Elections 2009* course. Just like the students, who were then assigned teacher roles, I was unable to keep track of changes, as this option did not exist for the Moodle book activity. It must be referred that, perhaps because it was the last activity or because it did not have real impact on them, not all the students commented on the book activity in their journals. Yet, informal contact with the students during the activity and on-going observation of their performance enabled me to see the course participants applying some of the knowledge they had acquired throughout the course, and to understand that they constantly looked for the wiki facilities they had used in the previous activities in the book activity. In her interview Mariella again explains that the book activity was not completely collaborative because not being able to keep track of changes generated problems (e.g. her peers accused her of not participating) and every student ended up acting individually, “doing it for himself”. In short, the course participants realised the book activity did not so much facilitate writing as a process, as the wiki activities did, but rather as a product, and this was probably the most valuable conclusion drawn.

As concerns the forum activities, also writing activities, in their interviews learners consider it an advantage to be able to use the language they are learning to discuss specific content and to be able to get to know what the others experienced, thought and read about. They seem to believe sharing one’s own opinion, ideas and questions and having a current topic to discuss which relates to one’s previous knowledge and personal concern works as a stimulus for discussion.

³⁹ It must be born in mind that some of these problems are inherent to Moodle whereas some others are likely to only concern the Moodle version being used for these courses or even the Moodle platform used since the platform administrator is responsible for deciding which features are introduced.

Conclusions drawn from observation support this view. For example, being asked to comment on binge drinking on the grounds of their previous experience, as well as of their readings, created an urge to communicate (3 student contributions). Asking students to associate the topic to their age level as well as local experience resulted in even more forum contributions (21 student contributions). In her interview, Tanja concludes that the stimulus of her contributions was the topic *binge drinking* itself. She knew what to talk about because of her previous knowledge on the issue (e.g. the psychology class about the topic she attended) and enjoyed talking about something she partially mastered, in this case binge drinking. In addition, this is a current topic often discussed on TV, on the radio, in the newspapers and she is personally concerned about it, she says. Tanja adds that using English was also part of the stimulus.

In her interview, Svenja explains it is interesting to read about other people's ideas or experience but the forum is not learning-conducive because there is no idea development, thus no true collaboration. In the *Binge Drinking* course, the students were also asked to use the Moodle forum to exchange ideas about the form, the content and the style of their wiki writing activity, which consisted of the argumentative essay. Unfortunately, only one group, Tanja and Daniel T., used it. They successfully resorted to it to discuss which ideas to include and in which part of the text. There were two more attempts by students from different groups but their group members did not react. As said before, this might be related to the lack of integration between the wiki and the forum, since more discussion took place on Wikispaces, where the course participants could easily switch between tabs. On Wikispaces students used the discussion function differently. Whereas a pair used it to show agreement, pay compliments, ask questions, make suggestions and explain mistakes and inconsistencies concerning content, form and writing skills, another pair did not discuss any changes and used it for partner moral support only. On Moodle, Daniel S. initiated a new forum discussion thread by suggesting a website for essay research.

As for the forum created for students to decide when to have their Skype session about binge drinking, again, only one group managed to use it for the purpose suggested, i.e., setting a day and time to meet and leaving messages concerning last-minute availability changes. There was one more missed attempt but, similarly, the student's partner did not reply. As for the forum to decide when to chat about the European elections 2009, only one group managed to use it, Svenja and Tanja. Another missed attempt took place.

Whereas the forum used to discuss binge drinking and the argumentative essay corresponded to the forum type *Diskussionsforen*, and the first could even be associated to *Fachforen*, the last two forums, used to discuss organisational issues, were more of a *Cafeteria* type, since they originated more informal discussion among the participants (see Footnote 20, p. 60). However, registers and topics often mixed, and so these types sometimes converged. In forums, students can discuss nearly anything in any way because even though information remains recorded, they are not required to deliver a final organised product. This is also why these tools facilitate initiative. Nevertheless, in her interview, Tanja points out the importance of being able to track people's opinion as opposed to what happens when you just speak. Forums help with processes: they enable learners to discuss to exhaustion.

As far as the chat tool is concerned, not all students had the chat session. This was due to the fact that one of the course participants was unavailable, thus leaving her partner without any other option than not having the session. Participant observation suggests that there was no relationship between this occurrence and the technical functioning of the chat activity and that this was a matter of responsibility. Yet, the technical problems affecting the Moodle chat did undermine this activity in general: “The Moodle chat did not work because the messages simply didn’t reach my partner and hers didn’t reach me either. My cursor which I needed to write a text was blocked in some way” (Tanja in the *European Elections* journal). For this reason, this group had to use the Skype chat. These are Tanja’s conclusions about the chat activity in her *Elections* journal:

As regards the chat, we faced a problem at the beginning because the chat tool didn't work properly. However, we worked things out by switching to skype where we had an interesting discussion. I really liked this week's activity consisting of two parts. On the one hand, we recapitulated the outcomes of the elections which is a current topic. On the other hand, we worked on important background information about the elections by summing up the clip. In my view, the two exercises complemented one another well. (Tanja)

The fact that an interesting discussion arose is obviously relevant, but also the circumstance that Tanja felt that they had worked on significant information about the elections. Most importantly, Tanja understood that these two different writing activities, on the wiki and on the chat, complemented each other, because they had different purposes and, therefore, the process was different as well. Discussions on chats and in wikis trigger a more informal, spoken-like register. They enable language creativity and cross-skill influence (see chapter 3.3). Mastering the blend of written and spoken discourse developed in these discussions is becoming more and more of a requirement. In this case the chat activity was based on a discussion, which was the purpose of the task, whereas the discussion taking place in wiki activities was a means to an end, the writing of text limited to a topic, more precisely a summary. Indeed, these activities complemented one another, especially in this case because a summary does not enable writers to express their own opinion, which a chat does. In the same journal, Svenja corroborates the discussion was interesting and fun: “the chat was fun because my chatpartner was very nice and we had an interesting discussion”. Further down in her journal, and as quoted before, Tanja explains she sees chats as a means for students not to miss out on important information that is usually conveyed personally. Simultaneous communication is essential for students not to lose focus and be able to tie all threads. She thinks every activity should offer the possibility to engage in a Skype or chat session for people not to miss relevant information non-simultaneous communication does not allow for.

In their interviews, students also claimed to have enjoyed the integration of speaking and writing skills, probably because it helped them towards becoming more widely-competent learners. Discussing binge drinking-related topics in written form in a forum and in a wiki and then via Skype orally is an example of this combination and goes beyond cross-skill influence.

The journal activities were aimed to help the course participants reflect about their course experience, with particular focus on specific activities. Nonetheless, they were a written activity and shall therefore be commented on at this stage as well. As an observer, I concluded this type of activity did indeed foster reflection, in particular if pushed by teacher’s comments and questions. Students could decide on the length of their comments and, in some cases, on their

content. What is more, the journal activities gave the students some room for sharing their most intimate thoughts, especially as regards collaboration, because they knew only the teacher was able to see their entries. The introspective, partly autonomous nature of such an activity leads to the use of a particular type of language, diary-like, which is not so often practised in class. All these characteristics indicate journal activities can be added value in a learning context.

As for reading skills, they were in demand in the following activities: the research exercise in the learning package, the corpus word-search exercise and the mind map exercise.

The research activity of the learning package in the *Binge Drinking* course asked students to find out whether binge drinking was a problem. They should have a look at a British newspaper or use a web search engine to find a text where binge drinking was discussed. Some web links were suggested. Students were then supposed to report what they had found out to their group. They should deliver information about the kind of text they had read and explain whether it described binge drinking as a problem as well as what the problem was, if any, with binge drinking. It also asked them to relate the text to their own hometown and compare as well as analyse the case there. This guided reading activity should provide students with input for the following activity on the forum, an exchange of opinions on binge drinking.

The corpus search activity set the students to analyse the most recurrent contexts of the word ‘drinking’ and thus explored reading skills as well.

Both the research activity in the learning package and the corpus search activity offered input for the activity that followed, the mind map, in which learners should collect all the words or phrases related to ‘drinking’ they had read and learnt in the course so far. Therefore, the mind map activity, with a lexical focus, was a reading exercise as well.

When commenting on the Skype session about binge drinking in her journal, Tanja explains, she “...used grammar as well as vocabulary which I learnt before”, thus suggesting this input was useful. These reading activities belonged, in fact, to the pre-task phase. They aimed at preparing students for the task phase, centred on the wiki writing activity. Within the same context, Daniel S. also states, “the terms and vocabulary I used were the result of excessive reading”. In reality, an analysis of his forum contributions demonstrates he was probably the student who engaged in more reading about binge drinking. Just as the forum shows what they researched and read, the phrases the course participants added to the mind map could be easily found in their argumentative essays in the wiki, which sheds light on the role of such reading tools and activities for output processing.

In the following I shall have a look at listening activities.

In the *Binge Drinking* course the learning package contained viewing comprehension exercises on an interview about binge drinking, followed by post-viewing grammar exercises on modification. Through corpus search of *binge drinking* students found another interview about the topic to watch. The mind map to collect vocabulary learnt to that point of the course can thus also be seen as a listening activity, and not only as a reading exercise, because both the reading and the listening activities preceded it. A comparison between the words inserted in the mind

map and the video transcripts shows some phrases overlap. Hence, the analysis above applies here as well.

In the *European Elections 2009* course, I requested the students to watch a video about the course topic and use a glossary to collect all the election-related vocabulary they could hear. They could also watch any other videos or read any other articles they considered related to the topic as well as recall vocabulary from their own experience in order to enrich the glossary. The glossary should contain a definition for each new word or phrase. As previously explained, this activity was followed by the hangman activity, which was based on the entries students had added to the glossary and aimed at testing and consolidating their both newly and previously acquired lexical knowledge. In a way, this activity also enabled the students to test their own definitions.

Svenja joined the glossary activity at a later stage. In her journal, she explains, “I didn't catch [come across] too many words that I could've entered into the glossary that weren't already there but I guess the others just did a too good job...”. This suggests the students' work was rather exhaustive. It is important to note that, by checking whether a word had already been entered, they were able to contact with their peers' definitions as well, which consolidated their knowledge of the word and offered them other samples of definitions. Students also realised the difficulty of writing a definition and had to reflect on word categories and find synonyms. In the same journal, Daniel S. claims that

[t]o explain a particular word...is not as easy as I used to think. You have to keep in mind what kind of word you try to explain. If you have a noun like election then you may [should] not explain it with the verb 'to elect' but...circumscribe it...or...use another noun to clarify its meaning. Finding synonyms wa[s] quite interesting because it improved my vocabulary. Now I know how it would be to draft a dictionary...In conclusion, this activity adds to my eLearning experience.

Mariella explains, she “...stopped the video every time I heard some vocabulary of which I thought it might be interesting, switched to the 2nd window and had a look and saw whether it's already listed in our glossary or not. If not I wrote an entry with all I already knew about the headword and further information I collected”. This sheds some light onto the process of glossary creation of this particular student. First, the inclusion of a specific word seemed to depend on the degree it could be authenticated by the student. Second, definitions contained not only information conveyed in the video but also previous knowledge about the word or phrase being defined. Motivation thus probably arose from both the video itself and the connection students were able to set to previous experiences. The nature of the activity played a role in this respect as well, as Mariella adds,

I find this activity very motivating, because it's an almost endless work to collect and describe every possible headword and in that way find even more new headwords and so on --> you write a definition of a word and in your definition there surface further 3 or 4 words of [3 or 4 more words emerge] which you think...could also be interesting...

The fact that students have gained this awareness that both language and learning are immense (Daniel S.) or infinite (Tanja) is rather positive.

The goals of the hangman activity previously pointed out seem to also have been achieved, which shows this apparently drilling-based low-level construction activity can easily develop into high-level construction: “[1] The hangman was a second possibility to really keep in mind

and fix in your memory even better all the words...[2] you found your own mistakes in the entries and mistakes others made...so while playing hangman you could learn and correct at the same time” (Mariella). Besides agreeing on the fact that these were motivating activities, like Mariella, Tanja also understood the importance of vocabulary for learning a language, in particular that vocabulary is an essential basis; and she believes repetition is important as well:

I think it's awesome to deal with the upcoming European elections, a very current issue. I recently went to a public discussion of candidates at the university in Tübingen in order to get to know the points of view. This new course is just another way to get more information and form an opinion. Therefore, vocabulary is a very basic thing [essential]. I appreciate the practice and repetition of words. Of course, I learnt new ones, too. Furthermore, the hangman game is a fun activity to repeat the words and their definitions. It is also motivating.

Svenja agrees motivation-wise: “Trying out the new vocabulary with the Hangman was fun too”. She explicitly relates this motivation to testing her recently and previously acquired knowledge:

I never really thought about vocabulary concerning elections. I learned some whil[e] I was abroad in the US so there weren't that many new ones but for example democratic deficite is a word I didn't know before. The hangman was interesting because I could try out the words and check how many I already knew or learned by watching the video.

The main attraction of the hangman activity is, indeed, the stimulus of finding out how much one actually knows via score and being able to make repeated attempts to improve results. In fact, games are usually motivating because one can win or lose: “The best thing was the hangman game. The idea to let the participants create a glossary of terms and the[n] playing hangman with exactly these entries is great. It is extremely motivating because you always try to gain a better percentage” (Daniel S.). This enables students to monitor their learning progress. The fact that in their journals the course participants often refer to vocabulary *learnt* must be underlined too. Daniel S. is very explicit when commenting on lexical development:

I also think that through this funny hangman game I could add some important words to my vocabulary. When it comes to deciding what activity did contribute the most to my development I would name the glossary. A big point would be the improvement of my lexical abilities. I really did benefit not only from my entries in the glossary but also from the entries of the other participants...The assignment of adding words to a glossary and the video raised my political awareness.

As quoted above, in her interview, Mariella also claims the main advantage of the hangman activity is being able to test the functionality of the glossary entries and correct one's as well as others' entries if that is the case. In the same interview, Svenja says she did not realise she could modify the glossary entries at a later stage, which they were purposefully not informed of. Curiously enough, although the advantages of the glossary/hangman activity were often mentioned by the course participants in their journals, when being interviewed, this activity did not occur to them that frequently. Their answers concerning activities they had preferred or which they thought had produced more learning outcomes focused on macro activities such as, and in particular, the wiki. Even when suggested by me as an example, the glossary/hangman activity was quickly dismissed. This does not mean, however, that this pre-task activity did not have an impact on their task accomplishment, but Svenja, for example, did not see this activity as very collaborative because she focused on her own entries only. In her interview, Tanja also explained that she had not committed to this activity as to others and that she felt the hangman was too easy for her, which is related to her mastery of English, upgraded by her stay in the U.S.A. Another example is Daniel S.'s comment on his journal after the wiki activity: “The

summary [wiki activity] did improve my lexical abilities even further than [than] the work on th[e] glossary...The work on the glossary and then on the summary added to my lexical abilities and usage of vocabulary”.

The wiki activity to write a summary of the video students had to watch, previously assessed, can obviously also be considered a listening activity. In this regard, the potential of the wiki activity outweighed the potential of the glossary/hangman activity.

The previous analysis enables some conclusions to be drawn with regard to conditions and strategies learners deem more important for language learning.

As suggested by the *English for Beauticians – Nail Care* course, which provided important information for the setup of this case study, learners find e-learning activities interesting and motivating. However, we seem to still be undergoing Bax’s Open CALL phase, in which students’ little interaction with the computer is not integrated into the syllabus or into the physical classroom. In opposition to conventional or e-learning classrooms in which there is no face-to-face communication, students express a clear preference for a blended language learning setting in line with Bax’s Integrated CALL phase. Such a learning environment integrates different tools/resources, (language) skills, interaction modes, tasks and different types of feedback.

In fact, the collaborative e-learning activities were the ones students referred to more exhaustively but communication issues often arose due to lack of face-to-face interaction. Just like the *Nail Care* course had suggested, collaborative e-learning activities with a lexical or writing focus again emerged as the most relevant and conducive to learning, and speaking-centred activities were highly valued as well. Wikis seemed to be the top activity again, in particular because of all the dimensions involved in wiki collaborative writing. Again, the glossary was rated higher than the mind map. This seems to be linked to its constructive potential. The drawbacks of the forum activity pointed out by the *Nail Care* course participants partially disappeared, perhaps because, as suggested by those students, Case Study 1 forums were structured into discussion topics and the teacher intervened more. Still, Svenja’s claim about the lack of idea development in the forum again emphasises the importance of going beyond posting ideas to true collaboration, which was always suggested to be more fruitful than individual actions. The book activity is another example of unsuccessful collaboration because it focuses on individual posting and thus on cooperation rather than collaboration. Each learner completes a part of the task, but no negotiation with others about all aspects of the task takes place, as demanded in collaboration (see chapter 3.3). Wiki activities, for example, on the contrary, demand and enable negotiation and this is what deems them so promising. This is a very important aspect to bear in mind. I shall look into learning outcomes more deeply in chapter 6.5.

6.4 A communicative constructivist orientation

In her interview, when explaining why she considered fluency more important than correctness, Svenja asserted that one learns by speaking. This view of the role of communication in learning a

language is very much in line with the constructivist idea of learning by doing as well. In fact, the data collected and analysed suggests these learners' view of learning has a communicative constructivist orientation.

The learners seemed to have acknowledged and appreciated the constructivist nature of some of the activities they engaged in during the courses. They tended to mostly value process-centred activities. They relished creating the glossary, in particular autonomously selecting words or phrases and building suitable definitions to generate a meaningful final product. In his journal Daniel S. clarifies, "If you have a noun like election then you may [should] not explain it with the verb 'to elect' but...circumscribe it...or...use another noun to clarify its meaning". Students highly valued building texts in wikis, above all discussing and revising changes. In his interview Daniel S. shows the importance of process-based learning when he explains that sometimes it is good to "take a rest from your text" to be able to further elaborate on it. He is the one who uses the word 'process' to talk about this possibility. In the journal of the *European Elections 2009* course, Mariella claims, "I...love to polish shape and mode of expression [according to her interview, choosing an adequate register] in a long text". In the same journal, Svenja says, "I first watched the video and took notes and then wrote the first draft with the notes I had taken. I...let some out because they didn't seem important to me anymore", which shows she constantly reassessed the writing process. Students acknowledged the importance of activities such as the exercises in the learning packages, the forum and the chat in supporting the processes previously mentioned, by offering input and output possibilities. They criticised or ignored activities such as the mind map or the book because their design did not allow for a process-focus – they were product-centred –, and they enjoyed being active agents of their own learning process. In general, students showed a clear preference over high-level construction activities, but providing them with both high-level and low-level construction activities seemed to have pleased them as well, which suggests they both play a role in learning. The hangman is an example of an activity students interpreted as both of low and high-level construction and which was appreciated in both cases. Tanja shows a more limited but still valid understanding of the potential of this activity when she talks about "appreciate [appreciating] the practice and repetition of words" whereas Mariella has a broader view of the possibilities of such an activity, namely offering the students the opportunity to reconstruct the glossary.

In addition, students sought communication in English throughout the courses: "... Daniel and I communicated in English both on skype and on studivz⁴⁰ which was really nice... The messages we exchanged after the assignment were in English, as well..." (Svenja in the journal about the *Binge Drinking* essay wiki writing experience). Even though it is hard to believe German-speaking participants of an English-learning course communicated in English with each other at all times, the truth is that these German-speaking students had volunteered to attend the course in order to improve their English skills, they met in an English-speaking context and they had not known each other before. This is probably why all written and spoken comments I read and heard in the various activities were in English as well. This offers some insight into the

⁴⁰ StudiVZ is a German social networking platform for students.

students' willingness to improve their English skills through communication. They completely appropriated the language during the courses.

The students taking part in Case Study 1 saw an interrelation between collaboration and communication. When assessing the whole *European Elections 2009* course in the journal, Tanja explains she feels "...an online class doesn't offer the chance to really get in touch with people, which should be part of collaborative learning, too". In the same journal Daniel S. claims, "this online project might not be the ultimate solution for a collaborative work. The ideal solution would definitely [be] working in class. Direct and fast exchange of arguments would be decidedly better". These students see communication as a primary condition for collaboration to succeed, but they do not perceive online communication as the best solution. As said before, Svenja, on the contrary, thinks that using Skype, e-mail or a wiki to communicate "works just as well". This is her opinion in the journal in which she analyses her wiki *Binge Drinking* essay-writing experience. In fact, in the journal about the *Binge Drinking* Skype speaking session, Tanja also says, "the skype session was an important part in the process of collaborative learning because we were able to communicate with each other, like in a discussion in class". In addition, as previously pointed out, in the journal of the *European Elections 2009* course she suggests every activity should offer the possibility of a skype or chat session for real-time simultaneous communication between participants. Tanja thinks collaboration cannot succeed without communication and thus suggests Skype or chat sessions might be a solution. Nevertheless, she does not think online communication replaces face-to-face contact.

Yet, curiously, some students state that some e-learning activities such as Skype sessions or the forum, which are collaborative, create an urge to communicate. This is quite interesting because what they are saying is that these collaborative tools do not only create an opportunity but also an urge to communicate. On the one hand, then, they need to communicate to be able to collaborate. On the other hand, collaborative activities create a desire to communicate. In his interview, Daniel S. also says that when you express yourself in the forum, you want to know what others think about it, which means you constantly challenge each other. Communication and collaboration thus share a very intimate relationship.

What not all of the course participants see, however, is the potential of online communication for overcoming impediments such as long distance, isolation and inhibition. Daniel S. does clearly see the benefits of online communication for overcoming the displacement condition his disease threw him into. This is not the case with Tania. In her interview, she claims to feel more communicative in English than in German. When speaking in English she feels as if playing a role and thus not inhibited to convey her message. Yet, she does not seem to understand that this disinhibition might be linked to the fact that she is not facing her peers personally. In reality, several students mention increase in confidence throughout online collaborative activities without face-to-face contact, and enthusiasm is clearly visible in all the course participants. They look forward to further collaboration: "As a final comment...collaboration worked well, a pity that we couldn't do more together..." (Mariella when assessing the whole course in the journal of the *European Elections 2009* Course).

In these students' statements, it becomes clear that both communication and collaboration play a role of paramount importance in learning a language. And it is also clear that communication and collaboration must interweave.

Another relevant aspect that must be pointed out is the type of communication students mostly report to when discussing successful collaborative practices during the course: communication that involves negotiation. This is one of the most important conclusions for this study.

For example, in the Skype session, collaboration was successful because it consisted of developing an argument together, reacting to one's partner's utterances as well as developing arguments one could discuss, and finally learning vocabulary and content from each other, Tanja says in her interview. She adds that being collaborative is listening or reading people's text closely and reacting to it. Daniel S. also explains in his interview that collaboration arose from the need for adequate reception and production of ideas for purposeful interaction. This is why the forum was successful at first, but then became diffuse with so many topics coming up and students reacting to different topics without control.

In her interview, Svenja, on the contrary, states that the Skype session was not as collaborative as the wiki activities because on Skype you do not correct each other, you just share ideas. Even though this is simultaneously positive because you develop an idea together and learn about other ideas, in the wiki activity, seen as highly collaborative, you go a step further by correcting the mistakes of others. Providing a framework of the text to be written is not enough, mutual correction has to occur for the activity to be collaborative: "We worked well together as a team, so that was good too. I got practise in writing a summary which is very important especially because my partner corrected my mistakes...", Svenja writes in her journal with regard to the elections wiki activity. Tanja's thoughts are in line with those of her partner: "working in a team with Svenja went quite well. Whereas she provided a framework for our summary, I mostly made adjustments", she writes in her own journal. The wiki activities were more collaborative because the students could correct and *talk* the changes *through* as well as see them, see the text develop. Negotiation reappears as a fundamental condition for collaboration to be considered fruitful.

The glossary and the book were considered to be less collaborative. Most students claimed that collaboration would have been richer if every participant had edited glossary entries that were not correctly formulated, which affected the effectiveness of the ensuing game. Learning from others' entries was not enough for the activity to be collaborative. Again, work seemed to have been cooperative rather than collaborative and the lack of a specific communication platform to negotiate the process might have contributed to this.

Regarding the book, as there was no communication platform to discuss changes either, students seemed to have been more concerned about their own contribution: "It is supposed to be a very collaborative activity and I'm convinced it could be one. However, it is difficult to get in touch with people and communicate about changes..." (Tanja in the *European Elections 2009* journal). Again, the relevance of negotiation emerges. Tanja goes on to explain this absence can be a true handicap in big-sized groups such as the one working on the book activity: "Probably, four

persons are already too many to work on an online project if they don't know each other better and regularly exchange ideas”.

Sharing the same notion of collaboration is said to be a *sine qua non* condition for collaboration to thrive. For the course participants, collaboration is working together on a project. This implies an idea of continuity and progress as well as that all participants must contribute towards the same goal. In her interview, Tanja points out that it is important that learners share the same working habits. For this to be possible, compromise, idea exchange, mutual correction, followed by justification, complementation, commitment and mutual praise, are needed. Mutual dependence is another aspect some of the students used to characterise collaboration. However, whereas for Mariella being mutually dependent is a synonym for mutual support, for Daniel S. mutual dependence might imply collaboration breakdown and a task left undone. These different shades show the students' impressions are also biased by their course positive or negative experiences. Whereas Mariella feels collaboration is a synonym for connection, Daniel S. feels it may make him feel unsure and unsafe because his partner did not do her part.

One last remark regarding collaboration is related to the interaction and negotiation between different proficiency levels and the learning resulting from it. Students seem to share different opinions. In her interview, Tanja says learners who are collaborating must have the same proficiency level. In the elections course journal, Daniel S. claims, “I really did benefit not only from my entries in the glossary but also from the entries of the other participants”. When assessing the *Binge Drinking* essay writing experience in the journal, he first says a less proficient learner may make mistakes, but he then suggests compromise as a solution and he actually explains such an experience can result in different types of learning: “maybe she learnt more from me than I did learn from her. Nevertheless, ...I'm going to be a teacher and this project is an extraordinary contingency to practise the passing on of knowledge. I enjoy collaborative work because everyone benefits from it.” Svenja's comment shows she agrees with Daniel S. that partners do not need to have the same proficiency level to profit from collaboration:

This week we were supposed to write an essay in pairs. I really liked that exercise because I have a problem with writing formal essays so I saw this as a chance to learn from someone maybe more experienced...I could tell after the first day that Daniel was a great partner to work with because he is further ahead in his studies and I really liked his style of writing. I contributed my part, he corrected me, I looked over his work and tried to correct him. I learned quite a lot.

What is more, in her interview, Svenja also claims that working with a less proficient partner would help her develop her teaching skills, which, just like Daniel S., she regards as very useful since she is studying to become a teacher as well.

In his interview, Daniel S. suggests one more condition for successful collaboration by arguing that collaboration on Skype was rendered even more useful by the presence of two genders, as male and female perspectives enriched the discussion.

The relevance students assign to authenticating the topic being dealt with during each course should not be left uncommented either. They give special importance to being able to relate the course topic to their real-life experience. As it has already been said, the *binge drinking* topic was chosen because in the first meeting with the students it became clear that they were not acquainted with it, but showed interest in learning about it. The topic *European elections* was

chosen because those elections would be taking place at that point in time and the course students should be going to the European polls for the first time.

They often expressed their satisfaction about the topics being dealt with, as Tanja does in her journal: “first and foremost, I think it's awesome to deal with the upcoming European elections, a very current issue”. In the same journal, Svenja is able to link the course topic with her previous experience in the USA and weigh the impact of lexical activities about this same topic on her learning process: “I never really thought about vocabulary concerning elections. I learned some whil[e] I was abroad in the US so there weren't that many new ones but for example democratic deficite is a word I didn't know before”. Daniel positively assesses the impact of the topic on his personal political experience: “...my political awareness concerning the different claims of the parties did increase decisively. That did help me in the ‘Kommunalwahlen’”. The students’ satisfaction seems to arise from topic authentication. Students are able to relate the course topic to their previous experience, to assess its impact on their language learning process as well as current existence or even to see a purpose with regard to their future life, just like when Tanja says she enjoyed discussing the topic *binge drinking* on the forum because she had previously learnt about it, constantly heard about it in the media and was personally concerned about it, and Daniel S. explains the *Binge Drinking* essay-writing experience will surely help him in developing teaching skills, even though in this case he is mostly referring to the activity itself rather than to its topic.

Binge drinking and the *European elections* are seen as appropriate topics not only because they are current issues but also because they create an urge to discuss which develops from previous knowledge and personal concern, a motivational factor. These students do not consider these topics authentic only for being up-to-date but also and most importantly because of their connection with their own lives. It is therefore authenticity in the sense of authentication (see Widdowson, 2003: pp. 93-133). It is authentication that arouses motivation because students feel that they are fulfilling their *Ideal L2 Self* (Dörnyei, 2009), i.e., the representation of the attributes they believe they ought to possess, for example, speaking good English, being able to discuss an up-to-date topic with others or becoming a good citizen.

Further comments show students recognise the relevance of a Content and Language Integrated Learning approach for triggering authentication. Students regarded the *binge drinking* topic as a stimulus for forum discussion, for example. In her interview, Svenja says that if the topic is interesting, it all becomes more motivating and explains *binge drinking*, for instance, is very up-to-date. She believes that in these cases, learning English is a ‘side effect’. For these students, in general, content stimulated language learning, and language was used to discuss content.

In the journal about the *Binge Drinking* Skype speaking activity Tanja states, “it was advantageous to devote myself to the English language (not on a theoretical level!) on the whole and familiarize myself with the context in which words are used”. On the one hand, she seems to understand she learnt English as a consequence of handling a topic in English. On the other hand, she places an emphasis on contextualised learning, which can be associated not only to CLIL but also to a lexical approach to language learning in which language is seen as composed of chunks instead of isolated words. In their interviews, when *pushed* by me to have a look at

their wiki texts again and discuss instances of output processing, students often justified their previous editions by resorting to the term *collocation*, again suggesting they focused on language chunks rather than isolated words.

In most cases students do not even realise they are developing their language skills because they are very focused on the activity content outcome:

I really liked this week's activity consisting of two parts. On the one hand, we recapitulated the outcomes of the elections which is a current topic. On the other hand, we worked on important background information about the elections by summing up the clip. (Tanja)

They see language from a practical point of view. Language serves needs and purposes. In her interview, Mariella points out that there is no relationship with reality when language is learnt in isolation and that will not motivate learners to learn that language. In their article about language attitudes in CLIL and traditional EFL classes, Lasagabaster & Sierra (2009) claim, "...CLIL programmes help to foster positive attitudes towards language learning in general" (p. 4). This point is supported by the learners' comments. They claim to have developed a more positive attitude towards language learning because being able to talk about other issues is motivating. In fact, Lasagabaster & Sierra believe that the explanation for the circumstance that teaching content has a substantial impact on students' attitudes "...could lie in the fact that a CLIL approach provides more intense exposure and more meaningful opportunities to use the target language" (p. 13) and "[l]earners' motivation to learn content through the FL may foster and sustain motivation towards learning the FL itself" (p. 14).

Finally, these students believe CLIL triggered learning: vocabulary which is acquired from reading sources or communicating with peers, the ability to discuss, and a new international broader understanding of the subject matter. One of the reasons Lasagabaster & Sierra identify for the positive results of CLIL on language attitudes, which goes along with the students' comments, is that "CLIL may strengthen learners' ability to process input, which prepares them for higher-level thinking skills, and enhances cognitive development" (p. 14).

Last but not least with regard to authentication, tools were also authenticated or not. When simultaneous communication on Skype or on a chat was considered indispensable, it was because it was considered "real life" (Tanja).

Autonomy is a further issue I would like to discuss. Students were able to adapt the courses to their own personal and academic current and future needs in particular by being able to monitor their actions and progress in various fields. This expressed their autonomy.

Daniel S., for example, watched the video on the European elections to look for specific information concerning politics he felt he needed to absorb:

I would like to stress that before I had watched this video I knew not that much about the EU. So, it does provide a decisive amount of knowledge and information. What I liked very much are the interviews of MEP's and common citizens. The video tries to investigate the prejudices people have against the EU or the Lisbon treaty...I think the message of the video is clearly stated: Go out and vote for a peaceful, multicu[l]tural and fair-minded Europe. Even if we as voters cannot influence much, we are the majority and should seize our right to vote. Only this way the EU will change slowly and steady. We still have along [a long] way to go, but it'll all work out...My listening abilities improved definitely because you have to hang on the lips of the interviewees to get the gist of their utterances. Certain claims of the right-wing politicians were incredibly awful and I pretty much liked the way Andrea Tyndall shot [shouted] back at them ☺. So, my political awareness concerning the different claims of the parties did increase decisively.

The fact that the activities are available any time also contributes to making e-learning a powerful tool with regard to learner autonomy. Learners become able to monitor their own learning. In the learning packages they can obtain immediate feedback on their answers, although this was not actually mentioned by the students. In the hangman activity they can repeatedly improve their scores. Some students autonomously corrected the glossary entries to improve the hangman activity. In the wikis they are able to at any time revise their peers' and their own text as well as keep track of those same changes. These are only a few examples of the formative options these activities facilitate. Being able to choose what, when and where to post an idea their peers can comment on also fosters these learners' autonomy: "A advantage is that everyone is free to post his or her idea and others can add something and correct something" (Dorothee in the journal about the *Binge Drinking* essay-writing experience).

In her interview, Mariella associated autonomy with collaboration, motivation and responsibility by saying that working on a platform with plenty of features and being able to choose what activity to do – here lay her autonomy – motivated her, and that her autonomy together with her responsibility created the conditions for collaboration to succeed. Indeed, the course participants took control over collaboration and were aware of being responsible for their own learning, in which the teacher only played the role of a guide. It had already been said that e-learning allows for new roles.

These students' perceptions of the conditions and strategies for successful language learning support the validity of Swain's collaborative output processing hypothesis for the e-learning context as well.

The students express a clear preference for process-focused collaborative activities. They prefer activities in which output pushes them to process language more deeply, i.e., they hardly comment or value activities in which they are not expected to play active roles and be responsible for their learning such as simple listening comprehension multiple-choice exercises as the ones in the self-study learning module. In her interview, Svenja says, for example, that in the wiki activities the students could correct and talk about the changes they made to the text as well as see them and thus see the text *develop*. She adds that you learn more this way than in a Skype session, for instance, because, first, you are more careful about your mistakes, second, you are corrected and, third, you are told the reasons why you are wrong. Daniel S. explained his corrections to her via StudiVZ. The students' assessment of speaking and writing activities in which learners are able to "'stretch' their interlanguage to meet communicative goals" (Swain, 1985: p. 127), such as the Skype or the wiki activities, for example, is highly positive. The course participants also cherished collaborative activities that offered room for both input and output processing and prepared or contributed to the wiki writing process, such as the forum activity in the *Binge Drinking* course or the glossary/hangman activity in the European Elections 2009 course. Through these pre-task activities they were able to start the process by understanding content in context to later be able to focus on form. In fact, students often say they learnt by discussing, correcting, comparing: "...the experience to correct the other writer or to learn from his or her arguments is exciting" (Daniel S. about the *Binge Drinking* writing experience in the journal); "Discussing in the forum [wiki discussion forum] worked out quite good because Daniel gave me feedback and we commented on each other's ideas" (Tanja in the

same journal); "...you found your own mistakes in the entries and mistakes others made...so while playing hangman you could learn and correct at the same time" (Mariella in the *European Elections 2009* journal); "I really did benefit not only from my entries in the glossary but also from the entries of the other participants" (Daniel S. in the same journal).

Pair or group work enabled learners to evolve within their ZPD mainly through *pushed* language use. Throughout the courses students were pushed to negotiate meaning and form and thus to produce comprehensive output. As expected, the learner providing the scaffolding often benefited from the experience as well, just as it can be seen in the comments above and also in Daniel S.'s comment with regard to the fact that he supported Svenja throughout the essay writing process, for example: "...if I can help a fellow student in any case then I'm satisfied and willo [will] do that at anytime...I enjoy collaborative work because everyone benefits from it" (journal on the *Binge Drinking* writing experience).

The online collaborative activities experienced by the courses participants enabled them to fulfil the three accuracy-centred functions of output proposed by Swain. For example, by extending their second language knowledge to a new target language context, they were able to fulfil the first function, the noticing function, with a consciousness-raising role ("I never really thought about vocabulary concerning elections. I learned some whil[e] I was abroad in the US so there weren't that many new ones but for example democratic deficite is a word I didn't know before" – Svenja in the *European Elections 2009* journal). Producing language enabled students to often realise their linguistic problems and generate new knowledge or consolidate acquired data ("To explain a particular word, either noun, adjective or verb, is not as easy as I used to think. You have to keep in mind what kind of word you try to explain. If you have a noun like election...you have to circumscribe it..." – Daniel in the same journal). The task-based approach implemented enabled them to fulfil the second function, hypothesis testing, in particular in the forum, in the Skype, in the chat and in the wiki activities. This is an excerpt from Tanja and Daniel S.'s Skype session about binge drinking:

Daniel S.: ...a guy who who claimed that he would feel weak if he goes to the bar and orders an orange juice and then I posted a question so it's about the eago

Tanja: the eagle wha's the eagle

Daniel S.: Ego [German pronunciation]

Tanja: oh ego oh I though you would say eagle like the bird but nevermind

Daniel S.: ok ok I try to pronounce it clearly ok

Daniel S. integrated a less ordinary word into his speech, which was perhaps a first-time test, and Tanja's reaction pushed him to modify his output with regard to pronunciation. This modification was necessary for him to meet his communicative needs. In addition, successful uptake is more likely to occur in response to elicitation moves in which students are pushed to modify their output (Swain, 2005). Finally, the course activities also enabled the participants to fulfil the third function of output, the metalinguistic function. What is more, by reflecting on language, they were able to control and internalise linguistic knowledge. This obviously supports the operationalisation of the other two functions. An example is Tanja's awareness of the language mastery required by the wiki summary activity:

My language learning awareness definitely increased because we worked on the summary together to find synonyms and suitable structures while avoiding sticking to[o] close to the clip's content. This made me think about different ways...to use grammar and vocabulary. (*European Elections 2009* journal).

While doing this, she was able to notice her limitations and test new hypotheses. These activities move students from meaning-focused thinking to the “complete grammatical processing needed for accurate production” (Swain, 1995: p. 128), promoting student-initiated development of situated syntax and morphology. It is very important to highlight that the conclusions Swain reached in her studies in conventional classrooms seem to apply to online activities as well:

We used skype, email and wiki to communicate which was an interesting experience because in the past when I worked with a partner or a group we met up to talk about the work. However, it worked this way just as well...I contributed my part, he corrected me, I looked over his work and tried to correct him. I learned quite a lot (Svenja in her journal about the wiki writing task on binge drinking).

What is more, although some course participants felt affected by the lack of face-to-face contact, this circumstance did not seem to affect the outcomes of the collaborative output processing these courses so much fostered, as evidence has so far proved. Although they appreciated all speaking and writing activities in which they could play a successful agentive role, the wiki activities facilitated learning as a process in a superior way because the tool enabled them to keep track of changes as well as to discuss them, in other words, to *language*. The students could permanently and transparently reconstruct their text helped, or *pushed*, by their peers. As said before, Swain's studies show students often recall what they considered to be the correct option during interaction in problem-solving tasks, i.e., learning becomes permanent through the process of *talking-it-through* because knowledge is recognised and restructured, just as in a communicative constructivist framework. Again, in an online context this seems to happen too. In his *European Elections 2009* journal, Daniel S. explains, “I learned the right way to type trans-European or that I always have to capitalize the names of countries or states”. In her interview, Mariella also claimed she would never forget what she had learnt from wiki revision, both in discussion with her partner or during the interview with me when she reflected on changes made. Some examples regard the use of capital letters, contractions or paragraphs. Mariella was very happy to be able to discuss changes with me because, according to her, this kind of action enabled her to go on learning, which she very much enjoyed. This enjoyment seems to also be connected with the transparency fostered by wiki tools, which enabled students to simultaneously become aware of language strands as well as of the development of their learning process.

This awareness is directly related to the reflection fostered by the wiki facilities. In her interview Mariella says such a course design makes it easier to memorise good language use because she engages in discussion instead of just looking words up in the dictionary that she eventually forgets. Again, this is a hint at learning by doing. She claims to know exactly what she wrote or changed in the wiki. She also explains that in a course with such a number of participants everything is more transparent, thus suggesting such a reduced number of participants is advantageous. This general course awareness is triggered by the process-centred approach facilitated by the online tools used in the courses. When assessing the second-week activities in the elections course, just like Mariella, Tanja shows a broader view of her language learning

process. She demonstrates that she understands the purpose of the activities and the way they are supposed to intertwine, as previously quoted:

I really liked this week's activity consisting of two parts. On the one hand, we recapitulated the outcomes of the elections which is a current topic. On the other hand, we worked on important background information about the elections by summing up the clip. In my view, the two exercises complemented one another well. (*Elections journal*)

In her interview Tanja adds she did not learn from Svenja in the wiki activity because her summary framework was too close to the video reporter's text, which, according to her, is not supposed to happen in a summary. As quoted before, this text type awareness made her look for synonymous expressions. She also claims English is often more simple than German and that she tries to adapt her language to this fact. Daniel S. also gives evidence of this language awareness in his journal.

In the glossary activity, students became aware of language as composed by an endless number of words as well as of the difficulty of creating a dictionary. Such activities also developed their political awareness, for example: "the assignment of adding words to a glossary and the video raised my political awareness" (Daniel S. in the same journal). The forum activities were said to have fostered reflection on one's writing since adequate production is essential for the success of reception and thus communication. Such comments indicate the course participants were able to discuss their learning process and products even if not prompted to.

When asked directly whether they felt the activities had increased their language and language learning awareness, the students mostly gave examples of how these activities led to reflection of different sorts. Again, the emphasis was on wiki activities. According to these learners, comparing different written versions, being able to see exactly what their peers corrected in their writing as well as understanding the reasons lying behind these corrections enabled them to assess their learning progress. They also said the writing of others helped in the process. In his journals and interview Daniel S. repeatedly mentions the development of the awareness of different language registers when writing in the wiki as well because he had to switch from an informal discussion register to the writing of an academic paper. The role of collaboration in reflection is evident.

The contribution of the students' awareness of their learning process to their motivation is equally important. Getting to know their capacities and transparently seeing their skills evolve represented a plus in these courses. Obviously, several other reasons interlaced which secured motivation along the process. As it could be seen in the students' paragraphs about e-learning in their pre-course questionnaires, they were already highly motivated before the course started and throughout the course they often said motivation was an essential condition for learning to occur.

The students were stimulated by multiple motivational factors. Dörnyei's 'L2 Motivational Self System' (Dörnyei, 2009) shall shed some light on the factors that motivated these learners (see chapter 2.6). In general, student participation in the course activities seems to have been powerfully motivated by their wish to fulfil their *Ideal L2 Self* and by their *L2 Learning Experience*, in particular their peer group and the experience of success. Their *Ought-to L2 Self* did not seem to have affected their motivation and thus learning process as much.

Since all course participants studied English, there was an instrumental orientation when signing in for this experiment, i.e., students were moved by the possibilities of career enhancement to reduce the discrepancy between their actual and ideal selves and to fulfil their *Ideal L2 Self*. Their *Ideal L2 Self* comprised the ideal of succeeding in their English studies and becoming good professionals. This is related to the dimension *Instrumentality* (Dörnyei, 2009), which integrates the *Ideal L2 Self* in Dörnyei's model. In his pre-course questionnaire, Daniel S. wrote, "I love the English language and for almost two years I haven't had the opportunity to speak it"⁴¹. Therefore, I'm excited about this project". During the course, Daniel S. explicitly said he enjoyed playing a teacher role and helping a less-knowledgeable fellow student. The imagery of a desired future, Daniel S. as a good teacher, motivated his action. Mariella's motivation, on the other hand, derived from the autonomy she felt throughout the course, she claimed in her elections journal, as well as from the responsibility she assumed when she decided to take part in the course, she explained in her interview. Mariella's motivation derived from her aspiration to become an autonomous and responsible adult. This also suggests learning autonomy, responsibility for her learning process and thus motivation are essential learning conditions for her. Moreover, students felt the satisfaction of achieving their goal of being L2 proficient by playing a student-role as well because they were able to successfully work with a more-skilled peer who helped them. Long-term instrumental motivation was accompanied by short-term instrumental motivation, such as improving ICT skills. In her pre-questionnaire Svenja pointed out the relevance of tools such as Moodle for her studies. The English Department of the Tübingen University used Moodle as a learning platform, so students saw it as an asset to engage with it, as vowed in the e-mail sent out to gather course participants. The expectances such an e-mail created concerning possibilities of collaboration, also part of the self-relevant imagery of one's possible self, appeared to have influenced their decision to participate as well: "I'm happy of having the chance to write and discuss certain topics with others" (Daniel S. in his pre-course questionnaire). Some other attitudinal/motivational dimensions that guided Dörnyei's survey (Dörnyei, 2009) and eventually led to his 'L2 Motivational Self System' offer insight into the students' interest in fulfilling their *Ideal L2 Self*: their *cultural interest*, i.e., "the appreciation of cultural products associated with the particular L2 and conveyed by the media; e.g. films, TV programs, magazines and pop music" (Dörnyei, 2009: p. 26), particularly visible in Daniel S.'s thirst for knowledge, for reading more and more on binge drinking or for absorbing all the information the video on the elections democratic deficit offered; their quest in search of *linguistic self-confidence*, i.e., "a confident, anxiety-free belief that the mastery of an L2 is well within the learner's means" (Dörnyei, 2009: p. 26), evident in the students' claim that their self-confidence in language use increased throughout the courses. Daniel S.'s introspective comments in his *Binge Drinking* journal provide support for this:

After the many months I could not attend classes or lectures, the skype sessions were like a revelation. My female opposite had a very good language and we had a lot of fun...we found strong arguments to support this statement...my fears that my English would be not that good...vanished...I had such a fun to talk to Tanja and exchanging arguments...I learnt a lot... I'm not shy anymore to use English, it's not such a horrible

⁴¹ Once again Daniel's is a particular situation. The possibility of going beyond the boundaries of his house and hospital obviously stimulated his motivation for the course even further.

pidgin anymore and my brains are enlightened. I felt that Tanja and I had a real conversation which means that both could answer the questions right away...

The first meeting held, the pre-course questionnaire and continuous exchange with the students throughout the courses helped design courses according to their *Ideal L2 Self*, that is, on the grounds of the identification of areas and skills they were interested in developing and that would make them feel good about themselves (see Dörnyei, 2009: p. 34). In fact, the students considered the topics *European elections* and *binge drinking*, and the hangman, the wiki, the Skype and the forum activities very motivating.

The dimension *Attitudes towards members of L2 community* (Dörnyei, 2009) also integrates the *Ideal L2 Self* in Dörnyei's 'L2 Motivational Self System'. L2 speakers tend to be "...the closest parallels to the idealised L2-speaking self", i.e., "...it is difficult to imagine that we can have a vivid and attractive ideal L2 self if the L2 is spoken by a community that we despise" (Dörnyei, 2009: p. 27). What is more, the power of the learner's view of the L2 community might affect their *Ought-to L2 Self* as well. Consequently, it is important to understand whether the students associate their idealised L2-speaking self to native speakers of English. Furthermore, their perspective is very likely to affect their understanding of the role of teachers and peers in their language learning process. On the other hand, the learning and teaching model students were exposed to throughout their lives plays a key role in the delineation of this idealised L2-speaking self. They might have been exposed to a strong Standard English orientation that requested them to comply with the Standard English teaching norms imposed, therefore focus on correctness in the sense of norm compliance and enforcement, which often has an inhibiting effect on communication (Kohn, 2015); or they might have been exposed to a weak Standard English orientation based on social constructivist learning activities in which communicative success dictates the rules. In reality, traditional second language learners have been exposed to a strong Standard English orientation (Kohn, 2015) and therefore tend to associate teachers with this requirement of correctness. The students' learning background affects their preference for and even actual success of a behaviourist interface over a constructivist one (see Beatty & Nunan, 2004). Naturally, it is easier for learners to associate their peers with constraint-free communication, therefore with fluency. This is because the primary goal of peer interaction is communication and no assessment is usually involved. The guidance students look for is intimately related to all these learning conceptions. If they have been exposed to a strong Standard English orientation, their ideal L2 self will probably have to fulfil a requirement of correctness in the sense of norm compliance and enforcement which teachers, not peers, are much more likely to represent. The following provides some insight into this: Katharina, who participated in the *Binge Drinking* course, decided not to participate in the *European Elections 2009* course because "I think using the internet I can get in touch with native speakers as well and that makes more sense [sense] to me than talking to non-natives who possibly make the same mistakes as I do...". In fact, all interviewed students considered correctness to be very important when using English but were able to point out different shades of importance in relation to the learning setting. They all considered fluency to be more important than correctness in spoken English, and correctness to be more important than fluency in written English. All this is in line with a strong Standard English orientation, since correctness is only secondary in relation to fluency in a somewhat non-recorded context, a spoken context. When

reflecting about written English settings, students again feel the need to comply with and enforce native norms dissociated from communicative needs and feelings of communal belonging (Kohn, 2011: 81), as if communication were not the ultimate goal of written English as well. What is more, all students agreed that their performance was not in line with their claims. Above all, even when speaking, they focused on correctness, which affected fluency and sometimes eventually led to communication breakdown. Svenja said she knew this happened because people expected her to be correct when she came back from the U.S.A., which again suggests a strong Standard English orientation. She seemed to be trying to fulfil her *Ought-to L2 Self*.

The participation in the online *Binge Drinking* and *European Elections 2009* courses changed the students' views in this regard. For example, Tanja said she learnt to focus more on fluency throughout the activities in order not to cause breakdowns, but still thought she could be more fluent. She gave the example of the Skype speaking session in which she felt her focus on correctness affected communication. In fact, students often stammered in an attempt not to commit any mistake, which curiously resulted in a positive outcome because it forced them to develop their strategic competence, expressed in the use of fillers such as 'like' and 'hum' or of synonyms, to avoid communication breakdown. This supports the *ELF communication argument* according to which "ELF speakers are able to take care of their communicative needs" (Kohn, 2015: p. 3). At the end of the courses, in their interviews, students were asked whether they saw a difference in communicating with native or non-native speakers and, if so, whether that difference played a role in language learning. All the students seemed to agree that native speakers are more correct and "more natural", i.e., less concerned about correctness because language comes out naturally. However, they also agreed that native speakers mostly lack metalinguistic knowledge about their own language, whereas non-native speakers, who might as well achieve a high level of language proficiency, can provide good feedback because they own the metalinguistic knowledge native speakers lack. Curiously, for Tanja, communicating with another German non-native speaker actually enabled the conversation to be more natural, as both had the same foundation in English. She said that, as a non-native speaker of English, she was often too concerned with correctness while speaking to a native speaker. When interacting with Daniel S. on Skype, it was all very natural. Moreover, knowing he was German might have led her to adapt her performance accordingly, which is rather positive since output modification has a positive impact on learning, as proved by several studies. In general, students regarded communication with non-native speakers as fruitful. The fact that these students did not know each other before and did not attend the same classes surely helped them not to fall into using their mother tongue to communicate, which would have made the use of English unauthentic. Svenja said she learnt from Daniel S., a non-native speaker, when writing the essay on binge drinking with him, because he was ahead in his studies. The positive way students assessed the learning outcomes of peer interaction shows they were satisfied with it. Although their peers were non-native speakers of English, students benefited from a peer within the same ZPD who had a different learning background, and even saw the advantages of being the ones providing scaffolding. Teacher intervention was limited to some forum contributions as well as support concerning some technical or collaboration issues since "...an effective CALL environment needs to offer different combinations of interfaces to accommodate different learning styles as appropriate to different skills" (Beatty and Nunan, 2004: p. 182). In fact, learners did not seek

teacher support for learning purposes. Data suggest that adequate task design, supported by pedagogical integration by means of a platform such as Moodle, may suffice to secure a learner-centred environment in which peers provide the scaffolding. This was obviously also facilitated by the fact that students felt their English was sufficient for their needs and purposes, except in academic or very specific contexts out of their area of specialisation, which required a higher command of English. They all felt they were able to express their selves – their personality – in English. Most of them gave supporting examples concerning humour, which they found themselves able to express in English as in German. Tanja actually said she felt more open and communicative in English than in German. Data indicate that their English was, indeed, sufficient for their needs and purposes in the courses. They appeared to be able to put across their opinions, emotions, jokes and even praising. The following transcript of Tanja and Daniel S.'s Skype session shows they make use of fillers (“what’s she called”), easily make cultural jokes (“the walking disasters”) and express astonishment (“oh my God”) in the target language.

Daniel S.: *that celebrities often glamourise alcohol abuse like this what's she called this Amy Winehouse*

Tanja: *yeah for example but I think also Paris Hilton they like*

Daniel S.: *the walking disasters yeah*

Tanja: *yeah*

Daniel S.: *and there's just a video on youtube from of David Hasselhoff he's completely drunk lying on the kitchen floor and eating an horrible burger*

Tanja: *oh my God*

All this suggests students have a positive disposition towards native L2 speakers, but also seriously acknowledge the gains from peer interaction with non-native speakers in such a pedagogical environment as the one prompted by the courses they participated in. The notion of *integrativeness* in the context of second language learning motivation suggests learners are very likely to attain success when they are driven to integrate in the target language community. The students' views suggest some e-learning activities, wikis in particular, enable integrativeness within an L2 community to gain another dimension. The fact that students understand the need to keep a balance between fluency and correctness and thus understand the need to accept the possibility of *Englishes* outside of a *native-speaker norm* indicates the fulfilment of their *Ideal L2 Self* is not strictly linked to the attributes of a native speaker and thus a teacher-oriented learning setting, but takes the possibility of peer practices involving non-native speakers devoted to communication with a focus on form. The fact that the courses offered a learning context which they felt helped them bridge the gap between their current and their ideal L2 self surely ensured motivation throughout: “I hope we'll do another collaborative assignment. It was a pleasure!!” (Daniel S. in the journal about the *Binge Drinking* essay writing experience); “second week's already done...My feelings are positive as usual” (Tanja, *European Elections 2009* journal).

However, it must be added that motivation sustained not only because students were moved by the possibility to attain their *Ideal L2 Self*, and at times their *Ought-to L2 Self* as well, but also because of their positive *L2 Learning Experience*. Their immediate learning environment and experience (e.g. the experience of success derived from successful collaboration) proved to be an

essential condition to keep motivation up. In his interview, Daniel S. said that working with a female peer motivated him as well because they shared different, gender-biased perspectives on several issues, therefore suggesting mixed-gender collaboration might be beneficial. For Svenja, “it was nice to actually talk to the partner and hear her voice because it is more personal than just communicating over e-mail” (*Binge Drinking* journal), which suggests this type of collaboration fostered motivation. When reflecting about the *Binge Drinking* Skype activity in her journal, Tanja indicated that having a motivated partner worked as a stimulus too. The reverse applied to unsuccessful collaboration, which obviously affected the students’ motivation negatively. Experiencing a new learning setting was also said to be motivating: “...the speaking activity has been the most interesting and exciting so far because I've never done that before” (Tanja in the journal about the *Binge Drinking* Skype activity).

The data collected strongly suggest these students’ view of learning is in line with a communicative constructivist orientation based on autonomy, authentication and collaboration. Most importantly, this data suggests that the activities analysed and discussed strongly facilitate such an approach to the process of meeting the students’ particular needs and purposes. The learning outcomes they identified as having been achieved throughout these same courses shall give further insight into this. The next chapter looks into learning outcomes in more detail.

6.5 Perceived learning outcomes

Throughout chapter 6, I have provided some information with regard to the learning outcomes students said to have achieved in the courses. The most striking conclusion to be drawn from their comments to this point is probably that the wiki activities were the most learning-conducive and that this is intimately connected with the fact that these activities facilitate collaborative output processing.

The previous chapters shed light on the course participants’ views on e-learning in general and on specific e-learning activities in particular. The analysis carried out enabled an assessment of the potential of concrete e-learning tools and resources in the context of the activities the students participated in. Furthermore, it enabled the outlining of a best-practice learning and teaching framework from a learner perspective. In order to complement this framework, this chapter shall give comprehensive insight into what learners perceived to be the learning outcomes of the activities they were engaged in during the courses. Coherence between the ideal learning setting these students outlined and the learning outcomes perceived will lend validity to the learning schema delineated throughout chapter 6, which shall be the basis of the next case studies.

An analysis of the participants’ course data revealed the following categories of learning outcomes: content skills, language skills, social skills, ICT skills and reflection skills.

Each activity shall be assessed individually. However, the data collected does not enable a uniform assessment of all activities. In fact, the students did not assess some of the course activities in terms of learning outcomes. Various reasons account for this.

In the *Binge Drinking* course, the journals focused on the wiki essay writing activity and on the Skype speaking activity respectively. Hence, students were not asked to and did not reflect on the self-study learning package, on the use of concordance tools, on the forum activity to discuss the various dimensions of binge drinking or on the mind map exercise. In addition, except for the forum, students found it difficult to recall these activities in their post-course interviews. Hence, there is no data to evaluate them.

The fact that they showed interest in writing and speaking activities and expressed a clear preference for academic writing from the very beginning of the course, which Svenja, for instance, reiterated in her post-course interview, might be one of the reasons why, in contrast, they recalled the wiki and the Skype activities with ease.

Furthermore, in the *European Elections 2009* course not all students contributed to the chat or to the book activity equally. Their reflection in the journal of this course, which was presented at the very beginning of the course and should serve to assess all the course activities, mirrors their participation, that is, there are not many feedback entries on these activities. Also, in her interview Tanja, for example, had some problems recalling the glossary/hangman activity. Since both the chat and the book activity were writing activities and the book in particular can even be considered to fit into academic writing, which students showed preference for, the fact that students did not provide feedback on the chat or on the book activities indicates that the focus of their assessment was also highly dependent on the degree of collaborativeness of the activity.

One last reason that explains the students' focus of reflection might concern the challenge the activities posed to them. In her interview, for instance, Tanja was asked questions about the glossary/hangman and the learning module activities, which she could not immediately recall, and she answered the hangman and the listening comprehension questions presented in the learning module were too "basic" and "easy". Moreover, when directly asked about her course learning outcomes, Tanja said she had learnt from the Skype session, from the wiki activity and perhaps somehow from the glossary, although not as much because she had not committed significantly. What is more, she said she had learnt from writing the summary because she had to listen to the video clip, she had to memorise and then retrieve the information when writing without conforming to the video framework. In fact, the glossary/hangman and the listening comprehension activities in the learning module were very straightforward activities as opposed to complex tasks such as the wiki, for example, which demanded higher-order thinking skills (see Newmann & Wehlage, 1993 in chapter 2.2).

This offers some more evidence of the conditions students deem essential for learning to occur: activities must suit their needs, interests and purposes (*authentication*), they must be truly collaborative (*collaboration*) and they must pose a challenge within students' ZPD so they can autonomously solve them and have a feeling of successful accomplishment about them (*autonomy*).

As explained before, there is no data to evaluate the self-study learning package, the concordance tools or the mind map activity on binge drinking. The students did make some comments on the book activity both in their journal and interview. However, they only named the problems they faced, mostly of a collaborative nature, when doing the activity, and no

learning outcomes were pointed out. For several reasons, the chat activity to discuss the European elections cannot be assessed properly either: one of the course participants did not participate in that particular activity, leaving her partner unattended; the Moodle tool did not work well and had to be replaced by the Skype chat; and the participants could hardly recall the activity in their interview. Nevertheless, through their few comments in the course journal, it can be said that the group who performed the activity, Tanja and Svenja, found the discussion interesting and fun, and Tanja found the chat and the wiki complemented each other well. Also, the fact that collaboration was successful seems to again have had a positive impact on their impressions, but, as explained, the chat was not a memorable or striking activity: “I liked the activity of the second week, the writing of the summary and the chat...The chat was fun because my chatpartner was very nice and we had an interesting discussion. We worked well together as a team, so that was good too” (Svenja).

I shall therefore start by evaluating the learning outcomes of the forum activity to discuss binge drinking in general. Erpenbeck and Sauter state that forums are “...in der Regel in Ruhe und durchdacht entwickelt, so dass die Qualität der Inhalte deutlich höher ist als z.B. in Chats. Die Lerner erfahren den Nutzen des Wissensaustausches im Kontext von Problemstellungen, die sie selbst betreffen“ (Erpenbeck & Sauter, 2007: p. 240). As said before, students were only asked to comment on the forum activity in their interviews and, in fact, as opposed to chats, they could easily recall this activity. This is probably linked to what Erpenbeck and Sauter suggest, i.e., that forums foster higher-order thinking skills because contributions can be thought-through in a more involved way, which results in higher quality as well as in higher impact on learners. This is supported by the fact that students said to have improved their content, language and reflection skills.

First, they gained knowledge of the topic by reading articles about it to develop their arguments, thus improving their content skills.

As for the development of language skills, learners pointed out they increased their vocabulary on the topic, often through the use of a dictionary, when trying to make their point in a precise way. They also felt their fluency in writing was enhanced and said to have learnt how to state someone’s opinion in their own words.

By having to reflect about how to convey their meaning the best way possible, the course participants developed their reflection skills as well. They said to have gained awareness of their writing process. What is more, in her interview, Tanja said she felt the forum helped her learn how to communicate.

As far as the essay and summary wiki writing activities are concerned, some concrete learning outcomes have already been outlined. The wiki collaborative activities enabled students to learn a great amount of content, namely new facts, ideas and arguments about such up-to-date topics as *binge drinking* and the *European elections*. Both the edition and the discussion functions played a role in this acquisition. In her interview, Mariella explained that through the wiki she had gained general knowledge about the elections topic in English and, most importantly, that she then knew everything she wrote and changed, because she discussed it and so “I won’t forget about it in my whole life”. She actually managed to provide some illustrating examples from the

wiki. Comments as the previous one suggest that the course participants deemed the learning outcomes of the wiki activity permanent but also that the discussion function was very beneficial.

The learning outcomes regarding language skills were also vast. The students said to have learnt vocabulary in context. They placed an emphasis on using the dictionary to find synonyms and on the importance of being aware of the context of the content they acquired. Learning spelling rules was mentioned as well: “The summary did improve my lexical abilities even further than [than] the work on the glossary. I learned the right way to type trans-European or that I always have to capitalize the names of countries or states” (Daniel S. in the journal). They thought to have learnt grammar when attempting to use alternating structures to avoid repetition, and believed to have developed different registers by alternating between the colloquial register used to discuss changes with their peers and the academic type of speech needed to write their final text. In her interview, Mariella explained the importance, and difficulty, of using an appropriate register (“no slang”) to write the text, in addition to the need and opportunity offered by wikis to constantly “polish”, i.e., improve, one’s register and, consequently, one’s text. The course participants also stated to have improved their listening skills by watching the video they had to sum up multiple times, and, first and foremost, their writing skills, in particular regarding argumentative essays and summaries. They considered it useful to revise and practise summary writing and writing in a “compact” way in general (Mariella’s words in her interview), also because it was the first time some students performed such an activity. They all enjoyed the practice on essay writing, which they had requested in their pre-course questionnaires.

The reflective ability they evidenced when expressing this kind of thinking concerning registers should not be ignored either.

In addition, students found the wikis a useful experience for future teachers on “the passing on of knowledge”.

This is Tanja’s comment about the activities taking place during the second week, the wiki and the chat, in her *Elections* journal, which illustrates most of the learning outcomes of the wiki activities pointed out to this point:

The learning outcomes of week 2 - being flexible working with a partner (as usual), being spontaneous when computer tools do not work, improving specific vocabulary, practicing how to find synonyms and create varied sentences, reviewing summary writing structures and rules. My language learning awareness definitely increased because we worked on the summary together to find synonyms and suitable structures while avoiding sticking to[o] close to the clip’s content. This made me think about different ways...to use grammar and vocabulary.

Moreover, her observation that the wiki and the chat activities complemented each other well suggests good integration of the activities of the course.

In both her journal and interview, Tanja mentioned she learnt about different online portals as well, which shows the courses also enabled students to broaden their ICT skills.

An important remark relates to learning modes. The students claimed that they had learnt a lot from their peers during the wiki activities: “I got practise in writing a summary which is very important especially because my partner corrected my mistakes” (Svenja in her elections course journal). They placed a great emphasis on learning through error feedback, enabled by the

edition, the discussion and the history functions. Warschauer and Healey suggest personalised and detailed error feedback, as opposed to computerised generalised feedback, improves writing more (see Warschauer & Healey, 1998). In reality, all the students stressed that most of the learning outcomes they perceived to have achieved derived from collaboration and negotiation:

I really liked that exercise because I have a problem with writing formal essays so I saw this as a chance to learn from someone maybe more experienced...We used skype, email and wiki to communicate...I contributed my part, he corrected me, I looked over his work and tried to correct him. I learned quite a lot. (Svenja in her journal in the *Binge Drinking* course)

Even though not clearly stated by the students themselves, participant observation suggests they also developed their social skills. There are several factors which might have had an impact on this development, for example: the need to collaborate to successfully complete the task, interaction with different proficiency levels, interaction with a different gender, interaction with peers at different ages.

All of this is in line with Erpenbeck and Sauter's view that wikis help learners develop various skills simultaneously (see Erpenbeck & Sauter, 2007).

Moving on to the Skype session to discuss a particular aspect of binge drinking, students also said to have developed their content skills and thus enriched their ability to discuss the topic. This was primarily linked to the synchronous interactive nature of the tool. A second reason is related to being able to share information about their previous personal experience and, most importantly, about their readings, which were essential to accomplish the previous activities: "My partner did great - thanks, Daniel, for so much reading! - which means we had a lot to discuss" (Tanja in her journal). In fact, exposing their previous experience and sharing data from their readings they considered relevant or interesting provided a stimulus for the discussion as much as having to discuss a particular dimension of binge drinking they had not elaborated on in previous activities yet. Students felt they had something to say. Again, authentication helped the success of the Skype activity.

Students felt they developed language skills as well. They highlighted learning vocabulary in context, improving their pronunciation, and increasing their fluency. Tanja's claim in her journal, previously quoted, shows the importance of a purposeful, contextualised use of English: "I can't really tell whether I learnt more vocab or grammar structures. It was advantageous to devote myself to the English language (not on a theoretical level!) on the whole and familiarize myself with the context in which words are used". In her interview, she explained she had learnt new vocabulary, but was not sure about grammar since she did not think about it anymore. This suggests that the participants were satisfied with the lexical approach to language learning the courses facilitated. Improvements concerning pronunciation were enabled by partner correction and by the possibility to later listen to the conversation again, since it was recorded for teacher assessment. Progress regarding fluency is mainly associated to increase in confidence, as previously explained: "I got to know my own speaking abilities. I'm not shy anymore to use English, it's not such a horrible pidgin anymore and my brains are enlightened" (Daniel S. in his journal). In fact, the Skype session also developed students' general ability to communicate. They claimed to have overcome shyness and the fear of not being able to express themselves properly: "...all my fears that my English would be not that good, because I had no opportunity

to talk English for a really long time, vanished” (Daniel S. in his journal about the Skype session). The personal face of Skype was also emphasised: “The skype session was an important part in the process of collaborative learning because we were able to communicate with each other, like in a discussion in class...I learnt not to be too shy while speaking...” (Tanja in her journal), “It was nice to actually talk to the partner and hear her voice because it is more personal than just communicating over e-mail” (Svenja in her journal), “The topic was important for me, of course, but I had such a fun to talk to Tanja and exchanging arguments that I would put emphasis on the talking. I learnt a lot” (Daniel S. in his journal). The students’ emphasis on the confidence they gained is probably one of the most relevant outcomes of this Skype activity since this comfort zone is needed for learners to, through meaning negotiation, develop within their ZPD.

The students’ awareness of their expanding confidence shows the impact of this Skype session on their reflection skills. In his journal Daniel S. claimed to have “...got to know [his] own speaking abilities”. Students also claimed to have developed their arguments through improvement of their thinking process. All of this shows students’ awareness of their evolution process, which the Skype activity, in connection with the journal, fostered. As described before, for the Skype session to be recorded, students had to learn how to use the Pamela Recorder, the Skype device which recorded their calls into an mp3-format. The students considered this added value. Recording their calls allowed them to analyse their production and go about their performance in an evaluative manner by focussing on aspects such as pronunciation. In addition, they were content to become aware of the existence of such a device, of how to use it and of the learning purposes it may fulfil: “now I know how to use pamela which might be a helpful device for other calls I’ll make in the future” (Tanja in her journal).

The students’ assessment of the Skype session is highly positive. Here are some more general comments from their journals that offer further insight into their perception: “I really liked the skype session even though or maybe because speaking – among writing, reading and listening – is the weakest of my language skills” (Tanja), “I put in a lot of effort and in the end it paid off” (Daniel S.), “I was simply one of the greatest experiences for me in the last few months” (Daniel S.), “...it was fun to do this assignment” (Svenja).

As for the glossary/hangman activity, in which students should collect and define *election*-related words and then check comprehension and acquisition, the data that addresses the learning outcomes perceived by the students in this activity has been mainly extracted from their journals. Comments in the participants’ journals were rather positive but it seems that the activities that followed, in particular the wiki, outshone this one. In fact, after so much praising, students could hardly recall the glossary/hangman activity in their interviews.

For example, in her interview, Tanja considered this activity too easy. Yet, the focus on vocabulary learning and consolidation in the students’ reflection on learning outcomes in their journals is undeniable. The hangman activity seems to have been the right complement to ensure the efficiency of the glossary activity. When playing the game, students had to understand the definitions and recall vocabulary, and they could correct their glossary entries. All of this enabled them to (re)consolidate their lexical knowledge. Having to define words found in a video about a topic such as the European elections, and then understand other definitions to solve the

game, triggered contextualised learning. This is why the course participants seemed to refer to the development of content and language skills all in one. Students were not playing with decontextualised words put under the same heading, as in a word search for example. In her journal, Tanja also explains the pertinence of the elections topic and the basic need to learn this specific type of vocabulary. She enjoyed learning new words as well as practising and repeating previously acquired words: “I appreciate the practice and repetition of words. Of course, I learnt new ones, too”.

As said before, in his journal, which students had to write after each activity, Daniel S. praised the glossary at a first stage, but then said, “the summary [in the wiki] did improve my lexical abilities even further than [than] the work on th[e] glossary”. To conclude, at the end of it he explains, “the work on the glossary and then on the summary added to my lexical abilities and usage of vocabulary”.

This activity had some impact on the enhancement of listening skills too, as previously hinted at: “My listening abilities improved definitely because you have to hang on the lips of the interviewees to get the gist of their utterances” (Daniel S.). The glossary/hangman activity enabled students to work on their listening, writing and reading skills with a clear lexical focus, all in one.

It must also be considered that by watching the video to complete the glossary, students had to deal with the topic “democratic deficit” and with the European elections in general, so their political awareness (Daniel S.’s words) and their ability to participate in the election process increased as well.

Finally, having the possibility to assess their learning and monitor their progress seemed to have been an asset of this activity: “the hangman was interesting because I could try out the words and check how many I already knew or [had] learned by watching the video” (Svenja). This, again, shows the development of the ability to reflect on and regulate one’s learning. In Daniel S.’s quotation below it becomes clear again that the glossary would not have been so fruitful without the activity that followed it. Yet, Daniel S. also makes it clear that the process of looking for synonyms to write the definitions was learning-conducive as well, not only because he acquired new words but also because he became aware of the difficulty of building a dictionary. This shows this activity had some effect not only on the students’ learning awareness but also on their language awareness. A part of Daniel S.’s thoughts below had been previously quoted for other purposes:

To explain a particular word...is not as easy as I used to think...If you have a noun like election then you may [should] not explain it with the verb ‘to elect’ but you have to circumscribe it by using other words or...another noun to clarify its meaning. Finding synonyms wa[s] quite interesting because it improved my vocabulary...through this funny hangman game I could add some important words to my vocabulary...I really did benefit not only from my entries in the glossary but also from the entries of the other participants. That was a nice and helpful activity. The best thing was the hangman game...Adding the vocabulary to the glossary also revealed to me that it is a whole lot of work to create a dictionary and to find understandable definitions.

From a more general point of view, there were also two comments in the elections course journals about the learning outcomes of the course at large. Mariella highlighted writing and lexical learning outcomes as well as the development of content skills: “As a final comment I

can say that all activities helped me with, I think: developing my style [according to her interview, meaning ‘register’], expression and vocabulary skills as well as my general knowledge”. Tanja placed the emphasis of her comment on the usefulness of doing activities on a topic she identified with, because this way she could improve both her content and language skills with the purpose of “...get[ting] more information and form[ing] an opinion”.

The learning outcomes students perceived to have achieved shed some more light into what they consider to be the conditions and strategies for language learning and prove their requirements of success are in line with their actual performance. Mariella and Tanja’s comments, for example, valued the fact that the learning which resulted from the course concerned both language and content, which is in line with their view that a CLIL setting is fruitful.

To sum up, the learning outcomes identified by students are mostly language and content learning results. Reflection and social skills were also often said to have been developed. Some students pointed out ICT skills as well.

With regard to language skills, vocabulary was the language area students claimed to have developed more together with their writing skills. On the other hand, they suggested the development of their lexis favoured the evolution of their content knowledge, since they could appropriate this lexis and use it in a real context, for example in the debates about the European elections at their university.

As far as reflection skills are concerned, the course participants several times claimed to have developed both their language and language learning awareness and their comments throughout show they were indeed able to discuss their learning process and progress. This is related to the transparency of the tools in the course and to the introspective role the journals played.

As for social skills, students learnt to work collaboratively in a more efficient way, for example by being more flexible. Also, the collaborative activities in the course were the ones that generated more learning outcomes.

Finally, the course participants believed to have improved their ICT skills as well. Being able to appropriately react to technical problems and learning how to work with online portals and e-learning platforms are some examples of this.

Students were only able to name learning outcomes derived from collaborative activities. Amongst all the collaborative activities, the wiki activities were seen as the ones that produced more learning outcomes with regard to the development of all the skills mentioned. The wiki tool facilitated the structure of the essay and summary writing activities, which enabled process-focused learning and thus the development of language, content, reflection, social and ICT skills. Even though students could see the potential of tools such as the forum or Skype, they regarded the wiki tool as more versatile and, consequently, more learning-conducive. A sophisticated ICT instrument that enables students to constantly go over a text and endlessly edit it, keep track of changes and discuss them triggers reflection in a way a forum or a glossary do not if used in isolation. And it is this same reflection that fosters the development of all the other skills. The fact that so much potential is concentrated in one single tool is obviously remarkable and did not go unnoticed to the course participants.

6.6 Conclusions

The assessment of the *Binge Drinking* and the *European Elections* courses was even more positive than the assessment of the *English for Beauticians – Nail Care* course. E-learning again proved interesting and motivating for the course participants. The attempt to bridge the gap between their actual L2 self and their *Ideal L2 Self* as well as their *L2 Learning Experience* secured the motivation they showed before the courses in nearly all cases. The participants who dropped the study after the first course did so mostly because the workload was rather heavy for the time they had available or they felt the need to work with native speakers rather than German peers. The *Nail Care*-course students found the integration of the e-learning materials and activities into their face-to-face lesson good. The *Binge Drinking* and *European Elections*-course students frequently reported the multi-modality of the e-learning activities they participated in. In addition, they showed they understood that they were being exposed to a task-based approach to language learning. All this shows integration within these e-learning-based courses was successful as well. In reality, although these were not blended language learning courses, the fact that the students in many ways managed to find strong ties between the e-learning activities and their real life to a certain extent filled the gap concerning the lack of face-to-face contact. Even though students still missed face-to-face collaboration when comparing e-learning to conventional learning, they acknowledged the potential of the online activities they participated in in this regard. They saw these activities as added value, in particular because they authenticated them and felt the collaborative possibilities they offered enabled them to monitor their learning process autonomously and achieve valuable learning outcomes. Just as the French students had suggested, although the lack of face-to-face interaction often increased the work time span, engaging in these online activities accelerated the students' learning process. This was mostly due to the beneficial nature of this type of collaboration, which was spread over time but more process-focused and deeper in approach. Students showed increasing learning and language learning awareness, just as the *Nail Care* course that had taken place in France had hinted would occur. The impact of collaboration on learning, as opposed to the impact of individual activities, was rather impressive. As supposed before, the possibility to collaboratively discuss the course topic in spoken and written forms and, in particular, the opportunity to *language* also helped suppress the need for face-to-face interaction. In any way am I, however, arguing in favour of e-learning-based practices only. As the students often claimed, blended language learning practices offer undeniable opportunities. Notwithstanding, it is interesting to notice the potential of some e-learning activities in attenuating this absence.

The wiki activities once again emerged as the most learning-conducive, above all due to the already explored reflective facilities offered by the wiki tool. Also, the German students assessed the forum more positively than the French group had. This probably happened because the types of forum the former participated in demanded higher participation levels and they could relate the topic to their experience. Again, the role of collaboration, authentication and autonomy in stimulating learning was unquestionable. In addition, bearing in mind the criticism offered by the participants in the *Nail Care* course, the forum activities in the *Binge Drinking* and in the *European Elections* courses were structured into discussion topics and there was more teacher

intervention, which inconspicuously guided and stimulated forum participation. Analogously to the feedback provided in the *Nail Care* course, the feedback on the mind map activity was again very unpromising. Students did use some of the vocabulary collected in the mind map in their writing, but they did not seem to be aware of it, probably because there was no complementary activity that would transparently show the application of the knowledge and skills they had developed. The fact that they were not as aware of their learning process in this situation as otherwise also suggests that the mind map activities require rethinking and adjustment. Despite having been thought as an initial ice-breaking activity for students to gradually start engaging with the topic, the phrases to be collected probably need to be even more topic-specific, and there should be a complementary exercise to test contextualised use. Students could, for example, create situated gap-filling exercises about their own experience for each other. This would facilitate lexical consolidation and learning transparency. As in the *Nail Care* course, the glossary was positively assessed. The analysis of this activity was more exhaustive this time. It had been suggested that motivation aroused from the possibility of endless addition of words and of quickly building a transparent pool of vocabulary, but there had been no detailed data regarding learning outcomes. Still, the French teacher had suggested the crosswords that had followed the glossary should have enabled the students to check vocabulary acquisition. In fact, the hangman appeared as a much more engaging activity. The students deemed it essential to close the cycle of lexical learning since it allowed them to test and improve the efficiency of the glossary definitions as well as of their word or phrase acquisition. This confirms the need students feel to monitor their learning process and autonomously contribute to improve it. In fact, the German students were mostly very pleased with the glossary activity despite acknowledging its potential was far behind that of the wiki activities, even with regard to lexical development. This was mainly related to the idea that the glossary activity did not foster the same type of reflection promoted by the wiki activities. In reality, these activities had a different focus. Even though they were both aimed at enhancing lexical skills, which was treasured by the course participants, the wiki activities had a more comprehensive goal, namely that of enabling students to collaboratively achieve a suitable final writing product by means of thought-through process-based negotiation of various writing aspects. The glossary/hangman was designed as a pre-task activity whereas the wiki activity was actually a task.

With regard to concrete learning outcomes, the students were convinced these courses produced a number of them and mostly pointed out content and language skills, but also personal and social skills, reflection skills and finally ICT skills. They claimed to have gained wide and varied knowledge about the topics being dealt with. Together with their writing skills, vocabulary was the language area students claimed to have developed more. The learning outcomes considered major strongly related to collaboration and therefore to the wiki activities, which appeared as the most collaborative. The transparent and introspective nature of most activities helped the students assess and monitor their learning process. They were able to cope with technical problems and learnt about new ICT facilities.

The analysis of the students' assessment of the course activities and of their performance provides the answer to the research questions presented, namely, on the one hand, what

conditions and strategies learners deem essential for language learning and, on the other hand, what activities, and tools, they perceive as most learning-conducive.

The students' perceptions of the conditions and strategies for language learning very clearly fit into the conditions initially suggested as best-practice learning principles. Learners tended to better assess process-centred activities they could authenticate, that pushed them to be autonomous higher-thinking agents of their learning and that required them to communicate in order to collaborate as well as to collaborate in order to communicate. Overall, the web-based English language learning scenario they learnt in provided an excellent context for *linguaging* and *pushing* output. These students' global assessment of the e-learning activities is surprisingly positive despite initial doubts concerning the lack of face-to-face interaction. Yet, blended learning still appears to be the most promising setting for language learning as, for example, face-to-face exchange is less conducive to misunderstandings, in particular because factors such as body language support communication. The students' preference over activities which required them to construct, to collaborate and to communicate, i.e., their preference over activities that required their negotiation-based agency could not go unnoticed. What is more, the learners often showed contentment with the self and peer review demanded by most course activities, even if these had a so much wanted communicative focus, thus showing a clear preference for a communicative approach with a focus on form and for reflective practices. They appreciated context-situated, above all authenticated, discourse (re)construction and believed it led to permanent learning.

Some activities met this view more easily than others. In all fields, the wikis received the best appraisals. From the point of view of development of a particular language skill, the Skype session was the only activity which directly focused on the development of speaking skills and, indeed, it was considered to offer very good opportunities to develop these. Students felt motivated to engage in an activity that also counter-balanced the lack of face-to-face contact because they could hear each other's voice even if not seeing one another. It was probably this fact that enabled them to become aware of their speaking skills and improve their self-confidence as well as fluency as speakers of English. Stress was placed on the fact that students did not have to be concerned about their correctness and could express their points of view in a free way. This would probably have been different had they not been able to preserve their face. On the contrary, being able to hear one another helped students create a connection and thus exchange valuable input from previous experiences and readings. Therein rested the so much appreciated collaborative nature of this activity. There were other activities such as the chat and the wiki, in particular the discussion function, in which students used writing in a conversational tone as well, but not much was said about this. As for activities that fostered writing skills, the forum and the journal activities were also positively assessed but the wiki activities emerged as the most complete. Several advantages of this activity were pointed out. The most relevant, however, were related to the facilities concerning peer review as well as meaning and form negotiation because, for reasons pointed out before, they enabled students to focus more on the writing process than paper face-to-face collaborative writing activities do. As for activities that trigger the development of reading skills, the integration of the learning package, the corpus word-search exercise and the mind map exercise seemed to have resulted

well as pre-task activities, even though the mind map activity still requires optimisation. In spite of the lack of direct assessment of these exercises by the students, the analysis of performance data showed they made use of what they had worked on during these activities later in the task, which suggests the wiki also triggered reading skills. As far as listening skills are concerned, the glossary/hangman activity, with a stress on the hangman exercise, was definitely the most fruitful because there was a wide range of cognitive processes involved: selecting relevant contextualised words or phrases from a video by listening to it; defining those words or phrases adequately, i.e., without being redundant, for example; testing the efficiency of the definitions and word or phrase acquisition by playing the hangman; improving inefficient definitions; repeatedly playing the game to reach vocabulary consolidation. Obviously, when writing the summary of the video in the wiki, the students were also developing listening skills. In fact, the potential of the wiki activities overcame that of other activities by far. The wiki activity enabled students to develop their knowledge, language, personal and social skills, reflection and ICT skills. Within the language skills, it was the activity that seemed to offer the widest linguistic growth because it not only helped students improve their writing competence with lexical progress but it also triggered listening and reading skills and even enabled them to work on their speaking skills through the use of a spoken register in the discussion function, for example. The possibilities offered by this tool are immense and probably the most important conclusion of Case Study 1. Since these learners were exposed to a learning framework they assessed positively, it is not surprising that they identify such valuable learning outcomes. Validation of the results is achieved by the coherence found between the two research questions, conditions and strategies they deem essential for language learning and their perceived outcomes within such a framework. From these learners' point of view, collaborative output processing in web-based English language learning scenarios does play a role of paramount importance in language learning.

Finally, results suggest such e-learning settings like the ones presented throughout this chapter are applicable to different proficiency levels. Still, the fact that the German students were at a higher proficiency level than the French seemed to have led to higher autonomy, thus higher engagement levels and greater outcomes. Yet, this difference might also have been influenced by other factors such as different cultural backgrounds.

These findings provided insight into ideal conditions and strategies for language learning. The design and implementation of the following case studies, this time based on blended language learning courses, built on these assumptions.

7 Collaborative output processing in wikis – two case studies

This chapter will focus on Case Studies 2 (CS2) and 3 (CS3) of this PhD thesis. These case studies aimed at further exploring the hypotheses put forward by previous research with a special focus on wikis. I shall begin this chapter with an overview of the context, the objectives and the approach of these case studies. I will then carry out an overall assessment of the wiki collaborative experience of the learners taking part in these case studies to examine the conditions for collaboration to succeed in such an environment. The subchapters that follow shall focus on more specific issues: teacher and peer support in such a learning context, the role of *linguaging* in wiki peer reviews, and finally specificities of revisions facilitated by wiki environments.

7.1 Context

The goal of the following part of this PhD thesis was to deepen the understanding of learning in web collaborative spaces, with particular attention to wikis as writing platforms that facilitate learning-conducive collaborative output processes. This part of the investigation was based upon the conclusions drawn from literature review (chapters 2, 3 and, in particular, 4), the results of the survey about teachers' perceptions regarding the use of ICT across Europe (chapter 5) and Case Study 1 (CS1) about students' conceptualisation of ideal learning conditions and strategies (chapter 6).

In CS1 learners acknowledged the benefits of engaging in blended language learning practices guided by the best-practice language learning precepts advocated in the first chapters of this PhD thesis. The literature had suggested information and communication technologies that rely on social interaction offer immense possibilities in this regard and call for integration into blended language learning scenarios. CS1 students' perception of the advantages of process-oriented practices grounded in principles of autonomy, collaboration and authentication also suggested that further, specific research is needed to increase the learning-conduciveness of learning and teaching practices in the context of the ever-changing world of today, that is, in an environment that stimulates skill development rather than knowledge acquisition. The literature had already indicated that the potential of wikis in such a context was so promising that it required further exploration. A platform that integrates not only page edition possibilities but also a communicative tool such as a discussion forum as well as a history function might be the ideal solution for authenticated communication with a focus on form as determined by the participants' linguistic needs as the activity progresses (see Ellis, 2003: p. 100). The analysis of the pilot course *English for Beauticians – Nail Care* had also suggested that it was fundamental to deepen knowledge in this field according to what the literature had suggested to be in demand (see chapter 4.3): examining how L2 learners work with wikis, evaluating the effectiveness of wikis as an educational writing tool, understanding the process as well as the final product of a wiki composition environment, investigating the nature of collaboration in the wiki space and its effects on the text (Arnold, Dukate and Kost, 2009), experimenting with variations of wiki

collaborative tasks and the degree of intervention by teachers (Kessler, 2009) with the help of an analysis of language acts and text changes in the wiki space (Rüschhoff, 2009; Kessler & Bikowski, 2010; Moloudi, 2011). In CS1 the wiki activities emerged as the most collaborative, the most engaging, the most motivating and the most learning-conducive, by developing not only knowledge, language, personal and social skills, but also reflection and ICT abilities. CS1 learners clearly preferred activities that required their negotiation-based agency.

On the other hand, the results of the survey about teachers' perceptions regarding the use of ICT across Europe (chapter 5) indicated that in most cases teachers are unaware of the existence of resources such as wikis but show interest in networking, communication and social interaction. The discrepancy between these teachers' daily teaching modes and their actual understanding of appropriate learning and teaching practices, which are very much in line with the best-practice learning and teaching framework proposed in this PhD thesis, suggests not only that there is an urge to improve ICT physical facilities at a European level, but also that teachers need to be exposed to the opportunities offered by tools of this nature to fulfil their requirements of success fittingly, in a professional development framework such as the one suggested by Duran et al. (2012). CS1 shows a way to achieve this exposition (see chapter 6.1 in particular) as well as to explore scenarios as the ones outlined by both students and teachers.

The case studies to be presented in this chapter will explore the potential of language learning and teaching settings that integrate the conclusions drawn. What is the real potential of web-based collaborative writing for language learning and teaching? What new possibilities and constraints do learners identify in wiki-based collaborative output processing? What is the impact of online *languaging* on peer review and revision as well as on learning in general? This chapter presents an investigation that moves from general to specific on the basis of two further case studies.

Case Study 2 (CS2) had a broader target, the macrocosm of a CLIL blended language learning task-based course centred on a wiki task, whereas Case Study 3 (CS3) focused on the microcosm of wiki-based language learning and teaching situations also integrated in a blended language learning scenario. CS2 saw its context narrowed to the activities and tools that proved meaningful in CS1. The design of CS3 built on the results of CS1 and CS2, namely by integrating a new variable, *cross-cultural* collaboration, in an attempt to examine its benefits over mono-cultural interaction in the authentication of the learning process, in motivation and obviously in learning outcomes. The variable added was also destined to integrate the study in a real educational framework guided by the National Curricula involved, which call for real language use and learner participation in international projects to develop an understanding of other countries and cultures.

7.2 Objectives and approach

The investigation presented in this chapter, based on data from CS2 and CS3, was guided by the following research questions:

1. What possibilities and constraints do learners identify in wiki-based collaborative processes?
2. What new roles does the wiki space unveil for peers?
3. Does the wiki space facilitate *linguaging* and what is its impact on text construction?
4. What is the focus of wiki-space revisions, their contribution to self-reliance and accuracy enhancement and what factors are they affected by?

To find the answers to these questions, the two case studies carried out provided data different in quality and quantity. CS2 analysed a macrocosm whereas CS3 looked into a microcosm. In addition, CS3 was based on a cross-cultural experience that delivered very specific and thus rich input for the aspects being broached here. Furthermore, the semi-structured interviews conducted in CS2 did not generate such concrete data as the questionnaires applied in CS3. For these reasons, in most cases, CS2 offers more general, mostly qualitative, material and consequently an introduction to more detailed, qualitative and quantitative results provided by CS3.

Research within Case Study 2 followed a qualitative approach and built upon the following types of data:

- a) the answers to the pre-course semi-structured interview (Appendix F);
- b) the product of the pre-test (Appendix G);
- c) the comments in the journal on Moodle;
- d) the processes and products of the wiki activities and other assignments;
- e) the contributions in the post-test (Appendix H);
- f) the answers to the post-course semi-structured interview (Appendix I);
- g) data from participant observation throughout the course (course performance, face-to-face or e-mail informal contact, activity guidance in the forums, journals, etc.) and throughout the interviews (free observation of spontaneous speech).

CS2, *Binge Drinking*⁴², explores a course about the same topic as in CS1. However, CS2 was based on a blended learning course which was composed of face-to-face classroom and online tasks supported by two different platforms – Moodle and Wikispaces. It was conducted within the functioning lessons of English of a year-9⁴³ class at Colégio Dom Diogo de Sousa, a Portuguese private school in Braga (Portugal). Students were taught the National Curriculum, and the school aimed at developing the learners' listening, reading, speaking and writing skills within a theme-based curriculum. The students chosen to participate in this study were part of a high-level year-9 class. The composition of classes in this school is level-based, which means that syllabus adjustments are often needed for differentiated learning. The implementation of such a study suited the needs of a challenging group as this and was thus readily accepted by both the school administration and the students. Thirteen out of the twenty-six students that composed the class agreed to participate in the study. Students attended two English face-to-face classes per week – a forty-five and a ninety-minute class. The online classes, which I decided

⁴² See http://marianaesteves.wikispaces.com/Piloting2_Group+1_ARita%26JPedro%26Miguel%26Catarina [Retrieved December 5, 2014].

⁴³ In Portugal Year 9 is the final year before going to secondary school and students are about 14 or 15 years old.

should work as consolidation and extension of what was being learnt at school, were added to these hours and required a workload of about one hour and a half a week. Despite the blended learning nature of the course, data were collected online or in additional face-to-face sessions, as only half the class was involved in the study. These students were selected because their proficiency level was approximately B1 to B2 according to the CEFR, which enabled me to carry on exploring the potential of the language learning settings advocated with further proficiency levels. Five of the participants were male and eight were female. As in Case Study 1, they volunteered in order to improve their ICT and English communication skills. The course took place from March to June 2010. It was initially intended to last one and a half months but its length extended to nearly three months because two of the activities carried out (the journal and the essay) did not develop as expected. I taught the class.

The thirteen volunteers took an individual pre-interview about their perceptions on several matters, in particular (e-)learning and collaboration. This first interview provided further information for the design of the course as well as for group formation. As in CS1, this interview had a basic script (see Appendix F) which was adapted in the course of it for theory to generate from naturally developed data, later marked and grouped under conceptual headings. The interviews were sound-recorded for subsequent analysis. The original script asked students to

- (1) define learning and name conditions/attitudes they found essential for learning to occur;
- (2) define e-learning and explain the differences as well as short and long-term advantages and disadvantages to conventional learning;
- (3) explain the role of collaboration in learning, express/justify preference for collaborative or individual activities, give examples of a truly collaborative learning and e-learning activity, explain how collaboration can develop introspection, language awareness or learning awareness, name the conditions needed for collaboration to be learning-conducive; state opinion about (previous experience with) wikis/Moodle;
- (4) state opinion on Content and Language Integrated Learning and explore possible meanings and benefits of such a scenario;
- (5) explain the role of motivation on learning and define motivation/learning motivation.

By the time CS2 began, the students were about to begin a new theme of their syllabus entitled *Teens' Problems*. For this reason, *binge drinking* seemed to be a good topic for the online tasks of this blended learning course. This way it would be possible to take advantage from resources that had proved meaningful in CS1, which the pre-course interview suggested would also fit into these learners' perception of conditions for learning, and assess the gains of their applicability in another context. Moreover, my experience on this specific age level told me this was a topic that would arouse students' curiosity and authentication.

After the pre-course interview, a first group session with all the participants took place in which the students had to take a pre-test followed by ICT training. In the pre-test, the students had to write an argumentative essay on the statement *Drinking is a major problem nowadays* without any reference material or support (see Appendix G). This pre-test was intended to provide information on the students' knowledge of the topic and the writing of argumentative essays in

particular, as well as on their writing in general. In this same session, they were then introduced to the course and received training on Moodle and Wikispaces.

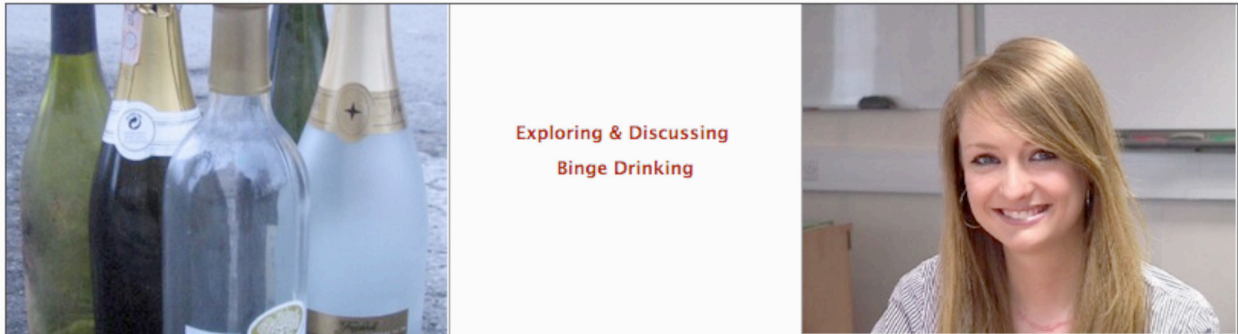
The online part of the course, *Binge Drinking*, aimed at developing the learners' skills to discuss several dimensions of binge drinking within a task-based approach. The course should engage students in the development of all the four language skills. Oral proficiency skills, for example, could also be improved indirectly through cross-skill influence (see chapter 3.3) in a forum, since the type of forum interaction taking place in the course resembled the kind of chat interaction that helps develop spoken discourse (discourse markers, hedges, intensifiers, interaction with the interlocutor, etc.). Yet, the focus of the course should be on writing. Based on the Portuguese syllabus requirements for Year 9, in which argumentative essays were listed as one of the types of text that could be dealt with at this level, as well as on the fact that this was a high-ability class, I decided that the main task should again be the collaborative writing of an argumentative essay on one of the dimensions that had already been explored in CS1, this time adapted to Portugal: *Is binge drinking a social problem? Do early closing hours lead to binge drinking? Is binge drinking a problem in Portugal? Is binge drinking a generation problem?* The choice of the task was therefore based on the three considerations thought essential by Peris (2004): motivation, curriculum-fulfilment and difficulty (see chapter 2.6).

The pre-task phase that had been used in CS1 was adapted according to the findings reported and to create a slightly different scenario and further possibilities of analysis. Yet, the goals of this phase remained the same. It was still important to (a) understand the concept *binge drinking* both in origin and in a real-life context, (b) be able to discuss the topic openly and in an informal way, using adequate phrases to express different shades of opinions and present arguments, (c) consolidate and extend vocabulary on the subject, (d) be aware of how to structure an argumentative essay and fill it in with content.

As far as the main task was concerned, it was essential to enable and encourage students to discuss content and form as well as other dimensions of writing such as stylistic aspects. This should shed further light on the implications of a meta-space in collaborative writing. In addition, all activities should be followed by post-performance reflection. This would enable students to engage in further awareness raising to assess the whole learning process and product, which would generate more introspective data.

The course took place on two different platforms, Moodle and Wikispaces (Figure 7.1, Figure 7.2 and Figure 7.4), because they enabled the conditions above to be met. On Moodle, which again played a pedagogically integrative role, the following prompt introduced the e-learning component: "In your English classes you have been talking about teens' problems. Drinking is one of them. What do you know about binge drinking?" This should enable students to keep in mind this was a blended language learning course even though only nearly half of the class was participating in this component.

Binge Drinking



In your English classes you have been talking about teens' problems. Drinking is one of them. What do you know about binge drinking?

Before you start the course, be aware that you should write in the following journal every time you finish an activity. Only your teacher will have access to it.

 [Journal – Reflecting about the activities of the course](#)

WEEK 1 (March 26 – April 3)

Step 1: Key terms and phrases


Use the *Sacodeyl English Corpus* to explore the meaning of "binge drinking":

What does "binge drinking" refer to?

Is it something positive or a negative? What makes you think so?

How would you translate "binge drinking" into Portuguese?

Go to the assignment and follow the instructions.

 [Assignment – What is binge drinking?](#)

Step 2: Listening comprehension


Listen to the video by clicking on the following link and find out what Beatrice says about binge drinking. Then follow the instructions in the learning module.

 [Learning module – Beatrice on Binge Drinking](#)

Step 3: Focus on Form

(A) Awareness Raising

Use the *Sacodeyl English Corpus*, go to Section Search, select the topic category "Discussions/Smoking & drinking" and the grammar category "Adjectives/adverbs". Click on "Search!". Then select "Adjectives/adverbs" in the Annotations box, and click on "Set Highlighting". Study the use of the highlighted adjectives and adverbs.

 [Link – Copy of the interview section](#)

(B) Practice

Open the learning module below and do the exercises on

Adjectives and Adverbs

Modality ("should" and "shouldn't").

 [Link – Learning module](#)

Note: Don't forget to write on your journal at the top of this course!

Figure 7.1 *Binge Drinking* Course (week 1) on Moodle (CS2)

WEEK 2 (April 4 – April 11)

Step 4: Communication

Have a look at the following list with useful expressions for structuring an argument. Then go to the forum to discuss the binge drinking issue.

 [Useful expressions for structuring your arguments](#)

 [Forum – Discussion on Binge Drinking](#)

Step 5: Deeper insights into the topic


Look at the following website and read about
binge drinking in different countries
the short-term and long-term effects of alcohol

 [Link to the website](#)

Step 6: Writing an argumentative essay

You will now be writing an argumentative essay on binge drinking.

You normally divide an argumentative essay into 3 main parts: introduction with thesis statement, body paragraphs with specific arguments and conclusion. The following link might help you structure your argumentative essay better.

 [Introductions, Body Paragraphs, and Conclusions for Argument Papers](#)

Note: Don't forget to write on your journal at the top of this course!

WEEK 3 and 4 (April 12 – May 2)

Step 6: Writing an argumentative essay (cont'd)

Now that you know who you are working with and how to structure your essay, click on the following link and start working. The topic of your essay will be on top of your page.

 [Wikispaces – Writing an argumentative essay](#)

Upload the last version of your essay by clicking on the following assignment as soon as you have finished it.

 [Assignment – Uploading the group's final essay](#)

Step 7: Wrapping up your course

Just before you finish this course, don't forget to use the journal to comment on every activity and to reflect on the overall impact of the course on your learning.

Figure 7.2 *Binge Drinking Course (weeks 2, 3 and 4) on Moodle (CS2)*

The face-to-face component facilitated a more holistic and multiskilled contextualisation of the subject matter under exploration in the e-learning part of the course. It centred on addictions – smoking, drinking and other drugs – and on how these affect not only celebrities known to the students but also their own peers. The socio-cultural objects of this component were describing pictures, expressing opinions on addictions, identifying reasons for them, talking about the damage they can cause and giving advice. Students listened to a song entitled *Keep holding on*, spoke about newspaper headlines concerning the topic, read about alcohol, cigarettes and illegal drugs, a project based on Hip Hop and a newspaper article called *Boozy Lohan gets help*, and wrote a text offering help to a friend under the heading *Let me be your friend*, on an advising note. The reading comprehension of the text about the drinking problems of celebrity Lindsay Lohan and her rehabilitation process was a significant section of the face-to-face component of this blended language learning course, which triggered an easy connection to the topic under

study in the e-learning part. All these activities helped the pre-task phase of the course. The core task for the students taking part in the face-to-face lessons only and not in the case study was to read the article about Lindsay Lohan and write the text to give advice. Therefore, these were definitely insightful and resourceful activities for the study participants, which enabled them to get input for their own task, the argumentative essay.

In detail, the e-learning part started with a reading-comprehension exercise for the students to deduce the meaning of the term *binge drinking* from its use in a real context. Students had to explore concordance lines with a context length of 15 words from a corpus search in SACODEYL and then answer three questions: *What does 'binge drinking' refer to?*, *Is it something positive or negative? What makes you think so?* and *How would you translate 'binge drinking' into Portuguese?*. Their conclusions should be uploaded by means of a Moodle assignment where the link to SACODEYL lay.

The next activity was a viewing-comprehension exercise followed by language focus on modification (Figure 7.3) and a self-discovery research exercise on the topic *binge drinking*. As in CS1, this was achieved through a self-study Telos learning module based on a real audio interview on binge drinking to Beatrice, an English pupil, by means of a link on Moodle. This module should provide further real-life input about the topic and about how to express an opinion on it through topic-related language focus.



Figure 7.3 Telos self-study learning module on binge drinking: modification (CS2)

Further contextualised language focus on modification followed which was based on searches on the SACODEYL corpus. Again, there was a link to SACODEYL on Moodle. Students should analyse the usage of adjectives and adverbs in a section of the transcript of the interview of the previous self-study learning module and then practise the usage of adjectives and adverbs as well as modality (*should* and *shouldn't*) in another self-study learning module.

After this, there was place for further language focus, albeit with a different focus. The students should read an English-Portuguese list of useful expressions for structuring an argument (expressing sequential ordering, pro/con expressions, introducing major/minor points, exploring time-based ordering). This list provided support for the participation in the discussion about binge drinking that followed. Students should analyse the list, which was organised in a Moodle book activity, and then engage in a discussion about what they already knew and thought of binge drinking in a Moodle forum. This forum discussion aimed at enabling them to apply the knowledge and skills acquired with regard to content and form.

Students were then asked to engage in reading comprehension exercises of further, concrete information on the topic. They had to access a link posted on Moodle and read a text that specifically focused on binge drinking in different countries and the short and long-term effects of alcohol. And so the pre-task phase of the course closed.

The course task consisted of a written collaborative (group) assignment (Figure 7.4). The course participants had to write an argumentative essay in groups of three or four members formed by the teacher. Each group was assigned a different topic. The students had to access a link to a website on how to structure and write an argumentative paper and then access another link to a Wikispaces homepage with further instructions on how to use the functions offered by this platform as well as an incentive to discussion. Then, they had to look for the wiki with their name on Wikispaces and write their essay there. Finally, they should upload the final version of their essay by means of a Moodle assignment activity which enabled me to correct, comment and assess their work.

Piloting2_Group 1_ARita&JPedro&Miguel&Catarir Edit 14 0 22 ...

Is binge drinking a social problem?

Binge Drinking is very popular among young drinkers, usually they don't drink trough the week and when the weekend arrives they totally drink some serious alcohol. You can die from it!

They can use "Beer Bonges", that force you to consume beer at a rapid rate. You get so much booze in your system so fast, that when the alcohol takes effect, you have actually poisoned yourself: messes with your brain activity and can slow your breathing.

You are so drunk that you can smother yourself in a pillow while sleeping. It's very dangerous!

I can't understand why anyone would want to drink so much, so fast and end up outside throwing up sick because the blood alcohol level is at poisoning level. That's not my idea of having a good time! I talked with a friend of mine that lives in Atlanta and she told me that she was a witness of binge drinking and that's something really frustrating because there's nothing you can do!

So... Yes, Binge Drinking is a social problem... There are lots of teens that drink because they suffer from peer pressure, or they just want to fit in!

On the other hand, many teens start drinking as a way of asserting themselves, it means that... many times when they go to a party or other type of togetherness, they tend on to forget the manly idea and just focus on the bad side of alcohol. That's when the history of many drunks begins, not only because they suffer from peer pressure but also because they want to show that they are "strong" , and don't understand that it is wrong, very, very wrong !

Nowadays, teens are really influenced by magazines and TV... For example Lindsay Lohan is admired by teens, they feel inspired by her: her career, beauty... but when it comes to partying she is such a bad example! She has been arrested for drink-driving and drugs possession... And I ask you... Would like to be in jail? This is just one case, but there are so many celebrities and other people who are very well-known for their party habits: Paris Hilton, Nicole Richie....

Figure 7.4 *Binge Drinking* course task: argumentative essay on Wikispaces (CS2)

The task phase of the course closed with self-reflection practice to assess every activity of the course as well as the course as a whole. This was facilitated by a Moodle journal made available at the top of the course page, which could be updated by the students after each activity and enabled teacher feedback that stimulated further reflection. The students were asked to describe the activity focus, problems or challenges they had encountered and changes they would make to it, and to comment on aspects such as motivation, collaboration, learning outcomes and learning awareness.

This is how the course layout on Moodle looked like in brief terms:

- a) a journal to reflect about the course activities;
- b) an assignment containing a link to SACODEYL, instructions and questions about *binge drinking*;
- c) a link to the learning module;
- d) a link to SACODEYL with instructions to study the use of adjectives and adverbs, followed by a link to download a copy of the interview section required;
- e) a link to the learning module to do language-focused exercises;
- f) a book with useful expressions for structuring arguments;
- g) a forum to discuss the topic *binge drinking*;
- h) a link to a website about the topic;
- i) a link to a website on how to structure an argumentative essay;
- j) a link to Wikispaces to write the argumentative essay on the topic given;
- k) an assignment to upload the final version of the argumentative essay.

On the basis of previous research, the cycle of activities of the course centred upon comprehensible input and comprehensible output. The task implemented matched the six major criteria for a CALL task to be appropriate for a given language learning situation: (1) Language learning potential, (2) Learner fit, (3) Meaning focus, (4) Authenticity, (5) Impact, and (6) Practicality (see Chapelle, 2001). The same applies to CS3. The frequency of corpus-search hands-on activities was aimed at making students autonomous users of corpus-enhanced tools.

After the course, the students took a tailor-made post-test in which they were asked to correct a text about binge drinking containing a number of errors their group had committed or discussed when writing their argumentative essay on Wikispaces (see Appendix H). Storch (2002)'s "futile initial attempts" [her words] to link patterns of dyadic interaction with evidence for language development by comparing results of tests helped make a decision concerning the type of test to apply – she suggests creating tests based on language items discussed by the group. The students had to underline the mistake, correct it and place an exclamation or question mark next to their correction to evince whether or not they were sure of their decision. Very much like their own corrections on Wikispaces, this exercise concerned spelling, word choice, punctuation, amidst others. The goal was to observe the contribution of wiki-space revisions to self-reliance and

accuracy enhancement, that is, to what extent the students were aware of and had learnt from self and peer-revision, and whether the course had had any effect on their self-reliance.

CS2 ended with an individual post-course interview based on the questions of the pre-interview for comparison (see Appendices F and I). In general terms it addressed the learners' view on the course design with a focus on the platforms and the materials used, their views on collaboration with their peers and their perception of learning outcomes. It was aimed at offering insight into the possibilities and constraints identified by learners in wiki-based collaborative processes, the new roles these unveil for peers, the potential of the wiki space to facilitate *linguaging* and its related impact on text construction and, finally, how the learners' revisions contribute to self-reliance and accuracy enhancement and what factors these revisions are affected by. The interview followed an introspective method in which prompts such as the students' revisions in the wiki or their writing tests were used to stimulate the learners' recall of their thoughts at the time the activities originally took place. These follow-up semi-structured interviews were guided by previously defined questions but, again, followed a grounded-theory approach. The interviews were sound-recorded for subsequent analysis. The original script of the interview asked students to

- (1) assess collaboration and name examples of (non-)collaboration;
- (2) identify possible relationship between previous answer and patterns of interaction (Storch, 2002) or proficiency levels;
- (3) identify possible cause-and-effect relationship between collaboration and introspection, language awareness and learning awareness;
- (4) suggest an ideal number of group elements for such collaborative tasks on wiki space;
- (5) express a preference for individual or collaborative work;
- (6) identify course general as well as wiki-specific learning outcomes;
- (7) assess the page edition, history and discussion functions in the wiki;
- (8) say whether they had found support in their peers' wikis;
- (9) express to what extent they were sure of the changes they had made and whether their degree of sureness of those words/expressions had decreased/increased throughout the course; comment on the impact the changes made by their peers had upon them and on the course impact upon their post-test;
- (10) recall their thoughts at the time of some of the editing moments;
- (11) relate the course to the development of their autonomy and express opinion concerning reduced teacher intervention;
- (12) assess the impact of the course and of the wiki-activity on their and their peers' motivation;
- (13) evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of blended learning;
- (14) name the conditions and attitudes they found essential for learning to occur in a blended learning setting;

(15) assess the course and name improvements needed.

On the one hand, the post-test and the post-course interview were intended to provide specific data required by this investigation that the course itself did not deliver. On the other hand, these were also consciousness-raising as well as practice activities directed at specific linguistic features that occurred in the input or output of the task, and so integrated the final phase of the CS2 task cycle.

I shall now move on to Case Study 3. Research within CS3 followed qualitative and quantitative approaches and built upon the following types of data:

- a) the processes and products of the wiki activities;
- b) the answers to the first (in-course) questionnaire (Appendix J);
- c) the responses to the second (in-course) questionnaire (Appendix K);
- d) the answers to the third (post-course) questionnaire (Appendix L);
- e) data from participant observation throughout the course (course performance, face-to-face or e-mail informal contact, activity guidance on Wikispaces, etc.).

CS3 was based on a course on *Developing writing skills in different types of text*⁴⁴ that made use of a blended language learning approach but centred upon collaborative writing in wikis only, in particular on peer review via an inter-institutional partnership between two schools, Sct. Hans Skole, a public comprehensive school in Odense, Denmark, and Colégio Dom Diogo de Sousa, previously presented, in Braga, Portugal.

The decision to investigate wiki peer review within a cross-cultural collaborative context was prompted by two facts. First, the first and the second case studies had showed learners felt an urge to authenticate their learning. CS2 students, for example, found it very unauthentic to write online since they saw their writing peers every day. Second, both Portuguese and Danish educational policies expressed a major concern for real language use. In the Key Initiatives of the Danish World Top Performing Primary and Lower Secondary School System, it is stated that “[t]he school should help pupils develop an understanding of other countries and cultures. During their school education, all children should be required to participate in at least one international project“ (Danish Government, 2006: p. 11). In the Essential Competences in Foreign Languages in the Portuguese National Curriculum of Basic Education, it is said learners should be offered opportunities “to participate in projects which involve real language use” (Ministério da Educação, 2003: p. 40). An international setting as CS3 was the perfect scenario for an authenticated use of English for Communication.

This collaborative writing experience took place from January to June 2011 and counted on 26 year-8 Portuguese students and 18 year-8 Danish students, who were divided into gender and nationality-mixed writing groups guided by their Portuguese and Danish teachers in blended learning contexts. This time the course was made compulsory for all the elements of both classes to preserve the quality of the blended learning approach. I taught the Portuguese class. These students were selected because their proficiency level was approximately B1 to B2 according to the CEFR, which enabled me to carry on exploring a similar proficiency level to the one looked

⁴⁴ See <http://marianaesteves.wikispaces.com/> [Retrieved December 5, 2014].

into in CS2 but in a different learning context. This would facilitate comparison. The Danish students were preparing for a writing exam for which they needed written practice while the Portuguese students were part of a motivated high-proficiency class who were concerned about not having more time to engage in writing. For these reasons, an experiment began in which students participated in online writing tasks that explored different types of text. Since the main target of the online component was to improve learners' writing skills and, as suggested by the literature and by the results prompted by CS1 and CS2, the research focus was to be set on exploring wikis both at a macro and a micro level, only Wikispaces was used as online learning platform⁴⁵. As the Portuguese National Curriculum was more binding and the Danish curriculum enabled the teacher to choose topics more autonomously, the topics discussed in face-to-face lessons in the Portuguese school determined the writing topics of the online component. The course comprised three assignments. The first one consisted of an opinion text on 'Where to eat and what to wear', the second one of a newspaper article in the context of the topic 'Sounds, pictures and actions', and the third one consisted of a summary of two videos within the previous topic as well.

The choice of the task was again based on the three considerations thought essential by Peris (2004) – see chapter 2.6.

In order to look into the most suitable patterns of interaction for successful wiki collaborative writing, the course teachers set up nationality-mixed groups of three and four elements based on their own perception of the students' learning profile and proficiency level. Students were first put together with similar profiles and levels and later merged to facilitate assessment of different combinations. The course teachers sorted out the course participants according to whether they believed them to be dominant, collaborative or passive. Storch's notions of *expert* and *novice* were used as levels of proficiency which learners with a dominant, collaborative or passive profile could be at, which means the concept of *expert* was interpreted in a context of proficiency levels rather than of interaction profiles. Teachers' perceptions were mainly based on class observation prior to the course. In most cases, data showed the students' own as well as their peers' perception of their learning profile, in the course at least, corresponded to the teachers' insight. When not, most differences concerned students who were thought to be dominant and actually proved collaborative.

On the course homepage on Wikispaces, the teachers presented the main functions available on the platform, described the assignments, set the deadlines and pointed out aspects to be born in mind when writing the type of text demanded in the task (Figure 7.5).

In face-to-face lessons, students were given an introductory session on specific project goals and guidelines and on Wikispaces as an online platform for collaborative writing.

⁴⁵ João, a CS2 participant, had actually hinted at the relevance of a wiki-only based course although he was able to acknowledge the relevance of the pre-task phase in CS2.

THE WIKI EXPERIENCE

Dear All,

I hope you like our wiki!

Look for the page with your name under 'Navigation'. You will immediately see whom you will be working with.

Use 'page' to write your text, 'discussion' to debate some changes you might find necessary to discuss, be it form, content or style aspects, and 'history' to keep track of your partner's changes. It is very important that you discuss changes you are not sure of or want to make clear to your peers. You can use 'discussion' or 'a note about this edit for the page history log' (when you edit text under 'edit this page') to document changes you make (either to your text or to your partner's).

On this page you will be given instructions on writing topics and deadlines.

April 28th 2011 – 3rd Assignment

It's time for **summaries**! In this assignment you will be gaining insight into **mass media** by making use of your **listening and writing skills**. Search for your **new groups** under **Piloting 3_3_NAMES** and **sum up** the following videos. The first one is an introduction for the second one. You will also be able to find a connexion with this project. You will have to produce your summaries of the videos **from 28th April to 13th May**. Collaborate as much as you can to make the task easier and your summaries comprehensive – use the discussion forum!

Here are some tips for how to get started:

- Watch the videos as many times as you need to get their gist: get a feel for the tone, style, and main idea of each video.
- Try to collaboratively divide the ideas of each video into sections and subsections by using the discussion forum.
- Take notes while you watch and try to place them under each section.
- Do research on ideas you don't understand by using reference materials such as dictionaries or websites; your peers may also be able to help out by debating those ideas/concepts in the discussion forum.
- After grasping the main ideas of the video, start writing your summary.
- Review the sentences you wrote. From them, you should be able to create a thesis statement that clearly communicates what the entire text was trying to achieve. If you find that you are not able to take this step, you should go back and make sure your sentences actually addressed key aspects.
- At this point, your first draft is virtually done. You can use the thesis statement as the introductory sentence of your summary, and your other sentences can make up the body. Make sure they are in order. Add some transition words (*then, however, also, moreover*) that help with the overall structure and flow of the summary. And once you are actually putting fingers to keys, remember these tips:
 - Write in the present tense.
 - Make sure to include the name of the videos.
 - Be concise: a summary should not be equal in length to the original text.
 - If you must use the words of the narrator or other people in the video, cite them.
 - Don't put your own opinions, ideas, or interpretations into the summary. The purpose of writing a summary is to accurately represent what the author wanted to say, not to provide a critique.
- Once you are certain that your summary is accurate, you should (as with any piece of writing) revise it for style, grammar, and punctuation. The reader should be able to understand the videos based on your summary alone. If he or she does not, you may have focused too much on one area and not enough on the main idea of the videos.

Source: <http://www.enotes.com/topics/how-write-summary> (adapted and abridged)



Figure 7.5 *Developing Writing Skills in Different Types of Texts* Course: homepage sample (CS3)

The Danish students were able to work online both in and off classes whereas the Portuguese students only worked online off classes. This was mainly related to the differences in syllabus and in the number of weekly lessons in each country. Nevertheless, both the Portuguese and the Danish students explored the topics (e.g. fashion, news) and the types of text (e.g. opinion article, newspaper article) in their face-to-face multiskilled lessons.

Each group was given a page with their names on the wiki. Students were asked to collaboratively write text which all the group members would be allowed to edit through addition, deletion or substitution. They were also asked to use the discussion function to debate content, form and style (e.g. text structure, register), in particular specific formal changes, by providing a concrete explanation of the reasons underlying their editions. Besides all other research goals, this tool was also intended to make collaborative ties stronger.

In this case study, pedagogic integration was achieved through successful merging of the e-learning component into the face-to-face part. Using the homepage on Wikispaces rather than the Moodle platform also facilitated this integration. Although this focus on apparently repetitive activities on Wikispaces does not enable us to envisage the ‘task cycle’ suggested by Willis (1996) or the criteria Ellis (2003) considers essential in the creation of a whole task, this course clearly follows a task-based approach with opportunities for attention to form in all phases (Willis, 1996: p. 33) and a space for reflection (Peris, 2004) as well. The pre-task phase took place in face-to-face lessons or through the wiki homepage, in which useful words or phrases were highlighted, for example. The course-assessment questionnaires enabled learners to comment on their performance of the task, which also had a consciousness-raising role, namely with regard to specific linguistic features that occurred during the task. The meta-space offered by Wikispaces and encouraged by the teachers facilitated close attention to form during the task. What is more,

...negotiation appears to be more effective if learners are *active* rather than passive participants in a task, for example, are required to contribute even when playing the *listener* role or are allowed to take the lead when playing the speaker in one-way tasks. *Repeating* a task results in increased interaction and greater communicative effectiveness. Doing a task with a *familiar* interlocutor can increase the amount of negotiation. Receiving feedback in the form of *clarification requests* rather than confirmation checks promotes modified output (uptake). [my italics] (Ellis, 2003: p. 100)

After the second assignment, 37 students (25 Portuguese students and 12 Danish students) answered a first (in-course) questionnaire on Moodle to provide evaluation feedback (see Appendix J). This questionnaire intended to shed light on the opportunities and difficulties faced by learners in wiki-based collaborative processes, the new roles disclosed for peers and the impact of wiki-space revisions on self-reliance and accuracy. The questions represented a mixture of Likert-scale questions, binary questions (yes-no), open-ended questions and comments. The questionnaire asked students to

(1) Motivation and learning – assess interest and motivation of e-learning activities and express likes and dislikes; evaluate their relevance and provide examples of (non-)learning; comment on the ideal number of group elements for such activities to result in learning; assess the impact of the e-learning materials and activities on specific language areas (writing, grammar, vocabulary, reading, speaking, listening); evaluate the impact of online collaboration on learning with concrete examples; assess the impact of the discussion function on learning with concrete

examples; evaluate the impact of peer review on learning by providing concrete examples and potential advantages and disadvantages; assess degree of sureness of the changes made before and after the assignment;

(2) Teaching and learning resources and profiles – rate and comment on the support used or needed during the e-learning activities (grammars, dictionaries, encyclopaedias, websites, teacher, peer/s, other means of support) and measure gains; evaluate and explain autonomy in the e-learning setting in comparison to a conventional one; assess teacher replacement by a (more knowledgeable) peer and comment on differences; report personal experiences playing the role of a teacher and point out learning outcomes; classify their learning profile in group work in general (collaborative, passive, dominant, other); classify their learning profile in the course activities; evaluate profile alteration through interaction with peers; assess their level of expertise according to their own and their peers' perception, define *expert* and name experts in the group; classify their language proficiency; classify their peers' learning profile in the task; classify their peers' language proficiency; assess collaboration levels; report contact with international/local peers out of Wikispaces and evaluate the importance of English in that context;

(3) General assessment – assess wikis and describe problems encountered; evaluate integration of the e-learning activities into their lessons; assess the impact of blended learning on the production of learning outcomes; evaluate the contribution of the e-learning activities to their English lessons and select underlying reasons from a list; add comments.

After the last assignment, 30 students (20 Portuguese students and 10 Danish students) answered a second (in-course) questionnaire on Moodle again in which, for comparison purposes, some questions were repeated and some others reformulated, added or deleted according to the research aims (see Appendix K). This second questionnaire should provide further data regarding the possibilities and constraints identified by learners in wiki-based collaborative processes, the new functions the wiki space unveils for peers and the effect of revisions on the learners' self-reliance and on the enhancement of accuracy. This questionnaire was structured as follows:

(1) Motivation and learning – assessing interest and motivation of e-learning activities; evaluating their relevance; commenting on the ideal number of group elements for such activities to result in learning; assessing the impact of the e-learning materials and activities on specific language areas (writing, grammar, vocabulary, reading, speaking, listening); evaluating the impact of peer review on their learning; assessing degree of sureness of the changes made before and after the assignments;

(2) Teaching and learning resources and profiles – ticking means of support used or needed during the e-learning activities (grammars, dictionaries, encyclopaedias, websites, teacher, peer/s, other means of support); evaluating autonomy in the e-learning setting in comparison to a conventional one; assessing teacher replacement by a (more knowledgeable) peer; classifying their learning profile in the course activities (collaborative, passive, dominant, other); selecting the learning profile required for such activities to be learning-conducive; naming an *expert* in their last group work according to their definition in the previous questionnaire; assessing their own level of expertise according to their peers' perception; classifying their language proficiency; classifying their peers' learning profile in the task; classifying their peers' language proficiency; assessing collaboration levels;

(3) General assessment – summing up the (dis)advantages of using wikis as a collaborative writing tool to learn English; assessing the impact of blended learning on the production of learning outcomes; adding comments.

Nine students who filled in the first questionnaire did not answer the second one. From these nine students, there were only three who did not work on the third assignment, which was undertaken after the first and before the second questionnaire. This means that the reliability of the comparison between the first and the second questionnaires might be slightly affected, as fewer and not necessarily the same students participated in the second survey. In total, 28 students answered both questionnaires.

When this case study was totally concluded, it became noticeable that more data was required for the second research question, concerning the new roles the wiki space unravelled for peers. A total number of 22 students (15 Portuguese students and 7 Danish students) provided these data by answering a third (post-course) questionnaire (see Appendix L), which also indirectly offered insight into the first research question, about the potentials and the problems identified in wiki processes. Of these students, 20 participated in all assignments and answered all questionnaires. When filling in the third questionnaire, students were asked to consider the whole project. The third questionnaire focused on teacher interventions only and was composed of three questions:

- (1) Did your teacher give you enough support in the online activities?
- (2) In which of these cases do you think your teacher gave you no or (very) little support (none, technical support, understanding the task, completing the task, collaboration, grammar, vocabulary, writing, listening, reading)?
- (3) Please write down other situations in which you felt you needed more support from your teacher than the one you got.

The number of respondents participating in each questionnaire decreased along CS3 but a clear proportion between the number of Portuguese (68%, 67% and 68% respectively) and Danish students was observed all along. This reduction seems to be related to the extensive length of the questionnaires, which some students protested about, as well as to the fact that the learners did not see their relevance. In reality, the questionnaires served research purposes mainly, but they also had a meta-function and led to some course adjustments throughout.

Students' insights from CS2 in this chapter were drawn from their comments in the Moodle journal and their answers to the post-course semi-structured interview. Students' insights from CS3 were drawn from their answers to the three questionnaires.

7.3 Overall assessment of the wiki collaborative experience

This chapter shall provide a general assessment of CS2 and CS3 students' wiki collaborative experience within a blended language learning context. It will deal with aspects such as benefits and constraints identified in the activities, especially in collaboration and in peer review, motivation and learning outcomes.

In CS2, several students considered Wikispaces very well-structured and enjoyed the facilities offered. Francisca saw the wiki activity as enabling continuous writing and stressed the importance of the whole process over the final product.

Still, most of these students suggested Skype should be used to discuss text revision. They claimed Skype would also enable them to simultaneously develop speaking skills, which was a concern for most of these students. Pedro, for example, showed great satisfaction about the pre-course and post-course interviews because being interviewed in English kept him interacting in English in a two-person conversation for a long period of time.

Another possibility to facilitate the discussion of editions would be meeting face-to-face. As in CS1, students felt the need to blend the online activities with face-to-face lessons. In truth, although this was a blended learning course, the fact that only the students who had volunteered to participate in the case study were involved in the online component jeopardised the blended nature of the course. Most CS2 participants claimed there should have been more integration of the e-learning and face-to-face activities, which was rather difficult in view of the fact that not all class pupils were involved in the study. This also affected their understanding that they were developing speaking skills in their face-to-face lessons, in which they had to orally give advice on teens' problems or orally report what they had read about alcohol, cigarettes and illegal drugs, among many other activities such as other-topic-related role-plays, not to speak of the fact that the development of writing skills, for example, also contributed to the enhancement of their speaking competence. Having to discuss their argumentative essay in writing with peers they met with personally every day compromised the authentication of this activity as well.

As previously explained, these two conclusions had an impact on the setup of CS3, in which participation in both components of the blended learning course was mandatory for all the students and the cross-cultural factor was introduced.

In fact, introducing Skype as a further tool to discuss text revision not only could have helped relegate the need for face-to-face negotiation but could also have been an asset for the development of speaking skills as well as for the intensification of collaboration. However, two reasons accounted for not making this decision. First, it would only have been possible to supervise and gather data from the use of Skype if students recorded all their conversations, which would be challenging to control. Second, such a pedagogical decision might have affected the attainment of some of my research goals, since the use of Skype might have endangered the use of the wiki discussion function when it was fundamental to analyse the usefulness of such an asynchronous tool for text negotiation, as it offered more time for reflection, easy access to a written record (vs. sound files), etc.

In line with the introduction of the cross-cultural variable, CS3 students' impression on wikis after the two first assignments was related to the following positive aspects: the benefits of interacting with other people (24%), the advantages of a new, motivating working mode (24%), being learning-conducive (22%) and finally the help such a platform can be in overcoming distance interaction/working relationships (8%). Problems they faced were especially concerned with collaboration issues: unequal collaboration (19%), issues in reaching consensus (8%), not being able to understand others' message (3%), problems in writing (3%), asynchronous discussion (3%), time constraints (3%), technical problems (3%). Some of the problems were

solved as students carried on working. Carla, for example, commented that “when i started i didn't knew what will hapened but nowadays, when i'll go [face] other situations different from usual like an english man talk to me, i know how i'm going to fend”. After the third assignment, students were concretely asked about advantages and disadvantages of using wikis as a collaborative writing tool to learn English. Their answers (Figure 7.6) were more detailed and thus more enriching this time.

Advantages		Disadvantages	
Working with unknown pupils from other countries	22%	No face-to-face discussion	14%
Learning vocabulary	14%	(No) collaboration	11%
Learning grammar	8%	Not knowing one's peers	3%
Motivation	8%	Difficulty in keeping a discussion (asynchrony)	3%
Different learning mode	8%	No pronunciation practice	3%
Learning about how to work in groups	8%	Workload	3%
Writing more fluently	5%		
Information exchange	5%		
Peer review	5%		
Opinion sharing	5%		
Mistake awareness raising	5%		
Group work	5%		
Online	3%		
Site in English	3%		
Developing reading skills	3%		
Using sites for clarifying doubts (faster)	3%		
Peer support	3%		
Developing listening skills	3%		
Improving skills	3%		

Figure 7.6 General assessment of wiki activities (CS3)

The most striking aspect about this table is that students perceive more advantages than disadvantages. Second, *learning vocabulary* emerges as a recurring positive outcome over *learning grammar*, *writing more fluently*, *developing reading* or *listening skills*. Third, working with students from different nationalities achieves the highest score, which supports the idea that the potential of wikis might be optimised in a cross-cultural context, but the lack of face-to-face interaction in online collaboration remains an issue for some students. Even though this reiterating conclusion must be accepted, it is also possible that students were not able to see the advantages of online written discussion for process-based writing – written interaction might be more binding, conducive to reflection and long-term than verbal interaction –, or its impact on

oral proficiency skills through cross-skill influence (see chapter 3.3). What is more, the answers to the first questionnaire in CS3, answered after the first two assignments, rate the integration of the wiki activities into the lesson with a 3.5 (1=*not at all integrated* to 5=*very well integrated*), which means higher blending could account for better results. Finally, the constraints identified in both CS3 questionnaires addressing this topic mainly concern collaboration issues, just like in CS1 and CS2, as pointed out above.

In their post-interviews, CS2 participants gave examples of both collaboration and non-collaboration. Some saw task division as complementation and were satisfied about having been able to discuss meaning as well as form aspects. They rated the wiki discussion function and the use of complementary resources such as books or the web search very positively and showed peer review was not an issue. Some others saw task division as individual acting and again complained about not being able to discuss the text verbally, about the refusal to accept each other's ideas, the workload and the fact that some students corrected rather than produced text.

As far as CS3 is concerned, the average rank of how collaboration worked was 3.5 and 3.4 (1=*very badly* to 5=*very well*) in the first and second questionnaires respectively, which supports the idea that collaboration issues might have affected their evaluation of wiki performance. When assessing the impact of online collaboration on their learning in the first questionnaire, which was answered after the first and second assignment, students named the following limitations:

- a) no learning identified (5%) or “i think its alright but we can never improve our speaking, vocabulary or listening when we just write together” (Alberte) (3%) – something has already been said about multiskilled web collaboration environments and cross-skill influence (see chapter 3.3) to retaliate this assumption, which students' data also supports;
- b) difficulty in discussing online (5%), as in “...I prefer to this kind of projects ‘face to face’ because some times only one or two do the work and the other just go there one or two days before the deadline” (Inês L.);
- c) no negotiation (3%), as in “I think that my group had a okay online collaborating. But sometimes they just did [deleted] something without saying it” (Johanne)”;
- d) difficulty in communicating in English (3%);
- e) forgetting to go online to complete the tasks (3%).

The positive impact of online collaboration on their learning concerned the following areas:

- a) learning/practising vocabulary, structuring and writing a text, verb tenses, cohesive devices and their usage, justifying opinions, using the Internet (30%);
- b) working with new people, getting to know other cultures, methods, etc. (30%);
- c) motivation/interest/fun (22%);
- d) learning to work collaboratively (8%);
- e) peer review (3%);
- f) time flexibility (3%);
- g) functionality (3%);
- h) compulsory use of English (3%);

i) awareness of today's problems (3%).

More will be said about concrete learning outcomes further down. As for collaboration problems, they were mostly related to unequal levels of participation, deleting peers' contribution without group deliberation, which suggests a lack of collaborative strategic competence and autonomy (see Kessler & Bikowski, 2010), and not using the discussion function. This last factor indicates that CS3 participants acknowledged the discussion tool as a valuable contribution to successful collaboration, just as CS2 students above. The difficulties felt in online discussion, on the other hand, are associated with the fact that online collaboration offers the aggravating circumstance of not including face-to-face interaction and, consequently, access to implicit information usually made available by body language. This may lead to communication breakdowns or misunderstandings, for example. All this indicates there is a need to train online collaboration skills, which are connected with autonomy:

Discussing the emerging technology of wikis, Godwin-Jones states, 'Such a system only works with users serious about collaborating and willing to follow the group conventions and practices'...Such responsibility is representative of characteristics associated with autonomy among language learners. (Kessler, 2009: p. 81)

There are two further aspects that seem to have determined the success of collaboration in the context of wiki activities: the number of group elements and the patterns of interaction in those same groups. As previously mentioned, for the first CS3 assignment students were divided into seven groups of three and six groups of four elements each, all nationality-mixed. A few adjustments had to be made throughout the course of this assignment and later for the second assignment, as there were students who did not participate at all, but the general size of groups was kept. For the third assignment, most groups were altered according to the students' answers to the first questionnaire about their conceptions of the ideal number of group elements for successful wiki collaboration. As explained earlier, in order to look into the most suitable patterns of interaction for successful wiki collaborative writing, students were first put together with similar profiles and levels and later merged to facilitate assessment of different combinations.

With regard to the ideal number of group participants for successful wiki collaboration, after the first and second assignments 43% of the students involved in CS3 perceived three to be the best number for the type of assignments to which they were exposed to be learning-conducive. 26% of the respondents opted for two members and 21% agreed on groups of four. Their general opinion was that if a group were excessively large, some would not feel compelled to work. Only Carla said, "...the more opinions [the] better, because wikispaces is a forum for debate of ideas". Individual work was an option for one student (3%) only. Two people who selected groups composed of two people claimed that those generate mutual dependence and it is easier to see "who doesn't make a thing" (Rebekka). In the second questionnaire, after a third assignment in which there were 10 groups of three and six groups of two⁴⁶, from the 10 students who had

⁴⁶ It was not possible to meet all the students' requests since the first requirement was that groups be nationality-mixed and there were fewer Danish than Portuguese students involved. Also, some students who believed groups of two would be more successful were assigned to groups of three again to verify whether better collaboration would alter their perception.

previously believed groups of two would be the best option⁴⁷, four students provided the same answer, four students did not submit a questionnaire, two of which did not participate in the third assignment⁴⁸, and two students who successfully accomplished their last assignment in a group of three changed their answer to three. Based on this last group of students, one could conclude that groups of three might indeed be the ideal number of group elements for this sort of activity, but the sample under analysis is too small for such a conclusive idea. Yet, considering all the answers to the second questionnaire, this idea is again supported: the number of students selecting groups of two decreased (23%) and the score for groups of three increased (60%) – Figure 7.7. It must be added, however, that four of the seven students who chose groups of two had worked in pairs in the third assignment and that three of these chose the same answer in both questionnaires. Two students who did not work in pairs only saw two members of their groups working, which, from their perspective, might account for unsuccessful collaboration in bigger groups. It must be noticed that seven students who had answered the previous questionnaire did not answer this one.

Collaboration modes	After 1 st and 2 nd assignments	After 3 rd assignment
Pair work	26%	23%
Groups of 3	43%	60%

Figure 7.7 Successful wiki collaboration modes (CS3)

In CS2, the majority of the students also agreed on three as the ideal number of elements for such group activities, but it should not be ignored that these students only had one wiki assignment to complete and that they worked in three groups of three and one group of four. In addition, figures do not make it clear whether they preferred to work individually or collaboratively. The ones who believed in collaboration agreed that this task became more successful when in group because more learning resulted from it, but the same students stressed that it all depended on whether the group worked as such, on the subject mastery and on the task itself. The ones who would rather work individually did so because they preferred to do it “their way” with no one to respond to. It should be born in mind, nonetheless, that this was a very competitive highly proficient class who seemed biased by some negative experiences on Wikispaces which there was no opportunity to change through a second assignment. They did not change their opinion from a pre to a post-interview.

In broad terms, the experience and the perception of CS2 and CS3 students suggest that collaborative writing in wikis is more fruitful in groups of three. Although different types of assignments might demand different group formation, as a participant said, wikis allow for a

⁴⁷ Six of them had worked in the same groups (maximum two); four of these had worked in groups of four in which collaboration was mostly unsuccessful and three of them were group members who did not contribute or showed very low proficiency levels.

⁴⁸ These two students showed lack of compliance in general, in other words, they rarely submitted their conventional homework or solved exercises in class to the best of their ability.

great exchange of ideas which is definitely richer in groups of three. Further speculation is dependent on the subjects' learning profile, which shall be looked into now.

The breakdown of the students' answers in the CS2 post-interview suggested that the learning profiles best conducive to successful collaboration are *collaborative* and *dominant*. The subjects also suggested to have enjoyed the *expert/novice* pattern of interaction.

In CS3, every time participants assessed collaboration with a 5 ('How did collaboration work?' 1=*very badly* to 5=*very well*), they assessed group members' profiles as *collaborative* (n=18). Only in two cases was there a member of the group who was considered *passive* (n=2). Groups in which one of the elements was considered *dominant* were assessed with a 4 or even a 3, but it is not clear whether this assessment was dependent on this condition only. In the first questionnaire, the respondents were asked to assess their learning profile in group work in general and then particularly in the writing tasks they were evaluating. The majority of the students considered their profile to be collaborative in both cases, but a slight difference was noticeable (84% and 81% respectively): five students believed to have adopted a profile in the writing tasks that was to some extent different to their learning profile in general. From the two students who had suggested two mixed profiles in the first question about their learning profile in group work in general, *collaborative and critical* and *collaborative/dominant* respectively, the former, Eduarda, changed her answer to *collaborative* in the second question about her learning profile in the writing tasks by claiming that "as we are working in group we face everyday different perspectives and...we get to, sometimes, change our own opinions"; another student said to have changed from having a generally *dominant* profile to a *collaborative* one in the wiki assignments; two claimed to have altered their profile from *collaborative* to *passive*; and Pedro stated to have played a *dominant* rather than *collaborative* role in these writing tasks, "...depending on the constitution of the groups". On the whole, only one student adopted a more prominent role, all the other ones switched to a less outstanding working profile, in two of the cases a more collaborative one. On the one hand, students seem to have been able to adjust their profile according to activity requirements and were aware of that process. On the other, as some students said their profile had been altered by interaction with their classmates, it appears this sort of activities requires students to assume a collaborative profile. Some of the reasons were provided before. Pedro's reason seems to hint at the group members' learning profiles, which you have to adapt to. Eduarda also became less critical because she felt the urge to consider different perspectives and change her opinion. Two more students, who maintained a passive and collaborative profile correspondingly, present a complementary view: "...I learn so much with their projects and I see many different opinions, w[h]ich help me to upgrade" (Francisca) and "I talk and discuss with my classmates" (Mariana L.). Three other observations are connected with collaborative concerns by students who maintained a collaborative profile: "My profile changes a little bit because I learn how to face people and how to be ok with theirs" (Inês M.), "My profile usually alters by interaction with my classmates because I feel that someone is *dependent from me (group work) and, if I am passive, I will be prejudicing [harming] the others members of the group. So, I feel that I can't be passive (I have to be collaborative)*" (Beatriz) and "*If your classmates is unserious you gotta be the dominant. Else your group will not make any work*" (Anders) [my italics]. All this suggests such wiki collaborative writing tasks as the ones students were exposed to stimulate not only collaborative attitudes but also the development of

collaboration skills in general. In the second questionnaire, CS3 interactants were asked about the profile(s) they thought was (were) needed for such activities to generate learning and 93% answered *collaborative*. In fact, Storch (2002) also believes that there is more knowledge transfer in collaborative or expert/novice dyads than in dominant ones. Still, participant observation suggested that dominant/dominant dyads can also lead to successful collaboration, reflective autonomous acting and thus efficient learning, as CS2 had previously suggested. It was observed that groups composed of dominant students tended to work thoroughly although they sometimes faced issues in finding consent in revision, for example, and reset corrections with frequency. Yet, it is also true that they discussed the problem until they found the right answer, often by resorting to other sources of information (Figure 7.27 and Figure 7.34). Playing a dominant role was not only associated with uncommitted peers. For instance, in opposition to what his quotation above might imply, Anders's peers were very hard-working and are good examples of this exhaustive search for the 'right' answer, as the Figures above show.

Both CS2 and CS3 students acknowledged the impact of peer review activities on their learning process and product, and were able to see the advantages of wiki space in comparison to conventional classroom peer review: "...we learn a lot of grammar, etc. easier than at school; we are helped by people of our age, which makes things more interesting" (Beatriz, CS3); two CS2 students explained that being able edit anything was another benefit of wiki peer review; Carolina (CS2) also claimed peer-review on Wikispaces was different from peer-review in the classroom, as there was no pressure, people were more relaxed, and it was easier to keep track of changes; Davide (CS3) said, "[h]aving other people reading our work and correcting it, it's very good, because this way we can learn from it and have a better assignment"; Rebekka (CS3) argued that the possibility to do peer review "... was the best thing at wikispaces! Because then you could write what you thought and then someone else could direct it. Because sometimes it's hard to see the mistake you make yourself but for others it's easier". The following is a more systematic list of the advantages that CS2 and CS3 students observed with regard to peer review:

- a) receiving other people's feedback on one's mistakes;
- b) learning from the person one discusses a mistake with;
- c) learning from both one's and others' mistakes;
- d) augmenting tolerance levels;
- e) reflecting before writing since the most minute mistake may lead to misunderstandings;
- f) becoming aware of the erroneousness of something one believed to be right;
- g) not making the same mistake again;
- h) improving one's English skills (learning about vocabulary and grammar specifically);
- i) being in contact with other opinions;
- j) being able to edit something one does not like;
- k) being able to improve the contents of a text.

The possibility to learn and the freedom to act stood out from this evaluation. Another dimension that emerges from these answers has to do with learning awareness. In fact, the learners often claimed to have developed their ability to reflect upon the accuracy of their writing. What is more, the students were concerned about learning the reasons which lay behind a reviewing act. This need for reflection on correction was expressed by Carolina (CS2), for instance, who

claimed peer review was a challenge, as she needed to know more and to reflect about grammar rules, etc., and Johanne (CS3), who said that “...sometimes I just got corrected and that[‘]s it. And that was annoying because I wanna know why”, for example. This supports the role of a meta-space in wiki peer review. The benefits pointed out once again clearly outnumbered the disadvantages mentioned, which were associated to:

- a) inaccurate revisions;
- b) being able to delete others’ work with no explanations.

The act of deleting others’ work without debate has an impact on collaboration only, since the history function offered by wikis enables students to keep track of changes and even revert to a previous version. As for the students’ concern about correction, the truth is that there are so many other processes involved and developed in peer review that the relevance of correction is subjective. For example, peer review enables learners to reflect about language and language learning processes, which seems to be much more important in a world of mutable knowledge in which skill development is what ensures lifelong learning than providing learners with *correct* knowledge. What is more, when evaluating the impact of peer review on their learning in the first questionnaire, which they answered after the first and second assignment, 49% of CS3 students said peer review was learning-conducive and 14% even suggested the wiki assignments made that learning permanent (“not making the same mistake again”). In fact, 46% students claimed to be surer of the changes they made at the time of reviewing than when they started working on Wikispaces, which means their self-reliance concerning the use of English increased. The average ratings in this question were the same in the first and in the second questionnaire (Figure 7.8). This is another positive outcome of peer review.

How sure of the correctness of the changes you made (1=not sure at all...5=totally sure)	were you when you started working at Wikispaces?	3.5
	are you at the moment?	4.0

Figure 7.8 Self-reliance in the process of revision before/after wiki activities (CS3)

In the second questionnaire, which students answered after the last assignment, when asked to evaluate the impact of peer review on their learning again, this time by using a Likert scale (1=*no positive impact* to 5=*a lot of positive impact*) instead of being provided with a comment field as in the first questionnaire, the average rank was a highly positive 3.8, but most of the Danish students and highly proficient students in general rated this question with a 3. This might mean older and/or more proficient participants tended to play the role of experts (Storch, 2002) and thus experience a static ZPD. It is important that students are exposed to patterns of interaction in which they play both the expert and the novice, thus profiting from a non-static ZPD. Since the Danish students were less positive than the Portuguese in nearly all answers, this might also be connected with a different cultural understanding of critical thinking, or the Danish experience was simply not as positive. This shall be explored further later on.

The benefits of the introduction of a cross-cultural exchange in CS3 peer review were also recognised. Different learning experiences were seen as an asset for collaboration and obviously learning: “it was really important for our work because here in portugal i may not know how to

write certain things but, in denmark, simon could know how to write that word, which is really good because that way we could help each other” (Liliana).

In fact, in their comments concerning interest and motivation in the wiki tasks, 62% of CS3 students found working with students from other countries/new people motivating and referred to collaboration, having become more skilled at English, having developed their cultural knowledge and learning how to teach others as further motivational factors. Dörnyei’s *L2 Motivational Self System* (Dörnyei, 2009) sheds light on this: learners felt motivated by both their attempt to fulfil their *Ideal L2 Self*, in this case by developing their English and cultural skills and feeling able to communicate with students from other countries, and by experiencing a successful *L2 Learning Experience*, mirrored in positive collaboration, specifically in being able to teach others. 51% found an aspect that had a negative impact on motivation as well, in particular the previously discussed difficulties in communicating efficiently (different time zone, asynchrony, no face-to-face interaction, etc.) as well as in team work, and, in smaller numbers, the task itself (word limit, interest aroused and workload) and the group setup. In concrete figures, 3.9 and 3.6 (Figure 7.9) were the average ranks for the interest and motivation aroused by their wiki experience in the first and second questionnaires respectively, which are rather good numbers, since negative assessment was mostly linked with communication and collaboration issues.

	After 1 st and 2 nd assignments			After 3 rd assignment		
	All Ss	Portuguese Ss	Danish Ss	All Ss	Portuguese Ss	Danish Ss
Interest and motivation in wiki activities (1=not at all...5=very much)	3.9	4.2	3.3	3.6	4.1	2.5

Figure 7.9 Interest and motivation in wiki activities (CS3)

The slight decrease from the first to the second questionnaire might be related to the variation concerning the respondents’ identity or the nature of the last assignment, the summary of the two videos, which did not allow for as much creativity as the previous assignments. Comparisons between answers by Portuguese and answers by Danish students (Ss) (Figure 7.9) give evidence that the former again assessed their experience much more positively (mostly 4 and 5) than their foreign peers (mostly 3, 2 or even 1). This might be related to the fact that they perceived integration levels of the e-learning activities into their lesson course to be low. In reality, nearly every Danish student rated integration with a 3 whereas 44% of the Portuguese students chose a 4 and 32% a 5 (Figure 7.10) when asked to rate integration in the first questionnaire. On the other hand, Danish students were slightly older than the Portuguese and at times more proficient, which might have been demotivating, even if learning how to teach others was seen as motivating by some of the students. Also, the fact that they would sit for their English exams might have made them feel overloaded by an activity they could not immediately see the learning outcomes of.

	All Ss	Portuguese Ss	Danish Ss
Integration of e-learning activities into lessons (1=not at all...5=very well)	3.6	4.0	2.8

Figure 7.10 Blended learning: integration (CS3)

In CS2, opinions concerning motivation diverged. Some students felt it increased along the course as they realised the potential of the tool and the facilities offered; some others felt it decreased for reasons such as time investment, workload or collaboration issues. Data from CS2 intersects with data from CS3.

An analysis of the concrete learning outcomes perceived by the students involved in CS2 and CS3 shall support the assessment of the overall wiki collaborative experience. Comments of different nature by CS2 students form a picture of their perception. Bruna and Francisca claimed that e-learning made conventional learning more specific because in the online part of the course they discussed a particular aspect of ‘drinking’ in detail. This obviously had to do with the outline of this course in particular and concerns the whole online course and not only the wiki activity, but it shows pedagogic complementation is possible. In fact, Francisca suggested that, due to its polysemic nature, the topic *binge drinking* was very appropriate for the type of online activities proposed, with a lexical and discursive focus. Rita demonstrated to have authenticated the topic. On the other hand, João showed no restrictions in saying that more teacher training was needed for (full) use of the potential of e-learning.

As for CS3, 3,8 and 3,9 were the average rating of whether CS3 students found the wiki activities relevant to their learning or not in the first and second questionnaires respectively (Figure 7.11). Again, the Portuguese students rated this question much higher than the Danish students and the Danish rating again decreased from the first to the second questionnaire. On the other hand, *very relevant* was mostly chosen by students who invested in wiki collaboration.

	After 1 st and 2 nd assignments			After 3 rd assignment		
	All Ss	Portuguese Ss	Danish Ss	All Ss	Portuguese Ss	Danish Ss
Relevance of wiki activities to learning (1=not at all...5=very)	3.8	4.0	3.3	3.9	4.3	2.5

Figure 7.11 Relevance of wiki activities (CS3)

Moreover, in the first and second questionnaires, 76% and 80% of CS3 participants respectively, believed that the combination of e-learning materials and activities with their normal lesson helped them learn faster (Figure 7.12). However, opinions were not always consensual: Inês M., for example, affirmed those “activities are a source of knowledge” and, in the second

questionnaire, confirmed she would like to repeat the experience, but Davide asserted that “elearning activities are good, but not essential to learn English”. Davide was the only Portuguese student who selected ‘no’ in the first questionnaire, but he changed his mind in the second one, so all Portuguese students selected ‘yes’ in the questionnaire they filled in after the third assignment. CS2 provided similar positive views on the learning-conduciveness of blended learning. As for the Danish students taking part in CS3, answers were not as positive, but this time there was a positive evolution from the first to the second questionnaire. Several reasons have already been pointed out that may account for this. The fact that the Danish assessment of the impact of blended learning practices on learning was always less positive than the Portuguese evaluation is probably also associated to weaker blending. As explained in chapter 7.2, the writing topics of the online component of this blended learning course were determined by the topics discussed in face-to-face lessons in the Portuguese school because the Portuguese National Curriculum was more binding. This sheds light on the importance of suitable blending for successful learning.

Blended learning helps learn faster.	After 1 st and 2 nd assignments			After 3 rd assignment		
	All Ss	Portuguese Ss	Danish Ss	All Ss	Portuguese Ss	Danish Ss
Yes	76%	96%	33%	80%	100%	40%
No	24%	4%	67%	20%	0%	60%

Figure 7.12 Learning-conduciveness of blended learning (CS3)

Yet, 84% of the students who submitted the first questionnaire considered the wiki activities a valuable contribution to their English lessons (Figure 7.13). Only two Portuguese students chose ‘no’; four Danish students chose ‘no’ as well, but the majority opted for ‘yes’.

Wiki activities as a valuable contribution to lessons	All Ss	Portuguese Ss	Danish Ss
Yes	84%	92%	67%
No	16%	8%	33%

Figure 7.13 Contribution of wiki activities to lessons (CS3)

The following table (Figure 7.14) shows the reasons for this. One of the students selected no reasons. These data confirm the validity of previous statistics since it partially addresses the same aspects. The numbers in bold, which correspond to the highest scores, show that the students who considered the wiki activities a valuable contribution to their English lessons were mainly impressed by

- a) practicability issues and being able to work online collaboratively and in a cross-cultural environment;
- b) all the possibilities offered by wikis, in particular

- i. the transparency offered by peer-review, follow-up discussion and a history function to keep track of changes and
- ii. all the impact these facilities have on learning and on the development of reflective skills concerning the learning process.

Pedagogic value of wiki activities	
I'm able to write from anywhere and anytime.	60%
These e-learning activities are integrated with face-to-face lessons.	20%
I can focus on writing only and improve this one skill.	40%
Wikis have numerous functions which make it easier to learn.	27%
Collaboration makes me learn faster.	50%
I'm in contact with school peers.	33%
I'm in contact with international peers.	67%
The discussion function enables me to debate important aspects.	63%
The history function enables me to keep track of my peers' mistakes and my own.	57%
The editing function enables me to change the text as much as I want and as I want.	27%
Through peer review I'm able to permanently learn about my mistakes.	70%
These e-learning activities make me reflect on my language skills.	43%
These e-learning activities make me reflect on my learning process.	47%
Other reasons	0%

Figure 7.14 Pedagogic value of wiki activities (CS3)

It must be observed that from the students' perspective the reason which mostly contributed to making wiki activities a valuable contribution to the English lesson was the fact that *peer review* enabled them to *permanently* learn about their mistakes, which is a major conclusion. In addition, the fact that 67% of the students selected contact with international peers as a reason as well validates the inclusion of this variable into CS3 and suggests wiki collaboration is much more successful in cross-cultural settings. Moreover, students understand the important role of the discussion function (63%).

The following table (Figure 7.15) is a systematisation of what CS3 students claimed to have learnt throughout the wiki activities in the first questionnaire, which the course participants answered after the second assignment. The two main aspects identified by the students as learning outcomes in Figure 7.15 suggest wiki peer review favours the development of lexical awareness as well as idea development, as previous answers had already suggested. The students also found that peer review developed different grammatical aspects (16% in total) and writing skills (16% in total). 24% of the students reinforced the view that learning was intimately related to heterocorrection: "we learn when we correct the errors of other students and when they correct us" (Mariana L.), "...when you write something and someone goes there and correct it we will see how it was and even when someone has something wrong i think we learn a little bit more because we know how to correct it" (Sofia), "we correct our and their mistakes, which is good

for everybody” (Mariana S.), “it call me to attention of some mistakes that i often do: i miss the auxiliary on the questions” (Beatriz), “we learn a lot about...concrete normal mistakes” (António), “wikispaces helped me to writte better and how to correct a text...” (Carla), “...some corrections for example she passed the verbs in the present simple to the past simple...” (Mónica).

Learning outcomes of wiki activities	
Vocabulary	19%
Information exchange (ideas, opinions, thoughts, content, cultural aspects, etc.)	14%
Spelling	11%
Writing (no speaking)	5%
Text structuring	5%
Other grammatical aspects (the use of prepositions, auxiliary verbs in the interrogative form, verb tenses, etc.)	5%
Text cohesion	3%
Writing according to a word limit	3%
Learning reinforcement	3%

Figure 7.15 Learning outcomes of wiki activities (CS3)

The following table (Figure 7.16) focuses on concrete language areas the students felt to have improved on the basis of a rising Likert scale from 1 to 5 (*1=not at all improved* to *5=improved a lot*), and supports data from Figure 7.15 with more objective and conclusive information. Answers from both questionnaires are presented side by side, but it should be born in mind that the sample of respondents and the object of assessment slightly differed from the first questionnaire, which was filled in after the opinion article and the newspaper article tasks, to the second questionnaire, which was answered after the summary task. These tasks had different foci and so their impact on the various language areas was also different. All average scores, including those for *reading*, with a quite good score, and *speaking*, were positive. *Vocabulary* reached a top position together with *writing*, both with reasonably high scores. They switched places from the first to the second questionnaire, but this is a change of a decimal point. The *grammar* score increased – this might have to do with the nature of the third assignment, the summary, in which students had a limited text length and therefore had to be grammatically precise; in fact, an increase in the number of revisions was observed in the third assignment. The most important conclusion to be drawn from the *grammar* score, however, is that it is below the figures for *vocabulary* and *writing*. As for *listening*, the rise is not surprising because the last assignment consisted of summing up two videos students had to listen to. This means wiki collaborative writing enables learners to develop all different skills, with a special focus on the enhancement of lexical and writing mastery. CS2 gave origin to similar results concerning the impact of wiki activities on lexical development.

	Language areas (1=not at all improved...5=improved a lot)					
	vocabulary	writing	grammar	reading	speaking	listening
After 1 st and 2 nd assignments	3.9	3.8	3.4	3.2	2.8	2.6
After 3 rd assignment	3.8	3.9	3.6	3.3	2.5	3.1

Figure 7.16 Impact of wiki activities on different language areas (CS3)

At the end of the second and third questionnaires, which students filled in after they had completed the three wiki assignments, they were given the possibility to add any further comment, or write down other situations in which they had felt they needed more support from their teacher, respectively. CS3 students' closing general experience assessment provided at this stage offers some more insight into the dimensions of the wiki collaborative experience they recalled more easily:

...I think Miss Esteves did an excellent job and made us have a completely different experience that we ever had in our learning english cycle [cycle]. This was a very pleasant project, although the Danish students could have been more collaborative, but in general I enjoyed it very much and hope to repeat again, perhaps with students from another country in Europe. (Inês L.)

...I would like to repeat the experience. thank you. (Inês M.)

I think that Wikispaces is a great way of learning English, know other opinions and learn how to work in group. I think that it is a great way of improve our knowledge as well. (Beatriz)

I would love that if on the next year we use Wikispaces, I work with Simon (even once) because I felt that we didn't have a collaboration work since that [because] when I wrote on our wiki he was on a trip (or something like that) and when he wrote I didn't see it on time to check it... (Mónica)

I think it was funny but i didn't learnt that much. I[n] the first tasks my group wasn't good and the last was okay. But im [I'm] not that much in to wiki. (Johanne)

The 3rd assingment worked very good and it was a good collaborative we had. The other times worked very bad. (Anna)

A general tone of satisfaction is visible. A special emphasis is placed on the cross-cultural dimension, on positive and negative collaboration matters and on content and language integrated learning. The assessment of the Portuguese students keeps a more positive tone.

The general assessment provided by this chapter confirms the findings from CS1 and sheds some more light on the advantages as well as on the limitations of wiki collaboration, which has poorly been looked into in the literature. This evaluation endorses the need to blend the online activities with face-to-face lessons in a pedagogically integrated way that enables seamless fusion. Although students tended to point out the lack of face-to-face interaction in writing discussions, the truth is that their comments demonstrated they acknowledged the benefits of written discussion, which proved more process-focused. Cross-cultural interaction proved essential in the process of authenticating wiki communication and collaboration. Feeling able to communicate with people from a different country in English and to exchange different cultural perspectives contributed to increasing the students' autonomy, motivation and confidence. Collaboration issues were mostly related to unequal levels of participation, lack of strategic

collaboration, and not using the discussion function, which suggests collaboration and autonomy skills must be trained beforehand. Peer review is associated with plenty of positive aspects. The main advantages pointed out by the students have to do with the fact that peer review enables them to be autonomous, enhances their learning awareness, increases their self-reliance, and is highly learning-conducive. Their concern for knowing the reasons lying behind a reviewing act supports the idea that a meta-space plays a role of paramount importance in wiki peer review. Three appears to be the right number of group members to take advantage of the full potential of wiki collaborative activities. Collaborative and dominant profiles of interaction seem to be more fruitful in this context because they stimulate the learners' agency. Nearly all students involved considered the activities a valuable contribution to their English lessons and the fact that peer review enabled them to permanently learn about their mistakes was the main reason for this, also voted for by the vast majority of students. The fact that nearly the same number of learners selected the possibility to debate important aspects in the discussion function suggests a link between these two options. Wiki collaborative writing enables learners to develop all different skills, with a special focus on the enhancement of lexical and writing abilities. The next chapters shall provide deeper insight into the issues that have been broached here.

7.4 Teacher and peer support in wiki collaborative writing

Some previous comments have suggested that the learners recognise the contribution of wiki peer review to the development of their fluency and correctness in English promptly when they experiment with it, but also that they still do not generally acknowledge their peers as reliable sources. This seems to be related to the fact that learners are mostly used to English language learning practices aimed at a native norm of correctness rather than at a good degree of fluency to use English appropriately for communication purposes, and they identify teachers, not peers, with that same norm. Recurrent exposure to teacher-centred language learning practices transformed their teachers into an authoritative power which discards other forms of learning support because learners who were educationally socialised in English language teaching contexts share a strong orientation towards Standard English. In such a learning context in which being grammatically correct is the most important target to reach, being able to successfully communicate in English is often relegated, in particular when that may imply some lack of correctness. This seems to be one of the reasons for learners' usual inability to perceive the potential of peers, who can play a role in developing these communication skills in a process that can also offer some focus on form. This chapter aims at exploring (1) the reasons for learners' seemingly preference for teacher support in detail, (2) the possibility that their predisposition be altered by the outcomes of their performance in a wiki collaborative scenario, and (3) whether the positive outcomes of peer review can cause a shift in attention from a final accurate learning product to process-oriented learning centred on the development of communication skills with a focus on form.

In the first two questionnaires they answered, CS3 students were directly asked whether they thought a teacher could be replaced by a (more knowledgeable) peer as far as learning support was concerned. In the first questionnaire, an average rating of 2.6 (1=*not at all* to 5=*definitely*) shows that most learners did not see this as a reasonable option. In the second questionnaire,

filled in after working collaboratively in one last assignment, their rating was nearly the same (2.7). As previously explained, the students answering the first and second questionnaire were not exactly the same. In addition, from the ones answering both questionnaires, nine students actually chose lower ratings. However, the six students who rated the item higher changed their opinion from 1 to 4 and were the same who said to have had successful collaborative experiences, which suggests students shifted from self and teacher-reliant to peer-reliant and vice-versa according to whether collaborative writing was very successful or rather fruitless.

Notwithstanding, both these average ratings of whether teachers can be replaced by peers are rather low. This is justified by the general differences between teacher and peer feedback perceived by students, which is in line with the previously presented idea that teachers are seen as the only reliable source learners feel they can trust upon. According to these students, peers share similar perceptions. They belong to the same age group, which makes them feel more comfortable about idea-sharing – peers are more straight-forward. Teachers, however, “know more” or do research when they don’t know the answer and provide more professional and constructive feedback in a more pedagogical way. They praise more frequently and provide exercises for further practice although they are more difficult to reach than peers. Teacher evaluation also interferes in this relationship, but teachers have more experience with the learners’ problems. Although “it is just so much more funny to get feedback from other teenagers, and from someone you really don’t know” (Laura), the pluses of teacher feedback clearly outnumber those of peer feedback.

However, when discussing the advantages of their peer review experience, some CS3 students had already suggested that being corrected by a peer rather than by a teacher was “...great...because it gives you a new perspective on things” (Inês C.) and “I maybe remember it better because it was someone on my own age and not just a teacher” (Magnus), besides many other benefits they pointed out presented in the previous chapter.

In fact, curiously, the students’ (claimed) predisposition for teachers when commenting on teacher replacement by peers is not coherent with their impressions about playing the role of the teacher themselves. 32% of the respondents said to have felt they played this role in several situations: when they had to take up responsibility or make important choices, when a friend asked for help or they had to encourage other students to work, when they had to correct them or give them suggestions. In contrast to their previous claims, all this means students felt they replaced the teacher in providing learning support in particular situations.

What is more, they seemed to have learnt quite a lot from the experience: vocabulary; taking up responsibility; confidence; listening to people more; “...that sometimes [it] is difficult for a teacher to explain to the student that he isn’t understanding” (Inês M.); “that sometimes you got to do some thing by you[r] self even if you work together in a group” (Alberte); that “sometimes when we think that we’re right, we can be wrong” (Miguel); and finally that “it’s very hard [to] correct someone because we didn’t know what he/she wants to say. An example is when we correct and the sentence comes to mean the opposite” (Carla). The students’ views are in line with Jean-Pol Martin’s understanding of the benefits of *Lernen durch Lehren* (LdL – learning by teaching), a learner-centred method according to which students learn by teaching their peers (see Martin, 1985).

All this suggests that, although these learners’ mindset did not enable them to recognise their peers’ expertise and thus authority in replacing teachers, they did identify numerous positive outcomes in such a replacement.

If learning support can only be provided by someone who has earned a reputation for expertise, an analysis of the students’ perception of what an *expert* is or should be may shed some light onto their understanding of the role of teachers and peers in this context. The Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English (2001: p. 480) defines an *expert* as “someone who has a special skill or special knowledge of a subject”. Wikipedia provides a more comprehensive definition:

...someone widely recognized as a reliable source of technique or skill whose faculty for judging or deciding rightly, justly, or wisely is accorded authority and status by their peers or the public in a specific well-distinguished domain...based on research, experience, or occupation and in a particular area of study...An expert can be...believed to have special knowledge of a subject beyond that of the average person, sufficient that others may officially (and legally) rely upon the individual's opinion...a shepherd with 50 years of experience tending flocks would be widely recognized as having complete expertise in the use and training of sheep dogs and the care of sheep... ("Expert," n.d.)

In common sense, the term *expert* is usually related to recognition by others rather than by the self and typically refers to *special* knowledge or skill, i.e., knowledge or skill which goes beyond average. In an open question about profiles in the first questionnaire they submitted, CS3 students were asked to define the term. Figure 7.17 is the result of the analysis of their answers.

Definition	
Someone who is very good/nearly perfect at something	30%
Someone who knows something very well/a lot about something	22%
Someone who is a specialist in a topic	14%
Someone who knows everything	11%
Someone who knows everything about vocabulary/appropriate expressions/applies verb tenses correctly	5%
Someone who does something on his own, without help	3%
Someone who has great knowledge about everything, can apply it properly and does research to fill gaps	3%
Someone who masters an issue and feels comfortable around it	3%
A boring, snobbish, know-it-all and annoying person	3%
The best one at something	3%
Someone who is good without studying/revising	3%

Figure 7.17 Definition of *expert* (CS3)

Storch’s view that an *expert* encourages what she calls *novices* to participate in learning and provides them with assistance (Storch, 2002) is not incorporated in the students’ definitions. It is also observable that students did not associate *experts* with collaboration much, as they used expressions such as “without help”, “without studying” or even “snobbish, know-it-all and annoying” in their descriptions. The students’ answers are very much in line with the definitions from the Longman Dictionary and Wikipedia and, most importantly, with their description of

teacher feedback, in which they had stated teachers knew more and did research, which again relates expertise to teachers rather than peers. Still, despite the fact that only 11% of the students believed to be an *expert*, most students were easily able to enumerate members of their groups whom they considered *experts*, even though none of them believed the others saw them so, which proves they did acknowledge their peers' expertise. The results of the second questionnaire are analogous to those of the first one.

All this shows discrepancy between, on the one hand, the students' predisposition to reject their peers' possible ability to support their learning and, on the other, reality. In reality, they see some of the benefits of peer (as opposed to teacher) feedback and state the advantages of peer review, they play the role of teachers themselves as well as identify the positive outcomes of playing such a role, and they see some of their peers and at times even themselves as experts.

Further discrepancy was detected with regard to the students' understanding of autonomy. The role of the teacher online which was made visible to the students was mainly reduced to outlining the writing task and assessing the final product of each assignment. At times, some help was provided with regard to organisational issues. Students spontaneously looked for support from their peers and other means of support. Also, their perceptions of autonomy were related to independence from the teacher or free resort to other means of support: "...i didn't get help from the teacher and in that way I felt more autonomous" (Laura) or "...when i used a dictionary or a web site i didn't need to ask anything to anybody" (Carla). 43% of the respondents claimed they liked being autonomous *very much* and the average rating for this question was 4.2 ('Do you like being autonomous?' 1=*not at all* to 5=*very much*). However, when asked whether they felt more autonomous when using e-learning materials and activities than without them (1=*not at all autonomous* to 5=*more autonomous*), CS3 students' average rating of autonomy was rather low (3.3): 30% of the students chose a 4 and the same percentage opted for a 3; 14% selected a 5.

Types of support (1=not at all...5=very much used/desired)	
Grammars	2.2
Dictionaries	3.1
Encyclopaedias	1.9
Websites	3.1
Teacher	2.5
Peer(s)	2.9
Other means of support	1.8

Figure 7.18 Types of support used/desired in the wiki activities – 1st questionnaire (CS3)

Although most CS3 and also CS2 students associated autonomy to independence from the teacher and free resort to other means of support and claimed to have felt little autonomous in the

courses, CS2 participants, for example, often referred to have used dictionaries, grammar books, web research and books, and, most importantly, claimed this was triggered by peer interaction, more precisely peer review. In CS3, when asked to rate the means of support according to their need to use them or their actual use in the e-learning activities (1=*not at all* to 5=*very much*) in the first questionnaire (Figure 7.18), students placed dictionaries and websites in the first position (3.1), followed by peer(s) (2.9) and teacher (2.5).

This indicates that peers, as well as other means of support, played a more important role in supporting their e-learning activities than teachers, even if resorting to these was not identified with autonomous behaviour, which is incoherent with their understanding of autonomy. In CS3, there was a clear inclination to digital and human means of support to the detriment of paper resources. Having to collaborate with students somewhere else in Europe seemed to have helped learners focus their online learning process on digital resources mainly. Grammars, encyclopaedias and other means of support were little used or needed by CS3 students. Other resources (1.8) the students added were Google, translators, worksheets, books, TV shows, relatives, and discussions in the wiki discussion forum to collaboratively choose a topic to write on, to decide on how to structure the text and stick to the story thread, to decide what person the text should be written in, to discuss the ideal text length and for technical issues. The discussion forum was mostly used to reach consensus and brainstorm ideas.

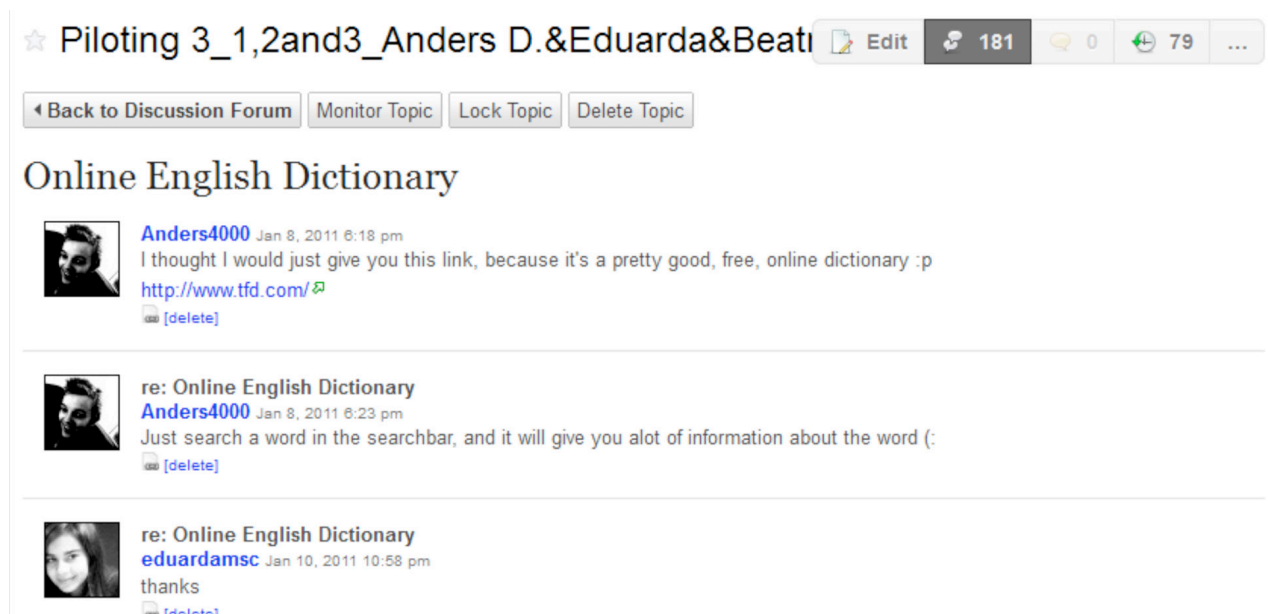





Figure 7.19 Resources: online dictionary/website (CS3)



As far as the benefits drawn from such means of support are concerned, the learners listed the learning of new words and expressions, improvement in sentence as well as text construction and idea sharing. This suggests providing students with the freedom to choose the means of support they deem more useful will develop both their language and language learning skills. Figure 7.19 and Figure 7.20 offer evidence of how peer interaction and, most of all, peer review enables peers to support each other and even foster their peers' autonomy in finding the right means of



support for their learning needs. In the wiki discussion presented in Figure 7.19, Anders suggests what he believes to be a good, free online dictionary to his group members and briefly explains its use. Eduarda expresses her gratitude. In Figure 7.20, it becomes clear Anders had detected some issues in the use of commas in his group's text production and therefore translates part of a worksheet on the topic to his peers. Eduarda acknowledges its usefulness for future practice. As suggested by the students themselves when discussing the power of peer feedback, the fact that they belong to the same age group and above all that there are no power differences in status because they are all students facilitates learners' acceptance of their peers' recommendations.


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"That worksheet"

 **Anders4000** Jan 15, 2011 12:02 am
Comma:
- Before someone speaks: The teacher asked, "Where is your book?"
- After a title in a letter: Dear John, / Dear Sir,
- In the end of a letter: Yours sincerely, / Best wishes,
- In sentences like this: I met my friend Jules, who had just returned from football.
- When there is a break: However, / Actually,
 [delete]

 **re: "That worksheet"**
eduardamsc Jan 15, 2011 12:53 am
thanks!
that helped a lot :)
i'll consider those things next time
 [delete]

 **re: "That worksheet"**
marianaesteves Jan 15, 2011 4:15 pm
Hi Anders,

Where did you get that worksheet from? Very helpful. I'm glad you're sharing that with your peers.
 [delete]



 **re: "That worksheet"**
Anders4000 Jan 15, 2011 10:49 pm
Kirsten, our teacher, gave it.
Some of it is written in Danish, so i had to translate it myself. (:
 [delete]

Figure 7.20 Resources: worksheet (CS3)

In the second questionnaire, the question was slightly different and asked the students to choose the means of support they used or felt the need to use (Figure 7.21). Most students ticked websites (77%), 60% chose dictionaries, 40% selected peer(s) and 27% teachers. Only 17% chose encyclopaedias, 13% grammar books and 3% other means of support. One student mentioned the Google translator and another one a relative (his mother). Results are very similar to the ones from the first questionnaire, with websites overcoming dictionaries and the gap

between peers and teachers growing more prominent. This preference for websites over dictionaries might indicate students started using online (website) rather than paper dictionaries (dictionary). It might also mean that students gained a broader understanding of the resources offered online and of how to use them to improve their writing at a macro level that goes beyond the restrictive look-up in a dictionary to skills such as analysis and comparison. An example would be to search newspaper articles or summaries about a similar topic to find writing patterns they would then apply to their own writing. Furthermore, the second questionnaire was answered after the third assignment and thus allowed a general course assessment rather than an evaluation of one of its parts. Continuously doing assignments online allows students to grow confident with using the web and to learn to use it to suit their learning needs to their best advantage.

Types of support	
Grammars	13%
Dictionaries	60%
Encyclopaedias	17%
Websites	77%
Teacher	27%
Peer(s)	40%
Other means of support	3%

Figure 7.21 Types of support used/desired in wiki activities – 2nd questionnaire (CS3)

Two further remarks ensue. First, there seems to be a relationship between the students' profile or the nature of the interaction they were exposed to and the type of guidance needed. Groups in which collaboration was unsuccessful or which were composed of passive members claimed and showed to use fewer means of support. Second, 41% of the learners said to have deliberately looked for contact with their international peers out of Wikispaces. As their common language is English, learning gains yet another dimension. Facebook is their first option for this contact, followed by MSN, Skype and e-mails. Students naturally looked for peer interaction.

As said before, there was intentionally little teacher intervention, but support was provided when needed. CS2 interviewees shared different opinions on their teacher's involvement. Henrique did not miss the teacher's presence, he felt more autonomous for being able to resort to the teacher when needed only; Bruna recognised they were used to teacher feedback and becoming used to such limited teacher intervention was a matter of self-reliance, but also acknowledged such an experience would prepare her for the future – it triggered autonomy and introspection and extended the writing process; João claimed two of his peers played a teacher role and he himself felt motivated when correcting others' mistakes; Carolina saw e-learning as a space to freely express one's ideas in a relaxed and fun way which promotes autonomy, and claimed not to have missed the teacher – it was a more *authentic* experience that way; when arguing about the accuracy of a word on Wikispaces, Catarina missed having someone around with the power to settle the matter down; Miguel explained that working online did not make it as easy to contact a

teacher, whom he missed, but made him reflect more; Sofia was happy about having used other (more demanding) means of support besides the ones usually present in her conventional lessons, and explained she missed the teacher’s presence at first because she was used to it, but rapidly understood she could learn from her peers and mistakes; for Rita, reduced teacher support enabled her to become more autonomous and responsible⁴⁹; Pedro agreed and was sure the teacher’s absence made him attentive to details; Francisca missed the teacher’s support even though she rated teacher replacement by peers positively; Diogo noticed it in particular with regard to sentence structuring; according to Ana Rita P., self-study activities were reasonable but peers would never be able to replace teachers because of their proficiency level; Ana Rita S. also saw it as a disadvantage not to receive teacher feedback. All in all, most students did miss teacher feedback, at least at first, especially for reasons related to their learning habits, but found great assets in this absence, in particular the positive impact on their autonomy, responsibility, authentication of the experience, self-reliance, reflection skills and language competence.

All CS3 students claimed to have been given enough support on the online activities by the teacher when asked about it in the third questionnaire, which they answered after the course had finished. As this was a Yes-or-No question, some students added a few examples of fields in which there was some lack of support. These are listed in Figure 7.22 according to their occurrence.





Insufficient support provided in	
Collaboration	18%
Reading	18%
Technical issues	9%
Listening	9%
Task understanding	5%
Task completion	5%
Grammar	5%
Vocabulary	5%
Writing	5%
Text structure (e.g. structure of a newspaper article ⁵⁰)	5%
Group formation	5%

Figure 7.22 Fields with little teacher support (CS3)

⁴⁹ These two attitudes had already been associated by CS1 participants.


⁵⁰ Some guiding information on this was provided on the homepage of the online component of the course: “Be sure to include the heading, the lead-in (What? Who? Where? When? How?) and the body of the article. Be aware that you will need more precise language and vocabulary in a newspaper article of 100 words than in the previous text”.

Most of these students seemed to have felt overwhelmed by some collaboration issues they were confronted with as well as with the amount of information to read they found online. These two problems were rather new, which might be the reason why they felt the need for more support. As for what most students may have meant by not having received enough support with regard to collaboration, Beatriz, for example, says, “I think that some groups had trouble working with each other and the teacher didn't help a lot in this kind of situation”. Figure 7.23 shows an example of teacher intervention in such a situation. 68% of the students opted for *none*, i.e., no situations in which they felt their teacher gave them no or (very) little support, which suggests all these students were content with the support they were provided with: “If it was given even more support, the assignment wouldn't be made by the students, but for the teachers” (Davide); “With the online dictionaries and tool we have today, it's easy to get your answers from somewhere else” (Anders D.).

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collaboration




marianaesteves Feb 28, 2011 10:19 pm
Thank you for finding the balance, Miguel, well done.

Still, Nuno and you should have started working earlier. You two should apologise to Anna.
[\[delete\]](#)



re: collaboration
AnnaBukh Feb 28, 2011 10:24 pm
It's ok, but I just only wrote my own name because I was the only one who had written something. I'll think you understand.
[\[delete\]](#)



re: collaboration
marianaesteves Mar 1, 2011 4:04 pm
Dear Anna,

You did right in writing your name only. I just thought Nuno's attitude was not very collaborative as he wrote a new text instead of working with you, which Miguel nicely solved. Anyway, they should both have started working earlier...

Best wishes
[\[delete\]](#)

Figure 7.23 Teacher intervention: collaboration issues (CS3)

For more transparency of the figures in Figure 7.22 a concrete analysis of teacher intervention along CS3 assignments is required⁵¹. Figure 7.24 concerns the types of teacher intervention and shows their frequency. Some notes about these figures are required. To start with, the first assignment was revised orally in class, therefore no online correction was provided. Second, only the third assignment received feedback on form and content because it was the last one and

⁵¹ Although there were two teachers guiding CS3, this analysis shall only concern the type of interventions made by me, the teacher leading the online component of the course.

thus the final outcome of the writing project/course. Third, each single number might correspond to a conversation thread rather than a single post, and some teacher interventions were assigned to more than one category. Fourth, this table is only about *online* teacher interventions. However, these were blended learning activities, which means that some aspects such as task description, presentation of the online tool, technical issues and collaborative aspects were discussed in class as well.

Types of teacher intervention	
Final correction	26
Final feedback on content and form	14
Organisational issues (e.g. clarifying task instructions)	11
Reaction to students' questions, comments and actions	7
Technical issues	3
Writing tips	3
Additional praise and encouragement	3
Collaboration issues	2
Resources	1
Total	70

Figure 7.24 Type and frequency of teacher intervention online (CS3)

Figure 7.25 is a sample of teacher intervention as a reaction to students' doubts, in particular with regard to task instructions. Since one of the videos to be summed up as part of the third assignment was Part 1 of a documentary, one of the students conjectured whether they had to watch the entire documentary. Teacher intervention was clearly required for students to follow the task without deviance and meet deadlines.



re: 3rd Assignment

Anders4000 May 7, 2011 8:19 pm

That looks good! I'm gonna watch the videos now, and see what I come up with.

[delete]



re: 3rd Assignment

Anders4000 May 7, 2011 8:38 pm

Beatriz's example is really nice. I just watched Video two too. Do you think we have to watch all the parts?

I'm gonna go post Beatriz's text on the Page, and we can edit it from there.

[delete]



re: 3rd Assignment

Beatriz1997 May 7, 2011 10:27 pm

well, the changes look good to me

now, we just have to work on the second video

[delete]



re: 3rd Assignment

Anders4000 May 8, 2011 12:57 am

All parts or just part 1!? :P

[delete]



re: 3rd Assignment

Anders4000 May 8, 2011 1:11 am

Please tell me if my present tense is wrong...

[delete]



re: 3rd Assignment

marianaesteves May 8, 2011 2:08 pm

Dear Anders,

You just need to work on the two videos we posted. Although the second one is only part one of a longer documentary, that's what you should sum up.

As for your verb tense, are you talking about "news travels" and asking me?

[delete]



re: 3rd Assignment

Anders4000 May 8, 2011 4:56 pm





Okay, thanks.

The verb tense: I just made all the past tense present tense. And it was just a message to my group; they can correct it if I'm wrong.

[delete]

Figure 7.25 Teacher intervention: organisational issues and reactions (CS3)

Figure 7.26 is another example of a situation in which teacher intervention was needed for students not to drift away from the type of the text they were supposed to write as a second assignment. This intervention originated from observation of the participants' performance.

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formal



marianaesteves Feb 17, 2011 9:28 pm
You are writing a newspaper article, so please bear the register in mind - you are supposed to write a formal text from the perspective of a neutral journalist.
[\[delete\]](#)

Figure 7.26 Teacher intervention: writing tips (CS3)



re: new topic
Anders4000 Feb 28, 2011 8:41 pm
I wouldn't put a "by".
I'm sure you can do it without, I like it better without and I think that the less words, the better it sounds...
[\[delete\]](#)



re: new topic
Beatriz1997 Feb 28, 2011 10:00 pm
well i was searching and i think that both are correct so... do we put or don't put?
[\[delete\]](#)



re: new topic
eduardamsc Mar 3, 2011 5:51 pm
i know the deadline is finished now but i still think i should give my opinion so: i seriously believe we should keep the "by" because even knowing we shouldn't translate it directly to our main language i still did it and it sounds much better to me the way it is.
[\[delete\]](#)



re: new topic
eduardamsc Mar 5, 2011 2:37 pm
after receiving my english test at school I noticed that one of my mistakes there was something like what we are discussing now so I guess Anders is right
sorry there!
[\[delete\]](#)



re: new topic
marianaesteves Mar 5, 2011 5:14 pm
;) [\[delete\]](#)



re: new topic
Anders4000 Mar 6, 2011 12:30 am
Hehe, no problem! :) [\[delete\]](#)



re: new topic
marianaesteves Mar 7, 2011 5:00 pm
Good :). Please let me know if there are any other questions.
[\[delete\]](#)

Figure 7.27 Teacher intervention: praise and encouragement and reactions (CS3)

Finally, Figure 7.27 above shows part of a discussion on the use of the preposition ‘by’. It gives insight into students’ effort to reach a conclusion through discussion and research as well as shows that the teacher remained out of the process until learners drew a conclusion on and of their own. What is more, this sample shows the potential of blended learning in the students’ ability to transfer knowledge from the face-to-face to the online component of the course without their teacher’s support. Teacher intervention here was merely corroborative.

The analysis of course performance enables some conclusions regarding teacher intervention to be drawn. The more contributions (e.g. posts, editions) by students, the more teacher intervention: for example, in the group with the highest amount of forum posts, 189, there were 11 teacher interventions whereas in a group with 44 forum posts, there was only one teacher intervention. However, it would be wrong to say that quantity was the only factor that affected teacher involvement. The number of teacher interventions also depended on the nature of the students’ contributions, whether they were merely informative of the fact that they had edited the text or there was some real exchange which may have contributed to the students’ development within their ZPD. The teacher tended to react to students, in particular to doubts concerning task instructions, for example, rather than take the initiative to intervene, except for final corrective feedback. Yet, the teacher did not only assess the final production by providing conclusive corrections and feedback but also supported the students during the entire writing process by offering help in organisational, technical and writing issues, by answering students’ questions or clarifying their doubts and motivating them. Figure 7.22 and Figure 7.24 endorse one another. For example, the topics which the teacher was said to have provided little support in (collaboration and reading in particular or even listening) are the ones which have little or no frequency in Figure 7.24. All the organisational, technical and writing-related matters mentioned by 5 to 9% of the students only were, indeed, often addressed by the teacher. It should be noted, however, that Figure 7.22 bases upon the data of both Portuguese and Danish students whereas Figure 7.24 focuses on the interventions of the Portuguese teacher solely. This is not very relevant, though, since the Danish teacher dedicated more face-to-face lessons to the activity and intervened little online. When she did, she mainly did so in order to provide a final correction or feedback. Furthermore, when answering the questionnaire about teacher interventions and the need for support, only six out of 22 students were Danish and only one out of these six students stated that the teacher could have provided more support with regard to collaboration. This, again, shows that more attention needs to be given to discussing collaboration online beforehand, namely because, as previously analysed, collaboration was not always fruitful.

In conclusion, results suggest most students did not a priori consider a teacher could be replaced by a (more knowledgeable) peer in providing learning support. This was mainly justified by their perception that teacher feedback was more reliable and more pedagogically conveyed, even though they considered peer exchange more enjoyable and comfortable because of age proximity. Positive wiki peer collaborative experiences increased peer-reliance. Also, the students’ predisposition towards teacher-oriented learning practices was hardly in line with their perception of the advantages of peer learning support. First, they often claimed that being corrected by a peer encouraged new perspectives and more permanent learning, among many other advantages of peer review. Second, they were able to name the learning outcomes of

having played a teacher role in previous experiences. Third, although their predisposition to rely on teachers rather than on peers derived from their understanding that teachers were the experts, they often acknowledged their peers' expertise. Fourth, students naturally looked for peer rather than teacher support when online, they claimed to enjoy being autonomous, which they associated to independence from the teacher and free resort to other means of support, and most students said they would have enjoyed even more autonomy in the online course component. In addition, they stated peer interaction triggered the use of other means of support such as dictionaries and websites, which suggests such practices trigger learner autonomy in looking for suitable learning support, partially because learners are more likely to accept their peers' recommendations. Successful collaboration stimulated the use of supporting resources further. What is more, learning support from peers and resources such as dictionaries and websites was said to be learning conducive, in particular as concerns lexical semantics, syntax and text cohesion and coherence, not to mention the fact that it stimulated idea development in general. The circumstance that websites grew more popular than dictionaries suggests the students' knowledge about and confidence in the use of the potential of online resources might have increased along the course. On the other hand, the increase in learner autonomy seemed to have had an impact on the development of language and language learning skills. In addition, nearly half of the students said to have autonomously looked for peer interaction with their international peers out of Wikispaces. Some students would have liked their teacher to intervene more, especially to solve collaboration issues, which a Danish student also suggested, to help them cope with the amount of information to read they found online and to assist them in finding conclusive answers. It is easy to understand the first two needs, since these were issues learners were confronted with for the first time – this was their first collaborative learning online experience. The latter loses relevance shall the focus of the activity be put on the process rather than on the product. Furthermore, even though the students initially refused teacher replacement by peers, their behaviour showed gradual acceptance. In fact, some students missed regular teacher feedback, at least at first, but found great benefits in this absence. Little teacher intervention was associated to increased attention, autonomy, responsibility, self-reliance, reflection, authentication and ability to face the future. In fact, 68% of the students in CS3 were satisfied with the amount of teacher support they were provided with. A comparison with the nature and amount of teacher intervention shows the teacher did not interfere in the learning process. The teacher played a monitoring and tutoring role mainly centred on making sure task instructions were clear and followed as well as on sustaining motivation, in particular through praise, encouragement and some support in collaboration issues. The teacher also had a final say over the end product presented, above all through correction and feedback, but the students' answers to the questionnaires show they were well aware of the powerful impact of the peer-collaborative process, in detriment of their final product, on their learning. Bearing all these conditions and factors in mind, it seems that the amount and quality of teacher intervention was appropriate. The analysis of the data of the questionnaires as well as participant observation indicate that the restriction of teacher intervention in general resulted in more focus on the writing process with all the gains that derive from it. Further prior-to-the-course attention to the special nature of online processes (collaboration and reading, for example) appears to be required.

7.5 The role of *linguaging* in wiki peer reviews

It has often been suggested throughout this PhD thesis, more specifically in chapter 2.5, that negotiation of meaning with one's writing peers throughout the writing process increases writing complexity and quality as well as motivation. This is related to the fact that meaning negotiation boosts involvement in learning and thus a stronger sense of ownership. In addition, it has been suggested that wikis offer good conditions for *linguaging* mainly because most of these platforms offer a history function that enables students to see text changes, which triggers debate, and a discussion function that enables students to have a place for that same debate.

This chapter shall provide insight into (1) what learners actually *language* about, (2) whether *linguaging* contributions tend to develop in quantity and quality throughout the writing process and, finally, (3) the impact of *linguaging* on text construction in the wiki space.

CS2 interviewees were able to see the potential of wiki tools and realised they should have used the discussion function to their advantage further than they did. Henrique stated that talking makes us think and perfect writing; Carolina explained that every participant was seriously impressed by the potential of this tool; Catarina claimed that there was a need to understand the reasons behind revision for peer review to result in long-term learning; Miguel believed this function made the writing and learning processes more dynamic; Rita stressed the role of such a tool on developing reflection as well as its impact on the whole process.

Chapter 7.3 has already provided an overview of the learners' perception of the impact of peer review on their learning. An analysis of CS3 learners' perception of the learning impact of the use of the discussion function in particular might prove useful. It was shown in chapter 7.3 that when selecting reasons for finding the wiki activities a valuable contribution for the English lesson, 63% of the students chose the option "The discussion function enables me to debate important aspects" and 70% opted for "Through peer review I'm able to permanently learn about my mistakes", and that these were the options that achieved the highest ratings together with "I'm in contact with international peers" (67%), which is very enlightening (Figure 7.14). The following table is based on the students' answers to the first questionnaire again, this time the answers in which they evaluated the impact of the use of the discussion function specifically on their learning. It should be noted that students could contribute to more than one category in the table. By analysing Figure 7.28, it can be concluded that students perceived the discussion function to have had a very positive impact on their learning. All in all, there were 78% clearly positive assessments. Most students saw this platform as an excellent foundation for idea sharing. Ricardo believed it was an authentic tool, as it made students ready for the future: "Thta's [That's] the thing that make the work important for our future because that make us ready to confront the situations". Davide regarded it as a learning-triggering tool when he claimed that "the discussion is probably the best place to learn English", this way highlighting the importance of a process-focus. Liliana, on the other hand, saw advantages for long-distance communication: "the discussion function was fundamental for my group to work. i think that function was really helpful because that way we could answer question to our colleagues that are hundred and hundred km away". Anders claimed, "I think being corrected by another is a big help...there was a couple of times, where we kind of kept changing the same thing from the first

word to the second, and then to the first again...In that situation the Discussion Tab was helpful” (Figure 7.34). *Learning* is clearly mentioned by 5% of the students – learning new vocabulary and improving one’s writing.

Aspects that favoured learning		Aspects that hindered learning	
Discussing ideas/sharing opinions/accepting other points of view	24%	Difficulty in discussing work issues online	3%
Discussing what is written on the edition page	8%	Difficulties in using it	3%
Solving doubts	5%	Inability to have all group members discussing simultaneously	3%
Making suggestions	3%		
Checking what is wrong	3%		
Finding mutual agreement/consent	8%		
Discussing language (e.g. “structures, tenses, verbs, vocabulary”)	3%		
Discussing vocabulary	3%		
Learning new vocabulary through discussion	3%		
Improving one’s writing	3%		
Organising ideas and structuring the text	8%		
Contacting group members about work	3%		
Communicating	5%		
Helpfulness	3%		
Handiness in comparison to the page edition tab	3%		
Learning to be ready to face situations in the future	3%		
Teachers’ supervision	3%		

Figure 7.28 Impact of the discussion function on learning (CS3)

Since CS3 students *language*d more than all other students in previous case studies, this chapter will focus on CS3 samples. This increase might be related to the fact that their online activities were wiki-based only and therefore focused on a writing process whereas in the other two case studies, CS1 and CS2, there were also some online exercises that prepared the way to the final writing task and thus there was not as much time to get to know the platform properly. Another factor that is likely to have contributed to this difference is the fact that students worked in nationality-mixed groups, which data from the first questionnaire, for example, proved motivating and a reason for e-learning activities to have been considered a valuable contribution for their English lessons by over 60% of the students. But what did students actually *language* about when given the chance to?

Object of <i>linguaging</i>	Groups (n)	Examples
Contact detail exchange	10	Providing personal data (e.g. name, e-mail, etc.) – see Figure 7.31
Writing topic	15	Choosing a topic to write about – see Figure 7.30
Resources	1	Suggesting an online dictionary – see Figure 7.19
		Translating a worksheet on punctuation – see Figure 7.20
		Clarifying a doubt about the use of a preposition (e.g. <i>consist of/on</i>) by providing an explanation, supportive websites and examples – see Figure 7.37
Text structure and organisation	9	Discussing about ideas/opinions to be included and how to access information (e.g. by questioning people on the street) – see Figure 7.32 and Figure 7.41
		Structuring the text and including missing parts such as title
		Discussing about what an opinion article is
		Discussing about what a newspaper article is (not)
		Discussing writing steps and collaboration along them
		Discussing length – see Figure 7.33
		Tense usage (e.g. present/past) – see Figure 7.25
Discussing coherence		
Syntactic issues	2	Preposition use (e.g. <i>by</i> ; <i>consist on/of</i>): providing an explanation, supportive websites and examples – see Figure 7.27 and Figure 7.37
		Cohesion: anaphoric reference – see Figure 7.42
Semantic issues	5	Solving text misunderstandings (e.g. by using punctuation signs or not, trying different text order or eliminating a conjunction, etc.) – see Figure 7.34 and Figure 7.35
		Asking for explanation of unknown concepts or unclear productions – see Figure 7.36, Figure 7.44, Figure 7.45, Figure 7.46, Figure 7.47
Collaboration	4	Removing others' text – see Figure 7.36
		Unwillingness to work
		Meaning of collaboration – see Figure 7.23

 Figure 7.29 Objects of *linguaging* (CS3)

A note should be made here as to how the concept of *linguaging* is to be understood in the context of this particular study. The focus of Swain's studies is on *linguaging* about language and how that is one of the ways we learn a second language to an advanced level (Swain, 2006 and 2009, among others). Notwithstanding, bearing in mind the idea that *linguaging* serves to mediate cognition, she refers to studies in non-language learning contexts in which students who verbalised their explanations of a newly learnt concept developed a more accurate, complete, and

deeper understanding of the topic (Swain, 2006: 96-97). In my study, Swain's concept of *linguaging* is explored in a broader sense than *linguaging about language*. It is shown how *linguaging* as the verbalisation or expression of a process of reflection can contribute to learning a second language to an advanced level. *Linguaging* about language in Swain's understanding is explored under the term *language-related episodes* (LREs – Swain & Lapkin, 2002).

CS3 participants used the Wikispaces discussion forum for several purposes. Figure 7.29 illustrates different objects of *linguaging* and the number of groups who *linguaged* about the topic at least once throughout CS3. It should not be ignored that, for research purposes and in order to meet the students' expectations, some of the groups were set up several times.

From analysing Figure 7.29, it can be concluded that students tended to use the discussion tab mostly to decide what topic to write about, to exchange contact details, and to discuss about how to structure and organise their text. Semantic issues were also often approached.

Deciding what topic to write about was a first compulsory step before beginning the text, since students could only write about one of the topics and thus had to reach a consensus about what topic to write about. The analysis of this number is therefore not very relevant. In reality, figures could have been even higher in this category had the last assignment also offered options to select from. Yet, its utility should not be disregarded because having to choose a writing topic enabled students to practice a very useful language function, which is always present in national curricula: expressing preferences (Figure 7.30). They not only had to look for a way to express their own preference but were also in contact with some other ways of expressing likes and dislikes used by their peers.

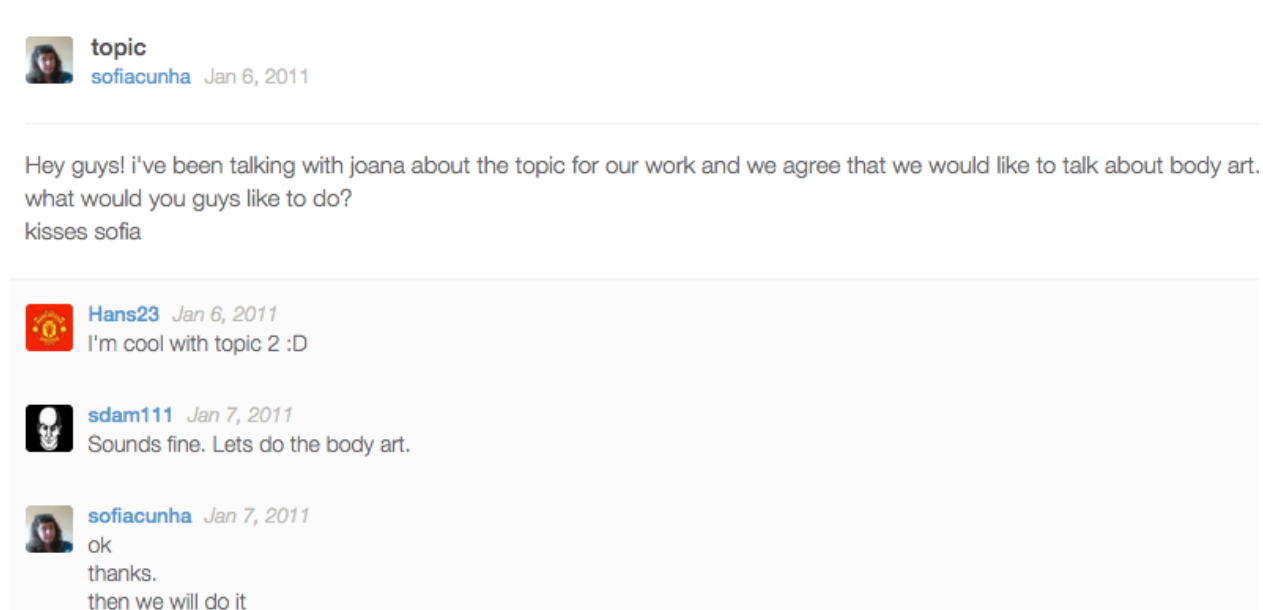


Figure 7.30 Writing topic (CS3)

As for exchanging contact details, students seemed to have felt a need to understand whom they were writing the text with and to take collaborative decisions both on the topic to write on and on

what to include in the text, how to structure it and how not to deviate from the type of text the task consisted in. Exchanging contact details (Figure 7.31) enabled students to develop social skills required in meeting and greeting contexts. In the first questionnaire and in class, as it was previously explained, 41% of the students claimed to have used external platforms such as Facebook, MSN, Skype or e-mails for this purpose, which means that the groups who did not exchange details on Wikispaces might have done so on external platforms. Although some students were assigned to different groups throughout the activities, they did not always exchange contact details the second or third time, either because a general external contact net was set up or because it was not “strange” to work with students abroad they did not know anymore, as in their first experience (see “Hey! Nice to meet you Johanne :D. This is so st[r]angeeeee :s Kisses, Mariana :)” – Mariana M.). In any case, even when not exchanging details, some group members, sometimes simply the one who initiated discussion, greeted each other. In some other cases, total absence of greetings or any other sign of interest was the beginning of the end of collaboration and resulted in unsuccessful work, which, as said before, was not often the case. Interaction of this kind seemed to be essential for students to acknowledge the activity as real and fulfil their so often mentioned need for face-to-face contact.

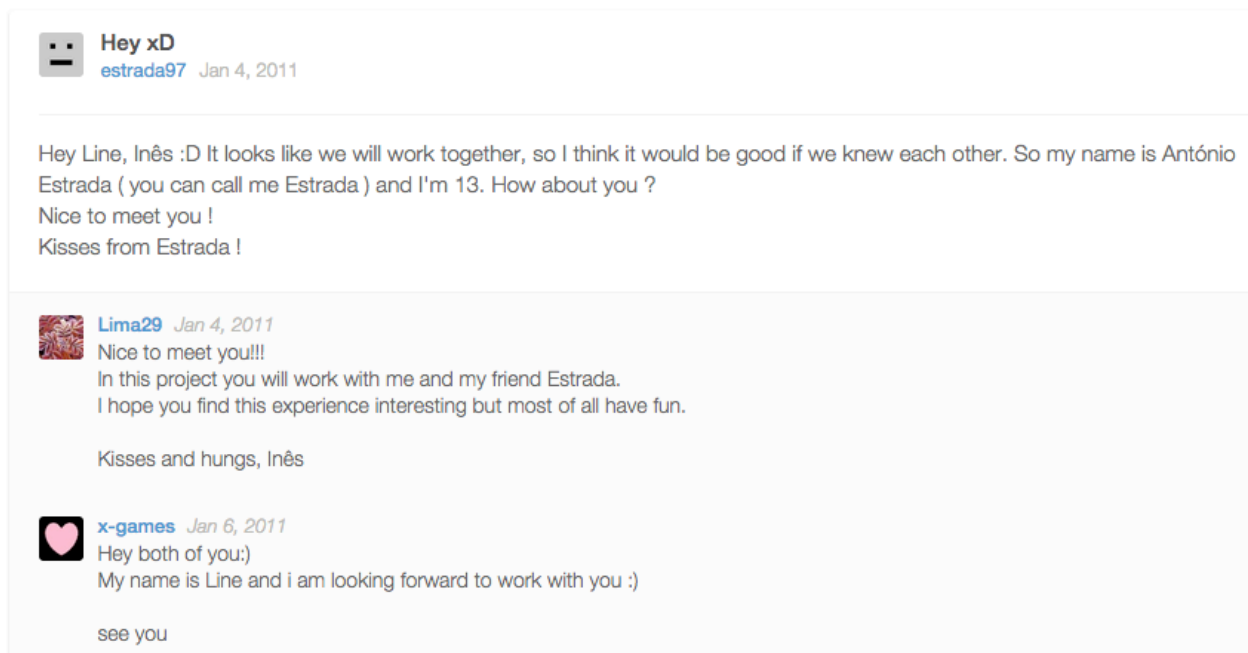


Figure 7.31 Contact detail exchange (CS3)



re: topic

sofiacunha Jan 12, 2011 5:47 pm

we have an idea for the work.

we would like to do a questionnaire to the people on the street about what they think of body art. teens adults and old people we have some questions like do you think it is cool or not?

tattoo's, piercings...

what's their meaning?

if you agree about doing this tell us and we will do it together

bye

[delete]



re: topic

sdam111 Jan 14, 2011 10:10 am

Okay. Sounds like a really good idea.

So we are going to start in the weekend

Okay then, me and Hans go for a walk on the street and ask people about Tattoos, piercings and other stuff.

I think that it would be a good idea if we could write a little bit over Facebook or Skype because it's live chat and it's a lot easier than this:D

See ya.

[delete]



re: topic

sdam111 Jan 14, 2011 10:28 am

We could start the topic with the.

"Why have we chosen this topic?"

[delete]



re: topic

JoanaGomes Jan 14, 2011 8:46 pm

and we could do an introduction of body art with that and we could add our opinions and then we put the opinions that we take a look

we have to decide four or five questions to begin to ask people.

so tell us two or three of them and tell us until tomorrow if you don't mind.

kisses sofia and joana

[delete]



re: topic

Hans23 Jan 17, 2011 10:50 am

1. what do you think of body art?
2. do you want to have body art on your body?
3. Why/why not?

[delete]



re: topic

JoanaGomes Jan 17, 2011 8:19 pm

ok ;b

me and sofia will ask people tomorrow and then we write a text with the information and you can do it too. Then we can do the conclusion, what do you think?

[delete]

Figure 7.32 Text structure and organisation 1 (CS3)

Discussing the text structure and organisation, on the other hand, enabled students to cognitively engage with the text straight away by “...producing language in an attempt to understand – to problem-solve – to make meaning” (Swain, 2006: p. 96), a process initiated with the selection of the writing topic. Figure 7.32 sheds some light on this. Although Mads (sdam11) suggested using a live chat, the fact is that when trying to structure their opinion text about body art (1st assignment) through the asynchronous use of the Wikispaces discussion function, students had to reflect on where to collect information on the topic from, and consequently on guiding questions, which introduced them to topic-specific language later required for their writing. These decisions also made Mads think of a concrete question as an introduction prompt. While negotiating, students not only performed a problem-solving task, that of structuring and organising their text, but also reflected on language production. In other words, although the focus of their negotiation was not to discuss language, they also did so and used language to do it.

The assignments clearly triggered the exploration of text typology as well, in particular opinions about the parts that should constitute each type of text, their length (e.g. how to define the length of a summary in Figure 7.33) or the most adequate verb tense for a specific type of text. Figure 7.25, for example, concerns the fact that Anders thought the Present Tense was the most appropriate verb tense for writing a summary. When Eduarda changed the whole text into the Past Tense, Anders reverted it. Giving students a deeper insight into different types of text was one of the objectives of this course.

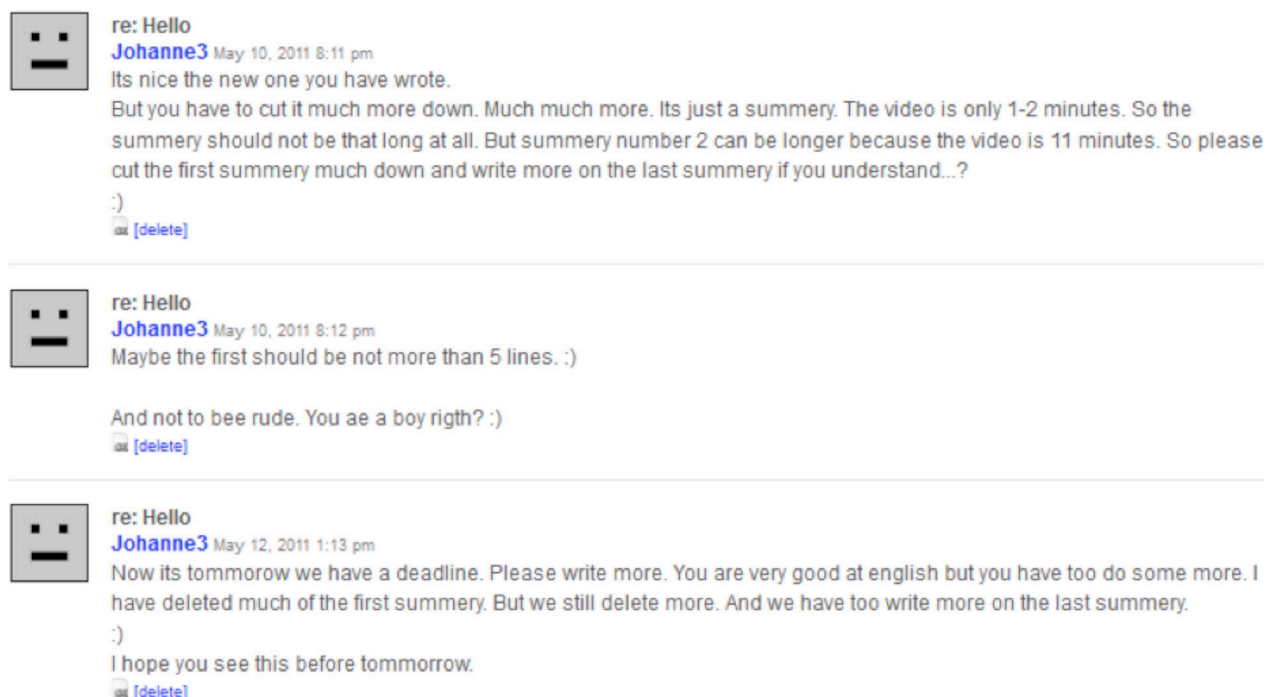


Figure 7.33 Text structure and organisation 2 (CS3)



re: Body art text

Anders4000 Jan 15, 2011 10:58 pm

Just did a little editing. Go click the History tab, and correct me if i'm wrong.

Quote: "When someone is wearing a tattoo we don't think that the person is someone, who just wants to be a rebel"

I think people with tattoos are just someone who wants to be rebels? :p

Though i know people having it, that aren't rebels... :S

[delete]



re: Body art text

eduardams Jan 16, 2011 7:34 pm

i'm not really understanding your point!

:(

try to explain yourself better, please

thanks

[delete]



re: Body art text

Anders4000 Jan 17, 2011 11:05 am

I think that people with tattoos are rebels. And in the text we wrote that we don't think they are just rebels...

So... I think that people with tattoos are rebels, but at the same time, i know people who wear them, and they are not rebels...

I just want to know if you believe in what you write. DO you think people with tattoos are rebel, or do you think they are not rebels? Just tell me (:

[delete]



re: Body art text

Anders4000 Jan 17, 2011 11:19 am

And i edit the font to Calibri or Arial? The Comic Sans is hardly readable (:

[delete]



re: Body art text

Anders4000 Jan 17, 2011 11:20 am

Can*

[delete]



re: Body art text

eduardams Jan 17, 2011 7:29 pm

you corrected something wich i didn't agree on so i put it like it was before :p

explain me what you mean with although (i think it changes the sentence meaning)!

about the font... for me it's ok :) you can choose whatever you want

[delete]



re: Body art text

Beatriz1997 Jan 17, 2011 8:27 pm


i agree with anders: when you look for someone who got a lot of tattoos in his body and in strang places, what do you think of him? that he's rebel or not?


[delete]


Figure 7.34 Semantic issues 1 (CS3)


There were five groups who on several occasions explored semantic issues by trying to solve text misunderstandings (Figure 7.34, Figure 7.35 and Figure 7.36). In previous case studies, this had been one of the main types of *linguaging*. Figure 7.34 shows how Anders, Eduarda and Beatriz attempted to understand whether they were trying to convey the same message or not; it also

shows that Eduarda realised a conjunction (*although*) might be frustrating this intention. In Figure 7.35, students discussed the use of punctuation after realising it also affected the meaning they wanted to convey. Students again *linguaged* about the best option to express their ideas clearly, this way engaging in metalinguistic negotiation.

 **re: Body art text**
Anders4000 Jan 23, 2011 2:32 pm
I don't like your changes Eduarde :D
[\[delete\]](#)

 **re: Body art text**
eduardamsc Jan 23, 2011 3:35 pm
we say we don't think on them as someone who wants to be a rebel because we know they have other reasons to do it
[\[delete\]](#)

 **re: Body art text**
Anders4000 Jan 23, 2011 6:19 pm
I see now (: But why did you remove the dot in the sentence then?
[\[delete\]](#)

 **re: Body art text**
eduardamsc Jan 23, 2011 6:27 pm
i think it goes better this way because the two sentences are conected
[\[delete\]](#)


 **re: Body art text**
Anders4000 Jan 23, 2011 6:35 pm
But can you say that sentence without having to get more air to your lungs? (:
[\[delete\]](#)


Figure 7.35 Semantic issues 2 (CS3)

The changes!

 **sofiebergholdt** Feb 22, 2011 11:44 am
Hi!
I think that it is sad that you gays have deleted all that text Johanne and I have wrote. Because then Marianna and Marianna have wrote it all. Remember that we are a group...

I have some questions to some of the things that Marianna and Marianna have written:
What do you mean with "the 14-year old child took his eyes from her little brother"

Please answer!
Hugs from Sofie.
[\[delete\]](#)

 **re: The changes!**
Mariana.Lino Feb 22, 2011 9:51 pm
Hey!
Sorry! :(we had to change, because the structure wasn't right...we have to do a formal news :)
and I change that sentence,please go there and correct it...

kisses and hugs from Mariana L.
[\[delete\]](#)

Figure 7.36 Semantic issues 3 and collaboration (CS3)

There was a group who also *language*d about syntactic issues on more than one occasion and a group who did so once. Figure 7.37 is an example of this. It again shows the students' need to know the reason behind a specific linguistic option, in this case Beatriz with regard to a collocation (*consist of*). It also illustrates how Anders makes use of websites and concrete examples to explain to Beatriz which option is the most adequate.

something about i am not sure



Beatriz1997 Jan 21, 2011 8:00 pm
i am not sure about if it's "on cutting" or "of cutting"
[\[delete\]](#)



re: something about i am not sure
Beatriz1997 Jan 21, 2011 8:19 pm
i think that it is "on" so i corrected it... if you don't agree, before you correct, please write here that you think that it's "of"

i already changed some other things (some of them are just comma that i put there)
[\[delete\]](#)



re: something about i am not sure
Anders4000 Jan 23, 2011 2:18 pm
It is "of" (: See the links below.

searched the internet:
http://www.bodymod.org/forum/forum_posts.asp?TID=12737
"My scarification work does not consist of any skin removal work"

http://about-bodyart.net/scare_about.html
"which consists of cutting out a design "
[\[delete\]](#)



re: something about i am not sure
Anders4000 Jan 23, 2011 2:19 pm
The word "on" means that it is eg. On the table, On the chair or On the floor...
[\[delete\]](#)



re: something about i am not sure
Anders4000 Jan 23, 2011 2:27 pm
Found a good example...
1: "I'm thinking on a table" Means that you lay on a table thinking about something...
2: "I'm thinking of a table" Means that you have the table in your mind... (Basically thinking of it)

Hard to explain. But if you think on something, it is physically. If you think of something it's psychically.
[\[delete\]](#)



re: something about i am not sure
Beatriz1997 Jan 24, 2011 11:24 pm
i understood and i agree
[\[delete\]](#)

Figure 7.37 Syntactic issues and resources (CS3)

Despite the fact that some groups discussed issues in some of these categories several times, it is clear most groups *language*d predominantly in order to organise their text and to use language to

the best of content. And this was what the groups who *language*d more discussed about more frequently too.

There were two groups who never used their discussion forum but managed to fulfil the task, one of them very successfully indeed. In spite of not being essential for a successful writing product, it is obvious that the use of the discussion function available in the wiki space contributes to develop skills not necessarily visible in a final product but tangible in one's general language learning process, mainly because such use sets the focus to the writing process rather than to the final written product, as previously discussed. All the concrete examples presented illustrate the possibilities offered by this space for discussion in wikis. In this space,

...language is used to mediate problem solutions, whether the problem is about which word to use, or how best to structure a sentence so it means what you want it to mean, or how to explain the results of an experiment, or how to make sense of the action of another, or...[This is how] languaging occurs,...[and]...languaging about language is one of the ways we learn a second language to an advanced level... [because] languaging serves to mediate cognition. (Swain, 2006: pp. 96-97)

All the verbalisations pointed out before with regard to the text itself, as in text structure and organisation or semantic issues, as well as the negotiations about the meaning of collaboration, etc., enable learners to articulate thinking and transform it into something palpable, therefore permanent. The wiki space offers gains that go beyond standard classroom group discussion. It allows students to carefully look at their collaborative texts at any time, analyse editions made by their peers, ask questions, make their own points, provide and access supportive resources, etc. In addition, when writing down their thinking, students are practising a type of writing which, on the one hand, is very much oral, and, on the other, still offers the benefits of having a discussion recorded for later purposes, namely that of rethinking what one has written. Collaborative output processing in the wiki space is much more continuous, variable and multidimensional. The wiki space facilitates a never-ending cycle of problem-solving tasks and meaning-making negotiation that is much more promising in developmental terms than conventional class face-to-face collaborative output processing.

As discussed in previous chapters, in several occasions throughout the case study, students showed they acknowledged the potential of the tools offered by Wikispaces, here representative of generally well-equipped wiki space, claiming they facilitated more reflective process-centred practices. It is now important to understand whether these conclusions had a hands-on effect, in other words, whether growing confidence in the usage of these tools increased their use. A scrutiny of the development of *languaging* contributions in quantity and quality throughout the course being evaluated in CS3 shall provide insight into this matter.

I looked into the total number of discussion forum posts per assignment in CS3, that is, the number of discussion forum posts in all groups in total and not per group, because students were assigned to different groups for each assignment, mostly for the third one, and the groups had a different number of participants. In the first, second and third assignments, there were 12, 13 and 14 groups respectively. For obvious reasons, I did not consider students working individually⁵².

⁵² Students worked individually either on the basis of their teacher's decision for reasons related to their non-collaborative behaviour, or because their group members did not collaborate and never contributed to the text in any way and they were left alone with the task.

However, I did include the contributions of a student whose group worked full and successfully but who used the forum on his own. Teacher interventions were also counted, corrections and final feedback on texts included, as they resulted from students' actions and gave rise to other students' comments. In some cases, at the end of the assignment, mostly at the end of the first one, students discussed whether collaboration and the final product were successful or about whether they would remain in the same group for the following task. These posts were taken into account as well. Contact detail exchange, which took place mainly before the first assignment, was also born in mind. This might also account for the fact that there were more discussion forum posts in this assignment, as can be confirmed through analysis of the following table.

Discussion forum posts		
1 st assignment	2 nd assignment	3 rd assignment
353	180	111

Figure 7.38 Number of discussion forum posts per assignment (CS3)

Figure 7.38 suggests the number of contributions decreased visibly, in particular from the first to the second assignment with nearly half the number for the latter, which appears to be a rather low figure. This number remains low even if considering that the first assignment included more contact detail exchange than the following ones and that there were more groups in the last assignment than in the previous ones, which means more texts were written and thus more *linguaging* would be expectable. The following are some of the reasons which may underlie these numbers:

- a) Students may have started to resort to external platforms such as Facebook, although they were asked not to do so except for personal exchange;
- b) Students may have started to get to know each other, even if they were assigned to groups in which all members were different from previous group members, through the use of external platforms;
- c) The type of assignment may have demanded less discussion (e.g. in the third assignment students did not have to choose the topic to write about as in the previous ones – and Figure 7.29 shows that deciding what topic to write about generated most *linguaging* episodes);
- d) Students were given different amounts of time to solve the assignment: 21 days for the first one, 24 for the second one and 16 for the last one.

These are mere speculations and there may be other reasons affecting this decline, since it would be expectable to see students *language* more as they gain experience with the tools and observe their success. There is one reason, however, which seems rather plausible: the learners' posting became more organised as time went by; there were fewer new discussion topics and the posts became more straightforward. Also, in the two groups who remained intact for three and two assignments respectively, and in which collaboration was more successful and resulted in good

text production, the length of each post increased. Since most students were assigned to different groups for each assignment, it is not possible to see the evolution of the number of words per post in each group, but if we compare the number of words used for each assignment by all groups together divided by the number of posts in each assignment, it is possible to draw rather different conclusions.

Words per assignment		
1 st assignment	2 nd assignment	3 rd assignment
7335	3922	3045

Figure 7.39 Number of words per assignment (CS3)

Words per post and assignment		
1 st assignment	2 nd assignment	3 rd assignment
20,8	21,8	27,4

Figure 7.40 Average number of words per post and assignment (CS3)

As in the previous analysis (Figure 7.38), repeated posts were included and the data by learners who worked individually were not considered. In Figure 7.39, it is possible to observe that, as with the number of posts, the number of words per assignment decreased. Notwithstanding, by looking into Figure 7.40, it can be concluded that the number of words per post increased, in particular from the second to the third assignment. As previously mentioned, however, only the last assignment was corrected and given a final feedback online. Yet, subtracting these posts – the total number of discussion forum posts in the third assignment without teacher final feedback is 92 – and their words – the number of words in the third assignment without teacher final feedback is 2646 – results in an average number of words per post in the third assignment of 28,7, which is an even higher value than the corresponding figure in Figure 7.40. This demonstrates that less frequent posting does not necessarily mean that students *languaged* less. Students seem to become more organised and concise in their posting as they grow confident with it. This may obviously result from new patterns of interaction as well as from the type of assignment but such a sharp rise seems to suggest an increase in students' awareness that *languaging* in the wiki space is actually easy and worth it.

Such a discussion forum, with easy and direct access from the writing page, may provide the scaffolding needed in the learning process and thus another question arises: are there real effects on text construction, that is, do students actually edit their text according to what they discuss in the forum?

Most instances of discussion affected the text, leading up the student who initiated that same discussion strand or another group member to alter it according to the conclusions drawn. Students used the forum to express doubts, and answers had a direct effect on text construction.

Some examples concerning text structure and organisation are discussions about the due text length (Figure 7.33), ideas to be included and how to access them (Figure 7.32) or the nature of content (Figure 7.41), examples previously presented, which were discussed by nearly all groups in many occasions, as well as picture inclusion.

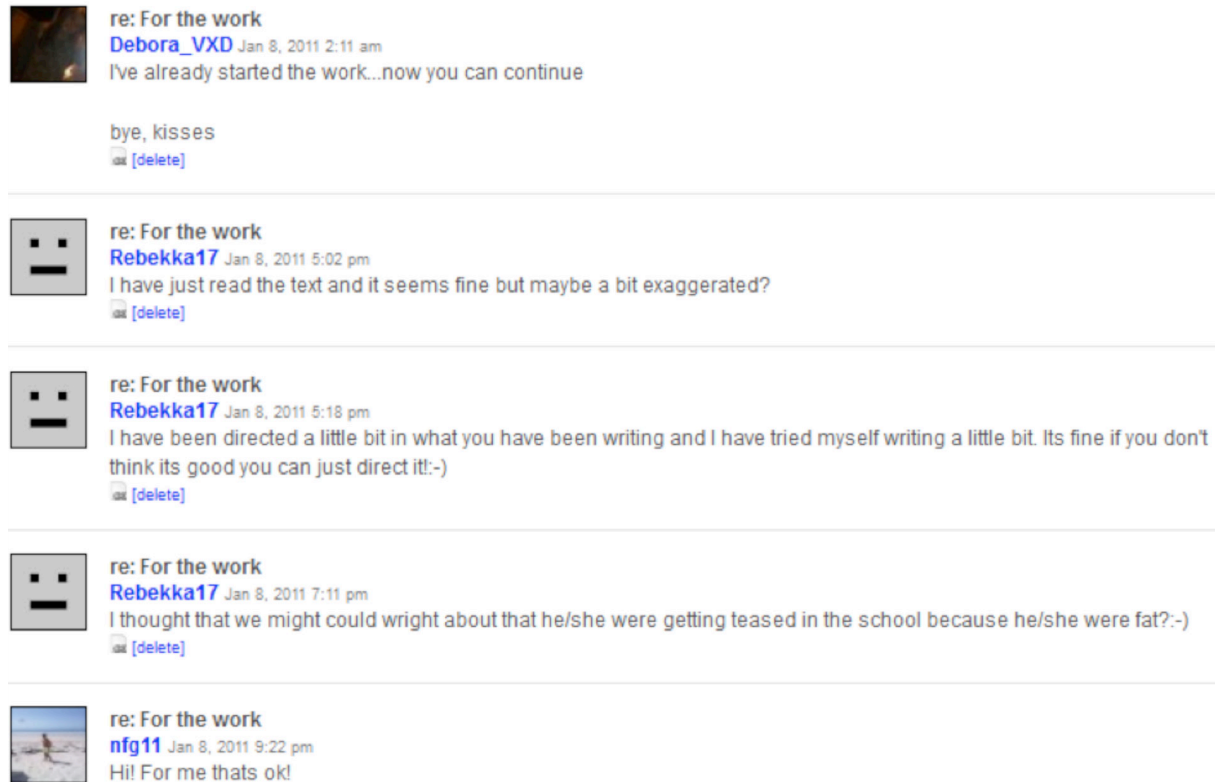


Figure 7.41 Text structure and organisation 3 (CS3)

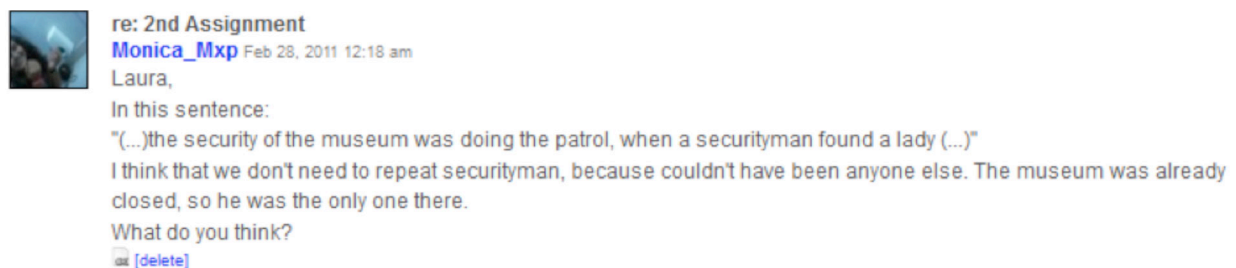


Figure 7.42 Syntactic issues (CS3)

Figure 7.43 provides the number of the LREs that directly affected text construction (n=13), some of them previously presented as well. In this particular context semantic issues are mostly related to LREs in which students discussed unclear words, phrases or sentences either because they were unknown to them (Figure 7.44 and Figure 7.45), they were ambiguous or even incorrect (Figure 7.34, Figure 7.36, Figure 7.46 and Figure 7.47), and punctuation when it affected the meaning of the sentence (Figure 7.35). Syntax-related episodes, on the other hand,

concern preposition usage (Figure 7.27 and Figure 7.37), person concordance and anaphoric reference (Figure 7.42).

Impact of semantic and syntactic issues	
Semantic issues	9
Syntactic issues	4
Total	13

Figure 7.43 Impact of LREs on text construction (CS3)

It is important to note the students' concern for semantic issues. They often tried to make sure they understood a word, phrase or sentence used by their peers, they discussed the way words or chunks of words were being conveyed exhaustively and pointed out inaccuracies, this all leading them or their peers to rewriting the part of the text under scrutiny. The following pictures shall shed further light on these occurrences.

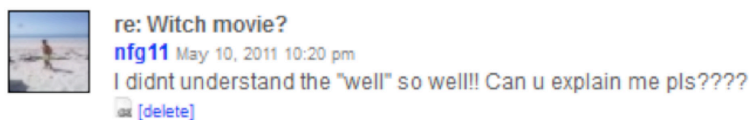


Figure 7.44 Semantic issues 4 (CS3)

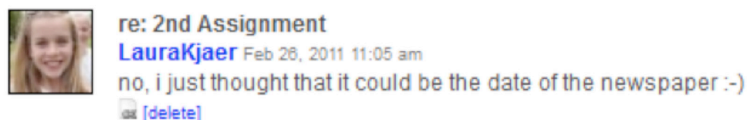
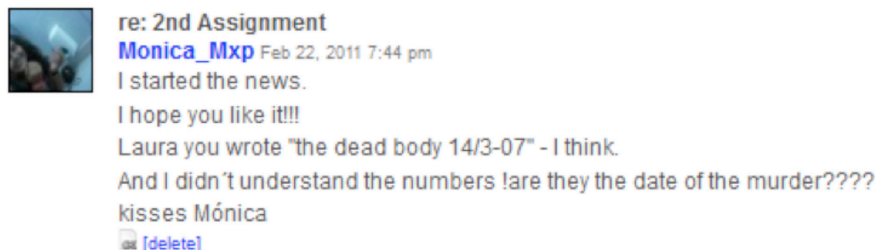


Figure 7.45 Semantic issues 5 (CS3)

This is rather interesting because it is supportive of the previously suggested claim that learners are concerned with the chunkiness of language and the impact words have on one another as co-text (Figure 7.34) or even the impact punctuation can have on the message they intend to deliver (Figure 7.35). Students want their text to convey the right message. They want to succeed in communication. In Figure 7.46, for example, we see Eduarda is aware that Beatriz may mean nothing else than “shooting area” because their newspaper article is about a film shooting crime

scene. Finally, even though semantic and syntax issues were put into separate categories here, it should be noted that the examples provided (Figure 7.27 and Figure 7.37, in particular) are also lexical in Lewis's view. Anders's explanations are co-textual as well.

 **re: new topic**
Beatriz1997 Feb 13, 2011 2:45 pm
ist's not "in the area of shooting" but "in the area of rooling"
[\[delete\]](#)

 **re: new topic**
eduardamsc Feb 13, 2011 4:21 pm
i have no idea what a area of rooling is... i think you mean shooting area
[\[delete\]](#)


 **re: new topic**
Anders4000 Feb 14, 2011 11:11 am
What about just writing about a police report?
Like:
"Monday Jan 5th, the police found a dead woman. She was stabbed 5 times and the killer escaped out the window."

I think that's a bit easier :p
[\[delete\]](#)

 **re: new topic**
eduardamsc Feb 14, 2011 7:31 pm
easier but not different!
[\[delete\]](#)

 **re: new topic**
Beatriz1997 Feb 14, 2011 10:09 pm
i think that it's like what everyone are going to do
and yes eduarda mean shooting area
[\[delete\]](#)

Figure 7.46 Semantic issues 6 (CS3)

 **Bertehjorth** May 12, 2011 1:20 pm
What do you mean when you write: " While the text"? Please write back! :)
[\[delete\]](#)


 **re: ?**
nfg11 Jun 1, 2011 9:47 pm
Forget that! I was mistaken!!! LOL
[\[delete\]](#)

Figure 7.47 Semantic issues 7 (CS3)

A last remark must be made here. Attesting the impact of *linguaging* on text construction is naturally more relevant in this context than understanding whether there is an enhancement of objective accuracy, that is, correctness according to standard language norms, as opposed to

perceived accuracy, that is, subjective correctness or the user's notion of correctness (Kohn, 1990). Objective accuracy is partially dealt with in chapter 7.6. In fact, a great number of, but not all, *linguaging* episodes led to actual text enhancement. However, objective accuracy is not the ultimate goal of *linguaging*. *Linguaging* also raises language and language learning awareness and enables hypothesis testing. What is more, the role of perceived accuracy is equally relevant here since *linguaging* has other positive effects on learning that go beyond objective accuracy. The increase in learner self-reliance (Figure 7.8) is an example of this because self-reliance leads to fluency enhancement.

This chapter explored the possibility of discussion of the writing process offered by the wiki space, more specifically the learners' assessment of the discussion function on Wikispaces, the nature and evolution of their *linguaging* in this platform, its role in text construction and, naturally, the contribution of web *linguaging* for the improvement of language learning writing-centred processes and ultimately products.

The vast majority of both CS2 and CS3 participants approved of the utility of this tool and acknowledged the role it played in peer review and consequently learning. As for its impact on learning, CS2 students placed the emphasis on the development of reflective skills. CS3 students, on the other hand, highlighted the potential of this tool with regard to the discussion and sharing of ideas and opinions, and considered it relevant for their learning that they could discuss the text produced to the moment and collaboratively solve text structure and organisation as well as language issues. They also mentioned advantages connected with developing one's vocabulary and possibilities of communication. The number of negative aspects, which concerned difficulties in discussing online, was rather irrelevant in comparison with 78% clearly positive assessments, which the possibility of intercultural exchanges might have contributed to. Yet, some students identified some constraints in explaining their point of view in written form. Eduarda says, "i don't know who's right but i don't agree with many stuff you both corrected so... give it a look! i'm freaking out! i can't explain my point of view just by texting :(". This may mean that, at times, the students' proficiency level was not enough to convey or understand a message and that this aspect should be born in mind and minimised when setting up blended language learning courses so that students do not feel frustrated and leave the process. Yet, it also means that the situation created in wiki space makes learners 'stretch' their interlanguage to meet their communicative goals, which is the same as saying that opportunities are created for students to learn according to the assumption that they must "...engage in two-way, negotiated meaning exchanges" (see Swain, 1985: p. 247) to thrive. Feeling social or cognitive pressure to produce language that reflects their intended meaning more appropriately or precisely is positive. Eduarda, for example, was pushed to being more comprehensible by receiving negative input (Figure 7.34) and this shall play a role in the development of her and her peers' syntax and morphology. Learners are given an authentic opportunity to use the target language and that output pushes them to process language in a deep way.

It was found that the interactants used this tool for various purposes but mostly to structure and organise their text collaboratively and find the right chunk of language to convey the content they aim at. Obviously, text structure and organisation, syntax and semantics cannot be seen separately and have merged, just as language and content merge as well and words were seen in

interaction with their co-text rather than in isolation. The fact that this was natural to the students must not be ignored. Students also used the discussion function to exchange contact details before initiating collaboration, and were compelled to discuss what topic they wanted to write about. All these instances of interaction are a paramount contribution to the students' learning process.

On the one hand, at a micro level, learners develop reading, writing and even speaking skills. This happens as they engage in comprehending their peers' statements and questions and in reacting to them or initiating discussions. Not being face-to-face and not knowing one or two of their group members demands more preciseness in their actions, and their communication acts, albeit written, are nonetheless very oral, which supports the simultaneous development of different skills. In addition, such interaction guided students through practising language functions such as introducing oneself, greeting, expressing likes and dislikes, etc. This type of interaction seemed to be essential for students to acknowledge the activity as real and fulfil their need for face-to-face contact. Deepening their understanding of different text genres was another gain to this process.

On the other hand, at a macro level, by discussing all the issues inherent to the text, students developed reflection and therefore language and language learning skills. They showed they regarded language and content as integrated while striving to convey their message successfully. They struggled to find the most natural and appropriate expressions, not words, to do so. They developed communication skills while doing so as well. They constructed their text based on their and their peers' previous experience and, most importantly, on experimentation. The discussion function facilitated this dynamic experimentation process and continuous (re)assessment of their product greatly. By integrating text edition with text discussion, students became aware of their linguistic problems both in writing and in discussion, were able to permanently test hypotheses and reflect on the language produced by themselves or the others, which enabled them to internalise linguistic knowledge (see Swain, 1995; Swain, 2005). All the self-regulation and self-direction demanded by these processes helps improve the learners' responsibility for their learning process and autonomy, not to speak of collaboration skills developed in a context they could authenticate because they could not meet with their Danish counterparts to discuss the task.

All of this also seems to suggest that, although this course did not follow the usual steps of a task-based approach online, it can still be regarded as integrating a pre-phase in which students get to know each other, discuss preferences regarding the writing topic and how to structure and organise their text, this way becoming lexically familiar with the task, for example; the actual task in which they produce the text, even though this corresponds to a long multidimensional process; and permanent assessment of their performance not as a post-phase but as an along-the-process phase. It is the discussion function offered by the wiki space that generates such an enriching learning experience.

The groups who *language*d more evidenced stronger bonds throughout the learning process as well as more learning awareness and self-direction and thus better final product. Indeed, perhaps due to the fact that learners perceived this themselves, there was a gradual and rather striking increase in the length and quality of each post assignment after assignment. In fact, the learners'

adhesion to this tool was visible through the increase in the number of words per post from the first to the last assignment, from 20,8 to 28,7, teacher final feedback subtracted. This result suggests students became more organised and concise in their posting as they grew confident with it and aware of the positive outcomes it produced.

Furthermore, most discussion instances gave rise to alterations in the text. It is important to note the students' concern with understanding words, phrases or sentences used by their peers and the way they discussed meaning comprehensively in order to rewrite their text to successfully communicate their message.

All this is in line with the findings of the previous chapter, in which the learners often identified the benefits of peer interaction in spite of the fact that this perception did not always match their predisposition with regard to the belief that peers might be able to facilitate their learning just as much as teachers. This chapter proposes highly collaborative groups *language* more and can easily find guidance in peer exchange or other external resources such as grammar books, online dictionaries, etc.

7.6 Lexical and non-lexical revisions in wiki peer reviews

This chapter aims at further proving the potential of wiki peer review for language learning centred on communication with a focus on form. I shall explore (1) the lexical focus in revision, (2) the evolution of the levels of self-reliance and accuracy in revision, and (3) the factors affecting revision frequency.

The students' discussions in the wiki space showed that when producing text there, they worked towards conveying a message that should sound as probable, hence as natural, as possible. CS1 students placed an emphasis on the urge wiki collaborative writing created regarding lexical work. They felt the need to find synonyms and consider the context when choosing a word in detriment of others, *inter alia* (see chapter 6). In their post-interviews, most CS2 interviewees stressed vocabulary (*vocabulary, concepts, expressions*) as a learning area they developed. Miguel said he was stunned by the amount of new words he had learnt and their meaningful use in context. Ana Rita S. claimed to have been praised by her achievements in the exam on drinking she had taken at her language school – both the student and her teacher noticed her evolution in her management of the topic.

The same concern about lexical development seems to be true of CS3 students. In their questionnaires, CS3 participants tended to focus on the word 'vocabulary' as something they improved or acquired as much. For example, when enquired about the merits and weaknesses of wikis as a collaborative tool to learn English, 14% mentioned *learning vocabulary*, which was second in frequency, the first one being *contact with international/unknown peers*, with 22% (Figure 7.6). When asked to provide examples of instances of learning that took place in their wiki experience, *vocabulary* achieved the highest score (Figure 7.15). In their assessment of the language areas they felt they improved with e-learning materials and activities, vocabulary reached the best scores together with writing (Figure 7.16). In their comments to this question, Beatriz stated, "I improved a lot my writing [writing], grammar and vocabulaire [vocabulary] because, to make a good work, we need to have a lot of different words. We must correct the text

so my vocabulaire [vocabulary] and grammar are really better right now”. Francisca claimed to have developed her language and strengthened her English, her writing, when learning vocabulary; Sofia claimed, “my vocabularu [vocabulary] improved a lot because when we talk to other people we learn other way of saying what we wanted to say”. There were also misconceptions such as the lack of connection between the learning of vocabulary and the development of skills such as listening or speaking: “I lea[r]ned some new words, but i didn’t lea[r]n to listening og [or] speaking better English” (Laura). There are two students who describe an *expert* (Figure 7.17) as someone who knows everything about vocabulary and *appropriate* expressions, and applies verb tenses correctly. When analysing learning outcomes, students tended to mention ‘vocabulary’ more often than ‘grammar’ and in their forums they discussed about chunks of text which did not bring clear meaning across. Throughout the questionnaire, there were other references to *vocabulary* in different contexts:

Online collaboration help us learning a lot because there we can practice structures, tenses, verbs, vocabulary... and we can understand that the people of other countries have different ways to make the same think [thing] that we do. (Inês M.)

i think its alright but we can never improve our speaking, vocabulary or listening when we just write together. (Alberte)

I learn vocabulary and writing but it's just that. (Miguel)

wikispaces helped me develop writing, to meet new vocabulary [vocabulary] and fundament my opinions. It was a very beneficial experience in the development of learning a new language. (Carla)

the discussion help us learning because there we can discuss structures, tenses, verbs, vocabulary.... we can discuss new ideas with the others and doubts. (Inês M.)

In our group, we used a lot the discussion function to discuss somethings like stru[c]ture and even vocabulaire [vocabulary]. In my opinion, it helps a lot on our learning and it helps in the elaboration of the work too. (Beatriz)

Well I think that the discussion was very important to execut[e] the work, we could discuss about the work so my vocabulary grew a little bit. (Rui)

Peer review is good because we can learn more about vocabulaire [vocabulary] and grammar and see different opinions. It can also call us to attention of somethings that we thought that were right and after all they were not. (Beatriz)

I think that it is important because we could learn more about grammar and vocabulary from our teammates. (Leonor)

i learn much more with the supports, about grammar and vocabulary. (José Rui)

I improved my writing and raised my vocabulary. (Eduarda)

More advance[d] vocabulary and some new expressions. (Inês L.)

Yes, this way we memorize faster the [subject] matter and the vocabulary. (Mónica)

Several ideas arise from these random passages. Most learners are aware that what they call ‘vocabulary’ plays an important role in language learning. Vocabulary seems to be linked to expressing one’s views. For some, vocabulary learning is not connected with the development of other skills. For others, however, it is a valuable contribution for language learning in general. Quite a few students mention discussing vocabulary and the fact that their vocabulary awareness increased through forum discussion. But, most importantly, there seems to be a lexical orientation in their words: importance of the word context (co-text?), association with appropriate expressions and successful communication, etc. This indicates not only that learners acknowledge the role of lexical development in learning and using a language appropriately, but

also that they see the utility of the online tools they experimented with for this purpose. Yet, is lexis what students tend to revise or take into account more often when editing text?

Numerous taxonomies were analysed so as to place the students' revisions, in particular formal revisions, into categories (Faigley & Witte, 1981; Arnold, Ducate & Kost, 2009; Kessler & Bikowski, 2010; Kessler, 2009; Schultz, 2005; among others). Faigley and Witte's distinction between surface and text-base changes (Figure 7.48) is quite pertinent. Yet, for this analysis I shall only need to focus on surface changes and the authors' division between formal and meaning-preserving changes.

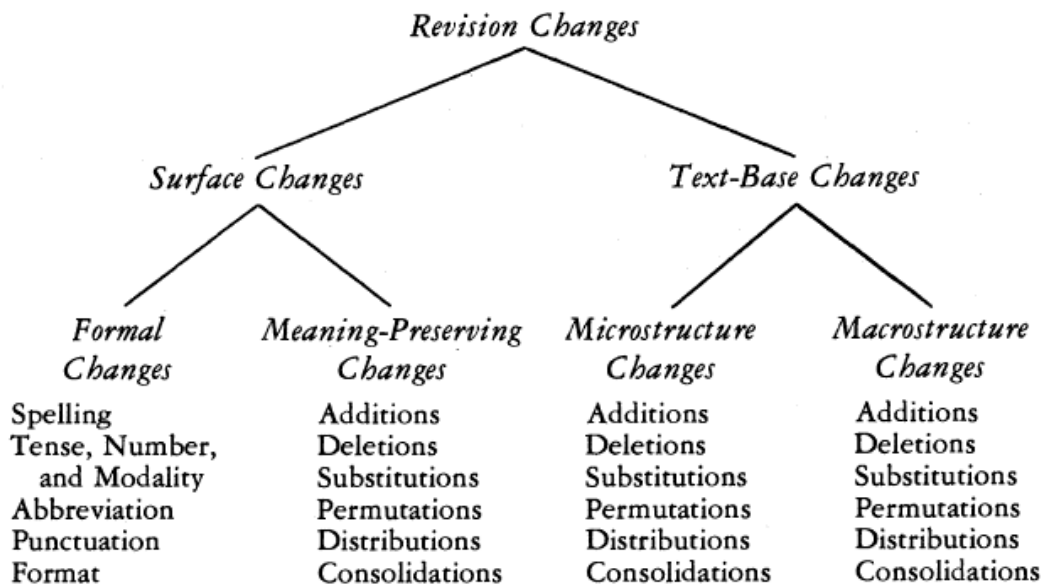


Figure 7.48 Taxonomy of revision changes (Faigley & Witte, 1981: p. 403)

Faigley and Witte seem to have divided surface changes into purely grammatical changes ('Formal Changes') and lexical changes ('Meaning-Preserving Changes') respectively. They explain what they understand as meaning-preserving changes:

The second subcategory, *Meaning-Preserving Changes*, includes changes that 'paraphrase' the concepts in the text but do not alter them. *Additions* raise to the surface what can be inferred...*Deletions* do the opposite so that a reader is forced to infer what had been explicit...*Substitutions* trade words or longer units that represent the same concept...*Permutations* involve rearrangements or rearrangements with substitutions...*Distributions* occur when material in one text segment is passed into more than one segment...*Consolidations* do the opposite. Elements in two or more units are consolidated into one unit... (Faigley & Witte, 1981: p. 401)

The writers also state, however, that it is difficult to set up a taxonomy that raises no doubts, since some categories may overlap:

Such separation is not always easy. Changes that affect meaning and changes that do not affect meaning can take the same form. In most cases, for example, capitalization does not change meaning. But some capitalizations, such as the change from *the man is white* to *the man is White*, can change meaning. (p. 401)

Faigley and Witte refer back to researchers, the National Assessment of Educational Progress in its 1977 survey and even literary scholars who attempted to classify revisions and concluded, as

Wallace Hildick, for instance, that “none of his categories is rigidly exclusive”. Hildick even created a category he labelled ‘the ragbag of types’, meaning ‘miscellaneous’.

Arnold, Ducate and Kost (2009) base their study upon Faigley and Witte’s taxonomy, which they altered substantially. For their analysis of revisions of written production in German, under formal (surface) changes they include format, spelling, punctuation, verbs, nominal/adjectival endings (cases, gender), word order, lexical revisions and translation. Their examples seem to show they understand ‘lexical’ under the light of Lewis’s approach. An example of unsuccessful lexical revision would be from *Churchill hatte der größten Verdacht Stalin* to *Churchill hatte der größten Verdacht von Stalin*. As for successful lexical revision, they provide the example *Hätten wir die Bombe tropfen sollen?* to *Hätten wir die Bombe abwerfen sollen?*. Meaning-preserving changes, which the authors name ‘stylistic’, comprise additions, deletions, substitutions and reordering.

After examining all these proposals for classification and bearing in mind the purpose of this study as well as these students’ most typical errors and revisions, I decided to divide their revision changes into lexical and non-lexical rather than into formal and meaning-preserving changes, which would not serve the purpose of this part of the study. Indeed, the purpose here is not so much to produce a fixed taxonomy but rather understand what the learners’ revision focus is. Lewis himself says grammatical and lexis categorisation has ‘fuzzy edges’ and that it is not rigid but a useful way of grouping (Lewis, 1993: p. 93). Figure 7.49 and Figure 7.50 list the subcategories that fall into each group’s revisions and provide illustrating examples, which portray both successful and unsuccessful revisions.

Subcategories	Examples
Spelling	- ...a personal decision wich we have to live with... + ...a personal decision which we have to live with...
Punctuation	- If a person decides to do it then we have nothing to do with it! + If a person decides to do it, then we have nothing to do with it!
Upper/lower case	- ...they think i 'm fat. + ...they think I 'm fat.
Subject deletion/addition	- Body art can be beatiful and nice, but it can... + Body art can be beatiful and nice, but can... - ...stayed there until found but still not known... + ...stayed there until found but it still not known...
Verb (number, tense...)	- Chris Burden is born in 1946. + Chris Burden was born in 1946. - ...the first television broadcast... evolve ... + ...the first television broadcast... evolves ...
Adjective (degrees)	- ...it is much easier ...

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	+ ...it is <i>much easier</i> ...
Noun (forming plural nouns)	- The regular drinking habits of teenagers lead evidently to mental disorders, car crashes ... + The regular drinking habits of teenagers lead evidently to mental disorders, car crashes ...
Article	- ...watching TV all the day. + ...watching TV all day. - ...born in 1946, in Boston, in United States of America. + ...born in 1946, in Boston, in the United States of America.
Preposition deletion/addition	- The main actress, Josephine Smith, ended up by dying... + The main actress, Josephine Smith, ended up dying... - ...a <i>Queen</i> needs clean up well... + ...a <i>Queen</i> needs to clean up well...
Other cases of singular/plural concordance	- Some teenager may even change style... + Some teenagers may even change style...
Word deletion/addition	- ...everyone can go change... + ...everyone can change... - ...the world has always developed and will develop. + ...the world has always developed and will always develop.
Genitive	- ...she got to St. Marks's hospital. + ...she got to St. Marks' hospital. - James and Elisabeth, parents of Tyler and Mary , arrived + James and Elisabeth, Tyler and Mary's parents , arrived...
Word order	- ...a girl who had probably ... + ...a girl who probably had ...
Translation	- Without the Internet, many social networking sites like Facebook puderial never have exist. + Without the Internet, many social networking sites like Facebook could never have exist.

Figure 7.49 Taxonomy of revision types adopted: non-lexical revision changes

As said before, these categories cannot be considered rigid. The *Verb* subcategory in Figure 7.49 may imply a lexical revision if we consider the difference in meaning in the usage of a gerund or infinitive after the verb *to like*, for example, but students did not seem to be aware of this at the time. The addition of a preposition, on the other hand, may represent a lexical transformation too, since phrases such as *I want **to** go* may be seen as a lexical chunk. This taken into account, can subcategories like *Word order* not be lexical as well? Does this not depend on the student's

intention? An example would be the difference between changing the adverb position intuitively, because that lexical chunk sounds more natural, or due to rule awareness, i.e., because one was taught at school that frequency adverbs, for example, come before the verb except for when we are dealing with the verb *to be* or composed verb tenses. Introducing a possessive, in the *Genitive* subcategory, can also be a lexical transformation. However, the examples in the table show that students mean possession from the beginning, they are just not confident about how to use it. In fact, many other subcategories can be looked upon as lexical when the student is looking for more natural, intuitive expressions, but they are grammatical as well. This is why some subcategories, the *Article* category, for instance, are listed in both tables. The examples provided elucidate the difference. The subcategory *Word choice* takes into account all word categories except for the ones which have been classified separately, such as *Article*. The difference between *Word choice* and *Fragment* is that the latter entails more than one word.

Subcategories	Examples
Conjunction	- So he was... + Therefore he was...
Article	- ...which later developed into the color television... + ...which later developed into a color television...
Word deletion/addition	- ...a personal decision, which we have to live with till the rest of our lives! + ...a personal decision, which we have to live with the rest of our lives! - ...giving rise to the known website "Google". + ...giving rise to the well known website "Google".
Word choice	- ...Body art! It can be subdivided in a few other boxes like Scarification and Scalpelling. + ...Body art! It can be subdivided in a few other categories like Scarification and Scalpelling.
Fragment	- She got a bullet hole in his head. + She was shot in the head.

Figure 7.50 Taxonomy of revision types adopted: lexical revision changes




Another possible taxonomy would have been the following:

- a) Word meaning and use
 - i. word meaning
 - ii. word use
- b) Word form
 - i. word formation
 - ii. inflexion
 - iii. spelling
- c) Grammar
 - i. verb tenses, articles, etc

- d) Discourse organisation
 - ii. discourse markers
 - iii. punctuation

However, *capitalisation* may also fall into *spelling* or *punctuation*, *plural formation* may belong to either *inflexion* or *spelling*, and *discourse markers* should probably be under *Grammar*, since they demand different sentence construction (e.g. *in spite of* vs. *although*).

Caption:

 Non-lexical revisions
  Lexical revisions
  Hybrid revisions

Case study	CS1 – Part I	CS1 – Part II	CS2	CS3 – Part I	CS3 – Part II	CS3 – Part III	All case studies
Spelling	8	10	41	79	14	37	189
Punctuation	1	2	13	95	25	21	157
Upper/lower case	-	11	1	22	10	14	58
Subject deletion/addition	1	-	6	4	4	4	19
Verb (number, tense...)	3	11	9	25	19	50	117
Adjective (degrees)	1	-	-	-	-	-	1
Noun (forming plural nouns)	2	-	-	-	-	-	2
Article	-	1	1	10	8	13	33
Preposition deletion/addition	-	1	5	4	8	-	18
Other cases of singular/plural agreement	1	-	3	5	1	4	14
Word deletion/addition	3	-	-	22	10	9	44
Genitive	-	-	2	7	10	2	21
Word order	1	4	1	7	5	2	20
Translation	-	-	1	-	-	1	2
Conjunction	6	-	5	12	4	-	27
Word choice	5	17	20	70	27	44	183
Fragment	3	20	23	28	17	19	110
Total	35	77	131	390	162	220	1015

Figure 7.51 Number of revisions per subcategory and case study (CS1, CS2, CS3)

Figure 7.51 shows the focus of the students' revisions. For a more representative analysis, the revisions from CS1 were also looked into. The highest scores are marked in bold. It must be taken into account that these numbers include revisions by students who worked on their own as well as group revisions which consisted of peer and self-correction, but revisions by the same

student that took place immediately after saving the text without any other group member's intervention were not taken in.

By analysing Figure 7.51, in particular subcategories such as *Word choice* and *Fragment*, which tend to hit top positions, it is obvious that there is a major concern over lexical revision. Students' attention to spelling and punctuation mistakes as well as verb errors cannot go unnoticed either. The *upper/lower case* subcategory is popular too. While this concern over grammar topics such as verb concordance reflects the impact of a more traditional teaching and learning approach, it is also obvious that students still primarily focus on the appropriateness of words in a specific context. Other examples of this, besides the ones presented in Figure 7.50, are the following: *Hannah Aitchison is **an American tattoois*** [instead of *American' artist of tattoos*]; *Tattoos can be done in lots of places on the body! **From*** [instead of *since*] *the usual and normal ones to the most weird and unexpected places...; Maybe people think it is ridiculous to hurt themselves just to have something like a tattoo, but **actually*** [instead of *personally*] *it is **just*** [instead of *only*] *a personal decision; Famous for her memorial tattoos Kat Von D got to be known **all over the*** [instead of *around the intire*] *world.* It is clear that learners are concerned with probable, not possible utterances.

Figure 7.52 provides some clearer insight into the most predominant revisions ranked from the most to the least frequent. The fifth place is provided when figures are very close to those of the fourth position. Lexical revisions are marked in bold. Bearing all case studies into account, word permutation emerges in second place, with *spelling* in the first position. The results of this study are coherent with Kessler's results regarding student-initiated attention to form in wiki-based collaborative writing: "Students initiated an attempt to correct word choice and spelling errors much more than anything else" (Kessler, 2009: p. 85), but were slightly more accurate in their spelling (10 of 19 – 53%) than in their word choice corrections (13 of 25 – 52%). This goes along the expectable because spelling mistakes hardly go unnoticed and are more likely to be successfully corrected through Microsoft Word (automatic) correction or (online) dictionaries, for example, whereas finding the right word for a specific context demands deeper thinking or a native instinct for what sounds more natural. Similarly, in Kessler, Bikowski and Boggs's study with Google Docs, "[w]ithin the LRCs attending to form, the most changes were made in spelling, followed by punctuation...", and the authors suggest, "[c]hanging spelling and spacing would appear to be easier for NNEs than would be changing verb tense or plurals" (Kessler, Bikowski and Boggs, 2012: p. 103).

Figure 7.52 also shows a shift in the students' revision focus within the same case study. In CS3, for example, the subcategory *Word choice* is initially third, then first and finally second. This may be related not only to the differences in group members from assignment to assignment but also to the type of assignment itself, since a newspaper article demands topic-specific language and follows a much stricter structure than an opinion article or a summary.

These findings suggest that collaborative writing in the wiki space encourages and facilitates a lexical approach to language learning.

Case Study Ranking	CS1 Part I		CS1 Part II		CS2		CS3 Part I		CS3 Part II		CS3 Part III		All case studies	
1 st position	Spelling	8	Fragment	20	Spelling	41	Punctuation	95	Word choice	27	Verb	50	Spelling	189
2 nd position	Conjunction	6	Word choice	17	Fragment	23	Spelling	79	Punctuation	25	Word choice	44	Word choice	183
3 rd position	Word choice	5	Verb Upper/lower case	11	Word choice	20	Word choice	70	Verb	19	Spelling	37	Punctuation	157
4 th position	Verb Fragment Word deletion/addition	3	Spelling	10	Punctuation	13	Fragment	28	Fragment	17	Punctuation	21	Verb	117
5 th position											Fragment	19	Fragment	110

Figure 7.52 Leading revision subcategories per case study (CS1, CS2, CS3)

The type of revisions was interpreted without bearing in mind their accuracy or whether students were sure of the editions they engaged in. This question also required an answer: do students in reality become more self-reliant and accurate with time, that is, do they become surer and more correct in their editions?

As far as self-reliance is concerned, in their post-test, CS2 students were asked to mark their revisions with ! for *sure* and ? for *unsure (of my revision)*. As previously explained, each group's post-test focused upon the mistakes revised in wiki peer work, which means that being in contact with their and their peers' corrections should have helped them become surer of their own revisions after the assignment. Students left 13% of the revisions unmarked, claimed to be sure of their changes in 63% of them and unsure in 24%. Therefore, students were, in most cases, sure of their revisions. In fact, in their post-interview, most students claimed to have become more self-reliant through peer review. Filipe, however, said his degree of self-reliance decreased because peer review helped him gain another perception of his writing limitations, which, from his perspective, was, nevertheless, a positive learning outcome. In fact, such a perception indicates a growth in learning awareness, which prepares the ground for self-regulation and direction.

As for CS3, students were confronted with this issue in the first questionnaire they answered. They were asked about how sure of the correctness of the changes they made they were a) when they started working on Wikispaces and b) at that moment. Most learners claimed to be as self-reliant (49%) or more self-reliant (46%) concerning the corrections they made at the time of the questionnaire than before, as scores prove (a rise from 3.5 (a) to 4 (b) in a scale from 1, *not sure at all*, to 5, *totally sure* – Figure 7.8). The second questionnaire shows exactly the same average rank, even though, as mentioned earlier, there were nine students who had answered the first questionnaire who did not answer this one. Only two students said to be less sure.

As far as accuracy is concerned, in CS2, 90% of the changes contributed to text enhancement. Cases in which both possibilities (before and after review) were correct were not considered. In CS3, revision accuracy ranged from 68% to 75%. Figure 7.53 illustrates the evolution of students' revision accuracy throughout CS3 (in percentage). Only this case study enables this type of assessment because a higher number of assignments took place and there was less variation in the students involved in each assignment. However, it must be accounted for that the combination of the students' proficiency level varied greatly, in particular from the first two assignments to the last one. This chart shows unsteady evolution but higher accuracy in the students' last task despite similar values for the first and second assignments. Since the last task was performed in groups formed according to the preferences the students expressed in the questionnaire they filled in right after the second assignment (e.g. smaller groups), the changes they proposed were likely to have favoured accuracy. Similarly, the positive work of revision in the last assignment can be seen as the culmination of course practice.

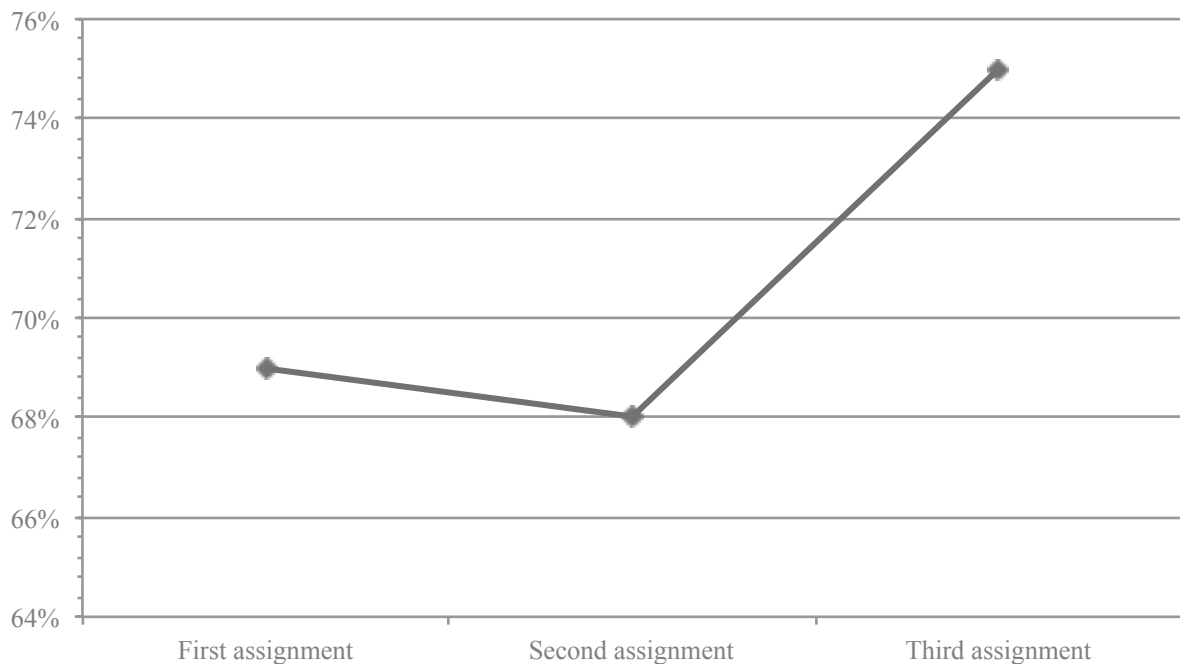


Figure 7.53 Development of students' revision accuracy

Considering that the levels of student self-reliance and accuracy in revision increased, it is now important to evaluate which revisions specifically contributed to text enhancement. For this analysis I shall again consider the third case study only since the significantly higher number of revisions accounts for more reliability. Figure 7.54 shows the percentage of accurate revisions per assignment according to revision subcategory in comparison with the total number of revisions, which is a very important reference. A few remarks must be taken into account:

- a) Notions of accuracy reflect my view only.
- b) 'Accuracy' was divided into three categories: *accurate*, *inaccurate* and *neutral*. *Neutral* means that the revision did not represent text enhancement, that is, the text was already correct before the edition or the learner was unable to suppress the mistake.
- c) Both peer and self-corrections were considered, which means that sometimes students annulated each other's revision but their interventions were added up.
- d) The ambivalence of criteria in this type of analysis shall not be ignored. Kessler's example elucidates this idea:

While it is obvious that students demonstrated an interest in addressing issues of word choice, 48% of word choice attempts resulted in error. This example illustrates a student's preference for the word *begins* over *starts*. Yet, the student misspells *begins*:

-We have to take into consideration that we belong to a society and there is where 'culture' **starts**.

+We have to remember that we are part and belong to a society and there is where 'culture' **beguines**.
(Kessler, 2009: p. 86)

In a follow-up interview this student explained this word choice as more academic.

	Accurate Revisions				Total no. of revisions
	1 st Assignment	2 nd Assignment	3 rd Assignment	Mean value	
Spelling	87%	86%	84%	86%	130
Punctuation	62%	56%	76%	65%	141
Upper/lower case	86%	90%	64%	80%	46
Subject deletion/addition	75%	75%	25%	58%	12
Verb (number, tense...)	92%	74%	76%	81%	94
Adjective (degrees)	-	-	-	-	0
Noun (forming plural nouns)	-	-	-	-	0
Article	60%	25%	62%	49%	31
Preposition deletion/addition	75%	75%	-	75%	12
Other cases of singular/plural agreement	80%	100%	100%	93%	10
Word deletion/addition	73%	60%	78%	70%	41
Genitive	43%	40%	100%	61%	19
Word order	57%	60%	50%	56%	14
Translation	-	-	100%	100%	1
Conjunction	50%	75%	-	63%	16
Word choice	60%	59%	71%	63%	141
Fragment	61%	71%	84%	72%	64

Figure 7.54 Accurate revisions per assignment and revision subcategory (CS3)

The subcategories which reach higher accuracy are marked in bold type, and they are mostly non-lexical: *Spelling*, *Upper/lower case*, *Verb* and *Other cases of singular/plural agreement*. There are subcategories such as *Translation* or *Genitive* which achieve 100%-scores but it must be taken into account that the number of this type of revisions is clearly inferior to that of other subcategories. An interesting aspect to be born in mind is the fact that although lexical subcategories do not show the highest accuracy levels, they represent an evident growth in correctness (see *Word choice* and *Fragment*, which eventually achieves one of the highest accuracy scores in a reasonably high total number of revisions). It can thus be concluded that lexical revision does not always contribute to text enhancement but is the one category in which students tend to become more correct alongside *Punctuation*, which, nonetheless, only shows moderate and less steady evolution. Still, further correction in punctuating suggests deeper language awareness. Other subcategories show evolution but cannot be taken into consideration due to the low number of total revisions. This lends support to Dalton-Puffer, Nikula and Smit's analysis (2010), which suggests CLIL students develop their strategic competence better, use a wider range of lexical and morphosyntactic resources in more elaborate and complex written structures and show greater accuracy regarding tenses and spelling in their written production.

Before it was said that wikis foster revision because of the ease of textual edition in electronic writing (see Arnold, Ducate and Kost, 2009), but what other factors affect the revision recurrence rate? Several conclusions were drawn when setting up revision categories. In the Moodle wiki, which was used for the first part of CS1, there were fewer revisions of form. Revisions were mainly based on adding and deleting and peers seemed to focus on writing a paragraph each. This may be related to the fact that this wiki does not facilitate the task of keeping track of changes, as it does not mark what was edited only but the whole sentence or even paragraph. On the other hand, the slight differences in the subcategories revised from CS1 to CS2 and CS3 might be dependent on level (university vs. school) or on the students' native language (German vs. Portuguese or Portuguese/Danish) as the prominence of each revision subcategory appears to vary according to the learners' native language (German, Portuguese or Danish). Portuguese learners of English are mostly aware of the fact that they cannot omit the sentence subject as often as in Portuguese, for example, even though no significant changes concerning differences in the type of revisions of form due to nationality divergence were found. Some other factors might have contributed to fluctuation in the number of revisions in the three case studies besides the platform in use, the education level and the students' mother tongue⁵³:

- a) The type of assignment, that is, whether students were supposed to create a newspaper article or a summary, for example;
- b) The length demanded (e.g. free-length opinion article vs. 100-word newspaper article);
- c) The time given to complete the assignment (e.g. 21, 24 or 16 days for the first, second and third assignment respectively);
- d) Students' personal availability, which may have varied according to whether they were facing a busier period at school or attended extra-curricular activities, for example;
- e) The group members – the group members' heterogeneous proficiency level rather than the number of group elements;
- f) Students' motivation and engagement;
- g) Students' learning background, i.e., whether they placed an emphasis on communication with a focus on form, their experience in peer and self-correction, etc.;
- h) The growing length and consistency of their wiki forum discussions.

Figure 7.55 shows the evolution of the number of revisions in CS3, which is unsteady and depicts no clear trend.

As far as the type of assignment is concerned, the opinion article on fast food or body art suffered the highest amount of revisions, followed by the summary of the content of the two videos and only then by the newspaper article.

As for the length demanded, which may be closely related to the previous factor, the first assignment had no restrictions imposed, the second one had to be written in about 100 words and the last one had no limits either but the length of the target text is dependent on the length of the original text. This suggests that a word limit can have a negative impact on the number of revisions, but it may simply mean that there was less to correct, as the other two assignments were definitely longer than this one in all groups.

⁵³ For stated reasons, I shall use examples from CS3.

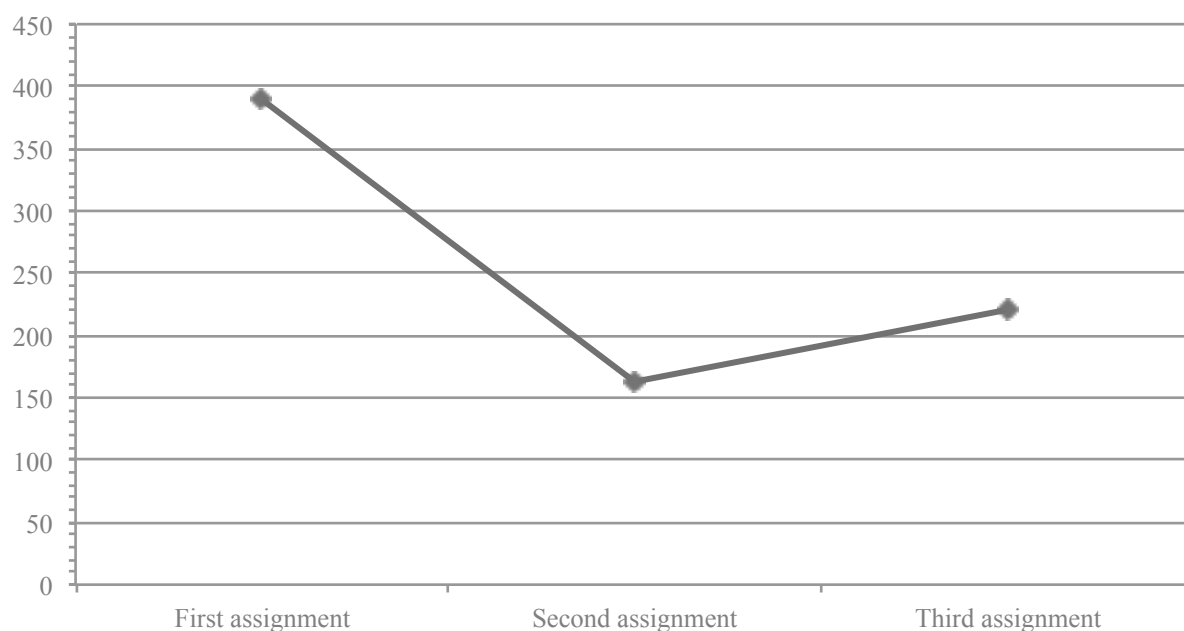


Figure 7.55 Development of the number of revisions (CS3)

With regard to the time given to undertake the assignment, though, conclusions do not go along the expectable. Actually, the second assignment, which was to be concluded in 24 days, the longest period of all, presents the lowest number of revisions. Again, this might be related to the length demanded. Thus, no real conclusions can be drawn. Yet, it was observable that some students tended to work harder when the deadline was approaching.

Another factor that seems to have influenced the number of revisions is the students' availability. In fact, the second assignment was the only one which did not take place at the beginning of term (first term for the first assignment and third term for the last assignment) but rather during a period in the term in which students sat their school tests. Other personal constraints were not looked into.

With regard to the number of group members, the first assignments were mainly composed of groups of three and four elements whereas, following on the students' answers in their questionnaires as well as on informal feedback, the third assignment was mostly solved in two-member groups. In fact, the number of revisions again rose from the second to the third assignment. Still, the students' proficiency level is likely to be more relevant for this analysis since more proficient students were more engaged in revisions, perhaps due to higher levels of self-reliance, as some students were visiting the wiki even when not posting to it (see Kessler & Bikowski, 2010: pp. 51-52). This is related to the next factor, the students' motivation.

As explained in chapter 7.3, learners felt motivated by both their attempt to fulfil their *Ideal L2 Self*, in this case by developing their English and cultural skills and feeling able to communicate with students from other countries, and by experiencing a successful *L2 Learning Experience*,

mirrored in positive collaboration, specifically in being able to teach others. Some students felt motivation increased along the course as they realised the potential of the tool as well as the facilities offered; some others felt it decreased for reasons such as time investment, workload or collaboration issues. In fact, the end of the collaborative project coincided with the end of the school year, the last short school term in which students tend to be concerned over their final marks rather than about activities which have an impact on their learning but not necessarily on their year evaluation.

There is also the students' experience in reviewing their partners' work as well as their own, which obviously increased from the first to the last assignment but cannot be proven.

Finally, the students' mother tongue, since collaboration between students with different first languages, for example, enables students to more easily filter interferences caused by one's native language, and the learning focus they are used to, fluency or accuracy. Students might also have improved their writing, which would then require fewer revisions.

The results presented above as far as the factors that affect revision frequency are concerned suggest that various aspects must be considered when setting up a collaborative task so that the quantity and quality of the revisions generate suitable outcomes and progress takes place through communication with a focus on form. This affects ELT practices. More personal writing seems to induce more discussion on form. No conclusive results concerning the length (restriction) of the assignment were found. As for the time conceded, however, more time does not necessarily mean more interaction and shorter deadlines may imply more pressure and thus higher revision frequency, but the students' availability must be considered, in particular at the beginning of the integration of these practices into their learning process – novelty concerning the type of task and the resources used demands a fresh mind. This accounts for motivation as well. In addition, students show a propensity for smaller groups and these tend to achieve best results. Participant observation also indicates that more proficient students engage in revisions more and should thus integrate mixed groups to push output. A relatively high number of revisions stands for collaborative intent and vice-versa.

This chapter was aimed at giving further insight into the impact of wiki peer review on linguistic awareness and improvement and its contribution to the development of communication with a focus on form.

In view of the idea conveyed by students that wiki collaborative writing stimulated lexical development, an attempt was made to create a suitable taxonomy for analysis of the type of revisions learners tended to engage in more often. It was found that students were mostly concerned with (in Lewis's understanding) lexical revisions but that they also engaged in some non-lexical edition, in particular in order to achieve spelling or punctuation accuracy. Corpora and KWICs (Key word in Context) would have been rather useful for this purpose. However, due to time constraints and reasons related to the course setup, these were only introduced in CS1 and CS2. Students' interest in probable, appropriate utterances shows compliance of their claims with their attitudes and also suggests that such a learning framework fosters a lexical approach to language learning.

A high number of participants suggested peer review triggered self-reliance in the process of revision, as they became surer of their revisions along the course, even if for some students peer review also meant gaining awareness of their writing limitations, which, in this particular context, was interpreted as rather positive as well.

As for accuracy, 90% of the changes in CS2 and 68% to 75% of the changes in CS3 contributed to text enhancement. The difference in these values may be associated with the students' level of proficiency, the activity demands or even the international-exchange factor, which, despite favouring negotiation of meaning, may have generated some loss of focus. The students achieved visibly higher accuracy in their last task, which suggests that they tend to become more accurate with time and that their suggestions concerning the number of group elements might have been successful. Students tended to be more accurate in their spelling than in their word choice corrections. This seems to be linked with the degree of difficulty demanded by the lower-level and higher-level thinking which these corrections respectively require. Yet, it was also found that in spite of the fact that the subcategories contributing to text enhancement are mostly non-lexical, lexical subcategories are the ones in which students tend to become more correct with time. This indicates that the wiki space may favour lexical development.

Various factors were found to be likely to have affected revision frequency: type of assignment, length demanded, deadline, students' availability and time management, group balance in proficiency and the students' motivation, commitment, experience in correction, different mother tongues, learning background and evolution in writing. Highly-proficient students seem to engage in more revisions, which is probably linked with higher self-reliance levels. Some best-practice conditions were suggested to take better advantage of the facilities offered by the wiki space.

7.7 Conclusions

This chapter aimed at responding to the need to deepen the understanding of learning in web collaborative spaces, with particular attention to wikis as writing platforms that facilitate learning-conducive collaborative output processes. Chapter 7 specifically explored the conditions for collaboration to succeed in this environment, the potential of peers in such a learning context, and whether the existence of a meta-space facilitated *linguaging* and thus led to higher-level critical thinking echoed in successful revisions and concrete learning outcomes.

Learners perceived the wiki space as beneficial and identified more advantages than disadvantages in their analysis of the wiki activities. Constraints were mostly related to collaboration issues which suggested lack of collaborative strategic competence and autonomy, hence the need to train students in online collaboration skills, with a particular focus on the development of collaborative autonomy. The discussion tool was seen as a major asset in ensuring the success of wiki collaborative learning processes. It was suggested that collaborative writing in the wiki space might be more fruitful in groups of three; it should be considered, however, that different types of assignments might demand different group formation. It was observed that cross-cultural contexts in which learners had to collaborate with unknown pupils from other countries facilitated their authentication of the wiki collaborative activities; combined

with successful pedagogical integration in blended learning settings, this feeling of authentication helped learners relegate the need for face-to-face interaction. The cross-cultural variable had a positive effect upon motivation as well, in particular when learning outcomes became visible and learners were able to play teacher roles as well. Results suggested students should be exposed to patterns of interaction in which they played both novice and expert roles in order to profit from dynamic ZPDs. Both collaborative and dominant dyads seemed to lead to reflective and autonomous agency in collaboration, therefore successful collaboration and real learning. Results indicated wiki peer review requires students to consciously develop collaborative profiles, thus attitudes, and skills. Successful wiki collaboration had a clear impact on the students' learning process, above all on the development of lexical skills, text structuring and writing abilities, grammatical competence, language learning awareness, ICT and social skills, and motivation. Students claimed online peer review resulted in more learning than conventional classroom peer review, in particular because it enabled them to be more autonomous and reflective. Learners expressed concern about understanding the revision process, in particular why a specific chunk of text was being modified. This is how they developed their ability to reflect upon the accuracy of their writing. They acknowledged the role of the history and discussion functions in this regard, seriously conceding the benefits of written discussion, which proved more process-focused than class face-to-face discussion. Again, had students not engaged in cross-cultural collaboration with pupils sitting somewhere else in Europe, this would not have been considered authentic. The focus on the process enabled learners to say wiki assignments led to permanent learning, and most of them claimed higher self-reliance in the use of English after the wiki experience. Data also suggested wiki peer review enabled learners to, in a content and language integrated learning setting, develop all different language skills, with special emphasis on the enhancement of lexical awareness and idea development skills, therefore lexical and writing mastery. This is supportive of the idea that such a meta-space can be a paramount contribution to skill development if not one of the most important elements in a blended language learning ensemble that integrates wiki collaborative activities.

As for the roles the wiki space unravels for learners, their predisposition to, on the basis of previous learning experiences, reject their peers' ability to support their learning process was hardly in line with their perception of their peers' potential in providing scaffolding. Positive wiki collaborative experiences increased peer-reliance. In the study, the teacher played a monitoring and tutoring role mainly centred on ensuring that task instructions were clear and followed, and on sustaining motivation, in particular through praise, encouragement and some support in collaboration issues. Results suggested providing students with the freedom to choose the means of support they deem more useful produces more focus on the writing process and all associated benefits, and facilitates the development of both their language and language learning skills. In fact, restricted teacher intervention had a positive effect on the learners' autonomy, responsibility, authentication of the experience, self-reliance, reflection skills and language competence. It enabled learners to support each other and even foster their peers' autonomy in finding the right means of support for their learning needs. Learning support from peers and resources such as dictionaries and websites was considered learning conducive, in particular as concerned lexical semantics, syntax and text cohesion and coherence, not to mention the fact that

the CLIL setting they were exposed to stimulated the development of their ideas in the content subjects they were working on.

With regard to the potential of a meta-space such as the discussion function for generating *linguaging*, and consequently fostering process-centred writing and learning, students who engaged in cross-cultural collaboration *linguaged* more and for various reasons. As they went along the course, students tended to produce fewer but longer posts, that is, they became more organised and concise in their *linguaging* as they grew confident with it. Negotiation in the wiki space enabled learners to develop competences in expressing preferences, social skills required in meeting and greeting contexts and, most importantly, content and language-related problem-solving abilities, among many others previously pointed out. Written negotiation allowed students to practise writing with characteristics of spoken discourse but still have a discussion recorded for being able to rethink what they had written on a following stage. Most instances of discussion affected the text, especially instances about text structure/organisation and semantics, which learners were strongly focused on and is indicative that such learning contexts favour reflection on the chunkiness of language and the impact words have on one another as co-text. In developmental terms, wiki collaboration proved more facilitative of collaborative output processing than conventional class face-to-face collaboration and therefore more learning-conducive: the situations created in the wiki space and the facilities offered, the history and above all the discussion function, make learners ‘stretch’ their interlanguage to meet their communicative goals, that is, such tools offer students an opportunity, and foster them, to grow by engaging in negotiated meaning exchanges. Well-equipped wiki space offers learners an authentic chance to use the target language and be pushed by output to process language in a deep, learning-conducive way.

As far as the potential of wiki peer review for the development of communication with a focus on form is concerned, results demonstrated that the CS3 learning framework stimulated and facilitated revision. In general, peer review triggered self-reliance in the process of revision and led to the enhancement of accuracy levels: most revisions resulted in text improvement. There was an emphasis on lexical revision. Lexical subcategories were also the ones in which students tended to become more correct with time. The more proficient the learners, the more likely they were to engage in revision, which is probably related to higher self-reliance levels. Various other factors seemed to have affected revision frequency and must be considered in task design so that revision quantity and quality generate suitable outcomes and progress: type of assignment, length demanded, deadline, students’ availability and time management, group balance in proficiency and the students’ motivation, commitment, experience in correction, different mother tongues, learning background and evolution in writing.

These results suggest learner-fitted wiki collaborative writing scenarios based on peer review foster collaborative output processing and thus the development of communication with a focus on form.

8 Final conclusions, pedagogical implications and follow-up

I started this PhD thesis by proposing a best-practice language learning and teaching scenario based on an analysis of SLA research to date, which suggests language learning is more successful when based on the following precepts:

- a) a communicative approach to language learning that aims at developing the grammatical, the sociolinguistic, the strategic and the discourse competence bearing in mind the contingent nature of social interaction (Hymes, 1972; Canale, 1983; Swain, 1985; Leung, 2005; Leung & Lewkowicz, 2012);
- b) a constructivist view of learning as the processing of constructs by learners on the basis of their knowledge, skills and needs (Wolff, 1994; Rüschoff, 1999; Müller, 2000);
- c) the importance of collaboration for the development of communicative constructivist practices (Storch, 2002; Beatty & Nunan, 2004; Storch, 2005; Swain, 2006; Watanabe & Swain, 2007; Brooks & Swain, 2009; Rüschoff, 2009);
- d) the relevance of learner agency and guided autonomy for an optimised purpose-directed use of material and human resources (Holec, 1981; Littlewood, 1996; Rüschoff, 2009; Kessler & Bikowski, 2010);
- e) the contribution of authenticated language, task, learning situation and interaction to meaningful learning (McGarry, 1995; Little, 1997; Widdowson, 2003; Widdowson, 2004; Rüschoff, 2009);
- f) the understanding that learner motivation affects the learning process and that both internal and external factors play a role in it (Dörnyei, 2009);
- g) the conception that language is interdependent with the content being conveyed (Biederstädt, 2000; Breidbach, 2000; Vollmer, 2000; Wolff, 2000; Dalton-Puffer & Nikula, 2006; Dalton-Puffer, Nikula & Smit, 2010; Mehisto, Marsh & Frigols, 2008; Lasagabaster & Sierra, 2009; Coyle, Hood & Marsh, 2010; Hall & Cook, 2012; Castro, 2013);
- h) a lexical approach to language learning according to which learning a language consists of understanding and producing meaningful and appropriate lexical phrases and not isolated words (Lewis, 1993; Bareggi, 2006);
- i) the major role played by collaborative output processing based on social interaction, learner/collective scaffolding and *languaging* within ZPDs (Vygotsky, 1978; Long, 1983; Swain, 1995; Izumi & Bigelow, 2000; Storch, 2002; Swain & Lapkin, 2002; Storch, 2005; Swain, 2005; Swain, 2006; Watanabe & Swain, 2007; Swain et al., 2009; Brooks & Swain, 2009);
- j) the effectiveness of a task-based approach that generates unintentional learning through the performance of meaningful tasks primarily centred on the task outcome and fluency (Willis, 1996; Ellis, 2003; Nunan, 2004; Peris, 2004);
- k) the potential of Web 2.0 and web collaboration for the enactment of the previously presented best-practice principles in blended learning contexts (Martel, 2000; Bax, 2003; Beatty & Nunan, 2004; Neumeier, 2005; Schultz, 2005; Kohn, 2006; Erpenbeck &

Sauter, 2007; Kohn, 2009; Lomicka & Lord, 2009; Rüschoff, 2009; Barboux, 2011; Moloudi, 2011; Kessler, 2012a and 2012b; Kessler, Bikowski & Boggs, 2012);

- 1) the promising potential of wikis for collaborative language learning centred on the reflective development of communication with a focus on form (Arnold, Ducate & Kost, 2009; Kessler, 2009; Rüschoff, 2009; Kessler & Bikowski, 2010; Khoii & Arabsarhangi, 2011; Duran et al., 2012).

Proceeding from an analysis of the research gaps in the language learning and teaching framework proposed, investigation was structured as follows:

- (1) Scrutiny of the perception of teachers across Europe regarding the state-of-affairs of the availability and implementation of e-learning equipment, applications and teacher training as well as appropriate learning and teaching models to understand the sustainability of implementing language learning and teaching settings along the lines of the findings of SLA research;
- (2) Analysis of the perception of learners concerning essential conditions and strategies for successful language learning as well as of the learning outcomes identified by them for comparison with the language learning framework proposed by SLA research and ESL teachers;
- (3) Exploration of the real potential of web-based collaborative writing for language learning in blended ensembles on the grounds of the ideal language learning and teaching schemata outlined by teachers and learners, with stress on the possibilities and constraints identified by learners in wiki-based peer-writing processes as concerns the reflective development of communication with a focus on form.

In short, I aimed to investigate collaborative output processing in web-based English language learning scenarios in a language learning and teaching framework authenticated by learners and teachers across Europe.

The teacher survey “The use of educational e-learning equipment and applications in foreign language classes” proved there is still very little knowledge, and consequently implementation, of the kind of e-learning resources and blended language learning practices advocated in this thesis. ICT is neither a small part of every lesson nor a normal part of teaching, which suggests we are not undergoing Bax’s *Integrated CALL* phase yet. Several reasons account for this. First, most schools or students’ homes were said not to offer the equipment or applications required for these practices; the majority of teachers had to rely on a computer placed in a school library with very poor software available. Second, only about 20% of the teachers who claimed to teach English with ICT support did explicitly mention ICT in line with Bax’s characterisation of the *Integrated CALL* period, e.g. Moodle, Blackboard, wikis, blogs, e-mails, chats or forums. Wikis were hardly known, let alone used. Answers suggest unfamiliarity with the most recent developments in the field of language learning ICT, if not ICT at large. Third, and this probably justifies the previous fact, 96% of the teachers who used no ICT in their language classes reported they had never participated in teacher training activities connected with educational ICT. Curiously, however, the leading topics of interest for these same teacher-training activities were networking, communication and social interaction (e.g. video conferencing, e-mails, chats, forums, blogs, wikis), and also authoring tools and e-learning platforms. This goes along with

another conclusion drawn: the teachers' requirements of success were in line with the principles of best practice proposed in this PhD thesis. What is more, their comments indicated they clearly viewed e-learning as able to fulfil the principles of autonomy, authentication and collaboration. Consequently, all but one of the respondents acknowledged that changes or improvements were required. Teacher education, technological infrastructures and school politics were the most frequently addressed issues. Collaboration in teacher networks was also considered necessary; e-learning resources such as Moodle, wikis, forums or video conferencing were pointed out as both means and ends to networking: they facilitate networking and networking helps learn to use these resources. Other issues discussed were the need for continuous technological support, for teacher encouragement, also through recognition, and for a reorganisation of teachers' workload. All of this is in consonance with Duran et al.'s (2012) claims. Final comments pointed to the need to be a good learner in order to be a good teacher and the role of collaboration in this context. These findings suggest teachers across Europe acknowledge the potential of the language learning and teaching framework suggested by SLA research and of e-learning in fulfilling these same principles as well. It should not be ignored, however, that their lack of knowledge in this field might have affected their perception. Attention must be given not only to providing teachers and students with the necessary e-learning equipment and applications but also and foremost to providing them with the knowledge and skill to use them in specific pedagogic contexts on the basis of an analysis of needs and circumstances. This obviously demands complicity of education policies. Only when this is achieved will teachers and students authenticate these practices and become autonomous users in evolution through collaboration – CALL shall then be integrated.

The first case study (CS1) showed a consensus between the frameworks initially suggested by SLA research and teachers and the one acclaimed by learners. Findings concerning the first research question, i.e., learner perception of conditions and strategies needed for successful language learning showed that communication and collaboration stood out as key principles for these students. Yet, the same students also stressed the need to find a balance between communication and focus on form, high-level and low-level constructivism and finally autonomy and teacher guidance. On the other hand, the importance students realised in face-to-face interaction prompted the need for blended practices that contemplate face-to-face and e-learning interfaces, therefore virtuous pedagogic integration, which platforms such as Moodle facilitate. They clearly appreciated context-embedded discourse construction. This placed an emphasis not only on the utility of corpus-based resources which facilitate a lexical approach to language learning, but also on collaboration, and therefore platforms such as wikis. In fact, most of the activities students were exposed to proved meaningful, in particular the ones with a lexical or writing focus. This is especially connected with the fact that, first, these activities had been tailored to these students' particular learning needs and purposes, and were therefore more easily authenticable, and, second, they had been adjusted on the basis of results from the previous piloting experience with the French students, which should not be disregarded. Wikis emerged as superior learning environments indeed, specifically because they enabled a focus on learning as a process based on collaborative reflection on content and language. They achieved high learner assessment rates, on the one hand as part of this outline of ideal conditions and strategies for learning, on the other as highly learning-conducive tools that rest on

collaboration and negotiation. This provided an answer to the second research question directing this case study, which concerned learner perception of learning outcomes of a blended learning setting. The e-learning activities the students were exposed to were said to develop content, language, personal, social, reflective and technical skills, namely in the use of ICT. In brief, this case study suggested that (1) the English as a second language learning and teaching framework advocated by researchers and teachers matches the one proposed by learners; (2) such a task-based communicative-constructivist model is learning-conducive, in particular because it is process-centred and enables the principles of authentication, autonomy and collaboration to be fulfilled; (3) wikis are promising tools in the fulfilment of the learning paradigm and outcomes projected. This analysis also confirmed that we are still undergoing Bax's *Open CALL* phase and have not entered the *Integrated CALL* period yet.

In addition to contributing to the consolidation of the design of a possible successful learning and teaching framework, CS1 indicated that wikis, integrated in blended language learning ensembles, deserved further analysis as spaces that enable learners to engage in a cycle of externalisation of their inner processes and internalisation of the processes and products of their outer interaction, as had been hinted at by research. This determined the main focus of the following case studies, CS2 and CS3, which aimed at investigating possibilities and constraints of wiki-based collaborative processes, the new roles the wiki space unveiled for peers in learning processes, and whether the existence of a meta-space encouraged *languaging* and thus led to meaningful negotiation echoed in successful revisions and, hopefully, language learning.

The wiki activities were majorly identified with benefits. Constraints were mostly related to collaboration issues. Although learners showed a predisposition to, on the basis of previous learning experiences, reject their peers' ability to support their learning process, their perception of their peers' potential in providing scaffolding was quite opposing and positive wiki collaborative experiences actually increased peer-reliance. The teacher's monitoring and tutoring role largely centred on ensuring task instructions were clear and followed, and on sustaining motivation, proved sufficient. Offering students the opportunity to opt for the means of support that met their needs generated more focus on the writing process and learning. According to the learners, restricted teacher intervention had a positive impact on their autonomy, responsibility, and authentication of the experience, as well as on their self-reliance, reflection skills and language competence. It forced learners to assist each other and even foster their peers' autonomy in finding the right means of support for their learning requirements. Learning support from peers and resources such as dictionaries and websites was considered learning conducive, especially with regard to semantic and syntactic issues and text cohesion and coherence, not to mention the fact that the content-relevant material learners were exposed to motivated the development of their ideas in the content subjects they were working on.

In association with the history function, the discussion tool proved to be the core of these wiki collaborative learning processes due to its potential for facilitating meta-reflection through *languaging* that generates *pushed* output, therefore collaborative output processing. Wiki collaboration was seen to favour process-centred writing and learning. Indeed, students claimed online peer review resulted in more learning than conventional classroom peer review, in particular because written discussion proved more process-focused than class face-to-face

discussion, hence more conducive to permanent learning. Written discussion was connected with autonomy and reflection since it enabled and encouraged learners (to attempt) to better understand the revision process, in particular why a specific chunk of text was being modified. It was observed that a cross-cultural context in which learners had to collaborate with unknown pupils from other countries was highly motivating in this sense, above all because such a setting facilitated learner authentication of the wiki collaborative activities.

Students who engaged in cross-cultural collaboration *languaged* more and for various reasons and their *languaging* became more organised and concise throughout the process because they were forced to ‘stretch’ their interlanguage to meet their communicative goals. Connected with successful pedagogical integration in blended learning settings, this sense of authentication helped learners feel less need for face-to-face interaction. Results also suggested cross-cultural collaboration in the wiki space enabled peers to alternate in playing the role of expert and novice within their ZPD and learn from each other while taking both roles. Both collaborative and dominant dyads seemed to lead to reflective and autonomous agency in collaboration, therefore successful collaboration and real learning. Findings indicated that wiki peer review required students to consciously develop collaborative skills and that successful wiki collaboration had a clear impact on the students’ learning process.

Negotiation in the wiki space enabled learners to develop competences in expressing preferences, social skills required in meeting and greeting contexts and, most importantly, content and language-related problem-solving abilities. Written negotiation allowed students to practise writing with characteristics of spoken discourse but still have a discussion recorded for being able to rethink what they had written on a subsequent stage.

Results also demonstrated that the CS3 learning framework stimulated and facilitated revision. In general, peer review triggered self-reliance in the process of revision and led to the enhancement of accuracy levels. In fact, most revisions resulted in text improvement. In fact, most instances of discussion affected the text, especially instances about text structure/organisation and semantic issues, which learners were strongly focused on. Lexical revision occurred very frequently and lexical subcategories were the ones in which students tended to become more correct with time. This was indicative that such learning contexts favour reflection on the chunkiness of language and the impact words have on one another as co-text, therefore on the learning of appropriate language. In fact, even though data suggested wiki peer review enabled learners to, in content and language integrated learning environments, develop all different language skills, the impact on the enhancement of lexical awareness and idea development skills, consequently on the learners’ mastery of lexical competence and process-writing, was the most visible. Obviously, engaging in these blended language learning activities also contributed to the improvement of ICT skills and to an increase in motivation and self-reliance levels as far as the use of the English language is concerned. Also, the more proficient the learners, the more likely they were to engage in revision, which is probably linked with higher self-reliance levels. Various other factors seemed to have affected revision frequency: type of assignment, length demanded, deadline, students’ availability and time management, group balance in proficiency and the students’ motivation, commitment, experience in correction, different mother tongues, learning background and evolution in writing.

These studies provided insight into what learners do when they plan strategically and online and how they orientate while performing a task. The potential of such a scenario for developing learners' autonomy, in particular their self-direction and self-regulation skills, in collaboratively constructing knowledge via negotiation is immense. The results support the idea that learner-fitted wiki collaborative writing activities supported by a meta-space foster the development of communication with a focus on form by means of collaborative output processing. Such activities can be a very relevant contribution to the development of numerous skills. They enable the development of communicative competence that integrates grammatical, sociolinguistic, and strategic and discourse competence in a context of convivial communication. They enable learners to, through problem-solving tasks, hypothesis formation and validation, internalise what is outside, then externalise what is inside in a never-ending process that results not only in linguistic learning but also in cognitive development, hence permitting real uptake and lifelong learning. This happens because peers are engaged in a type of negotiation which *pushes* output that makes them aware of mechanisms of discourse production and, as a result, leads them to the development of appropriate linguistic and intercultural skills, among many other competences. Learners concentrate on the learning task, talk it through and reflect on it. By focusing on using rather than learning language, such wiki activities facilitate unintentional learning situated within an authenticated activity, context and culture. They enable the learner focus to shift from language to achieving something concrete with the language in content-based contexts, which simplifies cross-disciplinary project-based learning. Learner-fitted wiki collaborative writing tasks enable the development of their strategic competence, the use of a wider range of lexical resources in more elaborate and complex written structures and even greater accuracy regarding, for example, spelling. And learners obviously become abler to fulfil their communicative intentions.

This PhD thesis has demonstrated that Swain's *linguaging* concept can be seamlessly transferred from face-to-face collaboration to online collaboration in wikis. This extension in the application of the concept brings about innovation, favours creativity and increases the didactic range of influence in language learning with a focus on productive skills including intercultural competences. Realising the potential of collaborative output processing in web-based English language learning scenarios is a matter of high relevance in the context of today's new proposals for a (language) learning profile oriented towards competencies.

Some fundamental conditions must be met when implementing a wiki collaborative writing environment. The cross-cultural variable appears as essential for learners to authenticate the process and sustain motivation throughout. The factors affecting revision pointed out must be considered in task design as well. The wiki space in use must obviously be optimised with all the facilities that deem it so promising. It is essential that such activities are performed in task-based contexts in which students take part in preparatory activities that get them ready for the communicative and constructivist demands of the core activity and allow them to reflect on the complete process conducting them to the desired product. The development of the learners' online collaborative strategic competence, in particular collaborative autonomy (Kessler & Bikowski, 2010) should not be neglected. Finally, pedagogic integration with meaningful classroom activities comprehending face-to-face interaction is highly recommendable. This again directs our attention to the relevance of blended language learning settings for successful

uptake. McDonough and Sunitham (2009) speculated that Thai learners exposed to computer-mediated collaborative tasks remembered only one-third of the grammatical forms and less than half the lexical items they had discussed because the computer activities were not connected or reinforced during class time and the students might have had little motivation to remember the language items.

This PhD thesis aimed to put teaching and research together to support reflective teachers and the development and transformation of daily school practices. It aimed to bridge the gap between teachers' initial enthusiasm about the new pedagogic opportunities and its actual uptake. Collaborative output processing plays a role of paramount importance in second language acquisition, and the wiki space, in connection with other tools such as corpora in blended ensembles, offers great potential in this regard. Web collaborative writing in the L2 writing classroom must not only be advocated but also utilized (see Kessler, Bikowski & Boggs, 2012: p. 93). The main challenges of applying such a learning framework as the one proposed have been hinted at above and mostly concern pedagogical implementation in a blended language learning setting and learner-preparation tasks (Kohn, 2014a). Yet, for reflective teachers to facilitate the development of their students' ability to learn to learn in blended language learning contexts, European governments must invest in equipment and applications of this nature and, first and foremost, in education policies that promote continuous teacher training and support as well. Teacher-education tasks must focus on learning how to teach with the technology rather than only on how to use it (Duran et al., 2012). These actions will help bring the benefits of such practices into school curricula and open Bax's *Integrated CALL* phase.

The fact that both the survey and CS1 and CS2 study participants were volunteers who self-selected based on their interest in collaborative e-learning of English may be considered to have generated a preference towards certain practices, hence a limitation to this investigation. However, self-selection bias cannot be said to have arisen with regard to CS3 study participants, who generated representative data for this study and were selected by their teachers as indistinctive members of a school class. What is more, just as the teacher survey prompted data from teachers from all across Europe, the three case studies prompted data generated by a broad spectrum of ages, nationalities, language proficiency levels and educational institutions: the participants were differently aged French, German, Portuguese and Danish learners whose English CEFR language proficiency levels ranged from A2 to C1 – A1 or C2-learners would not have been able to contribute to the courses as required by the research goals –, and who attended varied types of educational institutions – vocational, state and private schools, and university. Such a comprehensive sphere of analysis enables the range of application of the findings in this PhD thesis to the learning and teaching of English as a second language to be wider.

In order to optimise the design of tasks of this nature in pedagogically-appropriate contexts, further research is needed to deepen the understanding of intercultural differences that might affect interaction among students from different backgrounds and of other factors affecting the success and frequency of revision in web-based peer review settings.

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Appendices

Appendix A

Audit Questionnaire for the survey

The use of educational e-learning equipment and applications in foreign language classes

Background information

What is the age range of the pupils you teach?

10 to 12 years old

Other

In which type of school do you teach?

primary school

secondary school

Other

In which country do you teach (full name in English)?

In which city is your school?

Which language(s) do you teach?

English

French

German

Italian

Spanish

Other

Which language(s) do you teach with ICT support?

English

French

German

Italian

Spanish

Other

Have you taken part in teacher training activities related to educational ICT?

Yes No

If yes, please specify the kind of ICT training activity undertaken.

Would you be interested in taking part in a teacher-training workshop on educational ICT?

Yes No

If yes, please specify your topics of interest for a workshop.

Equipment and applications

Are e-learning equipment and applications available for language learning in your school?

e.g. PC + data projector, PC pool/computer lab, Internet/web access, Content Management System (CMS), e-learning platform/learning management system (LMS) (e.g. Moodle, Blackboard, WebCT), multimedia learning software/packages, video conferencing, email, chat, forum, blogs, wikis

Yes

No

Please specify the e-learning equipment and applications available.

Do you use e-learning equipment and applications in your own language classes?

Yes

No

If yes, please specify.

Do you use the following e-learning equipment with your pupils? Please indicate how often you use them (1=never to 5=regularly).

	1	2	3	4	5
PC + data projector in classroom	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Internet + data projector in classroom	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
PC pool/computer lab in school	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Internet in PC pool/computer lab in school	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
PC at home (teacher)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Internet at home (teacher)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
PC at home (pupils)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Internet at home (pupils)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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Do you use the following e-learning applications with your pupils? Please indicate how often you use them (1=never to 5=regularly).

	1	2	3	4	5
Multimedia learning software/packages	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Internet/web sites & contents	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Testing/assessment (offline/online)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Content management system (CMS)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Learning management system (LMS)/e-learning platform, e.g. Moodle	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Video conferencing (e.g. also via Skype conference)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Email	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Chat	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Discussion forum	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Blogs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Podcasts or podcasting	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Wikis	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Others	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Pedagogic contexts & evaluation of use

In which pedagogic contexts do you use e-learning activities? Please indicate how often you use them (1=never to 5=regularly).

	1	2	3	4	5
In school with the entire class	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
In school in project groups	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
As part of homework	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Others	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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How beneficial is the use of e-learning within the following areas? (1=not at all 2=a little bit 3=somewhat 4=quite a bit 5=very much)

	1	2	3	4	5
Grammar	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Vocabulary	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Listening comprehension	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Reading comprehension	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Speaking	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Writing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Language testing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
E-Portfolios	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Communicative interaction	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Intercultural competence development	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Language learning with cultural or subject-specific content (CLIL)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Others	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

How relevant are the following pedagogic goals and approaches in your language classes? (1=not at all 2=a little bit 3=somewhat 4=quite a bit 5=very much)

	1	2	3	4	5
Grammar and form	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Communicative competence	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Intercultural competence	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Teacher-centred approaches	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Learner-centred approaches	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Autonomous learning	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Authenticity of learning	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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materials & activities					
Explorative learning	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Collaborative learning (in pairs, groups)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Task/project-based learning	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Others	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Evaluation of e-learning for language learning purposes

Do you associate strengths & opportunities with using e-learning applications and contents for language learning purposes? (1=not at all 2=a little bit 3=somewhat 4=quite a bit 5=very much)

1	2	3	4	5
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please specify the strengths & opportunities you associate with it:

Do you associate weaknesses & threats with using e-learning applications and contents for language learning purposes? (1=not at all 2=a little bit 3=somewhat 4=quite a bit 5=very much)

1	2	3	4	5
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please specify the weaknesses & threats you associate with it:

Using e-learning from home

Do you consider it beneficial for your language classes that your pupils should have access to computer, Internet and learning software at home? (1=not at all 2=a little bit 3=somewhat 4=quite a bit 5=very much)

1	2	3	4	5
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Additional comments regarding advantages and/or problems:

Do you provide your pupils with e-learning applications and materials for working from home?

Yes

No

If yes, what kind?

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How many of your pupils do you think have computer and Internet access at home?

0-20%	20-40%	40-60%	60-80%	80-100%
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Changes or improvements

Should the use of e-learning in schools be changed or improved (e.g. school politics, organisation of teachers' workload, technological infrastructure, pedagogic approaches & strategies, teacher education, continuous teacher support, collaboration in teacher networks)? Please comment:

Appendix B

Student Post-course Questionnaire on the course

English for Beauticians – Nail Care (CS1)

Course assessment

Personal preferences and usability

Do you like working with e-learning materials and activities in the classroom (1=not at all to 5=a lot)?

1	2	3	4	5
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Comments:

Did you feel the following e-learning materials and activities were user-friendly and easy to handle (navigation) (1=not at all to 5=very much)?

	1	2	3	4	5
The overall Moodle course	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Link	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mind map	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Forum	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Wiki	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Assignment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Where did you have problems? And which problems did you have?

Did you always get clear instructions and understand what you were supposed to do (1=unclear to 5=clear)?

1	2	3	4	5
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Where did you feel lost?

Were the e-learning materials and activities well integrated into your lesson (1=not at all to 5=very well integrated)?

1	2	3	4	5
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Comments:

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Learning

Did you find the following e-learning materials and activities interesting and motivating (1=not at all to 5=very much)?

	1	2	3	4	5
The overall Moodle course	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Link	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mind map	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Forum	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Wiki	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Assignment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

What did you like? What did you dislike?

Did you find the following e-learning materials and activities relevant for your learning (1=not relevant at all to 5=very relevant)?

	1	2	3	4	5
The overall Moodle course	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Link	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mind map	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Forum	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Wiki	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Assignment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Comments:

Do you like... (1=not at all to 5=very much)

	1	2	3	4	5
... e-learning individual activities?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
... e-learning collaborative (pair/group) activities?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Comments:

Appendices

Do you feel the following e-learning materials and activities improved your English (1=not at all to 5=very much)?

	1	2	3	4	5
The overall Moodle course	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Link	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mind map	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Forum	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Wiki	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Assignment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Try to describe what you learnt:

Do you feel you improved the following language skills by working with e-learning materials and activities (1=not at all to 5=a lot)?

	1	2	3	4	5
Writing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Speaking	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Listening	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Reading	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Grammar	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Vocabulary	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Comments:

The role of the teacher, learning awareness and content

Did you need your teacher's support for the following e-learning materials and activities (1=not at all to 5= a lot)?

	1	2	3	4	5
The overall Moodle course	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Link	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mind map	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Forum	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Wiki	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Assignment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Did you get enough support?

Yes No

Comments:

Appendices

Did you feel more autonomous when using e-learning materials and activities than without them (1=not at all to 5=more autonomous)?

1	2	3	4	5
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

If so, in what way?

If so, did you like being autonomous (1=not at all to 5=very much)?

1	2	3	4	5
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Why (not)?

Do you feel the e-learning materials and activities helped you learn about other things (history, geography etc.) you would not have learnt in your normal lesson (1=not at all to 5=very much)?

1	2	3	4	5
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

If so, please give examples:

Level of difficulty, time investment and general assessment

What do you feel was the level of difficulty of the following e-learning materials and activities (1=too easy to 5=too difficult)?

	1	2	3	4	5
The overall Moodle course	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Link	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mind map	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Forum	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Wiki	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Assignment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please give examples:

The time I spent on the e-learning materials and activities was alright in comparison to what I learnt (1=not alright to 5=definitely alright)?

1	2	3	4	5
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Comments:

Appendices

Do you feel that the combination of e-learning materials and activities with your normal lesson helps you learn faster than without e-learning materials and activities?

Yes No

Appendix C

Teacher Post-course Questionnaire on the course

English for Beauticians – Nail Care (CS1)

Course assessment

Personal preferences and usability

Do you like working with e-learning materials and activities in the classroom (1=not at all to 5=very much)?

1	2	3	4	5
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Comments:

Did you feel the following e-learning materials and activities were user-friendly and easy to handle (navigation) (1=not at all to 5=very much)?

	1	2	3	4	5
The overall Moodle course	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Link	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mind map	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Forum	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Wiki	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Assignment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Did you encounter any technical problems?

Did the students always get clear instructions and understand what they were supposed to do (1=unclear to 5=clear)?

1	2	3	4	5
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Where did they feel lost?

Did the e-learning materials and activities fit into your regular curriculum and were you able to integrate them into your normal teaching practices (1=not at all to 5=very well)?

	1	2	3	4	5
They fitted into my regular curriculum.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I was able to integrate them into my normal teaching practices.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Comments:

Appendices

Learning

Did you feel the following e-learning materials and activities helped improve your students' motivation (1=not at all to 5=very much)?

	1	2	3	4	5
The overall Moodle course	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Link	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mind map	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Forum	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Wiki	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Assignment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

What did they like? What did they dislike?

Did you find the following e-learning materials and activities relevant for your students' learning (1=not relevant at all to 5=very relevant)?

	1	2	3	4	5
The overall Moodle course	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Link	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mind map	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Forum	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Wiki	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Assignment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Comments:

What do you feel the potential of... (1=very low to 5=very high)

	1	2	3	4	5
...e-learning individual activities is?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
...e-learning collaborative (pair/group) activities is?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Comments:

Appendices

Do you feel the following e-learning materials and activities improved your students' English (1=not at all to 5=very much)?

	1	2	3	4	5
The overall Moodle course	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Link	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mind map	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Forum	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Wiki	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Assignment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Try to describe what you feel they learnt:

Do you feel your students improved the following language skills by working with e-learning materials and activities (1=not at all to 5=a lot)?

	1	2	3	4	5
Writing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Speaking	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Listening	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Reading	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Grammar	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Vocabulary	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Comments:

The role of the teacher, learning awareness and content

Did the students need your support for the following e-learning materials and activities (1=not at all to 5= very much)?

	1	2	3	4	5
The overall Moodle course	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Link	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mind map	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Forum	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Wiki	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Assignment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Did you support them enough?

Yes No

Comments:

Appendices

Do you think e-learning has a positive effect on the following aspects (1=not at all to 5=very much)?

	1	2	3	4	5
Language awareness	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Language learning awareness	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Self-study abilities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Comments:

To what extent do you think e-learning helps you support content and language integrated learning (1=not at all to 5=very much)?

1	2	3	4	5
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please specify:

Level of difficulty, time investment and general assessment

What do you feel was the level of difficulty of the following e-learning materials and activities for your students (1=too easy to 5= too difficult)?

	1	2	3	4	5
The overall Moodle course	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Link	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mind map	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Forum	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Wiki	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Assignment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please give examples:

Do you think the time invested was in due proportion to your students' learning outcome (1=too much to 5=adequate)?

Time invested by	1	2	3	4	5
you as a teacher	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
your students	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Comments:

Appendices

Do you intend to continue using e-learning materials and activities in the future?

Yes No

Comments:

Do you feel you need (further) teacher training?

Yes No

If so, in which area(s)?

What do you feel is the relevance of the implementation of blended language learning (didactic combination of traditional forms of teaching and learning with the new possibilities offered by learning) in relation to conventional lessons regarding learning outcomes (1=not at all relevant to 5=very relevant)?

1	2	3	4	5
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Appendix D

**Student Pre-course Questionnaire for the courses
Binge Drinking and European Elections 2009 (CS1)
Personal and Learning Profile**

Personal profile

Name:	
Email:	Phone number(s):
Age:	Gender (M/F):
Nationality:	Mother tongue:
Comments:	

Learning profile

What do you study?	
What semester are you on?	
Have you ever learnt/studied English? If so, when and where?	
When?	Where?

Appendices

Have you ever studied or lived abroad?

Where?

When?

How long for?

How would you rate your level of English according to the classification below*?

Please write a paragraph on what you think about e-learning.

Please point out some topics and language skills you would like to work on.

TOPICS (e.g. interrailing, binge drinking)	LANGUAGE SKILLS (e.g. speaking, writing)

Comments:

*Classification

A1 Can understand and use familiar everyday expressions and very basic phrases aimed at the satisfaction of needs of a concrete type. Can introduce him/herself and others and can ask and answer questions about personal details such as where he/she lives, people he/she knows and things he/she has. Can interact in a simple way provided the other person talks slowly and clearly and is prepared to help.

A2 Can understand sentences and frequently used expressions related to areas of most immediate relevance (e.g. very basic personal and family information, shopping, local geography, employment). Can communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on familiar and routine matters. Can describe in simple terms aspects of his/her background, immediate environment and matters in areas of immediate need.

B1 Can understand the main points of clear standard input on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, leisure, etc. Can deal with most situations likely to arise whilst travelling in an area where the language is spoken. Can produce simple connected text on topics which are familiar or of personal interest. Can describe experiences and events, dreams, hopes & ambitions and briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions and plans.

B2 Can understand the main ideas of complex text on both concrete and abstract topics, including technical discussions in his/her field of specialisation. Can interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction with native speakers quite possible without strain for either party. Can produce clear, detailed text on a wide range of subjects and explain a viewpoint on a topical issue giving the advantages and disadvantages of various options.

C1 Can understand a wide range of demanding, longer texts, and recognise implicit meaning. Can express him/herself fluently and spontaneously without much obvious searching for expressions. Can use language flexibly and effectively for social, academic and professional purposes. Can produce clear, well-structured, detailed text on complex subjects, showing controlled use of organisational patterns, connectors and cohesive devices.

C2 Can understand with ease virtually everything heard or read. Can summarise information from different spoken and written sources, reconstructing arguments and accounts in a coherent presentation. Can express him/herself spontaneously, very fluently and precisely, differentiating finer shades of meaning even in more complex situations.

(Common European Framework of Reference for Languages)

Appendix E

Student Post-course Semi-structured Interview on the courses
Binge Drinking and European Elections 2009 (CS1)
Assessing the experience

What is collaboration for you? What activities did you find collaborative and why?

What do you think about CLIL? Do you think you developed a more positive attitude towards language learning?

Wiki – Writing a summary (*European Elections 2009*)

Why did you revise this piece of text?

- Introspection
- Language Awareness
- Learning Awareness
- Learning Outcomes

Do you like the text as it is now? Which parts do you dislike? Why?

- Pushed Output
- Learning Awareness
- Language Awareness
- Learning Outcomes

Please revise your text in the wiki once more and explain your changes as you make them.

- Pushed Output (form, content, style)
- *Languaging*
- Wiki

Tell me your impressions about the wiki activity. You may also refer back to the wiki activity in the previous course.

- Grounded Theory
- Collaboration
- Learning Outcomes (CLIL)

Skype Session – Speaking about Binge Drinking (*Binge Drinking*)

Is your English sufficient for your needs and purposes?

Do certain needs and purposes require a higher command of English? Which ones?

Are you usually able to express in English what you want to say?

Do you feel you are able to express your SELF in English, that is, your personality?

How important is it for you to be correct when you speak English? And why?

Does it depend on the communicative situation that you are in? Please explain.

Does it depend on whether you speak or write? Please explain.

Or is it sufficient for you to be understood? How important is it for you to be fluent?

Are you satisfied with the level of correctness you were able to achieve in your own performance? Are you satisfied with your pronunciation? Your grammar? Your vocabulary?

Does it make a difference whether you communicate with native or non-native speakers of English? Please explain.

Tell me your impressions about the Skype activity.

- Grounded Theory
- Collaboration
- Learning Outcomes (CLIL)

What do you think of these passages?

- Pushed Output
- Introspective Thoughts
- Learning Outcomes

Forum – Binge Drinking (Binge Drinking)

Tell me your impressions about the forum activity.

- Grounded Theory
- Collaboration
- Learning Outcomes (CLIL)

Why did you make (so many) contributions to the forum?

- Task Design and Teacher Feedback
- Introspective Thoughts

Do you consider the forum a collaborative activity? Why (not)? To what extent do your learning outcomes derive from collaboration?

Final Comments

Appendix F

Student Pre-course Semi-structured Interview before the course

Binge Drinking (CS2)

Collecting impressions

How would you define learning? What conditions/attitudes (requirements) do you find essential for learning to occur? [Constructivist and Communicative Approach]; [interaction, authentication, reflection and autonomy]

How would you define e-learning? What differences do you find in relation to conventional learning? To what extent could e-learning be advantageous when compared to conventional learning? (short and long-term) What disadvantages do you see? (short and long-term)

What is the role of collaboration in learning? What's your opinion on collaboration – do you prefer collaborative or individual activities and why? What would be a truly collaborative learning and e-learning activity? To what extent do you think collaboration develops introspection, language awareness or learning awareness? What requirements are needed for collaboration to lead to learning outcomes? Do you have any experience with wikis/Moodle – what's your opinion on them for learning?

Have you ever heard of *Content and Language Integrated Learning*? What do you think it is? Does it sound like essential for learning languages or would *Language Learning* be enough? Explain.

What role does motivation play on learning? How do you define motivation/learning motivation?

Appendix G

Student Pre-test before the course

Binge Drinking (CS2)

Writing an argumentative essay about Drinking

Name:

Date:

Write an argumentative essay on the following topic:

“Drinking is a major problem nowadays.”

Appendix H

Student Post-test after the course

Binge Drinking (CS2)

Correcting a text about Binge Drinking (Example: Group 1)

Group 1

Correct the following text. You may need to correct a single word/expression, to rewrite a long chunk of text or to punctuate a sentence. Underline the mistake and rewrite it correctly on the line below. Mark each correction with an exclamation mark (!) if you are SURE of it or with a question mark (?) if you are UNSURE.

Binge drinking

Interviewer: There seems to be a perception in Europe and also perhaps with the older generation in this country that young people in Britain drink too much. It's called binge drinking and it does seem to be a problem on the streets of towns and cities on the weekend. Do you think young people drink too much today?

Beatrice: I think that maybe they do. I think it's predominantly a culture problem. My impression is that in France they're brought up at an early age drinking, obviously not large amounts but having wine watered down, just drinking with family, whereas in Britain I don't think that culture really exists as much. And I think that may be part of the problem – that once children hit, once children become teenagers, in particular when they hit eighteen and it's legal to drink in the UK, they suddenly go into the party and start to drink as much as they can because they've never been able to before and they've never really drunk anything much before. This means you've suddenly got these children going out in groups, going round to clubs drinking as much as they can. On the other hand having things like shots now being so popular, people don't really drink wine and beer as much as maybe they used to. This is the bad way of alcohol. Is then that begins dependence. You know you're drinking to get drunk and it's, I think, the idea, and I think you know it's a difficult thing to overcome because you're changing people's whole ideology of what you do when you go out. So you know many people do just go out because they want get drunk and I don't think it's, you know, a good thing but then it's so difficult to change. And of course the problem is changing, the drinking age will create other problems because then you're gonna have people drinking before they can drive and, you know, that may cause other issues. There could be more crashes. Who knows? So, you know, altogether what to do with the problem is, I think, a big issue.

Interviewer III: What's your experience and with your friends as well? I mean do your friends drink too much, or what?

Beatrice: I don't think so. I think partly all my friends, we all go to the same, well, many of my friends go to the same school as I do and I think due to quite a high work pressure I think we're all expected to do very well in our exams and in another things. Some of us get frustrated. There really isn't actually a lot of time, you know, most of us have jobs as well, there's not a huge amount of time to go out and drink and things like that. So although we do go out, you know, a fair bit, I don't think particularly with my group of friends there's the same kind of feeling that we must go out to get drunk. But I think also partly, I mean binge drinking is seen as having two or three glasses of wine now, and it's not actually a lot to be considered a binge. So, you know, it's partly about where to draw the line. I mean if you go out and have a few glasses of wine I wouldn't necessarily call that binge drinking, though technically it is. It may be binge drinking if you go home and smother to a pillow. So again I think it's difficult to determine how much teens are, you know, taking it too far. There are many kind of people who drink and many different attitudes towards drinking.

Interviewer: I see, you believe we need to think it thru.

Source: <http://sacodeyl.inf.um.es/sacodeyl-search2/faces/search.jsp> (adapted)

Appendix I

Student Post-course Semi-structured Interview on the course

Binge Drinking (CS2)

Assessing the experience

Collaboration

How did collaboration work? Name some examples of collaboration and non-collaboration.

Do you find any relationship between your previous answer and the group you were assigned? How would you describe the patterns of interaction (see Storch) in your group? What about proficiency levels?

To what extent do you think collaboration develops introspection, language awareness or learning awareness?

After working on the binge-drinking essay collaboratively, how many members do you believe a group should have for such a task to work out well?

Do you prefer collaborative or individual work?

Learning Outcomes

How would you assess the whole binge-drinking course regarding learning outcomes? What about the activity on Wikispaces?

As far as the last activity is concerned, how would you evaluate the Page edition function? The Discussion function? The History function?

Did you have a look at any of the other wikis? Did that help you in any way?

Pushed Output (*stimulated recall*)

Let's analyse your edition on Wikispaces. How sure were/are you of the changes you made? Do you think your degree of self-reliance/sureness/confidence of the use of those words/expressions decreased/increased? (see Post-test) What about the changes made by your group members – what impact did they have on you? And finally, what impact did all of this have on you solving the post-test?

Let's recall your thoughts at the time editing took place (moments of *linguaging*).

Autonomy

From your point of view how does the whole course and its last activity in particular relate to autonomy? Did you miss having a teacher?

Motivation

How did you feel motivated by the course and by the last activity in particular? And what do you believe is your classmates' perception?

Blended Learning and learning

What do you now consider to be the advantages and disadvantages of blended learning?

What conditions and attitudes do you now find essential for learning to occur in a blended learning setting?

Course Assessment

How would you assess the course? Would you improve it in any way?

Appendix J

**Student First In-course Questionnaire on the course
Developing writing skills in different types of text (CS3)
Assessing the First Part of the Collaborative Writing Experience**

Motivation and learning

Did you find the e-learning activities interesting and motivating (1=not at all to 5=very much)?

1	2	3	4	5
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

What did you like/dislike?

Did you find the e-learning activities relevant for your learning (1=not relevant at all to 5=very relevant)?

1	2	3	4	5
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please provide as many concrete examples of learning/non-learning as possible.

What do you feel is the ideal number of elements (=students) for such activities to contribute to efficient learning?

1 (individual work)	2	3	4	Another number
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Comments:

Do you feel you improved the following language areas by working with e-learning materials and activities (1=not at all to 5=improved a lot)?

	1	2	3	4	5
Writing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Grammar	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Vocabulary	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Reading	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Speaking	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Listening	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Comments:

Please evaluate the impact of online collaboration on your learning. Be as concrete as possible.

Please evaluate the impact of the use of the discussion function on Wikispaces on your learning. Be as concrete as possible.

Please evaluate the impact of peer review (=correcting and being corrected by others) on your learning. Be as concrete as possible. You may also refer to advantages and disadvantages of peer review.

Appendices

How sure of the correctness of the changes you made (1=not sure at all to 5=totally sure)

	1	2	3	4	5
were you when you started working on Wikispaces?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
are you at the moment?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Teaching and learning resources and profiles

What support did you (feel the need to) use during these e-learning activities (1=not at all to 5=very much)?

	1	2	3	4	5
Grammars	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Dictionaries	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Encyclopaedias	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Websites	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Teacher	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Peer(s)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other means of support	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Comments/Examples of other means of support:

What benefit did you take from the resources above?

Did you feel more autonomous when using e-learning materials and activities than without them (1=not at all to 5=more autonomous)?

1	2	3	4	5
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

If so, in what way?

Do you like feeling autonomous (1=not at all to 5=very much)?

1	2	3	4	5
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Can a teacher be replaced by a (more knowledgeable) peer in terms of learning support (1=not at all to 5=definitely)?

1	2	3	4	5
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

What is the difference between teacher and peer feedback (pros and cons)?

Did you sometimes feel you were playing the role of a teacher?

Yes No

In what situations? Provide concrete examples.

What did you learn from it? Give concrete examples.

Appendices

How would you classify your learning profile in general? What sort of learner are you when working in groups?

Collaborative

Passive

Dominant

Other:

How would you classify your learning profile in these writing tasks?

Collaborative

Passive

Dominant

Other:

Was your profile altered by interaction with your classmates (1=not at all to 5=very much)?

1	2	3	4	5
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

If so, please explain how and why.

Are you an expert?

Yes No

How do you define expert?

According to that definition, who in your group was an expert?

Do you think your group members see you as an expert?

Yes No

How would you classify your language proficiency (=expertise) (1=very low to 5=very high)?

1	2	3	4	5
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

How would you classify your peers' learning profile in this task? Write their names down and choose *collaborative*, *passive*, *dominant* or *other* to describe them.

How would you classify your peers' language proficiency? Write their names down and select a number from 1 to 5 (1=very low to 5=very high).

How did collaboration work (1=very badly to 5=very well)?

1	2	3	4	5
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Comments:

Do you have any contact with your international/local peers out of Wikispaces/class? If so, how and what sort of contact? What is the importance of the English language in that context?

General assessment

What is your impression on wikis now that you have some experience with them?

What sort of problems did you face?

Were the e-learning activities well integrated into your lesson (1=not at all integrated to 5=very well integrated)?

1	2	3	4	5
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Comments:

Do you feel that the combination of e-learning materials and activities with your normal lesson helps you learn faster than without e-learning materials and activities?

Yes No

Comments:

Were these e-learning activities a valuable contribution to your English lessons?

Yes No

If so, what do you think were the reasons for this? You can tick more than one option.

I'm able to write from anywhere and anytime.

These e-learning activities are integrated with face-to-face lessons.

I can focus on writing only and improve this one skill.

Wikis have numerous functions which make it easier to learn.

Collaboration makes me learn faster.

I'm in contact with school peers.

I'm in contact with international peers.

The discussion function enables me to debate important aspects.

The history function enables me to keep track of my peers' mistakes and my own.

The editing function enables me to change the text as much as I want and as I want.

Through peer review I'm able to permanently learn about my mistakes.

These e-learning activities make me reflect on my language skills.

These e-learning activities make me reflect on my learning process.

Other reasons:

Are there any other comments you would like to make?

Appendix K

**Student Second In-course Questionnaire on the course
Developing writing skills in different types of text (CS3)
Assessing the Second Part of the Collaborative Writing Experience**

Motivation and learning

Did you find the e-learning activities interesting and motivating (1=not at all to 5=very much)?

1	2	3	4	5
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Did you find the e-learning activities relevant for your learning (1=not relevant at all to 5=very relevant)?

1	2	3	4	5
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

What do you feel is the ideal number of elements (=students) for such activities to contribute to efficient learning?

1 (individual work)	2	3	4	Another number
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Comments:

Do you feel you improved the following language areas by working with e-learning materials and activities (1=not at all to 5=improved a lot)?

	1	2	3	4	5
Writing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Grammar	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Vocabulary	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Reading	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Speaking	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Listening	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please evaluate the impact of peer review (=correcting and being corrected by others) on your learning (1=no positive impact to 5=a lot of positive impact).

1	2	3	4	5
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Appendices

How sure of the correctness of the changes you made (1=not sure at all to 5=totally sure)

	1	2	3	4	5
were you when you started working on Wikispaces?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
are you at the moment?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Teaching and learning resources and profiles

What support did you (feel the need to) use during these e-learning activities (1=not at all to 5=very much)?

Grammars

Dictionaries

Encyclopaedias

Websites

Teacher

Peer(s)

Other means of support

Examples of other means of support:

Did you feel more autonomous when using e-learning materials and activities than without them (1=not at all to 5=more autonomous)?

1	2	3	4	5
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Can a teacher be replaced by a (more knowledgeable) peer in terms of learning support (1=not at all to 5=definitely)?

1	2	3	4	5
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

How would you classify your learning profile in these writing tasks?

Collaborative

Passive

Dominant

Other:

What profile(s) do you think is (are) needed for such an activity to generate learning?

Collaborative

Passive

Dominant

Other:

According to your definition of 'expert' in a previous questionnaire, who was an expert in your last group work?

Do you think your group members see you as an expert?

Yes No

How would you classify your language proficiency (=expertise) (1=very low to 5=very high)?

1	2	3	4	5
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Appendices

How would you classify your peers' learning profile in this task? Write their names down and choose *collaborative*, *passive*, *dominant* or *other* to describe them.

How would you classify your peers' language proficiency? Write their names down and select a number from 1 to 5 (1=very low to 5=very high).

How did collaboration work (1=very badly to 5=very well)?

1	2	3	4	5
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

General assessment

Sum up the advantages and disadvantages of using wikis as a collaborative tool to learn English.

Do you feel that the combination of e-learning materials and activities with your normal lesson helps you learn faster than without e-learning materials and activities?

Yes No

Are there any other comments you would like to make?

Appendix L

**Student Third In-course Questionnaire on the course
Developing writing skills in different types of text (CS3)
*Final questions***

Please think of the whole project when answering the following questions.

Teacher intervention

Did your teacher give you enough support in the online activities?

Yes No

In which cases do you think your teacher gave you **no/(very) little support?**

None

Technical support

Understanding the task

Completing the task

Collaboration

Grammar

Vocabulary

Writing

Listening

Reading

Please write down other situations in which you felt you needed more support from your teacher than the one you got.

