Collaborative writing in the EFL Secondary Education classroom: Comparing group, pair and individual work

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Abstract

This study investigates the benefits of collaborative writing (CW) tasks in a 1st ESO setting. Based on strong socio-cognitive and communicative methodologies rationale, studies examining the benefits of CW use in Foreign Language (FL) learning are on the increase. However, papers about it in Spanish Secondary Education classes are scarce. Moreover, most CW published studies have compared individuals and pairs CW outcomes. This study is a partial replication of Fernández Dobao's (2012) paper, in which I analyse students' accuracy, fluency and syntactic complexity outcomes when writing the same text individually (n=18), in pairs (n=10) and in small groups (n=7). Findings suggest CW and a higher number of participants in the collaboration generally benefit texts' accuracy, fluency and syntactic complexity. However, individually written texts showed higher complexity via subordination than the ones written collaboratively. Limitations of the study and its pedagogical implications are discussed.

Key words: *Collaborative writing*; *Individual, pair and group work*; *Secondary Education*

1. Introduction

English as a Foreign Language (EFL) scholars and practitioners would agree about students need to develop (generally in an integrated manner) the so called four skills: reading, writing, listening and speaking. Moreover, in Spain current teachers of English in Secondary Education are required to do so by the last educational law (LOMCE in BOE, 2013). In this paper, I will focus on writing. As many researchers have pointed out, most Second Language (L2) and Foreign Language (FL) writing pedagogy so far has asked students to create their texts individually –limiting pair and group work to brainstorming and/or reviewing activities. However, there has been an increased interest in recent SLA research on FL learners' collaboration throughout the whole writing process (e.g. Fernández Dobao, 2012; Storch, 2005; Storch & Wigglesworth, 2007). In the current study, I will partially replicate Fernández Dobao's paper (2012) to compare the effect two kinds of collaborative work (in pairs and small groups) and individual work have on the accuracy, fluency and syntactic complexity of some texts written by Secondary Education EFL students.

There has been great supporting evidence for the benefits of collaborative work in FL classes. Based on socio-cognitive theories and communicative focused rationale, EFL

students' collaboration has indeed become common practice worldwide. Nevertheless, it is still predominantly oral collaboration; leaving writing as an individual task (Weissberg, 2007 in Storch, 2011). Those studies that have looked at EFL learners' written collaboration (or collaborative writing (CW)) provide evidence of its benefits. CW is thought to mediate FL learning by pushing students to reflect on their language use and to collaborate with each other in solving their language-related doubts (e.g. Storch & Wigglesworth, 2007; Swain, 2006). Moreover, their co-constructed texts tend to result in higher linguistic performance (e.g. Fernández Dobao, 2012). However, most of these studies have focused on students collaborating in pairs or on comparing individual and pair work. Besides that, the studies' participants have been mainly higher education or adult FL learners (e.g. McDonough & García Fuentes, 2015).

Therefore, the present study aims to discover, first of all, whether students' collaboration in a writing task results in greater written linguistic performance in a Secondary Education setting (individual work vs. pair work, and individual vs. group work). Secondly, if texts accuracy, fluency and syntactic complexity significantly differ depending on the number of participants collaborating (pairs vs. small groups). Consequently, the research questions of the present study are:

a) Is the same text more accurate when done individually or in pairs?
b) Is the same text more accurate when done individually or in small groups?
c) Is the same text more accurate when done in pairs or in small groups?

d) Is the same text more fluent when done individually or in pairs?
e) Is the same text more fluent when done individually or in small groups?
f) Is the same text more fluent when done in pairs or in small groups?

g) Is the same text syntactically more complex when done individually or in pairs?
h) Is the same text syntactically more complex when done individually or in small groups?
i) Is the same text syntactically more complex when done in pairs or in small groups?

In order to answer these research questions, I am going to firstly present a literature review on writing, collaboration and collaborative writing in EFL. Then, I will describe the methodology followed. After that, I will display, analyse and discuss the results.

Then, I will acknowledge my study's limitations and provide its pedagogical implications. Finally, I will reflect on my study's conclusions.

2. Literature review

2.1. Writing in EFL

L2/FL pedagogy has traditionally and still recognises the core importance of developing students L2/FL writing. First of all, writing helps develop some of the factors needed for FL acquisition: opportunities for output, focusing on language, etc. Secondly, the ability to write in the FL accurately as well as in different registers and formats allows for students' further social and career related opportunities (Harmer, 2007). Thirdly, the Secondary Education Spanish curriculum requires students to develop the writing skill (BOE, 2013). Nevertheless, it is not a simple skill to teach. Thus, teachers should investigate and try different techniques, strategies and methodologies in their writing instruction (Manchón, 2009; Reid, 1993).

There are a number of approaches to writing that teachers need to consider. I will briefly outline the two most important ones for my study. On the one hand, we may focus on the *product* or on the *process* of writing. That is, whether we are interested in the final written text (its accuracy, fluency, etc.), or in the *process* of constructing it (planning, drafting, (re-)editing and final version) (Harmer, 2007; Storch, 2013). On the other hand, we should be clear about whether our EFL students are *learning to write* or *writing to learn*. In other words, if they are learning to build coherent, appropriate texts for professional or academic purposes (*learning to write*); or whether they are writing texts in the FL to learn about the language itself (*writing to learn*) (Harmer, 2007; Manchón, 2009; Reichelt, 2009).

This TFM considers both the *product* (accuracy, fluency and complexity of the written texts) and the *process* of writing (by comparing individual, pair and small group work). That is, I will concentrate on whether a variable (grouping) in the *process* affects three different variables (texts' accuracy, fluency and syntactic complexity) of the *product*. As far as the *learning to write* and *writing to learn* dichotomy, I understand the task presented to be mostly focused on students learning to write a physical description of a person. Therefore, I regard it as a *learning to write* task. Students are expected to focus on the text's structure, coherence, format, characteristic vocabulary, etc. Moreover, the task for pairs and groups will be a learning experience on how to write collaboratively in the FL.

Finally, before concentrating on the nucleus of my study, I would like to note the lack of research on writing in Secondary Education in Spain. In spite of the agreed importance given to the skill, academic published papers about it in Secondary Education are scarce (Ortega, 2009). Thus, this TFM will try to provide small-scale further evidence to the limited existing literature on writing in this context.

2.2. Collaboration in EFL

Based on strong theoretical and pedagogical rationale, students' pair and group work in EFL classes is now widespread. On the one hand, its theoretical support comes from cognitive and socio-cultural theories. On the other hand, pedagogical beliefs are mostly backed by communicative methodologies such as Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) and Task Based Language Teaching (TBLT), both mostly accepted in current EFL classes worldwide.

Cognitive theories in Second Language Acquisition (SLA) today consider FL acquisition to be a non-linear process. SLA approaches focused first on learners' need of comprehensible input (Krashen, 1985). According to him, all that was needed for a L2 to be acquired was input with features beyond the learner's interlanguage (IL)[1] (*i*+1) (i.e. comprehensible input). Long (1985), however, stated that Krashen's comprehensible input was not enough and that learners needed to engage in interactions to obtain both positive and negative evidence of FL/L2 use. This is known as Long's Interaction Hypothesis (IH) (Gor & Long, 2009).

Several case studies have confirmed that exposure to comprehensible input is insufficient for FL acquisition (e.g. Schmidt, 1984; Schmidt & Frota, 1986 both in Schmidt, 2010; Swain, 2006). These findings backed another hypothesis, Swain's comprehensible Output Hypothesis, which put forward that FL learners need also pushed output to improve their process of FL acquisition (Swain, 1993). According to her, meaningful practice in the FL is necessary for automatisation of linguistic features. Moreover, while learners are pushed to produce FL instances, they are likely to encounter language difficulties, so that gaps and/or holes in their IL might be noticed.[2] Noticing and focusing on them have indeed been claimed to be a necessary condition

[1] Interlanguage (IL): type of language of a L2/FL learner who is in the process of acquiring it (Richards and Schmidt, 2010:293)

[2] Students notice gaps when they become aware that their IL structure is different from the target (i.e. making a mistake). Noticing the hole makes students aware of their lack of the means to express what they want to say (Williams, 2005:682).

for FL acquisition (Schmidt, 2010). Thus, learners' linguistic abilities are challenged to make their message comprehensible. At the same time, students' hypotheses about FL use are tested, re-built and/or confirmed. In this sense, collaboration in the FL, by which students negotiate their FL use and get feedback, has been found beneficial for FL acquisition (e.g. Gor & Long, 2009; Pica, 2009).

Several researchers noted the importance that focusing on linguistic form and meaning (*focus on form*, e.g. Doughty & Williams, 1998; Ellis, 2006) has for learners. In the FL setting, writing tasks might be an optimal opportunity to *focus on form*, since students consider the message to be conveyed as well as linguistic accuracy with greater care than during speaking tasks (Cumming, 2009; Storch, 2013).

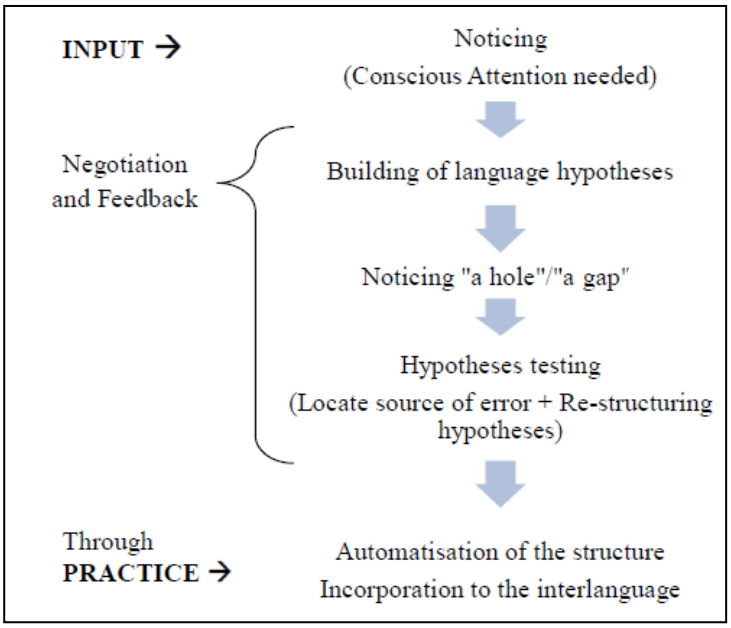


Figure 1: FL Acquisition Process (adapted from Skehan, 2007 and Williams, 2005)

Students' collaboration in the FL is also supported by socio-cultural theories. Since Vygotsky's work (1978), all human cognitive development (including language learning) is considered to take place through social interaction. He considered humans developed cognitively by engaging in novice-expert collaborative interactions at the formers' Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD)[3]. Such assistance is known in the literature as scaffolding (i.e. language learning support in SLA). In socio-cultural theories, language acquisition must be understood as social and cognitive development. On the one hand, language is directed to an audience (otherness), it enables communication and it is co-constructed with peers. On the other hand, it also facilitates

[3] ZPD: distance between what learners (novices) can do on their own and what they can do when assisted by a more capable individual (expert) (Richards & Schmidt, 2010: 644)

the development of inner thinking, allowing the development of higher order skills (e.g. reflective thinking, problem-solving capacity, etc.) (Storch, 2013).

Swain (2006: 98) coined as 'languaging' this "process of making meaning and shaping knowledge and experience through language (...). In languaging, we see learning taking place". So, when students collaborate in the EFL classroom, they use the language to solve linguistic problems; at the same time that they are constructing new FL knowledge, understanding and/or consolidating existing one. Previous SLA research has found evidence supporting EFL student's collaboration as means of collective scaffolding by which students could perform beyond their individual linguistic capacities; co-construct linguistic knowledge; test and build new FL hypothesis; etc. (e.g. Alegría de la Colina & García Mayo, 2007; Donato, 1994; Storch, 2005, 2013; Swain, 2006).

Pedagogical support for EFL students' communicative collaboration has been reflected in Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) and Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) methodologies. Their main goal is to develop FL learners' communicative competence. This involves all linguistic, sociolinguistic, discourse and strategic competences. CLT and TBLT have resulted in an emphasis on pair and group work, as well as in a combination and integration of both form- and meaning-focused approaches (Ellis, 2006; Pica, 2009).

2.3. Collaborative writing in EFL

Even though most of the research on collaborative tasks for SLA has focused on oral tasks; linguistic forms and meaning (how and what to express) can also be jointly considered in writing tasks. Consequently, learners acquire the psycho and socio-linguistic dimensions of FL composition when writing (e.g. Cumming, 2009; Ortega, 2009). CW, in fact, provides FL learners with an opportunity to integrate the four skills: speaking and listening (peers interactions), writing and reading (task completion). It facilitates, thus, FL acquisition as well as FL learners' linguistic, cognitive and social development (e.g. Manchón, 2009; Storch, 2013). It must be noted that students' *collaboration* –i.e. individuals' "coordinated effort to complete a task together"– and not their *cooperation* –"division of labour"– is pursued (Dillenbourg et al., 1996 in Storch, 2013:3).

I follow Storch's (2013:2-3) definition of CW as a task in which students jointly produce a text, being all of them "co-authors" of it. Therefore, pre- and post writing collaborative activities such as group-planning or peer feedback will not be considered CW, but rather collaboration at one stage of the writing process. Quite a lot of previous studies focused on peer revision and feedback (e.g. Memari Hanjani, 2015; Stanley, 1992). Recent literature, though, is increasingly paying more attention to students' collaborating during the whole writing process. A step by step procedure of a CW methodology with Japanese EFL university students was reviewed by Mulligan & Garofallo (2011). English teachers may use their study as guidance for CW class implementation using scaffolding.

CW studies have focused on a variety of factors. Most of them have investigated the nature, quantity and quality of learners' deliberations about their own and their peers FL use (i.e. Language Related Episodes (LREs)[4]). These are regarded as instances of language learning taking place. Fernández Dobao (2012), for instance, analysed and compared pairs and small groups LREs frequency, focus (form, lexis and mechanics) and outcome (unresolved, correctly and incorrectly resolved) when FL Spanish learners recreated a story from a visual prompt. She found students scaffolded each other and co-constructed linguistic knowledge in both pairs and groups interactions. In her study, the same writing task was developed by pairs, small groups and students individually. Thus, she examined the effect the number of participants had on their final texts accuracy, fluency and complexity. Interestingly, small groups were quantitatively and qualitatively more successful than the rest; while pairs outperformed individual writing.

Although LREs indeed provide us with insightful instances of FL acquisition taking place, there are no consistent findings relating CW with FL learning yet. Kuiken & Vedder (2002b) deliberately included post-test and delayed post-tests assessments in their study in order to measure the effect interaction had in EFL students' acquisition of the passive voice. They asked students to work individually and in small groups when completing a dictogloss task[5]. After both post-tests they could not conclude a definite relationship between students' interactions and passive voice acquisition.

[4]LREs are ''any part of a dialogue where the students talk about the language they are producing, question their language use, or correct themselves or others'' (Swain & Lapkin, 1998: 326).
[5]In dictogloss tasks, students are asked to collaboratively reconstruct a text the teacher has previously read. Students are generally allowed to take notes while the teacher is reading (Richards & Schmidt, 2010: 170).

Previous research, however, has been able to provide ample evidence for the positive effect collaboration has on students' written performance. A variety of tasks and students groupings have been investigated; but attention to texts accuracy, complexity and fluency has been maintained. Results have varied regarding texts complexity and fluency. Accuracy, though, has generally been found to be greater in collaboratively than in individually written texts.

Storch (2005) compared 18 pairs and 5 individual ESL learners' performance on a short composition task at an Australian university ESL writing class. Due to the limited number of participants in the study, her findings were not statistically significant. However, she was already able to observe that pairs produced texts that were grammatically more accurate and linguistically more complex than individually written ones. In a later and bigger-scale study, Storch & Wigglesworth (2007) compared the effect collaboration had when students wrote two types of tasks: a report and an essay. They concluded that there were no significant differences in students' writings for fluency and complexity. However, pairs were significantly more accurate than individuals in both.

Their findings are consistent with McDonough & García Fuentes (2015) in an EFL setting. They investigated the effect two types of paragraphs (cause/effect and problem/solution) as well as individual vs. pair grouping had on EFL students use at a Colombian university. Participants in the study were completing an EFL course from which tasks were selected; but no previous instruction on the writing process was given to them. McDonough & García Fuentes found students used more complex language in cause/effect paragraphs, but their linguistic accuracy did not vary throughout tasks. Pairs, however, wrote more accurate paragraphs than individuals.

In an even closer context to my study, Gil Sarratea (2014) compared two first Secondary Spanish Education EFL groups writing an argumentative essay. Both had received similar instruction. In one group students wrote in pairs and in the other one individually. She found that pairs were not only grammatically more accurate, but used more complex language and wrote better structured texts than students writing on their own.

It might become apparent that the majority of research around CW compared students working in pairs and individually. In fact, Fernández Dobao (2012) is one of the few scholars who compared the three types of groupings: individual, pair and small

group work. Kuiken & Vedder (2002a) investigated the effect CW had on the quality of a dictogloss task written by groups of three/four L2 English learners, EFL Dutch and EFL Italian students with an intermediate level. They investigated FL learning strategies students used for text reconstruction; as well as the grammatical and lexical complexity of their texts. Kuiken & Vedder found that students reconstructed versions were grammatically and lexically simpler than the original texts. They could not find positive evidence that linked the strategies students had used and the complexity and accuracy of their texts. These researchers suggested text difficulty, students' level and group dynamics as possible reasons for those results. Moreover, in order to measure for the L2/FL learning benefits of students' interactions, the desirability of designing pre- and post-tests was acknowledged. Although Kuiken & Vedder did not find evidence for their study's hypotheses, EFL groups were all able to collaboratively write the texts. So I have included their study as evidence that CW in small groups can indeed lead to successful written production in an EFL setting.

Factors influencing students CW outcomes and procedures have certainly been the focus of further CW-related research. Although they are not the topic of my study, I will mention some of the issues analysed by preceding literature, as they might provide later an explanation for my results.

Several studies have concentrated on EFL students and teachers' attitudes towards CW. Fernández Dobao & Blum (2013) designed a questionnaire to find out students' attitudes after carrying out the CW task in Fernández Dobao (2012). Only 4 out of 55 claimed they would have preferred to work individually. 1/3 did not recognise the positive benefits of collaboration for their FL development, although they had enjoyed it. Hence, Fernández Dobao & Blum claim for the need to raise awareness of potential advantages of collaborative tasks with EFL students. Overall, their participants' views on CW were positive and indeed agree with further research. Students' reservations towards collaborative work included reluctance to correct and receive corrections on FL use from peers; lack of confidence in their own FL proficiency; views on writing as an inherently individual task and failure of collaboration (i.e. passive students). These results have been supported by further studies (Al & Ali, 2014; Gil Sarratea, 2014; Mulligan & Garofallo, 2011; Storch, 2005).

Al & Ali (2014) investigated teachers and students EFL views at a public college in Oman. They used both questionnaires and interviews and their investigation was set to

outline students' and teachers' roles in CW. Results towards CW tasks were positive from both perspectives; although cultural beliefs, task type, task understanding and need of training for collaborative work behaviours were noted too.

Task type might be of further importance here, since students written outcome will necessarily vary according to the type of text they are writing. Alegría de la Colina & García Mayo (2007) compared the attention to form of different groups of EFL beginner university students writing in pairs. One group completed a dictogloss, other a text-reconstruction and the other one a jigsaw task.[6] They found that students' attention to linguistic features (e.g. grammatical forms, lexis use, etc.) varied from one type of task to another. So, when students wrote different types of texts, the nature of their attention varied. Text reconstruction was the task generating more attention to form and jigsaw for lexis. Moreover, jigsaw allowed learners to focus on a wider range of linguistic patterns, since the absence of FL input demanded learners to comprehend and pushed their FL use more than in the text reconstruction and the dictogloss tasks. The latter directed participants' attention to connectors and spelling; whereas learners FL use in the text reconstruction activity was influenced by the linguistic features in the original text (e.g. passive voice, verb-form, subject-verb agreement, etc.). Furthermore, Alegría de la Colina & García Mayo found L1 use with EFL beginners was key for successful tasks completion.

FL proficiency level will necessarily affect CW process and performance. Most studies so far have investigated intermediate level university students or adult learners, but Alegría de la Colina & García Mayo (2007) study is one of the few aimed at determining the effectiveness of CW tasks for EFL beginners. It is set, though, at a university context as well. I found Gil Sarratea (2014), who investigated CW at the first level of Secondary Education, to be a minority in the literature. Lack of research on CW for EFL beginners and at Spanish Secondary Education level could be claimed (e.g. Ortega, 2009). My study aims at addressing both issues by focusing on 1st level Secondary Education EFL students.

In sum, research comparing collaborative and individual writing has provided evidence of the positive effect collaboration had on texts final accuracy. This has been

[6]Jigsaws are information gap activities in which participants are given different essential pieces of information. Students need to exchange them (thus, collaborate) for successful task completion (Alegría de la Colina & García Mayo, 2007:97).

consistent regardless of task type, FL proficiency level and/or students' attitudes towards CW. Texts fluency and complexity have generally been found to be greater when students collaborated as well. Preceding literature tends to compare FL learners writing individually and in pairs or individually and in small groups. Besides, most have investigated intermediate adult FL learners.

My study, a partial replication of Fernández Dobao's (2012), aims to compare students' texts accuracy, fluency and syntactic complexity results alongside the three types of groupings reviewed: individual, pair and small group work. Furthermore, it investigates them in an EFL beginners Secondary Education context. Based on previous research findings (e.g. Fernández Dobao, 2012; Gil Sarratea, 2014; Storch, 2005; Storch & Wigglesworth, 2007), I expect texts written collaboratively to be more accurate –and in all likelihood more fluent and syntactically more complex− than those written individually by the students in my study. Likewise, I believe small groups' results will outperform pairs' in all three variables.

3. The Study

3.1. Method

3.1.1. Participants

The study was conducted in three 1st year of ESO English groups at a Secondary Education School in Pamplona, Navarre (Spain). A total of 59 students participated in the study. 33 were female and 26 male; they were all around 12-13 years of age. Being in 1st ESO level, we could state they were EFL beginners. Most had been studying English for the same amount of time and had had comparable exposure to the language. None were native speakers of English.

3.1.2. Context

All participants were studying at the same school in Pamplona. Students were divided into three classes according to their English level in the school. Consequently, two similar-levelled "heterogeneous" groups and one with more advanced learners of English were formed in every course. These were not closed groups. So, students may go up or down to one or the other according to their progress in English. In order to get comparable results, I asked students in one of the heterogeneous groups to write individually; whereas pairs and groups were formed in the other two (similar-levelled one and more advanced group).

The study was carried out at the start of the 3rd term. According to their English teachers and to my class observations, students were used to working both collaboratively (in pairs and in small groups of 3-4) and individually.[7] Therefore, collaborative working behaviour was considered to be familiar to the students. Moreover, English teachers at the school agree every week on the classes to be delivered for the course. Hence, previous EFL instruction was considered to be balanced.

3.1.3. Instruments

A total of 35 texts were collected, 17 written collaboratively and 18 individually. Out of the 17 CW texts, 10 were from the more advanced group (6 pairs and 4 groups of three) and 7 (4 pairs and 3 groups of three) from one heterogeneous group.

3.1.4. Procedure

Regarding the writing task, I agreed with their English teachers to prepare a physical description text. Our decision was based on both the need to follow the 1st ESO curriculum, as well as the intention to contextualise the writing task in the most familiar manner to students. It was also designed in order to be both challenging and manageable for them. Participants were presented the writing task of the study as part of their English course.

Both instruction and writing task performance were carried out in class time. A maximum of one week passed between the preparatory lesson and the day students wrote the text. All of the participants received equal instruction and they were given the same material as preparation for the writing task. I deliberately repeated a one-hour long explicit lesson on writing a physical description in all three classes. It covered lexical (physical description adjectives), grammatical (verbs to be/have got distinction and appropriate tense use) as well as structural (organisation in paragraphs) features (see appendix 9.1.).

Most pairs and small groups were randomly organised the day of the writing task by their English teachers[8]. Students wrote the texts the same day at the same hour in their usual English lesson. Since I was not able to be in all three classes, I agreed

[7] They usually collaborated not only in English classes, but also in other subjects, school projects, previous years, etc.
[8] The English teacher in the heterogeneous group purposely arranged some; so that students with higher learning difficulties did not work in the same group/pair.

beforehand with their English teachers on the instructions to be given. Due to individual teachers' plan for the lesson, students writing individually wrote the text at the beginning of the hour; whereas the other two did it at the end. All students were given a maximum of 25 minutes and they were all handed in the same photocopy (see appendix 9.2.). The pictures in the photocopy were going to be projected in all three classes, so that students could see them bigger and in colour. However, the more advanced group and the one where students wrote individually could not project them for technical failures. Consequently, students had their doubts about the images solved and/or were allowed to invent details about them.

3.1.5. Data coding and analysis

The written texts produced by students individually, in pairs and in groups were analysed for accuracy, fluency and syntactic complexity.

Following Fernández Dobao (2012), fluency was measured by the total number of words in each text. Syntactic complexity was calculated by the number of words per clause, number of words per T-unit and number of clauses per T-unit. So, the total number of words, clauses and T-units were counted. This allowed for the reporting of three types of syntactic complexity: "subclausal complexity, overall complexity, and complexity via subordination" (Fernández Dobao, 2012: 47).[9]

Regarding texts accuracy, I identified grammatical, lexical and mechanical errors. All grammatical inaccuracies were counted. I have categorised as lexical errors: use of words which meaning was clearly not the intended one –including false friends (e.g. *simpatico; fort* (instead of "strong"))–; use of an invented word (mostly translated from Spanish by the students); use of a word I could not recognise; use of a word similar to the students' intended meaning but inaccurate (e.g. *She looks friendly, intelligent and very <u>smile</u>* ["happy"]); and use of a Spanish word (e.g. *Shes face is /redonda/*). Finally, I have defined mechanical errors as misspellings (e.g. *jinger*; *blond*; *fink, whit* ("white"), *iers* ("ears")...); capital letters misuse; and punctuation mistakes.

[9] A T-unit is "an independent clause and all its attached or embedded dependent clauses (...) Sentence fragments (where the verb or copula is missing) is still counted as a T-unit (...). A coordinate clause with no grammatical subject is counted as a separate T-unit" (Storch, 2005: 171)
Clauses can be *independent* –they can "stand on its own" and they contain a subject and a verb– or *dependent* –they contain "a finite or a non-finite verb and at least one (...) of the following: subject, object, complement or adverbial" (Storch, 2005:172).
E.g. *We think that/Marion Blanche is a very good person//*→ One T-unit (ends at //) composed of two clauses (separated by /).

In order to make accuracy results comparable to those of previous studies (e.g. Fernández Dobao, 2012; Storch, 2005; Storch & Wigglesworth, 2007), I calculated the number of total error-free clauses per total number of clauses; error-free T-units per total number of T-units; and total of errors per total number of words. Moreover, ratios of number of grammatical errors per total number of words; number of lexical errors per total number of words and number of total mechanical errors per total number of words were calculated.

An ANOVA test was conducted to analyse the data collected. Accuracy, fluency and syntactic complexity measures were set as dependent variables and type of grouping (1 = individual, 2 = pairs and 3 = small groups) as the independent one. A post-hoc DMS test was conducted in order to consider statistically significant differences between groupings ($p<0.05$). DMS uses t tests in order to compare −by pairs− the means of the groups under study (individual, dyads and small groups).

3.2. Results and discussion

In this section, I present and discuss the results from the analysis of the data collected from students' texts: 18 written individually, 10 in pairs and 7 in small groups of three students.

3.2.1. Accuracy

Table 1 presents the results for accuracy of all texts. Error-free T-units was the only measure to show statistically significant differences between type of grouping ($F=3.717$, $p=.037$)[10]. DMS post-hoc test showed that this difference was only statistically significant for the comparison between individuals and pairs ($p=.037$) and individuals and groups ($p=.032$). This can be clearly seen in Figure 2. None of the rest of the variables analysed for overall texts accuracy (amount of errors, error-free clauses and their distribution per total of words, clauses and T-units) reached statistically significant results. However, there was a tendency for collaboratively written texts to be slightly more accurate than individually written ones.

Mean of error-free clauses in individually written texts was 7.9; whereas pairs and groups means were higher (M=10.6 and M=11 respectively). This tendency was consistent for error-free clauses per clause −individuals (M=0.48), pairs (M=0.57) and groups (M=0.64)− and error-free T-units per T-unit −individuals (M=0.47), pairs

[10] Statistically significant difference was considered for $p<0.05$

(M=0.57) and groups (M=0.63). Error per words means and means of total errors produced were higher in individually written texts (M=0.12 and M=10.72 respectively) than in pairs (M=0.089 and M=9.6) and in groups (M=0.07 and M=7.28). The latter are graphically represented in Figure 3.

ACCURACY - Overall									
	Individuals (n=18)			Pairs (n=10)			Small groups (n=7)		
	Total	Mean	SD	Total	Mean	SD	Total	Mean	SD
Error-free clauses	143	7,944	3,872	106	10,6	4,47	77	11	3,873
Error-free clauses/clause		0,48	0,203		0,57	0,182		0,64	0,2109
Error-free T-units	123	6,833	3,399	98	9,8	3,55	72	10,286	3,45
Error-free T-units/T-unit		0,471	0,1921		0,5698	0,179		0,6299	0,2085
Errors	193	10,722	5,1542	96	9,6	4,427	51	7,286	5,056
Errors/word		0,1157	0,05422		0,0899	0,0548		0,0701	0,061

Table 1: Measures of accuracy for texts written individually, in pairs and in small groups

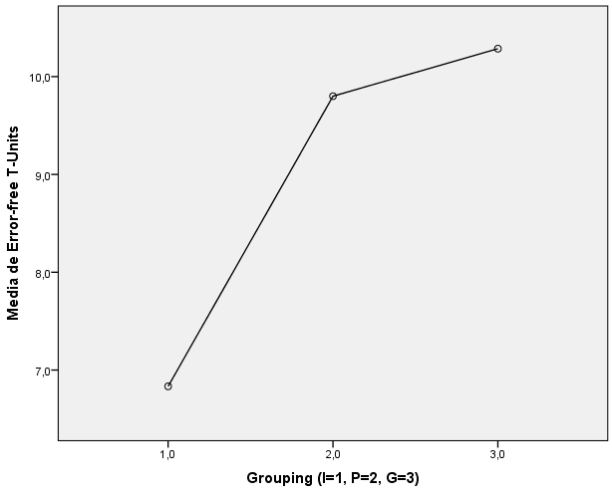


Figure 2: Means of error-free T-units in individually, dyads and small group written texts

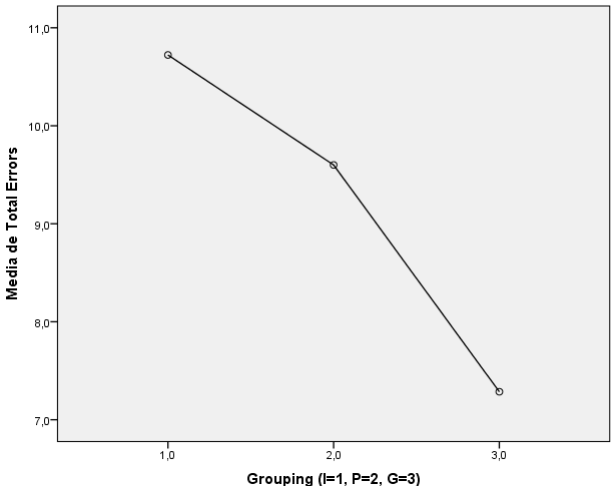


Figure 3: Means of total errors produced in individually, dyads and small group written texts

Most CW-focused research consistently evidenced students writing in collaboration produced more accurate texts (Fernández Dobao, 2012; Gil Sarratea, 2014; McDonough & García Fuentes, 2015; Storch, 2005; Storch & Wigglesworth, 2007). It might be no coincidence, hence, that the only analysed measure which presents statistically significant results in my study is this variable. Lack of statistically significant differences in the rest of the analysed measures between types of grouping might be related to the small sample size: only 10 pairs, 7 small groups and 18 individually working students participated in the study.

Therefore, I observed means variations in individuals, pairs and small groups outcomes as tendencies of the effect type of grouping may have on texts final product. In fact, means results consistently showed collaboratively written texts were more accurate than individually written ones. Similarly, small group texts were slightly more accurate than pairs'. Therefore, my results for general accuracy in students' written texts agree with previous research findings in that CW benefited students' written accuracy (e.g. Fernández Dobao, 2012; Storch, 2005).

3.2.2. Grammatical, lexical and mechanical accuracy

Table 2 presents results for grammatical, lexical and mechanical accuracy of all texts. None of these variables reached statistically significant different results. Nevertheless, as means accounting for overall texts accuracy suggested, students' collaboration and a higher number of participants benefited texts' grammatical, lexical and mechanical (not for pairs) accuracy too.

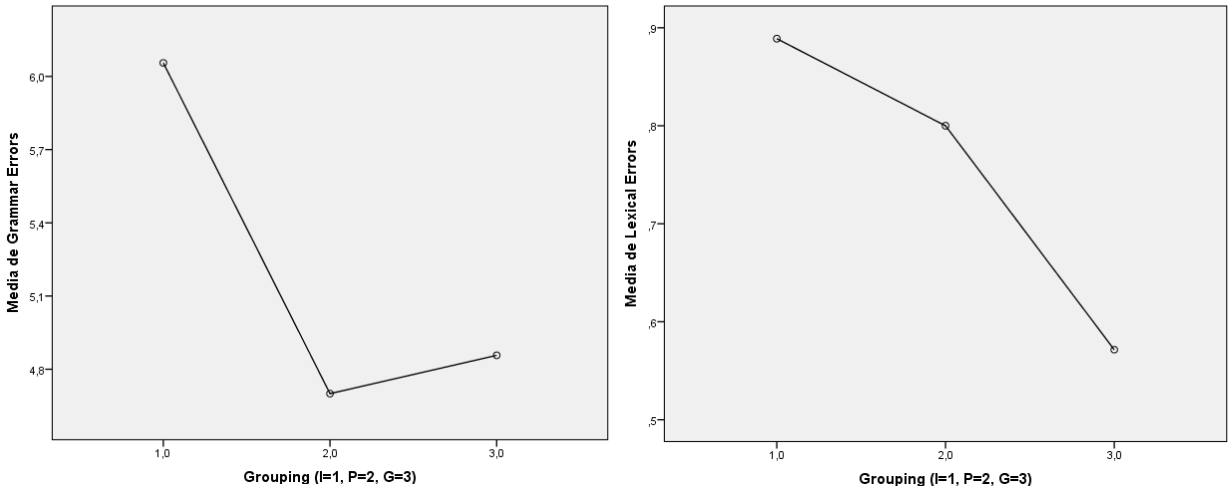
Students' collaboration especially benefited grammatical accuracy. Learners who wrote individually presented higher grammar error means (M=6.05) than pairs (M=4.7) and small groups (M=4.8). The same happened for amount of grammar errors per word −individuals (M=0.065), pairs (M=0.046) and groups (M=0.045). As pairs and groups means showed, a higher number of participants in the collaboration did not greatly favour grammatical accuracy.

Lexical accuracy was higher when students collaborated too. However, in this case, groups were lexically more accurate than pairs. In fact, individuals and pairs lexical accuracy results did not differ significantly. Total number of lexical errors and lexical errors per words means by individuals (M=0.889 and M=0.0094 respectively) was slightly higher than pairs (M=0.8 and M=0.0078), but groups means were considerably

lower than both previous groupings (M=0.57 and M=0.0059). Therefore, a higher number of participants positively influenced texts lexical accuracy. Nevertheless, it must be noted that students very rarely made lexical mistakes.

Small groups were the most accurate grouping regarding mechanical accuracy. Means of total mechanical errors per word were lower in groups (M=0.018), than in pairs (M=0.035) and in individually written texts (M=0.045). The lowest mean of total number of mechanical errors was found in groups too (M=1.85). However, pairs' mechanical errors mean was higher (M=4.1) than individuals' (M=3.77).

A higher number of participants collaborating in the writing task positively influenced all grammatical, lexical and mechanical accuracy of the texts (especially the last two). Students' collaboration particularly benefited grammatical accuracy, for which pairs and groups results were similar. The latter, however, outperformed both pairs and individuals in lexical and mechanical accuracy. Individuals and pairs results for these last two variables were similar; nevertheless, individuals' mechanical errors mean was lower than pairs'. Figures 4, 5 and 6 below graphically show means of total number of grammar, lexical and mechanical errors made by the three types of groupings.



Figures 4 and 5: Grammar errors and lexical errors means for individually, dyads and small group written texts

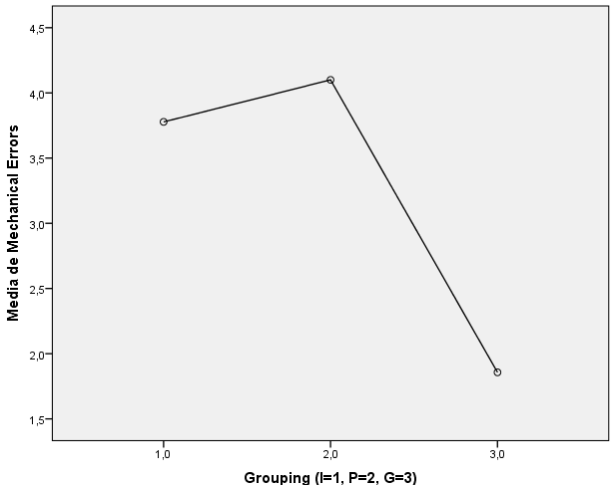


Figure 6: Mechanical errors means for individually, dyads and small group written texts

ACCURACY - Grammatical, lexical and mechanical accuracy									
	Individuals (n=18)			Pairs (n=10)			Small groups (n=7)		
	Total	Mean	SD	Total	Mean	SD	Total	Mean	SD
Grammar errors	109	6,056	3,7491	47	4,7	3,9455	34	4,857	2,4785
Grammar errors/word		0,0658	0,0433		0,04688	0,04832		0,0454	0,0297
Lexical errors	16	0,889	0,7584	8	0,8	1,0328	4	0,571	0,7868
Lexical errors/word		0,0094	0,00775		0,00782	0,0115		0,0059	0,0087
Mechanical errors	68	3,778	2,2637	41	4,1	2,2336	13	1,857	2,1157
Mechanical errors/word		0,0405	0,0239		0,0352	0,0174		0,0188	0,0245

Table 2: Measures of grammatical, lexical and mechanical accuracy for texts written individually, in pairs and in small groups

Results showed students in dyads had more difficulties regarding mechanical accuracy. A likely explanation might be that students in pairs focused more on the content than on the form of their message (since most were spelling inaccuracies) when writing. Moreover, pairs and individuals results for lexical accuracy were very similar. These findings may suggest dyads primarily concentrated on the message to convey, regardless of them knowing the accurate lexical term and/or its spelling. I believe pairs made more mechanical errors because it was the student writing who did not know the proper spelling. Individuals and pairs means did not differ much, so it could be the case that the other peer in dyads did not read (or they did not know) the correct spelling. On the contrary, a higher number of participants in the group allowed students a higher number of opportunities to realise and solve mechanical inaccuracies.

All grammatical, lexical and mechanical accuracy results presented were just tendencies which showed no statistically significant results. Nevertheless, as it was the

case for overall accuracy of the texts, means tendencies showed CW benefited grammatical, lexical and mechanical (not for pairs) accuracy. Pairs and small group results did not differ much for grammatical accuracy of the texts. However, a higher number of participants in written collaboration positively influenced lexical and mechanical accuracy. Interestingly, pairs and individuals means for these last two variables only slightly benefited the former. In fact, individuals slightly outperformed pairs regarding mechanical errors results. However, this was the only measure for which individual work was more accurate than another type of grouping.

Therefore, although my research questions regarding accuracy cannot be positively answered based on statistically significant numbers, I can claim that higher number of participants in the task positively influences the final accuracy of the written texts. In other words, the same text was slightly more accurate when done in pairs than individually; it was slightly more accurate in small groups than individually; and it was slightly more accurate in small groups than in pairs too. These results are backed by studies analysing larger data. Hence, collaboration and a higher number of participants in the group seem to benefit texts final accuracy (both overall and in the three measures analysed) as Fernández Dobao (2012) already showed for the tree types of grouping.

3.2.3. Fluency and syntactic complexity

Fluency and syntactic complexity results are presented in Table 3. Fluency of the texts was measured by the total amount of words. Even though students were asked to write an 80-100 words long text, they did not all follow the instruction and texts' length tended to slightly vary across type of grouping. In fact, after total of error-free T-units, number of words was the only measure which was closer to getting statistically significant results ($F=3.082$, $p=.060$). Contrary to previous research findings (e.g. Storch, 2005), students writing individually produced on average shorter texts ($M=93.6$) than students writing in pairs ($M=118.6$) and in small groups ($M=113.4$). We see in Figure 7 how mean number of words for pairs and small groups written texts were very similar.

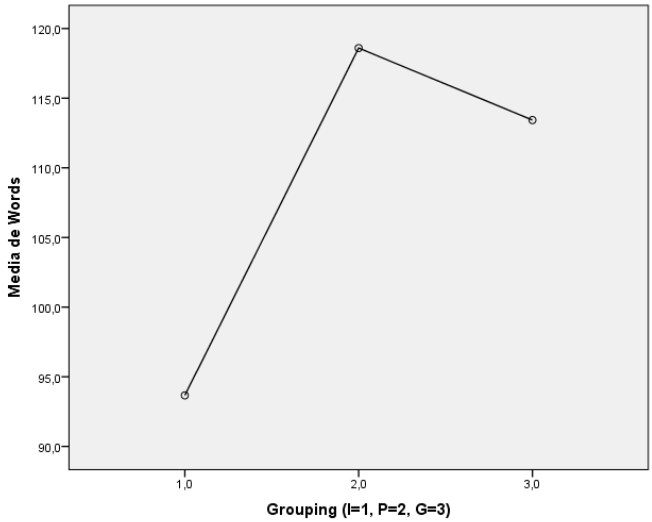


Figure 7: Total words means in individually, dyads and small group written texts

FLUENCY and SYNTACTIC COMPLEXITY									
	Individuals (n=18)			Pairs (n=10)			Small groups (n=7)		
	Total	Mean	SD	Total	Mean	SD	Total	Mean	SD
Words	1686	93,667	19,9765	1186	118,6	41,1456	794	113,43	18,946
Clauses	289	16,056	3,9627	184	18,4	4,4272	120	17,143	2,1157
T-Units	257	14,278	4,0118	172	17,2	3,6757	115	16,429	2,2991
Words/clause		5,902	0,635		6,3728	1,203		6,653	1,0465
Words/T-Unit		6,6848	0,7969		6,798	1,4303		6,9948	1,3391
Clauses/T-Unit		1,135	0,104		1,065	0,0651		1,0465	0,0504

Table 3: Measures of fluency and syntactic complexity for texts written individually, in pairs and in small groups

Previous research had already noted fluency did not increase significantly by the use of written collaboration (e.g. Storch & Wigglesworth, 2007). Contrary to my findings, though, previous studies reported collaboratively written texts tended to be shorter than individually written ones. This was explained by claiming students collaborating spent more time making decisions, scaffolding peers, etc. than students working individually, who used that time for writing (Fernández Dobao, 2012; Storch, 2005). Interestingly, I found pairs and group texts to be slightly longer than individually written ones. This might be due to a higher number of participants allowing for a higher number of ideas, a stronger focus on details (and ultimately writing those ideas and details) than in individual writing. Since students were describing an image, they did not need much time to reach an agreement on the task content.

Syntactic complexity results did not reach statistically significant differences for any of the measures analysed either. Texts written in pairs and in small groups tended to

have one or two more T-units (M=17.2 and M=16.4 respectively) than individually written ones (M=14.3). Similarly, students collaborating wrote a higher number of clauses (M=16.05 in individually written texts, M=18.4 in pairs and M=17.14 in small groups). Since students in collaboration wrote longer texts, it may be no surprise that means in the total number of clauses and T-units were higher in CW than in individually written texts. In fact they follow the tendencies in fluency results, pairs made use of more T-units and more clauses than groups and individuals. Groups wrote more T-units and more clauses than individuals too.

The rest of the variables analysed for syntactic complexity showed very similar results in the three types of groupings. However, a closer look at them might provide interesting findings. Total number of words per clause means were M=5.9 in individually written texts, M=6.37 in pairs and M=6.65 in small groups. Total number of words per T-unit were M=6.68 in individually written texts, M=6.79 in pairs and M=6.99 in small groups. Therefore, sub-clausal and overall complexity of students written texts was slightly benefited by collaboration and a higher number of participants in the grouping. Means of clauses per T-unit results did not differ much either, nevertheless, it was higher in individually written texts (M=1.135), than in pairs (M=1.065) and in small groups (M=1.046). Students writing individually used more subordination than students in CW, and pairs used more subordination than small groups. These results might be observed since they are the only instance were individual students outperformed CW ones and a higher number of participants negatively influenced students' linguistic performance.

Previous research had already noted CW did not significantly increase syntactic complexity results in students written texts (e.g. Storch & Wigglesworth, 2007). This agrees with my results, since means results did not vary as much as in the previous measures analysed. CW and a higher number of participants benefited overall and sub-clausal syntactic complexity outcomes. However, a higher number of participants in the writing task decreased students' syntactic complexity via subordination.

My research questions regarding the effect type of grouping may have in students' texts fluency and syntactic complexity cannot be answered with statistically significant numbers. Following my previous argument of looking at tendencies in variables means, I could claim the same text was more fluent when it was written in pairs than individually; it was more fluent in groups than individually; and it was slightly more

fluent in pairs than in small groups. As far as syntactic complexity is concerned, small groups wrote syntactically slightly more complex texts overall and at the sub-clausal level than pairs. And so were pairs syntactically slightly more complex than individuals overall and at the sub-clausal level. However, individuals wrote syntactically slightly more complex texts via subordination than pairs and groups. And pairs wrote syntactically slightly more complex texts via subordination than small groups.

3.2.4. Type of errors in students' texts

Even though it was not the aim of my study, noting the most frequent type of errors participants made might be beneficial for the instruction of physical description writing in 1st ESO. In the process of coding the data, I observed learners, regardless of whether they wrote individually, in pairs or in groups, made similar type of errors. The most frequent grammatical ones were: pronouns misuse (his/her, he/she –one student kept referring to Marion Blanche (a woman) as "they"–); general tendency to omit the subject when needed (e.g. *In one arm* ["he"] *has got a Starbucks coffee cup*); a/an articles misuse (both inclusion and omission); lack of N/Adj. number concordance; and general omission of 3rd person singular –s in the Present Simple. Mechanical errors were mostly spelling inaccuracies (e.g. *jinger* for "ginger"). Finally, lexical errors were not common. However, those made might be more serious since they generally prevented comprehension and/or conveyed an unintended meaning. They clearly showed students' lack of knowledge of specific words (e.g. "*She has got small and turned up nose"*).

Instructors and researchers may not negatively regard all errors made in an EFL setting. Although it seems less accurate texts are not to be pursued, it was clear during the process of coding the data that several mistakes were made due to students taking higher risks in their FL written production. Several participants moved beyond simple safe physical description vocabulary and grammar; they pushed their written output, allowing them to test their own FL use hypotheses. This is believed to benefit students' FL learning process (Swain, 2006). Furthermore, we should not forget the task was not an exam, so it was indeed one of the best opportunities participants in the study had for written hypothesis testing. This could be collaboratively resolved by some pairs and small groups as total number of errors means suggested (see again Figures 3-6).

4. Limitations

Due to time constraints, I did not analyse students' collaborating LREs. However, I acknowledge their appeal for SLA acquisition and EFL research and, hence, the limitations of my study. Analysing pairs' and groups' LREs in my study may provide clearer reasoning for the results obtained, especially those accounting for lexical and mechanical accuracy in students' texts. Moreover, they would be sound evidence that 1st ESO students are perfectly able to collaborate when performing an EFL writing task, as well as examples of how and with what outcomes students scaffolded each other. These would support and/or challenge previous research findings (e.g. Fernández Dobao, 2012; Gil Sarratea, 2014; Storch, 2005; Storch & Wigglesworth, 2007). From my own class observation on the day of the writing task, I would claim students engaged in collaboration and they did it at several levels too (grammatical, mechanical, lexical and structure-related comments were repeatedly heard – E.g. "*And in the third paragraph conclusion*"; "*How did you say...?*"; etc.).

The attitudes of learners towards the three types of grouping in the writing task were not formally investigated either. From class observation and students personal oral feedback, I believe participants' attitudes in my study consistently coincide with the ones in Gil Sarratea's (2014). The vast majority enjoyed writing collaboratively −although it was not as a novel experience for them−, and some expressed reservations (e.g. passive students in a group). Formal investigation of students' attitudes towards the three types of grouping in the study may provide views that could have influenced their texts' linguistic outcomes. Previous studies already noted the possible influence learners' attitudes towards CW may have on their written production (e.g. Al & Ali, 2014; Mulligan & Garofallo, 2011; Storch, 2005).

My study analysed results for accuracy, fluency and syntactic complexity variables in three different types of grouping (individual work, pair work and small group work). Lack of statistically significant differences between the three types of grouping in most of the variables analysed might be due to the small sample size of participants. This is another limitation of my study. Studies with larger sample of participants could corroborate and/or reject the tendencies in the present paper.

Moreover, the variables in my study are only some of the wide range that could be investigated regarding EFL learners' written product. Students were learning to write the description of a person in English. When writing it, they were expected to consider

multiple other variables as well (e.g. format, layout, coherence, audience, etc.). Therefore, analysing and comparing results in other variables in texts written by students individually, in pairs and in small groups (and with larger amount of participants) may provide a more complete understanding of CW linguistic outcomes in EFL Secondary Education classes.

5. Pedagogical implications

Based on previous research, I expected small groups to outperform pairs, who would at the same time outperform individuals in all three variables. I found small groups wrote slightly more accurate texts than pairs and individuals, and pairs wrote more accurate texts than individuals as well. In fact, accuracy was the only measure to show a statistically significant result. Groups and pairs wrote statistically significant more error-free T-units than individuals. In terms of accuracy, then, this study has shown CW and a higher number of participants in the collaboration generally benefited the accuracy of students written texts.

Students collaborating were more fluent than those writing individually too. I believe this was caused by the fact that a higher number of participants pooled more ideas and ultimately wrote them. Contrary to previous research findings (e.g. Fernández Dobao, 2012; Storch & Wigglesworth, 2007), I found students in pairs wrote the longest texts. However, pairs' texts were only slightly longer than groups'. Since EFL students at ESO level are generally given word limits, I believe it might not be a general concern for English instructors. Nevertheless, if word limits are not set, task type might be carefully regarded. In this case, students were describing an image, so they did not need much time to reach an agreement on the task content.

My study found interesting results regarding syntactic complexity. Even though it was the variable where means numbers less differed, tendencies still showed CW and a higher number of participants benefited overall and sub-clausal syntactic complexity of students written texts. However and most interestingly, since it was the only case among the eighteen measures analysed, individuals wrote syntactically more complex texts via subordination than both pairs and small groups. Similarly, the former outperformed the latter. CW and a higher number of participants in the group decreased texts syntactic complexity via subordination. These might be a concern for EFL teachers if they are pursuing to increase their students use of subordination. According to my results, CW

would probably not be the most suitable methodology to follow, at least in a similar context.

Therefore, all in all, my study claims CW in an EFL Secondary Education setting benefits students' texts final accuracy, sub-clausal and overall syntactic complexity (more so if writing in groups) and fluency. Nevertheless, CW does not seem to facilitate students writing syntactically more complex texts via subordination in 1st ESO physical description texts. In other words, CW tasks might be a desired practice in EFL Secondary classes as a way to improve learners' accuracy, fluency and sub-clausal and overall syntactic complexity written performance.

Even if my proposal of looking at tendencies in results means was not considered valid evidence; CW tasks have still been found to be appropriate for EFL Secondary Education use. This study has shown CW texts −both in pairs and in small groups− were as accurate, fluent and as syntactically complex as individually written ones in a 1st ESO course (if not more in collaboration). Moreover, it has demonstrated how English instructors do not need to vary typically EFL writing tasks to engage their students in successful CW (see appendixes 9.1. and 9.2.; Gil Sarratea, 2014). Monotony in instruction is not desirable and several studies have already shown learners generally find pair and group work engaging (e.g. Al & Ali, 2014; Fernández Dobao & Blum, 2013; Mulligan & Garofalo, 2011).

Moreover, I added a record of the most common type of errors students made since they appeared to be consistent throughout all three types of grouping. I believe 1st ESO English teachers might consider the section pedagogically appealing, especially when teaching a physical description text.

6. Conclusion

The current study was set to investigate the benefits of CW in a Secondary Education setting. Based on socio-cognitive theories and communicative teaching methodologies, students' collaboration in the FL class is common practice worldwide. Particularly CW has become a recent focus in EFL research today and several studies have evidenced its benefits for FL learning (Fernández Dobao, 2012; Storch, 2005; Storch & Wigglesworth, 2007).

My study is a partial replication of Fernández Dobao's (2012). It analysed accuracy, fluency and syntactic complexity variables for individual, pair and small

group work writing a physical description text in three 1st ESO EFL classes. Based on previous research (Fernández Dobao, 2012; Gil Sarratea, 2014; Storch, 2005; Storch & Wigglesworth, 2007), I expected CW and a higher number of participants in the grouping to positively influence students' written performance. Results indeed evidenced CW and, generally, a higher number of participants in the collaboration benefited EFL students' written production in terms of accuracy, fluency and overall and sub-clausal syntactic complexity. Texts syntactic complexity via subordination was higher in individually written texts than in CW ones.

Based on my study's results and, in reference to my research questions, I claim that:

a) The same text was slightly more accurate when written in pairs than individually; it was slightly more accurate when written in groups than individually; and it was slightly more accurate when written in groups than in pairs.

b) The same text was more fluent when written in pairs than individually; it was more fluent when written in groups than individually; and it was slightly more fluent when written in pairs than in groups.

c) The same text was syntactically more complex when written in pairs than individually; it was syntactically more complex when written in groups than individually; and it was syntactically more complex when written in groups than in pairs except for syntactic complexity via subordination.

d) The same text was syntactically more complex via subordination when written individually than in pairs; it was syntactically more complex via subordination when written individually than in groups; and it was syntactically more complex via subordination when written in pairs than in groups.

Therefore, I believe my study may serve as additional small-scale support for CW use in EFL Secondary Education classes (unless specifically aiming at encouraging EFL students' written use of subordinate clauses). Statistically significant results were only found for error-free T-units ($F=3.717$, $p=.037$). Nevertheless, I argued this might be a consequence of the small sample size of participants in the study (individually written texts (n=18), pairs (n=10) and small groups (n=7)). Further research analysing larger number of participants might be needed in order to confirm and/or reject the statistically significant validity of my claims.

Moreover, research investigating and comparing accuracy, fluency and syntactic complexity variables in EFL students' texts for the three types of grouping reviewed (individual, pairs and small groups) is needed; especially in the Secondary Education context. However, other variables different from the ones in my study (e.g. layout, coherence, etc.) might be investigated since it could be the case that 1st ESO students writing a physical description text concentrate more on them than on the accuracy, fluency and syntactic complexity of their texts. Therefore, analysing the linguistic performance of students in the three types of grouping for other variables might provide additional and a more complete understanding of CW in the current Secondary Education setting.

Due to time constraints, I did not analyse students' collaborating LREs, or learners' and teachers' attitudes towards CW tasks. Nevertheless, I acknowledge the appeal both have for SLA and EFL research and, therefore, the limitations of my study. Several studies have already focused on both. However, papers investigating them at Spanish Secondary Education level are scarce (Gil Sarratea, 2014). Further research considering learners' LREs and students' and teachers' attitudes towards CW might provide clearer stances over CW reality in EFL ESO classes today as well.

Finally, my study has evidenced EFL instructors do not need to vary typically 1st ESO writing tasks for students successful CW performance. However, further research in comparable contexts and with different types of task are needed in order to be able to generalise my study's findings.

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9. Appendixes

9.1. Physical description preparatory class (student's photocopy)

PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

GENERAL APPEARANCE			FACE			HAIR			OTHER
Height	**Build**	**Age**	**General**	**Eyes**	**Skin**	**Length**	**Style**	**Colour**	
Tall Short Medium height	Well-built Muscular Slim Skinny Over-weight Plump/Stout Fat Obese	Young Old Middle-age In his/her 20s, 30s...	Round Thin Square Chubby	Big/Small Green/Blue/ Brown...	Fair Dark Tanned Pale Wrinkles Freckles	Long Short Shoulder-length Bald Saved	Straight Curly Wavy Fringe Ponytail	Fair Blonde White/Grey Brown Dark Red-haired	Beard Moustache Glasses Tattoos Piercings Earrings Jewellery Make-up
Attractive Beautiful Pretty Handsome Athletic Ugly Smart/Elegant Well-dressed	Scruffy Untidy-looking								

IS vs. HAS/HAVE GOT

Amanda is a very beautiful woman. She is the youngest sister in Garcias' family, she is in her twenties. She is also the tallest and most athletic one. She is usually tanned because she lives in Málaga close to the beach. She had very long dark hair, but she decided to change it last year. Now, she has got curly shoulder-length hair. I think she looks better now with her new style. Also, it looks great with her face's square shape. Amanda has got big brown eyes and she does not need glasses. However, she loves wearing sun-glasses during the summer. She has got more than 5 different pairs of glasses! Amanda does not usually wear any make-up, earrings or jewellery. She likes wearing them only on very special occasions.

1

Describing a person

Prince Philippe Azure

Prince Philippe Azure is the eldest brother in the royal Bournesbouth family. He is in his mid-thirties and he works with several NGOs like UNICEF, Save the Children and the Heart Foundation UK.

He is a handsome, well-built and tall man. He likes to exercise for one hour every day. He has got a round face, big brown eyes and a big nose and mouth. He has got dark skin and a short beard with a moustache. He saves his hair, so he looks bald. He usually wears very smart clothes. In the picture, he is wearing a blue jacket suit, a white shirt and a light blue tie. He also likes to wear jewellery, expensive watches and rings.

Prince Philippe Azure is a very friendly, cheerful man. He likes to spend time with friends and going to parties. However, he is not very responsible and he sometimes forgets important work.

Organise the description

Paragraph 1: Introduction	- Who is the person you are describing (if you know) and how do you know him/her - Age
Paragraph 2: Appearance	- General appearance, height and build - Face (eyes, nose, mouth) and skin - Hair (length, colour, style) - Clothes and style - Individual characteristics (jewellery, make-up, tattoos, etc.)
Paragraph 3: Closing sentences	- Whether you/people like him/her and why - Most characteristic features (+ personality)

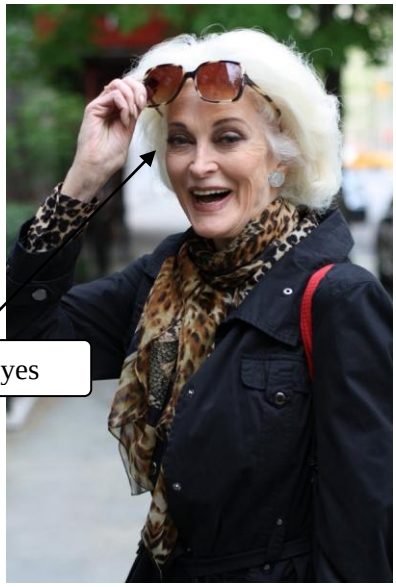
9.2. Writing task photocopy

WRITING- 1º E.S.O. **April 2016**

Write a short description about the person in <u>one</u> of the pictures (80-100 words).

FORMAT 2 points	COHESION AND COHERENCE 2 points	GRAMMAR 3 points	VOCABULARY 3 points
-Layout -Punctuation -Paragraphs: Introduction Body (Appearance) Closing sentences	-Cohesion (linkers) -Coherence (clear ideas and in order) -Adequacy (follow the instructions)	- Correct use of verbs (have/be) -Correct use of tenses -Length of sentences (10-15 words)	-No spelling mistakes -Use of precise and appropriate vocabulary

A) Marion Blanche – 72 years old
Job: Journalist



B) Conan O'Brien – 52 years old
Job: Musician and actor