**International Journal of Social Sciences**

Caucasus International University
Volume 6, Issue 1

**Journal homepage:** http://journal.ciu.edu.ge/

DOI: https://doi.org/10.55367/HNPO1405

# Short-Term Interdisciplinary Collaborative Learning in an EAP Context: A Micro-Level Exploratory Study

Domna Karanadze[a1]
[a] PhD in Philology, Associate Professor
University of Georgia

Inga Dolidze[b2]
[b] Bachelor of Science, Robert Morris University, Pittsburg, USA

ARTICLE INFO

*Keywords:*

Cooperative pedagogy
Academic English
Task-based instruction
Classroom research
Tbilisi
Georgia

ABSTRACT

The aim of this study is to explore an interdisciplinary collaborative learning task for a short period in a B1-B2 English for Academic Purposes (EAP) classroom. The study is based on the interactionist second language acquisition (SLA) (Long, 1996; Gass & Mackey, 2007); task-based language teaching (Ellis, 2003; Skehan, 1998); and sociocultural theory (Vygotsky, 1978) and investigates if a structured four-hour intervention can produce observable interactional and linguistic outcomes.

Four undergraduate students from different fields of study were gathered as a team to complete a joint assignment where they had to design an eco-friendly travel plan for Tbilisi. Classroom observation, analytic rubrics, pre- and post-task comparisons, and analysis of language-related episodes were used to gather data.

Evidence shows that participation, interpretation, vocabulary, and fluency are enhanced. Student notes revealed more organization and coherence following collaboration. Although long-term acquisition is not asserted, it proves that short collaborative tasks can foster good conditions for pushed output and meaningful interaction in EAP contexts. Another aspect of the project is the suggestion that the composition of the interdisciplinary groups can overcome the issue of diversity in background knowledge and become a tangible resource for the classroom.

[1] Corresponding author.
E-mail addresses: dodo.kara@yahoo.com (D.Karanadze).
ORCID: https://orcid.org/0009-0002-2852-2938
[2] E-mail addresses: Ingadolidze55@gmail.com (I.Dolidze).
ORCID: https://orcid.org/0009-0005-8169-6429

# მოკლევადიანი ინტერდისციპლინური კოლაბორაციული სწავლება მიზნობრივი ინგლისურის კონტექსტში: მიკრო-ექსპლორაციული კვლევა

დოდო კარანაძე [a3]

[a] ფილოლოგიის დოქტორი, ასოცირებული პროფესორი
საქართველოს უნივერსიტეტი

ინგა დოლიძე [b4]

b მეცნიერების ბაკალავრი, რობერტ მორისის უნივერსიტეტი, პიტსბურგი, აშშ

სტატიის შესახებ

*საკვანძო სიტყვები:*

თანამშრომლობითი პედაგოგიკა
აკადემიური ინგლისური
დავალებაზე დაფუძნებული ინსტრუქცია
საკლასო კვლევა
თბილისი
საქართველო

აბსტრაქტი

წინამდებარე კვლევის საგანია უნივერსიტეტის სტუდენტებისთვის განკუთვნილი აკადემიური მიზნებისთვის ინგლისურის (EAP) სწავლების მოკლევადიანი, ინტერდისციპლინური და კოლაბორაციული მოდელი.

სოციოკულტურულ, ინტერაქციონისტულ და დავალებაზე დაფუძნებული პედაგოგიკის თეორიულ ჩარჩოებზე დაყრდნობით, ნაშრომის მიზანია დადგინოს, შესაძლებელია თუ არა მოკლე სასწავლო ინტერვენციის ფარგლებში ინტერდისციპლინური კოლაბორაციული დავალებების გამოყენებით გაზომვადი ინტერაქციული და ლინგვისტური შედეგების მიღწევა.

კვლევაში ჩართული იყო სხვადასხვა აკადემიური დისციპლინის რვა ბაკალავრიატის სტუდენტი, რომლებმაც ოთხსაათიანი საკლასო ინტერვენციის ფარგლებში კოლაბორაციულად შეიმუშავეს თბილისში ერთდღიანი ეკომოგზაურობის გეგმა და წარადგინეს იგი პრეზენტაციის ფორმით.

მონაცემები შეგროვდა ანალიტიკური რუბრიკების, საკლასო პროცესზე დაკვირვების, ენობრივი ეპიზოდების ინტერაქციული ანალიზისა და მნიშვნელობის შეთანხმების პროცესების შესწავლის საფუძველზე.

მიუხედავად იმისა, რომ კვლევა არ იძლევა ენის გრძელვადიანი ათვისების შესახებ დასკვნების გამოტანის შესაძლებლობას, მიღებული შედეგები აჩვენებს, რომ მოკლევადიან კოლაბორაციულ დავალებებს შეუძლია აკადემიური მიზნებისთვის ინგლისურის სწავლების პროცესში შექმნას გარემო, რომელიც სტუდენტებს უბიძგებს საკუთარი აზრების უფრო

[3] ავტორი კორესპონდენტი.
ელექტრონული ფოსტა: dodo.kara@yahoo.com (დ.კარანაძე)
ORCID: https://orcid.org/0009-0002-2852-2938

[4] ელექტრონული ფოსტა: : Ingadolidze55@gmail.com (ი.დოლიძე)
ORCID: https://orcid.org/0009-0005-8169-6429

ზუსტად და არგუმენტირებულად გამოხატვისკენ, ასევე ხელს უწყობს მათ შორის შინაარსობრივ და მიზანმიმართულ ინტერაქციას.

კვლევის კიდევ ერთი მნიშვნელოვანი მიგნებაა, რომ ინტერდისციპლინური ჯგუფების ფორმირება მონაწილეთა წინარე ცოდნის მრავალფეროვნებას დაბრკოლებად კი არ აქცევს, არამედ მას საკლასო სწავლების მნიშვნელოვან რესურსად გარდაქმნის. განსხვავებული აკადემიური გამოცდილება და პერსპექტივები ამდიდრებს თანამშრომლობით პროცესს, აძლიერებს ცოდნის ურთიერთგაზიარებას და ხელს უწყობს უფრო ეფექტიანი სასწავლო გამოცდილების შექმნას.

## 1. Introduction

Collaborative learning is a well-defined type of social interaction in which participants build knowledge together (Dillenbourg, 1999). It encourages meaningful communication in second language classrooms through explaining, clarifying, comparing, and negotiating meaning in the target language (Hall, 2022; Mercer et al., 2020). The reason these processes are important for second language development is because they increase the chances of feedback, output, and participation (Long, 1996; Swain, 2000; Philp et al., 2021).

In the academic setting, language serves as a means of problem-solving (Hyland 2009a), and for certain purposes, it is an object of study. Students will be required to synthesize information, present ideas, justify choices, respond to other students, and do all of this in a time-constrained environment. But mere exposure is not enough to ensure academic language development (Li & Pei, 2024). This is because a task can be communicative but not sufficiently tight to ensure sustained engagement; it can also be cognitive but not sufficiently rich to ensure language use is generated. The purpose of this study is thus to investigate the communicative effectiveness of such a brief collaborative intervention for changes in linguistic and interactional results.

The present study is deliberately small. It does not purport to offer generalization, and it doesn't try to measure lasting acquisition over time. Rather, it emphasizes micro-level classroom evidence: the type of interactional moves that learners make as they engage in collaborative problem solving with each other to accomplish a specific academic task, the type of products they produce during the collaborative process, and the type of written notes that they create to plan for the collaborative process. In this way, the study adds to classroom-based EAP studies of a realistic instructional episode as opposed to a laboratory abstraction. The focus on situated activity is also consistent with Dewey's (1916) perspective that learning is more likely to be meaningful when it is connected to purposeful experience and with Hattie and Zierer's (2020) argument that learning needs to be visible in evidence, feedback, and reflection.

The novelty of this study is not only that it focuses on a four-hour collaborative intervention on a micro-level, but studying these pedagogical principles in a context characterized by the underrepresentation of the Georgian EAP. However, because there has been little empirical research on collaborative EAP practices within the context of universities in Georgia, the results can be used as locally grounded evidence that can be relevant for the EAP pedagogic and curricular design in the context of similar educational settings.

## 2. Theoretical Framework and Literature Review

This study combines the three theories: sociocultural theory, interactionist SLA, and task-based language teaching. The Socio-cultural theory focuses on learning by interacting with others and mediated learning in the zone of proximal development (ZPD) (Vygotsky, 1978). Learners expand their capabilities to extend their own through collaboration, scaffolding, and guided participation (Ohta, 2001). From this perspective, language is not just a code and facts to be learned; it is also a social instrument that helps to create, judiciously and develop, thinking.

Two mechanisms identified by interactionists are negotiation of meaning and pushed output as important aspects of language development (Long, 1996; Swain, 2000, 2005). When miscommunication happens, the learners must clarify, reformulate, and repair, calling attention to the linguistic gaps and providing opportunities for development (Gass & Mackey, 2007). Where there is no expert speaker, then the task should be designed to be truly interdependent and communicatively needed, and learner-learner interaction can be valuable. (Philp et al., 2021; Storch, 2002).

There were also arguments for the value of interaction from the study of corrective feedback. Lyster and Ranta (1997) demonstrate that the most effective feedback is one that is used by the learners and not just corrected passively. In group work, peers tend to assume similar roles on an ad hoc basis: asking questions for clarification, repeating a point, challenging an unclear explanation. These small steps are pedagogically important as they call on learners to make meaning corrections in real time.

Task-based language teaching is the final piece of the framework. Pedagogical tasks should be purposeful, emphasize Ellis (2003), Nunan (2004), and Skehan (1998), meaning focused, goal-oriented, and complex enough to be done with real language use. This is particularly helpful in EAP contexts as students may be required to engage in academic, practical, and cross-disciplinary topics at the same time. A well-structured task is not decorative – it is the mechanism that will make the need for language.

The interdisciplinary component is important too. Repko et al. (2021) suggest that interdisciplinary collaboration is most useful when the students combine various forms of expertise to create a product they share. This approach is applicable to this task as the students from different majors had to integrate their views on economic, sustainability, cultural, transport, and feasibility aspects. Social interdependence theory also helps to explain why such tasks are effective because when group members believe they will be successful if the group is successful, they tend to put more effort into the task and into the other group members (Johnson & Johnson, 2009).

Academic discourse research also indicates that students in higher education must be more than just grammatically correct. They must present arguments, compare options, and present their own writing and/or speech in a way that is purposeful and audience-appropriate (Hyland, 2009b). The current project was aimed at providing students with repeated practice in the very moves they were interested in. It therefore not only covers language form, but also the expectations of the discourse in university studies.

Recent EMI and classroom interaction research indicate that exposure without classroom interaction is not sufficient for the acquisition of academic language. For example, Li and Pei (2024) demonstrate that students in EMI classrooms may still experience difficulties with writing, reading, listening, and precision when speaking. The current study focuses on guided collaboration instead of being immersed in the language. The task was not intended to supplant a more general language development. It was designed to demonstrate the activation of language resources that are not frequently used in normal class discussion.

### 2.1. Why short collaborative tasks can still matter

Communicative episodes are typically short and well-defined in EAP and are limited in time by classroom hours. The students need to answer a question, take part in a meeting, participate in a seminar discussion, and make a recommendation under pressure of time. A brief, focused collaborative task resembles authentic academic conditions more accurately than an extended open-ended project that does not require participants to reach a conclusion.

If it's a short task, it can be helpful as well because it allows you to see the process. The micro-level classroom research enables the researcher to watch ideas being translated from personal notes to peer questioning to reformulation to group consensus. Those very moments are the times when learners may be aware of a language issue, attempt a new phrase, or steal a better expression from another learner. The essence of brevity is not to diminish the value; it enhances it.

In practice, the successful collaborative task may not be so extensive as it needs to be pedagogically significant. It must be asymmetric, purposeful, and organized such that language cannot be avoided. For this purpose, the present study was designed.

## 3. Purpose of the Study

The aim of the study is to investigate if there are measurable interactional and linguistic results of such a short-term interdisciplinary collaborative task in a small amount of instructional time. How much negotiation of meaning and language-related episodes does the task elicit? (2) What are the immediate changes in language performance that can be seen after the intervention? (3) How do students perceive the collaborative experience?

The study is also based on classroom experiences gained from previous collaborative work. Through the years, these activities have been adapted to better suit the content of the syllabus, and topics are chosen to make connections with academic vocabulary and problem-solving in real-life scenarios. The current edition has been specifically made small, usable, and portable to other EAP classrooms.

# 4. Method

## 4.1. Design and participants

With the student recruits who agreed to participate in the experiment, the method was implemented in an intermediate-level (B1–B2 CEFR) EAP course at a university in Georgia. The collaborative format was considered appropriate for this proficiency level because students had enough lexical and grammatical resources to discuss complex ideas, while still benefiting from structured opportunities to improve fluency, accuracy, and interactional competence.

The intervention took place in a single four-hour classroom block of instruction (240 minutes) and was a micro-level exploratory classroom study. Since the time frame was brief, immediate performance-based and interactional indicators rather than acquisition were studied. Eight undergraduate students participated. They came from five different academic disciplines: Social Sciences, History, Architecture, Economics, Business, and Computer Science. The group was deliberately diverse – no one student had all of the information to complete the task. The pressure of communication and supportive interdependence were induced by the asymmetry.

## 4.2. Task foundation and procedure

The theme "Planning an Eco-Friendly Trip in Tbilisi" was chosen for its relevance to the course syllabus and ability to integrate language use with a practical, local context.

The final task involved developing and presenting the best possible one-day ecological route in Tbilisi, Georgia. The plan needed to be economic, educational, include zero emissions, and feature the city's multicultural heritage. This activity aimed to provide students with an opportunity to apply their language skills in practice in a realistic activity where they have to solve a problem, taking into account principles of environmental protection and responsible tourism.

The task was cognitively challenging and structurally asymmetric. Students were required to explore and explain their selections and develop a cohesive plan. This design prompted them to go beyond merely sharing ideas and towards synthesis.

The intervention consisted of five phases. Students were provided with detailed instructions in the first phase. Secondly, they searched independently for information and formulated arguments. Thirdly, they shifted into a group working mode, sharing resources and amalgamate ideas. Fourth, they went on to build consensus and further refine collaborative work. Lastly, they showed their class their final plan. The series was designed to take the learners from preparation to negotiation to the final stage, which was public reporting, with each step requiring more accurate oral expression.

Subject matter was also important. Eco-friendly travel is easily measurable and specific enough that students can come up with ideas fast, yet it is also wide-ranging that there is always a compromise. All of these factors can apply. In the classroom, it involves having multiple potential answers and so provides a space for discussion, not just a single correct answer.

### 4.3. Data sources and analysis

The data was gathered from: classroom observation, analytic rubrics, interactional analysis, and short pre-task and post-task performance comparisons. The analysis was based on observable signs of episodes, negotiation of meaning, peer scaffolding, and pushed output. The teacher also observed students' notes to determine if ideas were more organized following the discussion.

To enhance trustworthiness, a second trained evaluator independently analyzed 25% of the data, based on the same criteria. There was 87% interrater agreement, indicating good consistency between scorers. Statistically generalizing is not part of the study. Instead, it provides descriptive and performance-based evidence to demonstrate how the task worked in practice.

This analysis was intentionally qualitative-descriptive in nature and not inferential. It's a decision that's appropriate for the project size. While a one-session intervention with eight learners is not a scientifically valid basis for making any broad statistical claims, it can establish whether or not a particular task design can generate useful classroom language behavior. The focus was thus on pattern, rather than prediction.

### 4.4. Evaluation framework

The teacher and assistant watched the entire process and documented the students who performed the following: who found information relevant to the group; who brought in new information; who debated and justified ideas; who synthesized group input; and who helped the group make a final decision. In addition, creative thinking was also addressed in terms of the quality of idea generation, synthesis and problem solving.

A rubric measuring the four points: 1 = Needs Improvement, 2 = Satisfactory, 3 = Good, and 4 = Excellent was used. The same evaluation criteria were used for collaborative processes as well as for language use, enabling the class in its entirety to be assessed as a group of speakers instead of as single language users.

### 4.5. Measuring linguistic progress

As the intervention was brief, there was a descriptive assessment of linguistic development by comparing the brief pre-task speaking activity to the post-task presentation. Collaborative stages were also followed by written notes, and compared with the pre-collaborative stages. Task performance, information selection, and responsiveness during interaction were measured for reading and listening. This is helpful for micro-level classroom research because it demonstrates change in performance, but does not attribute long-term acquisition from a single session.

The most crucial decision made in practice was to make note-making a part of learning and not a by-product of it. In tasks such as this, notes are not only memory aids. They are the middle ground between ideas and words, and words and plans.

**Table 1. Participant Distribution by Discipline**

| Discipline | n | % |
|---|---|---|
| Social Sciences | 2 | 25.0 |
| History | 1 | 12.5 |
| Architecture | 1 | 12.5 |
| Economics and Business | 2 | 25.0 |
| Computer Science | 2 | 25.0 |
| Total | 8 | 100.0 |

**Figure 1. Participant Distribution by Discipline**

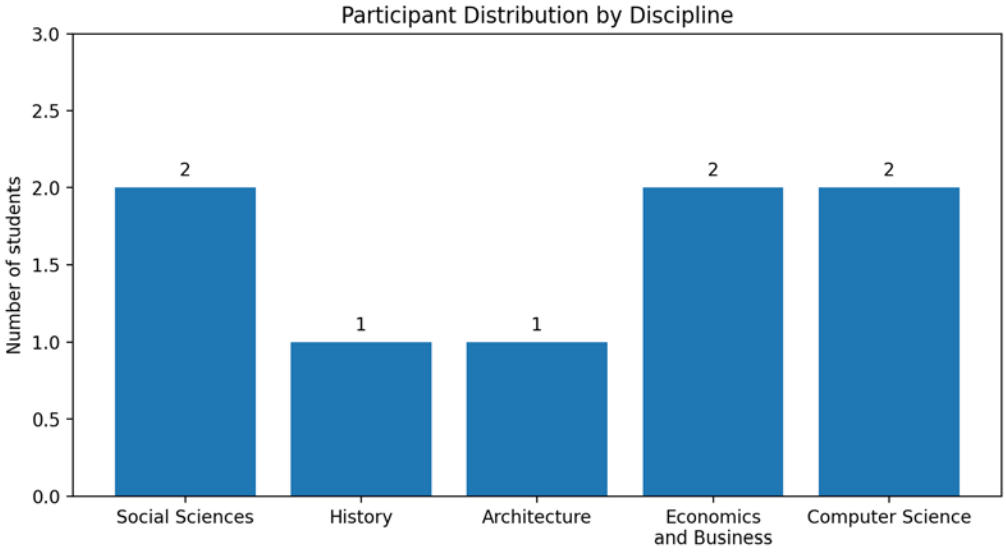



**Table 2. Intervention Phases and Time Allocation**

| Phase | Duration | Purpose |
|---|---|---|
| Instruction | 15 min | Explain the task and the working stages |
| Individual work | 45 min | Collect information and prepare arguments |
| Group work | 60 min | Share ideas and build a first proposal |
| Collaborative work | 60 min | Negotiate, refine, and reach consensus |
| Presentation | 30 min | Present the final plan and explain decisions |

**Figure 2. Intervention Phases and Time Allocation**

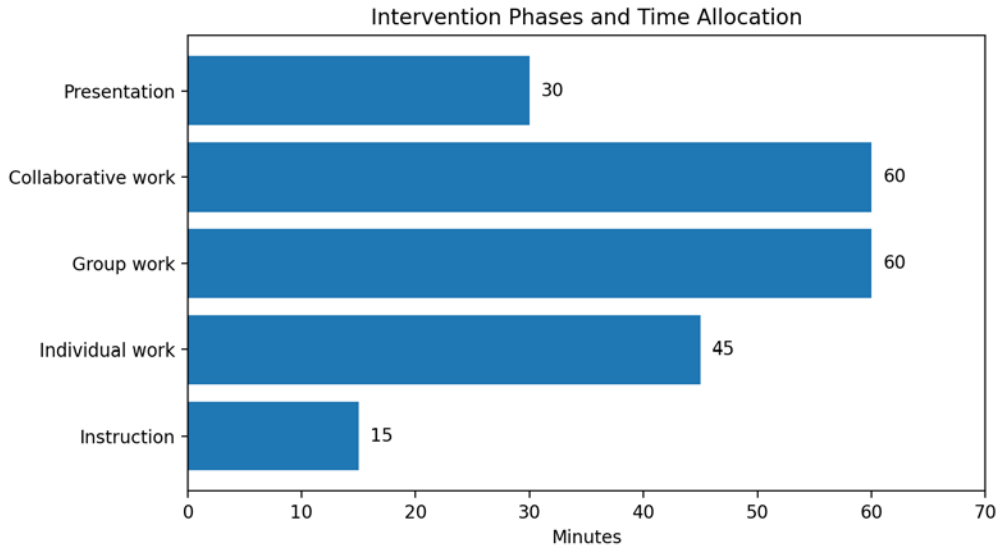



**Table 3. Analytic Rubric for Collaborative Processes and Linguistic Performance**

| Criterion | Operational description | Domain |
|---|---|---|
| Positive interdependence | Observable reliance on peers' contributions and integration of multiple disciplinary perspectives into the final proposal. | Collaborative |
| Individual accountability | Evidence that each participant completed assigned roles and contributed substantively to the group product. | Collaborative |
| Face-to-face interaction | Frequency and quality of discussion, clarification requests, elaborations, and supportive feedback. | Collaborative |
| Social skills | Turn-taking, leadership, respectful disagreement, and conflict resolution. | Collaborative |
| Group processing / reflection | Ability to evaluate the collaborative process and identify strengths and areas for improvement. | Collaborative |
| Speaking | Fluency, lexical range, grammatical accuracy, and task achievement during discussion and presentation. | Linguistic |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Writing | Organization, coherence, lexical diversity, and grammatical correctness in notes and proposal outlines. | Linguistic |
| Reading | Accuracy in extracting and synthesizing information from interdisciplinary materials. | Linguistic |
| Listening | Responsiveness to peer contributions and evidence of comprehension during discussion. | Linguistic |

**Table 4. Quantitative Descriptors Available in the Study**

| Indicator | Value | Source in the study |
|---|---|---|
| Participants | 8 | Classroom intervention |
| Academic disciplines represented | 5 | Participant profile |
| Total duration | 240 minutes | Task design |
| Independent double-coding | 25% of the dataset | Reliability procedure |
| Inter-rater agreement | 87% | Scoring comparison |
| Evaluation scale | 4 points | Analytic rubric |
| Collaborative-process criteria | 5 | Rubric |
| Linguistic-performance criteria | 4 | Rubric |

## 5. Results and Observations

### 5.1. Interactional evidence

The comparative observation in the United States was a descriptive, non-interventional observation. Observations were conducted in five undergraduate courses at an American university. The sample of the observed consisted of 140 students from First-Year Undergraduate Training, Sociology, Economics, Public Communication, and Introduction to Leadership courses. The purpose of the observation was not to judge the effectiveness of instruction and/or to compare academic achievement statistically across disciplines, but to provide context on learning environments in which students interacted with the institutional learning management system (Blackboard).

Median Blackboard scores were calculated from class statistics that students could access in Blackboard and indicated the middle point of students' overall coursework for the class during the period of observation. Due to inter-curriculum variation in grading systems, assessment systems, and discipline expectations, these scores were used only as an indicator of performance. These data were not used to perform inferential statistical tests, nor were they used as dependent variables in the larger study. The

observations were used instead, however, to set the context for the educational setting and exemplify differences in undergraduate courses in the U.S. institutional sample.

The interaction data analysis revealed a high level of engagement, lots of negotiation of meaning, and active interdisciplinary collaboration. Students were required to explain terms, to clarify meanings, to compare options, and to merge subject specific knowledge into one proposal. In practice, it was not a requirement for the work that language be added to it, but that it is a requirement of the work.

The task also promoted repetition of rephrasing. Students did not just give ideas to one another; they made and tried out ideas and changed them based on what others had said. This is a situation where pushed output is most apt to occur. The most noticeable descriptive results were: greater participation, increased oral fluency in group discussion, increased task-related vocabulary, and increased coherent organization in the concluding group product.

It was particularly apparent when the group was asked to prioritize options. From then on, they switched from producing short answers to producing sequences of explanation, one student proposing a choice, another asking if it was feasible, and the third rephrasing the suggestion in a more manageable version. This sequence was repeated a number of times throughout the session. The pattern is significant because it illustrates that collaboration was not just social; it was cognitively and linguistically significant.

### 5.2. Student notes and micro-artifact evidence

The written notes supplemented the oral data. At the individual phase, students created short and vague lists of modes of transport, cost considerations, environmental considerations and cultural tourism. These fragments became more coherent and organized into a planning structure by the time the group reached the collaborative stage. There is an interesting, but very helpful, movement from information gathering to synthesis in the notes, away from the one to the many.

This is important because the writing was not separated from the speaking and was not considered a different skill. Rather, it served as a link between listening, reading, and oral negotiation. As students' notes were put together, they combined common points, eliminated redundant choices, and kept only those points that they would be able to back up in the final report. The process of transitioning from scattered notes to a coordinated plan offers a mini case study of how interdisciplinary learning is manifested in practice.

Another implication is that the quality of the notes may be a valid measure of collaborative learning. The last notes were not just longer, they were more meaningful. They included headings, sequencing, and clearer justification. In EAP terms, organizing small bits of information into a plan that can be defended is a transferable academic skill.

### 5.3.Examples of interactional evidence

Excerpt 1. Discussions for meaning during a budget. Context: Students talked about how they’d get to the eco-friendly trip. One student suggested taking the bus, and another student asked for clarification.

A language-related episode was clearly demonstrated in the discussion. One student asked about the words: economical and economic. The speaker rephrased the explanation to relate to cost-cutting. The next step involved eco-tourism-based arguments, such as carbon emissions and time efficiency. This is crucial as it demonstrates that a single question of clarification can give rise to further metalinguistic reflection and enrich the content discussion.

Excerpt 2. Consensus building in the process of trip planning. Task: To make a decision about adding a guided tour to the eco-friendly itinerary. Task context: Students were considering whether to add a guided tour of the history to the eco-friendly itinerary. There is a long negotiation of meaning and consensus-building. Students also had conflicting opinions on cost, suggested a self-guided option, and created a QR code-based digital guide. The compromise solved both the budget and sustainability concerns. It also demanded that students explain, justify, and synthesize the disciplinary knowledge in comprehensible English.

Similar episodes happened multiple times throughout the intervention period of 4 hours. They generated communicative tensions and maintained interaction to facilitate language and collaborative problem solving. Such episodes are helpful because they make the learning mechanism visible: Students did not just get the right answers to the questions, they not only negotiate what constituted a good answer.

### 5.4. Attitudes toward collaborative learning

The task was well received by students on the whole. They found it to be interesting, stimulating and useful for their vocabulary development, fluency, and confidence. They also appreciated that the subject was of practical value and that they could share their various forms of expertise.

Meanwhile, there were some concerns raised. Some students felt it would be difficult to ensure equal participation in group work. It is a concern in collaborative learning and is one of the reasons that roles and clarification of assessment criteria are important. Overall, the task was successful when the teacher and assistant kept track of the group's participation, made notes about what each person had contributed, and only stepped in to direct the group when it needed it.

The feedback indicates that the students didn't feel the task was 'artificial'. They felt it was a real problem in learning and had a definite solution. This perception is important because most of the time, student buy-in is responsible for making a collaborative task successful, or unsuccessful, even when it appears to technically do what's required.

### 5.5. Immediate linguistic shifts

There were noticeable, but minor, changes in the immediate language. As students engaged in the task, they increasingly employed longer turns, more explicit connectors, and more reformulation in their responses to peers. Many contributions were short and 'list-like' at the start of the activity. At the collaborative stage, the same students are more likely to explain the significance of a choice, to compare two choices, and paraphrase a peer's suggestion before endorsing or challenging it.

The pattern is important because it indicates that the task was not just about the amount of speech; it is about the quality of speech. Students now started to justify their thinking and opinions with greater academic form than spontaneous speech. The second change was to decrease isolated contributions. Students were still given the opportunity to give their own ideas, but more often they connected their ideas with the group's plan.

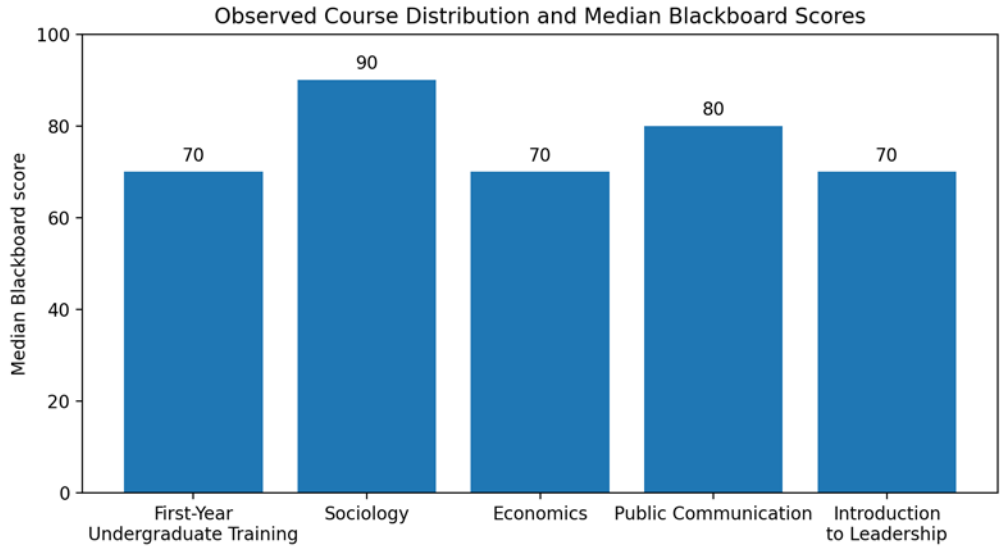
Linking behavior is significant in EAP since academic oral activities are not usually single opinions. It typically asks students to develop on their previous statement, respond to an objection, or explain how a claim is part of a larger argument. The task thus promoted a small, but significant, move from a single-sentence involvement in the text to connected discourse. These changes are short-term because the intervention was short, and thus should be interpreted as immediate changes in performance due to the intervention, not as long-term learning, but they count as evidence that the activity was impacting the classroom process.

Overall, the evidence from the classroom and the student notes suggest that students were developing the habit of simplifying complex processes. This compression is a very real academic acumen. A student who has the ability to synthesize a few uncertain ideas into a single proposal is already engaging in a synthesis process that will eventually become a part of his/her essay and presentation writing skills and group projects. The task did not just pull students into interaction; it taught students how to frame uncertainty so that it could be discussed, defended, and presented.

**Table 5. Descriptive Summary of Observed Undergraduate Courses and Blackboard Medians**

| Course | Students (n) | Share of Observed Sample (%) | Median Blackboard Score |
|---|---|---|---|
| First-Year Undergraduate Training | 50 | 35.7 | 70 |
| Sociology | 40 | 28.6 | 90 |
| Economics | 20 | 14.3 | 70 |
| Public Communication | 15 | 10.7 | 80 |
| Introduction to Leadership | 15 | 10.7 | 70 |
| Total | 140 | 100.0 | — |

**Figure 3. Observed Course Distribution and Median Blackboard Scores**




Note. Scores reflect learning-management-system class statistics visible to enrolled students and are presented here as descriptive context.

## 6. Discussion

Results indicate that it is possible to have interactionally rich conditions for language use in such a short interdisciplinary task. Students had to negotiate meaning many times because of the incompleteness of knowledge, shared responsibility, and the objective of real decision-making. This is a positive finding, especially since it demonstrates that the same level of interaction that is often described as deeper learning is possible when working on tasks within the confines of a classroom for a limited amount of time.

This is important for EAP because EAP students do not simply require "the right words. They must be able to apply language to plan, discuss, and justify choices and decisions. Task demonstrated that these skills can be taught in a brief, systematic session. Perhaps the best evidence was that the pattern of performance was more like the students: more talking, more fixing and repairing, more synthesis, and a more coherent product than the students first made on their own.

The comparative observational note goes the same way. The five undergraduate course settings observed were Sociology (n = 40), Economics (n = 20), Public Communication (n = 15), Introduction to Leadership (n = 15), and First-Year Undergraduate Training (n = 50) from August 2025 to March 2026. Class performance, reflected in the class statistics that are available to the students, varied from one class to another, and the medians of the classes of Sociology and Public Communication were comparatively higher than in some of the settings observed. Academic achievement in English-medium schools is not dependent on one course versus another, but rather on more than passive exposure. Structured academic work is still a thing of value for precision, clarity, and performance.

All these observations provide a succinct comparative benchmark. Immersion helps build confidence and helps learners use the language in the real world, but doesn't eliminate academic language demands. The current research then suggests that collaboration, rather than simply being exposed to language, is necessary to provide students with opportunities to transition from everyday language to academically appropriate language. This is particularly important in mixed-discipline EAP classrooms where students have to acquire knowledge and content skills, discourse control skills, and interpersonal negotiation skills simultaneously.

The findings further imply that, in a subject area that truly calls for more than one type of expertise, interdisciplinary teams can mitigate the risk of passivity. An architecture student is aware of spatial feasibility, an economics student is aware of cost, a computer science student is aware of digital tools, and a student in the social sciences is aware of audience and social impact. If each of these perspectives is relevant, it is difficult for any one speaker to stay within a comfort zone and dominate the task. This doesn't remove the need for monitoring, but makes it more essential. This principle is useful to utilize in future EAP activities as a way of utilizing diversity of background as a resource instead of a "problem of imbalance”.

Another significant point about the task is that it demonstrates the interplay between oral and written work in a collaborative EAP context. The notes were not merely planning notes, but rather a transitional ground in which new words, categories, and arguments were explored prior to speech. After all, once students returned to oral discussions, those written pieces became more structured and easier to defend. It's a small detail in the classroom but a very important one: when students have time to jot down some ideas, they are able to speak afterwards with greater control, since they are not having to invent the whole thing as they go along.

The small changes have pedagogical value because they facilitate transfer. In a single task, students are practicing a more general academic skill: supporting claims with evidence. This is a habit that is vital to presentations, seminars, project work, and eventually to communication in the workplace. That is, the scope of the classroom event was narrow, and the skill being rehearsed was broad. This is one way collaborative EAP work can be efficient. Reading, note-taking, discussing, negotiating, and delivery are many of the academic activities that fit into one activity.

The balance between structure and openness was also a factor in the task. Excessive structure may lead to fill-in-the-blank, and a lack of structure may result in unfocused chatter. In this situation, the goal was clearly defined, there was a realistic limit of constraints, and there was a product. Meanwhile, students were given sufficient freedom to suggest other ways, means, and focuses. This balance is crucial since interaction requires both pressure and choice to be productive.

The study findings are also consistent with recent research highlighted in relation to classroom discourse and collaborative dialogue. The literature of dialogic education emphasizes that learning consists not only of transmitting but also of joint reasoning in talk (Mercer et al., 2020). The research on peer interaction also indicates that collaborative dialogue can support noticing, reformulation, and uptake (Philp et al., 2021). These patterns showed up in miniature in this study. Students did not progress in a

linear fashion from incorrect to correct; they oscillated between partial thoughts, feedback from their peers, and the refinement of their wording. That is the reason why doing something for a short period of time is still educationally beneficial. It also aligns with the reflective teaching approach outlined by Walsh and Mann (2021), as they suggest that teachers should use evidence collected to inform task design in the future.

Another aspect of analysis has to do with fluency. The improvement seen here should not be taken to mean fluency in the native language, and it is not evidence of permanent development. It is more clearly seen as performance fluency: more skill and confidence in sustaining speech, prolonging turns, and continuing conversation in the face of task demands. The distinction is important because the changes in performance that result from short classroom interventions are more likely to be visible than changes in development. But even when the performance changes it is important, particularly in an EAP classroom where students have to present, explain and defend ideas under time constraints.

The writing dimension is the same. The research on academic discourse would indicate that the language of the university is influenced by genre, audience, and expectations for a particular discipline (Hyland 2009a, 2009b). The students in this task were not writing a finished essay, but they were practising similar skills: structuring information, articulating choices, and developing a rationale. The support provided by the task of note-taking and oral explanation, both in the same direction, indicated that the learners could convert their raw ideas into structured academic language.

The other good thing about the intervention is that it was based on content that was relevant to the local context. The eco-friendly travel of Tbilisi is not just a random call to action; it is a call to reason with the learner about transport, heritage, and sustainability. Task relevance is important because when students can visualize the decision that they are being asked to make in the real world, they tend to pay more attention to the task. The local context also reduces the barrier to participation: students do not need to be experts in the area to make a contribution, but they must also think carefully to make their plans viable.

Lastly, this study indicates that shorter tasks can be particularly helpful for teachers who require scalable routines in class. In most university curricula, a 4-hour block is a realistic time period, with only minor changes needed to the design for other themes. The topic may shift, but the structure remains the same: individual preparation, role-specific collaboration, consensus building, and public reporting. This makes the model a practical one rather than an extraordinary one.

### 6.1. Limitations and future research

The study is not generalizable due to the small sample size, the relatively brief time of the study, and the single-site design. It also uses descriptions and not inferential statistics, and the results should be interpreted as a diagnostic and not as a causal statement for general application. Also, it is context-rich and reflective, but not a controlled comparison, and the comparative observational note.

These limitations could be overcome in future studies by incorporating delayed posttests, larger samples, and parallel comparison groups. It would also be interesting to make a comparison between homogeneous and interdisciplinary task groups as the findings of the present study indicate that some of the

characteristics that most positively influence negotiation is the disciplinary discrepancy. In a subsequent study, the effect on lexical range and oral fluency could be investigated for delayed post-learning periods.

An alternative productive activity that could be pursued next would be to study the task at different levels of proficiency or in other EAP modules. It would be particularly helpful to know if there is a difference in learning gain from tightly scaffolded prompts for lower-proficiency learners and whether there is a difference in synthesis quality for higher-proficiency learners when the content load is greater. The questions would enhance the model but not alter its fundamental logic.

## 7. Conclusion

Based on this micro-level exploratory study, it is recommended that structured interdisciplinary collaboration can be used to enhance the performance development in an EAP classroom in the short term. The task promoted an interdependency of positive task relationships, meaning negotiation and perceptible improvement in oral fluency and lexical range in performance. The written notes also indicate that students were able to transition from disorganized ideas to a more coherent planning product when they started to work together.

The study does not guarantee long-term acquisition in one session. It does demonstrate, however, that well-designed, collaborative, short tasks can foster meaningful language use and evidence-based learner engagement. The small episodes are of importance here: when clarification requests were made, they resulted in reformulation; when there was disagreement, there was explanation; and when there was explanation, there was a more precise group decision. These are precisely the micro-processes that are educationally valuable for classroom collaboration.

Finally, that the task worked well is related to the fact that it involved a number of strengths at one time. It was not too long to fit into real classroom time, but not too short to not allow for actual problem solving. It was multidisciplinary, so a student couldn't finish it without listening to others. It was communicative, and language was necessary to achieve success. Therefore, the study confirms the general conclusion that students will benefit a lot when they are encouraged to think, compare, synthesize, and make decisions together in EAP classrooms.

To sum up the results of the study, the following three related findings are emphasized. First, the task caused recurring language related incidents indicating that students not only exchanged ideas but were aware of and corrected language in real time. Second, planning and talking went in the same direction; the notes and the talk were mutually supportive. Thirdly, the students were receptive, though the task needed teacher supervision to ensure balance in participation. These are modest results, but collectively illustrate the potential for a brief intervention to create a fruitful academic language environment.

As a result of the intervention having a number of linked effects, the intervention can be used again within a semester as a re-occurring module, not as a one-off event. These behaviors – clearer note-making, faster peer negotiation, and more confident presentation language – are likely to be reinforced through repetition. It may be a different topic every time, but the structure could be the same. That's a

practical strength for EAP teachers, since, as already mentioned, a good task is one that is not only interesting once, but one that can be reused, adapted, and easily connected to various units of the syllabus.

## 8. Implications for Practice

Collaborative tasks in EAP should be cognitively demanding, interdisciplinary, and outcome-oriented. Complexity and asymmetry increase communicative pressure and lead to deeper processing. Teachers should assign roles, monitor participation, and guide students toward explanation, reformulation, and consensus-building.

Assessment should include both collaborative processes and linguistic outcomes. When students know that participation, negotiation, and synthesis are part of the evaluation, they are more likely to contribute meaningfully. Short collaborative modules can be added to regular instruction without requiring a full semester-long project, which makes the model flexible and realistic for higher education contexts.

One especially useful classroom practice is to require each student to bring one discipline-specific idea and one feasibility constraint to the group. That small requirement increases accountability without making the activity feel overly controlled. Another useful practice is to build a short note-review stage between group discussion and presentation, because that step helps students transform scattered ideas into a coherent oral report. These small design choices fit the broader results of the study: they preserve spontaneity, but they also make collaboration more visible and more educationally productive.

**The Statement Regarding the Usage of AI**

The authors used Grammarly solely for language refinement, grammar correction, and improving readability. All research design, data collection, analysis, interpretation of findings, and final editorial decisions were conducted by the authors. The authors take full responsibility for the content of the manuscript.

## References


1. Dillenbourg, P. (Ed.). (1999). Collaborative learning: Cognitive and computational approaches. Elsevier.
2. Dewey, J. (1916). Democracy and education: An introduction to the philosophy of education. Macmillan.
3. Ellis, R. (2003). Task-based language learning and teaching. Oxford University Press.
4. Gass, S. M., & Mackey, A. (2007). Input, interaction, and output in second language acquisition. In B. VanPatten & J. Williams (Eds.), Theories in second language acquisition: An introduction (pp. 175–199). Lawrence Erlbaum.
5. Hall, J. K. (2022). Classroom interaction and language learning. Language Teaching Research, 26(4), 561–579. https://doi.org/10.1177/13621688211044240
6. Hattie, J., & Zierer, K. (2020). Visible learning guide to student achievement. Routledge.
7. Hyland, K. (2009a). Academic discourse: English in a global context. Continuum.
8. Hyland, K. (2009b). Teaching and researching writing (2nd ed.). Longman.
9. Johnson, D. W., & Johnson, R. T. (2009). An educational psychology success story: Social interdependence theory and cooperative learning. Educational Researcher, 38(5), 365–379. https://doi.org/10.3102/0013189X09339057
10. Li, M., & Pei, L. (2024). Exploring challenges in academic language-related skills of EFL learners in Chinese EMI settings. Acta Psychologica, 247, 104309. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.actpsy.2024.104309
11. Long, M. H. (1996). The role of the linguistic environment in second language acquisition. In W. C. Ritchie & T. K. Bhatia (Eds.), Handbook of second language acquisition. Academic Press.
12. Lyster, R., & Ranta, L. (1997). Corrective feedback and learner uptake: Negotiation of form in communicative classrooms. Studies in Second Language Acquisition, 19(1), 37–66.
13. Mercer, N., Wegerif, R., & Major, L. (Eds.). (2020). The Routledge international handbook of research on dialogic education. Routledge.
14. Nunan, D. (2004). Task-based language teaching. Cambridge University Press.
15. Ohta, A. S. (2001). Second language acquisition processes in the classroom: Learning Japanese. Lawrence Erlbaum.
16. Philp, J., Adams, R., & Iwashita, N. (2021). Peer interaction and second language learning (2nd ed.). Routledge.
17. Repko, A. F., Szostak, R., & Buchberger, M. P. (2021). Introduction to interdisciplinary studies (3rd ed.). Sage.
18. Skehan, P. (1998). A cognitive approach to language learning. Oxford University Press.
19. Storch, N. (2002). Patterns of interaction in ESL pair work. Language Learning, 52(1), 119–158.
20. Swain, M. (2000). The output hypothesis and beyond: Mediating acquisition through collaborative dialogue. In J. P. Lantolf (Ed.), Sociocultural theory and second language learning (pp. 97–114). Oxford University Press.
21. Swain, M. (2005). The output hypothesis: Theory and research. In E. Hinkel (Ed.), Handbook of research in second language teaching and learning (pp. 471–483). Lawrence Erlbaum.

22. Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). Mind in society: The development of higher psychological processes. Harvard University Press.
23. Walsh, S., & Mann, S. (2021). Doing reflective practice in English language teaching: Research-based principles and practices. Routledge.