

Book review: Working Collaboratively in Second/Foreign Language Learning

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Article Detail:	Abstract
<p>Received: 17 Mar 2024; Received in revised form: 23 Apr 2024; Accepted: 06 May 2024; Available online: 15 May 2024</p> <p>©2024 The Author(s). Published by International Journal of English Language, Education and Literature Studies (IJEEL). This is an open access article under the CC BY license (https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/).</p> <p>Keywords – Collaborative Learning, Second/Foreign Language Learning, Language, Pedagogical Strategies, Empirical Studies</p>	<p>This paper reviews a scholarly work titled <i>Working Collaboratively in Second/Foreign Language Learning</i> (García Mayo & María del Pilar, 2021). It briefly summarizes the content of the ten chapters. The authors recommend this volume to a broad readership.</p>

Working Collaboratively in Second/Foreign Language Learning, by García Mayo and María del Pilar, Boston, De Gruyter, 2021, 250 pp., US \$114.99 (hardcover), ISBN-13: 978-1501517310 (hardcover).

Collaborative learning has played a significant role in second/foreign language (SL/FL) learning. Certain factors and strategies may promote languaging when SL/FL learners work collaboratively. This raises the need to recognize the factors and the strategies that can promote languaging to maximise the language learning opportunities afforded by collaborative learning. In responding to this need, editors García Mayo and María del Pilar bring together scholars to discuss these factors and strategies by drawing on more recent research in the field of SL/FL collaborative learning in *Working Collaboratively in Second/Foreign Language Learning* (De Gruyter, 2021).

This volume discusses three key issues regarding collaborative learning in SL/FL classrooms. The first issue relates to the factors that either facilitate or hinder languaging when SL/FL learners deal with collaborative tasks. The second issue concerns the impacts that collaboration has on SL/FL learners, namely the aspects of SL/FL performance and knowledge that may be influenced by collaboration (e.g., written text quality, grammatical knowledge, production of lexico-grammatical features, and pragmatic competence). Thirdly, this volume explores the need to broaden the empirical basis for collaborative research. The collaboration research included in this volume was carried out on SL/FL learners of different ages, which included young learners, adolescents, and university students. These learners also had various language backgrounds,

Article DOI: <https://dx.doi.org/10.22161/ijeel.3.3.3>

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including native speakers of Arabic, Basque, Chinese, English, German, Japanese, Korean, and Spanish. They were also learning English as a second (ESL) or English as a foreign language (EFL) in multiple countries, such as Canada, Indonesia, Spain, and the United States. The learners collaborated to complete different types of tasks (written or oral) through using different approaches (face-to-face, online, or combined) in diverse SL/FL settings.

This volume consists of eleven chapters. It begins with the chapter titled "Introduction". In this chapter, the editors first introduce two theories that provide theoretical frameworks for collaborative learning. Then they illustrate several contributions of this volume. Lastly, they briefly discuss each chapter.

In Chapter 1, the author first critically reviews recent research on L2 collaborative writing and illustrates theoretical frameworks underpinning collaborative writing. The following is the discussion of research on learner- and context-related factors that have been identified as a possible explanation of patterns of interaction and the nature of languaging. The author continues with a discussion concerning a range of pedagogical strategies on how collaborative writing tasks should be implemented and assessed. At the end of this chapter, the author opines that future research could focus on assessing the efficacy of these suggested strategies.

The author in Chapter 2 summarizes the designs and the findings of 11 second language acquisition studies. These studies have investigated whether completing form-focused tasks collaboratively is more effective than completing the same, or similar tasks individually and whether working collaboratively with peers affects the longer-term learning of specific grammatical features. The author highlights some methodological limitations inherent within previous research and proposes suggestions on how to address these limitations in future research.

The following six chapters (from Chapter 3 to Chapter 8) discuss collaboration in various foreign language settings. The empirical studies included in these chapters illustrate how learners interact while completing collaborative tasks through Face To Face (FTF), online, or in a blended approach. In Chapter 3, the author examines peer oral interactions of 20

adolescent EFL learners in a mixed-age (M-A) secondary school classroom in Germany to explore the degree of mutuality among these learners, the factors that influence the degree of mutuality among these learners, and the relationship between the degree of mutuality and actual learning opportunities created during M-A peer interactions. In Chapter 4, the authors explore the linguistic and motivational effects of collaboration and the types of grouping (e.g., pairs, groups of three) on the narrative texts written by 54 12–13 years old Basque-Spanish EFL learners. They also examine their attitudes towards writing and writing in collaboration. The possible effects of collaborative writing on individual writing and problem-solving strategies are explored in Chapter 5. In this chapter, the authors present a case study of two German EFL learners taking a university language course at a German university. Chapter 6 focuses on the nature of collaboration when the collaborative writing activities are implemented in a blended approach. In this chapter, the authors use collaborative writing activities to investigate the patterns of peer interaction and the Language Related Episodes (LREs) generated by 27 Indonesian undergraduate EFL learners over a 16-week semester using blended (FTF and online) at a university in Indonesia. In Chapter 7, the authors investigate the possible linguistic effects of different groupings (individual vs. collaborative) and different writing modes (FTF vs. online) on the quality of composition. They examined texts written by a group of 28 12–13 years old EFL students enrolled in the first year of compulsory secondary education in Spain. In Chapter 8, the author examines how 15 L2 Spanish learners at a US University develop their ability to produce appropriate closing sequences when engaging in text-based telecollaboration with L1 Spanish speakers (university students, learners of English in Spain).

The two final chapters (Chapter 9 and Chapter 10) in this volume introduce two empirical studies informed by activity theory. These studies report collaborative writing activities carried out in English as a second language (ESL) contexts. In Chapter 9, the author analyses how the interconnected components (e.g., tools, rules, community, division of labour, objects, and outcome) of collaborative wiki

writing activities afford and constrain the participation and learning of two groups of 3 ESL students in an English for Academic Purposes class at an American university. The author also investigates what contradictions occur among the components of the activity system of wiki-based collaborative writing. In Chapter 10, the author investigates interaction patterns and mediating factors among two groups of ESL learners during web-based collaborative writing activities.

Overall, it is apparent that *Working Collaboratively in Second/Foreign Language Learning* is a valuable collection of must-read material on SL/FL education, collaborative learning (especially collaborative writing), and teacher preparation programs in universities and colleges. It adds to the database of empirical literature on collaborative work and written tasks, and it expands more broadly on the topic of collaboration in language learning. It may be useful in pushing classroom-based research forward by exploring diverse aspects of collaborative learning in different instructional settings. This volume is sure to appeal to readers from a wide range of backgrounds, particularly those interesting in exploring collaborative work in the language classroom. This volume may benefit ESL/EFL writing teachers in overcoming challenges in using collaborative tasks. Instructors can add this volume to their list of suggested readings for their graduate students (MA, PhD) in order to promote their students' knowledge of collaborative learning.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This work was supported by (1) Humanities and Social Sciences Youth Foundation of Ministry of Education of China (Grant number 23YJC740025); (2) Jiangsu Province Education Scientific Planning Project (Grant number C/2023/01/140).