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by Puji Astuti

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Puji ASTUTI
Universitas Negeri Semarang, Indonesia
Email: puji.astuti.ssu@mail.unnes.ac.id

Leslie BARRATT
Indiana State University, USA
Email: Leslie.Barratt@indstate.edu

Abstract

While literature suggests the significance of peer interaction for language learners, little is known about how the interaction specifically works to benefit them. Additionally, while putting students in groups has become a widespread practice in language classrooms, most teachers appear not to have a clear idea of how to structure classroom interaction and cooperation so that learning goes in the direction of helping learners to attain communicative competence. To address the gap in the literature and lessen the theory-practice contrast, this qualitative case study was conducted by looking at how cooperative learning (CL) processed in EFL classrooms, with specific attention given to how individual accountability—CL's key principle—manifested and played its important roles during speaking lessons. One of the findings shows that CL's peer interaction in individual accountability activities provides EFL learners with opportunities for giving and receiving vocabulary help, which later helps them to perform better in presenting their understanding of the materials. By implementing CL with fidelity, teachers help EFL learners to achieve their

language learning objectives. As for teacher educators, they need to engage teachers in the activities of zooming in on how CL's structured interaction and cooperation help enhance EFL learning.

Keywords: cooperative learning, individual accountability, peer interaction, vocabulary help, communicative competence

Introduction

ESL/EFL learners' active participation in their interaction with peers has long been advocated by researchers (e.g., Mourão, 2018; Namaziandost & Nasri, 2019; Oga-Baldwin & Nakata, 2017). Nevertheless, most existing studies do not appear to reveal what constitutes students' active participation during peer interaction. References on group work index the use of cooperative learning (CL) for structuring students' interaction and cooperation. CL facilitates group learning in which individual students' contribution through presentations and interaction benefit not only themselves but also their peers and the group's goals (Astuti & Lammers, 2017a). A vast number of studies demonstrate the effectiveness of CL for improving language learners' mastery of language components and for increasing their language skills. However, our probe into the literature shows that more studies are needed to uncover how CL processes in ESL/ELF classrooms, including how CL principles work, how learners interact and cooperate with their CL peers, and how these activities benefit their language learning. To address this gap, we conducted the present study to explore the role of one of the CL principles, namely individual accountability, in enhancing EFL learning in Indonesian secondary schools (see Astuti, 2016).

CL has a place in the Indonesian education system. More specifically, the use of CL is mandated by Law No. 20/2003 on the National Education System (*Departemen Pendidikan Nasional*, 2003), which states that the learning processes should make students active in developing their potential. Literature demonstrates that active learning is one of the underlying concepts of CL (see Cohen, 1994; Keyser, 2000; Richards, 2002; Sharan, 2002), which is also in line with Communicative

Language Teaching (CLT), an approach to language instruction that has been implemented in Indonesian ELT contexts since the 1980s. CLT stresses student-student interaction and use of target language in learning activities (Richards, 2002), and it provides them room for making sense of the language being learned (Holliday, 1994). Notwithstanding the law and the close connection of CL and CLT, teacher-centered learning continues to be prevalent in Indonesian EFL classrooms, which is partly due to teachers' low mastery of CLT methods (Alwasilah, 2012, 2013; Madya, 2007).

In order to realize cooperation among students, to ensure a functional group working, and to achieve an effective CL implementation, teachers should enact in their instruction the defining elements or principles (see Chen, 2011; Johnson & Johnson, 1999; Olsen & Kagan, 1992; Tamah, 2014; Slavin, 1999). They include, among others, positive interdependence, individual accountability, equal participation, and simultaneous interaction (see Kagan & Kagan, 2009). Unfortunately, little attention has been given to studying individual CL principles, including in the ESL/EFL fields. Thus, the focus of our inquiry was individual accountability, selected since it is a principle without which CL loses its characteristics. Individual accountability is also a focal principle that distinguishes CL from collaborative learning (see Johnson & Johnson, 1999; Kagan, 1989; Kato, et al., 2015; Slavin, 1995), which thus explains why the present study did not examine the latter. Through our research, we sought to understand how CL's individual accountability promotes vocabulary acquisition in EFL learning.

In ESL/EFL classrooms, vocabulary resources or help are available when students are engaged in meaningful interactions. In these interactions, learning moves from other-regulated to self-regulated; students position themselves as both novices and experts (Mirzaei et al., 2017). Learners "pool their knowledge to scaffold each other" (Dobao, 2012, p. 43). The nature of dialog that takes place between them is collaborative, which revealed by a number of studies as conducive for vocabulary acquisition and learning, both in face-to-face settings (see Ahmadian & Tajabadi, 2017; Viera, 2017) and in virtual environment (e.g., Tai, 2020;

Tseng et al., 2020; Zou & Xie, 2019). Unfortunately, especially in Indonesian TEFL contexts, the process of vocabulary acquisition has not been explored and reported in an in-depth manner. Additionally, there have been calls for investigations into what methods, techniques, and strategies are suitable for facilitating vocabulary acquisition (Cahyono & Widiati, 2015). Our study helps fill this void in the literature. Throughout this article, we argue that implementing CLT through CL with attention to the manifestation of individual accountability in EFL classrooms is essential as it gives learners the opportunities for giving and receiving vocabulary help from their peers; a process that is supportive of second language acquisition and learning.

Literature Review

Cooperative Learning in ESL/EFL Instruction

Numerous studies have shown that CL facilitates second language acquisition and benefits language learners (see Kagan, 1995; McGroarty, 1989). In ESL/EFL fields, the use of CL was shown to have a positive effect on students' achievement in the mastery of language components and skills (e.g., Alghamdi, 2014; Almuslimi, 2016; Singay, 2020; Wei & Tang, 2015). Research also demonstrated that CL nurtured learners' motivation (Baleghizadeh & Farhesh, 2014) and social skills (Ning, 2013). However, the extant studies that examined how CL worked and promoted EFL learning were predominantly learners' and/or teachers' perception-based (e.g., Alghamdy, 2019; Hanjani & Li, 2017; Hung, 2019). It remains unclear why and under what conditions CL increases students' academic achievement (see Slavin, 1996). These areas are thus worthy of further exploration.

Similarly, investigations into CL use for vocabulary learning in EFL contexts were mostly carried out through quantitative designs. For example, Er and Azap's (2013) study demonstrated a significant effect of the interaction between CL and Multiple Intelligences to help EFL learners learn and retain vocabulary items. A study on the use of CL for teaching EFL to reflective and impulsive learners showed that they performed better in their vocabulary achievement than their peers who were also categorized into the two cognitive styles and taught in a non-

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CL setting (Shafiee & Khavaran, 2017). Additionally, Jahanbakhsh et al. (2019) reported the effectiveness of CL methods for improving EFL learners' lexical collocation knowledge. A recommendation for future studies from this line of inquiry is the use of a qualitative approach to observe and reveal how the interaction between EFL learners in their CL groups enhances vocabulary learning and acquisition. The present study attempts to address this gap in the literature.

The Construct of Individual Accountability in Cooperative Learning

For a number of researchers, individual accountability is CL's main principle (see Johnson & Johnson, 1999; Kagan, 1989; Kagan & Kagan, 2009; Olsen & Kagan, 1992; Slavin, 1995). Astuti and Lammers (2020) reported tensions—evidenced by learners having peer preference—in the implementation of CL in EFL classrooms due to the missing of activities that demonstrate individual accountability. Hence, as also stated in the previous section, individual accountability became the focus of the present study. According to Kagan and Kagan (2009), individual accountability in CL takes place when individual students make a public performance, i.e., performing or sharing what they have learned or mastered in front of their group members. Along the same lines, 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…" (p. 441). These researchers emphasize that in CL individual students' public performances are required.

In light of the aforementioned definitions, this study defines individual accountability as presentation or performance by individual students in front of their CL peers, making their performance public, to complete a task in their EFL learning (see Astuti & Lammers, 2017a; Astuti & Lammers, 2017b; Astuti & Barratt, 2018; Astuti & Lammers, 2020). Also, there is a series of activities of individual accountability in most CL instructional strategies or techniques or structures (the latter term will be used henceforth): individual students' performance or presentations before their partners, in their groups, in other groups, to the

whole class, and peer interaction between performances (Astuti & Lammers, 2017a; Astuti & Lammers, 2017b; Astuti & Barratt, 2018, Astuti & Lammers, 2020). Various discourse moves, e.g., initiating, eliciting, extending (Barness & Todd, 1977), are likely to occur when this series of activities take place. However, it is beyond the scope this study to look at these moves during CL interactions.

In conventional group work, such performances may not be present because they might not be required. Hence, in the context of language learning, we argue that conventional group work may not be as advantageous as CL because activities that require individual accountability—present in CL—are opportunities for language learners to practice using the target language through their presentations and in their interaction with their peers (see Astuti & Lammers, 2017a; Astuti & Barratt, 2018). These opportunities support language learners' process of attaining communicative competence in the target language (Astuti & Lammers, 2017b; Long & Porter, 1985; Long, 1996). In this article, we show how peer interaction in CL's individual accountability activities promotes negotiation for meaning and affords learners vocabulary help, which is also constructive for target language acquisition and learning.

Theoretical Framework

To frame our thinking about individual accountability in CL, we used Cultural-Historical Activity Theory or CHAT (Engeström, 2000; Jonassen & Rohrer-Murphy, 1999; Leont'ev, 1978; Wells, 2002; Yamagata-Lynch, 2003, 2007, 2010) and Interaction Hypothesis (Long, 1996). CHAT postulates human interactions as complex phenomena that take place in collective settings (Yamagata-Lynch, 2007) with the following components: subjects, tools, object/goal, rules, community, and division of labor. CHAT helped us to make sense of how activities in CL that display individual accountability, which includes peer interaction, 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 activities that display individual students' accountability in the studied activity

systems, i.e., implementation of CL in the EFL classrooms. The framework was helpful in recognizing, for example, factors that support or hinder the enactment of individual accountability in the activity systems under study. Additionally, Wells' (2002) CHAT approach to education helped us to see CL as purposeful collaborative activities in which the following take place: a) mediated meaning-making process, b) other- to self-regulated learning, c) joint building of dispositions and resources, and d) celebration of diversity. Educators might find these tenets helpful as guidance when incorporating CL in their lessons. Likewise, researchers can use the tenets as a framework to examine to what extent CL use in a certain teaching context realizes the agenda of active learning and/or CLT.

We utilized Interaction Hypothesis (Long, 1996) to understand how individual accountability in CL promoted second language acquisition and development. The hypothesis conceptualizes how language learners receive input that is slightly beyond their current level of competence (Krashen, 1985). Learners obtain such input through interaction with their peers and the process of negotiation for meaning during the interaction. The hypothesis helps us to make sense of how these elements in the interaction (i.e., input and negotiation for meaning) enable learners to produce the target language, including refining their natural talk—comprehensible output (Swain, 1985). When teachers emphasize student-student interaction in their language instruction, such as in the use of CLT-CL, comprehensible input, negotiation for meaning, and comprehensible output are likely available to help promote learners' communicative competence (e.g., Ortega-Auquilla, et al., 2019). Researchers alike might find the three elements worthwhile as a lens for examining how language learners acquire language forms such as collocations, phrasal verbs, idioms, etc. (see Nowbakht & Shahnazari, 2015).

Since our study did not specifically look at classroom discourse and talk, e.g., moves and acts (Wells, 1999), we did not employ any linguistic theory to scaffold our study and to guide our data analysis. Instead, CHAT and the Interaction Hypothesis worked hand-in-hand to build a theoretical framework within which we could explore the role of individual accountability in

CL—the focus of our inquiry—in enhancing EFL learning, specifically for vocabulary acquisition.

Method

Research Question

The present study reports on part of a larger research that sought to look at the role of individual accountability in CL implementation in Indonesian secondary school EFL classrooms (see Astuti, 2016). To understand how individual accountability in CL played a role in enhancing EFL learning in these classrooms, we posed the following overarching research question: What role does peer interaction—part of CL's individual accountability activities—play in speaking lessons in Indonesian secondary school EFL classrooms?

Research Context

Sites

In order to examine specific illustrations of the enactment of individual accountability in CL, we conducted a qualitative case study involving two Indonesian secondary schools: one middle school and one high school. They were both located in the same school district in Semarang city, Central Java, Indonesia, but they implemented different curricula, the 2013 and the 2006 curriculum respectively. Notwithstanding, both curricula advocate the use of CL. Thus, our multi-case study's units of analysis were individual accountability in CL in middle and high school EFL classrooms. In this article, however, we focused only on individual accountability in CL in the middle school classrooms as an exemplar of what we observed across the cases.

Participants

Our research participants were all Javanese, two EFL teachers, and 77 students. We employed two different sampling strategies for recruiting them, purposive sampling for teacher participants and convenience sampling for student participants. Both teacher participants met our criteria. They had: a) 10 years of teaching experience, b) EFL teacher certificates, and c) experience of implementing CL for more than two years. Four of

the students were involved in our in-depth interviews; they were "telling" (Wallestad, 2010, p. xxii), open and engaged participants (see Knox and Burkad, 2009). None of them had any experience of living in English-speaking countries or learning English as a second language. We obtained consent forms from all of the teacher and student participants. In this article, we use pseudonyms for all names of our research participants (i.e., Andini/female teacher, Midya/female student, and Budi/male student).

The use of Indonesian and/or Javanese during CL's peer interaction was observed across sites, which was seemingly done so by the students to clearly convey their meanings and intensions. Indonesian was used partly due to its status as the national language, official language, and medium of instruction in schools (Nababan, 1991), while Javanese was due to its status as the mother tongue or native language of the majority of Javanese people.

Data Collection

Since individual accountability in CL is an unexplored and little understood phenomenon, we used constructivist grounded theory (Charmaz, 2014) to guide our data collection and analysis. This approach suits our study since it leads researchers to ground theory in the data themselves. We gathered our data through three data collection methods: 1) participant observations, 2) in-depth interviews, and 3) document analysis.

In our observations, we mainly focused on the enactment and/or the manifestation of individual accountability as CL's key principle in the use of CL structures selected by the teacher participants for their EFL lessons. In doing so, Author1 approached and sat with a CL 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 10 sets of field notes, totaling approximately 70 pages.

We conducted 19 in-depth interviews, which were completed over seven months. Specifically, we conducted eight teacher participant interviews, five high school student interviews, and six middle school student interviews. The duration of each of our semi-structured interviews ranged from 30 minutes to one hour, totaling approximately 110 pages of interview transcription.

To triangulate, we analyzed curriculum and instructional documents (e.g., ministerial decrees on education standards, syllabi, lesson plans, etc.). When analyzing lesson plans, for example, we looked at whether our teacher participants integrated the procedure of the selected CL structure(s) in their plan for the learning activities. Finally, journal entries and analytic memos for each data source (field notes, interview transcriptions, and relevant documents) achieved the purpose of documenting our reflections throughout the research process.

Analysis

As stated earlier, constructivist grounded theory (Charmaz, 2014) guided our data analysis. Thus, 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 framework provides us with the sensitizing concepts (e.g., socio-cultural socio-historical contexts, negotiation of meaning, and comprehensible output) to understand the studied phenomenon or our units of analysis (i.e., individual accountability in CL in high and middle school EFL classrooms). We kept in mind, however, that our sensitizing concepts were tentative tools because theories were constructed from the data themselves (Charmaz, 2014). With our sensitizing concepts and unit of analysis in mind, we did three levels of data coding: line-by-line (including in-vivo coding), focused, and axial (Charmaz, 2014). Through the process of coding and analytic memo writing (i.e., writing reflections— substantive, theoretical, methodological—throughout the research processes), themes materialized from our data. For example, through initial coding of our data from the 10 participant observations and 19 in-depth

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interviews, we started to see how peer interaction was part of individual accountability activities.

From focused coding we discovered that vocabulary was one of English language components that the student participants learned during their peer interaction. Next, through our axial coding and analytic memo writing, we developed an understanding that individual accountability activities were required or set by the procedures of the selected CL structures. During one of these activities, i.e., peer interaction, vocabulary help was available for the EFL learners. As an example, a CL structure used across sites named Numbered Heads Together has the following procedure: 1) students work in groups, 2) each student in the group is assigned one number (e.g., one, two, three, or four), 3) the teacher poses a problem and gives time to think, 4) the students privately write their answers, 5) the students stand up and "put their heads together," showing their answers, discussing, and teaching each other, 6) the students sit down when everyone knows the answer or has something to share, 7) the teacher calls a number, and 8) the students with that number answer (Kagan & Kagan, 2009, p. 6.280). We see here that the activities of individual accountability in Numbered Heads Together include: step #4, step #5, and step #8. In step #4, individual students are responsible for making sense of the teacher's question and then coming up with their own answers. This answer is important in step #5 where individual students show or tell their answers to their group members (individual accountability in home group) and have a discussion and teach each other (peer interaction). During this peer interaction, vocabulary help is available for students as they are reaching consensus for their group's best answer as well as preparing for all members so that they are ready to represent the group (step #8, individual accountability to the whole class). In short, our findings emerged from our close and intensive interaction with our data through the systematic coding and memo writing.

Findings

Our larger study identified seven roles of individual accountability in CL in EFL classrooms (see Astuti, 2016). In this

article, we present one of the roles, i.e., providing opportunities for students to give and receive vocabulary help. These opportunities are beneficial since they prepare students for the next performance(s) that display their individual accountability. This particular role, as with the other ones, was recognized by looking at the relation between the components in the activity systems. More specifically, this article presents findings that resulted from our analysis of the relation between the subjects and the tools. Subjects in activity systems use the tools such as technology, training, and conceptual ideas to move toward accomplishing the object (Koszalka & Wu, 2004). This study revealed that for enacting the required individual accountability in CL, the student participants were helped—semiotically mediated (e.g., Ma, 2014; Wertsch, 1985) by, among other tools: their dictionary, books, the Internet, their first language, their teacher, and especially their peers. Since peer interaction is an integral part of CL (Johnson & Johnson, 1985, 1999; Kagan & Kagan, 2009), we particularly focus on other learners or peers as the student participants' learning tools or sources. In the studied activity systems, i.e., the CL implementation in the middle school EFL classroom, the student participants as the performer of individual accountability in CL used one another as learning sources, especially during peer interaction. This activity is a phase that prepares the students for the subsequent level of individual accountability performance. The following describes this subject-tool relationship from one of the activity systems as an exemplar of what we observed across the sites. All research participants' responses used to support our arguments are quoted verbatim.

Vocabulary Help During Peer Interaction

One of the CL structures through which the middle school students learned was Think-Pair-Share in the unit concerning public notices. The following is the procedure of the CL structure: 1) students think to themselves on a topic provided by the teacher [Think], 2) they pair up with another student to discuss it [Pair], and 3) they then share their thoughts with the class [Share] (Kagan, 1989, p. 13). During the Pair phase of this structure, our student participants presented to their partner the answers to

three questions given by their teacher—Andini—about the assigned public notice. The questions were: 1) What does the notice mean? (2) What should we do? (3) Where can you find the notice?

Although the presentation was supposed to be in English, the use of Indonesian and/or Javanese (i.e., our student participants' strongest mother tongues) words were also heard as the students were translanguaging (see Kagan & McGroarty, 1993; Seltzer 2015). Yet, the use of English was dominant. After students listened to their peer's presentation, Andini asked them to give each other feedback. Three examples of this process are described below.

Like their peers, two of Andini's students—a boy and a girl—worked together. The girl's notice said: "No Admittance, Employees Only." Using English, she presented to her partner her own answers to the given questions. This is a performance that displays the student's accountability in front of her partner. After this performance, the boy helped the girl to translate the meaning of the word *employees* into Indonesian because as was reflected in her answers, the girl thought that the word meant people who hired another people—employer. Not only helping with the meaning of the word, the boy also helped the girl to put together the new understanding in her answers, which were then presented to the whole class (Field Notes, 20150404). We noted that this girl shared in her presentation the following sentence to the whole class during the Share phase: "We do not enter because the room is only for employees" (Field Notes, 20150404) which suggested the word "we" referred to she herself and her peers.

In the second example, two girls worked together, showing each other the notice that they had. One of them presented her answers in English but some Indonesian words were also heard. Her notice said, "No smoking." After her performance, she asked her partner in Indonesian: "What is SPBU (*Stasiun Pengisian Bahan Bakar*) in English? "Gas station," her partner replied in English. With this newly acquired word, the girl restated her answers to her partner and then to the whole class: "We must not smoking in a gas station," to which Andini responded: "Smoking or smoke?" (Field Notes, 20150404).

In the third example, another pair of girls worked side by side. One of them held a notice that said, "Keep clean." She asked her partner: "*Di mana ini*? (Where is this? [Where do we usually see this notice?]) Her partner replied in Indonesian: "*Mushola*" (mosque). It seems that this girl forgot or did not know how to say the word in English, however, she added, now in English: "We should obey the notice." This addition seems to indicate the girl's effort into helping her partner to prepare for the next presentation, i.e., telling the answers to the three questions Andini gave them (Field Notes, 20150404).

For Andini's students, as the three accounts above demonstrate, their partners were their learning sources. As also described, students serving as each other's learning source was especially evident during peer interaction. And this interaction took place after a performance; one that displays individual students' accountability in front of their partner. During the interaction, these students received vocabulary help that contributed to the betterment of their next accountability performance.

Our participant observation data showed that most of the students who performed during the Share phase of Think Pair Share used English; neither Indonesian nor Javanese was heard during their presentations. For example, in his presentation, a boy was holding a notice that read: "Swim at your own risk," and he reported: "I have a notice. We do not surf in the beach." We notice here that the boy did not use the word "swim" in his presentation, which might be due to his and his partner's preference for surfing over swimming. Overall, however, the meaning conveyed in his presentation was appropriate in that it did not stray too far from the message of the notice he had. Most importantly, he did his presentation in English, the target language.

Our interview data also demonstrated how the middle school students picked up English vocabulary from each other. Recalling how he and his classmates in their CL group gave each other vocabulary help, Budi stated:

> So, like, if we get group members who are good at English, so when we have words that we do not really understand or

> new words, or we have difficulty in English, peers can help us to understand more. (First Interview, 20150404)

Budi underlined that the vocabulary help he received was from a more capable peer ("…group members who are good at English"). Further, he indicated how he also helped his peers whenever they encountered new English words that they did not know the Indonesian meaning of. According to him, this process of helping each other was what made completing a task through CL "lighter" than doing it on his own. He said:

> If my peers have a difficulty, I also help them out. So, we will know for example which words are new vocabularies or words that my peers did not know. And, we also, our work will be lighter, will be lighter when done in groups than doing it on our own. (First Interview, 20150404)

Similar to Budi, Midya said that she received feedback on vocabulary from her Think-Pair-Share partner:

> She helped find suitable words for my presentation. (First Interview, 20150404)

Midya stated that during Think Pair Share, she received "suitable words" for her answers. She explained further how her partner's background knowledge helped the feedback giving process:

> My peer has once seen the notice that I got, she taught me words for presenting the notice that I got. (Second Interview, 20150408)

To her partner, Midya's notice was not new, which allowed her to give Midya the vocabulary help. In return, Midya helped her partner:

> So, there was a difficult word, she asked me the meaning, so I answered. And then she also asked me to revise the incorrect words she used to answer the three questions. (First Interview, 20150404)

Two levels of vocabulary help were requested by Midya's partner: 1) asking about the Indonesian meaning of an English word used in the notice, and 2) revising the use of incorrect words used in her answers.

Midya's accounts above demonstrated how she and her partner provided each other with help on vocabulary for their answers ("helped find suitable words," "taught me words," "asked me the meaning,"). Put differently, after their initial performance of individual accountability, the two students were engaged in a conversation in which they were asking, helping, and teaching each other vocabulary. The conversation helped the two students to prepare for their next performance, i.e., individual accountability to the whole class. It is clear that for the two students, their CL peers were learning sources.

Andini also observed how, during the interaction in their CL groups, her students helped each other on vocabulary. She recalled:

> Yesterday there was a new word, *surveillance*. That's when, they were like, "What's the meaning of this word?" At least they discussed it with their peers, rather than figuring out the meaning on their own, looking up their dictionary. Maybe it is more, it is easier to remember. "Oh, yesterday he/she said the word surveillance, the meaning is this." It is more meaningful when they were cooperating. (Second Interview, 20150408)

In the above account, Andini underlined that her students would remember a newly encountered word better when they were talking about it and trying to figure out its meaning together than when they were looking up the meaning in their dictionary. In a follow-up interview, Andini highlighted that during CL interaction, the language component in which her students learned the most was vocabulary (20150526).

As stated in Andini's plan for the lesson that incorporated Think-Pair-Share, speaking was the day's focused language skill. One of the lesson objectives was the following: "Students are able to explain the meaning(s) of notices around them with good

pronunciation, intonation, and language structure and follow the message of the notices" (Lesson Plan, 20150331). Given this direction for the lesson, it appears that Andini's choice of Think-Pair-Share was suitable because the structure, as the name suggests, required the students to think about the given task, do a presentation in front of their partner, interact with them, and do another presentation in front of the whole class. As also described in this section, the last two activities—presentation followed by interaction (Pair) and the next presentation (Share)—promoted EFL learners' production of spoken English (see Astuti & Lammers, 2017a). The selected CL structure appeared to accommodate the attainment of the lesson objective.

Throughout this section, we have depicted how our student participants' production of spoken English, especially in their presentations, was accelerated by the availability of vocabulary help during their interaction with their CL peers. Their active participation during the peer interaction—required by the CL structure used by their teacher—contributed to the availability of vocabulary help.

Discussion

Our study has found that during the peer interaction, which followed an initial performance of individual accountability, our student participants utilized each other as learning sources. More specifically, these students helped each other with vocabulary needed in their performance of a subsequent level of individual accountability. This vocabulary help might not be available if these students work in a conventional group where interaction and cooperation are not structured and/or or in a learning setting where they work on their own. From a CHAT perspective, the availability of vocabulary help during CL activities was possible because of the other components in the activity systems, including the rules, specifically the procedures of the CL structures used in the classrooms that made peer interaction happen. The procedures required the student participants to carry out a number of activities that include performances/ presentations and peer interaction. When teachers follow the procedures of appropriate CL structures they select for their

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lessons (rules component), it is likely that their students will utilize each other as learning tools, including giving each other help on vocabulary. Hence, for a harmonious subject-tool relationship to happen, the rules—enforced by the classroom members, including teachers—need to be applied.

Jonassen and Rohrer-Murphy (1999) argued that activities are the medium of and precursor to conscious learning (pp. 62-64). As described in the previous section, our student participants were aware of how doing the required activities within CL helped them to complete the assigned learning task, i.e., sharing their understanding of the public notices (the target text), which was in line with the day's target language skill: speaking. During the initial performance of individual accountability, the student participants brought their realization of their need to prepare for the next level of individual accountability performance, such as preparing for the words to say. Next, the peer interaction was an arena in which the vocabulary help was accessible for the EFL learners. They saw the benefits of the peer interaction and thus actively participated in it. They might have acquired other vocabulary items as well because they were listening to their peers' initial and later presentations (Astuti & Barratt, 2018). In short, the sequence of individual accountability activities in CL promotes students' responsibility as learners, which resonates with Dewey's (2001) proposition that, "What makes it continuous, consecutive, or concentrated is that each earlier act prepares the way for the later acts, while these take account of or reckon with the results already attained—the basis of all responsibility" (p. 344).

Seen from the Interaction Hypothesis, the identified role of individual accountability in CL described earlier exemplifies the input that the student participants received from their peers, specifically after their first individual accountability performance and during the peer interaction. Krashen (1984) posits that input essential for language acquisition is comprehensible input, which contains "*I + 1*, structures 'slightly beyond' the acquirer's current state of competence" (p. 357). The vocabulary help that the student participants received during the peer interaction can be categorized as comprehensible input because the help resulted

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from the process of negotiation for meaning among the students who had different levels of language proficiency. For example, Budi stated that when learning through Think-Pair-Share, he received vocabulary help from his peer whose English was better than his (First Interview, 20150404). This help might have led him to make an adjustment in his sentences for the next presentation and achieve "an acceptable level of understanding" (Long, 1996). The interaction between low and high proficiency students may have also resulted in the availability of comprehensible input, which was essential for their second language acquisition (Krashen, 1984), especially for the development of their speaking. This was a language skill the student participants across sites found as the most challenging.

We also observed the availability of comprehensible output in the students' opportunities for receiving and giving vocabulary help. When students refine communication through natural talk during peer interaction with peers, they are producing comprehensible output (Swain, 1985). Because of the vocabulary help, the student participants enhanced their spoken production in the target language, at least at the level of vocabulary, i.e., words that they would use in their next presentation—the subsequent performance of individual accountability. This finding lends support to Gass and Mackey's (2007) as well as Benson, et al.'s (2013) propositions concerning the benefits of student-student interaction for second language acquisition. The authors argue that linguistic feedback that language learners receive during interaction helps them to produce modified output. With the aforementioned vocabulary help, our student participants could produce utterances in English with no Indonesian word(s) and with vocabulary that suited the given learning tasks (Field Notes, 20150404).

The availability of comprehensible input which then promoted the production of comprehensible output in the studied EFL classrooms was mediated by the negotiation of meaning that takes place during peer interaction in CL groups. Such negotiation triggers interactional adjustments (Long, 1996), hence, it is an important element of second language acquisition and learning. This element of the Interaction Hypothesis also explains the other

important roles that individual accountability in CL plays in enhancing EFL learning (see Astuti & Lammers, 2017a; Astuti & Barratt, 2018). Thus, the positive effect of negotiation in vocabulary learning is supported by our depiction of how individual accountability in CL is supportive of vocabulary acquisition. This lends support to the line of inquiry on the positive effect of negotiation in interaction on vocabulary learning of second language (Bilen & Tavil, 2015; Kagan, 1995; Long & Porter, 1985; McGroarty, 1989; Pica, 1994; Swain, 2005).

As discussed earlier, the present findings highlight the availability of the substantial elements of second language acquisition and learning (i.e., comprehensible input, comprehensible output, and negotiation of meaning) in CL groups, which can be attributed to CL's individual accountability activities. One of these activities is peer interaction, which take place in various configurations depending on each CL structure's procedure, e.g., students working in pairs, trios, foursome, etc. All require individual students' active participation. In light of these findings, our study offers a caveat to an existing study's findings which showed that small group interaction in second language learning resulted in significantly more instances of vocabulary learning than pair interaction (Dobao, 2014). Specifically, Dobao's study demonstrated how in interaction in a small group— as opposed to interaction in pairs—lexical language-related episodes (LREs) occurred, and they resulted in students' learning of vocabulary, which "…understood as both the acquisition of new lexical knowledge and the consolidation of previously existing knowledge" (p. 514). She went on to report, "Since groups produced significantly more lexical LREs than pairs and, in particular, more correctly resolved LREs, this means that overall small group interaction resulted in more instances of L2 [second language] vocabulary learning than pair interaction" (p. 514). Although our data did not allow us to say that the pairs working in the CL setting (i.e., Think-Pair-Share as described above) produced more lexical LREs than groups, we had evidence that during the interaction with their mates, the student participants gained new lexical knowledge (e.g., recall the word *gas station*) and consolidated the previously existing knowledge (e.g., recall the

words *employee-employer*). A possible explanation for this may be that our student participants—unlike those in Dobao's study—worked in CL setting in which their interaction in pairs (prescribed by the procedure of the selected structure) was in preparation for the next activity, i.e., individual presentation to a wider audience, which was also required. Thus, in order to succeed in this presentation, during the peer interaction (the Pair phase) individual students are required to contribute to each other's learning by serving as their sources of vocabulary. In other words, the interaction and cooperation are structured in such a way so that individual students' active participation happens. Through this active participation, which is required in any CL groups regardless of number of students, vocabulary learning takes place.

The findings presented in this article extend our knowledge of the significance of engaging learners in their language classrooms through active participation in peer interaction. In a study on LREs in pair and small group work, García Mayo and Zitler (2016) came to the following conclusion: "…if more learners are involved in an interaction and pool their knowledge, they have more possibilities to solve language-related problems" (p. 77). While our exploratory study does not contradict García Mayo and Zitler's, our findings suggest that CL's structured and required interaction as well as cooperation engage students who work either in pairs (as reported in this article) or in groups, and they heighten each other's learning (see Astuti & Lammers, 2017a; Astuti & Barratt, 2018). In other words, opportunities for active participation, which is substantial for enhancing EFL learning, are provided in and/or by CL.

The findings of the present study also shed light on how CL accommodates CLT implementation. Specifically, our findings showcase how through CL the tenets of CLT manifest in EFL classrooms: communication functions-oriented—meaningful and authentic language use (Larsen-Freeman, 1986, 2012; Richards, 2002) and discourse-oriented—making sense of the target language (Holliday, 1994). In doing so, we portrayed how CL accommodated individual students' presentations of their understanding of the target texts and how through structured peer interaction and cooperation EFL learners exchanged

information, provided feedback to each other, and made meaning in the target language.

Our findings also illuminate how CLT through CL make the essential elements of second language acquisition and learning available for EFL learners and thus reveal how CLT and CL enhance EFL learning. Research shows that lack of support for teachers (Musthafa, 2001) and their low mastery of CLT methodology (Alwasilah, 2012, 2013; Madya, 2007) are challenges for the implementation of CLT in Indonesia. Our study generates important information for supporting EFL teachers in their CLT implementation and for elevating their understanding of CLT methodology.

Conclusions and Suggestions

The purpose of the present study was to explore the roles of individual accountability—a key principle of CL—in enhancing EFL learning. Since little previous research has examined the processes within the use of CL including how its principles manifest in ESL/EFL classrooms, the present study helps fill in this gap by illuminating how individual accountability in CL materializes in EFL classrooms and plays an important role, i.e., providing opportunities for learners to give and receive vocabulary help. These opportunities are available due to the required activities within CL structures, specifically peer interaction that allows students to cooperate and supply each other with vocabulary needed to refine their sentences so that later they can perform better. Such peer interaction boosts individual students' active participation because they should be accountable to their peers by serving as their learning sources. Within this process, students negotiate meaning, gain comprehensible input, and produce comprehensible output; all supportive of second language acquisition and learning.

Although one of our data collection activities (i.e., participant observations) was carried out within a relatively short period of investigation (one month) and the first author being "the researcher as translator" (Temple & Young, 2004, p. 168)—from Indonesian to English of quotes from the interview transcription, the findings of the present study give us a better understanding of

the importance of implementing CL with fidelity so that it goes in the direction of helping EFL learners to attain communicative competence. We also recommend teachers to put students in heterogeneous groups, i.e., ones that comprise of students with varying levels of English proficiency, to promote the activities of giving and receiving help among learners. Both activities are equally important for improving their English ability.

For teacher educators, we make specific suggestions as the following. In both teacher education courses and professional development programs, teacher educators should provide opportunities for teacher candidates and practicing teachers to look at a closer look at the structured interaction and cooperation in CL groups. In addition, pre- and in-service teachers should have hands-on experiences of working in or learning through CL groups with their fellow teacher candidates/teachers. Providing them with such opportunities will allow them to make sense of how CL's principles promote students' active participation in their learning and how students having each other as learning sources (i.e., the acts of giving and receiving help) accelerates the process of acquiring and learning the target language. As the findings of the present study underscore the importance of individual accountability in CL, how other CL principles work and enhance EFL learning merit future research. Finally, we believe that implementing CL without enacting its principles is, to some degree, the same as not implementing it at all. "…principle is not what justifies an activity, for the principle is but another name for the continuity of the activity (Dewey, 2001).

About the Authors

Puji Astuti is an associate professor in the English Education Program at Universitas Negeri Semarang, Semarang, Indonesia. Her research interests include cooperative learning in TEFL, digital literacies, and identity construction. Recent publications include articles on cooperative learning in TEFL published in the TEFLIN Journal (2016, 2017), the Indonesian Journal of Applied Linguistics (2017), the Journal of Asia TEFL (2018, 2020), and an article on digital literacies published in the Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy (2021).

32 Leslie Barratt is 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).

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