

Magee, V. Y. G., & Jacobs, G. M. (2001). Comparing second language student participation under three teaching modes. *Journal of the Chinese Language Teachers Association*, 36(1), 61-80.

## **Comparing Second Language Student Participation Under Three Teaching Modes**

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**ABSTRACT** This study examined the talk of 20 university level learners of Mandarin as a Second Language in three instructional modes: teacher-led (TL), unstructured group work (UGW), and structured group work using a cooperative learning technique (SGW), in this case, Jigsaw. Statistical analyses showed that more learner talk (in terms of turns and c-units) was generated in both types of group work than in the TL setting. Of the two group modes, SGW generated more learner talk than UGW. These learner talk data were supplemented by using questionnaires and interviews to learn how the students and their teacher reacted to the three modes. The results of the study suggest that all three settings can play a positive role in classroom language acquisition. Therefore, keeping a balanced mixture of each in the curriculum is recommended.

### **Introduction**

Increasing student participation in the foreign language classroom was a key rationale behind the introduction of communicative language teaching. Group activities form one of the key means by which communicative teaching methods attempt to increase student participation. The overall quantity of student talk tends to increase when group activities take place, because in the traditional teacher-fronted classroom, students have very limited time and opportunity to practice their target language (Long and Porter 1985). Teachers talk most of the time, and even when they call on students, usually only one student talks at a time. In contrast, if a class of 32 works in groups of four, eight students potentially are talking simultaneously (Kagan 1994).

Two key advantages have been suggested as arising from this increased level of learner talk.

Theorists working from an interactionist perspective on second language acquisition (e.g., Long, 1996) propose that groups provide opportunities for learners to interact in order to make spoken or written input comprehensible by such means as asking for repetition or clarification. This comprehensible input is seen as a prerequisite for language learning (Krashen 1985). Another rationale for the use of groups is the output hypothesis (Swain 1993). Swain argues that output in the form of speaking or writing pushes learners to develop their language competence in a way that input does not, because more complete grammatical and lexical processing is required when producing output.

However, group work does not necessarily produce the desired results, as discussed by Brown (1994) and Rodgers (1988). Uneven student participation is among the most commonly cited problems in group work, with some students dominating group discussion while others seldom or never participate. Indeed, simply putting students into groups, as opposed to using a teacher-led interaction mode, does not guarantee that greater participation will take place. To achieve the structuring of group activities seen as vital to full student participation, some language educators have turned to the literature on cooperative learning (CL) (e.g., Kagan 1994; Slavin 1995). Two concepts critical to CL are positive interdependence (PI) and individual accountability (IA) (Johnson, et al. 1991). PI exists when group members feel that their success is positively correlated with the success of other members of the group. Therefore, they 'sink or swim together'. IA exists when each group member is personally responsible for their own learning and for that of their groupmates, and when students need to individually demonstrate their competence, e.g., via a quiz or by talking to other group members. CL methods are conscious attempts to structure group interaction to encourage these two elements and thereby to increase learners' responsibility and encourage more talk and equal participation from the learners.

Jigsaw (Aronson et al. 1978; Coelho et al. 1989) is a CL technique widely used in foreign language teaching. In Jigsaw, teachers structure group interaction by dividing a text into pieces like the pieces of a jigsaw puzzle. Each group member takes a different piece and then must learn their piece well (typically by collaborating with members of other teams who have the same piece) and

present it to the members of their original group, after which the group does a task or takes a quiz that requires information from all the pieces. Jigsaw encourages PI because members depend on each other to teach their piece, and IA is encouraged because each member is responsible for first learning their piece well and then for sharing with groupmates. Pica et al. (1993) label Jigsaw a required information exchange task. In contrast to the large quantity of interaction potentially generated in structured group tasks such as Jigsaw, an unstructured group activity, such as an opinion exchange task, may be less effective in promoting interaction (Pica et al. 1993). In opinion exchange tasks, all learners hold the same information and are asked to exchange their views on a related topic. Information exchange among all learners is possible but not necessary in order to complete the task.

There have been a large number of studies of CL in a wide range of settings (for reviews, see Cohen 1994; Johnson & Johnson 1989; Slavin 1995), but relatively few done in second language (L2) contexts (Deen 1991; Gunderson and Johnson 1980; Jacob et al. 1996; McGuire 1992; Sharan et al. 1984; Szostek 1994), although in the late 1990s CL received a seeming burst of interest from SLA theorists (e.g., Dornyei 1997; Dornyei and Malderez 1997; Liang, Mohan and Early 1998; Oxford and Nyikos 1997).

Deen's study of foreign language learners of Dutch provided a closer look into classroom interaction by comparing student participation in two teaching modes: teacher-led (TL) and structured group work (SGW), in this case, Jigsaw. Deen found that while learners took many more turns and produced more Dutch output in CL groups than in the teacher-centered setting, stronger learners still took more turns than weaker ones. However, in Deen's study the tasks were quite different in the two conditions - the CL groups did a reading activity, while in the whole class setting, the task was a review of structures, vocabulary, and the previous test. Therefore, we do not know whether the significant differences Deen found were due to the task or the setting alone or both.

In the present study, the researchers hoped to add to the literature on participation by carrying on from Deen's study in several ways. One, a third teaching mode was added:

unstructured group work (UGW), in this case, an opinion exchange task. Two, the task was controlled. Third, participants in the study were L2 learners of Mandarin.

## **The Study**

### *Participants*

Participants in this study were 20 students (14 female and 6 male) from two parallel intermediate level Mandarin classes (11 students in class A, 9 in class B) at the National University of Singapore. All were non-native speakers of Mandarin from a variety of first language backgrounds: 13 Japanese, 1 Korean, 2 Malay, 1 Cantonese, 1 English, 2 Filipino. They studied Mandarin for four classes (50 minutes each) a day, five days a week. The teacher who participated in this study taught the news and editorials course to both classes. He was a native speaker of Mandarin with more than three years of teaching experience.

### *Materials*

Based on a needs analysis and interest inventory, consultation with classroom teachers, and pilot testing, three texts from local Chinese newspapers were adapted and later selected for use in the study. Selection criteria were (1) similar level of difficulty (intermediate level), (2) common level of interest to learners, and (3) similar length (approximately 350 Chinese characters). Each text was accompanied by five researcher-written discussion questions. Two open-ended questionnaires (Appendix I) were created to gather information about students' and the teacher's opinions about these three modes of teaching. Semi-structured interview schedules were written (Appendix II) with the aim of gaining further insight into their opinions. A simple observation sheet was designed to record relevant nonverbal occurrences.

### *The Teaching Modes*

The three modes of teaching - TL, UGW, and SGW - are described below. In each mode, instruction was based on reading and discussion of a newspaper article. The first 10-15 minutes of each class were set aside for the teacher to briefly introduce the topic and explain or review vocabulary and structures related to the text. After that, students read the text and then discussed the questions, according to the particular instructional mode to be used. In each mode, 20 minutes

were given to carry out the task (reading and discussion). The classroom interaction was audio-taped and later transcribed for analysis. In the teacher-led setting, students read the text first, and the teacher initiated discussion by asking learners the questions.

In both group settings, students were divided into groups of four or five which were heterogeneous on such variables as proficiency, age, sex, and L1 background. The same text was read by all groups, but one group used the UGW setting and the other used the SGW setting. Participants in the UGW condition were asked to read the text first and then discuss the text and questions with their group members. Pica et al. (1993) classify this as an opinion exchange task and state that because all the interactants have access to all the information needed to complete the task, each group member can do the task on their own without having to interact with the others. No information gap exists. Thus, learners may feel less need to negotiate for meaning if they do not understand what a groupmate has said. Less negotiation for meaning could result in less comprehensible input and in fewer opportunities for output.

In the SGW condition, a modified version of Jigsaw, Within-team Jigsaw (Kagan 1994), was employed. Using this technique, each member was given a different portion of a text. Without conferring with members of other groups who held the same text portion, they each silently read their portion of the text and then taught it to their groupmates. After each member had taught their part, the groups discussed the questions. Pica et al. note that in Jigsaw a two-way flow of information is required for task completion, thereby enhancing opportunities to receive comprehensible input and produce output as group members seek to close the information gap. Here we see the overlap between the CL concepts of PI and IA, discussed above, and the concept of information gap from the second language acquisition literature.

### *Procedure*

In order to familiarize participants with discussing newspaper articles in the three modes, each mode was used alternately beginning from week 1 of the course. Classroom interaction was audio-taped and classroom observation conducted in weeks 6, 7, and 8, questionnaires administered in week 8, and interviews held in weeks 9 and 10.

### *Data Analysis*

Student participation was measured by the quantity of talk in terms of turns and c-units. Chaudron (1988, p. 45) defines a turn as ‘any speaker’s sequence of utterances bounded by another speaker’s speech’ and c-unit as ‘an independent grammatical predication; the same as a t-unit, except that in oral language, elliptical answers to questions also constitute complete predications.’ Inter-rater agreement was 95% on the coding of turns and 96% for c-units. One-way repeated measures ANOVA (Analysis of Variance) was used to see if differences in student participation existed between TL, UGW, and SGW. An alpha (significance) level of .05 was set. Data from questionnaires, interviews, and observation notes were content-analysed to look for recurring ideas. Due to absences, only 16 students participated in all the reading and discussion sessions. Only data from those 16 were used in analyses of turns and c-units.

### **Results**

The key issue the researchers sought to investigate was the effect of teaching mode on student participation. The results are presented below in three sections. The first section presents the data on student talk as to, first, the number of student turns and then the number of c-units produced. The second section reports the researchers' observations of students in the three modes. In the third section, the results of the student questionnaire and interviews with students and their teacher are reported

#### *Student talk*

Student talk was analyzed in terms of the number of turns taken and the number of c-units produced. On both measures of student talk, UGW and SGW were associated with greater numbers than TL, and SGW with more than UGW. Details are given in Tables 1-6. Descriptive statistics for turns taken by students are displayed in Table 1. The mean number of turns for each mode were 13.44, 31, and 46.75 for TL, UGW, and SGW, respectively. The results of the one-way repeated measures ANOVA (Table 2) showed significant differences for the turns generated under different settings ( $F = 80.68$ ). The Scheffé test (Table 3) comparing the three different settings revealed that to a statistically significant extent learners produced more turns in UGW than in TL; in SGW than

in TL; and in SGW than in UGW.

**Table 1: Descriptive Statistics for Turns**

Settings	Count	Mean	Std. Dev.
TF	16	13.44	9.54
UGW	16	31	13.57
SGW	16	46.75	12.64

**Table 2: One-way Repeated Measures ANOVA for Turns**

Source	df	Sum of Squares	Mean Square	F Value
Settings	2	8886.54	4443.27	80.68*
Between subjects	15	4868.81	324.59	.99
Residual	30	1652.12	55.07	
Total	47	15407.48		

\*p < .05

**Table 3: Results of Scheffé Test Comparing Turns under the Three Settings**

Comparison	Mean Diff.	F Value
TL vs. UGW	-17.56	22.4*
TL vs. SGW	-33.31	80.6*
UGW vs. SGW	-15.75	18.02*

\*p < .05

Descriptive statistics for c-units produced by students are displayed in Table 4. The mean number of c-units for each mode were 17.69, 45.81, and 63 for TL, UGW, and SGW, respectively. The results of the one-way repeated measures ANOVA (Table 5) showed significant differences for the c-units generated under different settings ( $F = 58.08$ ). The Scheffé test (Table 6) comparing the three different settings revealed that to a statistically significant extent learners produced more c-units in UGW than in TL; in SGW than in TL; and in SGW than in UGW.

**Table 4: Descriptive Statistics for C-units**

Settings	Count	Mean	Std. Dev.
TF	16	17.69	14.45
UGW	16	45.81	23.24
SGW	16	63.00	21.86

**Table 5: One-way Repeated Measures ANOVA for C-units**

Source	df	Sum of Squares	Mean Square	F Value
Settings	2	16744.79	8372.4	58.08*
Between subjects	15	14075.33	938.36	1.43
Residual	30	4324.54	144.15	
Total	47	35144.67		

\*p < .05

**Table 6: Results of Scheffé Test Comparing C-units under the Three Settings**

Comparison	Mean Diff.	F Value
TL vs. UGW	-29.12	21.95*
TL vs. SGW	-46.81	56.97*
UGW vs. SGW	-17.69	8.2*

\*p < .05

### *Classroom Observation*

In TL, the teacher played the dominant role in terms of initiating the talk and controlling the discussions. There was little simultaneous talk in this setting. Non-verbal behavior suggested that some learners might not be paying much attention some of the time. For instance, some seemed busy doing other things when the teacher was not talking to them, losing eye contact with the teacher or touching their hair and looking away from the teacher and the text. In contrast, although other students did not say a word in this setting, their body language and facial expressions showed that they were listening and interested in the talk.

In UGW, students controlled their own discussion. They seemed to enjoy the freedom of talking to their group members. Simultaneous talk was more common in this setting than in TL, and the exchange of conversation was also faster than in TL. However, too often it seemed that two group members were engaged in a private conversation. Although some other group members tried to listen, others lost interest, looking away or touching their hair. In SGW, participants' facial expressions suggested they were more alert. The rate of exchange of conversation appeared to be faster than in UGW and TL, and overlapping or simultaneous talk was more common.



*Questionnaires and Interviews*

Participant responses to questionnaire items 15-20 are most directly relevant to the current study, and their results are presented below supplemented by representative data from the interviews. Item 15 asked **Which kind of classroom activities do you prefer (TL, UGW and SGW)? and Why?** The students' response to this item revealed that 30% preferred TL, 40% preferred UGW, 25% preferred SGW, and 5% had no special preference. Items 16 to 18 asked students to **comment on the advantages and disadvantages of each method.** Table 7 displays typical responses:

**Table 7: Student Views of the Advantages and Disadvantages of the Three Settings**

<b>Methods</b>	<b>Advantages</b>	<b>Disadvantages</b>
<b>TL</b> (Item 16)	'The teacher can correct my mistakes when I speak.' 'I can understand the content better and compare my view with others.' 'I can learn from others' expression and increase my vocabulary.'	'I have very little time to speak in TL, because some competent students use a lot of time.' 'Only certain people talk, some did not even say a word.'
<b>UGW</b> (Item 17)	'I can hear others' opinions and their accents.' 'I have more freedom to talk and express my views.' 'More time and opportunity to talk.'	'The teacher cannot hear all our talk at the same time, and he cannot correct our mistakes.' 'If I do not feel like talking, I do not have to talk.'
<b>SGW</b> (Item 18)	'When others are explaining, it can test and improve our listening ability.' 'Students are more willing to talk and pay more attention to others' talk' 'It helps me a lot by giving me more opportunity to talk and use my own words to introduce my piece.'	'The responsibility is too heavy and sometimes I cannot understand the whole text accurately.' 'If someone's explanation is not clear, others cannot understand, this will affect the discussion.'

Some students felt the two group settings, especially SGW, were more demanding because group settings were less familiar, pushed students to talk more, and meant that groupmates' characteristics were crucial to success or failure, as the teacher was not always there to help, even in such small classes. Groupmates needed to participate actively, be cooperative, listen carefully, and speak clearly for the group to succeed in its task. Item 19 asked **Which method gave you more opportunity to talk? and Why?** Results were: 5% TL, 40% UGW, and 55% SGW. When interviewed about the importance of speaking in class, all but one

of the students felt speaking was important or very important but for different reasons, with some saying that it gave the teacher and peers a chance to correct their errors and others stating that speaking helped memory and understanding. Item 20 asked **Which method is more helpful for your learning? and Why?** Results were: 29% TL, 33% UGW, 29% SGW, and 9% said they are all helpful.

The teacher stated that advantages of the TL mode included better understanding of content, more opinions heard, and more opportunity for teacher correction. However, it was not easy to encourage all students to participate in TL discussion due to the number of students and time constraints. Group activities were better because shy students felt less pressure when speaking to their group rather than to the whole class and the teacher. The teacher found UGW was easy to use; however, sometimes student participation was not as great as expected. He reported that SGW helped learners develop a spirit of cooperation which was good for their learning. When asked if these three modes of teaching were suitable for his classroom teaching, he replied that all were suitable because different teaching methods provided different opportunities for learning and participation, and the variety gained by using all three heightened student enjoyment of the course. When asked which settings he would use in the future and what the percentage he would be given to them in a week, he replied that he would use all three settings. The percentage for each setting would be 60% for TL and 20% for both UGW and SGW. This was because he was most used to TL and thought his students would expect him to correct their mistakes. Besides, he could have more control in TL and make sure that students understood the text and that they could all learn something.

## **Discussion**

### *Classroom Participation*

The findings on classroom participation suggest that learners participate differently under different settings (TL, UGW, SGW) in terms of the quantity of output they generate in each setting. In the TL setting, learners produced the least turns and c-units, and they produced more turns and c-units in SGW than in UGW. Learner participation in each setting is discussed and illustrated

below. It is no surprise that learner participation was lowest in the TL mode, as the size of the group (whole class) was larger than in small group settings, and the amount of time available for each learner to speak was less. Not only does the time constraint affect participation, but the communication pattern is also very different from that of group discussion. As much previous research (e.g., Sinclair & Coulthard 1975) has pointed out, the IRE sequence (teacher initiation - student response - teacher evaluation) tends to dominate the TL setting. The following excerpt from the data illustrates this.

**Excerpt 1**

Teacher: Please say it again, OK?	ÀÏË!£° ÇëÄäÔÛËμÒ» Î°ÄÄð£ç
Pupil R: The result of the survey found that when males are depressed they choose to sleep, while females choose to cry.	Ñ§ÉúR£° μ:²ε½²á¹û· çÏÖÄÐÐÔÐÄÇε²»°Ã N;ÔñË- ¾ò£-À@ÐÔÑ;ÔñçP;£
Teacher: Very good. OK the second question. What percentage of teenagers said they rarely felt happy?	ÀÏË!£° °Û°ÄÄ¶;£°ÃμÚ¶lâ;£°Û·ÖÖ@ ¶âÉÛμÄÇàÉÛÄêËμËûÃÇ°ÛÉÛ,Ð μ½çìÀÖ£ç
Pupil H1: 36% of teenagers said they rarely felt happy.	Ñ§ÉúH1£°Û·ÖÖ@ËÿË@ÁùμÄÇàÉÛÄêË μ ËûÃÇ°ÛÉÛ,Ðμ½çìÀÖç;£
Teacher: That is, of every 100 people 36 felt unhappy. ...Very good.	ÀÏË!£° ¾ÎËÇÒ»°Û ðËËμ±ÖÐÓËËÿË@Áù ðËË¾ðμÃËûÃÇËÇ²»çìÀÖμÄç;£ ...°Û°Ãç;£

As Long and Porter (1985) point out, the artificial nature of such discussion limits its value for preparing learners for conversations outside the classroom.

Data collected from UGW show that learners produced significantly more turns and c-units compared to the TL setting. While in TL learners were largely limited to the role of responding to teacher initiations in the form of questions, the excerpt below shows students in UGW initiating topics, and evaluating and building on what others have said.

**Excerpt 2**

Pupil A: The other advantage is that parents have lived longer than us and they have a lot of experience, so they can teach us...	Ñ§ÉúA£° »¹ÓÐμÄ°Ä ¹¾ÎËÇ£- ,Ä, ÒÑ ¾-Éú»îÁË°Û¶â£-ËùÖÖËûÃÇ ÓÐ°Û·á,»μÄ¾-Ñé£-ËùÖÖËû ÃÇ;ÉÖÖ½ÏÖÃÇ...
Pupil Y1: teach us.	Ñ§ÉúY1£°½ÏÖÃÇ;£
Pupil A: For example they can, my mother can	Ñ§ÉúA£°

teach my wife how to make Kimji.	±ÈÈçÈμÈùÄÇ¿ÈÖÖ£¬ÏÖμÄÄ,
Pupil L1: Right, help new wife to do house work.	Ç×¿ÈÖÖ½ÏÖμÄÆÐ×ÓÖðÄ´×ö Kimji.
Pupil A: Right, but the disadvantage is that often in Korea is...	Ñ§ÉúL1£°¶Ö£¬¿ÏÖúÐÄμÄÆÐ×ÓÁÍÄí¼ Ö
Pupil L1: Fight.	Ïñ¿
Pupil A: Fight, a fight between my wife and my mother. Mhm...right.	Ñ§ÉúA£° ¶Ö£¬¿ÈÈÇ»μ´¾ÄÍÈÇÖÚ°«¼ú ¾£¾£·çÈúμÄÈÇ...
Pupil L1: From the point of view of privacy, because everyone has a right to privacy	Ñ§ÉúL1£°¾¼¼Ü¿ Ñ§ÉúA£°¾¼¼Ü£¬¿ÏÖμÄÆÐ×Ó°ÏÖμÄ Ä, Ç×μÄ¾¼¼Ü¿àÄ...¶Ö¿ Ñ§ÉúL1£°ÖÄ¿, öÈÈμÄÖþÈ½Ä Èμ£¬Òð ÏÄ¿, öÈÈÖÐ×Ö¼°μÄÖþÈ½È

This excerpt shows that the group's discussion was dominated by learners A and L1, who took many turns, while learners Z1 and Y1 were totally silent on many occasions. This was typical of UGW in that there was relatively little simultaneous talk and negotiation of meaning. This might indicate that the rate of exchange of talking turns was not very rapid and, therefore, the participation was not so lively.

Data collected from structured group work (SGW) show that learners produced significantly more turns and c-units compared to the other two teaching modes. This appeared to be partly due to more simultaneous talk among group members, and the exchange of talking turns seemed to be quite frequent and rapid in this setting. The following example illustrates this. (Note: brackets indicate two people speaking simultaneously.)

**Excerpt 3**

Pupil Y1: ...not eating breakfast also affects young people and old people's spirit, lack of nourishing affects human beings' memory because when we lack nourishment, our brain functions will gradually slow down.	Ñ§ÉúY1: ...²»³ÖÖç²¶¶ÖÄêÇáÈÈ°ÍÄÏ ÄêÈÈμÄ¾¼¼«ÈñÖ²ÖÐÖ°Ï, Èç¼ú ÖªÑø²»¹»»¿Ö±½ÖÖ°ÏÈÈμÄ ¼ÇÖä, ÖðÍªÖªÑø²»¹»μÄÈ±ð Í·ÄÖμÄÖÈÖÄ»¿½¶½¶¼ðÄý¿
Pupil A: Gradually [slow down.	Ñ§ÉúA£° ½¶½¶ [¼ðÄý¿
Pupil Y1: [slow down.	Ñ§ÉúY1£° [¼ðÄý¿
Pupil L1: Mhm grad[ually slow down.	Ñ§ÉúL1£°àÄ½¶ [½¶½¶ðÄý¿
Pupil Y1: Gradually.	Ñ§ÉúY1£°½¶½¶¿
Pupil L1: The brain [doesn't work so fast!	Ñ§ÉúL1£°Í·ÄÖ [²»Ï¿¿¿¿¿
Pupil Y1: [more and more	Ñ§ÉúY1£° [ÖúÄ Öú
.....	.....
Pupil Z1: Mhm the ability to do things is still weak.	Ñ§ÉúZ1£°àÄÖ:ÖÄÜÄÜÄ»¹¿¿¿

Pupil A: Ah?	Ñ§ÉúA£° °;£¿
Pupil Z1: The ability to do things.	Ñ§ÉúZ1£°Ó!ÓÄÄÜÁ!;£
Pupil L1: er [do things?	Ñ§ÉúL1£°BÀ, [Ó!ÓÄ£¿
Pupil A: [do things?	Ñ§ÉúA£° [Ó!ÓÄ£¿
Pupil Z1: Do things.	Ñ§ÉúZ1£° Ó!ÓÄ!;£
Pupil L1: [Do what?	Ñ§ÉúL1£° [Ó!ÓÄÊ²Ä´£¿
Pupil A: [The ability to do things.	Ñ§ÉúA£° [Ó!ÓÄÄÜÁ!
Pupil Z1: Ability. I er don't know, er in ability to memorize language.	Ñ§ÉúZ1£°ÄÜÁ!;£ÍÒ°;²»ÖªµÀ£-°;ÔÚ ÔÚ¼ÇÒäÖiÑÓÄÜÁ!;£
Pupil L1: [Ah, ability to do things.	Ñ§ÉúL1£° [°;Ó!ÓÄÄÜÁ!;£
Pupil Y1: [Language.	Ñ§ÉúY1£° [ÓiÑÓ

Comparison of this excerpt with the one from the UGW data (Excerpt 2) is illustrative of the general trend that even though in SGW some learners talked more than others, the gap between more and less talkative seemed smaller than in UGW. This might be due to the fact that each learner held only one piece of the information. Thus, they needed to rely on their communication skills to exchange information necessary to task completion. Again in Excerpt 4 although group members did not participate equally, all seemed to participate actively and collaboratively. When communication broke down, or someone could not understand certain words or concepts, there was always someone in the group trying to keep the conversation going.

#### Excerpt 4

Pupil N: I am not sure either.	Ñ§ÉúN£°ÍÓÓ²»I«Çã³p
All pupils: (laugh)	È«IãÑ§Éú£°(´óÐ!)
Pupil Z: It probably means that.	Ñ§ÉúZ£°´ó.ÄÊÇÓãÑµÄÖâÊ¼°É;£
Pupil N: ... Also 70%, er 77% of parents who have married children, er like to live alone.	Ñ§ÉúN£°...¶!ø¶ÇÒ°Ü·ÖÖ@ÆBÊ@£-BÀÆB Ê@ÆB
Pupil R: Live alone?	ÓÐÖÑ»é
Pupil Z: Live separately. Separately.	×ÓÁ@µÄ,Ä,BÄI²»¶!×Ó¼°
Pupil Q: Separately?	×;j;£
Pupil Z: It means don't want to live with them.	Ñ§ÉúR£°×Ó¼°×;j;£¿
Pupil H1: Right, right.	Ñ§ÉúZ£°·Ö;ª×;j;£·Ö;ª
Pupil R: Is that a newly wed?	Ñ§ÉúQ£°·Ö;ª?
Pupil Q: [mhm, no it's parents'.	Ñ§ÉúZ£°²»Öª,úËüÄÇÒ»Æð×;j;µÄÒâÊ¼;£
Pupil H1: [Theirs...	Ñ§ÉúH1: ¶!Ó¶!Ó;£
Pupil Z: [Their parents' children are all married.	Ñ§ÉúR£°ÄÇ,öÊÇÐÄÐÄ½á»é µÄ?
Pupil N: Ah, some like to live alone, some like to live with unmarried children, unmarried children.	Ñ§ÉúQ£° [ãÄ£-²»ÊÇ,Ä,Ä,Ä,µÄ
Pupil Q: Not yet married.	Ñ§ÉúH1: [ËüÄÇµÄ...
Pupil Z: [mhn	Ñ§ÉúZ£° [ËüÄÇµÄ,Ä,µÄ°ç×Ó¶!¼½á»é ÁË
Pupil R: Just [before who mentioned 70%?	Ñ§ÉúN£° °;ÓÐµÄI²»¶!×Ó¼°×;j;£-ÓÐµÄBÄI²»¶! úÍ»é ×ÓÄ@×;j;I-×;j;I»é×ÓÄ@

ĩ  
Ñ§ÉúQ£º»¹Ã»½á»é µÄ;£  
Ñ§ÉúZ£º [àÄ  
Ñ§ÉúR £º Ö  
[²ÄÊÇºÛ·ÖÖ@ÆßÊ@µÄÊÇË-º;?

### *Learners' Views*

Despite the apparent advantages of SGW, only 25% of students named it as their preferred learning mode, with 30% preferring TL and 40% favoring UGW. Preference for TL might be explained by the fact that it was the most familiar mode of instruction. Indeed, 95% of the learners in this study were Asians. Johnson (1995) suggests that Asian learners are used to the teacher lecturing and the learners listening, to the teacher telling them what to do and when and how to do it, and when the learners do speak, to the teacher providing immediate error correction. Additionally, some learners favored TL because it enabled them to hide in the crowd (Brown, 1994). As one learner commented, 'I can rest easily in this activity if I am tired, but in group activity I must talk'. It appeared that more quiet or average learners preferred group work, while more talkative learners preferred TL. One possible explanation could be that talkative learners take any opportunity to practice the language either in TL or GW; therefore, they do not see any special need for or benefit from speaking with their peers rather than with the teacher.

One possible reason that more learners favored UGW over SGW is that they found UGW easier to use. Some learners had experienced UGW before, while none had experienced SGW previously. Thus, they may not have been totally accustomed to this mode of learning and may not have understood the rationale behind it. Another possible explanation for learners' preference could be that the demands of SGW were too great, as they had to explain things using their own words. As one participant noted, 'If someone's explanation is not clear, others cannot understand; this will affect the discussion'. However, these difficulties felt while using SGW might be overcome by further work on communication skills, by controlling the difficulty level of the reading text, and by explaining the rationale for its use. For instance, the kinds of demands that SGW places on learners may be exactly the kind of 'push' that Swain (1993) advocates.

### **Conclusion**

The present study examined learner participation under three different classroom settings: TL, UGW, and SGW. The results showed that both types of group work generated significantly more learner talk than TL and that SGW, using Jigsaw, generated more learner talk than UGW. This suggests that attention to task type selection and classroom organization may increase learner participation. As TL and UGW appear to be the most commonly used modes of teaching in language classes, SGW should be considered when language teachers plan and select classroom activities.

Jigsaw is only one of many CL techniques applicable to second language classrooms. While CL offers benefits when added to the teaching modes employed in foreign language classrooms, CL may be new to many learners and teachers, even to those who have experience with group activities (Felder 1995; Jacobs et al. 1997). Therefore, it should be introduced gradually so both parties can become accustomed to its use. Also, learners need preparation in such areas as the language skills used to manage communication breakdowns and to encourage others to participate, not to mention preparation in terms of the basic vocabulary and language patterns needed to carry out the task. Further, the rationale behind CL should be explained prior to its use.

It is also necessary to bear in mind that students need to develop the skills and attitudes necessary to learn in all instructional modes. Thus, 100% use of the SGW mode is not advocated. Rather, the hope is that this study provides another piece of the language teaching puzzle as language educators select which instructional mode to use at a particular time and when they evaluate the effectiveness of the methods they are using at present. Indeed, all three modes of teaching provide different yet valuable opportunities for language learning.

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#### NOTE

We would like to thank the following people for their support in this study: Professor Ho Wah Kam for his invaluable advice on this project; Dr. Willy A. Renandya for his comments and help with the statistical analysis of the data; Mr. Zhang Meisuo for his help with the inter-rater agreement testing; and Mr. Kevin Magee for his helpful editorial comments and support for this study. Finally, we would like to thank the teacher and the students who participated in this study.

## APPENDICES

### Appendix Ia - Questionnaire for students (in English translation)

1. Name:    2. Sex:    3. Age:    4. Nationality:    5.Specialty/Work:
6. How long have you learnt Chinese?                      7. Reasons for learning Chinese?
8. How long have you been living in Singapore?
9. Do you have any opportunities to practice Chinese outside the classroom? With whom?
10. Of the four language skills, which are your strongest? Which are your weakest?
11. Are you normally a talkative person?
12. Do you normally participate in discussion and debate in Chinese class? Why?
13. Do you normally participate in discussion and debate in other classes? Why?
14. What is the most effective way for you to learn Chinese?
15. Which kind of classroom activities do you prefer (TL, UGW, SGW)? and Why?
16. What are the advantages or disadvantages of using TL activities?
17. What are the advantages or disadvantages of using UGW?
18. What are the advantages or disadvantages of using SGW?
19. Which method gave you more opportunity to talk? and Why?
20. Which method is more helpful for your learning? and Why?

### Appendix Ib- Questionnaire for the teacher (in English translation)

1. What is your view on TL activities?
2. What is your view on UGW?
3. What is your view on SGW?
4. Do you think these three modes of teaching are suitable for your classroom teaching? Why?
5. Which method do you prefer? Why?

**Appendix IIa - Interview schedule for student (in English translation)**

1. What kinds of teaching methods do you usually like or dislike?
2. Is it important for you to have the opportunity to speak in the classroom? and Why?
3. Do you find yourself or your classmates participating differently under different activities? and Why?
4. Do your classmates or group members have any influence on you?
5. If there were three types of activities (TL, UGW, SGW) scheduled during a week, what percentage of class time would you like to see allocated to each one of them?  
  
TL: \_\_\_\_\_, UGW: \_\_\_\_\_, SGW: \_\_\_\_\_.
6. Discuss the questionnaire (clarify the meaning of their responses):

**Appendix IIb - Interview schedule for the teacher (in English translation)**

1. Which method do you think is more helpful to your students? Why?
2. Which method do you think your students preferred? Why?
3. In the future which method will you use? in what percentage?  
  
TL: \_\_\_\_\_, UGW: \_\_\_\_\_, SGW: \_\_\_\_\_.
4. Any other comments?