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ATTEMPTS AT RAISING AWARENESS OF LANGUAGE AND LEARNING THROUGH COLLABORATIVE WRITING IN COLLEGE

Marcelo Concário^{1*}

¹Universidade Estadual Paulista, São Paulo, São Paulo, Brasil

Abstract

This paper is the result of classroom research with Radio/TV Studies undergraduates over a period of 16 weeks (60 hours) to investigate: (1) group cooperation/collaboration in the writing of two texts requiring online interaction; (2) students' comments about the language/strategies they practiced and learned, and the impact on their awareness of language and learning. Assessment of collaboration was based on the work of five groups. Comments about language learning/motivation/challenges were also expressed in a final presentation/portfolio. Interpretive analysis by the teacher-researcher shows that labor sharing is preferred, that learning is perceived to be more systematic because of the records of comments/corrections, and that students prefer to work mostly in class, which can be frustrating for advocates of autonomy in advanced language learning.

Keywords: English for Specific Purposes; Content-based Instruction; Higher Education; Language Awareness; Writing

*Completed his PhD in Applied Linguistics at Unicamp and has been a visiting researcher at Eastern Washington University (USA), and Universität Wien (Austria). He is Assistant Professor at São Paulo State University (UNESP), School of Architecture, Arts and Communication, Bauru, where he teaches English for Specific/Academic Purposes based on principles of Content-Based Instruction and CLIL (Content-and-Language Integrated Learning). He acts as board member in the Association for Language Awareness. His e-mail address is mconcaro@faac.unesp.br. ORCID: <http://orcid.org/0000-0002-7051-7879>.



Introduction

There is very little published material in and about Brazil regarding Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL), Content Based Instruction (CBI) in foreign language education, or Language Awareness (LA). This does not necessarily mean that the number of practitioners is small who, deliberately or unconsciously, do their jobs in ways addressed in and endorsed by the rich literature on CLIL, CBI and LA (Concário, 2003; 2011; 2014; Brinton, Snow & Wesche, 2003).

Specifically in the case of higher education, it has been even more difficult to identify institutions or professionals involved with the teaching of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) in Brazilian undergraduate programs (cf. Finardi & Porcino, 2014; Ramos, 2014; Leão & Finardi, 2016), except those preparing students for degrees in Language Arts, Language Teaching, Translation or Literature. Even in such programs, explicit reference to CBI has only been found in the curriculum of one public university in the state of São Paulo (Donadio, 2007; Concário, 2014).

In countries like the United States (Vines, 1997), Spain (Lasagabaster & Doiz, 2016), Italy (Coonan, 2013; Martino & Sabato, 2012), and Austria (Dalton-Puffer, 2007), a range of studies have been reported that focus on the teaching of foreign languages through CLIL or CBI approaches in higher education. What these studies have in common, despite the range of different scenarios, is the concern for optimizing learning of the target language while maintaining students' high level of motivation.

In this paper, I describe a case study of classroom research in which I was the teacher-researcher. It has been part of a broader investigation conducted between 2014 and 2016, which focused on the refinement of guidelines for (self-)assessing student production in CBI, EFL classes. The broader investigation, in turn, looked at how such guidelines became more useful from the point of view of students as a result of more detailed prompts being provided for evaluating their writing and speaking. For example, instead of "are there too many definite articles?", the prompt changed to "check the text for unnecessary definite articles. Remember, for example: Nature is affected by... Water is more abundant in... Inflation has a strong effect on... Jobs can be more attractive if...".

Just as in inquiries conducted in other scenarios, the interest both in the broader research and in this particular case study lies in analyzing how materials and classroom procedures may impact on learning. Accordingly, the case study has explored collaborative writing and (self-)assessment in an attempt to promote awareness of language and learning with a group of 28 undergraduate students enrolled in a 60-hour EFL course toward a degree in Radio/TV Studies.

The following sections of this paper are dedicated to the theoretical framework, the detailed description of the case, the results, the discussion, and the concluding remarks. Every attempt has been made to preserve the identities of the participants, and all the procedures in the research have been

approved by the local Committee for Research Ethics (Plataforma Brasil CAAE 46633015.0.0000.5663).

Theoretical grounding

This paper deals with language learning and teaching, thus it also relates to Language Awareness (LA): explicit knowledge about language, and conscious perception and sensitivity in language learning, language teaching and language use (www.languageawareness.org).

I have learned throughout the years of classroom practice, research, and discussion with students and colleagues, that knowledge about language can become and/or be made explicit in many ways, and that different levels of explicitness work best for different people on different occasions. Thus, I believe LA has increased my sensitivity to and, in some cases, the conscious perception of how language is used in pedagogical interactions (Concário, 2003; 2016).

James (1999) provides a detailed analysis of the use of the terms awareness and knowledge in LA work and concludes that “if LA has become KAL [knowledge about language], and KAL is linguistics, not only have conservatives won but [...] LA has been academicised beyond all recognition” (1999, p. X). To me, this sounds like a warning against the risk of only valuing what someone *knows about/can do with* language as long as *it* can be made explicit in ways that meet the expectations of specialists.

In the same paper, James argues that LA has to do with “working *on* what one knows”, whereas “working *at* what one does not know” should be regarded as consciousness raising (p. XX, both emphases in the original). Again, my interpretation is that both awareness and consciousness have to do with more opportunities to notice (Robinson, 1995; Schmidt, 1995), and – therefore – LA/consciousness raising concerns a deliberate effort to increase sensitivity to language. By noticing what is (un)known about language, one may (be ready to, need to, decide to) make whatever has been perceived at greater levels of consciousness explicit to oneself or others, to varying extents.

In my recent research, I have also been strongly influenced by an alternative way of conceiving *advancedness* in foreign language education (Byrnes, Weger-Guntharp & Sprang, 2006; Norris, 2006; Schohamy, 2006; Swain, 2006). Admittedly there are things only advanced users can do *with* and *in* the target language; however, *advancedness* can also be used to refer to specialized needs of particular users. For instance, in the case of adults in higher or professional education, their knowledge of specialized content and the fact that they are already proficient in their first language must be considered. They may not qualify as users who already have the competencies and skills to perform well in the target language, but they are probably expected to function in situations that are typically experienced by advanced users of language.

This alternative outlook on *advancedness*, accentuating what users are likely to be faced with, anticipates, to a certain extent, things they are expected to

bring with them, namely a clearer perception of their needs and the required effort to meet those needs. Accordingly, advanced users should show stronger commitment to and responsibility for their choices. In other words, the disposition for autonomous learning should be a determining factor of the rate of progress for advanced users of (foreign) languages.

Based on Benson's work (1996), it can be further explained that learners of languages can exercise autonomy at three different levels. First, with the capacity to learn outside educational contexts and without the intervention of a teacher (technical autonomy). Second, by taking responsibility for their own learning through psychological autonomy, which directly impacts on their investments in the face of opportunities for learning. Finally, there is political autonomy, which involves a critical stance toward the control of the contents and processes that will be more conducive to learning.

In this case study, therefore, the decision to investigate the effects of collaborative writing on awareness of language and learning has been based on the relevance of autonomous learning for advanced users of a foreign language. According to the notion of advancedness outlined above (Byrnes, Weger-Guntharp & Sprang, 2006; Norris, 2006; Schohamy, 2006; Swain, 2006), the participants in this case study can be considered advanced users of language for three reasons, at least. First, they are all very competent users of Brazilian Portuguese (the first language) who are required to communicate in specialized, higher education contexts, and they already have a rich linguistic repertoire. Second, most of them have studied English (the target language) in private language institutes in addition to at least 7 years of instruction in their prior, ordinary education. This means they also have considerable experience of foreign language instruction. Finally, they are all students in an institution where admission criteria are quite demanding (15 candidates per opening), which is indicative of substantial knowledge of and interest in specialized content areas.

Cooperative and collaborative learning have become keywords (Storch, 2013; Swain, 2010; Swain, 2006) whenever there is an interest in drawing attention to features of a target language to help learners notice them. In both collaboration – when learners work together throughout tasks – and cooperation – when learners may share the work, and later combine and review what each participant has done separately –, there can be increased opportunity for interaction, negotiation of meaning, attention to forms and noticing. Thus, the decision to explore collaborative work in this case study means an opportunity for students to become more sensitive to – and, maybe, consciously perceive aspects of – the use of the target language without the exclusive push of the teacher's agenda and expectations. In other words, it has been considered that collaboration among peers may promote more effectively both consciousness raising and language awareness, as discussed by James (1999), at a pace that suits students more adequately. Despite the participation as the teacher-researcher in the online interactions during the writing process, my interventions focused more on

planning and organization at first, and feedback concerning lexicogrammar was intentionally delayed.

The approach to data collection and analysis is qualitative in nature, and the overall objective is to describe events and how they are interpreted by the participants. In this sense, an emic, second-order perspective has been adopted (Freeman, 1998; Nunan, 1992; Patton, 1990). It is believed that this approach is more consistent with research into LA in the classroom.

The case study

This classroom, case study was conducted in the second academic semester of 2015, over a period of 16 weeks, during a 60-hour course of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) which is a required component for graduation in Radio/TV Studies in a public university in São Paulo state, Brazil.

The analysis was based on a corpus of texts written online using Google Docs™, and comments/corrections originating from (tele)collaboration. Second order data were obtained through participants' reporting on their own experience of the classroom activities, and the effects on language learning and their engagement with the tasks.

Research questions

The objective of this case study was to answer two questions:

- (1) What are the characteristics of the online collaboration of five groups of students who wrote two texts during a particular 60-hour CBI EFL course?
- (2) In the opinion of the participants, what are the perceived impacts of (self-) assessment and (tele)collaboration on their awareness of language and learning?

Participants

In addition to the teacher-researcher and an intern, there were 28 undergraduate students involved. The volunteer intern was a former student who had completed all her required credits in EFL and was, at the time of the study, being tutored by the researcher in a one-year internship focusing on the introduction to research methods. Her role in the case study was to interact online with the other students while they worked on their assigned texts. Her participation was expected to generate feedback from a reader who was not physically in the classroom and, therefore, provide more opportunities for refining what the other students were writing.

Twenty-eight undergraduate students were attending their second academic semester (out of eight) in the Radio/TV Studies degree. The age range was 18-22, but the absolute majority was 19 years old (21 students). There were two other students (20 y. o., and 21 y. o.) of Public Relations, who had joined this class to attain credits required for their graduation without further delay, after a

six-month exchange period abroad. There were more female (21) than male (7) students in the group.

The undergraduate students (except the intern) were therefore enrolled in the 60-hour course planned to help develop their oral command of English for specific (academic/professional) purposes (ESP). All of them had successfully completed at least another 60-hour course dedicated to ESP Reading. All ESP courses in the undergraduate programs are content based and follow the theme-based model of implementation (Brinton, Snow & Wesche, 2003).

The competence level of a typical student in this context is ALTE B2 (60-70% of students), whereas 20% will be above that, and 10% below. Regardless of these differences, as explained above, all students in the study are considered to be advanced users of language: they have all had considerable contact with English in instructional environments; they are now studying English for professional or academic communication in a specialized setting; and they are all educated speakers of at least another language, which needs to be taken into account because of their familiarity with ways of communicating in the communities they are part of.

Classroom activities – overview of the course

The 16-week ESP course (one weekly, four-hour meeting) aimed at enhancing listening and speaking skills primarily. In order to do that, two lessons (eight hours) were taught by the teacher-researcher to address general aspects of the phonology of English as an international language, and the main challenges for first-language speakers of Brazilian Portuguese, which is the case of all the participants in the study.

Next, a number of tasks were used to practice listening and note-taking skills, reading aloud, talking in groups and reporting orally in class. The students organized themselves into five groups of 5 - 6 members, and the decision concerning assessment was the following: (a) 1.5 points for an individual oral presentation, (b) up to 4.5 points for the collaborative production of two texts, in the groups, including the participation of the intern and the researcher, and (c) up to 4 points for a group presentation, based on a portfolio and the use of audiovisual materials.

The individual presentations were given between weeks 3 and 5. The objective was to “break the ice”, and students had to introduce themselves and talk about a topic of their choice, for at least 3 and no more than 8 minutes. It was recommended that their introductions should aim at explaining personal characteristics and their qualities in order to increase the chance of success in a fictitious recruitment process. In addition, students were expected to explain their choice of topic and, ideally, make a connection with their intended degrees. All the students were awarded 1.5 points.

The collaborative production of two written texts involved the use of input material selected by the teacher-researcher for reading and discussion in class, and the search for and discussion of other materials selected by the different

groups. A period of 4 to 5 weeks was dedicated to the production of either text, and the classroom routine primarily involved the use of spoken English for discussing the content, and planning, drafting and reviewing of different versions of student writing. Most of these meetings took place in a laboratory provided with computers for individual use, and each group appointed a manager to post the first version of either text online, using Google Docs™. That manager would then share the material with all the group members, the intern, the researcher, and any other person(s) they wished to include in the collaboration. Up to 4.5 points were awarded by the researcher for compliance with instructions, quality of interaction, and the final version of each text (organization, amount/relevance of details and arguments, and language as form).

The group presentations took place during the last two weeks of the course. Students were expected to introduce the group, inform the duration (between 25 and 35 minutes) and breakdown of the presentation, briefly explain what their collaborative texts had been about, and discuss their experience of the activities in the course – including the perceived impact on motivation and learning, and the challenges faced by the group. The use of audiovisual material in the presentation was required, and each group was supposed to grade their own presentation at the end, to a maximum of 4 points.

A couple of weeks after the end of the course, the teacher-researcher received a computer-generated report of how students evaluated it. This is an ordinary procedure in the institution, and data from this survey are addressed in this paper as well.

The texts in collaborative production

The main source of data in this classroom study has been the record of online interaction related to the writing of two texts by the groups of students. When those groups were set up, the following instructions were provided: at least one participant should monitor individual participation toward text production; two members should be in charge of taking notes of language issues (questions and resolutions concerning vocabulary, grammar, sentence structure and so on); and two members should keep a record of student comments concerning challenges and motivation throughout collaboration. This information was to be shared with the other participants in the group presentations at the end of the semester.

In preparation for the first text, an essay to be written in a personal tone, students read part of a chapter in “Language awareness. Readings for college writers” (Eschholz, Rosa & Clark, 2009). The main text, “Should English be the law?” (King, 2009) addresses the issue of “official language status” in the United States and debates concerning legislation; the ideas of nationality, national language and nationalism as relatively new historical developments; prejudice and power; and the idea of unique otherness, which is supposed to highlight the value of diversity and tolerance in terms of language. The material was used in class for discussion and pronunciation practice, including reading aloud.

The content was further discussed to address the widespread notion of Brazil being a monolingual country, and how the media can play a decisive role in the dissemination, preservation, and disappearance of languages or language variants. Students were then invited to discuss issues such as the debate involving dubbed-into or subtitled television programs in our country, bills that have been proposed to regulate the number of productions in Brazilian Portuguese to be broadcast on paid-TV channels, different accents that can be heard or are stereotyped in the media, and the prevalence of a “standard” Brazilian Portuguese that is spoken in either of two state capitals where most television programs – especially news – are produced.

The reading and the following discussion occurred in two weeks, and other texts have been addressed in class: sample interviews students found on the internet of Brazilian actors talking about the challenges of working abroad, and how they were normally cast for the “same role”; sample radio programs that are produced in indigenous languages; different possibilities afforded by the media (TV, internet, radio) concerning the dissemination of local cultures and dialects.

The groups were then free to choose a more specific topic to be dealt with in their essay, as a spin-off of the introductory text used in class, and the rich discussion that ensued. They were instructed to begin writing one paragraph immediately, introducing their essay and explaining how it originated. They would then need to continue writing their texts outside the class, using Google Docs™. The following classes would be dedicated to reviewing and developing their drafts until the text was considered ready for submission. Throughout the process, the different versions of the text in production would be open for comments and corrections by the intern, the researcher, and any other collaborator the group might have invited to interact online with them.

The second text to be written by each group was a review. In preparation for that, a book by Robert L. Hilliard (2011) was brought to class by the teacher-researcher. The book has 11 chapters dealing with different aspects of production and broadcasting, including a historical account of the development of mass media; elements of production for different media; technical information concerning equipment, technology and script writing; types of programs; and a discussion of opportunities for young professionals. Students were supposed to choose (a segment of) a chapter to focus on, and the groups were expected to look for alternative sources of information dealing with the ideas in the passage of their choice – in Portuguese, English or other languages. The reviews would need to follow the conventions of the genre: identify and describe the reviewed material, and provide a critical analysis from the point of view of professionals in training.

During the weeks dedicated to the preparation of the review, classroom activities also involved reading and discussing different extracts of Hilliard’s book and other sources, in addition to the analysis of feedback on students’ drafts and questions originating from such feedback.

Table 1, below, shows the initial guidelines shared with students for (self-) assessment of their texts. These guidelines have been refined in the broader research

project I conducted between 2014-2016, as mentioned in the introduction of this paper (Concário, 2014). Reference to these guidelines is made in the discussion of the data in the present case study.

Process – Language as skill: ability to communicate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Have instructions been followed? (content, length, way of presenting info, contextualization); - Macro-organization (content distribution, sequence and sections). In oral presentations, e.g., are keywords explained/made explicit?; is there use of visual material?; quality of audiovisual resources; - Is the language appropriate to the task? (Tone, attitude, relevance, terminology and others); - Attempts at good rapport? (Eye contact, pace of spontaneous talk and reading aloud; level of detail/ shared and new information...)
Text as product – structural aspects of the target language	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Is there evidence of no proofreading? (number/types of errors); - Rate of delivery/talk and pronunciation allow for comfortable comprehension, avoid strain? (adequate intonation, stressed syllables, word endings/borders/encounters); - In written work, are paragraphs organized effectively? (use of commas, full stops, instances of coordination and subordination, flow of main clauses, topic progression/elaboration etc.); - Are these recurring problems: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> false friends? other forms of L1 interference that make meaning unclear? problems with verbal aspect? clauses without subject? (impersonal constructions, passive voice) too many definite articles? inadequate noun-phrase constructions?

Table 1 - Initial guidelines for (self-)assessment (Concário, 2014)

Analysis of the data

According to Nunan (1992, p. 75), the case study investigates how an instance functions in context. Therefore, the setting and conditions for data collection had to be described in detail in order for the particularities of the case to be clear. In addition to the information provided previously, a description both of the texts produced by the groups and how the participants interacted throughout the process will appear in the results. Such results come from the history retrievable from Google Docs™ for drafts of each text. Therefore, the answer to the first research question is primarily based on the texts, comments, corrections and records of student participation. Supplementary, but equally important, data have been collected from the students during the group presentations, a journal kept by the intern, messages exchanged with participants, and personal notes made by the researcher throughout the course.

As previously instructed, the groups were expected to keep a record of language issues and resolutions; student participation and how the collaborative work took shape; and the motivation and challenges perceived by the members. They would then need to address those items in their final presentation, which was another opportunity for the students to talk about the perceived impact of the activities on learning, and to provide feedback to the teacher-researcher overall. The journal kept by the intern and the personal notes of the researcher, which

include notes made during the group presentations, have also been the source of second-order data in answering the second research question.

Thus, the data in this case study have been ultimately subjected to content and discourse analysis (Trappes-Lomax; 2006) and consisted of a record of written texts (including interventions and changes in their drafts), participants' notes and comments. The material was reviewed by the researcher and the intern to establish interpretive categories and verify their recurrence.

Results

The five groups have posted texts dealing with the topics discussed in class, according to the instructions for length, tone and style. However, interesting differences have been found. For instance, one group (G4) decided that the ideal form of participation for them would be different: they would agree on a topic and any sources to use, discuss an overall approach to their first draft (organization and sequence of information), and each member would write one paragraph. The participant in charge of posting the first draft explained this in writing and shared the explanation with the members of her group, the intern and the researcher. One week later she deleted the explanation and posted all six paragraphs, using one font color for each group member. In the following class meetings, the group explained that some members found it more difficult than others to write directly in English. So, they thought that, if each member could write his or her own paragraph, they would all be able to do their jobs at the right pace.

Two participants in G4 told me in class that their preference was first to write their paragraphs in Portuguese and then translate them into English. However, they wanted to check with me if that would be *acceptable*. They also wanted to know what I thought about their idea of using online translators to help them, and then asking for the help of their group members to correct and edit their versions in English. I told these students that, as long as they felt that plan was working for them, I would not have a problem with it. I thanked them for sharing something that I do not believe would become known to me otherwise: that they had made conscious decisions about the best way to do their share of the work. I recommended too, in the event of using online translators, that they should try supplying either phrases or sentences to the software, and then entire paragraphs. I asked them to discuss the result of the experience in class, but they never talked about it again. Therefore, it is not possible to know whether they did it or not.

Apparently, G4 decided to plan and review their work in class, together, and post their individual paragraphs when each member had arrived at the best version possible. This may explain why their texts online show virtually no record of feedback exchanged among themselves. The same procedure was used in both texts, and one of the participants expressly stated that working like that would be "easier and faster" for them. Whatever appears in the history of their texts online involves comments and corrections provided by the researcher, related to

language as form (e.g. pronoun reference, verb agreement, noun phrase structure, the likely influence of Portuguese on word choice).

The first text written by G4 dealt with the dilemma of hiring actors who are not native speakers of the language of production; how authenticity and credibility may be affected on the one hand, and how the pressure for commercial success and diversity may be decisive factors in casting, script writing and who the characters in a story will be. Their second text was a review of a chapter titled “Features, Documentaries and Reality Programs”.

Another group that stood out was G3, where the Public Relations students were included. This group systematically avoided classroom work and only posted their texts *on* the deadline, when whatever interaction online among themselves, with the intern, or with the researcher would not have any effect on rewriting. Their first text was very impressive and dealt with indigenous Latin American languages in films, particularly Quechua, Tupi and Aymará. The second text was on the adaptation of a comic book for a film, and of a novel for a television series. There was no explicit information in this second text whether a source material was being reviewed by the group.

The performance of the three other groups (G1, G2 and G5) corresponded more closely to the expectations of the researcher. The texts written by G1 were an essay about television in multilingual countries, and a review of a chapter titled “World Cinema”, from a book the students were reading for a project in another course. In the introduction of their review, they justified their choice very well. The first text posted by G2 dealt with productions in which the stories, settings, and characters obviously have no relation to English, the language of production. The participants expressed their wish to draw attention to how television and cinema can reinforce the “simplistic idea” that English is the language of international communication. In their review, they deal with a chapter titled “Music, Variety and Comedy”, from Hilliard’s textbook (2011).

Finally, the first text by G5 addresses one television show featuring characters who are US or Colombian citizens. Members of either nationality respectively speak English (subtitled in Spanish) or Spanish (subtitled in English) as their default language. Some characters in the show will use their second language in interactions with nationals whose first language does not match their mother tongue. Their second text is a review of a four-page section from the same chapter chosen by G2.

The highlighted portion in the first paragraph of an extract from the first text written by G5 (Figure 1) relates to a typical comment made by the intern in the interactions online. The record of interventions shows that the intern has provided occasional prompts that (could) have been used by group members to determine the content of their texts. There are only three records of the intern’s recommending corrections to what the participants in G1, G2 and G5 have posted. Other comments provided by the intern are in the form of encouragement, or appraisal of participants’ writing, like “Excellent!” and “Very good paragraph!”.

→ In English class, we read a text called "Language debate: should English be the law?" which talks about how English is not the official language of the United States, it's only the most widely spoken language. The text brings several questions related to different aspects of what an official language means, including the questions of immigrants and natives that speak different languages from the official one. Inspired by this theme, our group decided to write about how characters from different countries (that speak different languages) are handled in audiovisual productions.¶

One of the main series that show this is *Narcos*, an American production streamed on Netflix. The series, directed by José Padilha, tells the history (in this case, history is possible. However, I would still prefer story) of the famous Colombian drug dealer Pablo Escobar from the point of view of a DEA agent, Steve Murphy. There are characters from Colombia and the USA. The series treats all the characters by their native language, which is unusual in American audiovisual productions. This means that Colombian characters speak Spanish (with English subtitles), while American characters speak English. The only instance when a Colombian speaks English in the series is in some scenes when they're talking to an American, but there are also times that the American person speaks Spanish in the same situation. (Very good!)¶

This is a good argument, since USA doesn't have an official language. If you want, you could explain that every state can legislate about its official language.¶

Excluído: by

Excluído: It is composed by

Excluído: meaning,

Excluído: in

Excluído: in

Excluído: with

Figure 1 - Print screen of student collaboration, extract of text 1, G5

Reviews of the intern's journal and conversations between her and me have confirmed that she "was not confident to correct" what the other participants posted because she herself often wondered if there were actual mistakes in the material. On one occasion, she said that "it is strange because I'm not sure if there's something wrong with this or that phrase [...] I don't think I'd write in a different way".

The markings in the second paragraph in figure 1 illustrate feedback in the form of corrections (highest count) and comments provided by the teacher-researcher. I have not found any record of a student explicitly responding to comments or suggestions in the interactions online. However, a number of students – particularly in groups 1, 4 and 5 – were eager to ask me in class if or how they were supposed to make changes in their drafts. There are three records of change in texts written by G1, after classroom work, which resulted from my earlier request for clarification or examples to support claims of the authors. I often included "please ask me in class" next to comments I posted online, and – in some cases – I made sure the groups would bring them to the attention of the whole class in our meetings.

→ In the eighties, popularity of entertainment shows fell, which lead to a fragmentation of styles and attractions of variety and comedy shows. The Vauderville Show got popular, which is a program that receives various different attractions. There's also Music Hall Variety, blending music and jokes, like Vauderville. The comic-dominated type consists in a comedian presenting the program. There are also a lot of other types. That way, a program that catered to various audiences was created, such as Tonight Show with Jay Leno, while also having various niche shows. That way, a more focused public and better quality opportunities are a result of having a specific audience. (I'm curious: are you familiar with these TV shows?)¶

According to the approach intended rapport with the public and the organization of a sitcom, it is important to note that the writers have a mission not to let the program get stale by repeating acts and stories, as it is a variety show. (como se fosse? as if it was/were... like a...). A format that repeats situations several times in a row can tire the viewer, making them change channels. (tire the viewer... making him or her... tire viewers... making them...). A clear example on Brazilian TV in recent years is "Zorra Total", by Globo, which began to repeat a formula that, initially, worked, but then it got stale. That's the reason why the program lost more than 50% of the audience over a decade, which led the program to be replaced by a new version called "Zorra", using a daily skits format, which allows wide variety of stories to tell. (Be careful with the repetition of: "...which"?)¶

It's also important to note that the program has to choose a specific branch in the genre, not leaving the viewer confused about the program's identity. (Can you contextualize and explain this in class? I would like to talk about this with the whole class). In this type of program, dark humor cannot be used in the script because this can lead to serious damage to writers, actors and even the station.¶

Excluído: to

Excluído: fatigue

Excluído: recipe

Excluído: in

Excluído: .

Excluído: ,

Figure 2 - Print screen of student collaboration, extract of text 2, G5

Figure 2 and figure 3 are print screens of segments in the reviews of groups 5 and 2, respectively. Although the introduction has not been captured in figure 3, it is possible to verify that both groups have chosen to review material in the same chapter of "Writing for television, radio, and new media" (Hilliard, 2011).

Our English teacher, , proposed a task which consists in producing a text about a topic that interests us, audiovisual students. We have chosen the theme "Music, Comedy and Variety", based on the book "Writing for Television, Radio, and New Media" because, after a group discussion, this topic appeals to all of us. The text is divided into: music radio; music videos; music on the internet and variety and comedy, providing us with basic information for writing variety shows and also comedies.¶

First, we need to understand that non-music programs on the radio grew, but the content broadcast on stations is still predominantly Music and recordings. In the 30s, Martin Block was the one who had the idea to separate the music on the radio ads to give the impression that it was being played live, giving the basis for the growth of disc jockeys and dejaay shows. This success is due to the fact that artists who were great performers? on the radio and varieties with music and comedy programs migrated to television. (I need a technical explanation about "separating music" on ads)¶

Still, the most successful musical appearances on TV are not musical programs, such as late nights, with the exception of reality shows to discover talents in the area, something like American Idol. But what really changed the whole scenario was the advent of MTV in the 80s, now (? now or in the past?) broadcast 24-hour music content on television. The bands that came after that present their music with a striking visual, dramatic attitude and with a typical enthusiasm of their (his = he?) his generation.¶

With everything integrated, you need a solid and prepared script, and although many dejaays not doing so, a true professional will this care. (This paragraph does not sound right)¶

Excluído: the

Excluído: y on

Excluído: ed material?

Excluído: Martin Block,

Excluído: i

Excluído: ances

Excluído: musical

Excluído: s

Excluído: and prepared

Figure 3 - Print screen of student collaboration, extract of text 2, G2

The interventions appearing in figure 2 can be considered examples of subtle and explicit prompts for classroom talk about student writing (parentheses), and corrections by the teacher-researcher. The same type of feedback has been recorded in the excerpt from G2's review. In figure 3, it is worth noting the introduction, in which students explain their choice and the purpose of the text they are writing. This introductory paragraph may read a little unusual in a typical review; however, it is very effective in setting the personal, yet formal tone of the text. Toward the ending of their review, the students have included a compelling evaluation of the content in the reviewed chapter.

The group presentations in the final weeks of the course meant new opportunities to learn about students' impressions regarding the activities they had been dealing with. Group 1 spoke for nearly 30 minutes, with a good introduction and a clear, concise description of their texts. They provided very little information about how the group interacted, but said that "collaboration is good because you have multiple voices and reviewers". This contrasts with the fact that only two names, in addition to the intern's and teacher-researcher's, have appeared in the online interaction. They also mentioned that it is important to be able to go back to the text and view the teacher's questions and corrections.

One member of G2 explained that he interacted a lot with other students in his group, using WhatsApp™ to exchange typed and spoken questions/answers. He explained that the application was a faster tool for him to ask specific questions (vocabulary) and solve his problems when he was writing outside the class. This group said they sent two drafts of their first text to friends in Australia and New Zealand, whom one of the students in the group had met in an exchange program. Apparently, these additional reviewers helped refine the final version posted online as well. Their group said they worked well together, but they thought the course involved "much more reading and grammar than speaking" activities. They explained that the students in all the groups mostly spoke Portuguese among themselves. The student who had kept a record of language issues mentioned that their group began to pay more attention to sentence structure, particularly the number of adverbials and dependent clauses in parts of text 2: "a lot of comments, and sometimes we could be confusing readers... like, what's the point here?". Their presentation took 27 minutes, but no participant announced the intended duration at first. One of the students in the group chose to play a recorded video segment of her part: she explained that speaking in class makes her extremely anxious, especially in English.

The third group did not announce the duration of their presentation either. The students emphatically expressed their excitement about the topic in text 1. They said they had to do a lot of searching for vocabulary, and that they learned a lot. A specific example was the use of search engines to check whether several technical expressions were actually used in English. They also addressed the positive aspects of the interaction between Public Relations (PR) and Radio/TV students, which made their texts richer. One student said, though, that they were somehow restrained by the instructions, and that it was very difficult for them

to find the time to meet and work on their texts online. In their opinion, online interaction should occur in the classroom.

Group 4 explained that they learned more in the preparation of text 1 (“everybody had to sweat”) than 2, but that the review was “more difficult”. They did not provide many details about that, but the challenge apparently involved dealing with different opinions in the group (“we are not like-minded”). They said that it took them a lot of time to “know what to do in the first composition”. Their presentation took a little more than 35 minutes, which had been announced. According to the group, there were very strong differences between them as far as language skills are concerned. The experience was new to them, and they started to use Google Docs™ for other assignments in different courses. Toward the end of their presentation, they provided a list of words they learned during the activities and explained that “*the plus uncount words*” was probably what they became most “attentive to”. They also said that text 2 would have been better had they had more time to work on it.

It was only in the presentation by group 5 that one participant explicitly referred to the prompts provided by the intern. According to that student, she thought that the comments made by the intern were suggestions, and that the group thought their first text would become too long if they decided to address the issue raised by the intern. G5 decided not to use audiovisual aids in their presentation, and they did not mention how long it would last either (18 minutes). They said that the course was a good opportunity to do research and learn more about their interests, and they were encouraged to do that in English. They did not provide specific examples of language issues or how they have dealt with them. In addition, this group said that they think the course work should be done entirely in the classroom, and that corrections and comments provided by the teacher (explanations or “questions to help remember”) had been the most useful feedback.

The results in this study include information on how collaborative writing was assessed by the teacher-researcher (0-4.5 points), how students graded their presentations (0-4 points), and results of how students later evaluated the course and the performance of the teacher. All students were awarded 1.5 points for the individual presentation at the start of the course.

The global assessment of collaboration was based on the final versions of the texts posted by each group, evidence that each text had undergone a process of elaboration, and that the instructions had been followed (G1 = 3.8, G2 = 4.1, G3 = 2.7; G4 = 3.8; G5 = 4.3). In the case of oral presentations in groups, students were told that they could either decide on a single score for all groups members, or different scores for different participants. They were expected to assess their work based on task completion (organization, duration, content) and delivery (G1 = 3.2, G2 = 3.5, G3 = 3.0, G4 = 3.9, G5 = 2.5). All the groups decided to award the same score to their participants.

	Individual presentations (max. 1.5)	Written work (max. 4.5)	Presentations (max. 4.0)
G1	1.5	3.8	3.2
G2	1.5	4.1	3.5
G3	1.5	2.7	3.0
G4	1.5	3.8	3.9
G5	1.5	4.3	2.5
	All students awarded 1.5 by teacher-researcher	Same grade awarded by teacher-researcher to all students in specific groups	Same grade awarded by members in each group

Table 2 – Grades awarded to students in the groups

Fourteen (out of the 26 Radio/TV students) responded the questionnaire for course evaluation that is part of the institutional survey at the end of every academic semester. Respondents clearly indicated their perception that the course objectives were met in terms of results, but only about half of them agreed that the initial objectives were matched by the activities that took place. Most respondents answered that the course did not repeat content of other courses, 7 of them agreed that evaluation procedures were explained at the start, but 9 disagreed that the evaluation process was adequate (4 partially agreed, and 1 did not respond). Most respondents answered that there was enough time to complete the tasks, and that there was adequate feedback throughout. Ten respondents answered they met all deadlines and worked well during the course.

Teacher performance was rated by 11 respondents (out of 26). The largest number of high scores concern: teacher encouraging student participation, teacher seemed happy and motivated when students participated, and teacher demonstrated high expectations regarding student work. The items on which more than 6 students partially agree or (strongly) disagree are: teacher showed the high relevance of the course to the general education of students, and teaching procedures enhance learning. The PR students were not reached by the institutional survey.

Discussion

As far as the first research question is concerned, there is evidence of student collaboration toward the written work they have done. Although the literature on collaborative/cooperative writing often addresses different levels of sharing and responsibility in text generation (Storch, 2013; Stahl, 2006; Dillenbourg, Baker, Baye, & O'Malley, 1996; Ede & Lunsford, 1990), a number of events documented in this case study show that there has been the division of work to complete tasks, that some members were responsible for the execution of specific parts of the job – even if that meant separate input being initially supplied by individuals in relative isolation, and that there has been interaction among them – involving other agents – on a few occasions. Moreover, even when it has not been possible

to find records of the negotiation in the files shared with Google Docs™, classroom interactions and the feedback provided by the students in their presentations suggest that processes have involved decision making and negotiation to make sure each group produced their texts together.

The intern expressed frustration – which I also have experienced to some extent – at the nearly non-existence of online interaction between the students and herself. However, both in the classroom interactions and during one presentation at least, group members have acknowledged her attempts to contribute to their jobs.

Another finding that triggered some frustration at first was that students seemed to accept my corrections without adding new comments to the material online. Two groups (G1 and G4) explained that they downloaded and deleted previous versions of their first texts, and then posted the final versions again. This has affected data collection negatively, but it was an opportunity to review instructions and explain again the objectives of the classroom research.

It must be noted that, on more than one occasion, some students did not seem to see the point of recording their reactions and decisions in writing: “why can’t we just accept the correction?” and “it’s faster and better to talk in class, in front of everybody” are sample comments that reinforce the impression. As the course unfolded, I gradually became more appreciative of what students said they were doing, even if they were not providing written records of that, or when they failed to use the words I had hoped for. Maybe this can be considered further evidence that different levels of explicitness work better for different people on different occasions, and that the efforts invested by teachers in certain things may not be acknowledged by students. Or, to put it in a more student-centered manner, it may be that students have different priorities from those of teachers.

More surprising to me, though, was that students in three groups argued that the collaborative work should take place in the classroom. In their opinion, then reinforced by comments of other participants, their routine was greatly facilitated by not having to work on their texts outside the classroom. This response certainly needs to be investigated further because it may pose a serious challenge for teachers, materials writers, and program managers as far as autonomous learning is concerned. The data in this study suggest that many students still find it challenging to take responsibility for their choices at first, but that the experience can be rewarding and help to develop new strategies to deal with course assignments overall. This can be confirmed by students’ comments about the difficulty to decide on what to write about, or whether some of their decisions would be *acceptable*.

Even though this case study has not explicitly focused on motivation, some comments made by the participants are consistent with what is typically found in the specialized literature on the motivational aspects of CBI/CLIL (Concário, 2011; 2014; Brinton, Snow & Wesche, 2003). The choice of topics and materials (by the teacher or students), related to their field of study, raises interest and increases engagement with the tasks.

As for the impact of the course on awareness of language, it may help to underscore the perceptions voiced by the intern and the students, and my own considerations. The intern made it very clear to me in our regular meetings, the journal entries, or the messages we exchanged, that she felt uncomfortable raising questions about or correcting *the language* in the texts posted by the other participants. In her opinion, participation in the study was an opportunity for her to think about vocabulary and “sentence structure”. In that sense, she found the researcher’s interventions “good because they helped... think about what... to try to remember/explain”.

The students mentioned that the feedback provided by the teacher-researcher was helpful. Only two of them explicitly referred to the guidelines for (self-) assessment (Figure 1). Incidentally, questions raised by the students in class helped review those initial guidelines and include, for instance, examples of mother-tongue interference (e.g. *the medias; the prejudice* is clear; or *Is considered public interest the programs* that...). Ultimately, this sort of classroom discussion has contributed to my broader research between 2014-2016, by causing assessment guidelines to change into a more detailed checklist.

From my point of view, the examples given by students to illustrate the impact of the activities on their LA can be grouped into two categories. First, there are specific aspects of what I like to call *language at large*: how they became more interested in reviewing the length and order of sentences/paragraphs; the feeling that planning and rehearsal reduce anxiety in oral presentations in English, and that they should not begin a presentation with apologies for not being fluent in the target language, or asking for permission to refer to and read their notes; and the realization that when someone speaks about something “theoretical” for “the first time in English, it’s clearly harder”. Second, there are the *particulars of the language*, a category in which I have included remarks students made about what drew their attention, what they found strange – regardless of their (not) being able to explain why –, what they needed to ask for help with, or what they resolved themselves as far as the lexicogrammar of English is concerned. In all such remarks, the students mentioned that they responded to the interventions of the teacher, and these are a few examples of comments made in the group presentations: “I’ll never forget the word *despite* anymore...”, “I don’t think we’ve learned with our mistakes. It would be necessary to tell more. I don’t think the person who did the mistake understands why the mistake is a mistake...”, “still don’t know when I have to use *which*...”.

Conclusion

This case study has been effective in promoting a critical analysis of a CBI ESP course in a Radio/TV Studies undergraduate program in Brazil. More specifically, it has contributed to a larger research project into the impact of (self-)assessment and (tele-)collaboration on students’ awareness of language and learning.

Collaboration seems to have worked well for the participants because it allowed for labor sharing; students had the chance to negotiate and make informed decisions about how to complete their jobs; and the use of applications such as Google Docs™ and WhatsApp™ enabled the participants to keep track of the writing process, the history of interventions and – to a more limited extent – the resolutions of problems. Both the intern and the researcher involved in the collaborative writing process have experienced frustration to varying levels, and at different times, because most students did not respond in writing to their interventions. However, there is compelling evidence that the feedback by the teacher-researcher was incorporated in the drafts (corrections) and generated classroom discussions. As it was explained in the section dedicated to data analysis, students did ask questions and did talk about feedback provided on their drafts in the classroom meetings. However, they did not respond to such feedback in the form of written records using Google Docs™.

As for the impacts on LA and awareness of learning, it has been confirmed that varying levels of awareness may work differently for individual students, and that it may be operating *at* what students do not know and *on* what they already know (James, 1999). In addition, LA can be at play at the level of *language at large* (communicative skills, discourse competence and text) and what has traditionally been referred to as *language as form(s)*.

Above all, this case study should be regarded as an instance of foreign language teaching involving adults who already bring a lot with them to the classroom. It may be that they also bring many gaps that can negatively affect self-confidence and autonomy because of limited opportunities to become protagonists of learning. I have been particularly intrigued by the casualness with which students repeatedly said they were not willing to work outside the class. This, again, has reminded me of the key role played by effective interaction in learning-teaching environments: discussion and negotiation of learning objectives and the actions to attain them most effectively. To me, this is an important part of the LA agenda, especially when language is both a tool for and an object of learning.

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