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by Puji Astuti

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Individual Accountability in Cooperative Learning in EFL Classrooms: More Opportunities for Peer Interaction

Puji Astuti

Universitas Negeri Semarang, Indonesia

Leslie Barratt

Rajabhat Roi-Et University, Thailand

Research shows that cooperative learning (CL) supports foreign language learning (e.g., Almuslimi, 2016; Wei & Tang, 2015). However, there is little research demonstrating how CL works and, specifically, how it promotes learning, particularly individual accountability, which is a principle in CL. This article reports on part of a larger study that aimed to fill this gap by exploring the roles of individual accountability in CL in enhancing EFL learning. The study involved two secondary school EFL teachers, with 77 students in their classrooms, and four focus students. Analysis of data from participant observations, in-depth interviews, and document analysis shows that individual accountability manifests itself in a series of activities from individual, group, and class presentations as well as other peer interactions. The findings also showed that the learners had more opportunities to interact and had more interactions with their peers during CL than during conventional group work (i.e., students simply completing non-CL activities in groups). Opportunities for student-student interactions in CL activities, absent in the conventional group work, may have contributed to the EFL learners' communicative competence. However, teachers new to CL should follow the preset procedures for CL strategies to promote individual accountability and understand how these activities benefit students.

Keywords: cooperative learning, individual accountability, peer interaction

Introduction

The EF English Proficiency Index (2017) shows Indonesia ranked 39th and categorized as one of the nations with low English proficiency among 80 countries participating in the survey, which includes mostly non-English speaking nations. The report also indicates a strong correlation between English proficiency and a nation's economy, quality of life, innovation, and connectivity. These findings may not be surprising for most ELT scholars in Indonesia because they have long argued that ELT instruction in the country needs to be improved. For example, regarding EFL teaching in Indonesia, Marcellino (2008) notes, "English language teaching has then undergone more than four changes in its curriculum [Oral Approach, Communicative Approach, Meaning-based Approach, and Competency-based Curriculum] since the country's independence [1945] and brought no significant impact upon the learning outcomes" (p. 57). Similarly, Mattarima and Hamdan (2011) describe typical activities in Indonesian EFL classrooms as follows: "The activities, usually teacher-centered, include repetition and substitution drills, which are essentially used to activate phrases or sentences that learners have understood" (p. 295). Most Indonesian EFL teachers, as classroom realities show, tend to follow textbooks and student work sheets faithfully; they provide few opportunities for students to interact with their peers and use the target language

(Alwasilah, 2012; Lie, 2007; Musthafa, 2009). Since English is a foreign language and is not used for daily communication, English classrooms in Indonesia are expected to provide learners exposure to the language and opportunities for using it with their peers. Indonesia needs ELT instruction that helps elevate the citizens' English proficiency to improve the nation's connectivity to the world that, in turn, can boost the "key economic and social indicators" such as having more service exports, better Internet access, and more investment in research and development (EF English Proficiency Index's Executive Summary, 2017, p. 5).

Previous research demonstrates that factors supportive of learners' second language acquisition involve opportunities for the learners to use the target language through interaction with their peers (Kagan, 1995; Long & Porter, 1985; McGroarty, 1989; Swain, 2005). The theories supporting all of the implemented curricula in Indonesia from 1984 to 2013 (Communicative Approach, Meaning-based Approach, Competency-based Curriculum, and Text-based Approach) have highlighted the importance of peer interaction in the learning process. Nevertheless, as discussed earlier, teacher-dominated learning remains prevalent. According to Alwasilah (2012), this teacher-centeredness is due to Indonesian EFL teachers' weakness in teaching methods. More specifically, an emphasis on rote learning indicates that teachers do not have a strong teaching repertoire (Alwasilah, 2013). Understanding the utilization of language teaching methods that promote peer interaction and the use of the target language in EFL classrooms was the impetus of this study. Cooperative learning (CL) is one of the mandated learning activities in the Indonesian education system (National Education Standard Board, 2007, 2013, 2016), and CL stresses peer interaction (Johnson & Johnson, 1985, 2009; Kagan, 1989). For these reasons, this study focused on CL.

In light of the definitions of CL proposed by Johnson and Johnson (1999) and Olsen and Kagan (1992), we define CL as a group learning activity in which individual students' contributions to the learning is realized through their performance or presentation, which is beneficial not only for their own learning but also for their peers' learning and the group's goals (see also Astuti & Lammers, 2017). Embedded in this definition is the principle of individual accountability in CL, which is manifested in a series of activities: individual students' performance or presentations before their partners, in their groups, in other groups, to the whole class, and during peer interaction between performances (Author 1, 2016; Astuti & Lammers, 2017). These activities are required to complete a learning task (Author 1, 2016). Our study focuses on CL, particularly its individual accountability principle, because while the research literature shows that CL is supportive of EFL learning, there is a lack of studies that document how CL works in EFL classrooms and benefit the learners, as well as how the principles of CL promote EFL learning. Joining this line of inquiry helps us to recognize ways to achieve an effective implementation of CL.

Literature Review

When learning in a CL setting, students work in groups with their peers and are responsible for their own learning and the learning of their group members (Kagan & Kagan, 2009). In contrast, when learning in conventional group work, students simply sit and work together on a given task. Hence, individual students sitting in conventional group work might not take the responsibility—for their own and of their peers' learning—as individual students are instructed to do when these students are working in CL groups.

The literature demonstrates that CL facilitates second language acquisition and thus benefits language learners (Kagan, 1995; McGroarty, 1989). The use of CL has been shown to have a positive effect on English as a Second Language (ESL) and EFL— hereafter referred to as ESL/EFL— students' achievement in mastery of language skills and components (Alghamdi, 2014; Almuslimi, 2016; Bejarano, 1987; Ghaith, 2003; Liang, 2002; Sachs, Candlin, & Rose, 2003; Wei & Tang, 2015). Yet research that depicts how CL promotes ESL/EFL learning is scarce. As in a broader educational context, it remains unclear why and under what conditions CL increases students' academic achievement (Slavin, 1996). Therefore, answers to these questions deserve further exploration.

CL researchers highlight how enacting the CL principles (e.g., positive interdependence, individual

accountability, equal participation, simultaneous interaction) increases cooperation as well as fosters effective implementation (Chen, 2011; Johnson & Johnson, 1999; Olsen & Kagan, 1992; Slavin, 1999). Nevertheless, little scholarship has looked at how the aforementioned CL principles work, are manifested, and function, particularly in ESL/EFL classrooms. This study attempted to address this gap in the literature by exploring one CL principle, individual accountability, to understand how it enhances EFL learning. Individual accountability was chosen as the present study's unit of analysis because it is a key principle of CL (see Johnson & Johnson, 1999; Kagan, 1989; Olsen & Kagan, 1992; Slavin, 1995), without which CL is no different from other forms of group learning.

In discussing individual accountability in CL, Slavin (1983) notes, "The best learning efforts of every member of the group must be necessary for the group to succeed, and the performance of each group member must be clearly visible and quantifiable to the other group members" (p. 441). Explicit in his statement is that individual students' public performance is required in CL. This activity may not be present in conventional group work, and its absence can disadvantage language learners because it is an opportunity for them to practice using the target language with their peers. When such opportunity is not available, the attainment of communicative competence as the goal of language learning might be hampered (Long, 1996; Long & Porter, 1985).

Communicative competence was first described in Hymes (1972), whose notion of communicative competence includes both knowledge and the ability to use language in a way that is socially acceptable in a given context. Savignon (1991) defines communicative competence as "[t]he ability of language learners to interact with other speakers, to make meaning" (p. 264). More specifically, communicative competence is "[t]he learner's ability to take part in spontaneous and meaningful communication in different contexts, with different people, on different topics, for different purposes" (Celce-Murcia, Dörnyei, & Thurrell, 1997, p. 149). In light of these definitions, the link between language learners' opportunity for using the target language and their goal of achieving communicative competence through CL might be clear. Nonetheless, research exploring that link in practice is necessary. Especially needed is research that explores and documents how learners' use of the target language in CL and the goal of language learning are at play in the learning process (Bejarano, 1987; Ghaith, 2003).

In short, the literature has shown that ESL/EFL research needs studies that depict the process of CL implementation and focus narrowly on individual CL principles to explore how they enhance learning—promoting communicative competence. The availability of findings from this line of inquiry is needed to generate classroom implications that will in turn promote the use of CL in the field (Ghaith, 2004). This information, in the context of Indonesian EFL instruction, is important to enlighten teachers as well as to broaden and strengthen their teaching repertoire.

Purpose Statement and Research Question

The purpose of this study was to explore the role of individual accountability in CL in enhancing EFL learning in Indonesian secondary school classrooms. Researching this area is important on three accounts. First, attention to the role of individual accountability in CL in Indonesian secondary school EFL classrooms may generate a better understanding of how CL works and thus promote or improve the use of CL in these contexts. Second, the discussion can provide teacher candidates, practicing teachers, and teacher educators with information on how to enhance individual accountability in order to promote EFL learners' communicative competence. This information may also be useful for those in Indonesia designing the Process Standard—and similar guidelines or mandates in other countries—that guide secondary education. Third, research on individual accountability in CL can build a foundation for future studies on other CL principles, to develop our understanding of how the inclusion and/or absence of other principles relates to the effectiveness of CL in EFL contexts. This research sought to address the following question: What is the role of individual accountability in CL implementation in Indonesian secondary school EFL classrooms? Our study excludes elementary education because, in Indonesia, English is not mandatory at that level. In this article, we explore one of the identified roles that individual

accountability in CL plays in Indonesian EFL classrooms, i.e., having the learners to take more opportunities to interact with their peers. Before doing so, we describe the methodology of the present study in the next section.

Method

To address the research question, we employed qualitative research methodology. Specifically, we used a qualitative case study method because we needed specific illustrations of the enactment of individual accountability in CL in EFL classrooms. The present study is categorized as a multi-case study because two cases were involved, and they were also the study's units of analysis: 1) individual accountability in CL in a middle school EFL classroom, and 2) individual accountability in CL in a high school EFL classroom.

Participants and Settings

One teacher from each school was involved: Andini (middle school) and Putri (high school; both names are pseudonyms). They were selected through purposeful and convenience sampling. Since students were the subjects in the CL implementation (i.e., the doers or performers of individual accountability in CL), the students of the two teachers were also involved as research participants, especially those whose class was observed (the eighth and tenth graders). Additionally, we recruited four focus ("telling," Wallestad, 2010, p. xxii) students for in-depth interviews. They are—in pseudonyms: Midya (female) and Budi (male) from the middle school, and Joko (male) and Natya (female) from the high school. In short, we employed convenience sampling for recruiting our student participants.

Since the schools were both secondary schools, they shared a number of similarities. One major difference, however, was that the middle school implemented the 2013 curriculum, while the high school implemented the 2006 curriculum. This difference was partly due to the fact that the middle school had been a test site for the 2013 curriculum. Notwithstanding this difference, the Process Standard for Primary and Secondary Education (Board of National Education Standards, 2007, 2013, 2016) for both curricula, including the revised version of the latter curriculum (launched to public in June 2016), advocate the use of CL.

Our student participants in both schools had two English classes each week, which were 40 minutes for the middle school students (eighth graders) and 45 minutes for the high school students (tenth graders). English teaching in both schools covered the knowledge and skills for developing students' communicative competence, including the teaching of the four language skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. During our participant observations, the teacher participants in the middle school implemented CL to develop her students' speaking skills, while the teacher participant in the high school developed her students' listening and reading skills through CL. Our Results section will detail what our student participants learned (the learning materials) and how they learned them (the CL techniques or structures).

Data Collection

Guided by constructivist grounded theory (Charmaz, 2014), which "[p]laces priority on the studied phenomenon and sees both data and analysis as created from shared experiences and relationships with participants and other sources of data" (p. 239), we gathered our data through three data collection strategies: 1) participant observations, 2) in-depth interviews, and 3) document analysis. Grounded theory is appropriate for this study because, as stated earlier, our unit of analysis was individual accountability in CL; a phenomenon that is unexplored and little understood. Hence, we needed a flexible approach that could help us to ground theory in the data themselves (Charmaz, 2014).

In our observations, we paid attention to how individual students prepared for their individual

accountability performances, how they performed, and how—between and/or after these performances—they interacted with their peers. To do so, one researcher approached and sat with a group or two, stayed there, and took notes. She also recorded the teacher's activities in facilitating individual accountability in their classrooms. During the one-month fieldwork, a total of ten lessons were observed: five in the middle school and five in the high school. From these observations, we generated ten sets of field notes, totaling approximately 70 pages.

The in-depth interviews consisted of 19 interviews (completed in seven months), including eight teacher participant interviews, five high school student interviews, and six middle school student interviews. The semi-structured interview durations ranged from 30 minutes to one hour, totaling approximately 110 pages of interview transcription. Each interview was scheduled at a time convenient for our participants in a vacant room in their school. The informal conversations with the participants were also data collection points, especially when the conversations provided insights into the phenomenon under study. In addition to observations and in-depth interviews, curriculum and instructional documents (e.g., ministerial decrees on education standards, syllabi, lesson plans, etc.) were analyzed. Finally, memos and journal entries for each data source (field notes, interview transcriptions, and relevant documents) achieved the purpose of documenting our reflections throughout the research process.

Theoretical Framework

To frame our thinking about the phenomenon under study, we used Cultural-Historical Activity Theory or CHAT (Engeström, 2000; Leont'ev, 1978; Jonassen & Rohrer-Murphy, 1999; Yamagata-Lynch, 2003, 2007, 2010) and Interaction Hypothesis (Long, 1996). CHAT, particularly its concepts of activity systems and its components (subjects, tools, object/goal, rules, community, and division of labor), helped us to make sense of how individual accountability as an activity in CL served as a medium of conscious learning in the EFL classrooms. The theory also lent a socio-cultural and socio-historical framework (Jonassen & Rohrer-Murphy, 1999) to understand the implementation of CL in the EFL classrooms.

Finally, we utilized Long (1996) to understand how individual accountability in CL promoted second language acquisition and development. Long's Interaction Hypothesis conceptualizes how language learners receive input that is slightly beyond their current level of competence through interaction with their peers and the process of negotiation for meaning in it (Krashen, 1985) and how they produce the target language, including refining their natural talk (Swain, 1985). CHAT and the Interaction Hypothesis work together to create a theoretical framework within which we could explore the role of individual accountability in CL in enhancing EFL learning, including how it helped the EFL learners learn the target language.

Analysis

Our analysis was also guided by constructivist grounded theory (Charmaz, 2014) as we employed sensitizing concepts, "concepts as points of departure for studying the empirical world while retaining the openness for exploring it" that gave us "ideas to pursue and questions to raise" about our topic (pp. 30-31). Our theoretical frameworks, CHAT and the Interaction Hypothesis, provided concepts, ideas, and questions for collecting and analyzing data. The two theories also served as starting points to analyze our participants' meaning making. Nevertheless, we kept in mind that our sensitizing concepts were tentative tools because theories were constructed from the data themselves (Charmaz, 2014). With sensitizing concepts and unit of analysis in mind, we completed three levels of data coding: line-by-line (including in-vivo coding), focused, and axial (Charmaz, 2014).

During line-by-line coding, we used action words and phrases from the data to generate "some codes to pursue" (Charmaz, 2014, p. 343). When doing in-vivo coding, we used our participants' words or phrases. For example, in one of the interviews Midya (recall her being one of the focus students from the middle school) used the phrase "*saling ngajarin*" (Indonesian) meaning teach each other. We used this phrase to

code an example of activities that promote individual accountability. In our next phase, focused coding (Charmaz, 2014), we used “the most significant and/or frequent initial codes” (p. 138). We noted, for example, how the procedures for all CL structures employed by the teachers included a “teach each other” activity. Lastly, through axial coding we developed an understanding of how codes related to each other as categories and subcategories. In this process, we conceptualized a series of activities that require/promote individual accountability in CL, including “teach each other,” which means individual students’ presentation in front of their CL peers. Themes emerged from the data through the process of coding and analytic memo writing (i.e., writing our thoughts—substantive, theoretical, methodological—throughout the research processes).

Limitations

There were at least two limitations to our study. The short period of investigation was the first limitation, especially with regard to the participant observations (i.e., one month). Nevertheless, we were able to generate 10 field notes and 10 analytic memos from our participant observations. The second limitation pertains to the position of the first author as “the researcher as translator” (Temple & Young, 2004, p. 168) since she translated the interviews and relevant curriculum and instructional documents from Indonesian to English. The first author also translated Indonesian key words and phrases from the interview transcriptions and document analysis data because the coding and analytic memo writing were in English. Additionally, this author conducted member checking (Marshall & Rossman, 2011), i.e., asking our participants whether we “got it right” (p. 221) in Indonesian. Notwithstanding these limitations, our findings make significant contributions for the teaching of EFL, especially for the contexts where CL is seldom practiced.

Results

Our classroom observation data (field notes and analytic memos) showed that the middle school students learned two short functional texts (i.e., notice and short message) through Think-Pair-Share and a fable through RoundRobin and Numbered Heads Together. The high school students learned one text type (i.e., news) through Numbered Heads Together, Jigsaw, and One Stray (see Appendix 1 for the procedures for CL structures used by the teachers (Astuti & Lammers, 2017)). Our interview data revealed our teachers’ understanding of their CL practice (including how CL was different from conventional group work) and how individual accountability activities helped their students to learn English. The interview data also revealed the students’ views on CL, individual accountability activities, and how CL differed from conventional group work. Our document analysis helped us to understand the roles that individual accountability played in the observed classrooms, including whether the EFL instruction tended toward achieving the stated objective or goals.

The study identified a number of important roles that individual accountability in CL played. Most importantly, through individual accountability in CL, the students had more opportunities to interact with their peers and displayed more interactions with their peers than when they were learning in conventional group work, which was another teaching method used by the teachers across sites during our observations. This role was identified by looking at the relation between the students as the subjects of individual accountability in CL and their community (see Figure 1). In an activity system, the community comprises multiple individuals and/or subgroups who share the same general object (Engeström, 1993) and a set of social meanings (Jonassen & Rohrer-Murphy, 1999, p. 64). In our study, the focused activity systems were the implementation of CL in the EFL classrooms (two activity systems, one in the middle school and the other in the high school), in which the community was comprised of the students—EFL learners—who shared the same learning objectives, aimed at achieving communicative competence in English, and liked the idea of working in groups in their English learning. Their teacher was also a community member

who facilitated their learning for attainment of the objects/outcomes.

Our study revealed that individual accountability in CL involved the following activities (see Astuti & Lammers, 2017): 1) individual accountability in pairs, 2) individual accountability in home groups, 3) individual accountability in other groups, and 4) individual accountability to the whole class. Corroborating the notion of peer interaction as a required activity in CL (see Johnson & Johnson, 1985, 1999; Kagan & Kagan, 2009), we also identified how individual students' initial presentations were usually followed by peer interaction that helped them to prepare for and improve their next presentations. For example, when the students learned through Think-Pair-Share (see Kagan & Kagan, 2009), they first performed in front of their partners. Then they interacted with each other in preparation for their presentation to the whole class.

More Opportunities for and Displays of Peer Interaction

Peer interaction in CL helped prepare the students to perform their individual accountability and to support their group in completing the given task. This was evident in the Think-Pair-Share (Field Notes, 20150331, 20150404) and Whispering Game (Field Notes, 20150401) in the middle school, and in the One Stray (Field Notes, 20150318 20150401) in the high school (see Appendix 1). In contrast, the conventional group work did not reveal instances of individual accountability.

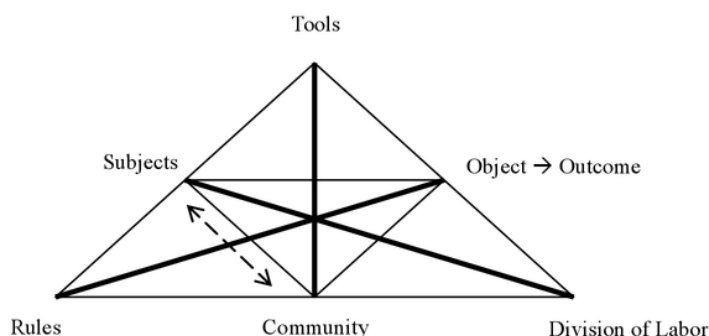


Figure 1. The relation between the subjects and the community in the activity system in Astuti (2016), adapted from Engeström (1987) in Yamagata-Lynch (2007, p. 456).

Our study found peer interaction in most of the CL structures used in the EFL classrooms. In these interactions, the students talked about what they learned, i.e., the target text genre. For example, in the use of Think-Pair-Share in Andini's eighth graders' classrooms, the students learned in the following sequence. First, each student prepared for their share of the work (i.e., preparing for the answers to the three questions they had been given about the notice they had read). Next, they performed their individual accountability in front of their partner (i.e., telling their answers to the three questions). After this performance of individual accountability, peer interaction took place. Specifically, the students conversed with their partners about their answers and gave each other feedback on vocabulary. The conversation that the students were engaged in helped them to prepare for their performance of individual accountability to the whole class. More specifically, after the conversation, they came up with answers using English vocabulary (no Indonesian—the official and national language—words and/or answers) that suited the notes they read (Field Notes, 20150331, 20150404).

Another example was when Andini's eighth graders were learning another short functional text (i.e., short messages) through a Whispering Game. Some individual students interacted with a fellow group

member after one of them delivered a short message. In this interaction, they were seen telling the message given repeatedly to another student and asking each other questions about the message being conveyed. Here we heard use of Indonesian and Javanese (either one was the first language of the students), which were seen by the students as necessary to ensure that the next message receiver understood the message and was then able to deliver it accurately (Field Notes, 20150401).

The above description showed that the students followed the instructional strategy being implemented by their teacher as members of their EFL classroom community. They seemed to understand that working in groups was part of their English learning activities and were accustomed to it. This shared social meaning was likely a factor that contributed to their interacting actively with their peers. Additionally, such active interaction appeared to help the students complete the given learning tasks.

Three CL structures were used in the high school classroom: Numbered Heads Together, One Stray, and Jigsaw. However, not all of the steps in the preset procedure of Numbered Heads Together and Jigsaw were followed. One of the consequences was that, in the use of these two structures, peer interaction did not happen. In the use of One Stray, peer interaction took place after the students shared the information they had (i.e., news-related words or news aspects) to the other groups. The students from two groups were observed talking about the information they had just received from each other. For instance, a student was heard saying in Javanese—the first language of most of the students in the high school: *Wis mudheng urung?* (Did you understand?), after presenting an aspect of her group's assigned news to another group (Field Notes; 20150401). This kind of interaction contributed to the students' individual accountability performance in the group they visited next and when they shared the information they received from the other groups with their home group members. Their list of the news-related words grew longer and, to some extent, they had a better sense of how to pronounce the words as a result of this peer interaction (Field Notes, 20150318, 20150401; Natya, Second Interview, 20150629).

As indicated earlier, during our field work, we witnessed the teachers' use of conventional group work in their teaching in addition to CL group work. We used the data from both types of group work to test our supposition that through the use of CL, particularly the activities involving individual accountability, EFL learners would spend more time interacting with their peers. For example, when the middle school students were working in the conventional group work in the fourth observed lesson, they had less conversation with their peers (Field Notes, 20150406) than they had when learning through the two CL structures (Think-Pair-Share and Whispering Game). Similarly, when the high school students were working in conventional group work in the third, fourth, and fifth observations, their conversation was less evident than when they were learning through One Stray. Also, when conventional group work was in use, only a few of the high school students were engaged in task-related conversations. Off-task behavior, such as students playing with their cellphones and talking about non-school related content, was seen displayed by the rest of the class (Field Notes, 20150404, 20150408, 20150409).

The most common peer interaction took place when individual students had completed their share of the work (already performed their individual accountability), and they were preparing for their next performance of individual accountability in pairs, in their own and/or to neighboring groups, and/or to the whole class. What made peer interaction in CL different from peer interaction in the conventional group work activities was that, in the latter, only a few individual students usually completed a presentation, and group members were not engaged in preparation for the next presentation.

Sharing their views of the benefits of peer interaction in the CL structures implemented in their classroom, the two focus high school students said:

Kita dapat informasi dari teman.

We got information from our peers. (Joko, First Interview, 20150408)

Berbagi informasi. Kalau kita belum tau informasi tentang kerjaan kelompok lain, kita jadi tau.

Information sharing. If we have not known the information from the other groups, we will get to know about it. (Natya, First Interview, 20150408)

In their perspectives, through the peer interaction in CL, the students received information from their peers or members of other groups. Therefore, they were aware of and seemed to share an understanding of the importance of the other students as members of their EFL classroom community for their learning and that their peers had their share of work. Natya also said, “I can teach them; they can teach me,” suggesting that she also contributed to her peers’ learning (First Interview, 20150408). A similar view on the benefit of peer interaction in CL was also shared by Midya, saying:

Bisa saling melengkapi, maksudnya, yang misal satunya nggak tahu, terus bisa tanya lainnya, terus bisa sama-sama paham, saling ngajarin.

We can complete each other; I mean, if one does not understand, he/she can ask the others so that he/she will understand it, teaching each other. (First Interview, 20150404)

While Midya held the view that she and her CL peers could “teach each other,” Budi said:

Siswa bisa lebih mengetahui kemampuan temannya sendiri.

The students will know their peers’ ability. (Second Interview, 20150530)

Budi suggested that when he was interacting with his peers, he could reflect on his ability in English compared to that of his peers. He added to the benefits other focus students noted about peer interaction in CL because he recognized this metacognitive advantage: reflecting on English ability.

Andini echoed the focus students when she stated that through peer interaction in CL her students tried to prepare themselves well, including receiving and giving each other feedback in order to perform better in the next level of performances. Recalling the use of Think-Pair-Share in her class, Andini stated:

Kemudian setelah ‘pair’, mereka saling mengisi. Saat ‘share’ itu, sudah dapat masukan dari temannya, saling melengkapi.

After the Pair phase, the students gave feedback to each other. When they were in the Share phase, they had received feedback from their partner; they helped each other. (First Interview, 20150408)

Andini’s account above stressed that receiving and giving feedback happened (“...the students gave feedback to each other” “...they had received feedback from their partner, they helped each other”) in the peer interaction in Think-Pair-Share in her classrooms. Viewed from a different perspective, Putri said that through CL interaction, most of her tenth graders came to realize that they could contribute to their peers’ learning; she recalled what most of them said: “Saya itu ternyata bisa, lho” (“I realized that I could actually do it, you know”) (First Interview, 20150404).

The participants’ own statements of the benefits of peer interaction in CL help explain how individual accountability in CL necessitated peer interaction in which the students prepared for their next individual accountability performance. Specifically, when the students were preparing for their individual accountability performance through the peer interaction, they presented the work assigned to them, helped each other, reflected on the ability in the target language, and realized that they could participate in their peers’ learning. In sum, compared to the conventional group work, CL structures and the required activities of individual accountability fostered more opportunities for the students to interact with their peers as fellow members of their EFL classroom community, and thus these students displayed more interactions with their peers.

Our findings have demonstrated that, in addition to sharing the same learning objectives and outcome, and an understanding of working in groups as part of their English learning, the students across research sites shared other social meanings such as an understanding that they were learning in CL and benefitting from their interaction with their peers. They were aware of how their classroom community contributed to their individual performances and to their EFL learning. This is in agreement with the outcomes of a study by Tamah (2008), who found that students working in CL held consistently positive perceptions of how useful the roles assigned to them and to their friends were for their discussion.

The findings presented in this paper also demonstrate the interrelation between the subjects of individual accountability in CL and their community, as well as between the subjects and the tools in the

activity systems, especially with regard to how students benefited from each other during their CL interaction—other learners as learning tools. The shared social meanings among the EFL learners were manifested in their helping and learning from each other toward the common goal. That is, in the two activity systems, other learners were among the available tools to mediate the relation between the subjects (i.e., the students themselves as the doers of CL) and the object (i.e., the lesson objectives), suggesting that the social environment (i.e., the social meanings shared in the community) influenced whether the enactment of individual accountability in CL, i.e., peer interaction as a component of individual accountability activities, helped students to achieve their learning objectives.

Peer Interaction in CL and Language Acquisition

McGroarty (1989), in her work on the advantages of CL in second language learning and bilingual education, stresses that interaction among students who have specific roles to fulfill in completing a task offers multiple chances to ask questions and clarify meanings. She also argues that interaction is central to the success of CL and second language development. Our analysis demonstrated that an initial level of individual accountability performance in CL was usually followed by peer interaction in which the EFL learners gave assistance to each other. More specifically, these learners helped each other in preparation for completing the next individual performance. They provided help to each other in English vocabulary, for example, which also suggests that they were providing and receiving comprehensible input because the words acquired were relevant to the task at hand. Their sharing demonstrates how language learners gain access to the language being learned through interaction with their peers (Foster & Ohta, 2005) and in such interaction negotiation for meaning usually takes place (Long, 1996).

The finding discussed in this section supports the hypothesis that “conscious learning emerges from activity (performance)” and “activity is a precursor to learning” (Jonassen & Rohrer-Murphy, 1999, pp. 62-64). In the observed classrooms, the chain of activities in individual accountability in CL (e.g., presentation in front of group members—peer interaction—presentation in front of the whole class) was a precursor to and medium of conscious EFL learning. In the processes of demonstrating individual accountability, the EFL learners also subconsciously acquired the target language (Krashen, 2003). For example, they might not have been aware that they were “picking up” (Krashen, 2003, p. 1) English vocabulary in their interaction with their peers and when they listened to their peers’ presentations (performances of individual accountability).

Our findings also indicate how the students in their interaction with their peers utilized translanguaging with their strongest language, Indonesian or Javanese, which can promote rapid understanding and the availability of comprehensible input (Kagan & McGroarty, 1993; Seltzer 2015). The use of learners’ first language, according to McGroarty (1989), is “...a bridge rather than a barrier to academic knowledge and second language mastery” (p. 134). In our study Indonesian and/or Javanese was used when the EFL learners were conversing with their classmates, including during peer interaction, i.e., one of the activities of individual accountability in CL. During this interaction, with the help of their home language, the EFL learners provided each other feedback on English vocabulary, which appeared to be needed by these learners to perform better in the next performance of individual accountability.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The importance of learners’ active participation for their second language development has been supported by most previous studies on interaction in second and foreign language learning (Gómez Lobatón, 2011; Mackey, 1999; Posada, 2006; Sato & Lyster, 2012). These studies, however, have not specified what constitutes active participation in peer interaction. Our study shows that individual accountability in CL provided the EFL learners with more opportunities to interact with their peers (as opposed to the same opportunities in conventional group work) and pushed them to take these opportunities. These findings shed light on how to arrange peer interaction (the *when*, *what*, and *how*) that

promotes language development (see Astuti & Lammers, 2017). In particular, learners interacting with their peers when they demonstrate their individual accountability (such as in Think-Pair-Share in the middle school classroom and One Stray in the high school classroom) constitutes the *when*. As they talk with their peers about the task at hand, i.e., the assigned learning materials that should be presented or mastered by individual students they create the *what*. They then take turns giving feedback on each other's performance of individual accountability, which produces the *how*. This feedback-giving and feedback-receiving activity has been promoted for many decades (see e.g., Fujii, Ziegler, & Mackey, 2016) as positively related to achievement: providing help and receiving help. In short, our study illustrated how an appropriate design yields this pattern of peer interaction that contributes to the EFL learners having more opportunities to use the target language (particularly in spoken mode, see also Astuti & Lammers, 2017) and to negotiate for meaning. Although our study did not measure the EFL learners' achievement as they were learning through CL, its depiction of the processes of individual accountability provided evidence of how CL, to some degree, enhanced EFL learning.

Given these findings we suggest teachers, especially those new to CL, first adhere to CL structures or instructional strategies exactly as described by CL scholars (e.g., Johnson & Johnson, 1987; Kagan, 1989; Sharan & Sharan, 1990). Doing so will allow teachers to recognize activities that promote individual accountability in CL and to understand how these activities can benefit their students. As our study shows that individual accountability in CL is a series of observable activities, it thus lays the groundwork for research on other CL principles, which may also be observable. More research is needed to explore how other CL principles (such as positive interdependence, equal participation, and simultaneous interaction) work and to analyze how each principle, individually and/or in combination, plays a role in enhancing learning. Likewise, future research must investigate the extent to which inclusion and/or absence of other principles impacts the effectiveness of an implementation of CL as well as the extent to which new and/or experienced CL practitioners understand CL principles. Research in these areas can help researchers in their development of CL structures and the establishment of criteria for assessing effective CL implementation.

The Authors

Puji Astuti (corresponding author) is a faculty member at Universitas Negeri Semarang. Her research interests include cooperative learning in TEFL. Recent publications include articles on cooperative learning in TEFL published in the *TEFLIN Journal* (2016, 2017) and the *Indonesian Journal of Applied Linguistics* (2017).

English Education Program
Universitas Negeri Semarang
Kampus Sekaran, Gunungpati, Semarang
Jawa Tengah, Indonesia, 50229
puji.astuti.ssu@mail.unnes.ac.id
Phone: +62248508071
Fax: +62248508071

Leslie Barratt is Professor at Roi Et Rajabhat University and Professor Emerita at Indiana State University. Her research interests include language teaching in multilingual contexts. Recent publications include *Englishes in Multilingual Contexts* (2015) edited with Ahmar Mahboob and *Monolingual Bias—TESOL Encyclopedia of English Language Teaching* (2018).

Graduate School
Rajabhat Roi-Et University
Selaphum District, Roi Et, Thailand, 42150
Indiana State University

Leslie.Barratt@indstate.edu
Phone: +660612468552
Fax: +66043544744

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Appendix 1

List of CL Structures Used in the Observed Lessons

Names of CL Structures	Procedures
Think-Pair-Share (used in the middle school classrooms/8 G 20150331 and 8 H 20150404)	Students think to themselves on a topic provided by the teacher. They pair up with another student to discuss it. They then share their thoughts with the class (Kagan, 1989, p. 13).
RoundRobin (used in the middle school classroom/8 G 20150406)	Students sit in teams. Teacher poses a problem to which there are multiple possible responses or solutions, and provides time to think. Students take turns stating responses or solutions (Kagan & Kagan, 2009, p. 6.31).
Numbered Heads Together (used in the middle school classroom/8 G 20150413, and in the high school classroom, 20150318)	Students work in groups. Each student in the group is assigned one number (e.g., one, two, three, or four). Teacher poses a problem and gives time to think. Students privately write their answers. Students stand up and “put their heads together,” showing answers, discussing, and teaching each other. Students sit down when everyone knows the answer or has something to share. Teacher calls a number. Students with that number answer (Kagan & Kagan, 2009, p. 6.28).
Whispering Game (used in the middle school classroom/8 H 20150401)	Students sitting in the same group get the same short message given by the teacher. All group members work together, playing a role as either the first receiver of the message, message courier, or message writer/reporter. In each group, the message courier whispers the message to the next student (i.e. a message receiver who will be the next message courier) and makes sure that he/she gets the message right. The last message courier is also the message writer/reporter. This person writes the message and reports it to the whole class (a version of this instructional strategy: “Whispering Game” May 28, 2009, http://esolonline.tki.org.nz/ESOL-Online/Teacher-needs/Pedagogy/ESOL-teaching-strategies/Oral-language/Teaching-approaches-and-strategies/Vocabulary/Whispering-game)
Team Jigsaw (used in the high school classroom, 20150318 and 20150401)	Each team becomes an expert on a topic. Individuals from that team each teach another team.

After teaching, experts return to their seats.

The process is repeated so that each expert topic is covered (Kagan & Kagan, 2009, p.17.3).

One Stray (used in the high school classroom, 20150318 and 20150401)

One teammate "strays" from her team to a new team to share or gather information.

Variation: Students return to their original (home) teams to share what they learned when they strayed (Kagan & Kagan, 2009, p. 6.28).

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