

## **The Role of Private Speech Produced by Intermediate EFL Learners in Lexical Language Related Episodes\***

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### **Abstract**

Private speech utilization is accepted to have a critical role in the continuum of language acquisition. As a valuable device in studying learners' talk during interaction, a language related episode (LRE) is any part of a dialogue where a student speaks about a language problem s/he comes across while completing a task. The present study investigated the role of private speech produced by Intermediate Iranian EFL learners while they were involved in completing a dictogloss. For this purpose, 12 female EFL learners were chosen and they were required to speak about a lexical item cooperatively while they were completing a dictogloss task. These interactions were recorded and their lexical language related episodes were transcribed. In order to investigate the private speech used in the interactions, data was coded for different forms and contents of private speech and their functions were identified. The results indicate that private speech is mostly used for self-regulation and gaining control over the task. The study has implications for teachers and researchers by giving insights on how L2 is used in interactions.

**Keywords:** private speech; dictogloss; lexical language related episodes; self-regulation

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### **Introduction**

Since the mid 90's, Vygotskian thoughts and ideas of psychological advancement have been connected to the investigation of L2 improvement. Expanding on the thought that higher mental capacities first show up on the social level, L2 scholars have started to analyze the social and intellectual capacities that languages serve amid collaboration so as to comprehend mental functioning and improvement in progress, that is, a procedural situated perspective of language development. This dialogic perspective of situated learning incorporates communication with the self (e.g. private speech) and with our companions. In a nutshell, the investigation of situated learning offers us a comprehensive perspective of human cognition where language is a prevalent symbolic instrument for learning.

Private speech utilization is accepted to have a critical role in the continuum of language acquisition. SLA researchers concentrate on recognizing important practices utilized by learners to overcome challenges in different language undertakings (Frawley & Lantolf, 1985; McCafferty, 1992). Their discoveries show that language learners externalize their reasoning procedure so as to overcome challenges, focus attention, and organize thoughts. As such, language learners think aloud when they endeavor to solve an issue. This self-talk is named "private speech" in light of the fact that it is implied for the self so as to get control (self-direct) over the language activity and linguistic challenges experienced by the individual and is not meant for social cooperation (Centeno-Cortez & Jimenez, 2004). Private speech is accepted to have a crucial role in the process of language development as it helps language learners achieve control over a troublesome task, give and get scaffolding, and help learners have a joint perception from one another in the intersubjective condition (Dicamillia & Anton, 2004). Language development is thought to occur as learners' cognitive regulation moves towards a more self-managed state with the assistance given by a more skilled other (De Guerrero & Villamil, 1994).

Some SLA experiments on shared learner activities report that private discourse of language learners also has a social capacity. Private speech helps interlocutors increase intellectual control over a joint

activity in light of the fact that peers adjacent can hear all plain speech despite the fact that the main role of speech is private (DiCamila & Anton, 2004; Wells, 1999) and this is called other-regulation. Besides, Wells (1999) acknowledges that as much as private speech may have social capacity, social discourse might likewise have a coincidental private capacity in light of the fact that any speech directed to a peer might likewise help the individual clear up his or her considerations about future activities.

While working on learners' interactional talk, a number of studies (e.g. Storch, 2008; Swain, 2005; Swain & Lapkin, 1998) took into account Language Related Episodes (LREs) to examine the role that language could have in the execution of linguistic tasks. As a valuable device in studying learners' talk during interaction, an LRE is any part of a dialogue where a student speaks about a language problem s/he comes across while completing a task.

Learners talk about lexical gaps as they fulfill pedagogical tasks. Lexical language related episode (LLRE) is an LRE that in terms of function and content is related to a lexical matter, e.g. meaning or spelling (Swain, 2006). For language development taking an interest in conversations questioning language is crucial. Various studies have demonstrated a complex collaboration between task type, resolution of LREs, and language patterns utilizing LREs as a construct (e.g. Swain, 2005; Swain & Lapkin, 2002). In the same way, LREs created amid task based communication have been indicated to prompt language development; however, the role of private speech in solving lexical problems conducive to vocabulary development has yet to be examined.

The scope of this study is the role of private speech in solving lexical problems. My objective is to study how English as Foreign Language (EFL) Learners use private speech to increase regulation over a language activity and how they would set up mutual comprehension of one another and the task (intersubjectivity) as they switch expert and novice roles in solving a lexical problem through their LLREs. This is realized by examining both how interaction happens and what learners achieve through it.

Swain claims that “using language to reflect on language produced by others or the self, mediates second language learning” (Swain, 2005, p. 478). Not much is known about adult language learners’ use of private speech in lexical related interactions. Like child private speech studies, prior L2 studies on private speech concentrated on private speech use in individual problem solving exercises (Centeno-Cortez & Jimenez, 2004; Frawley & Lantolf, 1985; McCafferty, 1992). In spite of the fact that studies report private speech use by peers in cooperative discourse (Anton & DiCamilla, 1999; Brooks & Donato, 1994; Donato, 1994), only a couple of researchers have examined the utilization of private speech by grown-up language learners in interaction (Buckwalter, 2001; DiCamilla & Anton, 2004; Villamil & De Guerrero, 1996). Consequently, not much is known about language learners’ private speech use in collaboration with peers produced in their LREs. In this way, this study examines the engagement of adult EFL learners in cooperative dialog with one another through LLREs.

Numerous studies have concentrated on the advancement of grammatical ideas in LREs (e.g. pronominal verbs in Lapkin et al., 2002; voice in Swain & Lapkin, 2002). Also the occurrence of both syntactic structure and lexis have been examined (Swain & Lapkin, 1998). Nevertheless, no study has been done exclusively on the impacts of private speech on lexical problem solving. From the sociocultural point of view, the investigation of private speech is important in seeing how the mind works (DiCamilla & Anton, 2004). Yet, not much is known about the form and content of private speech as researchers just report on the existence of private speech that develops in studies on collaborative dialog. A systematic, focused investigation of language learners’ private speech by EFL learners in lexical related tasks is missing in the literature.

When learners cooperate, their shared and individual implementation as a dyad can be considered by private speech. Private speech may surface as learners try to guide themselves during the task, an aspect of self-regulation. As the collaboration continues, cognitive knowledge progresses, and the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) process is perceived, which leads to growth. In the same way, this

research provides a holistic approach to the analysis of private speech by reflecting on both learners and their social exchanges, and whatever they achieve through such exchanges regarding attaining more cognitive abilities. Based on the above remarks, the study tries to answer the following question:

What is the role of private speech produced by intermediate Iranian EFL learners when engaged in lexical language related interactions?

## **Methodology**

### **Research design**

This study uses a qualitative perspective in its design. This qualitative approach makes it possible to consider the development of participant utterances in interaction in every moment (Firth, 2009). The detailed investigation of the interaction seems crucial for the interpretation of the results of the specific context of this study. Qualitative analysis is appropriate for the research questions because it lets the researcher obtain comprehensive information about the language development perceived in individuals or small groups (Aljaafreh & Lantolf, 1994).

### **Participants**

Participants in this study are intermediate English as foreign language learners in a language school in Iran. In qualitative research purposeful sampling is recognized as the most common technique for selection of participants (Ellis & Barkhuizen, 2005). In this study one intermediate class (12 female) was selected from a series of classes in a language school. Participants comprised a homogeneous and typical sample of intermediate learners. They ranged in age from 23 to 32 and had at least three years of experience in studying English.

### **Instrument**

The dictogloss was used as the instrument of data collection. This type of task has extensive and effective use and implementation in other sociocultural studies in SLA (Foster & Ohta, 2005) and also this task has received obvious confirmation from specialists in the field as it promotes much collaborative talk and LLRE (Swain, 2006). The teacher reads out a short story twice to the learners. The text is first read by the teacher while the students listen. The second time the text is read,

learners take notes of key words and ideas that they will use to reconstruct the text. The text reconstruction process is done in dyads, an arrangement that is conducive to much collaborative talk.

During this dictogloss activity, learners are required to play a game. Each student is given two cards and in each card a certain word is written in a sentence with its definition. These words were used in the stories read by the teacher so each group had to discuss four vocabulary items. Learners should describe a certain word or concept written on the card during the reconstruction of the story. In each episode, one player starts explaining the word on the card to her partner who also cooperates actively to understand the word. The episode ends when the partners stop discussing the word on the card. It is noteworthy to point out the chosen vocabularies for this game were previously taught in the last term class with the same students, and were correctly answered by them when included in the last term exam.

#### **Data collection procedure**

Data collection was carried out at the end of each class time for 30 minutes. We had 6 groups (each containing 2 members). Participants interchangeably formed groups. We had 10 sessions of data collection. These sessions were audio recorded completely (while learners were involved in the dictogloss) with the permission of participants. In each gathering a story was read twice at a normal pace by the teacher. When the teacher was done reading the stories the participants had to start reconstructing the story in the written form. During the procedure every student was given two cards. Each card contained a certain vocabulary which was written in a sentence with its definition. One student had to explain the vocabulary she saw on the card and her peer had to interact to guess the word. So in every dictogloss task, each group had to discuss four vocabulary items while they were involved in the reconstruction of the story and they also had to use these words in their reconstruction (These words were included in the stories). Our analysis only concerns learners' discussion of the 4 vocabulary items given on the cards; that is only interactions in which learners discuss the 4 vocabulary items were transcribed to analyze the LLREs produced during the dictogloss

task. At the end of the task, each group was required to deliver their reconstructed text.

### **Data coding**

The research question addresses the role of private speech produced by learners in their LLREs. To answer this question, the nature of private speech in terms of form and content appearing in the LLREs of the learners was considered. The coding categories for private speech were initiated with the literature on adult private speech and also from The Private Speech Coding Manual by Winsler, Fernyhough, McClaren, and Way (2005). Nonetheless, coding was not limited to previous research since private speech is context-specific and should be explained as it comes about in the data. The coding conventions will be illustrated fully below.

*Coding for private speech form.* The form of private speech involves silent speech/whispering and loud speech without social speech features (Ohta, 2000).

*Silent speech/whispers.* Utterances that were generated in a tone of voice lower than the social speech loudness and were directed to the self were marked as silent private speech (Brooks, Donato & McGlone, 1997; DiCamilla & Anton, 2004; Lantolf 2009; Lantolf & Yanez, 2003).

*Loud forms.* Such utterances were created in a social tone of voice as if the speaker is speaking to someone in the audience but they were addressed to the self (DiCamilla & Anton, 2004; Platt & Brooks, 1994).

*Coding for contents and functions of private speech.* Based on the literature review, contents of private speech were recognized. Those were: (1) self-directed questions; (2) affective utterances; (3) repetitions; (4) comments that indicate a hypothetical stance; (5) labels; (6) pause fillers; (7) metalanguage; and (8) Comments on self.

*Self-directed questions.* The utterances were coded as self-directed questions if the student raised a question not answered by others or once the learner responded to her own question instantly after asking it (Buckwalter, 2001; DiCamilla & Anton, 2004).

*Affective markers.* Statements showing the affective stance of the speakers were coded as affective markers. These statements could be sighs, laughter, or any type of speech that had a motivational intention, or that implied relief, exhaustion, and discovery of an idea or solution (Centeno-Cortes & Jimenez, 2004; DiCamilla & Anton, 2004).

*Repetitions.* Private speech statements that were repetitive and learners by using them could concentrate on the task (Centeno-Cortes & Jimenez, 2004; DiCamilla & Anton, 2004), do lexical searches (Anton & DiCamilla, 2004), and self-repair their incorrect utterances (Buckwalter, 2001) were indicated as repetitions.

*Comments that indicate a hypothetical stance.* These comments usually involved words such as think, guess, suppose, believe, probably, can, could, will, should and would. Past research indicates that students hypothesize solutions and achieve individual or joint regulation towards a task by using these statements (Lantolf, 2009).

*Labeling and counting.* Prior investigations show that labeling, naming, and counting facilitate learners in getting control over a task (Brooks, Donato, McGlone, 1997; Centeno-Cortes & Jimenez, 2004; Platt & Brooks, 1994).

*Pause fillers.* Statements such as *um, ah, eh, er, mmm, hmm, and word extensions*, etc were indicated as pause fillers. Earlier researchers contended that pause fillers in learner utterances show the thought process (Centeno-Cortes & Jimenez, 2004).

*Metalanguage.* Learners' statements were regarded as metalanguage when learners' utterances were utilized to discuss language, and while the students commented on their own speech. Past research proposes that students utilize metalanguage to help their participation in the task and to obtain control over communication with peers (Brooks & Donato, 1994).

*Comments on self.* This type of private speech can be on task, knowledge, or performance. DiCamilla and Anton (2004) point out that these comments help learners create a joint understanding of each other's worlds, modify task strategies, and find alternative solutions.



### Findings of the study

The research question tries to realize the nature and role of private speech the learners employ in their LLREs. Consequently, form, content, and function of private speech are examined.

#### Findings for forms of private speech

All in all we had 194 LLREs for analysis. Private speech was present in 93 of these episodes. 69 of these private speech utterances were in the loud form and 34 utterances were in the silent form. The loud form of private speech is often used to externalize the planning procedure of a task (*This is difficult but I have to explain it*), it is generated for revision of the task (*this is not going to work*), for giving motivation (*that was a good one*) and learners also express their private speech in the loud form to provide strategic assistance at the planning stage of the activity (*eeeeh mmmm this is an easy word but I should find a way to describe it... eeeeh... Right...*)

Silent private speech occurs when participants have discoveries about some part of their own task, performance, or knowledge (*this can't be true*). The data suggests that silent private speech can also have dual social and private purposes since silent private speech can also be grasped by the interlocutor.

#### Findings for contents and functions of private speech

Classifications of content for private speech in this study are self-directed questions, repetitions, affective utterances, pause fillers, utterances indicating hypothetical stance, labels, metalanguage, and Comments on self.

*Affective markers.* In this study, Affective markers demonstrate discovery, relief, dissatisfaction, and mostly they are signs of an individual's consideration of a mistake or a disappointment when confronted with a challenging circumstance. Participants make use of affective markers to ease tension and to create coordination concerning the LLREs. The frequent affective markers are expressions like "cool", "oh", "aww/oww", "oh my god", "sheesh", "oh girl", "yeah" and "wow", and laughs and Sighs.

*Hypothetical stance.* Learners use hypothetical and conditional clauses so as to give other solutions to a problem and to form mutual regulation towards a task. These statements are one of the most notable private speech content types that help students share orientation towards the task. Hypothetical stance statements frequently appear when learners are commenting on performance. This facilitates the students to assess their statements and have mutual orientations in a collaborative task (*I could have said it in another way*). Learners can express their thought progression and intentions for employing a different strategy (*I don't think I can be successful this way, I have to take a different approach.*).

*Labeling/Counting.* The learners regularly use labeling and counting so as to handle the task by giving it some kind of structure. Similar to the earlier contents, labeling has social and private features. Labeling regulates the self and partners to the task. Through using labeling and counting learners avoid confusion and frustration. In the next example, the learner labels and counts components of the lexical activity with the intention of aiding her and her peer split the task into controllable chunks. This makes it possible to work on distinct divisions of the task separately (*The word I am trying to explain consists of two nouns. I start with the second noun*).

In the next excerpt, B uses private speech in the form of counting in order to concentrate on one part of the task at a time and to do away with probable frustration and uncertainty and this helps them continue the task. (A: This word is a compound word and has a noun and an adjective. The first word is a group of people with commonalities. B: *The first word a noun.*)

*Repetitions.* Similar to the previous research, repetitions are exercised mostly for lexical searches, self-repairs, and repetitions of vocabulary forms confronted recently in the study. In the upcoming excerpt, Students employ repetitions to remember lexical information (A: Something unexpected happens and you are in a hurry. B: *Hurry, hurry*). Repetitions are also used to manage thoughts and gain regulation during a task turn (A: Imagine that you don't know

something but you don't want anybody know that. B: *no one understands, no one understands*, you mean hiding something?). Another use of repetitions is to indicate the complexity of the task (e.g. *this word, this word, this word*).

*Pause fillers.* The pause fillers are “*umm*”, “*hmm*”, “*ahh*”, “*eeh*”, etc. followed by a short pause. Students use these pause fillers to indicate the continuing thought process and sometimes to manage the thought process. Several learners utilize melodic voice when they see their words prior to the task. This gives hints of the thought progression to their peers and aids them manage and arrange their thoughts with the musical beats (*bum bum bum bum*).

*Metalanguage.* Learners make use of metalanguage to recall a vocabulary and to orient one another to the language activity. Since all episodes are about vocabulary in order not to confuse the results, an utterance is recognized as metalanguage only if it is about grammatical features of the language (i.e. “*it's in verb form*”, “*adverb type of thing*”, “*like superlative*”, “*present tense*”, “*add ed*”).

*Self-directed questions.* These are questions directed to the self and are mostly followed by an answer from the same student and sometimes they are not given any answer from the students present. Some of the questions are “*How should I start?*” By asking this question, students orient themselves to the activity and also adjust to the novice and expert roles determined by who should start explaining the word. Self-directed questions are also used for learners to orient themselves to the task in the following excerpt. (A: These groups are active in the oceans and sometimes they are in the news. They have a special ship and an infamous flag. B: *What kind of ship?* ... Are they armed groups?)

*Comments on self.* Through these private speech utterances learners comment on task, performance, and knowledge. The statements on the task reduce the pressure from the participants (*easy*). These utterances also show learners' problems to assist the peer to be self-regulated (*My mistake, hard to describe*). Remarks on performance point to students' processes of thought and changes of strategies. Speeches on knowledge give important information about the background knowledge of

learners (*I didn't know that*) so that they can create shared understanding of the task and support each other.

### **Discussion of the findings**

Participants achieved self-regulation by making use of private speech in their interactions for mediation of knowledge, scaffolding, regulation, and assistance. Participants form comprehension and meaning as they worked within their ZPDs by using private speech. Private speech is used for planning, monitoring, and guiding interaction. Learners use private speech to gain control of the LLREs and become self-regulated as they move beyond the level of trusting peers for regulation to control the activity and make meaning in the episodes. In the following the role of private speech used by learners in the LLREs will be discussed.

### **Forms of private speech**

Our analyses indicate that loud and silent forms have social and private roles. Students use silent and loud private speech extensively in this study. Both silent and loud forms had the function of self and other regulation. Loud forms are utilized to regulate self and other, encourage self and other, make the cognitive process accessible to one another, and help the process of finding solutions to the problems. Consequently, loud forms of private speech support learners to create shared understanding. Silent forms can also have both private and social roles. Silent private speech emerges when participants face new vocabulary forms or when they come to findings about their own task, performance, or knowledge or when learners are seeking to examine their lexicon so as to remember a lexical item. Silent private speeches also occur frequently in the abbreviated form which indicate a higher degree of private functions for private speech. These results are in line with the earlier literature. DiCamilla and Anton (1999; 2004) similarly observed that private speech has social functions. Anton and DiCamilla (2004) account that although private speech has social functions, its status as private speech is not contradicted because it is used by the participants to attain control over a language activity.

### **Contents and functions of private speech**

*Affective markers.* In line with the literature (Centeno-Cortes & Jimenez, 2004; DiCamilla & Anton, 2004) learners here employ affective markers regularly to manage disappointment and anxiety. These markers are key in bringing about joint scaffolding and assistance in discussing a linguistic item (Donato, 1994). The results of this study indicate that successful scaffolding requires giving reactions to peer's emotional and motivational needs and having dynamic participation in the course of cognitive development. Participants of this study play a part in cooperative task by soliciting and offering assistance through obtaining appropriate and well-timed affective marker private speech. Learners intentionally try to estimate self and other's knowledge and performance. Parallel to Brooks, Donato, and McGlone (1997) by using private speech in the content of affective markers students keep being active in the language activity and raise their awareness of the gap concerning what they and others know.

*Hypothetical stance.* Like past investigations, learners in this study use verbs, adverbs, and modal verbs that show a hypothetical stance such as think, can, could, will, would, etc (Anton & DiCamilla, 1999; Centeno-Cortes & Jimenez, 2004). In this research, learners' practices of hypothetical stance statements have the function of revealing private thought procedures about self-knowledge and performance.

*Labeling/Counting.* The findings of this study corroborate earlier findings (Brooks, Donato, McGlone, 1997; Centeno-Cortes & Jimenez, 2004) that labeling and counting has the function of getting control in a language task. Similarly, in this study, learners make use of labeling and counting to separate the language activity into controllable parts and to draw the attention of the peer to specific parts of the word (in case of compound words) to find the word discussed. Mostly, participants use labeling and counting when they think that the word they are trying to explain is difficult to guess or peers do not have awareness about this and it verifies earlier findings (Platt & Brooks, 1994) as this type of private speech is linked to object regulation in collaborative language activities.

*Repetitions.* Our data reveals that learners use repetitions to reclaim information from memory, perceive new information, create a shared orientation of the task, reiterate unfamiliar vocabulary, search vocabulary in their minds, and repair oneself. The earlier literature has reported that repetitions are applied to assist students concentrate on the task (Centeno-Cortes & Jimenez, 2004; DiCamilla & Anton, 2004), to support lexical search (Anton & DiCamilla, 2004), and to self-repair faulty statements (Buckwalter, 2001). Anton and DiCamilla (2004) also put forward that repetitions of others help scaffolding. In the same way, learners' repetitions of peers' statements instigate scaffolding from peers, which contributes to self and other regulation.

*Pause fillers.* Similar to the past studies (Centeno-Cortes & Jimenez, 2004), pause fillers are utilized to direct attention on a specific part of the task or to limit interruption. In this study humming as a pause filler is used to decrease distraction and to show the continuing cognitive processes. In the literature, humming is used by language learners as a mental tool (Winsler, De Leon, Wallace, Carlton, & Quayle, 2003). Humming in this study is a sign that planning and thinking is in progress. Another idea mentioned in the previous research for pause fillers (especially melodic voice) is the idea of fun that is participants are enjoying their conversation (Centeno-Cortes & Jimenez, 2004) which is confirmed by our findings.

*Metalinguage.* Previous studies verify that private speech in the content of metalinguage in the second language acquisition has an important role during joint language tasks and it is exercised by learners to rectify themselves and others, discuss their language use, facilitate students resolve linguistic difficulties, and boost metalinguistic awareness (Storch, 2008; Swain & Lapkin, 1995; 1998). The findings of the study confirm the earlier findings that L2 learners make use of metalinguage private speech to think upon their own language behavior and in order to administer and manage the task so as to proceed the interaction.

*Self-directed questions.* In line with this study, past research reveals that self-directed questions are used for task description, lexical

searches, self and other regulation, and task orientation. (DiCamilla & Anton, 2004; Frawley & Lantolf, 1985; Platt & Brooks, 1994). One function not mentioned in the previous literature that is found in this study for these questions is using questions such as “*whose turn is it? Me?*” to control different task parts such as taking cards and this is much because of the task of this study.

*Comments on self.* In this study, learners through self-comments alleviate the stress of being unsuccessful (*It's difficult to explain*), show helplessness to deliver adequate scaffolding (*my fault*), construct shared understanding so as to communicate effectively (*I know this*), motivate self and peer (*good one*), and create joint cognition (*I made it*). These private speech utterances are identified as participants' remarks on their own thinking. These utterances help peers assist their own participation in the task and revise their past performances (*My fault*), prepare them for a hypothetical future performance (*There is no way I would know*), relieve exhaustion from failing (*It is difficult to explain*), and build shared histories and knowledge of the self (*I didn't know that*). The utterances may also indicate participants' inability to provide sufficient scaffolding to their peers (*I'm getting worse*). In this study, private speech about task, knowledge, and performance is important in the learners' involvement and contribution to the collaborative activity. Learners by disclosing their cognitive processes help peers observe the weaknesses in their linguistic capacity.

### **Conclusions and Pedagogical Implications**

Traditional methods of language acquisition cannot measure cognitive subtleties in the process of language acquisition since they only focus on the product and neglect the internal dynamics of the process and focus on concrete results. This investigation has considered how cooperative discourse functions in the processes of explaining and remembering vocabulary by analyzing the private speech produced by EFL learners. It can be indicated that utterances in cooperative interaction can have social and private purposes. The statements prior to, within, and after a language activity need to be investigated by teachers and researchers. Through these speeches, learners construct social connections, plan for upcoming actions, and revise important

information. In these phases participants illuminate their thought developments through private speech that is used for regulation purposes. Learners should be encouraged to describe their thinking process in the form of private and social speech prior to, within, and after a language activity so as to regulate both self and others.

Our findings show that a major function of private speech is helping learners reach intersubjectivity. This intersubjectivity cannot be achieved instantaneously; rather it can be reached by steady attempt. These efforts resume during the course of having joint orientations from their shared understandings that they construct since the starting point of the relationships. Recounting interactions and associations produced by participants from their LLREs is a complicated issue of cognitive development. Likewise, investigation of the intersubjective state between participants is an intricate issue. Nonetheless, with extended surveillance, evidence can be realized that show learners become regulated. It can be stated that reaching the stages where scaffolding is shaped can be facilitated when learners have joint orientation of each other. This can be achieved by keeping the peers in a group constant. Scaffolding requires that at least one learner gives assistance. For having successful assistance learners should have understanding of self and partner (e.g. when the partner is in need of assistance) and partners need to know about each others' styles.

The private speech statements have the function of creating joint perception of the language activity and one another. These statements make it possible for learners to get and deliver regulation in different stages of cognitive development. Learners express their understandings concerning themselves and peers in a classroom context in their efforts to form shared cognition assuming expert and novice roles. Comments on self also helps them have ideas about their language skills and knowledge which in turn helps them reach the intersubjective state.

As explained previously, this study ties to investigate the nature of private speech of L2 learners through qualitative designs and because of this, generalization of the results to other contexts should be practiced with caution. Because of the lack of exact definitions of



private speech, categorization of ideas are mostly done based on the present research rather than depending on theoretical definitions in the literature. It should be mentioned that private speech codings and classifications in this study (constructed on the literature and current data) might not be complete. Our findings indicate that private speech has positive outcomes in the LLREs produced by EFL learners for the student uttering it and the interlocutor hearing it but its characteristics can be discussed only in its context. Future research can shed light on cooperative interactions and regulation in long lasting involvement of the same peers to analyze the impact of issues such as intimacy on the private speech use in lexical problem solving tasks.



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