UNIVERSIDAD SAN FRANCISCO DE QUITO

Colegio de Posgrados

An analysis of learners' metatalk and grammaring process through the use of a Dictogloss

Mecanismo de Titulación: Proyecto de Investigación y Desarrollo

Ana A. Vieira Vieira

Troy Spier, PhD
Director de Trabajo de Titulación

Trabajo de titulación de posgrado presentado como requisito para la obtención del título de Magíster en Enseñanza de Inglés como Segundo Idioma

Quito, 02 de Mayo 2022

UNIVERSIDAD SAN FRANCISCO DE QUITO USFQ

COLEGIO DE POSGRADOS

HOJA DE APROBACIÓN DE TRABAJO DE TITULACIÓN

An analysis of learners' metatalk and grammaring process through the use of a Dictogloss

Ana A. Vieira Vieira

Scott T. Gibson
PhD in English

_____

Director del programa de Maestría en
Enseñanza de Inglés como Segunda Lengua

Cristen Dávalos O'Neill
PhD in Research in Geography

_____

Decano del Colegio de Ciencias Sociales
y Humanidades COCISOH

Hugo Burgos Yánez
PhD in Media Studies

_____

Decano del Colegio de Posgrados

Quito, mayo de 2022.

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Nombre del estudiante: Ana Alicia Vieira Vieira

Código de estudiante: 00215435

C.I.:   1757356066

Lugar y fecha: Quito, 2 de mayo de 2022.

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DEDICATION

To the library in which you will sit.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My deepest appreciation to all of those who endured all my whining and oh-so-many tears

these past two years.

Resumen

Diferentes investigaciones se han llevado a cabo en el área de la enseñanza del inglés como segundo idioma en relación al uso de la 'metacharla' por parte de los estudiantes, así como el proceso emergente de 'grammaring' o estructuración gramatical. Sin embargo, esta investigación buscó evaluar la efectividad del uso del 'Dictogloss' o dictado gramatical para permitir la negociación de significado y la reconstrucción del lenguaje a través del trabajo en pareja o grupal, así como el análisis del lenguaje emergente de la metacharla de los estudiantes durante la actividad y el desarrollo de su proceso de 'grammaring' o estructuración gramatical.

El estudio fue llevado a cabo con un grupo de seis estudiantes de nivel intermedio alto de una escuela privada de idiomas ubicada en Quito, Ecuador. Dichos estudiantes completaron una actividad de Dictogloss o dictado gramatical, y su metacharla durante la actividad de reconstrucción y etapa de edición fue grabada, luego transcrita, y analizada desde la teoría fundamentada y enfoque interaccionista. Los resultados mostraron evidencia de que los estudiantes ejecutaron una serie de estrategias al trabajar colaborativamente propuestas por Swain (2001) – notando, hipotetizando y usando metalenguaje – tanto durante la fase inicial de reconstrucción como en la etapa de edición.

Con relación al primer borrador, los textos de los estudiantes, así como su metacharla, mostró evidencia de un énfasis por términos léxicos o fragmentos lexicales y prioridad precisión o exactitud de lenguaje sobre complejidad de este. Sin embargo, tras leer el texto original y pasar a la etapa de edición, la atención de los estudiantes viró a incluir un mayor rango de tiempos gramaticales. Dichos resultados podrían sugerir, en línea con DeKeyser (1997, 2007), que particularmente estudiantes de niveles intermedio alto y avanzado en sus estudios pueden alcanzar conocimiento declarativo de estructuras gramaticales más avanzadas mas no tener el conocimiento procedural ni la automatización de estos dado la falta de práctica.

Key words: Dictogloss. Dictado grammatical. Grammaring. Metacharla

Abstract

Different investigations have been carried out in the teaching of English as a Second Language (ESL) regarding learners' use of metalanguage as well as their emerging grammaring process. However, this investigation set out to assess the effectiveness of the use of the Dictogloss to enable the negotiation of meaning and reconstruction of language through pair or group work, as well as the analysis of the emerging language from learners' metatalk during the task and the developing grammaring process.

The study was carried out with a group of six upper-intermediate students from a private language school in Quito, Ecuador. Learners completed a Dictogloss task, and their metatalk during the reconstruction and editing stages was recorded, later transcribed, and analyzed from the perspective of grounded theory and interactionist approach. Results showed evidence of learners carrying out a series strategies proposed by Swain (2001) when working on collaborative tasks – noticing, hypothesizing and use of metatalk – both during the initial reconstruction or first draft and the editing stage.

Regarding the first draft, learners' texts, as well as their metatalk, showed evidence of a focus on lexical items or chunks and a focus on accuracy over complexity. However, after reding the original text and moving onto the editing stage, learners' attention shifted to include a wider range of grammar tenses. These findings could suggest, and in line with DeKeyser (1997, 2007), that particularly learners at upper-intermediate and advance levels in their studies may achieve declarative knowledge of more advance language structures but not have the procedural knowledge and the automatization of these due to a lack of practice.

Key words: Dictogloss, grammaring, metatalk,

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I. Introduction

The dictogloss, which is an alternative to the traditional dictation (Wajnryb, 1990) foments process writing in a more supportive – and perhaps even reflective way. When used as a pedological instrument, it has been investigated in a variety of teaching contexts. This is due to the fact that it can have a range of functions and variables can be manipulated to determine its impact in language teaching. While the dictogloss may come off as a dictation with a 'twist' and is often presented this way, it goes beyond this by promoting the use of learners four language skills through pair or group work.

The dictogloss enables learners to participate actively in the activity (Wajnryb, 1990; Swain, 2001), constructing their knowledge collaboratively and more importantly allowing for a range of reflection opportunities. As for the teacher, it aids them in developing learners' both receptive and productive skills as well as assess participants language knowledge.

However, limited investigation has been carried out regarding the use of learners' metalanguage when negotiating meaning and reconstructing the language, more specifically the grammar, of the original text as they move from isolated words to full sentences and paragraphs. The purpose of this investigation is to see what can be unveiled when taking a closer look at learners' metalanguage use and the emerging grammaring process from their discussion. In this sense, a collaborative task such as the dictogloss will promote student-student interaction that can be analyzed through a cognitive-interactionist framework to evaluate how that communication may facilitate second language learning through conversational and linguistic modifications (Muho and Kurami, n/d). Furthermore, it can shed light on how a group of upper-intermediate students, moving into an advanced level, make use of their previous knowledge and the cognitive processes entailed.

Thornbury (2001) proposes grammar be viewed as a kind of mental process which activates itself when "an utterance is in need of fine-tuning" (p. 31). Larsen-Freeman (2014) argues that grammar goes beyond form and can be used to make meaning. More importantly, there is a choice to be made in the way we adapt and use grammatical patterns.

Through the use of the dictogloss and in this grammar emerging process, the teacher's role hence shifts to that of an aid and to serve as a guide to learners' innate process of 'uncovering' grammar. The use of the dictogloss can enable teachers and investigators to stand to the side, observe and later reflect on the process learners carry out to construct meaning and their 'learner-centered grammaring process' to be analyzed later.

This thesis aims to analyze the metalanguage of six adult upper-intermediate English second language learners living and studying in a private language school in Quito, Ecuador. Their use of metalanguage emerged through the implementation of a dictogloss task with the purpose to assess learners' grammaring process. This project is presented in five chapters. Chapter two presents the literature review covering in depth key concepts presented above, studies from experts in the field and their relation to the Dictogloss. Chapter three develops the methodology of the study, including the framework in which it is set and details the procedure carried out. Chapter four presents the analysis of learners' metalanguage and writing in the framework of the methodology. And finally, chapter five offers a series of conclusions in light of the limitations of the study and presents recommendations for future studies.

II. Literature Review

In the following chapter a quick look will be taken into what writing in a second language, more specifically English, entails and what we understand as process writing. However, principally the concept of the dictogloss is developed and its relation to process writing, the cognitive-interactionist approach, grammar and finally metatalk.

2.1 Writing and ELT

Hedge (2005) ascertains that writing in "real life" is carried out as a response to a demand – academic studies, professional responsibilities, social roles, etc. And the English learner may have any of these present, hence the importance of teaching writing. Regarding the teaching of writing, Byrne (1988) highlights that we cannot assume that learners will be proficient at writing in their own language nor possess the organizational skills to effectively write; however, it is likely that most of our learners will have already gone through the laborious work of developing their spoken language as well as writing skills in their mother tongue. Hence, we should be able to make certain assumptions about what they can do, for example their awareness of certain genre features, ability to paragraph or to form a sentence...

Furthermore, relating to the importance of including writing lessons as English teachers, White and Arndt (1992) highlighted that "despite the power of writing – as a permanent record, as a form of expression and as a means of communication – it has tended to be a much neglected part of the language programme, both in first and foreign or second language teaching" (p. 1). Still, in 2005, Hedge believed the same, writing was a neglected area of ELT and had been for years. However, the imbalance between writing and other skills, particularly the scarcity of books in this area "has been redressed a little" (Hedge, 2005, p.8). Research, initially into first language and then second language writing, has also grown and is influencing the design of activities. And these ideas, as stated by Hedge

2.2 Process Writing

One well-known approach to teaching writing is process writing. White and Arndt (1992) outline different stages implied in the process of process writing. Among those stages they include: Generating, focusing, structuring, drafting, evaluating and re-viewing. Generating can include brainstorming the use of questions, notes, visuals and even role play. Focusing can entail the discovery of main ideas, the consideration of purpose, audience and form. Structuring refers to the ordering of information, experimenting with arrangements and relating structure to focal ideas. Drafting requires developing the beginning, adding content, and ending the draft. Evaluating attends to the assessment of the draft, responding to it and conferencing. Finally, the re-viewing stage checks the context, connections, divisions, assesses the impact and edits, corrects and marks.

Regarding the last two stages, Hedge (2005) focuses on marking and how learners hold teachers responsible for helping them improve their writing via marking and proper feedback on performance. Nevertheless, she emphasizes that students must also show concern for reviewing and improving their own work. This relates to the editing process and can emphasize language accuracy and use as well as meaning and organization.

Hedge (2005) develops on the idea of what creates quality in a piece of writing and like many other authors, agrees on two main areas: 1) the skills in the process of composing: having a sense of purpose and 2) the skills connected to crafting, or putting together the pieces of the text and choosing the appropriate language.

2.3 Dictogloss

A Dictogloss, or grammar dictation, is built on process writing but presented in a more supportive and constrained manner. The dictogloss is often referred to as a writing task based on dictation and the reconstruction of a text (Thornbury, 1999). In the literature it can also be defined as an activity (i.e. Vasiljevic, 2010) or a procedure (i.e. Stewart, Rodriguez and Torres, 2014), for the purposes of this project it will be considered a task.

The development of this task is credited to Ruth Wajnryb (1990; Jacobs, 2003). Most authors would agree that the process of a dictogloss can vary from class to class, but at its core, and in line with Wajnryb's (1990) design, a dictogloss consists of 4 stages. The first stage, warm-up, engages students with the topic and possibly activating schemata for the listening. The dictation stage has students listen to the text and take notes on key words and phrases. The dictation is followed by the reconstruction stage in which students collaborate in pairs or small groups to reconstruct the original text from their shared resources. And the final stage, analysis and correction has students analyze and compare their text to others and with the original text. (Wajnryb, 1990; Jacobs, 2003; Vasiljevic, 2010)

Analyzing these stages more closely, we can notice that the spoken text sets the context. This text is usually dictated twice. During the first dictation the teacher may use mimes and gestures to ensure learners' understanding of the main facts, while the second encourages note taking and more language focus (Harmer, 2004). Students should process the whole text at once and the exact forms in which meaning is conveyed without word for word memory (Thornbury, 1999).

The reconstruction stage is usually collaborative. Harmer (2004) highlights that the challenge can be involving everyone in the reconstruction of the text. However, it always seems that there is more to gain in working together than individually. Students must draw from forms that are familiar to them; they can do this by providing each other support, instruction and scaffolding, which are essential components of a dictogloss (MacKenzie, n.d.). And as stated by Swain (1999, as cited in Jacobs, 2003) "students gain insight into their own linguistic shortcomings and develop strategies for solving them by working through them with a partner" (pp. 3).

The analysis and correction stage are focused on discerning the differences between the writings. Learners, by this point, are well positioned when they move on to compare their writing to that of their peers and/or the original text. At this time, they should be better able to detect the differences in how meaning was expressed. It is important learners identify the differences for themselves as this will result in them making the necessary adjustments, teacher should then follow up on these adjustments (Thornbury, 1999). Through this active learner involvement, they become aware of their own strengths and weaknesses and how they themselves use the language. This seems to create learner autonomy, as students independently discover what they do not know and discover what they need (Wajnryb, 1990).

Wajnryb (1990) states that the dictogloss is "a task-based procedure designed to help language learning students towards a better understanding of how grammar works on a text basis" (pp.6) as it aims to provide an opportunity for learners to use their productive grammar in the task of text creation. Learners' linguistic resources are called upon as they pool their fragmented notes and consider the various language options available to them (Wajnryb, 1990, pp. 7). Nevertheless, it can allow for insights not only in relation to grammar but also a range of language use as well.

As for how to guarantee a successful activity, Scrivener (2011) highlights that there are three necessary conditions for a dictogloss to be effective, 1) students must understand the instructions, 2) the text should be longer than what students could completely remember and 3) students should be set up in a quiet environment, which is essential for reconstruction. Focusing on the text, Thornbury (1999) establishes that the dictogloss must be short and in learners' general level of competence. In this sense, prepared texts may be better suited than authentic material though delivery should aim to be authentic.

The use of this task is considered to allow for a better understanding of a language point, more so than other approaches. It integrates testing and teaching, allowing for a stimulation of learners' motivation because students are able to identify their grammar or other language problems and the teacher takes on the role of responding to their needs (Vasiljevic, 2010).

While the four traditional language skills – listening, writing, speaking and reading – may not be developed in an equally balanced way through the dictogloss, learners do

manage to do use all four of them. They listen when being exposed to the text, write what they hear – developing note-taking skills, speak by sharing what they heard and writing collaboratively – making their way through the different stages of process writing – and finally read others' samples as well as the original text (Stewart, Rodriguez & Torres, 2014 and MacKenzie, n.d.). The dictogloss should also allow for higher accuracy in language use, as there is an interactive form of language learning where students negotiate meaning as well as form (Vasiljevic, 2010). Consequently, students ought to report feeling a sense of accomplishment and perceive that their English skills have improved as a direct result of this task.

2.4 Dictogloss and the Cognitive-Interactionist Approach

The interactionist framework proposes that conversational communication is a primary context for second language (L2) acquisition (Loewen and Majorana, 2018). The Interaction Hypothesis (Long, 1996, as cited in Loewen and Majorana, 2018 and in Muho and Kurani, n/d) "emphasizes the role of input, negotiation for meaning, noticing and output" pp 49. Muho and Kurani (n/d) state that interactions facilitate second language learning as conversational and linguistic modifications that occur in discourse provide learners with necessary comprehensible linguistic input.

Throughout the use of the dictogloss we evidence the multiple internal and cognitive factors alongside the external or environmental ones that reciprocally interact for the production of a written task. In this regard, Ortega (2009, as cited in Freeborn, 2015) states there are five "ingredients" that aid L2 learning and form part of this interactionist paradigm: acculturated attitudes, comprehensible input, negotiated interaction, pushed output and noticing. The first stage of the dictogloss is compatible with acculturated attitudes. It allows to motivate learners, build self-confidence and reduce their levels of anxiety, lowering learners affective filter (Freeborn, 2015). Comprehensible input occurs at the second stage.

Krashen's (1985) Input Hypothesis states that language acquisition develops when the child, or learner, is exposed to comprehensible input. This refers to language that is at

their level and slightly above (+1) the students current language ability, finding it challenging but not so much that it is beyond their grasp. In this sense, the text being used during the dictogloss can be modified by the teacher to the level of the learners +1. And during the dictation stage, learners would have the input to then reconstruct.

The reconstruction stage of the dictogloss is compatible with negotiated interactions. The later refers to "a communicative breakdown which learners need to resolve" (Freeborn, 2015, pp.148) and in this sense collaborating with others enables learners to make sense of their notes and work out the meaning and form of the original text for a pushed output as well. Swain (2000, as cited by Freeborn, 2015) states that output pushes the student to process language more deeply. Freeborn (2015) exemplifies this through the dictogloss itself, stating that it "can 'push' and challenge learners to produce output" (pp. 149).

Finally, the analysis and correction stage of a dictogloss are compatible with noticing. Schmidt (in Robinson 2001, as cited in Freeman 2015), claims that "Attention is what allows speakers to become aware of a mismatch or gap between what they can produce and what they need to produce". Through the contrast of their output in their dictogloss to that of others and the original text, learners can raise their awareness of those gaps and be challenged to face and "solve" these.

Regarding student interaction Wajnryb (1990) also considers the part language plays in the thought process, and the value of the language used to 'problem-solve'. More specifically, he reflects on how by talking to each other learners' active and passive knowledge of the target language can be triggered and how it can become activate knowledge and competence as opposed to lying dormant and relatively untapped. In this manner we can evidence the recursive nature of the language production carried out by learners throughout the dictogloss.

2.5 Dictogloss and Grammar

Wajnryb (1990) and MacKenzie (n.d.) states that the dictogloss can be an alternative method of teaching grammar by focusing on form through a dictation activity. Swift (n.d.) denotes that the text used in a dictogloss will often contain language items that are of interest to the teacher and that he/she would like to shed light on. In a manner, learners are exposed to the language through listening, and learners must then express the same content and meaning in written form. They may use or attempt the target language or avoid it by expressing content and meaning accurately but paraphrased.

Kowal and Swain (1997, as cited in Tedick, 2001) found that through collaborative work during the application of a dictogloss task learners demonstrated strategies such as: noticing, hypothesis testing and metatalk. The learners focused on the grammatical aspects emphasized but also went beyond this, picking up on orthographic and semantic issues as well. From this study as well as others, Tedick (2001) concludes that the dictogloss can promote collaborative and constructivist learning, and that in discussing accuracy of the language used and reformulation of the text, learners reestablish rules of form and use.

Looking more closely at the second stage of a dictogloss, and as previously indicated, learners are "dictated" a text and encouraged to take notes. Note-taking is defined by Makany, Kemp and Dror (2008) as recording the essence of information. They highlight that it is a central aspect and complex behavior that relates to information management. When taking notes, the learner needs to "comprehend and write down personally flavoured information but, before that, they also need to acquire and filter the incoming sources, organise and restructure existing knowledge structures and, most importantly, they must store and integrate the freshly processed material" (Makany, Kemp and Dror, 2008, p. 2). During a dictogloss task, while in a more simplified version to that of Makany, Kemp and Dror (2008), learners filter what they hear and are encouraged during their notetaking to write the content words they hear and avoid function words. The distinction between what words are to be written down and which are not is due to both their relevance in content as well as how these are pronounced or dictated within natural speech.

The Longman Dictionary of Language Teaching and Applied Linguistic by Richards and Schmidt (2010) states that "words can be divided into two classes: content words and function words" (pp.126). "Content words are words which refer to a thing, quality, state, or action and which have meaning (lexical meaning) when the words are used alone" (Richards and Schmidt,, pp. 126). British Council (n.d.) defines content words as words that have and carry meaning and provide as examples: nouns, main verbs, adjectives and adverbs and Thornbury (2001) states that these words have "propositional meaning." Thornbury (2002) states that content words carry high information load and that the sense of a text is more or less recoverable by using these words alone. He also establishes that these are an open set, meaning there is no limit to the number of these words that can be added to the language.

On the other hand, auxiliary verbs, pronouns, articles, and prepositions are considered grammatical words (Thornbury, 2002), or as defined by Cambridge Dictionary (n.d.) and Richards and Schmidt (2010), function words. The later show the relationship or between other words – including content ones – in a sentence or phrase, knitting propositions together (Thornbury, 2001), or "grammatical relationships in and between sentences" (Richards and Schmidt, 2010, pp.126).

In an activity such as a dictogloss, there is an important difference in pronunciation between content and function words. Content words are often stressed whereas grammatical words are said in a reduced form or present a schwa sound (British Council, n.d.). The use of this task provides learners with practice of this through the listening comprehension and note-taking activity, requiring them to focus on the stressed content words and later reconstruct what they heard to include the function ones.

Learners must therefore string together lexical items, and as stated by Harmer (2007), a successful sentence depends on putting several elements in the correct order as well as putting the proper type of word in the correct 'slot'. Larsen-Freeman (2014) states that grammar is about the form of the language but is also used to make meaning and despite conventional patterns in language that need to be learned, there is a choice to be made in the way we adapt and use these patterns.

The process of putting both content and function words together and doing so correctly via the dictogloss relates closely to what is known as 'grammaring'. Macmillan

Dictionary (n.d.) defines grammaring as "the process by which a learner acquires the ability to use grammar structures accurately, meaningfully and appropriately." Larsen-Freeman (2014) refers to it as the way we "address 'carry-over' or 'inert knowledge problem' whereby students know the rules but do not necessarily apply them to what they're communicating" (p. 263-264). She adds that the addition of *-ing* to *grammar* indicates a dynamic process to grammar use. And Thornbury (2001) defines grammaring as a process of 'adding grammar' to otherwise lexical propositions; such is the case of learners' notes after the dictation of the dictogloss task.

Thornbury (2001) points out that in 'grammarless' structures, such as public signs, the inclusion of grammar may be almost redundant. However, the de-grammared nature of others can lead to unintentional confusion, like in *SLOW CHILDREN CROSSING*. He concludes that operating at a pure lexical level may present problems and that by adding grammar we 'unpack' the meaning for the reader. In this sense, through the dictogloss, and the students' 'grammarless' notes learners must reconstruct it in such a way to avoid what Thornbury (2001) refers to as unintentional confusion. Therefore, the emerging grammar should fully support the originally intended message.

However, the constructed grammar and its shift to a grammaring process should not be understood solely in the morphosyntactic sense but rather in the cognitive-interactionist sense described above.

2.6 Dictogloss and Metatalk

It is through student-student interaction and their use of metatalk that the grammaring process emerges during the Dictogloss.

Metatalk is one of the classroom's metalinguistic talk. The concept originated in the work of Swain (1995) who identified noticing, hypothesis testing, and metalinguistic reflection as three outputs in second language. And metatalk is defined as the learning of language and making its use to reflect on the language, "a surfacing of language used in problem solving; that is, language used for cognitive purposes" (Swain, 1995). The author also described it in a context of engaging learners in meaning making, where language

serves as communicative function in the process of reflection, hence a "knowledge-building dialogue" (Swain, 2000).

In this regard, Swain (2000) shifts from the negotiation of input and how this is comprehended, for example the listening stage of the dictogloss in which learners take notes, to how interaction is implicated in the learning process of both the input message as well as the form. This relates closely to the grammaring process that emerges in the interactive reconstruction and writing stages of the dictogloss, the output.

Relating to output, Swain (2000) establishes that collaborative dialogue "heightens the potential for exploration of the product" (p.102) shifting output from the simple understanding of students' writings or speaking activities to a more cognitive tool. She argues that in second language acquisition, dialogue mediates its own construction and that of knowledge associated to itself, advocating for finding new methodologies that can unravel, in her opinion, the layered complexity of learners' dialogues (Swain, 2000).

Swain (2001) in her own study of French immersion programs presents evidence of how collaborative dialogues provide opportunities for second language learning, including through the use of the dictogloss. And in line with, previously described cognitive-interactionist approach but focused on output functions, Swain's (2001) background and theoretical considerations of her studies highlight the concepts of *noticing, hypothesis formation and testing,* and *metatalk.*

She establishes that *noticing* can occur as learners attempt to produce language, recognizing their own linguistic problems and/or needs. *Hypothesis formation and testing* can be attempts of new language forms, often against a learner's internalized knowledge or external feedback. Finally, *metatalk* occurs when learners use language to reflect on language use, for example, through the use of metalinguistic terminology or other cognitive forms (Swain, 2001).

While outlining a series of insights from her studies into the value of language teaching through student-student interaction and dialogue, she states that collaborative tasks provided "second language learning because students notice gaps in their linguistic knowledge as they try to express their intended meaning leading them to search for solutions… They can externalize their knowledge allowing them to reflect on it, revise it and apply it. And all students participate actively, and the resulting output allows them to

increase their use and knowledge of the target language." (Swain, 2001, p. 59). She highlights the value of unintended consequences based on learners' own needs and goals, assimilating the content and knowledge they are able to learn, beyond that intended by the teacher (Swain, 2001).

Storch (1999) also highlights the value of pair work stating that pairs are given the opportunity to communicate in the target language. His study completed in Australia with students from different backgrounds, but all studying English for Academic Purposes, evaluated learners' language performance over three different language exercises to be completed individually and another opportunity in pairs. Results, overall, collaborated the value of joint effort on language accuracy; "collaboration and the metatalk it generated led to an improvement in the grammatical accuracy of the texts produced" (p. 370). However, the study also found that in the composition task that higher levels of accuracy likely led to less linguistic complexity and, as for correct decisions for the target language use, the findings were inconclusive. And Storch (1999) concludes that not all grammatical items benefit from the same kind of classroom treatment.

Furthermore, the engagement in meta-talk by foreign language learners in an Iranian study carried out by Sahebkheir (2020) found that grammaring achievements were made and that different types of knowledge are used to understand the text. Dialogue after the reading had the potential to increase the understanding of what was read, as in the interaction with teacher 4 and with classmates, new perspectives and knowledge emerged. This analysis could be in relation to the language used, textual aspects, or knowledge of the world, which are shared in mediation, enabling an expansion of textual understanding and critical positions on the text (Sahebkheir, 2020).

According to Kleiman (2013) it is through the interaction of different levels of knowledge, such as linguistic, textual, and world knowledge, that the reader is able to construct the meaning of the text in order to understand it. In this regard, and in relation to the dictogloss and students' interaction and use of metatalk, the student would go through a process of using their previous knowledge and activation of various types of knowledge to influence the understanding and later reconstruction of the text but also to collaborate in the continuous construction of their language knowledge. This in turn would allow the teacher to also evaluate learners' language use, and grammaring process.

III. Methodology

In the following chapter a closer look will be taken into what writing in a second language, more specifically, English entails and what we understand as process writing. However, principally the concept of the dictogloss is developed and its relation to process writing, the cognitive-interactionist approach, grammar and finally metatalk.

3.1 Type of Investigation

The investigation was carried out in the framework of grounded theory. Glasser and Strauss (1967) define this as the discovery of theory based on data systematically obtained from social research and highlight its inductive nature. Based on this Nobel and Mitchel (2016) summarize the process of carrying out grounded theory as:

> "First the area of interest is identified. Theoretical preconceptions should be avoided, although it is accepted this is difficult in practice. Analytical procedures and sampling strategies are then used, and the study is finished when theoretical sampling reached all discussed below. Data collected may be qualitative or quantitative or a combination of both. Data collection methods often include in-depth interviews using open-ended questions. Questions can be adjusted as theory emerges. Observational methods and focus groups may also be used." (p. 1).

In relation to theoretical sampling, Glaser and Strauss (1967) described a process of generating theory from data which includes collection, then coding and finally analysis; it is "…the process of data collection for generating theory whereby the analyst jointly collects, codes, and analyses his data and decides what data to collect next and where to find them, in order to develop his theory as it emerges" (p. 45). The researcher must, throughout the investigation, make conscious decisions about what details ought to be explored as the 'new theory' develops. This, as highlighted by Nobel and Mitchel (2016) tends to take place after some initial key concepts or categories have emerged and been

identified. "Theoretical sampling therefore, is used to produce more data to endorse or refute the categories that have been identified in the previous analysis." (Nobel and Mitchel, 2016, p. 1).

Before, during and after the data collection, Glasser and Strauss (1967) highlight the importance of the researcher's own *theoretical sensitivity*. This can be defined as their insight and the ability to give meaning to the data. Nobel and Mitchel (2016) state that this sensitivity can come from the following sources (1) literature review (2) professional and personal experience and/or (3) the analytic process.

Understanding the investigation from an interactionist setting is instrumental to the analysis of the data collected. This approach stems from both sociological and biological backgrounds, understanding that we learn language out of a desire to communicate with those around us. Therefore, conversational communication is paramount for L2 acquisition (Loewen and Majorana, 2018).

Loewen and Majorana (2018) claim that interactionist researchers investigate "the effectiveness of corrective feedback that teachers provide in response to students' non-target-like utterances during meaning-focused interaction" (pp. 49). And that this, along with Long's Interaction Hypothesis, which emphasizes meaningful input and negotiation of meaning, comprise the primary focus of interactionist theory and research.

"The opportunity to produce output in the context of interaction, in addition to receiving input, is another important component of the interactionist framework" (Loewen and Majorana, 2018, pp. 50), which relates closely to the Swain's Output Hypotheses or knowledge-building dialogue (Swain, 2000; Freeborn, 2015; and Loewen and Majorana, 2018).

Both grounded theory and interactionism are an effective way to approach a dictogloss activity and the analysis of learners' metalanguage, as this can unveil numerous aspects regarding student dynamic, skills use and language production, and possibly language learning. For the purpose of this research the data collected focuses on learners' negotiation of meaning and grammaring that results from the note taking to restructuring and editing of the text.

3.2 Population, Sample and Classroom Set Up

The participants consisted of men and women of a minimum age of 18 years old and that they be students at EF Language School Ecuador, a private language institute located in Quito current online classes and taking part in the C1.1 (pre-advanced) courses of this school and registered in the period of classes that took place between January 2021 and March 2021.

For the sample selection there were three class schedules available 7am, 4pm and 6pm, and as both 4pm and 6pm had minors attending, the 7am group was chosen. The sampling was intentional non-probabilistic, meaning that there were no random procedures but rather intentional and a deliberate selection in order to collect a representative sample that included some relevant characteristics that represent the population – B2 level of English learners (Kerlinger and Lee, 2002).

The class consisted of ten students, however, for the lesson recorded only six students attended that day, five of which were females and one male, and their ages ranged between 23 and 42 years old. All six participants had been studying together for over a year and their current module (C1.1) ran from January 2021 until March 2021 at 7:00 am.

The group of six participants were divided into two subgroups, referred to in Appendix E and F as Group 1 (G1) and Group 2 (G2). Each group was made up of three participants referred to S1, S2 and S3 in Group 1 and S4, S5 and S6 in Group 2 to preserve confidentiality.

3.3 Instruments

A sociodemographic scale (Appendix A) was used to know the sociodemographic characteristics of the participants that constitute the sample of students. The data collected included: gender, age and current course registered in.

A Dictogloss text is email (Appendix B) in format and presented in spoken form or orally to the participants. It represents a scenario of a holiday or trip in which different activities were carried out on a specific day. Throughout the description learners are exposed to different narrative tenses including a) simple past, b) past continuous, c) past perfect simple and d) past perfect continuous, as well as a lexical set relating to camping and holidays.

The text was accompanied by a worksheet (Appendix C). The Dictogloss reconstruction worksheet consists of an introduction to the genre, the email, and then presents blank spaces in which learners reconstruct the text. And a a full lesson plan (Appendix D) details the stages, aims, procedures and instructions as well as resources, interaction patterns and timings for the stages of the lesson.

3.4 Procedure

1. *Instrument revision*

To guarantee the validity of the Dictogloss text and reconstruction worksheet (Appendix B and C) expert judges were chosen in the area of English Language Teaching. Experts consisted of two colleagues that are Cambridge DELTA qualified teachers and teacher trainers, one of which is a published author for Cambridge University Press and the other a frequent user of the Dictogloss in their own lessons. They were presented with the Dictogloss text as well as the reconstruction worksheet to evaluate and revise the writing, presentation, coherence and language samples of the narrative tenses and lexical set.

2. *Sample collection*

From the registered list of students of the C1.1 course open for the term running from January 2021 to March 2021 those who were 18 years of age or older were contacted and invited to participate in the investigation.

They were told the objective of the investigation and were asked for their collaboration completing the Dictogloss activity and for this to be recorded during the Zoom session, clarifying that the data collected, and content recorded would be confidential and their participation voluntary.

3. *Application of the Dictogloss and data collection*

As stated in the literature review, most authors agree that a dictogloss can vary from class to class, for the purpose of this investigation and in line with Wajnryb's (1990) design, learners carried out all 4 stages. The warm-up aims to engage students with the topic and aiming to activate schemata for the listening. At this stage of the lesson participants were asked to discuss the holidays they enjoy and more specifically what they did on their last holiday. The following stage was the dictation in which students listened to the text and took notes on key words and phrases. For the purpose of this project the learners were read an email that included a range of narrative tenses (Appendix B). They first listened for gist and then specific information, taking notes of content words. The reconstruction stage had students collaborate in pairs or small groups to reconstruct the original text from their shared resources. Participants compared their notes with each other and recreated the original email. And at the analysis and correction, students analyzed and compared their text to the original text. (Jacobs, 2003; Vasiljevic, 2010) during this time learners were presented with the original text to contrast with their own. They were later given an opportunity to edit their own. And finally, they were presented with the original text once more and encouraged to reflect particularly on the grammar they used both in range and accuracy of the narrative tenses. A more detailed procedure has been included in Appendix D.

The lesson was carried out via the Zoom platform and when working collaboratively in smaller groups the participants were placed in Breakout Rooms. The zoom session was recorded onto the computer for later analysis and interpretation of the data collected.

4. *Analysis and interpretation of results*

The content recorded during the reconstruction and editing stages was transcribed and analyzed from the setting of the investigation description and in a qualitative manner. Qualitative research is an interpretative and subjective exercise, and the researcher is intimately involved in the process (Pope and Mays 2006) interpreted and finally conclusions, recommendations and limitations were drawn and reported.

3.5 Ethical Considerations

To carry out the investigation, it was necessary to consider some ethical problems that could affect investigation with human subjects, in this case the students or learners' participation. All students or learners in the study were respected, ensuring the dignity and well fair during their participation in the investigation, as well as ensuring their privacy and confidentiality of the information collected. This was done through the principles of informed consent in the participation of the study and through the coding of their names for privacy of information and proper handling of recorded material (Appendix E). And the analysis of the data collected was aimed to be carried out through the proper methodological procedures previously described to guarantee objectivity in the analysis of the results and interpretation of these.

IV. Analysis

This chapter presents the findings of the research project, starting with an overall view of the group, who the learners are and how they worked during the lesson and then a detailed account of the grammaring process, emerging from learners' metatalk and dictogloss written reconstruction.

4.1 Sociodemographic Scale and Classroom Set Up

The group consisted of six students, five females and one male and their ages ranged between 23 and 42 years old. The group forms part of EF's C1.1 class, which ran from January 2021 until March 2021 at 7:00 am.

The group of six participants were divided into two subgroups, referred to in Appendix E and F as Group 1 (G1) and Group 2 (G2). Each group was conformed by three participants referred to S1, S2 and S3 in Group 1 and S4, S5 and S6 in Group 2 to preserve confidentiality.

4.2 Metatalk and Grammaring Process

4.2.1 First draft

Looking closely at the transcription of learners' spoken discourse (Appendix E) it becomes evident that learners reflected very little regarding the grammatical tense to use. Both groups used simple past almost as a default tense, without discussion or need for agreement. The following examples show the use of simple past and Appendix E shows that prior or subsequent to the use there was no negation of the tense:

G1.S3: … I wanted to share with you about my last holiday…

G1 S2: …I went camping… It had a river…

G1 S3: …something like, like, like, all day I was around the /park?

G1 S1: something like, like a fire, I put a camping tent and I, I prepared the fire, probably.

G2 S4: …when the momma bear appeared.

G2 S6: I got in, I got into my car.

G2 S5: I heard quickly.

G2 S6: …I got into my car quickly.

G2 S4: /Yes. I thought how lucky /was I,

In this regard, and in line with Swift's (n.d.) understanding of teacher's use of the dictogloss when containing language items that were of interest to the teacher, this group of learners avoided the use of narrative tenses but managed to express the content and meaning accurately but paraphrased in a simpler manner. In line with Storch's (1999) study, learners may have prioritized accuracy over linguistic complexity.

Another aspect that was treated indirectly or not explicitly by the students relates to the genre features of the text. The text to be reconstructed was a letter or email and while learners did manage, during their first draft, to write according to the genre fairly well (Appendix G), they did not talk about this overtly. In this sense, G1 mentioned the salutation or greeting S1: Hi Paul, Hi Paul! and G2 discussed how to close it:

G2 S5: With love\, Ana. With love, Ana?

G2 S4: Ok.

G2 S6: Or just /love…(3) I don't know.

G2 S4: I listen holidays in the final.

G2 S6: Nice holidays? Or … with love?

G2 S5: Love, Ana

Swain's (2001) understanding of metatalk establishes that it can present metalinguistic terminology or avoid it. In this regard, while learners did not overtly express genre features, they did show awareness of it. Particularly, G2 both *noticed* – recognized a linguistic problem – as well as went through a hypothesis formation process – attempting the language form compatible both to the original text and the genre.

On the other hand, learners seemed more attentive to proper formation of collocations and lexical chunks, prioritizing particularly lexical accuracy. At some points these referred to preposition + nouns and verb + prepositions, verb + nouns and article + noun.

Preposition discussion examples include:

G1 S1: I'm, I'm, I'm behind that river.. I think.. but I'm not sure.

G1 S3: Well, I have the same.. but.. by the river.

G1 S1: /Yes! And at night I stopped near to a river… near a river.. behind a river?

G1 S3: /Behind river? by the river or on a river. <@@>

G1 S2: I put a camping tent and /then.. something about fire. I don't know…

G1   S1:   put /up a camping tent

[[[[

G1   S3:   /up, I put /up.

G1 S2: I put /up a camping tent <@@> and now?

G2 S6: I got in, I got into my car.

G2 S5: With love\, Ana. With love, Ana?

G2 S6: Or just /love…(3) I don't know.

G2 S6: Nice holidays? Or … with love?

G2 S5: Love, Ana

In all three examples the groups aim to carry out language agreements to complete the task and as previously mentioned, they are preoccupied with accuracy, aiming to properly choose the preposition to complete the lexical chunk or expression. In the first example, we evidence learners aiming to arrive to a language agreement by hypothesizing on the proper preposition to use, as proposed by Swain (2001), learners took turns out loud saying and shifting from one preposition to another 'behind' 'by' 'near to' and 'on'. In the second example, S1 and S3 emphasize language accuracy by stressing and raising their intonation for S2 to complete the collocation properly and the later acknowledges and

makes the proper correction, complying to the language agreement between the other two learners. And in the third example, one of the learners acknowledges that they don't know the expression – there's a gap in their knowledge – but hypothesizes and attempts two combinations until S5 who had originally attempted the expression with a preposition drops the preposition and decides on that as the final expression.

Similarly, below, verb collocation discussion and article discussion examples can be found. These also aimed for language agreements after hypothesizing or experimenting with language expressions. And in the last example of the article metatalk, we can find evidence of one of the learners relying on what Swain (2001) would define as their metalanguage, this was done to argue in favor of the use of an article.

Verb collocation examples included:

G1 S1: something like, like a fire, I put a camping tent and I, I prepared the fire, probably.

G1 S3: I put the camping tent and made a bonfire. Could be.

G1 S3: she, she.. /made a bonfire.

G1 S2: made a /fire?

G1 S1:   yes, made, made

G1 S1: And drank a cup of, of chocolate.

G1 S3: I /prepared a cup of chocolate.

Article discussion examples include:

G1 S3: No, I was in Yellowstone National Park.. last weekend..

G1   S3:   no /'the' before last.

[[[[

G1   S1:   Last weekend. For me, it's only last weekend.

G1 S2: Bear, bear, very good.

G1 S3: With 'a' because it's one bear.

They also preoccupied themselves, to some extent, with proper spelling, capitalization and to some extent, punctuation, as evidenced in the following language samples:

G1 S1: Wait! Wait! The name of the park, in the start she saysss, Yellow Stone National Park. Stone, stone with 'n'
G1 S1: And Yellow with capital letter. The, the Stone with capital letter too.

G1 S3: b-o-n-f-i-r-e

G2 S5: Momma bear, yes. Double m.

G1 S3: …It's possible to put a comma after last /holiday?

G1 S2: Ok, how about what about your vacation, did, did /you go?
G1 S3: Or two questions, what about you? And did you go on vacation?

Finally, the two moments in which the use of metalanguage or metalinguistic terminology was evidenced and in which they referred to a grammatical structure explicitly was in reference to the formation of the rhetorical question in the text and in the previously exposed example of the use of the article 'a'. Learners' metatalk regarding the rhetorical question was also accompanied with L1, or first language, interference:

G2 S4: /Yes. I thought how lucky /was I, not I was
G2 S5: Yes, because of /'how', it's a, a question, a <L1 L2> retórica question
G2 S6: Ok, how lucky was I.

Just as with the genre analysis, at different points of learners' conversation that focused on reconstruction of the content and form of the dictogloss, learners *noticed* gaps in their knowledge - G1 S3: …It's possible to put a comma after last /holiday? - *hypothesized and tested* structures - G1 S1: something like, like a fire, I put a camping tent and I, I prepared the fire, probably. - and as seen in the previous paragraph used *metatalk* to reflect on language use.

4.2.2 Editing draft

After having revised the model presented by the teacher and gone into the editing phase both group's manner at this stage, while revising the recording, did shift to more focused and despite still having a positive attitude, learners did seem tired or drained at different points. Group 2 explicitly stated the following:

S6: I can't think anymore.
S4: I'm tired too <@@>
S5: Just the last sentences <@@>, come on, we can!

Despite spending less time at this stage, seven minutes versus the 15 minutes on the first draft, the previous could relate to learners prioritizing language range and accuracy of language and the cognitive demand this had on them. Students more explicitly externalized their knowledge and reflected on it, allowing them both to revise and apply it, as suggested as an advantage to by Swain (2001) to the consequence of activities set up in this manner. This was demonstrated also in their use of more metalanguage or metalinguistic terminology when referring to different grammatical features, particularly grammar tenses. At this stage they also showed more explicit use of Swain's (2001) *metatalk.* Examples of their own language analysis included:

G1 S2: I think we need to focus on past.
G1 S1: We only used simple past, /no?

G2 S6: <@@> .. And the language of the content, the content is very good, though.
G2 S5: I think that we used synonyms with the verbs, for example, brought that, but, but it was put up… But I think that is similar. Same with, turned on a a fire and I think that is, it's similar to made a fire.

G2 S5: What did you.. what did you notice about the tenses?
G2 S6: In the listening, the tenses I read perfect, what is it? Past perfect tenses.
G2   S5:   Only we used simple past tense.
G2 S6: Why do you think S5?

G2 S5: Because it was an action in the past. And simple past is always, always correct. So, it's the easiest, but it's also always correct.

G2 S4: So it's correct but no variety.

G2 S5: Is, is correct if I say, I was in the car all day but let's change for had, had driving, been driving all day, continuous and before I stopped.

Students negotiated the use of narrative tenses explicitly, as seen in G2's previous example referring to past perfect in contrast with simple past. G1 and G2 also discussed the use of past continuous referring to an action that gets interrupted (G1) or as part of background information (G2):

G1 S3: Can I change drank for past continuous?

G1 S2: So, I write I am drinking a cup of chocolate.

G1 S1: No, we have to, should change /and

G1 S3: <L2 L1> ¿por qué? No entiendo <L1 L2> I mean, why? <@@>

G1   S1:   because it's interruption

[[[[

G1   S3:   oh oh oh

G1 S3: yes, I see the bear and I stop drinking.

G1 S2: Ok so… I was drking a cup of--hot-chocolate

G1   S1:   When I saw a baby bear

[[[[

G1   S3:   when I saw baby bear

G2 S6: yes, had appeared. And then all night the bears were trying, not tried to open.

G2 S5: Continuous, past continuous, correct?

G2 S4: Yes, the bears /were /trying to blah blah all night.

Learners' awareness of more complex language yet lack of use or avoidance of it in the initial draft, is in line with previously mentioned Storch's (1999) suggestion that accuracy can be prioritized over linguistic complexity in collaborative compositions. Richards's (2008) analysis of upper-intermediate/advanced level learners language

proficiency also suggests learners may attempt to complete tasks more accurately while sacrificing language range and complexity.

During the editing phase they also better addressed punctuation and referred to more genre features as well, in contrast to the general content of the first draft. Richards (2008) highlights that language learning does not follow a smooth progression, at times learners' progress is marked and noticeable but at intermediate and upper-intermedia levels progress is not as marked. At these levels he highlights that there may be a plateau effect and that any of the following five problems can occur:

1. There is a gap between receptive and productive competence, their ability to understand language and to produce language

2. There are persistent fossilized language errors, which are mistakes that are carried on from previous learning and incorrect repetition; these then become harder to produce correctly even when knowing the correct form or rule

3. Fluency may have progressed at the expense of complexity, a lack of lexical and grammatical complexity yet a high fluency

4. A limited vocabulary range

5. Language production may be adequate but often lacks characteristics of natural speech

In this group of learners, the use of the Dictogloss seemed to bring points one and three into evidence. During the first draft learners wrote accurately and effectively managed to convey the overall message but with limited range. However, during the editing phase and after revising the model learners recalled previous knowledge and use of different grammar forms, particularly narrative tenses, as they not only used but also discussed the proper use of these.

Furthermore, DeKeyser's (1997) research into second language acquisition shows that providing learners, specifically adults, with explicit knowledge along with sufficient and ample opportunities to practice the grammatical functions is key to achieve native-like

proficiency. In this sense, learners may not have sacrificed complexity but rather not had had enough practice and the explicit learning process to carry out what DeKeyser (1997) refers to as an automatization.

The specificity of the practice effect is explained by DeKeyser (2007) through the distinction between declarative and procedural knowledge. He establishes that in most forms of skill acquisition, people are first presented with information or "declarative knowledge" and through initial practice they incorporate this information into behavioral routines, "production rules" or "procedural knowledge". This later knowledge consists of highly specific rules which in the case of second language learners they would use in a manner that is not only fast but with low error rate and once established, procedural knowledge can become automatized. This could also account for learners' overuse of simple past in their initial draft over other narrative tenses. Hence, the editing phase allowed for practice of the later, after "declarative knowledge" was presented to them when contrasting their reconstructed text to the original Dictogloss.

During the editing phase learners also discussed punctuation and clause formation:
G2 S4: yes, I deleted the point, should I use comma?
G2 S5: No, no, no, one sentence.
G2 S6: and the preposition I see, I read /by the river

G2 S5: point after happened. Ok.

G2 S5: Just the last sentences <@@>, come on, we can! I can not wait to know your stories. I'm going to change to I can't wait to know stories about your vacation.
G2 S4: And there was like a question, one before this idea. I think 'and you?' Do you remember?
G2 S5: Yes, like what about you?

And while these were the only samples that was recorded -G2, it is evident through the final product (Appendix H) that learners did analyze both genre and their punctuation, this is analyzed more closely in the section of *writing and grammaring process.*

Finally, some changes were made to collocations and lexical chunks. However, these were less frequently discussed yet more evidenced in their writing. Some language discussions included:

G2 S6: And we wrote love, with love. The original said love.

G2   S4:   Yes, we were near..

[[[[

G2   S5:   I said it like 3 times <frustrated>

G2S6: and the preposition I see, I read /by the river

G1 S1: But she doesn't, doesn't see the mom bear

G1 S3: momma bear, yes, she didn't see it, she imagined.

4.3 Writing and Grammaring Process

4.3.1 First draft

Both groups' first written draft (Appendix G), and as discussed previously in the analysis of their metatalk, used simple past as their initial grammar tense. In this sense the notes they had taken of the activities carried out in the letter, were stung together with verbs in past simple tense e.g.

G1: I *was* on a, I *went* camping, I *stopped* neat to the river, I *drank* a cup of chocolate…

G2: I *wanted* to let you know, I *was* in the car, I *stopped* in a small campsite…

Except for G2, who also included one past continuous form – *I was drinking a cup of hot chocolate…*

In line with the analysis of learners' metatalk, students prioritized the content or activities mentioned in the dictation stage, over grammatical complexity of tenses of their writing. For example, both groups included *being in Yellow Stone National Park, stopping by a river, putting up the tent, making a fire, having hot chocolate, seeing a bear, and going back into the car.*

There also seemed to be less regard to punctuation and genre features on their first drafts, despite having discussed it more during their first draft and in contrast with the spoken discourse at the analysis stage. This is significantly more evident in G1's writing

in which there is no paragraphing and no clear sense of it being a letter or email and presenting a run-on sentence - *I put up a camping tent very close by the river and made a bonfire, at this moment I drank a cup of chocolate and I saw a baby bear and its mom.* As for G2, despite having a clear salutation and goodbye – *Hi Paul!* and *With love, Ana* – in line with a letter or email, they also presented the content of the letter in just one paragraph, lacking more organizational features.

4.3.1 Edited draft

After having revised the model presented by the teacher and gone into the editing phase (Appendix H) learners seemed to have prioritized language range and accuracy of language with some editing of punctuation and genre as well.

Concerning language range, more specifically that of grammar, as evidenced in the group's metatalk analysis an effort was made during the editing phase to include more range of narrative tenses. G1 went from only simple past in their original draft to include two past perfect forms - *I had decided to go camping so…* and *…I had slept there all night* - and two past continuous clauses - *I was walking around the Park…* and *I was drinking a cup of hot chocolate when…* As for G2, they included a past perfect continuous form - *I had been driving all day…* -, included past perfect - *I was safe by the time the momma bear had appeared.* - and kept their original past continuous form - *While I was drinking a cup of hot chocolate…*

It is important to highlight that particularly G1 used narrative tenses in a flexible and creative way, different from the original text. They included the past perfect with *I had decided to go camping so…* in contrast with the original text *You know I went to Yellowstone National Park last weekend…* increasing the level of complexity. And used *I was walking around the Park…* when the original text used, *I'd been driving all day in the park…,* in this regard simplifying the text.

In both groups we see evidence of learners' understanding of these more complex grammar forms, yet it is only when they are prompted to use these that they do so, whether imitating, like G2, or flexibly like G1.

Regarding accuracy, there was improvement of learners' use of prepositions e.g., G1's original text included *I was on a Yellow Stone National Park* in contrast with the edited version *I drove to Yellow Stone National Park.* They also showed evidence of more lexical

accuracy, with more appropriate colocations present the second time around e.g. G2's original text included *turned on a fire, baby bear* and *with love, whereas* the edited version was modified to *made a fire, bear cub* and *love,*.

Improvement of genre features included clear salutations in both groups, clear and accurate goodbye/closing of the letter and improvements in paragraphing. G1 adapted their structure to a clear purpose for writing in the first paragraph, details about the trip in the second and an invitation to write back in the third. G2 divided theirs in three as well, the first with details about the trip, the second with the outcome and the last an invite to write back.

As for punctuation, more awareness was evidenced in less run on sentences ideas despite having discussed these features less in the analysis of learners' discourse. For example, G1: *I put up a camping tent very close by the river and made a bonfire, at this moment I drank a cup of chocolate and I saw a baby bear and its mom* was modified to:

> *I put up a camping tent very close by the river and made a bonfire. I was drinking a cup of hot chocolate when I saw a baby bear come from the trees and I imagined it's momma*

And G2 modified:

> *I was drinking a cup of hot chocolate and at this time, I saw an adorable baby bear in the trees when the huge momma bear appeared. I put my food away and I got into my car quickly. The bears tried to open a rubbish bin all night. I thought how lucky was I. Nothing more happened I can not wait to know your stories*

To:

> *While I was drinking a cup of hot chocolate, an adorable bear cub came out of the trees. I thought about the huge momma bear and I put my food away fast and I got into my car quickly.*
> *I was safe by the time the momma bear had appeared. The bears were trying to open the rubbish bin all night. I thought how lucky was I. Nothing else happened.*

V. Conclusion

In accordance with Swain's (2001) publication, the dictogloss was a useful tool to promote metatalk in this investigation's group of learners. It allowed them to discuss and come to a range of language agreements, shed light on their grammaring process and showed evidence of their awareness of gaps in their knowledge.

Regarding their language agreements, in the reconstruction of the original text read to them, we found evidence in the first draft of a particular focus on lexical compromises and discussion of these which related to word choice and use of collocations, even spelling. On the other hand, when moving to editing that first draft and after having revised the original, grammar tense agreements became more evident, with the groups aiming to include more complexity and shifting from simple past to past continuous, and past perfect simple and continuous.

Their grammaring process was witnessed as they moved from their notes, isolated words, to threaded ideas formed into sentences, then paragraphs and ultimately the letter/email. In this process learners first defaulted to simple past and preoccupied themselves with collocations and use of prepositions and articles, while in the editing phase and after revising the original their attention was drawn more to their language range, particularly their grammatical tenses, as mentioned previously.

And as for learners' awareness of gaps in their knowledge, learners hypothesized and tested structures, and asked questions to each other. These related to punctuation, noun collocations, and grammatical tenses particularly when editing their first draft.

Both groups, as they were divided, initially focused on the lexical items, collocations and chunks. This goes in hand with the fact that learners are encouraged to take notes (Wajnyr, 1990) and to focus on what was previously defined as content words (Thornbury, 2001 and 2002, Richards and Schmidt, 2010). This is expected, as stated by Wajnyr (1990) "in the reconstruction stage learners pool their fragments… They are merely bits or fragments of language... Groups should aim to maintain the informational content of the original" (pp. 10).

Richards and Rodgers (2001) state that based on the lexical approach, the building blocks of language and communication are not grammar, functions or anything other than lexis, understanding this as words and word combinations. Pawly and Syder (1983, as cited in Richards and Rodgers, 2001) state that only a minority of spoken sentences are completely novel creations and that multiword units which function as "chunks" form a high proportion of everyday speech. Participants in the study attempted to convey most of the key activities and ideas from the original text. However, as they realized in the editing stage, they did so accurately but in a simplified manner through the use of simple past over other narrative tenses.

Lewis (2000) has a series of assumptions about learning theory in the lexical approach, including that encountering new learning items on several occasions is paramount for learning to occur. And in this sense, despite grammatical tenses not being a lexical chunk, taking narrative tenses used in the dictogloss into consideration, learners are significantly more exposed to examples of past simple – both during their learning process, it is taught first, as well as their daily lives – than they are to the other forms. This along with our understanding of grammaring as the way students know the rules but do not necessarily apply them to what they're communicating (Larsen-Freeman, 2014) past perfect simple, and past perfect continuous chunks could be less accessible to students than the samples of simple past and or even past continuous.

DeKeyser (1997, 2007) would also argue about the effect of not only input and exposure but the lack of grammar practice in the group of learners. Students having achieved procedural knowledge and the automatization of simple past but only declarative knowledge of narrative tenses due to the lack of practice.

During the editing stage and after the revision of the original though learners' awareness increased, not only of narrative tenses but as evidenced in the analysis of both their speech and final drafts, their punctuation and genre features as well. This is not only in line with increased exposure but also with the expected results of the dictogloss as well as the stages of process writing and steps three through six defined by White and Arndt (1992). This editing phase shows what Swain (2001) concludes, in regards to the target language:

      a)   students noticed gaps in their knowledge

b) the group externalized their knowledge, reflecting, revising and applying it

c) their output allowed them to increase their use and knowledge of the target language

and other aspects of their language use showed unintended consequences based on the learners' own needs and goals – genre features, lexis, punctuation, and so on.

These observations and as discussed in the analysis are very much in line with Richards's (2008) understanding of students reaching the plateau stage of their learning. As stated by Skehan (1998, as cited in Richards, 2008) it is ideal for fluency, accuracy, and complexity to develop hand in hand, yet this is rarely the case. Particularly in the case of incorporating a range of language, Van Patten (1993) refers to the restructuring process and that this goes beyond the accumulation of discrete bits of data. New data can cause accommodation of previous knowledge or if it does not fit at all can make it more challenging to make it into long-term storage. Richards (2008) also states that learners may overuse the known forms until a restructuring of the system occurs. And "for the learner's linguistic system to take on new and more complex linguistic items, the restructuring or reorganization of mental representations is required, as well as opportunities to practice these new forms" (Richards, 2008, p. 8-9). The dictogloss and participants metatalk enabled to evidence, to some extent, this distinction.

Like every study there are important limitations to be considered to this one. The first refers to the recording, the sample of both groups' language use was limited by the fact that Zoom only records learners in Breakout Rooms so long as the teacher is in that room. Therefore, assumptions can only be made about the samples collected. However, participants might have used more range of language and even metalanguage than what was recorded at either stage of the reconstruction.

As for the group, there were two variables that were not analyzed in hand with learners' metatalk that could have influenced or determined more specific aspects of the groups grammaring and metatalk. These variables refer to age and gender. There was a range of age difference with one learner being particularly younger from the rest of the group, a 23-year-old while the others ranged from 30 to 42 years old. And one of the members of the class was male, while the other five were female. These variables were not

considered at the time as the group had been studying together for over a year, both online as well as face to face.

Another limitation refers to the instrument's text. A dictogloss text aims to cover specific aspects of language – grammar, lexis or functional – coherence and cohesion or even genre. The text specifically used for this investigation is an edited version I have used in the past with upper-intermediate levels to draw attention to narrative tenses. As a result, it is aimed to raise their awareness of this language point in particular, as well as the genre features of a letter/email. However, it is limited in its authenticity as a text and how learners might respond or structure a more authentic text.

Finally, whenever learners are being recorded and know they are more carefully being observed this can cause changes in their behavior. Consequently, participants may have been more cautious as to being accurate and reduced linguistic risk taking, avoiding complexity.

In line with the previous limitations, recommendations can be made for future investigations, including but not limited to:

- A closer analysis to variables such as age and gender can be incorporated in future investigations to broaden the scope as to whether these variables correlate to specific metatalk.
- Having a or various teacher assistants that can record the different breakout rooms, if using Zoom, in order to collect a larger or the complete language discourse throughout the task.
- Using authentic materials for a Dictogloss text, e.g. real email/letter, reviews published in newspapers, etc.

As for the classroom, this group of learners can benefit from teachers addressing the issue of them having reached the plateau. Both learners and teachers being better aware of the level reached and their limitations can help the establishment of an action plan that can better support the group's needs.

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Appendix A

Sociodemographic Scale

Sociodemographic Scale

The information provided below is used to better understand the underlying characteristics of the group in which you are taking part. This data can provide insights when analyzing the recording.

Gender: _____

Age: _____

Course registered in: _____

Appendix B

**Dictogloss Text –
Email with Narrative Tenses**

Hi Paul,

I wanted to let you know the most exciting thing about my trip to Wyoming so far. You know I went to Yellowstone National Park last weekend, right?

So, I'd been driving all day in the park and in the evening stopped in a small campsite by a river. I put up my tent, lit a fire and cooked supper. You'll never guess what happened next! I was sitting by the fire drinking a cup of hot chocolate when an adorable bear cub came out from the trees. I quickly realized that the small bear's mother was going to be a huge bear. By the time I put all my food away and got into the car, the momma bear had appeared. All night I heard the bears trying to open the rubbish bins but thankfully nothing else happened. How lucky was I?!

What about you? How have your holidays in the south of Spain been? Can't wait to exchange more stories once we're back home.

Love,
Ana

<u>Appendix C</u>

**Dictogloss Reconstruction
Worksheet**

Hi Paul,

Appendix D

Dictogloss Lesson Plan

Stage	Aim(s)	Procedure	Resources	Focus / Interaction	Time

Lead in
 	
(5 min.)
	1. To engage students (Ss),
	2. To activate schemata
	3. To set the context of the lesson and raise their awareness of vocabulary and past
		Teacher (T) puts 2 questions up on the board for Ss to discuss in partners
		   1. What do you enjoy doing while on holidays?
		   2. What did you do on your last holiday?
			Board and questions	S-S	17:30-17:33
					
					(3 min.)

		T checks answers in open class		Ss-T-Ss	17:33-17:35 (2 min.)
Listening (10 min.)	1. To expose Ss to the original text 2. To practice listening skills 3. To practice note taking skills	**For gist:** T tells Ss they will listen to her talking about an event that occurred on her last holiday and they must only try to understand because they will have to re-write the text 1. What was surprising about my trip? **ICQ:** **Do you need to understand every word or the general idea?**	Dictogloss original text (Appendix B) Ss chat box or scrap paper	S	17:35-17:38 (3 min.)
		For specific information: T tells Ss they will listen again but this time they must take notes **ICQ:** **Do you need to write individual key words or full sentences?** Teacher puts a sample sentence, not from the text, on the boards and asks: We were watching a scary movie when suddenly the lights went off. **What words are the most important?** **Do these words have stress in a listening or not?**		S	17:38-17:41 (3 min.)
		Ss compare their notes in groups		Ss-T-Ss	17:41-17:45 (4 min.)

Stage	Aim(s)	Procedure	Resources	Focus / Interaction	Time
Text Reconstruction (10 min.)	1. To practice writing skills 2. To develop learner autonomy by having them use their strengths to reconstruct the text	T tells Ss they will work together and re-write the text they heard based on their notes and they must try to write it as similar as they can to the original **ICQ:** **Does only one person have to write?** **Do you have to take turns writing?** **Can you use your notes?**	Personal notes Reconstruction worksheet (Appendix C)	Ss	17:45-17:55 (15 min.)
Analysis: (15 min.)	To raise Ss awareness of their strengths and weaknesses with the language and determine emerging language needs	T tells Ss to look at the original text and compare it to their own	Other Ss' writing Dictogloss original text (Appendix B)	Ss	17:55- 18:00 (5 min.)
		Ss discuss with their groups their strengths and weaknesses compared to the original text language and analyze the language they used		Ss	18:00- 18:05 (5 min.)
		Ss get the original text removed and edit their own based on the language they identified in the original. **ICQ**: **Do you take note of things you didn't include?** **Can you revise your own writing?**		Ss	18:05- 18:10 (10 min.)
Emerging language clarification: (10 min.)	To clarify and consolidate the emerging language	T draws Ss attention to their common mistakes with the text and elicits the points they discussed, clarifying the emerging language needs	Board work	T-Ss	18:10- 18:20 (10 min.)

Stage	Aim(s)	Procedure	Resources	Focus / Interaction	Time
Closing and feedback (5 min.)	To get Ss feedback on the teaching task	T gets Ss reflection about the activity and emphasizes there are no correct or incorrect answers	Board work and Ss chat box	S	18:20-18:25 (5 min.)

<u>Appendix E</u>

Transcription Reconstruction

Transcription Reconstruction

Group 1 (G1)

S1: Hi Paul, Hi Paul!

S2: Ok

S3: But in this case …(3) We have to reconstruct the listening..

```
   S2:      yeah
[[           [[
   S3:       with keywords
```

S3: and that we have and =then.. for example.. I in the beginning of the listening, I listened to Ana say, Hello Paul.. I'm starting to.. I'm starting to…. I wanted to share with you about my last holiday.. It's not exactly that but it something

```
   S3:       like that
[[           [[
   S1:       Perfect *S3*
```

S2: Ok, I wanted to share with you, what is it?

S1: Continue

S2: \No, what is next? <@@>

```
   S1:      /Oh! <@@> I was in a small campsite.
[[           [[
   S3:       about my holiday.
```

S2: Ok, about my holiday.. I went camping… It had a river, a river, but I don't know before river what comes /there?

S1: I'm, I'm, I'm behind that river.. I think.. but I'm not sure.

S3: Well, I have the same.. but.. by the river.

S2: Nooo.. What comes /before the river part?

S3: /Oh! <@@> Ok… something like, like, like, all day I was around the /park?

S1: /Yes! And at night I stopped near to a river… near a river.. behind a river?

S3: /Behind river? by the river or on a river. <@@>

S2: Ok, near to the river. In this next part, I only wrote the keywords, tent, fire, chocolate.

S3: That is after, because he, he stopped in this part and then he a bonfire.

S1: Wait! Wait! The name of the park, in the start she saysss, Yellow Stone National Park. Stone, stone with 'n'

S2: Sorry, a Yellow Stone with /'n', yes, National Park. Park. the last weekend.

S3: No, I was in Yellowstone National Park.. last weekend..
```
   S3:    no /'the' before last.
[[         [[
   S1:    Last weekend. For me, it's only last weekend.
```

S2: Ok. Ok\

S1: Another idea.

S3: Let me, let me check…(4) It's possible to put a comma after last /holiday?

S1: And Yellow with capital letter. The, the Stone with capital letter too.

S2: And Park, /yes?

Group 2 (G2)

S4: Of the trees.

S5: Yes.

S4: I understand that, that she was afraid, afraid of that.. the mom bear, he might appear.

S6: I have that then she saw a huge bear that was.. something like that, but I don't understand what to put next.

S4: Ok, so, let me write, when the, when the mom bear

S5: Momma bear

S6: Momma?

S5: Momma bear, yes. Double m.

```
    S5:    I heard momma, not mom,
[[         [[
    S6:    You're right, momma
```

S4: Ok. When the, when the momma bear appeared. A..ppea..rd… When the huge, let me write, when the huge momma bear, huge momma bear appeared.

S6: I got in, I got into my car.

S4: Yes, I understand this part.

G1

S3: Let me check camping.. Let me make sure…

```
    S3:    Camping tent.
[[         [[
    S1:    Yes, camping tent.
```

S2: I put a camping tent and /then.. something about fire. I don't know…

```
    S1:    put /up a camping tent
[[         [[
    S3:    /up, I put /up.
S2: I put /up a camping tent <@@> and now?
```

S1: something like, like a fire, I put a camping tent and I, I prepared the fire, probably.

S3: I put the camping tent and made a bonfire. Could be.

S1: And drank a cup of, of chocolate.

S3: I /prepared a cup of chocolate.

S2: By the river.

```
    S1:    yes!
[[         [[
    S3:    Good.
```

S2: I put up a camping tent by the river… very close.. by the river.

S1: and put the fire.

S3: (mmmm)

S1: I don't know, if the correct word.. is put, but the idea is that she did a fire.
I don't know if it's similar…

S3: she, she.. made a bonfire.

S2: made a /fire?

S1:   yes, made, made
[[[[
  S3:   /bon..fire

S3: b-o-n-f-i-r-e

G2

  S4:   How can I
[[[[
  S6:   /Back home,

S6: I,. I forgot the last part.

  S4:   I don't. I didn't write.
[[[[
  S6:   I understood Ana.

S5: With love\, Ana. With love, Ana?

S4: Ok.

S6: Or just /love…(3) I don't know.

S4: I listen holidays in the final.

S6: Nice holidays? Or … with love?

S5: Love, Ana

S6: Ok. That's Ok.

T: Good job working together. Double check now. Alright? Double check everything that you have written. You have 3 minutes. Ok?

  S5:   Ok
[[[[
  S6:   Ok

G1

S3: Let me check. Let me make sure.

S1: She saw the bear…

T: Ok guys, start finishing the story. You have 3 minutes.

S2: Ok, thank you teacher.

S1: She saw a baby, a baby bear.

S2:   Not bird.

  S1:   No bird, bird is <L2 L1> 'pájaro'.
[[[[
  S3:   Wait S2, wait.

S2: Bear, bear, very good.

S3: With 'a' because it's one bear.

S2: It's Ok.

G2

S5: Quickly.

S4: You listen, or not?

S5: I heard quickly.

S6: Very good S5.. yes.. I got into my car quickly. Anything else?

S4: /Yes. I thought how lucky /was I, not I was

S5: Yes, because of /'how', it's a, a question, a <L1 L2> retórica question

S6: Ok, how lucky was I.

S5: And I think it is only love.

G1

S1: And she asks about Paul's holiday, no?

   S2:   Yes, yes, what about your vacation?
[[[[
   S3:   Correct. Did you go on vacation too?

S2: Ok, how about what about your vacation, did, did /you go?

S3: Or two questions, what about you? And did you go on vacation?

S2: Ok, one minute… you? Did.. you.. have.. a... vacation..

S1: Did you /go on vacation?

S3: too?

S2: What?

   S1:   Did you go on vacation too?
[[[[
   S3:   Did you go on vacation too?

S2: <@@> got it.

Appendix F

Transcription Editing

Transcription Editing

G1

S3: Yes, I think our text is, like too simple.

S2: I think we need to focus on past.

S1: We only used simple past, /no?

```
   S3:    Exactly.
[[        [[
   S2:    Yes.
```

G2

S4:… Holiday

S6: And we wrote love, with love. The original said love.

```
   S4:    Yes, we were near..
[[        [[
   S5:    I said it like 3 times <frustrated>
```

S6: <@@> .. And the language of the content, the content is very good, though.

S5: I think that we used synonyms with the verbs, for example, brought that, but, but it was put up… But I think that is similar. Same with, turned on a a fire and I think that is, it's similar to made a fire.

S4: The structure is Ok.. The content of this part, I think that the keywords that we listened is very good, good because the content…

S5: What did you.. what did you notice about the tenses?

S6: In the listening, the tenses I read perfect, what is it? Past perfect tenses.

```
   S4:    Ok, but where?
[[         [[
   S5:    Only we used simple past tense.
```

S6: Why do you think S5?

S5: Because it was an action in the past. And simple past is always, always correct. So, it's the easiest, but it's also always correct.

S4: So it's correct but no variety.

S5: Is, is correct if I say, I was in the car all day but let's change for had, had driving, been driving all day, continuous and before I stopped.

S4: Ok, so I -had-been-dri-ving-all-day

```
   S5:    change the point
[[        [[
   S4:    then I stopped in a small
```

S4: yes, I deleted the point, should I use comma?

S5: No, no, no, one sentence.

S6: and the preposition I see, I read /by the river

G1

S3: Can I change drank for past continuous?

S2: So, I write I am drinking a cup of chocolate.

```
   S1:    no, no, I /was
[[        [[
   S3:    no, in past
```

S3: I /was drinking a cup of /hot chocolate.

S2: oh yes, yes V hot chocolate too-

S1. (eeeemmmm)

S3: Good!

S1: No, we have to, should change /and

S3: <L2 L1> ¿por qué? No entiendo <L1 L2> I mean, why? <@@>

```
   S1:    because it's interruption
[[        [[
   S3:    oh oh oh
```

S3: yes, I see the bear and I stop drinking.

S2: Ok so… I was drking a cup of--hot-chocolate

```
   S1:    When I saw a baby bear
[[        [[
   S3:    when I saw baby bear
```

S2: Ok, ok

S1: But she doesn't, doesn't see the mom bear

S3: momma bear, yes, she didn't see it, she imagined.

G2

S6: yes, had appeared. And then all night the bears were trying, not tried to open.

S5: Continuous, past continuous, correct?

S4: Yes, the bears /were /trying to blah blah all night.

S5: were-trying, ok, anything more to change?

S4: <reads aloud> I was safe by the time the momma bear had appeared... The bears were trying to open the rubbish bin all night... I thought how lucky was. I. Nothing else happened.

S5: point after happened. Ok.

S6: I can't think anymore.

S4: I'm tired too <@@>

S5: Just the last sentences <@@>, come on, we can! I can not wait to know your stories. I'm going to change to I can't wait to know stories about your vacation.

S4: And there was like a question, one before this idea. I think 'and you?' Do you remember?

S5: Yes, like what about you?

S4: yes, sounds ok.

S6: All sounds good to me.

T: Great job guys. Let's go back to the main session.

S4:   Ok teacher.
[[[[
    S6:   Thank you, teacher.

<u>Appendix G</u>

**Dictogloss Reconstruction
Worksheet Completed**

Group 1

Hi Paul, I am excited to share with you, about my last holiday, I was on a Yellow Stone National Park last weekend. I went camping. All day I was around the Park at night I stopped near to the River. I put up a camping tent very close by the river and made a bonfire, at this moment I drank a cup of chocolate and I saw a baby bear and its mom. I quickly went into the car for a long time. I was so lucky person.

Ana

Group 2

Hi Paul!
I wanted to let you know about my trip to Yellowstone National Park last weekend . I was in the car all day. Then I stopped in a small campsite behind a river in the evening. I brought a tent and turned on a fire, cooked a soup... I was drinking a cup of hot chocolate and at this time, I saw an adorable baby bear in the trees when the huge momma bear appeared. I put my food away and I got into my car quickly. The bears tried to open a rubbish bin all night. I thought how lucky was I. Nothing more happened I can not wait to know your stories.
With love,
Ana

<u>Appendix H</u>

Dictogloss Reconstruction
Worksheet Edited

Group 1

Hi Paul,
I am excited to share with you about my last holiday. I had decided to go camping so I drove to Yellow Stone National Park last weekend.
All day I was walking around the Park and at night I stopped near the River.
I put up a camping tent very close by the river and made a bonfire. I was drinking a cup of hot chocolate when I saw a baby bear come from the trees and I imagined it's momma.
I quickly went into the car and I had slept there all night. I was so lucky!
What about you? Did you go on vacation too?

Love,
Ana

Group 2

Hi Paul!
I wanted to let you know about my trip to Yellowstone National Park last weekend. I had been driving all day when I stopped in a small campsite by a river in the evening. I put up a tent and made a fire to cook supper. While I was drinking a cup of hot chocolate, an adorable bear cub came out of the trees. I thought about the huge momma bear and I put my food away fast and I got into my car quickly.
I was safe by the time the momma bear had appeared. The bears were trying to open the rubbish bin all night. I thought how lucky was I. Nothing else happened.
What about you? I can't wait to know stories about your vacation.
Love,
Ana