

New Trends in the Learning and Teaching of Second Language Speaking Skills in Higher Education

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Edited by

Bettina Hermoso-Gomez,
Chiara La Sala and Sofia Martinho

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INTRODUCTION

This volume stems from the synergies created during the one-day conference, “Developing Speaking Skills,” organised by Bettina Hermoso-Gomez, Chiara La Sala, and Sofia Martinho and held at the University of Leeds in September 2017.

The aim of this collection of papers is to bring together researchers and language teachers working in Higher Education in the UK and internationally to discuss the challenges currently facing the field of speaking-skills pedagogy in second-language acquisition. These contributions intend to support the teaching community in the important task of developing speaking skills in our globalised world by more closely integrating language-learning theory into pedagogical practice. It is essential to push forward the under-researched field of speaking skills by showcasing original research and innovative practice, with a particular emphasis on the integration of emerging technologies.

These thought-provoking papers explore a wide range of topics, from task-authenticity in the classroom, to fluency development, social media, prosody and transferable skills. We hope all the chapters will lead to reflection on the topics and help practitioners improve their own classroom practice.

In the first chapter, Isabel Molina-Vidal presents a study looking at the impact of using an online written chat and its effect on grammatical accuracy and oral fluency in advanced learners of Spanish as a foreign language. Two main questions are explored: whether the use of online written chat improves oral fluency and accuracy; and whether it does so whilst favoring noticing and scaffolding according to a constructivist conception of learning.

In the next chapter, “The effectiveness of a blended learning method to develop the oral skills using VoiceThread: A case study of Caribbean university students,” Paula González investigates the effectiveness of a blended learning approach to enhance oral skills using the online educative tool, VoiceThread, with Caribbean university students. Moreover, the

article explores how technology can be used effectively to improve students' oral skills, comprehension and expression.

In Chapter Three, Alessia Plutino reports on the preliminary outcomes of an exploratory study on the use of Twitter and Storify, aimed at facilitating the development of reflective strategies to help multilingual students improve the accuracy and fluency of their L3 oral language production.

In her chapter, "Developing Italian Speaking Skills for Art Historians," Cinzia Bacilieri (University of York, Department of Language and Linguistic Science), describes the challenges of developing bespoke language skills for students of History of Art and Italian language for art historians. A primary purpose of this work is to illustrate experimental initiatives aimed at facilitating the acquisition of speaking skills essential to the history of art as a discipline. In addition, Italian art is used as a tool to develop critical thinking skills in a much broader language-learning context, with a particular focus on employability.

The next chapter, "Pronunciation of Suprasegments," delves into the type of nuclear-placement errors that Chilean speakers produce in oral contexts when old information is exchanged. Prosody in second-language learning is an under-researched area and, in this chapter, Daniela looks into prosodic rules in English and how native speakers tend to accent the last context word when there is new information.

To finalise the volume, Thomas Jochum-Critchley brings together research into second-language acquisition and classroom practice. The article presents and discusses the design and delivery of a set of innovative tasks aimed at developing accuracy and fluency, simultaneously, in the German classroom.

We hope these articles will inspire readers and spark a passion for further research and future projects. By bringing together scholars at different stages of their careers, we want to reflect the rich contributions that both early-career and well-established scholars can bring to the field and to academia in general.

We would like to take this opportunity to express our gratitude to all contributors for their inspiring work and their help in reviewing the manuscript thoroughly.

Buona lettura! Boa leitura! Buena lectura!

CHAPTER 1

THE IMPACT OF TEXT-BASED ONLINE CHAT ON ORAL FLUENCY AND GRAMMATICAL ACCURACY

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1. Introduction

Oral fluency remains one of the most challenging skills that students need to improve when learning a foreign language. Additionally, the development of oral fluency is often not addressed in the classroom or regarded as an aspect that cannot be taught (Tavakoli and Hunter 2017, 2). There is thus a need for intervention strategies that allow students to develop oral fluency while also maintaining grammatical accuracy.

On the other hand, the fields of CMC (computer-mediated-communication) and second-language acquisition have yielded numerous studies showing the positive impact of text-based chat in oral production (Sykes 2005, 399). However, according to Blake (2009, 227), more research is needed to establish the impact of this technology in oral fluency.

This chapter presents the results of an intervention using CMC with advanced students of Spanish. During five mock debates that took place in the first semester, in preparation for assessed debates in the second semester, it was observed that although learners were explicitly taught the uses of indicative and subjunctive modes in Spanish during their grammar lectures, most of them still failed to use them accurately in oral debates. Additionally, some students had fewer opportunities to participate or found it difficult to take turns in the debates because they were nervous or lost confidence when comparing themselves with more proficient peers. Finally, some students admitted that the biggest challenge was to be grammatically

accurate whilst remaining fluent. Therefore, it was determined that students needed some intervention to improve their skills in oral performance. In this sense, the idea of assessing the impact, if any, of text-based written chat in oral fluency and grammatical accuracy was based on the following assumptions about the affordances that SCMC (synchronous computer-mediated-communication) offers:

- a) It could arguably reduce students' anxiety, thus facilitating more participation while raising self-confidence.
- b) Hypothetically, it could give participants more time to focus on grammatical accuracy, especially the uses of Spanish indicative and subjunctive moods.
- c) Hypothetically, it could help them be more aware of complexity and accuracy in grammatical structures, since a transcript of the whole chat would be available to them.
- d) In theory, it could help students create a habit of thinking at a pace that allows them to focus on grammatical accuracy while remaining fluent. The text-based online chat may contribute to raising awareness of there being a range of speaking paces that can be regarded as fluent, and that some of these may provide the speaker with extra time (even if it is just a few seconds) to think about what is going to be said.

Accordingly, the design of this intervention seeks to integrate different aspects related to a variety of fields such as psychology, neurobiology and theories of second-language acquisition and learning that might play a role in developing oral fluency and grammatical accuracy.

Section 2 of this chapter will explore the main theories and conceptions of language learning that underpin the design of this study. Section 3 will describe the research and section 4 will present the results. The results will be discussed in Section 5; conclusions will be drawn in Section 6.

2. The Acquisition of a Second Language: Multiple Dimensions

Complexity theory draws on the principles of emergentism, which combines both cognitive and social dimensions of second-language acquisition (SLA) (Ellis 2015, 22). According to complexity theory, SLA originates from the

interactions between different systems and components: cognitive, social and psychological. The theory regards the system of SLA as open, dynamic and subject to constant change. The interactions between the system and the environment will cause some adjustments in the system, meaning that it is adaptive. Thus, when it comes to complexity theory in the process of language acquisition, there is no final stage, which implies that fossilization may be reversed (Larsen-Freeman 2011). This idea is confirmed by the neuroanatomy of the brain: although procedural memory tends to be inflexible and difficult to alter, procedural knowledge can be corrected with declarative information from the declarative memory. This is possible for two main reasons:

- 1) There is plasticity in the brain.
- 2) The brain's anatomy has shown that procedural memory can be accessed and influenced by other components (Schumann et al. 2004, 70).

Complexity theory offers a comprehensive framework to account for the various factors that have been considered for the design of the intervention proposed here: a cognitive perspective (how learning occurs); the social dimension of learning; and a psychological perspective. These will be discussed in the following subsections.

2.1 Learning vs. Acquisition

According to Krashen's monitor theory, learning implies a conscious and intentional process of studying a language, while acquisition involves unconscious processes of which the learner is unaware (Krashen 1981, 1). This distinction is reinforced by the brain's neurobiology and taxonomy in the form of an explicit or declarative memory and an implicit or non-declarative/procedural memory. In declarative memory, events and information can be recalled consciously, whereas implicit memory is formed partly through habit and emotional conditioning and is not accessed consciously (Schumann 2004, 4-5). However, learners do not produce some grammar rules accurately in oral tasks, despite such explicit instruction. According to Krashen, learning and acquisition are separate processes that do not influence each other and "learning does not turn into acquisition" (Krashen 1982, 83). However, studies in neuroanatomy support the idea that there is an interface in which declarative memory/learning and procedural memory/acquisition may influence each other because they share the same

cortical areas (Schumann 2004, 67). This means there is a window for intervention in students' interlanguage. The aim of this chapter is, therefore, to present an activity that will serve as an intervention to bridge the gap between conscious learning and unconscious acquisition, based on the premise that practice is needed to transform declarative knowledge into procedural knowledge (DeKeyser 1998, 49).

2.2 The Sociocultural Dimension: Learning through interaction

The sociocultural approach to language learning has mainly been developed from the work of Vygotsky and his concept of ZPD (zone of proximal development) (1978, 33). According to Vygotsky, learning occurs through the interaction and exchange of concepts between individuals who have different levels of knowledge. The zone of proximal development occurs where these levels intersect. Along the same lines, Ausubel (1985, 75) regarded learning as a process in which pre-existing ideas in the cognitive structure assimilate new concepts through interaction. Text-based online chat is an activity in which interaction, dialogue and exchange of ideas are involved and, therefore, it offers multiple opportunities for participants to create ZPDs. Additionally, a thorough reading of the chat's transcript would allow learners to analyse not only their own performance, but also structures produced by their more advanced peers.

2.3 Psychological Factors: Language anxiety and motivation

Psychological factors have been traditionally classified in three main groups: cognitive factors; conative factors; and affective factors (Ellis 2015, 37). Affective factors account for the positive or negative reactions of people to specific situations and, more specifically, for language anxiety, which is one of the key factors playing a role in the activity design of this critical study. Language anxiety is an affective factor defined by Ellis as 'the anxiety that arises from learner's emotional responses to the learning conditions they experience in a specific situation' (2015, 55). Some of the sources of this anxiety noted by Ellis (2015, 56) include:

- Learners comparing themselves to classmates who were more proficient.
- Learners being asked to communicate spontaneously in the second language.
- Learners' fear of negative assessment.

Considering that the FTF debates consist of assessed discussions in groups, some students may experience any of these types of anxiety. However, is anxiety positive or negative? According to Ellis, although anxiety is usually thought of as negatively impacting language learning, it should also be considered a potential catalyst for the learner to make more effort (2015, 57). Even though anxiety may have a positive impact on language learning as far as the Spanish module object of this study is concerned, some students admitted during the mock debates that took place in the first semester that they found it difficult to participate in some discussions and take their turn from their classmates. This could be the result of learners not feeling confident enough to express themselves in the target language as opposed to more proficient peers, or it could be due to personality traits such as being shy or less prone to participation. Ultimately, it was observed that the dynamics of FTF interaction were having an impact on some learners, shown by them participating less or having fewer opportunities to participate than their peers. Consequently, it was hypothesised that the activity of text-based online chat could contribute to reducing language anxiety in the following ways:

- Learners are not pressured in the same way as they are in a FTF situation to give an immediate answer since they can't see each other.
- There is no need for turn taking, thus avoiding the confrontation that may result from two or more people talking at the same time and the need to decide who is taking the turn.
- Learners have more time to think and plan their language and this may have an impact on their self-confidence, especially if they think they are less proficient than some of their peers.

Clément et al. reported that self-confidence is related to less anxiety in speaking the target language and higher levels of proficiency and competence (1980, 294). A decrease in anxiety levels may therefore raise learners' self-confidence because of their increased participation and greater opportunities to improve their language skills. In turn, such self-confidence could have a positive impact on what is known as 'attributional motivation,' the learner's perception of his/her own progress and how such a perception influences further language behaviour (Ellis 2015, 46). If learners assess their learning experience as positive and they perceive themselves as making progress, partly because language anxiety has been blocked, they might be more motivated to keep on working in order to achieve goals they might have previously thought impossible to reach. As Clément found out,

self-confidence is a key factor for predicting proficiency and acculturation in a second language (1986, 286). Accordingly, self-confidence is one of the variables that have been considered in researching the impact of text-based online chat in students' oral performance.

2.4 Contributions from CMC

Although text-based interaction has already been used for SLA, the computer-mediated feature of online writing has revealed the real potential of text-based communication (Warschauer 1997, 472). The aim of this section is to analyse some of the benefits of CMC for SLA in comparison to FTF communication in the light of studies using online written chat. Some of the benefits that will be discussed include:

- More time for task planning.
- More opportunities for noticing.
- Automatization.

2.4.1 More time for task planning

In his trade-off hypothesis, Skehan (2009) argues that attentional capacity and working memory are limited and defines successful performance as characterized by the following three components: complexity, accuracy and fluency (CAF). Accordingly, if the speaker focuses attention and resources on one of these aspects, there will be a negative impact on the others (2009, 510-511). However, there are specific conditions under which learners will prioritise one aspect (e.g., fluency over complexity) and by manipulating these conditions some abilities could be enhanced over others (Skehan 1998). Skehan further identifies the opportunity for planning as one of the key conditions that influences performance in the three components, CAF. Similarly, Sauro and Smith analysed the impact of increased online planning-time in the acquisition of the second language when using chats. More specifically, the study reports the results of analysing both overt and covert L2 output according to three main aspects: syntactic complexity; grammatical gender; and lexical diversity. Online planning refers to the changes, deletions and decisions chat participants make while performing the task in the chat and which lead (or not) to the production of an output (an actual piece of text posted in the chat). The study is based on both covert (text not shared in the chat and only seen by the video recording the participant's screens) and overt productions (those productions that are

eventually sent and shared in the chat). Such productions are divided into different categories according to the degree of monitoring, alteration or deletion of the text: 'pristine text' (not subject to change and posted in the chat); 'deleted text' (erased and never posted in the chat); 'post-deleted text' (text that was corrected and posted in the chat) and 'post-deleted deleted text' (changed and corrected but eventually deleted and not shared in the chat). According to the study, post-deleted productions showed higher levels of syntactic complexity, grammatical gender and lexical diversity than pristine or deleted texts, thus implying that participants use online planning time to focus on the form of the L2 and are more careful about the final outcome (2010, 554). This seems to lead to the conclusion that if more time is available for learners to plan, their performance will be improved.

2.4.2 Noticing

Schmidt developed the noticing hypothesis in several works (Ellis 2015, 14), whereby he concluded that the more learners notice, the more they learn. Conscious learning and awareness are therefore seen as essential elements for connecting input and acquisition (Ellis 2015, 15). Further, in analysing noticing in synchronous computer-mediated text-based and voice chats, Sotillo (2010) concludes that text-based chats facilitate noticing of errors and provide more opportunities to focus on linguistic form (2010, 366).

2.4.3 Automatization

According to Skehan's trade-off hypothesis, text-based written chat facilitates noticing and focus on form (Sauro and Smith, 2010). However, the combination of both declarative (accuracy and complexity) and procedural (fluency) knowledge is necessary for successful performance. So, how can conscious knowledge of the rules be transformed into acquisition without diminishing fluency? According to Schumann, learners are not fluent because they do not have enough opportunities to automatize knowledge and store it in procedural memory (2004, 60). Procedural memory is formed through habits (2004, 5), meaning that continuous practice and automatization will contribute to the construction of procedural memory or acquisition. According to this, I hypothesize that regular use of text-based online chat may contribute to:

- a) Automatization of grammatical accuracy through continuous practice of linguistic structures in combination with noticing and time availability factors.

- b) Increased fluency. Learners acquire the habit of working within a timespan, which is slightly higher than the one in FTF conversations (giving them time to focus on grammar), but is also limited, meaning that they need to keep a certain degree of fluency. Regular practice with text-based online chat may contribute to creating the habit of working/thinking at a pace that is fluent while providing time to plan the message. Such a habit could be reproduced later in FTF situations since, according to Aglioti (1999, 373), procedural memory 'is available in contexts that are identical or very similar to the original learning situation.'

Figure 1 summarises the contributions of text-based online chat to SLA according to the various approaches that have been discussed in this chapter:

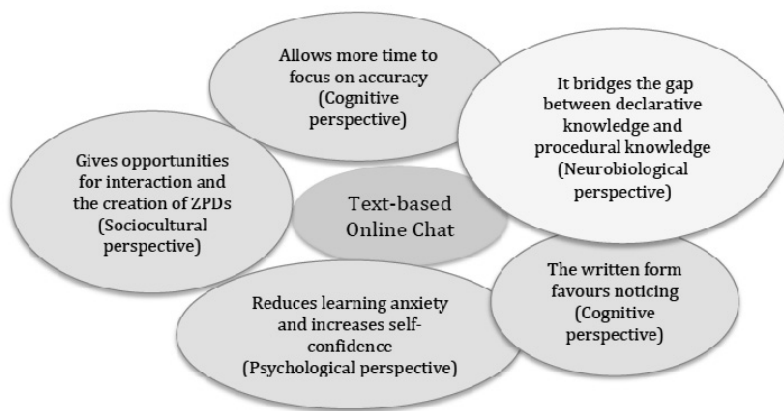


Fig. 1 Contributions of text-based online chat to SLA according to theories of SLA, Neurobiological approaches and CMC

3. The Research: task and research questions

The research consisted of participation in a one-hour text-based online chat discussing a topic of current interest and related to Spanish speaking countries. Prior to that discussion, learners had the opportunity to attend a lecture about the same topic and, the week after the online discussion, students had an assessed FTF debate about that same topic. Given the limited amount of time available in FTF conversations, the initial hypothesis was that the use of text-based online chat would allow learners a little more time to think about grammar. However, time in an online chat is not

unlimited (the topic of discussion may change if participants are too slow in posting their messages), which means that participants still need to be fluent. Additionally, the written mode of the conversation could facilitate noticing as well as scaffolding—co-construction of knowledge and expansion of ZPDs. Therefore, the main aim of the study was to observe whether the text-based online chat could contribute to enhancing both oral fluency and grammatical accuracy in FTF debates through greater time to plan, noticing and scaffolding.

3.2 Research methodology and collection of data

The online chats were organised using the Adobe Connect platform and students could participate from anywhere (they were not physically in the same room). Participants were given a link to access the chat room and, although specific roles were assigned to students for the FTF debates, they logged in using their real names to avoid negative verbal duelling (Cook 2000, 64) or flaming, which could be favoured by anonymity. However, the opinions and views shared by students in the online chat were those according to the roles assigned to them for the FTF debate. After the online chat discussion was finished, participants got a transcript of the whole conversation for further reading, analysis and reflection.

As far as data collection is concerned, two main sources were used:

- Comparison of individual student's marks obtained in FTF debates with and without previous practice in online written chat.
- Analysis of transcripts of written chats and recordings of FTF debates.
- Questionnaire about the impact of text-based online chat on self-confidence.

To determine the extent to which practice with online written chat had an impact on grammatical accuracy and fluency, grades obtained by individual students for those skills in an FTF debate following an online chat, were compared with grades obtained in a FTF debate which was not rehearsed beforehand through online chat. Students were thus compared against themselves to obtain more stable results. This also avoided the inconsistency of comparing students who had differing language levels, differing interest in the subject, or even different personality traits. The marks given to students were obtained after considering some language and

content criteria including grammatical accuracy and oral fluency. Fig. 2 shows the assessment grid for oral debates:

Student:	Fail 20-39	Third 40-49	2:2 50-59	2:1 61-69	First 70+
LANGUAGE					
Range & sophistication of constructions					
Accuracy of constructions					
Vocabulary / Idiomatic range					
Pronunciation and Intonation					
Fluency, communicative effectiveness and interaction					
Style, register and tone					
CONTENT					
Relevance of contributions to the debate					
Sophistication and relevance of ideas					
Comments which justify the mark:			Mark (20-90): _____		

Fig. 2 Assessment Grid for Oral Debates

Accordingly, the marks obtained by a student for their accuracy of constructions and fluency in a FTF debate following an online chat were compared with the marks in the same categories obtained in a FTF debate for which students did not participate in an online chat in the previous week. Therefore, undergraduates could not participate every week in the online chats but were asked to participate every second week or, if they participated two weeks in a row, they could not participate for the next two weeks. Students belonged to different groups in the same module and were being assessed by different tutors. Consequently, participation was double marked by tutors to avoid bias.

Transcripts of the online chats and recordings of the FTF debates were kept for analysis and double-marking purposes. Transcripts of the online chats were analysed in order to identify any instances of noticing (self-correction of errors or reformulation of sentences for grammatical accuracy) and scaffolding (collaboration and assistance between participants). Analysis of both online chat and recordings of FTF debates was carried out to discover if participants had used identical constructions in both, which would mean the online chat had been used as a planning task for the FTF debate.

3.3 Participants

Thirty-nine undergraduates participated in the study, all of whom were taking the module, “Practical Language Skills in Spanish 3.” All students had a level of Spanish ranging from B2 to C1. Differences between the levels of participants were not an issue. In fact, one of the approaches underpinning the design of the task was social constructivism and the concept of ZPD. Therefore, a combination of levels could favour the occurrence and expansion of ZPDs among participants. Moreover, students' marks were being compared against themselves and, therefore, differences in the degree of competence in Spanish could not affect the results.

4. Results

Figure 3 shows general results when comparing marks obtained in FTF debates with previous practice in online chat, and those marks obtained in FTF debates without prior participation in online chat. The chart displays results of higher marks in grammatical accuracy (69%) and fluency (49%) with text-based online-chat participation; higher marks in grammatical accuracy (26%) and fluency (38%) without text-based online chat participation; and equal marks in grammatical accuracy (5%) and fluency (13%) in both weeks with and without participation in text-based online chat.

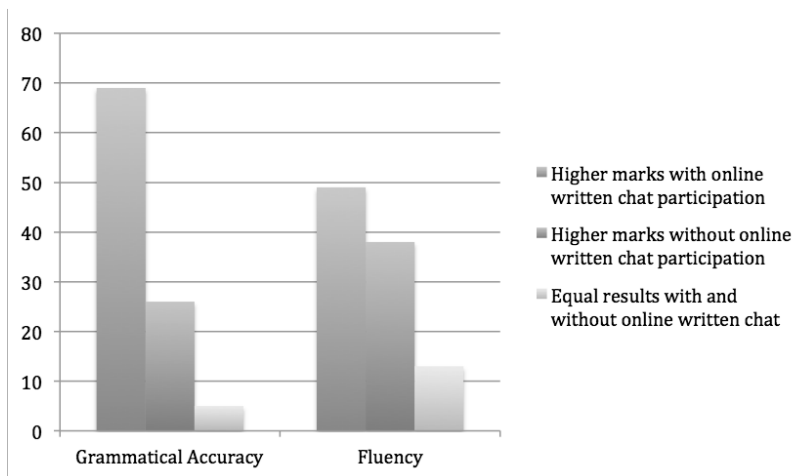


Fig. 3 General Results in Grammatical Accuracy and Fluency

These are general results in which the grades for accuracy and fluency have been analysed independently. However, according to Skehan's trade-off hypothesis, fluency decreases when the speaker is focusing attention on grammatical accuracy. In this sense, it is also relevant to consider the variations in the accuracy-fluency pair in individual students. Such variations in performance after participation in online chat include: higher grammatical accuracy and fluency (43.5%); lower grammatical accuracy and fluency (23%); equal grammatical accuracy and fluency (0%); higher grammatical accuracy and lower fluency (13%); lower grammatical accuracy and higher fluency (2.5%); higher grammatical accuracy and equal fluency (13%); equal grammatical accuracy and higher fluency (2.5%); and equal grammatical accuracy and lower fluency (2.5%). Fig. 4 shows in more detail variations in performance in FTF debates in terms of grammatical accuracy and fluency for individual students after practice with online chat.

Type of Result	Total 39	% Percentage
Higher Grammatical Accuracy and Fluency	17	43.5%
Lower Grammatical Accuracy and Fluency	9	23%
Equal Grammatical Accuracy and Fluency	0	0%
Higher Grammatical Accuracy and Lower Fluency	5	13%
Lower Grammatical Accuracy and Higher Fluency	1	2.5%
Higher Grammatical Accuracy and Equal Fluency	5	13%
Equal Grammatical Accuracy and Higher Fluency	1	2.5%
Equal Grammatical Accuracy and Lower Fluency	1	2.5%

Fig. 4 Types of Results in Pairs Grammatical Accuracy-Fluency

4.2 Analysis of Transcripts and Recordings

Analysis of the online-chat transcripts was mainly focused on three different aspects:

- 1) Identifying examples of noticing, especially the use of indicative/subjunctive moods.
- 2) Cases of scaffolding or peer collaboration.
- 3) Transfer of sophisticated grammatical constructions or information from the text-based online chat to the FTF debate.

4.2.1 Noticing

Noticing was identified when participants amended a previous participation that they considered incorrect and provided a modified version. In most cases, the amendment was indicated with the star key *. A total of 35 instances of noticing were found in the online debates corresponding to the following different categories:

- Grammar (indicative-subjunctive, prepositions, verb-subject agreement): 19.
- Spelling: 11.
- Vocabulary: 3.

Table 1 shows some instances of noticing. All amended forms either related to grammar, vocabulary or spelling errors have been highlighted in **bold**. Relevant comments that contribute to analysis are highlighted in **bold** as well.

Table 1. Instances of noticing in text-based online chat.

Debate 2. La globalización (Globalisation).
<p>██████:Pero eso solo pasaria en un mundo ideal pq la verdad es que son las empresas que acaben gobernando en cuanto a la unfluencia que tienen sobre el gobierno</p> <p>Molly*acaban y *influencia jaja</p>
Debate 3. El conflicto del Sáhara Occidental (The Conflict in the Western Sahara).
<p>Lucie Coudre:Deben ser lazos fuertes si superan su responsabilidad a proteger naciones en conflicto. especialmente cuando hay tantas violaciones de derechos humanos en el Sahara</p> <p>Lucie Coudre:si superen' (subjunctive i think haha)</p>
Debate 3. El conflicto del Sáhara Occidental (The Conflict in the Western Sahara).
<p>Samuel Las reivindicaciones por la tierra de anteayer no tiene validez ninguna según las potencias actuales</p> <p>Jacob:Totalmente jacob!</p> <p>Samuel:**de antes</p>

In the first example in Debate 2, the participant uses '**acaben**' (subjunctive form) in the first text but then makes a correction and changes to '**acaban**' (indicative form), which is the correct form for the Spanish relative clause construction '**son las empresas que...**' [**The companies are the ones who end up ruling**]. The same student also corrects a typing/spelling error in the word '**unfluencia**' and provides the correct form, '**influencia**'.

The second example extracted from Debate 3 shows how the participant changes from '**superan**' (indicative form) to '**superen**' (subjunctive form) in a conditional structure. The noticing is also indicated by the student's comment '**(subjunctive I think haha)**'. However, the change from indicative to subjunctive in this case is wrong. This is a conditional structure of Type I, also called 'real conditional,' as opposed to 'conditional II,' used to express a less probable hypothesis. Type 1 conditional sentences follow the pattern 'si + presente de indicativo + indicative' / 'if + present indicative + indicative.' This is an example of noticing a complex structure but failing to apply the rule.

An example of noticing a lexical error is illustrated in Debate 3, in which the participant notices that '**anteayer**' (the day before yesterday) makes no sense in the context and then provides the correct form, '**de antes**' (before/prior).

On the other hand, although there are some instances in which noticing occurs, there are other examples in which correct uses of the indicative and subjunctive have not been noticed, or where the same participant has used the same construction correctly and incorrectly in the same online chat. A total of 69 examples of not-noticed instances have been identified: 52 not-noticed grammar errors; 15 not-noticed lexical errors; and 2 examples in which the same structure is used both correctly and incorrectly in the same discussion. Table 2 includes some of these examples; the not-noticed structure has been highlighted in **bold**.

Table 2. Instances of not-noticing in text-based online chat.

The structure is not noticed and the sentence is incorrect	
Debate 1. Los derechos de los mapuche (The Rights of the Mapuche Community).	
██████	Sí, lacon es increíble que un gobierno puede ignorar una población tan grande!

Debate 2. La globalización (Globalisation).
Eliza Hama: es una lastima porque es evidente que haya muchas otras casos como eso en el mundo
The same structure is used both incorrectly and correctly
Debate 3. El conflicto del Sáhara Occidental (The Conflict in the Western Sahara).
Eliza Hama: Por mas que una decada se ha abandonado el enfoque referendum ademas se ha olvidado la idea al derecho a autodeterminacion, pronto los refugiados se convertiran en una amenaza porque quieren venganza y solo quieren que sus vidas regresan a normalidad
Eliza Hama: porque quieren un cambio y solo quieren que sus vidas regresen a normalidad

The example in Debate 1 shows the structure '**es increíble que**' [it is unbelievable that] followed by the indicative, '**puede,**' instead of the correct subjunctive mood, '**puedan.**' In this case, the participant failed to notice the structure requiring a subjunctive. The example in Debate 2 shows the structure, '**es evidente que,**' followed by the subjunctive, '**haya,**' [it is evident that] although it should be followed by the indicative, 'hay.' In Debate 3, there is an instance in which the same participant uses the structure incorrectly at the beginning of the discussion ('**quieren que**' [they want that]), followed by the indicative, '**regresan,**' but then uses the same structure accurately later on ('**quieren que**' [they want that], followed by subjunctive, '**regresen.**'

4.2.2 Scaffolding and the Co-construction of Knowledge

As far as scaffolding and the expansion of ZPDs are concerned, some cases have been identified in which participants collaborate to increase knowledge, either by providing new vocabulary or by sharing sources of information to further prepare the FTF debate. A total of 6 examples of scaffolding have been found in the online chats: 4 examples related to the sharing of information or online sources and 2 instances in which new vocabulary was provided. Table 3 illustrates some of those examples. A translation of the relevant contributions is provided in square brackets, and the specific information that was shared has been highlighted in **bold**.

Table 3. Co-construction of knowledge and ZPDs.

Debate 2. La globalización (Globalisation).
<p>Joseph: que es la perzosidad, Joseph:?! [What does 'perzosidad' mean, :?]</p> <p>Kitty: jaja [ha, ha]</p> <p>Kitty: laziness [laziness]</p> <p>Kitty: creo [I think]</p> <p>Joseph: gracias haha [thank you, haha]</p> <p>: jaja no es asi, [haha that is not the word]</p> <p>Kitty: es pereza [it is 'pereza']</p> <p>Kitty: disculpa [sorry]</p> <p>Molly 2: jaja no pasa nads Kitty [haha no worries (misspelling 'nads'), 1]</p> <p>Molly 2: nada [nothing] (correction of misspelled 'nada')</p> <p>Joseph: jaja yo la busqué ahora! No te preocupes :) [I have just looked the word up! Don't worry]</p>
Debate 3. El conflicto del Sáhara Occidental (The Conflict in the Western Sahara).
<p>: Lucie, porque Francia vetó? [Lucie, why did France veto it?] [...]</p> <p>Lucie Coudre: No sé... lo he escuchado en un podcast en RTVE pero no explica por qué [I don't know... I heard it in a podcast from RTVE but it does not explain why]</p> <p>Lucie Coudre: supongo por sus alianza con marruecos [I suppose because of its alliances with Morocco] [...]</p> <p>Hannah: vale, lo buscaré antes de la semana que viene, supongo que si [Ok, I will look for it before next week, I suppose that is the reason why]</p> <p>Lucie Coudre: Los dos países tienen fuertes lazos [both countries have strong ties]</p> <p>: Sí es verdad [yes, that is true]</p> <p>: Exacto [exactly]</p> <p>: No hicieron el referendun porque no se sabia los criterios de identificación de los votantes [They did not celebrate the referendum because there were no criteria to identify the voters]</p> <p>Samuel: http://elpais.com/diario/2010/11/20/opinion/1290207606_850215.htm</p>

Debate 7. El trabajo infantil en Bolivia (Child Labour in Bolivia).

[SS]:sin embargo, hay niños que sólo trabajan **por especie** [however, there are children who only work in kind]

[Laura Alice]:que quiere decir por eso [SS] - **por especie** [what do you mean with that [SS] – in kind]

[SS]:lo he oído en la clase de [Joseph]: jaja, creo que es cuando por ejemplo si trabajan en una frutería, se les pagan con frutas en lugar de dinero [I heard it in [SS] 's lecture haha, I think that it is when for example if they work in a fruit market and they are paid with fruits instead of money]

[Laura Alice]:ahhhhhh,vale, gracias!! [Ohhhhhh, ok, thank you!!]

Debates 2 and 7 are examples in which one participant is helping other peers to increase their vocabulary: '**laziness**' in Debate 2 and '**in kind**' in Debate 7. Interestingly, in Debate 2, when asked about the meaning of the word '**perzosidad**,' the participant realised that she had used the wrong word. After checking for the precise word, she gave the correct answer ('**pereza**') and the English translation ('**laziness**').

Debate 3 is an example of the exchange of online resources to prepare information for the FTF debate. One of the participants shared information about a podcast and another participant included the link to an online article about the topic. This information was used by one of the students when she said, '**lo buscaré antes de la semana que viene**' [I will look for it before next week], meaning that the exchange of information in the online chat had prompted further research of the topic.

4.2.3 Transfer from text-based online chat to FTF debates.

The analysis and comparison of online written chat transcripts and recorded FTF debates was focused on identifying instances where information and knowledge from one mode (text-based online chat) had been transferred to the other mode (FTF debate). The analysis included the following elements:

- Complex grammatical structures. Sophisticated constructions are understood to be, for example, subordinate sentences which demand the use of either the indicative or the subjunctive, and which were used in the online written chat and in the FTF debate by the same participants.

- Information about the topic shared in the online written chat, and that was used in the FTF debate.

At least 4 examples of transfer were identified: 2 successful transfers of sophisticated constructions; 1 example of information shared in the online written chat; and 1 example of the attempted but failed transfer of a sophisticated construction. Table 4 displays some examples of the transfer of sophisticated structures or information from online written chat to FTF debate. The sophisticated constructions or information have been highlighted in bold; an explanation of the nature of the sophisticated construction is provided in square brackets; and a translation of the information shared is included in square brackets.

Table 4. Transfer of sophisticated structures and information from text-based online chat to FTF debate.

Sophisticated structure used in online written chat	Grammatical structure used in FTF debate
<p>Ann: Solo es que es una lastima que hayan tantos aspects negativos tambien [Subordinate sentence: it is a pity that + subjunctive 'hayan'] Debate 2. La globalización (Globalisation)</p>	<p>█: me parece una lástima que hayan tantos restaurantes Debate 2. La globalización (Globalisation) (min. 32:06)</p>
<p>Ann: para mi, vivimos en sociedades con numerosos tipos de personas. Es esencial que seamos meticulosos sobre sus sentimientos y creencias [Subordinate sentence: it is essential that + subjunctive 'seamos'] Debate 4. ¿Qué es el arte? (What is art?)</p>	<p>█: vivimos en una sociedad con diferentes tipas de personas y es esencial que seamos meticulosos sobre las creencias y sentimientos de cualquier grupo de personas Debate 4. ¿Qué es el arte? (What is art?) (min. 19:46)</p>
Information shared in online written chat	Information used in FTF debate
<p>Zoe Treadwell: Estoy de acuerdo en el senitimiento de que hay muchas ventajas de la globalizacion, pero</p>	<p>█: [...] una amiga mía dijo algo interesante que estaba en China y en cada lugar había un</p>

<p>lo que me preocupa es su impacto cultural, porque por ejemplo se puede encontrar un McDonald a la cima de una montana muy preciosa en China [You can find a McDonalds at the top of a beautiful mountain in China]</p> <p>Alice: estoy de acuerdo [redacted], es una lastima que exista un mcdonalds alli, quita la atencion de la tradicion</p> <p>[...]</p> <p>Alice: Claro que es una lastima que haya mcdonalds en cada sitio, pero al mismo tiempo la globalizacion puede ayudar en el sentido de que otras empresas bajan sus precios con el fin de que la gente compre su comida</p> <p>Debate 2. La globalización (Globalisation)</p>	<p>McDonalds [A friend of mine mentioned something interesting that she was in China and there were McDonalds everywhere] y es por esta razón que pienso que la globalización puede llevar aspectos negativos [...] me parece una lástima que hayan tantos restaurantes McDonalds, por ejemplo, en sitios bonitos como montañas. Estaba encima de la montaña [I find it is a pity that there are so many McDonalds restaurants, for example, in beautiful places, like mountains. It was at the top of the mountain]</p> <p>Debate 2. La globalización (Globalisation) (min. 31:31)</p>
<p>Sophisticated construction used in online written chat</p>	<p>Failed attempt to use the sophisticated construction in FTF debate</p>
<p>[redacted]: entiendo su punto de vista [redacted], quizás hay que cambiar la manera de pensar en bolivia. sin embargo, no debemos olvidar que hay niños que no podrían comer si no trabajarán [Conditional II sentence: they would not be able to (conditional tense) survive + past subjunctive 'trabajarán']</p> <p>Debate 7. El trabajo infantil en Bolivia (Child labour in Bolivia)</p>	<p>[redacted]: también tenemos que pensar que pensar en los niños de ahora que si no trabajan no podrían sobrevivir. Y no solo ellos, pero sus padres también.</p> <p>Debate 7. El trabajo infantil en Bolivia (Child labour in Bolivia) (min. 33:47)</p>

Examples in debates 2 and 4 are both instances in which a sophisticated construction followed by a subjunctive has been successfully used in both online-chat and FTF debate: '**es una lástima que hayan**' and '**es esencial**

que seamos.' In Debate 2, there was also a transfer of information: a participant in the online written chat shared a piece of information related to the existence of McDonalds in the mountains of China; this was used in the FTF debate by another participant in the same online written chat.

Finally, in Debate 7 there is an example in which a clear attempt is made to use the same structure but it is not delivered with complete accuracy in the FTF debate: 'no **podrían** comer **si no trabajarán**' (online chat); conditional II subordinate sentence si+ past subjunctive 'trabajaran' + conditional 'podrían' correct use / 'si no **trabajan** no **podrían** sobrevivir' (conditional I and II have been mixed up: si + indicative 'trabajan' + conditional 'podrían' = incorrect use). The use of the indicative ('**trabajan**') in the FTF debate should have been a past subjunctive form ('**trabajaran**') as in the text-based online chat.

However, despite these instances of transfer, it was also observed that some participants used a wider range of sophisticated constructions in online chat than in the FTF debates. Table 5 shows some of these examples.

Table 5. Complex grammatical constructions in text-based online chat not transferred to FTF debate.

Sophisticated construction used in online written chat	FTF debate
<p>[User]: Absolutamente, como he dicho, hay una historia española muy larga y es importante que no pierdan eso. [Subordinate sentence: it is important that + subjunctive 'pierdan'] Debate 6. Bilingüismo en los EEUU (Bilingualism in the USA).</p>	<p>No use of that construction</p> <p>Debate 6. Bilingüismo en los EEUU (Bilingualism in the USA).</p>
<p>[User]: Entiendo, y veo su punto [User], es una preocupación pero muchos de los niños están en una posición en la que quieren ayudar a los padres. Por mucho que digamos que la situación es injusto o inhumano, deberíamos reconocer que esta es la que eligen a muchos de los niños [Subordinate sentence: No matter that we say + subjunctive 'digamos']</p>	<p>No use of that construction</p> <p>Debate 7. El trabajo infantil en Bolivia (Child Labour in Bolivia).</p>

Debate 7. El trabajo infantil en Bolivia (Child Labour in Bolivia).	
<p>■:si, desde un punto de vista de una persona del mundo desarrollado es muy fácil juzgar, pero si estuviéramos en la situación de estas familias, no tendríamos otra opción que pedir la ayuda de nuestros niños [Conditional II subordinate sentence: if we were (subjunctive)...we would not have (conditional)]</p> <p>Debate 7. El trabajo infantil en Bolivia (Child Labour in Bolivia).</p>	<p>No use of that construction</p> <p>Debate 7 El trabajo infantil en Bolivia (Child Labour in Bolivia).</p>

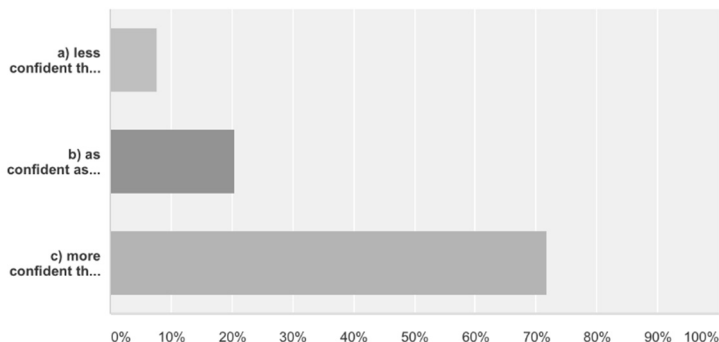
In all these instances, a participant used a complex structure in the online chat that was not used in the FTF debate.

4.3 The impact of text-based online chat on self-confidence.

After participation in an FTF debate, students were asked how they felt about using the online chat before participating in the FTF debate, in terms of self-confidence. Fig. 5 shows the majority of participants (71.79%) felt more confident in the FTF debate after participating in text-based online written chat.

1. How did you feel in the oral debate in terms of confidence after having participated in the chat?

Answered: 39 Skipped: 0



Answer Choices	Responses
a) less confident than when I do not participate in a chat	7.69% 3
b) as confident as when I do not participate in a chat	20.51% 8
c) more confident than when I do not participate in a chat	71.79% 28
Total	39

5. Discussion

The comparison of marks in FTF debates with and without previous practice in text-based online chat seems to indicate that participation in online chat contributes to a higher grammatical accuracy (69%). However, the impact of online chat on increasing fluency is comparatively lower (49%) and there is no remarkable difference between those participants who showed higher fluency (49%) and those with less fluency (38%) or equal fluency (13%). An analysis of variability in the pair (grammatical accuracy and fluency) shows the criteria of both grammatical accuracy and fluency increase in 43.5% of participants. On the other hand, 23% obtained lower marks in both grammatical accuracy and fluency. It is also worth noting, however, that 26% of participants obtained higher marks in grammatical accuracy, while their fluency was lower or equal to the participations without prior practice in text-based online chat (13% respectively). This is in tune with Skehan's trade-off hypothesis, meaning that the more the speaker focuses on grammatical accuracy, the less fluent he/she becomes.