
Peer interaction loses its impact on second language acquisition in online classes in comparison to face-to-face courses

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Language acquisition and social network theory

Wei (1994): the make-up (in particular the ethnic composition) of an individual's social network has a far greater impact on their language selection than variables such as gender or age

Chambers (2009): social networks are active influencers of language development

Kurata (2010): informal social relations enabling social exposure to the TL – the chief agent in second language learning

Bardovi-Harlig & Bastos (2011): intensity of interaction has a significant effect on the recognition and production of conventional expressions

Social Networks and Language Setting the Scene

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Language acquisition and social network theory

residence and study abroad lead to significant gains in students' language proficiency (Opper, Teichler & Carlson 1990; Meara 1994; Lapkin, Hart & Swain 1995; Coleman 1998; Freed 1998; Huebner 1998; Ingraham & Peterson 2004; Isabelli-García 2006)

extensive variation both in the amount of contact students have with members of the local community and in their linguistic outcomes (Kinginger 2009)

- so far, no rigorous quantitative data-driven analyses have been carried out measuring
- social network structure and peer interaction dynamics vs. SLA/TLA outcomes
- face-to-face interaction
- horizontal vs. vertical learning
- the impact of COVID-19-induced school closures

Site selection and population

353 students from 41 countries (5 continents) taking part in an intensive Polish language course in Warsaw

2017, 2019, 2020

Most participants from post-Soviet countries

POLONICUM
*Centre of Polish Language and Culture
for Foreigners*

The study



PEERLANG

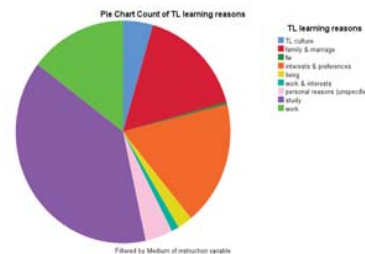
How Peer Interaction Mediates SLA
(from a Social Network Perspective)



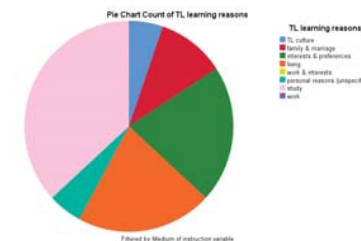
Polonicum course participants

Methodological tools

- i. questionnaire measuring the influence of individual and group factors on language outcomes
 - communication in different contexts and languages
 - psychological variables
- ii. placement and final tests measuring participants' TL competence at the beginning and end of the course
- iii. PEERLANG ego-network questionnaire
- iv. interviews with all the language instructors and volunteer students



- Face-to-face:
1. Studying
 2. Interests
 3. Family
 4. Work



- Online:
1. Studying
 2. Living
 3. Interests
 4. Family

DIFFERENCES IN MOTIVATION

Differences in motivation

Learning out of class in minutes/day:

Instructional mode	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Effect size	p-value
Face-to-face	251	81.43	85.079	.000	.729
Online	21	88.00	56.586		

Degree of motivation to learn the target language:

Instructional mode	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Effect size	p-value
Face-to-face	268	4.37	.832	.114	<.001
Online	21	5.52	.873		

Changes in the level of immersion

% of interactions with classmates in the context of overall communication:

Instructional mode	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Effect size	p-value
Face-to-face	223	53.04	29.186	.097	<.001
Online	21	19.48	24.361		

Communication patterns

% of voice chats in TL:

Instructional mode	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Effect size	p-value
Face-to-face	240	9.16	19.081	.081	<.001
Online	21	32.38	39.485		

Voice chats in minutes/day:

Instructional mode	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Effect size	p-value
Face-to-face	213	44.09	47.295	.004	.366
Online	21	54.29	65.922		

I think it really was **being in context with many, many new words and vocabulary**, and then really taking the time to looking it up and writing it down. And then you come across it 2 days later and you start learning, because then you repeat. It's probably that which created the biggest progress, I would say.

Interview #6
M, 29

Writing and vocabulary

% of texting in TL:

Instructional mode	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Effect size	p-value
Face-to-face	240	12.54	17.031	.049	<.001
Online	21	23.38	35.150		

Improvement in writing:

Instructional mode	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Effect size	p-value
Face-to-face	124	2.67	1.280	.000	.993
Online	21	2.67	1.713		

Improvement in vocabulary:

Instructional mode	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Effect size	p-value
Face-to-face	263	3.56	1.113	.014	.049
Online	21	3.05	1.431		

I just pick up certain things, like "train station". **Some stuff you just wouldn't learn otherwise**, I just pick them up. Like directions, like "wschodnia", "zachodnia", they just exist as train stations I have to go through in my day-to-day life.

Interview #8
F, 26

Why is online learning not conducive to some aspects of language progress?

- immersion?
- peer interaction?
- teaching focus / course curriculum?

**BLENDED
LEARNING**

Thank you very much for your attention! Stay safe and healthy!
Dziękujemy za uwagę!

References:

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