The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

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The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

2

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3

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4

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The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

5

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The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

6

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The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

7

Abstract

Debates on a range of current affairs topics are commonly used by L2 teachers within a task-based pedagogical methodology to develop learners' oral fluency. However, debates cannot be expected to boost fluency unless they are designed in a specific way to promote the L2 learner's motivation to successfully engage in this task for genuine communication purposes. Whilst it is clear that this task offers valuable oral practice for learners, the potential debates offer for fluency development is largely undiscovered, in particular, in terms of how these can boost cognitive processes for creative automatisation within the context of meaningful communicative interaction. This study is underpinned by Segalowitz' (2010) creative automaticity model and fluency methodology ACCESS, conceived to enable learners to automatise their speech in a creative manner with the aim of enhancing oral fluency through practice and within a genuine communicative context. It is also based on Dörnyei's (2005) motivational model leading to the perception of motivation as a tool that promotes task engagement in the L2 classroom. The main aim of this study is to investigate the impact of a conclusion-based debate on fluency in L2 Spanish. Producing a conclusion at the end of a debate involves a process of listening to the contributions of all participants and deciding what the main views presented are, which is different to simply contributing to the debate. This study is aimed at investigating the impact of this reasoned process on L2 fluency. The task designed for this study involved participating in a debate on current global news. 56 second year university students of Spanish took part in this debate in 10 different classes. Each class was divided into group A (conclusion outcome) and group B (discussion only). Participants in all classes and groups were audio and video recorded for the duration of the debate. This study also aimed at shedding light on the causes for dysfluencies during the speech process. For this purpose, cards containing two potential explanations for pausing during speech, linked to the conceptualization and formulation stages of Levelt's (1989, 1999a) speech production model, were used by the participants to indicate the causes for their pausing. Prior to the debate, all participants had 10-minute planning time with the support of a stimulus sheet containing a selection of news headlines selected and adapted from a national Spanish newspaper in order to help them focus their contributions during the debate. At the end of each debate, all participants completed a questionnaire on their perceptions about fluency development. A set of assumptions was presented with regards to the participants' perceptions on fluency and contrasted with their actual fluency outcomes in the debate. These assumptions regarding fluency and motivational aspects

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

8

were all met or partially met, including whether reaching an outcome at the end of a debate leads to higher fluency outcomes. Participants' oral performances were analysed using a range of fluency measures based on Skehan's framework which represent the three aspects of fluency in SLA research, that is, speed, breakdown and repair. The findings revealed that oral fluency increased in two of its measures, namely articulation rate and frequency of repair, specifically, reformulations and self-corrections, for the A group participants who produced the conclusion as they uttered a slightly higher number of words within the 20 second sample (excluding pausing). It was also revealed that these participants showed a lower rate of mid-clause pausing. It can, therefore, be concluded that reaching a conclusion at the end of a debate had a partial effect on the speech production process and, ultimately, on fluency. These findings give way to a range of theoretical implications regarding the contribution this study makes to creative automatisation within the framework of Segalowitz' automaticity model and ACCESS, as well as motivation research following Dörnyei's model. The main theoretical implication is that the processes of planning, priming and monitoring during the task would have led to an increased cognitive fluency in the conclusion utterers speeding up lexical retrieval and freeing up attentional resources for the formulation of new language chunks. They also have methodological implications, in particular, with regard to the effectiveness of the use of dysfluency explanatory cards, the benefits of adopting a mixed-methods approach which elicits unique insights otherwise unidentifiable if statistical analyses were used in isolation, and the contribution this study has made in terms of its findings with regards to grammatical encoding having more weight than lexical retrieval as the main cause for dysfluency in speech in L2 learners resulting from the word by word speech analysis carried out. Finally, the pedagogical implications drawn from the current study focus on the benefits of integrating a conclusion at the end of debates and ways in which to reduce dysfluencies to further enhance fluency in speech from both the teacher's and the L2 learner's perspective.

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The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

9

Contents

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

10

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

11

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

12

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

13

List of Figures

List of Tables

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

14

Appendices

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

15

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

16

Chapter 1: Introduction

Throughout the researcher's teaching career at HE, proficiency students of Spanish have always placed the development of oral fluency at the top of their learning objectives. They have highlighted that their main goal in learning Spanish has been developing the oral skills required in order to be able to hold a conversation with a native speaker of Spanish and communicate their thoughts fluently and effectively. The main drive for this is fuelled by the learners' ambition to satisfy the criteria for oral assessment in their university examinations, which features fluency as one their components, with the ultimate goal of being able to pursue a professional career in a Latin-American country. As a teaching practitioner, the researcher has designed a varied repertoire of oral tasks with the intention of building up the learners' oral fluency skills. However, this process has always posed the question as to what the speech mechanisms are that enable fluent speech in the L2 and whether there are any specific strategies that may be applied when designing oral tasks that will tap into these mechanisms and boost oral fluency development, thus helping learners reach their main goal. This constitutes the initial motivation for the current study and the willingness of the researcher to contribute to this field in fluency studies research.

1.1   Filling the gap in L2 fluency research

Over the last few decades teachers have introduced a vast array of methodological approaches with the aim of helping learners improve their fluency in the classroom. The end of the 20th century was marked by the 'communicative revolution' which prioritised fluency of speech over its grammatical accuracy. After a traditional emphasis on grammar, the focus for L2 learning in the classroom changed to the quantity of speech produced (Hughes et al., 2017). This drive to achieve 'communicative competence' in the classroom led to a new shift in pedagogical approach which culminated in Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) and the current Task-based language teaching (TBLT), based primarily on helping learners develop their fluency through the completion of selected tasks by the teacher and interacting with their peers in the L2.

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

17

However, Gatbonton and Segalowitz (1988, 2005) reported that genuinely communicative classrooms were still a minority and that traditional techniques were still being used, such as long grammatical explanations by teachers and pattern drills instead of purposeful communicative tasks for improving fluency. They suggested that the focus of pedagogy should be on helping learners achieve automaticity in their speech, that is, "the smooth and rapid production of utterances, without undue hesitations and pauses, that results from constant use and repetitive practice" (Gatbonton and Segalowitz, 2005, p. 326). With this aim, they proposed a fluency enhancing methodology called ACCESS (Automatisation in Communicative Contexts of Essential Speech Segments), designed to enable learners to automatise their speech in a creative manner within a truly communicative framework.

The main limitation of the CLT approach that was reported by Gatbonton and Segalowitz (1988, 2005) was that L2 teachers were used to highly structured activities and struggled to embrace CLT wholeheartedly and consider the newly adopted communicative tasks such as games, role-plays, pair and group work, debates, etc. as 'real teaching'. It seemed that CLT had not evolved to include communicative tasks with structured learning content. This may have been due to the difficulty of integrating focused oral practice within the open and often unpredictable nature of communicative tasks. Current L2 teaching coursebooks offer a vast array of 'free communication' activities of this kind although these are not always based on L2 fluency research (Rossiter, Derwing, Manimtim & Thomson, 2010). This also seems to apply to coursebooks for teaching Spanish as a L2. The widely spread use of this type of communicative activities was also reported by Tavakoli and Hunter (2017) who concluded that there is indeed a mismatch between the pedagogical recommendations made by L2 fluency research and the practices teachers adopt in the class. It can be concluded that there needs to be a greater emphasis placed on the findings of L2 fluency research and on applying these in improving fluency in the classroom with greater efficiency. In this sense, Tavakoli and Hunter (2017) make reference to the 'adaptations' that could be made to free-production activities and admit the value of future research on this basis:

Future studies might, therefore, consider triangulating findings with classroom observations in order to better understand how free-production activities are actually manipulated for teaching purposes (Tavakoli & Hunter, 2017).

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

18
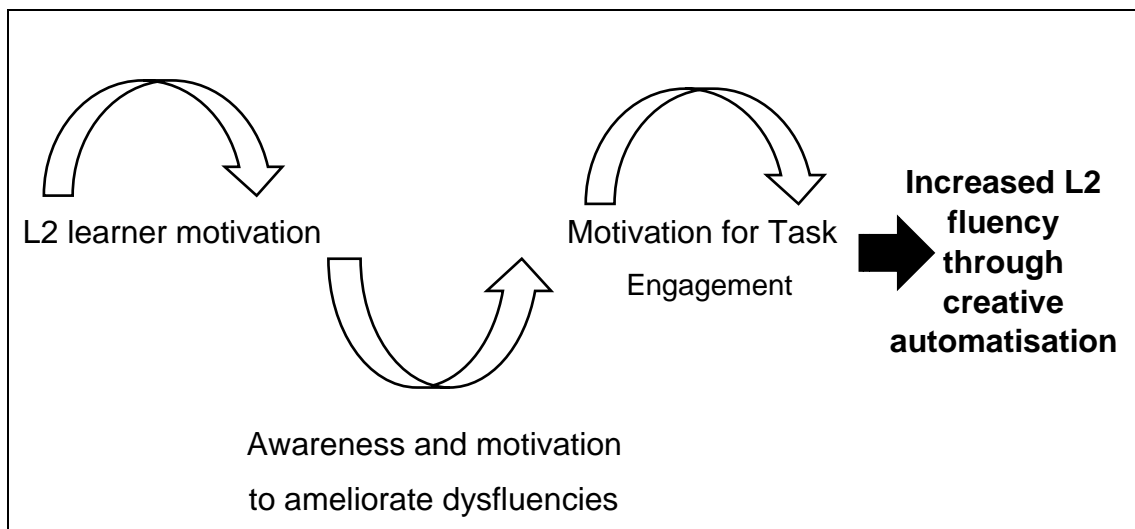
Figure 1: Co-occurrence of factors for increased fluency through creative automatisation

Achieving increased fluency through creative automatisation by L2 learners does not take place solely by following a specific method designed to develop L2 fluency, such as the aforementioned ACCESS methodology. Referring exclusively to advanced L2 learners who already have a B2 proficiency level and the assumptions made in this study, there are other factors that also play an important role and have to co-occur with each other in order to lead to an increased fluency outcome through creative automatisation (see Figure 1 above): firstly, L2 learners must have the motivation required that drives them to continue to develop their fluency (i.e. Dörnyei 2005, 2009, 2014); secondly, they have to be aware of the dysfluencies they incur in their speech and want to ameliorate them to improve their fluency; and, finally, they have to feel motivated by the tasks they are asked to complete in the classroom which are designed to increase their fluency (i.e. Dörnyei 2005, 2009, 2014). This final element, that is, task engagement, is crucial to accomplish L2 fluency development, as Willis and Willis argue:

> "without engagement, without genuine interest, there can be no focus on meaning or outcome. Learners have to want to achieve an outcome, they have to want to engage in meaning" (Willis & Willis, 2007, p. 13).

Each of these factors constitute the core of the current study and will be explored in detail in the following chapters.

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

19

The current study is, therefore, motivated by an eagerness to reach a deeper understanding of the interaction of these factors, that is, L2 learner motivation, awareness and motivation to ameliorate dysfluencies and task engagement and the effect that a specific free-production task such as reaching a conclusion at the end of a debate may have on L2 fluency. This is because reaching a conclusion entails bringing together the main points discussed in the debate, which involves listening to all contributions made and deciding on and expressing the main ideas discussed. The current study will look into how this process of producing a conclusion has an impact specifically on cognitive and utterance fluency.

This study will also investigate how this task could be 'adapted' in its design to improve its effectiveness as a pedagogic method. Therefore, the main aim of this study is twofold: it aims at making a theoretical contribution to research by advancing understanding of these aspects of L2 fluency, as well as a contribution to pedagogical methodology by suggesting ways in which this specific fluency enhancing task could be further improved for use in the classroom. This is in contrast with most research into L2 fluency which has aimed at contributing in one of these aspects, mainly theoretical, and which calls for studies that incorporate both in such a way that theoretical knowledge can have a practical pedagogical application in the classroom. As DeKeyser (2017) points out:

(W)hat is sorely needed […] is studies that are […] carried out in a classroom context, yet look very closely at very specific processes in a controlled design […] studies that combine ecological validity and internal validity (DeKeyser, 2017).

Mackey and Gass (2005) also highlight the validity of classroom studies:

[…] if the effects of a particular instructional method are investigated, an existing classroom may be the most ecologically sound setting for the research (Mackey & Gass, 2005).

The current study answers this call for this type of studies that combine a theoretical and pedagogical perspective and that have both ecological and internal validity.

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

20

1.2 Main fluency studies in Spanish oral fluency development in the classroom

Given that the current study focuses on oral fluency development in Spanish in the classroom, it is worth acknowledging the main studies that have been carried out in this field. Although there have been many attempts at investigating oral fluency development with English as the L2, less attention has been given to Spanish. Most of these have been (focused on) qualitative studies measuring pauses, repetitions and self-corrections (Smith, 1985; Ejzenberg, 2000) and others such as the work of Giménez Bornaechea (2017) analysed the impact of using the 4/3/2 repetition technique for the development of oral fluency and accuracy in the classroom. In this study university Japanese participants spoke about a specific topic in three consecutive times lasting 4, 3 and 2 minutes respectively and their word per minute output was measured in each of them for evidence of fluency development. The number of repetitions, reformulations, incidents of hesitation and Japanese words per 100 words was measured each time they spoke. The results showed a positive impact on fluency gains although the impact on accuracy of output was less conclusive. Studies based on repetition task designs (see for instance de Jong & Perfetti, 2011) tend to result in fluency gains. The current study, however, goes a step further than repetition task based designs and seeks to explore whether fluency outcomes are increased when the participants reach a conclusion at the end of a debate. The study design is further detailed in Chapter 5.

Other studies have focused on the efficacy of commonly used communicative activities in the classroom such as songs, newspapers, films and games combined with conversation in the development of oral fluency in learners of Spanish as a L2 (Vargas Venegas, 2010; Barroso García, 2000). The results of Vargas Venegas' study, although a small scale one, showed that the combination of these activities and the promotion of conversation greatly complemented each other not only for the development of oral fluency but also for L2 learning in Spanish. As we will see, the design for the current study is underpinned by the use of press articles used for the promotion of the participants' interaction in a debate.

Other studies have aimed to explore the use of the L2 with regards to pronunciation and intonation (Wennerstrom, 2000) or how conversation is organised between native and non-

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

21

native speakers (Morales, 2000; Fiksdal, 2000). In Morales' study, the aim was to consider oral fluency as the convergence of two necessary processes for spontaneous speech, as that produced by native speakers, that is, listening comprehension skills that follow negotiation of meaning in speech production as well as the knowledge of the social and cultural aspects for the accurate interpretation of the inferences implied in conversation. In the current study, this holistic interpretation of oral fluency is also acknowledged, however, for reasons of scope, the emphasis is on speech output only. The focus for other studies has been on the role played by non-verbal communication elements such as the use of gestures and facial expressions (Bavelas, 2000).

Finally, others have investigated the concept of fluency from the perspective of the listeners, what is known as perceived fluency, in particular, which are the most important social aspects from the listener's perspective and the linguistic aspects from the speaker's point of view in the perception of fluency of a non-native speaker (Sánchez Avendaño, 2002). Focusing on the linguistic aspects, this study by Sánchez Avendaño (2002) highlights the continuity in the flow of speech in terms of its quantity, duration, place of pauses, speed of speech and use of reformulations that are needed to convey the intended message by the speaker. It also includes the semantic and discursive flow which encompass the information contained in the speech, the sequence of events narrated, the conflict presented in this and the speech used for each specific emotion. In general terms, this study seems to suggest that perceived fluency is based, not on the use or lack of use of pausing or reformulations but in the way in which these are used in speech. The current study aims at focusing only on speech fluency measured in terms of speed, breakdown and repair and other aspects are out of scope.

All of these studies, although not directly linked with the current study, have, in some way, helped pave the way for this and future investigations and highlight the novelty and originality of the current research both in focus and methodology.

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

22

1.3 General overview of this thesis

Having presented the aim, motivation and justification of the current study, as well as some of the main constructs that will be explored in detail in the following chapters, I now outline an overview of this thesis.

In Chapter 2, I explore current models in L2 fluency and speech production and the definition of *fluency*, focusing on influential fluency definitions in L2 and explaining the definition adopted in the present study. I investigate automaticity in L2 speech production drawing on Segalowitz (2010) model of *creative automatisation*. I look at the sociolinguistic demands of communicative situations, the impact of instruction on L2 fluency and specific aspects of fluency as perceived by L2 learners of Spanish. In terms of fluency measurement, I explore fluency *measures* in L2 in terms of speed, breakdown and repair, I look at the most reliable L2 utterance fluency measures and the issues that can be encountered when measuring L2 fluency. Finally, I explore the definition of *dysfluency,* how dysfluencies can be identified and the possible reasons why L2 speakers of Spanish incur dysfluencies in speech.

Chapter 3 provides an overview of the definition of *task* in the context of Task-based language teaching (TBLT) and SLA in the classroom. In particular, I explore the role of task input in TBLT and the impact of task cognitive load. I define the construct of *task engagement* and explain its importance and that of the role of the teacher to achieve it, as well as the influence of content on task engagement. I then explore in detail Gatbonton and Segalowitz' (1988, 2005) fluency teaching framework ACCESS which was introduced with the aim of promoting fluency in the classroom. I explore the major theories in Motivation research drawing on the most influential studies. I explain the notion of *vision* and *envisioned self* the L2 Motivational Self System (Dörnyei, 2005) and the three-level framework conceptualisation of L2 motivation on a L2 learner and learning situation level. I then explore the definition of *motivation* in L2 and as a tool for L2 classroom instruction, in particular, the role of the teacher as a transformational leader, the motivational aspects of ACCESS and the influence of motivational content topics for L2 fluency development.

In Chapter 4 I provide separately, for clarity, the rationale for the present study. I outline the research questions that have driven it and the assumptions made with regards to the fluency

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

23

outcomes resulting from the study task and the participants' perception on fluency looking at potential correlations between their questionnaire responses and their speech rate.

In Chapter 5, I present the design and how the whole study has been executed. I explain the lessons learned from carrying out a pilot study and how this shaped the main study design. I explain the context in which the study took place, the participants and the ethics approval granted. I detail the study task and how it was administered as well as the effect of topic familiarity on the task and the role the research during the experimental process. I explain how the study task was video and audio recorded and how the participants use their dysfluency explanatory cards while on task. I then detail what the post study task questionnaire entailed. I provide a detailed explanation of the whole process of speech data analysis, outline the dependent variables, explain the data coding and the transcription procedure.

Chapter 6 presents the quantitative results of the study and includes the screening of the data and the summary of effect of task on fluency in answer to research question RQ1 (a). This chapter also provides an in-depth presentation of the qualitative results drawn from the speech data analysis in answer to research questions RQ1 (b) and RQ2. I explore the results with regards to the type and frequency of dysfluencies and repair and provide specific data findings. I present the participants' perceptions on fluency development and their fluency scores, and the assumptions and correlations results between questionnaire responses and SR in answer to RQ2. I also present the findings on the participants' perceptions on fluency drawn from their use of the cards and their questionnaire responses and look at whether the assumptions based on these have been met.

Chapter 7 provides and overview of the discussion of the findings with a focus on the task effect of conclusion-based debates, fluency and creative automatisation. I also discuss the participants' perceptions findings on the use of cards and the generalisability of findings.

In Chapter 8, I introduce the theoretical, methodological and pedagogical implications of the study. I include the processes of planning, priming and monitoring and their effect on creative automatisation. I explore the implications of motivation and task engagement on fluency and the fluency effects of formal classroom instruction. With regards to the methodological implications, I explore the difficulties of L2 classroom-based research, the

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

24

use of PRAAT for data annotation and the effectiveness of the participants' use of dysfluency explanatory cards while on task. Finally, I stress the benefits of adopting a mixed-methods approach in this study. In relation to the pedagogical implications, I explain the benefits of using debates for L2 fluency, how teachers can use a range of strategies for reducing dysfluencies in L2 speech and how feedback on L2 use can be integrated to improve oral performance in debates.

Chapter 9, the concluding chapter, presents a more detailed section on the generalisability of findings, the limitations of the study, suggestions for future research and an overall conclusion of the whole project.

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

25

Chapter 2: Fluency and dysfluency in L2 speech

2.1. Introduction

Over the past century, L2 fluency has become an important issue due to the pace of the international population movement and the mixing of language groups over the past century (Segalowitz, 2010). An ever increasing amount of people of all nationalities embark on the journey of moving to a different part of the world in search of a better future for themselves and their children and a chance of a dignified life away from the perils of poverty and conflict in their own home countries. As they try to adapt to a new life in a new country, it soon becomes apparent the need to be able to communicate fluently in the language of their host country (Segalowitz, 2010). However, they not only seek to adapt to a new linguistic community, but to become socially integrated members of this community and be accepted as such. For this reason, having the ability to communicate with their new peers is not sufficient, they need to be able to speak like them. With this aim, achieving fluency in the L2 becomes their main pursuit since their social wellbeing will depend on them speaking fluently with others in their host community. It is not surprising, then, that L2 fluency has become a popular line of enquiry in SLA in the last few decades.

Others simply seek more prosperous professional opportunities and, with this aim in mind, they set about leaving their home country to move to another which offers them the possibility of beginning or developing their professional careers. This is the reason why skills in spoken L2 continue to become increasingly important in the professional world, for instance, in sectors such as health, business, education, law, government and politics, among others (Segalowitz, 2010). It seems that the skill to speak fluently in a L2 has become more of an economic and social necessity for large numbers of people all over the world. Segalowitz illustrates this by referring to Bourdieu who already identified the potential economic power of language in the early 90s:

"linguistic exchange […] is also an economic exchange […] between a producer […] with a certain linguistic capital and a consumer […] capable of producing a symbolic

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

26

> profit. Utterances… are also *signs of wealth* and *signs of authority*" (Bourdieu, 1991, p. 66).

Bourdieu implies that being able to speak an L2 fluently can have the benefit of allowing access to a wealthier and more powerful status in society.

In the UK, an increasing number of students have understood the potential benefits of learning an L2, such as Spanish, and this is reflected in the increased uptake of students who wish to learn Spanish for professional reasons (Kennedy, 2018; Kershaw, 2017). In an attempt to cater for this new shift in learning goals, universities in the UK have been adapting an increasing amount of their L2 course programmes with the aim of helping students boost their employability skills with a view to equipping them with the necessary linguistic skills to deal with international clients in their future jobs or develop their careers abroad. As Deborah Till (University of Nottingham Careers Service) points out, language is becoming a top priority for companies: "Increasingly, multinational companies value language skills as an added extra when considering applications." (Beyene, 2012). Given the realization of the potential value of L2 fluency and this shift in its value in the world of work, it is not surprising that L2 fluency has become a core object of linguistic enquiry in SLA research since becoming the centre of the CLT approach in the 80s. This is, particularly, as all evidence seems to point to the increasing demand for L2 fluency skills as the pace of mobility between countries continues its upward trend and workers' continuous quest for economic stability persists.

In turning to SLA research to reach a deeper understanding of L2 fluency, it became evident that the first step was to explore in depth the construct of fluency and how this can be developed in the classroom. However, as we will see in this chapter, fluency is a complex construct to define, measure and develop and multiple attempts have been made over the last few decades in SLA research in order to determine the best way to accomplish this.

This chapter starts with a brief reference to the most influential theories in L2 fluency in relation to the speech production process. This will be followed by an exploration of the main fluency definitions in L2 concluding with the one that will be adopted in this study which will include examining automaticity in the L2 speech production process. I will then analyse

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

27

the elements that affect fluency in L2 and, since this study involves a dialogic task in the form of a debate, I will also explore the sociolinguistic demands of communicative situations and the specific aspects of fluency that are perceived by L2 learners of Spanish. Finally, I will investigate how fluency can be measured in a most reliable manner as well as the types of dysfluencies learners incur in their speech and the possible reasons for these.

2.2 Current models in L2 fluency and speech production

As we have seen, the main aim for L2 learners seems to be able to speak the language over the other linguistic skills. Kormos agrees that being able to communicate through speech is indeed an important skill since it allows speakers to develop relationships with others: "Conversation is one of the most frequent and fundamental means of communication and its primary and overriding function is the maintenance and establishment of social relationships" (2006; 2011, p. 16). Given the unquestionable importance of this skill for communication and social relations, it seems essential to explore the L2 speech production process. A deeper understanding of this process will lead, as we will see in this chapter, to a better understanding of the problems L2 learners face when they speak in the L2 which, in turn, helps inform the process of adapting free-production activities for increased fluency development.

Over the last few decades, there have been several attempts at capturing the process of L2 speech production (see for instance de Bot, 1992; Kormos, 2006; Segalowitz, 2010). Despite their differences, they all draw on Levelt's highly influential model on the native speaker (1989) in which he described the process of L1 speech production which he later called "blueprint" of the native speaker (1999a) (See Figure 2 below). This speech production model is based on four components which are activated in the following order: conceptualization (planning of speech); formulation (grammatical, lexical and phonological encoding of the message drawing on knowledge}; articulation (production of speech sounds) and self-monitoring (checking correctness and appropriateness of the speech output).

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

28
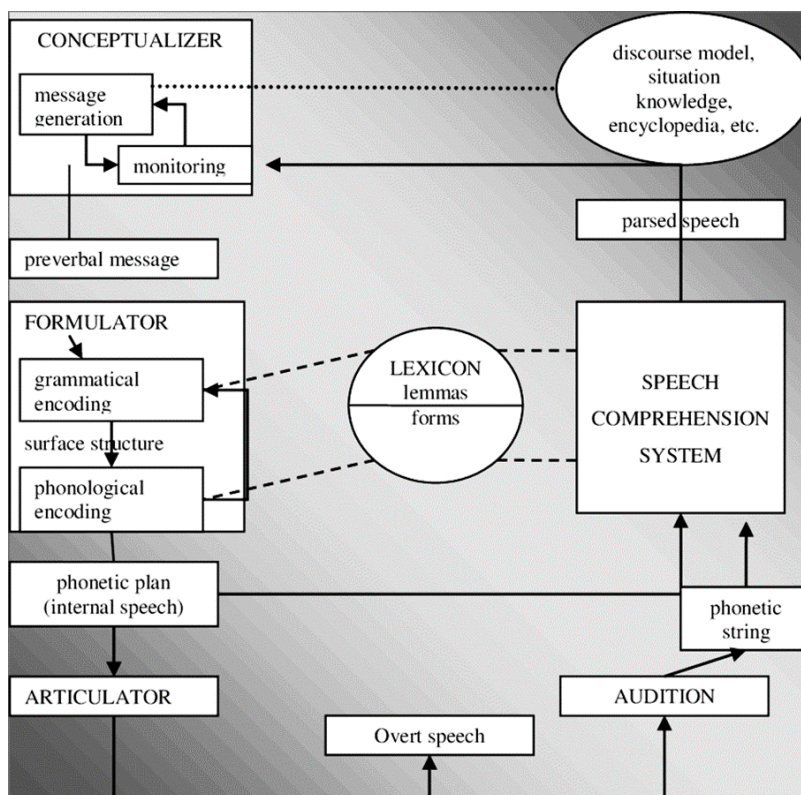
Figure 2: Levelt's Blueprint of the Speaker (1999a)

This model has been adapted to L2 speech (de Bot, 1992; Kormos, 2006; Segalowitz, 2010) although they all seem to agree on these four components of speech production (*conceptualisation, formulation, articulation* and *self-monitoring*) and the order in which these are activated in stages. The main differences between these models are with regards to the formulation process and how the linguistic knowledge is organised in vocabulary stores, which may be shared for L1 and L2 knowledge. Kormos's (2006), for instance, proposed that her model contains one large memory store, called 'long-term memory', which has episodic and semantic memories including the mental lexicon, the syllabary, and a story for declarative knowledge of L2 rules. The semantic memory contains linguistic and non-linguistic concepts as well as meaning-related memory traces, whereas episodic memory contains temporally organized events experienced in one's life. She also posits that knowledge stores are shared between L1 and L2. She adds that in L2 production there is an additional L2 specific knowledge store: a declarative memory of syntactic and phonological rules in L2. In speech production, activation flows from the conceptual to the lemma and then to the lexeme level. This justifies this model as following the principle of

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

29

ecology and simplicity, prevalent in human cognition (Kormos, 2006). Segalowitz (2010) most recent model has been chosen as the adopted model in the current study for its particular focus on fluency in L2 speech production.

Kormos explains that the main difference between L1 and L2 speech is that in L1 planning requires attention whereas formulation and articulation are automatic which makes output smooth and fast (Kormos, 2006). This means that an L1 speaker only needs to pay attention to planning what they intend to say but less so in the process of formulating and articulating the intended message. One of the basic mechanisms involved in producing speech is *activation spreading,* based on the interconnectivity of brain cells which allows the sending of signals between neurons (Hebb, 1949). The speech-processing system has hierarchical levels which exchange information thorough activation spreading and knowledge stores such as the lexicon and conceptual memory store also connected through this process. The *nodes* represent units such as concepts, word forms, phonemes, etc., and these are activated as required. For an L1 speaker, the activation of these nodes requires attention whereas formulating and articulating the message seem to be an automatic process that causes this to be delivered smoothly through speech.

In L2 speech production, however, learners' knowledge of the L2 is incomplete and, therefore, the necessary linguistic competence is lacking to express the intended message originally planned. Therefore, learners have to resort to communication strategies to overcome problems in communication such as resource deficits, processing time pressure, perceived deficiencies in language output and perceived deficiencies in decoding the interlocutor's message (Kormos, 2006). This lack of linguistic competence is then reflected in the process of speech production which may result in speech output which may be less smooth and slower. In addition to this, as knowledge stores such as the conceptual memory, the lexicon, the syllabary and the phonemes store are shared in L1 and L2, if we follow Kormos' model, items in both languages compete for selection. This may result in the interference of L1 on the L2 speech output which manifests itself with the appearance of unintentional code-switches when units in the wrong language are selected.

Levelt revised his speech production model (1999a) and presented the *Blueprint of the Speaker* proposing the existence of two main processing components, the *rhetorical*

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

30

/semantic/syntactic system and the *phonological/phonetic system* and three knowledge stores: the mental lexicon, the syllabary and the store with knowledge of the external and internal world. Speakers conceptualise the message first, then they formulate its language representations by encoding it and, finally, they articulate it. Processing is incremental, that is, the preverbal message is passed on to the formulator and then the conceptualiser starts working on the next chunk as the previous one is being processed (Levelt, 1999a). Parallel processing takes place as different components work simultaneously. This is possible as most of the production mechanisms are automatic. The incremental, parallel and automatized nature of processing leads to great speed in language production. This characterises speech in L1 and it seems much harder to accomplish for L2 learners with advanced proficiency. This seems to be the case, as we will see, with regards to conceptualizing the message, as they can be unsure as to what they wish to say specially when taking part in a debate and responding to a previous contribution and formulating this message with precise grammatical encoding. On occasions, articulation of certain words which are more difficult to pronounce can also pose a challenge. This study will explore which of these first two stages of speech production, conceptualisation and formulation, seems to be most challenging and the possible causes for this.

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

31
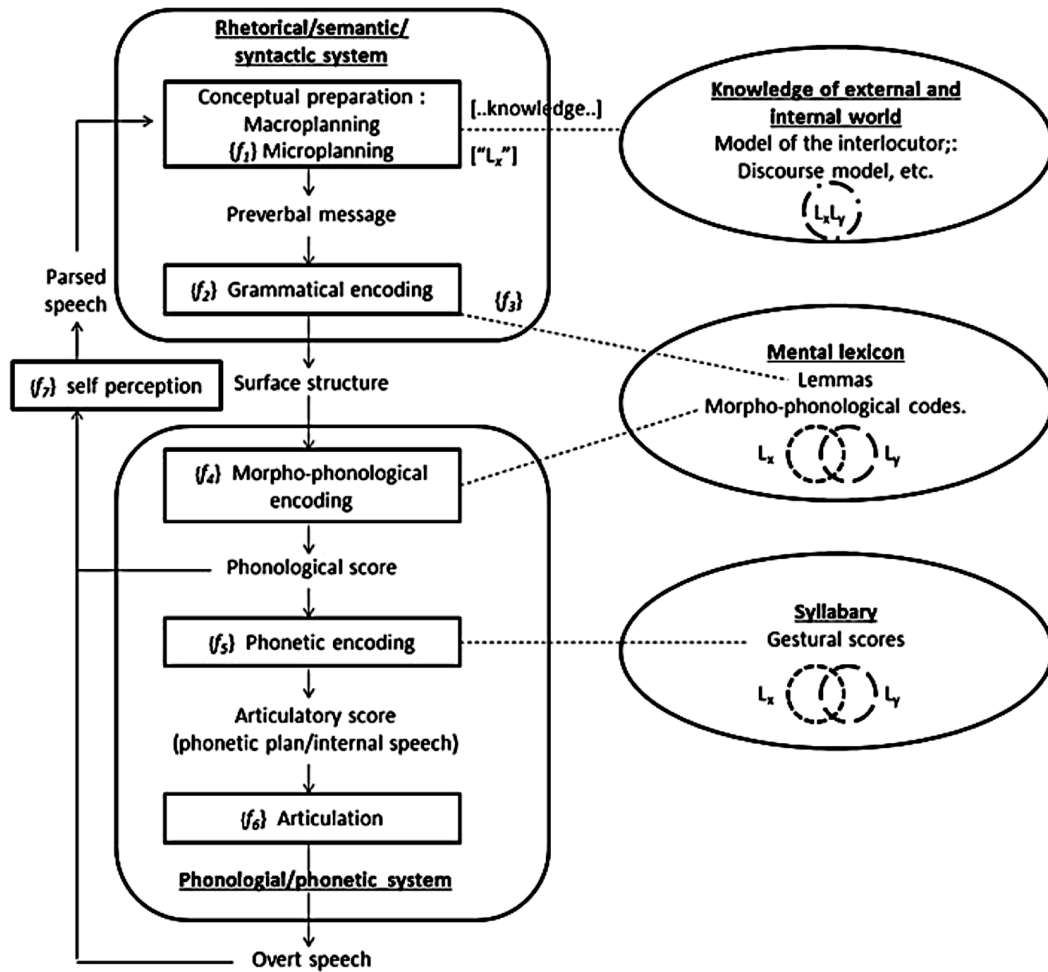
Figure 3: The L2 speech production process (Segalowitz, 2010)

I will now turn to look at the components of speech production in more detail before I discuss how this process is associated to L2 fluency. During conceptualisation, the speaker decides what they want to say (Levelt, 1989). Segalowitz (2010) sees the L2 speech production process (see Figure 3 above) divided into two different stages, that is, *macroplanning* and *microplanning*. Macroplanning involves the elaboration of the communicative intention, expressed by *speech acts*, such as informing, requesting, etc. In microplanning, speakers decide on the perspective they need to adopt in conveying the message. The microplan also includes giving propositional content to the message, assigning thematic roles, specifying the referents and determining the mood of the message (Segalowitz, 2010). This may also contain language specific information (de Bot, 1992; Paradis, 2004).

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

32

The outcome of both the macro- and microplanning is the *preverbal plan* which contains all necessary information to convert meaning into language. This is the input of the next processing phase, called *grammatical encoding.* In this phase information from the speaker's mental lexicon is retrieved in the form of lexical entries, made up of lemmas and lexemes. *Lemma activation* then takes place whereby the lemma whose meaning best matches the semantic information of that chunk of the preverbal plan is retrieved. In the *formulation* stage, this preverbal plan activates its syntax which triggers syntactic building procedures, providing the "linguistic shape" through the grammatical encoding (Segalowitz, 2010), called 'surface structure'. This is followed by the morpho-phonological encoding. The final result of phonological encoding is the phonological score or internal speech.

This stage is followed by *articulation.* Lemmas are selected to fill the syntactic shape chosen and complete the surface structure of the utterance. This generates the articulatory score stored in the syllabary which is then converted into overt speech (Segalowitz, 2010). The syllabary contains information about how to create sounds (gestural scores). It could be argued that fluency issues may arise when the L2 speaker needs to select an L2 gestural score over a dominant L2 score (Hunter, 2017). The overt speech is produced by "setting into action the motor activity for articulating the message" (Segalowitz, 2010, p. 16).

As we have seen, *monitoring* is also part of the speech production process (Kormos, 2006). The *monitor* is located at the conceptualizer but receives information from the separate *speech comprehension system*, connected to the mental lexicon. This system is used both for checking one's own speech and others'. Kormos (2006) distinguishes between three monitor loops for inspecting the outcome of the production processes. The first one compares the preverbal plan with the original speaker's intentions before it is sent to the formulator. The second loop monitors the phonetic plan before articulation, a process called "covert monitoring" to detect any encoding error such as a wrongly selected word before utterance. Finally, there is the external loop of monitoring involving the acoustic-phonetic processor to check the utterance after articulation. If these loops detect an error, the monitor issues an alarm which triggers the production mechanism for a second time.

Kormos's (2006) modular theory provides an extremely detailed account of the production of speech, and it has been highly influential in L2 research. However, from a research point

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

33

of view, it does not allow us to test its validity as most of the whole speech production process happens in silence and it would need the input from speakers to allow researchers to fully understand this process and its intricacies for each articulated utterance (Hunter, 2017). In order to test the impact of this modular theory, researchers may, for instance, wish to ask participants whether a specific utterance is a true reflection or an approximation of their intended message. They may also wish to find out whether the participants identified any encoding errors during covert monitoring, such as a knowingly wrongly selected word before they produced an utterance. They may also wish to enquire whether the participants monitored what they said by listening to themselves to check for potential errors. Further research that takes into account this type of input by the participants in future fluency studies would lead to an increased understanding of this remarkable and seemingly complex process. Having explained the main models of speech production, in the next section I turn to explore the attempts that have been made to define the complex and multifaceted construct of fluency.

2.3 Defining fluency

Defining fluency is a complex endeavour as the definition of this construct varies depending on the perspective it is viewed from, as will be explained below. In this chapter, I will explain the 'broad' and 'narrow' definition that fluency has been given. I will explore the most influential theories and models regarding L2 fluency in SLA and their implications in current research. Finally, I will look into Segalowitz's (2010) definition of this concept which attempts at conceptualizing all perspectives into an all-encompassing model with a tripartite dimension: *cognitive, perceived* and *utterance* fluency.

2.3.1 Influential fluency definitions in L2 and fluency definition adopted in the present study

The current study is underpinned by Segalowitz's principles on L2 fluency (Segalowitz, 2010) that encompass the value of the L2, as follows: firstly, as we have seen, that fluency really matters in the real world for social, economic and personal reasons since an L2 user's fluency level can have socioeconomic consequences; and secondly, Segalowitz's desire to further understand and actively promote L2 fluency skills. In addition to this, I agree that

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

34

Segalowitz's approach to L2 fluency from an overarching sociolinguistic perspective is successful in shedding light on crucial issues for L2 oral development, as we will see.

In SLA, the understanding of fluency is firmly rooted on Levelt's (1989, 1999a) speech production process and the stages of conceptualizing the intended message, formulating a pre-verbal message and articulating speech. As we have seen, during conceptualization, communicative intentions are produced in the form of the preverbal message; in formulation, this is translated into linguistic structures; and finally, in the articulation, these are encoded as speech. L2 researchers have adopted this model and argue that in the early stages of L2 acquisition speech production is not yet automatic and this results in slower speech with frequent pauses and hesitations, particularly in the middle of clauses (de Jong, 2016). However, it could be argued that this hesitancy in speech may also occasionally occur in the case of L2 learners with a high level of proficiency, albeit less frequently. The current study will explore the types of dysfluencies that are most recurrent in advanced L2 learners and the reasons for their occurrence.

In SLA, many attempts have been made to define the concept of 'fluency'. However, it does not seem that there is yet a consensus in defining this construct in a systematic and holistic way. To the contrary, there seem to be as many definitions of this construct as there are ways to approach it. Despite there being no consensus, it has been agreed that this construct may be defined in both a 'broad' and 'narrow' sense (Lennon, 1990). In a 'broad' sense, it refers to the 'mastery' of the language and it reflects 'general proficiency' in the L2. It is normally used in reference to the spoken command of the L2 (Lennon, 1990). On the other hand, it may be defined in a 'narrow' sense, as it is most commonly done in SLA, referring to ease and automaticity of speech and it differs from grammatical accuracy and syntactic complexity. In this sense, Lennon defined it as it being "unimpeded by silent pauses and hesitation, filled pauses, self-corrections, repetitions, false starts, and the like" (Lennon, 1990, p. 390). He pointed out that fluency is a "purely performance phenomenon" and that fluency is an impression on the listener's part that the psycholinguistic processes of speech planning and production are functioning easily and efficiently" (Lennon, 1990b, p.391).

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

35

Most of the approaches in defining fluency seem to highlight 'fluidity' as its predominant characteristic and aim to identify factors that may influence it. For instance, in trying to define fluency, Segalowitz draws on Kaponen and Riggenbach (2000) who point out that in many languages there is a metaphor which underlies the meaning of 'fluency', that is, "language is motion". This reflects the idea that languages should 'flow' and that this is an inherent characteristic of all languages. This element of 'flow' or 'movement' that seems to be present in all languages is precisely the most complex component in terms of its operationalisation and has prompted many attempts in L2 fluency research. Fillmore (1979), for instance, identified other qualitative attributes and distinguished four kinds of fluency: the ability to talk at length with minimum pauses; to compact the message into semantically dense sentences without fillers; to speak appropriately meeting the demands of specific contexts; and finally, the ability to use the language creatively and imaginatively. All these seem to reflect 'fluidity of flow' in the use of language, the ability to speak without pausing and to be able to create new language in response to varying social and thematic contexts.

Kormos (2006) agrees that defining fluency is rather problematical and provides also measures of fluency which have fluidity as the predominant feature, although they may be conceptualized differently. For instance, she distinguishes four approaches to determining measures of fluency that relate to the temporal aspects of speech production, the investigation of interactive features, the phonological aspects and the analysis of formulaic speech. She concludes that fluency is best conceived of as fast, smooth and accurate performance (Kormos & Dénes, 2004).

Finally, Segalowitz (2010) also concludes that fluidity is a multidimensional construct and, therefore, very difficult to define. He argues that fluency needs to be considered in a way that links it to the wider context of scientific inquiry into the nature of language, with "fluidity" as its predominant characteristic. Consequently, this has led Segalowitz to conceptualize fluency within an overarching cognitive science perspective. With this aim in mind, he draws on previous cognitive research to define this construct from a perspective of how fluency is delivered in speech and perceived by others.

Drawing on Levelt's model (1989, 1999a), and with the aim of better understanding fluency, Segalowitz distinguished three aspects of fluency, namely, *cognitive*, *utterance* and

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

36

perceived fluency. *Cognitive* fluency relates to the speed and manner of the mechanisms of speech production; *utterance* fluency, concerns itself with the measurable aspects of speech fluency which reflect the cognitive fluency underlying speech production; and *perceived* fluency refers to the reaction from listeners about the cognitive fluency of the speaker (Segalowitz, 2010). In an attempt to conceptualise this construct, he also draws on previous research to define the concept of *dysfluency,* which will be dealt with later in this chapter. The current study will focus on the first two dimensions of fluency, that is, cognitive and utterance fluency. Firstly, with regards to cognitive fluency, I will be exploring the cognitive process behind the participants' interventions, in particular with regards to the dysfluencies they incur in speech and the dysfluency explanatory cards they use during the task they carry out in this study. Secondly, I will explore the utterance fluency dimension as I will be analysing any changes in fluency measures that result from participating in this task.

Segalowitz takes the construct of 'fluency' defined in a classic study by Lennon as "an impression on the listener's part that the psycholinguistic processes of speech planning and speech production are functioning easily and efficiently" (Lennon, 1990, p. 391). Segalowitz (2010) understands the relevance of the underlying speech production process emphasized by Lennon and uses this to define his own concept of *cognitive fluency* as "the efficiency of operation of the underlying processes responsible for the production of utterances" (Segalowitz, 2010, p. 48). In other words, Segalowitz (2010) agrees that for fluency to exist this must include the efficient processing of speech plans and the speaker must be able to access the lexical and grammatical stores without the need for slow speech, excessive pausing or self-correction. This means that, in order to maintain fluency, the speaker needs to effectively integrate the underlying cognitive processes responsible for producing utterances.

Segalowitz (2010) concludes that when fluency is lacking, the speaker incurs in *dysfluencies* which are the manifestations that the oral production process is under strain and that fluency has been disrupted. In these cases, the speaker resorts to a range of compensatory strategies such as paraphrasing, tailoring the message to the language known or the use of fillers that provide extra time for planning incurring in dysfluency. Segalowitz concludes that speech rate and pausing phenomena are critical indicators of

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

37

speech fluency. This leads to the conclusion that cognitive fluency is an essential requirement for *utterance fluency*. Consequently, Segalowitz adopts a definition of fluency that involves the ability on the part of the speaker to produce speech without "unintentional" pausing, that is, pausing that is involuntary and without "undue hesitation or pauses" in a range of social and physical circumstances (Segalowitz, 2007, p. 181). This is the definition that is adopted in the current study.

Finally, Skehan's definition of fluency stems from the way in which tasks draw form the speaker's attentional capacity and their ability to "mobilize one's linguistic resources for real-time communication" (Skehan, 1996, p.48). His conceptualization is driven by his goal to understand how task complexity impacts on learning and fluency development in order to harness its effects and promote fluency. Segalowitz (2010) agrees that understanding how task structure affects production is extremely important because this has pedagogical implications for L2 instruction, in particular, with regards to task selection for testing purposes and help researchers better interpret the results of fluency studies. Segalowitz shares with Skehan his interest in promoting L2 instruction in the classroom to achieve increased fluency outcomes. The current study also shares this goal and concludes with some pedagogical implications for current L2 instruction in the classroom.
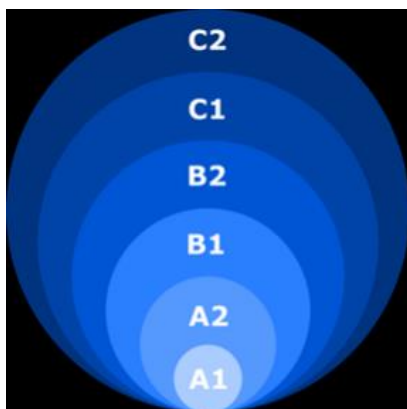
Figure 4: The CEFR levels

Since the focus of this chapter is defining L2 fluency, it seems relevant to consider the definitions of fluency provided in the CEFR, which can be applied to all languages taught as an L2. The CEFR (also CEF or CEFRL) is the the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, a guideline provided by the Council of Europe to describe the linguistic achievements of learners of foreign languages in Europe. It provides a method of

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

38

learning, teaching and assessing language learning and a system of validation of learners' language ability. For this purpose, it has provided a set of six *Common Reference Levels* (A1, A2, B1, B2, C1, C2). Figure 4 above presents the CEFR levels.

Table 1: (CEFR 3.3): Common Reference levels (featuring C2 and A1 only) – Qualitative aspects of spoken language use

	RANGE	ACCURACY	FLUENCY	INTERACTION	COHERENCE
C2	Shows great flexibility reformulating ideas in differing linguistic forms to convey finer shades of meaning precisely, to give emphasis, to differentiate and to eliminate ambiguity. Also has a good command of idiomatic expressions and colloquialisms.	Maintains consistent grammatical control of complex language, even while attention is otherwise engaged (e.g. in forward planning, in monitoring others' reactions).	Can express him/herself **spontaneously at length** with a natural colloquial flow, **avoiding or backtracking around any difficulty** so **smoothly** that the interlocutor is hardly aware of it.	Can interact with ease and skill, picking up and using non-verbal and intonational cues apparently effortlessly. Can interweave his/her contribution into the joint discourse with fully natural turntaking, referencing, allusion making etc.	Can create coherent and cohesive discourse making full and appropriate use of a variety of organisational patterns and a wide range of connectors and other cohesive devices.

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

39

A1	Has a very basic repertoire of words and simple phrases related to personal details and particular concrete situations.	Shows only limited control of a few simple grammatical structures and sentence patterns in a memorised repertoire.	Can manage **very short**, isolated, mainly pre-packaged **utterances**, **with much pausing** to search for expressions, to articulate less familiar words, and to repair communication.	Can ask and answer questions about personal details. Can interact in a simple way but communication is totally dependent on repetition, rephrasing and repair.	Can link words or groups of words with very basic linear connectors like "and" or "then".

Table 1 (CECR 3.3) above has been designed for assessing oral skills and focuses on specific qualitative aspects of language such as range, accuracy, fluency, interaction and coherence (table 1). Only levels C2 and A1 (highest and lowest) have been included here for easy contrast of descriptors. As Hunter (2017) points out, if we look at the descriptors for the highest level of oral ability with regards to fluency learners must be able to speak "spontaneously at length" and "avoid or backtrack around any difficulty […] smoothly". In contrast, the fluency descriptors for A1, the lowest level of ability, reflect a much-diminished oral ability limited to "very short […] utterances with much pausing". These fluency descriptors for these two opposed levels of ability seem to make reference to different dimensions of fluency (Hunter, 2017), such as the underlying cognitive speech process (e.g., "spontaneously", "smoothly"); the quality of the speech (e.g., "at length", "very short", "with much pausing"); and the perception of the listener (e.g. "that the interlocutor is hardly aware of it"). This illustrates that trying to capture all aspects of fluency in one single definition must be approached from a multidimensional perspective if we are achieve an accurate conceptualization. Inevitably, the main drawback of this approach is that the resulting definition may be too generalistic. Consequently, this calls for the need to come up with an operationalizable and dimension-specific definition of fluency for each L2 fluency research project, as will be the case with the current one, which is dependent on the aspects of this complex construct that constitute the focus of the study. Such has been the tenet followed in the current study.

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

40

2.3.2 Automaticity in L2 speech production

Another essential construct in fluency studies, is that of automaticity which has been the centre of extensive exploration in SLA. As a result, there have been many ways in which it has been interpreted by researchers and approaches to explain how to achieve it in the context of L2 learning. DeKeyser (2017), for instance, points out that "(h)ighly automatised knowledge is usually characterized as unintentional, uncontrollable, unconscious, efficient, and fast" and that automaticity in language skill is "graded". This suggests that there does not seem to be any means of controlling how to acquire it, the pace at which this could happen, or even the degree it could be achieved in the L2.

Segalowitz (2010) highlights that, common to most definitions of automaticity, is the aspect of processing speed. This means that when a process is considered automatic it is carried out faster than usual. In this sense, he refers to this process as "ballistic" (or unstoppable). However, he argues that for automaticity to occur, the speeding up of all the individual components of processing is not sufficient. He argues that a reorganization of speech processes must take place which makes the whole system more efficient resulting in automatic speech production. He also notes that this process is load-independent, that is, independent of the amount of information to be processed, effortless and unconscious (Segalowitz, 2010). He refers to this as *processing stability*, that is, that the process has become more efficient. In the context of L2 learning, for an L2 learner to show automaticity they have to be able to speak fast, regardless of the amount of information they are processing to do so, without requiring any special effort and without consciously controlling the speech production process. The question then arises as to how does an L2 learner acquire such automatisation in their speech, which I will now turn to explore.

Segalowitz's (2005) answer to this is that frequent exposure to elements in the L2, that he calls *input repetition* is essential to attain a high level of fluency, understood as automatized speech. He explains that both input and *output repetition* boost automaticity as this helps critical cognitive processing skills become more efficient and, ultimately, automatic. He points out that automatisation that results in high levels of utterance fluency is achieved through repetition and that this enhances cognitive fluency.

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

41

Segalowitz's model of automaticity represents a novel approach to most research in this field which has traditionally focused on lexical access, that is, how the mental lexicon is accessed for appropriate word retrieval. However, it is not unreasonable to point out that word retrieval is not sufficient for automaticity as this also relies on the speaker's ability to engage in linguistic communication, for which linking up words with meaning is crucial. Indeed, this requires more complex language formulations such as sentence constructions based on meaning which can only be possible thanks to cognitive fluency.

Segalowitz (2010) argues that highly efficient cognitive processing only develops when the learner has had significant exposure and experience using the L2 in real communicative situations. He adds that formal instruction alone only leads to high levels of lexical knowledge and grammatical accuracy, but it does not provide the necessary training to develop automaticity. Only significant background experience can develop strong and efficient L2 cognitive fluency which, in turn, leads to L2 fluency development. He adds that as L2 learners become more fluent in the L2, this feeds back into the cognitive mechanisms underlying the processing of grammar and lexical access becoming more efficient.

However, automaticity has yet another dimension. Fluent L2 learners must be able to package information into appropriate language relatively smoothly as they process the thoughts that come to mind that form their intended message. At the same time, they have to react to feedback from the interlocutor about whether the message is being understood. Then they have to be able to redirect the focus of attention to retrieve the appropriate linguistic resources for formulating this message. Segalowitz (2010) sees this type of attention-based processing as complementary of the L2 cognitive fluency and the automaticity of the whole system. He adds that L2 cognitive fluency needs to include efficient processing (fast, load-independent, effortless and unconscious) as well as flexibility of attention control. In order to meet the processing demands successfully and be able to engage in linguistic communication with the interlocutor, the L2 learner needs processing stability, strong attention control and flexibility. It is only when all these elements are present that the L2 learner will be able to focus their processing resources in a dynamically changing situation.

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

42

In order to achieve automaticity and be able to speak with a high level of fluency, Segalowitz (2010) stresses the importance that L2 learners develop language-directed attention. In Spanish, an example of this would be the effective use of the two forms of 'you' that exist, depending on whether the context is formal or informal (*usted* and *tú* respectively) and the specific characteristics of the interlocutor being addressed (e.g., whether they hold a position of authority or are considered of a similar age to the speaker). Segalowitz (2010) argues that grammar plays a central role as an attention-directing device as it provides the instructions to organise the elements that form part of the mental representations of meaning that are being constructed during the act of speaking. This form of attention is directly associated with the grammatical features of the L2.

As we have seen, achieving automaticity is a complex process that requires speed and linguistic knowledge in order to be developed. In SLA, two types of knowledge are distinguished: *declarative* knowledge (or "knowledge that") and *procedural* knowledge (or "knowledge how") (DeKeyser, 2017). In L2 learning, knowledge is initially about the language and its grammatical rules and it gradually becomes procedural as this is automatised with practice and experience. In SLA, automaticity is viewed in two ways: the rule-based approach, which is based on the conversion of declarative (factual) knowledge into procedural rules; and the item-based approach based on a single-step access of a memorized linguistic item. As we have seen, this is what Segalowitz refers to when he explains that through exposure (input repetition) and much practice (output repetition), cognitive processing skills that deal with language production become automatised resulting in increasing fluency (Segalowitz & Hulstijn, 2005). Some researchers following the item-based approach believe that automatisation can also be achieved through the retrieval of language chunks stored in memory (Kormos, 2006). The main limitation of this route to automaticity is, however, that although it does explain lexical retrieval, it fails to shed light on how the speaker would be able to produce appropriate and meaningful speech based on the grammatical rules that are pertinent to that language.

Ortega (2014) also refers to this process of automaticity as the gradual transformation of performance from controlled to automatic via proceduralization, or meaningful practice that is sustained over time. She explains (2014) that this happens through relevant practice which enables controlled processes to be taken over by automatic processes during

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

43

performance. L2 learners start the process of L2 language learning with explanations by teachers and textbooks and, through practice, this knowledge is converted into ability for use, or "implicit-procedural knowledge made up of automatic routines" (Ortega, 2014). She agrees that proceduralization leads to automatisation, a quality of fluent automatic performance beyond speed. The L2 learner's knowledge representation becomes more specific and targeted to the use of the language. It can then be concluded that, regardless of the route to automaticity that is followed, the key to automaticity is prolonged meaningful practice as this seems to trigger the process from proceduralization into automatisation.

Regardless of how automaticity is truly achieved, it leads to speech production being automatic and it is how to best develop this automaticity in the classroom through instructional tasks that is at the core of the current study, as we will see later. Fluency development has not been considered a priority in L2 teaching due to the commonly held assumption that it develops as general proficiency progresses and that it cannot be taught (Chambers, 1997; Lennon, 1990). Even if we considered this premise to be true, it could be argued that some classroom tasks help develop fluency in the classroom more than others. To this effect, Gatbonton and Segalowitz (1988; 2005) proposed a fluency teaching framework called ACCESS (Automatisation in Communicative Contexts of Essential Speech Segments) which will be dealt with in the next chapter. This aimed at helping L2 learners develop their speech automaticity in the classroom within a communicative instructional framework. L2 learners could work with tasks that were "genuinely communicative", "inherently repetitive" and "functionally formulaic" (Gatbonton and Segalowitz, 2005, p. 331). The main objective of this framework was to develop the learners' ability to produce language creatively and fluently. The construct of *creative automatisation* underpins this study and it is understood within the cycle of oral interaction which includes listening to other interlocutors and *negotiation for meaning* (Foster, 1998; García Mayo & Imaz, 2016). This is the process where interlocutors interact with each other to reach a clear understanding of each other and where creative automatisation may be present (Segalowitz, 2010). For reasons of scope, however, aspects such as the listening that takes place among interlocutors and negotiation for meaning will not be given attention in the current study to allow for the main focus to be how creative automatisation is developed. In the context of the current study, it is essential to highlight the difference between recitation of linguistic resources previously uttered by some of the participants and repeated by others

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

44

in their contribution in the course of the debate the participants have taken part in, and creative production of speech, which, in this study, is defined as original speech output that has not been uttered before in the course of the debate. As Fillmore explains in the context of fluency, this is "the ability some people have to be creative and imaginative in their language use, to express their ideas in novel ways, […]" (Fillmore, 1979, p.93). The construct of creative automatisation goes beyond proceduralisation and access to linguistic resources, it also involves the ability of uttering speech that is not based on repeated language chunks that the speaker may have listened to in a specific interaction, but on formulating new ideas creatively, using their own linguistic resources. The distinction between simple recitation and creative speech is of vital importance in this study as it is only the latter that will be taken into account when considering the degree of creative automatisation achieved by the participants who spoke with higher fluency levels. With this goal in mind, the design for the study task was deliberately selected to be based on the participation in a debate in which participants could contribute their own ideas freely, some of them being formulated based on repeated language chunks and others using their own linguistic resources to reach their own conclusions. A different type of communicative task, such as a role-play for instance, would have implied that the participants would have had to take specific roles and their ability to express themselves freely would have been compromised. As we will see, selecting a debate allowed all participants to speak about their viewpoints without the constraints of specific roles and allowed the distinction between repeated and creative speech to be clearly seen in the speech analysis that was carried out and, in turn, the output attributed to creative automatisation.

As we have seen, Gatbonton and Segalowitz claimed that *automatic fluency* is developed through tasks presented to the learners that are genuinely communicative, functionally formulaic and inherently repetitive (Gatbonton & Segalowitz, 2005). In this study, automatic fluency is defined as "the smooth and rapid production of utterances, without undue hesitations and pauses, that results from constant use and repetitive practice" (p. 326).The significance of this framework in SLA is that this methodology constitutes an innovation with regards to CLT (Communicative Language Teaching) as its criteria are explicit and based on principles concerning learning, memory, attention and skill acquisition drawn from cognitive science (Gatbonton & Segalowitz, 2005). ACCESS is an attempt to help CLT evolve in a way that leads to improved practical solutions for promoting fluency. However,

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

45

despite the validity of this framework, it is argued here to present one major drawback which is that, for it to be effective, it requires the learner to be highly motivated to successfully engage in the learning process and invest themselves in the tasks used for this purpose. For this reason, in the next chapter I explain the importance of learner motivation for task engagement as without it any attempts at developing learners' fluency are in vain. It also requires for the teaching practitioners to embrace this methodology, which may be a tall order for some as they may still struggle to appreciate the learning value of communication activities given their incompatibility with the more traditional form-focused teaching methods they are used to. I will explore this framework in more detail in the following chapter.

2.3.3 Sociolinguistic demands of communicative situations

As we have previously seen, there is a social dimension to authentic communication in the L2 which may have an impact on L2 fluency. In this sense, Segalowitz (2010) identifies three social aspects of communication that may have an effect on L2 fluency, that is, appropriateness, naturalness and identity/self. He refers to Hymes (1967) who defended that *communicative competence* involves knowing how to speak in a socially appropriate way, not just how to make grammatically correct sentences. In other words, for an L2 speaker to be competent in a communicative sense they have to be able to speak with appropriateness depending on the social context. For Hymes (1967) acquiring *communicative competence* (Hymes, 1967, p. 1) is as integral to the L2 as the competence for grammar.

Segalowitz (2010) agrees that this has significant implications for fluency development as L2 speakers are sensitive to the sociolinguistic demands of communicative situations. For instance, every L2 speaker has experienced the need to sound friendly, to use appropriate forms of respect and deference, to make appropriate register shifts, etc. depending on the L2 interaction. However, when L2 speakers are unable to meet these sociolinguistic demands, they may feel discouraged from participating in L2 interactions in future. This would have the consequence of stalling the development of their cognitive fluency and, ultimately, their L2 oral fluency. The need to become an L2 speaker socially integrated in the communicative interaction with the rest of the interlocutors is perceived as essential by the L2 speaker and the degree of success that they are able to achieve this integration will

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

46

determine whether they continue to engage in such interactions or decide to withdraw with detrimental consequences for their L2 fluency.

Segalowitz (2010) points out that integral to L2 fluency is the knowledge and ability to use of culturally determined fixed expressions which are acquired through social interactions with native speakers. He explains that, in order to sound nativelike, speakers must be able not only to apply syntactic knowledge correctly but socially appropriate. In this sense, Pawley and Syder (1983) argue that fixed and *formulaic expressions* are crucial for speech fluency and that these lexicalized expressions are learned from social contact with the speech community and that they are characterized by their naturalness. Very often, and perhaps due to the lack of direct contact with the L2 country, it is not uncommon to see that L2 speakers fail to master this type of critical formulaic expressions which are necessary for authentic interaction and that can indeed compromise their L2 fluency. Since the process of acquiring and using a repertoire of formulaic sequences happens within the social communicative exchanges between interlocutors, it can be concluded that these sociolinguistic factors play an important role in the shaping of L2 fluency. Acquiring a repertoire of formulaic expressions can also contribute to the construction of the L2 speaker's identity (Wray, 2002) and their use is indeed encouraged in the ACCESS framework (Gatbonton & Segalowitz, 2005) mentioned before. With reference to this, Segalowitz (2010) points out that any threat felt by L2 speakers to their identity may also have an impact on their L2 fluency. Indeed, research carried out in this field (see for instance, Iandoli, 1990; List, 1989) has demonstrated that learners' beliefs and attitudes about their personal social position in relation to the L2 and its community can also impact the degree of language L2 fluency achieved.

In order to illustrate how social factors might impact on L2 fluency development, Segalowitz refers to Dörnyei's theory of the Motivational L2 Self System (2005), which is fully dealt with in the next chapter. Dörnyei (2005) argues that people develop abilities to regulate their own behaviour by setting goals and expectations. They have images of themselves as they could be in the future, and these motivate particular behaviours. He believes that: "language learning is a sustained and often tedious process with lots of ups and downs, and […] the secret of successful learners was their possession of a superordinate vision that kept them on track" (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2009, p. 25). There is an ideal L2 self which represents what

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

47

people would like to become and an ought-to L2 self that reflects what people believe others expect them to become and tied to the individual's social identity. This highlights the various social underpinnings of fluency and it stresses the importance that the social perception of L2 speakers have of themselves in their community.

In sum, Segalowitz (2010) believes that the social, linguistic and cognitive dimensions of the L2 speaker become fully integrated with respect to fluency development. This is achieved when a sense of self, linguistic affordances and appropriate L2 learning condition are viewed as interconnected elements that impact fluency development. The L2 speaker's sense of self determines how L2 interactions are experienced. They then take advantage of the affordances in order to properly serve their specific interests and needs. Fluency will then develop as this becomes an interactive situation that is favourable for fluency development. It can be concluded that the social dimension of any L2 interaction is an essential element in as much as it is intertwined with the L2 speaker's sense of self which and will determine their engagement in it with implications for fluency development.

2.3.4 The impact of instruction on L2 fluency

In addition to authentic interactions with native speakers of the L2, it is widely accepted that instruction in the learning environment has a positive impact on L2 fluency. Segalowitz (2010) points out that instruction can result in the acquisition of processing fluency. He refers to the principle of *encoding specificity* in episodic memory (Tulving, 1983) whereby new information encountered at the time of learning is encoded in a context-sensitive manner. In this way, encoding is specific to the conditions at the time of intake. This refers to Tulving's (1983) principle of TAP (*transfer appropriate processing*) which shows that memory performance is not only determined by depth of processing (associating meaning with information strengthens the memory) but also by how this information is initially encoded for later retrieval.

Segalowitz (2010) agrees that the TAP perspective on memory retrieval aids the understanding of fluency in skilled performance. It holds that the ease of retrieval will depend on which brain activation patterns at the time of retrieval overlap were active at the time instruction, and therefore input, took place. This has implications for how skills, such

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

48

as L2 speech, should be acquired in order to optimize fluency (Gatbonton & Segalowitz, 2005). Fluent retrieval of earlier learned L2 knowledge and skills will depend on how the cognitive and perceptual processes elicited at the time of speech in interaction match those elicited at the time of learning (Segalowitz, 2010). When these are not aligned the L2 speaker may experience difficulties in the retrieval of L2 linguistic knowledge. Lightbown (2007) agrees that TAP explains why learners can't mobilize the knowledge they have acquired when faced with new situations. In order to overcome these difficulties, it becomes important that, during instruction, both settings and processing types of the linguistic material to be learnt are diversified so that learners acquire linguistic knowledge applicable to a wide range of settings. Thus, the principle of TAP (Tulving, 1983) applies to the acquisition of fluency both within the classroom and outside in authentic L2 interaction. This will help towards enabling the L2 speaker to develop their fluency as they will be better prepared for adapting to new situations as well as maintaining stability and accuracy in the performance. This study is centred around investigations on a debate, which is a common tool for instruction in the classroom with real applications in real life.

Segalowitz (2010) points out the implications of the type of learning environment on learning. He explains that learning in an open, non-restrictive environment, allows the L2 learner to acquire the processing procedures required to perform well in a transfer situation. He adds that this is enhanced when there is opportunity to receive reliable feedback during the process of learning. He explains that L2 use in the real world corresponds to performing an open skill for communicative purposes while the cognitive processing takes place in the L2 learner which allows them to assess the intentions of the interlocutor, handle unpredictability, etc. With their interaction, the L2 speaker tries to bring about a change in the environment which makes these processes independent of the linguistic processing required to produce speech. If the L2 speaker is to accomplish their communicative goals successfully, they have to be attuned to the ways in which the L2 allows them to do so. That means that they have to be able to perceive the affordances of the language that are required for communication. The learning environment has to be such that it allows the L2 speaker to identify and utilise these affordances (Segalowitz, 2010). As Van Lier (2000) points out, "if the language learner is active and engaged, she will perceive linguistic affordances and use them for linguistic action" (Van Lier, 2000, p. 252). In this way, learners learn to use them and completely immerse themselves in them.

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

49

With regards to these linguistic affordances, Segalowitz (2010) explains that speech utterances are vehicles for carrying out speech acts, such as informing, requesting, etc. All language items provide specific utterances for accomplishing these speech acts. Skilful L2 learners learn to use the different affordances of the language to achieve specific goals. For instance, in Spanish, it could be using an impersonal construction to convey negative information in a tactful way: "No se permite el uso de teléfonos móviles" rather than "No puede usar teléfonos móviles" ("The use of mobile phones is not permitted" as opposed to "you cannot use mobile phones"). This construction reflects the linguistic affordance learned by the L2 speaker to achieve this communicative goal. The learning environment has to meet the necessary requirements to allow L2 learners to develop their cognitive fluency in order to perceive and apply these affordances.

Instruction can be considered to be successful when it enhances the cognitive processes underlying the L2 speech production. One way in which this can be achieved is by applying the TAP principle to L2 instructional setting. As Lightbown (2007) points out, it becomes necessary to consider how instruction can be designed to elicit specific processing activities during learning. The dominant current instructional approaches in English curricula (Butler, 2011) are communicative language teaching (CLT) and task-based language teaching (TBLT). Both these approaches try to replicate in the classroom the natural communicative conditions that elicit genuine communication in a natural setting. Segalowitz (2010) believes that learning activities in the classroom should both attempt to recreate the mental processing involved in communication in the real world and provide learners with opportunities for systematic repetition in order to activate the cognitive processes required. It was to this end that Gatbonton and Segalowitz (2005) posited that instructional tasks should be designed in a way that they are genuinely communicative and naturally repetitive at the same time, that is, inherently repetitive. They believed that this form of linguistic instruction, based on communication and repetition, is the best way for fluency development and should become common practise for teaching practitioners.

However, as Tavakoli and Hunter (2018) point out, it is possible that not all L2 teachers may be ready to accept recommendations offered by L2 fluency researchers for fluency-enhancing activities in the classroom. With regards to tasks that are inherently repetitive,

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

50

students may consider them valuable (e.g., Pinter, 2007; Lambert & Minn, 2016), however, L2 teachers may be reluctant to use them in the classroom for fear of students finding their repetitive nature 'boring' (Ahmadian, Mansouri, & Ghominejad, 2017). Instead, they tend to adopt free-production activities, debates, etc., that are best suited for developing speaking ability (Tavakoli & Hunter, 2018). It may be that, in terms of designing effective fluency-enhancing tasks a compromise needs to be reached between retaining the free-production element of activities and including an in-built repetition component of key language resources together with a communicative goal to be reached by the end of the task as proposed by Segalowitz & Gatbonton (2005). In the current study, I will examine how the design of such a task type may be tweaked to boost its fluency-enhancing focus.

This study is set within the instructional context of task-based language teaching (TBLT), which was a novel approach to language teaching when it was first introduced in the 1980s and was adopted by the majority of British language educational institutions. The cognitive-interactionist, educational and pedagogical perspectives have yielded much research aimed at understanding how manipulating tasks would affect cognitive mechanisms and L2 production and how task design features may be manipulated to suit learners' different cognitive abilities. The cognitive-interactionist perspective in particular has a focus on input, output, task-based procedures and internal cognitive mechanisms (Ahmadian & García Mayo, 2017, p. 2). An influential study in this area is that by García Mayo et al. (2017) who investigated the effects of task repetition on the oral production of 120 young learners of EFL in Spain. It shows the effects of task repetition on fluency and accuracy as well as trade-offs between different dimensions of L2 performance. In addition to this, other variables such as the type of task repetition, task type and narrative structure seem to play an important role in the learners' performance.

The different outcomes in each measure provided evidence to support Skehan's Trade-off Hypothesis (Skehan, 2009; earlier known as the Limited Attentional Capacity Model, Skehan, 1998; Skehan & Foster, 2001) which proposes that speakers must divide their attentional resources between all the processes a task requires and if these exceed the available resources performance aspects such as complexity, accuracy and fluency will compete with each other with the result that only those that receive enough attention will reach optimal performance. The findings of this study were also in line with recent studies

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

51

on the effect of task repetition. Given that the effects of repetition, in particular, have been extensively researched and go beyond the scope of the current study, I will focus specifically on how task design may be optimised for increased creative automatisation and, in turn, effective fluency development.

2.3.5 Specific aspects of fluency as perceived by L2 learners of Spanish

Drawing on previous research, assumptions have been made with regards to the cognitive fluency process that underlies utterance fluency in all L2 languages. It seems that the process is regarded to be the same for all languages and that no distinctions are made between languages even in cases where the expected utterance fluency may be faster than in others. Spanish is particularly interesting and worthwhile for fluency research for many reasons, in particular, because there is often a perception among L2 learners that native speakers of Spanish tend to speak very fast. This may create the expectation that they also have to speak fairly fluently to accomplish the expected rate of fluency and be able to engage in meaningful communicative exchanges with native speakers. Another common concern among L2 learners of Spanish is that if they are not able to speak fluently, they risk being left out of oral interaction with other native speakers. This may be the case when they begin to suffer from speaker fatigue and their initial conscious efforts to speak at a slower pace progressively wane and they revert to their usual fast-paced speech delivery with the result that L2 learners are not able to keep up and end up being excluded from the interaction.

The general perception by L2 learners that Spanish is spoken very fast by native speakers is backed up by research. According to a recent study by researchers from the University of Lyon based on 59 male and female native speakers English, French, German, Italian, Japanese, Mandarin and Spanish and Vietnamese, the more data-dense the average syllable was, the fewer of those syllables had to be spoken per second and thus, the slower the speech. In this study, English, that has a high information density of .91, was spoken at an average rate of 6.19 syllables per second. In comparison, Spanish, with a lower density of .63, ripped along at a syllable-per-second velocity of 7.82. This shows Spaniards' tendency to speak at a faster rate than English native-speakers (Kluger, 2011) and this may

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

52

indeed be the reason why L2 learners of Spanish perceive it to be spoken at a faster rate than they are used to in their own L1.

As we have seen, Spanish is not as data-dense or semantically charged as English and, therefore, more words and morphological elements within words generally need to be articulated to convey the same message than in English. This presents an additional challenge for L2 learners when speaking in Spanish as they often have to explain in more words what they intend to say. Speech planning can also be a lengthier process for a learner of Spanish as certain morphological elements of the sentence take a different order than in English. For instance, an indirect object will always precede a direct one and both will be placed in front of the main verb. With regards to the pronunciation of the language, there are certain sounds in Spanish, such as the /r/ which requires rolling for accurate pronunciation which may add another level of difficulty for many L2 learners of Spanish. In addition to this, native speakers of Spanish tend to show little patience and pragmatic politeness when interacting orally, as it is customary to interrupt interlocutors before they finish what they wish to say as part of a normal oral interaction with other speakers. These are the most salient factors that English L2 learners are only too aware of and that make achieving oral fluency in Spanish specially challenging. From a research point of view, however, this makes fluency in Spanish an object of enquiry that unequivocally merits further exploration. This study addresses the need to focus on this scarcely researched field and seeks to close this gap in SLA.

2.4 Measuring fluency

As we have seen, fluency is at the heart of the present study. It is an essential component of L2 speech and, as such, it is important to understand how it has been measured in SLA and what the specific features of speech are that determine cognitive fluency. Despite the interest it has received over the years, a consensus has not been reached with regards to any specific measures of oral fluency which are universally applicable (Kormos, 2006).

This section will look at the variability that has been employed in attempting to measure fluency which has inevitably led to a lack of consensus over fluency measures. I will also consider how fluency fits into a framework which includes complexity, accuracy and fluency

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

53

(CAF). Then, I will explain how fluency can be measured taking into account the *speed*, the *breakdown* that may be present and the *repair* attempted by the L2 speaker. Finally, I will conclude which are the measures that are deemed most reliable and will therefore be adopted in the current study.

2.4.1 Fluency measures in L2

As Kormos (2006) points out, a consensus over how to measure L2 fluency in a consistent and objective manner has not been reached in SLA due to the variability researchers have employed in their attempts to operationalize oral performance variables. For instance, Kormos (2006) makes reference to some fluency variables, such as silent pauses and speech rate, which have been measured differently. Kormos (2006) also adds that fluency features, such as filled pauses, can at times be considered communicative functions rather than symptoms of dysfluency and, therefore, this needs to be factored in. Speakers may employ strategies to compensate for possible dysfluencies, such as slowing down their speech while they search for a word, substitute words or "foreignize" an L1 word to make it sound like a L2 word. Speakers may also resort to the use of lexicalized and non-lexicalized pauses to avoid the emergence of dysfluencies. It seems unsurprising that all of these factors have inevitably contributed to variability in outcomes and conclusions.

In SLA, fluency has traditionally been considered as one of three components in L2 oral performance, together with accuracy and complexity. This conception of oral performance stems from the need in SLA L2 assessment to have clear guidelines as to what it means to speak proficiently in an L2. This led to the emergence of an *SLA index of development* being developed (Larsen-Freeman, 2009). In 1996, Skehan presented an L2 proficiency model which brought together its three core components known as CAF which stands for *complexity, accuracy, fluency*. Complexity concerns the ability by the L2 speaker to use more advanced language; accuracy relates to the ability to avoid error in speech or avoid structures that may cause error. Finally, fluency is defined as "the ability to use language in real time, to emphasize meaning, possibly drawing on more lexicalized systems" (Ellis, 2009, p. 475). This framework seems to have been successful when applied to studies focused on exploring the impact of a range of variables on performance (for instance, Foster & Skehan, 1996). However, it has also received criticism on many accounts not least that

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

54

these performance components may be influenced by other factors and by each other in a way that it makes it difficult to be sure about their individual effects. Even though the performance components in CAF seem to be intertwined and due to the main focus of the current study being on L2 fluency, this will be the aspect that I will explore in detail to the exclusion of the other components which fall beyond the scope of this research.

2.4.2. Fluency as speed, breakdown and repair

Given the lack of consensus in SLA over which measures are the best indicator of L2 fluency, in 2003 Skehan proposed that fluency should be measured in terms of its three main characteristics: *speed* fluency (i.e., speed with which speech is performed); *breakdown* fluency (pauses and silences that break down the flow of speech); and *repair* fluency (hesitations, repetitions and reformulations that are used to repair speech during the production process). Revisiting this framework, Skehan (2014) suggests that, in measuring fluency, a distinction should be made between the disturbances made to the flow of speech, e.g., pausing and reformulations, and those made to the speed of speech, e.g., speech rate. This new framework, in effect, groups breakdown and repair fluency measures under flow, and distinguishes them from speed fluency measures. Skehan (2014) also proposes that composite measures such as phonation time and length of run, i.e., measures that blend speed and flow, should be considered. Recent research findings suggest that some measures of fluency are related and, if not chosen carefully, one measure may overlap with others (Kormos, 2006; Skehan, 2014; Tavakoli & Skehan, 2005). One problem in using composite measures, e.g., speech rate, is that since they combine pausing and speed aspects of fluency (de Jong et al., 2012), it would be difficult to identify whether an increase or decrease in fluency has been caused by the pausing or the speed aspect of it. However, as the choice of measures should always guided by the purpose of a study, researchers always have the option of choosing to use a composite measure such as speech rate, if they are more interested in a global measure of fluency, or a noncomposite measure such as articulation rate when interested in an individual aspect of fluency, e.g. speed.

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

55

2.4.3 Most reliable L2 utterance fluency measures

To date, research that has been carried out has suggested that specific temporal measures have been the most reliable. For instance, the majority of studies have tried to identify these by comparing L2 speech before and after an intervention designed to have an impact on fluency (e.g. de Jong & Perfetti, 2011; Lennon, 1990; Towell et al., 1996). I now turn to look in detail at de Jong and Perfetti's (2011) influential and robust study on fluency in L2. The focus of this study was to investigate the role of speech repetition in oral fluency development by examining the effectiveness of the 4/3/2 procedure with regards to proceduralization, long-term effects and transfer. A total of 24 English as L2 students in two groups performed three speeches of 4, 3, and 2 minutes, respectively, on the same topic and on three different topics. This study showed that repeated practice increases fluency, and it leads to transfer and long-term retention. However, due to the effect of other variables, such as time pressure and topic perception, the results may not be considered entirely conclusive. This highlights the interrelated nature of fluency measures but shows that the researchers were confident in the three measures of fluency they used to reliably measure fluency. These were the mean length of pauses (measured in seconds), the phonation/time ratio and the mean length of fluent run. Incidentally, these were all also considered by Kormos and Dénes (2004) as good predictors of fluency.

Other research (Lennon, 1990; Towell et al., 1996) has concluded that the best predictors of fluency are speech rate (number of syllables articulated per minute); the mean length of run (average number of syllables produced in utterances between pauses of 0.25 seconds and above); phonation-time ratio (percentage of time spent speaking as a percentage proportion of the time taken to produce the speech sample). Whereas there seems to be some agreement as to what the reliable predictors of speed and breakdown fluency are, it is not so straightforward with regards to repair as this is perceived to be more frequent in more developed language and that "part of fluency development in the advanced learner may involve *increased* ability to reformulate, monitor and self-correct production on-line (Lennon, 1990b, p. 412). However, regardless of the apparent agreement on the most reliable measure of fluency that we have seen, more research is needed on each measure in isolation if we are to get much closer to understand the nature of cognitive fluency. In the meantime, it seems that the best compromise remains to select the fluency measures that

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

56

best apply to each research project, with the researcher making a balanced judgement depending on the aims pursued by the research undertaken.

2.4.4. Issues in measuring L2 fluency

As we have seen, L2 fluency is not a component of oral performance that is straightforward to measure as more research is needed to reach a consensus on fluency measures that can be objectively and reliably used in fluency research. In addition to this, other issues also add a level of complexity in L2 fluency measurement. An important issue concerns how fluency should be measured in interaction. Tavakoli (2016), for instance, is one of the influential researchers who has looked into the differences between fluency in monologic versus its dialogic mode. She found that the dialogic mode yielded a more fluent performance as regards utterance fluency measures but calls for further research and a more systematic approach to analysing fluency in interaction.

Witton-Davies (2013) highlights that the research carried out on fluency to date has not been as thorough as it needs to be due to this perhaps not being the main focus, samples analysed not being representative of typical spoken language, measures for analysis not being explained or monologue being analysed to the exclusion of dialogue. He also calls for more thorough research in order to understand the complexity of fluency development of both monologue and dialogue. He points out that this is especially important as fluency research must include both monologue and dialogue for the results to be truly representative of the speakers' fluency, not least since dialogue is the most common mode of speech and it should be given the attention it deserves in any fluency study (Witton-Davies, 2013).

As Hunter (2017) points out, another issue to be considered in measuring L2 fluency is the variability employed by researchers in their selection of the best measures of fluency (e.g., Segalowitz, 2010). This has resulted in the impossibility to establish comparisons among fluency studies, including those in which the same measures have been used but have been calculated in different ways. This can only be overcome when researchers stick to measures used in most fluency studies and justify the reasons for calculating them in specific ways.

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

57

Next, is the current use of adopting computer technology to analyse fluency which is becoming the norm in fluency studies. Traditionally, this was achieved with orthographic transcription and counting syllables manually. However, it has now been replaced by the use of specialist software such as PRAAT (Boersma & Weenink, 2008) which has the benefit of making possible the analysis of larger sets of data in a more objective and precise manner (Segalowitz, 2010). This software detects silence in speech samples, allows the analysis of pausing and makes the calculation of speech rate easier. It also allows detailed manual annotation and analysis of dysfluencies. Its main limitation is that it requires clear data which is more difficult to acquire if the study is conducted in a classroom environment. This needs to be overcome, as much as possible, by training participants to speak clearly and turn take to avoid their interventions to overlap and cause the speech to be recorded with other noises which could make the task of analysing the data more complicated using PRAAT. This was part of the instructions given to the participants in this study.

2.5 Defining and identifying L2 dysfluency

As we have seen, many attempts have been made in SLA research to define the concept of 'fluency' with none succeeding in defining this construct in a systematic way, highlighting its 'fluidity' as its predominant characteristic. Similarly, the construct of dysfluency has not been conceptualized in a universal manner and this has led Segalowitz (2010) to define it from a cognitive science perspective. In this chapter, I will look at the definition of dysfluency given by Segalowitz and the main reasons why L2 speakers incur in these in their speech.

2.5.1 Defining dysfluency

As we have seen, in an attempt to define the construct of *fluency*, Lennon (1990) emphasises the relevance of the underlying speech production processes and concludes that fluency is "an impression on the listener's part that the psycholinguistic processes of speech planning and speech production are functioning easily and efficiently' (Lennon, 1990, pp. 191–2). This is directly associated to Segalowitz's concept of *cognitive fluency* who defines it as the "the efficiency of operation of the underlying processes responsible for the production of utterances" (Segalowitz, 2010, p. 48). Taking the construct of fluency

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

58

by Lennon, Segalowitz (2010) points out that dysfluency markers are the manifestation that the oral production process is under strain.

As Segalowitz (2010) points out for fluency in speech to be possible, the language processing system needs to work smoothly. This includes the efficient processing of speech plans and the speaker's ability to access the lexical and grammatical stores without the need for slow speech, excessive pausing or self-correction. In order to maintain fluency, the speaker needs to effectively integrate the underlying cognitive processes responsible for producing utterances. When this is lacking, the speaker tries to compensate with strategies such as paraphrasing, tailoring the message to the language known or the use of fillers that provide extra time for planning and processing. Therefore, the concept of dysfluency that will guide the current study will be that of speaking with 'unintentional' pausing, that is, pausing that is involuntary on the part of the speaker, as opposed to Segalowitz's definition of fluency as speaking without 'undue hesitation or pauses' in a range of social and physical circumstances (Segalowitz, 2007, p. 181). The main drawback of this definition is that, given the speech processing system happens in the mind of the L2 speaker, it makes it difficult to distinguish between a pause in speech that is intentional, that is, deliberately integrated in the utterances produced, or 'unintentional' or inevitable. In future studies who focus on the nature of dysfluencies, this may be resolved by using feedback from participants on their speech using procedures such as the stimulus recall technique in which participant feedback on this issue is provided on listening to the recording again. In the current study, the different nature of dysfluencies drawn from the speech data collected is acknowledged but a detailed study of this is beyond the scope of this study.

2.5.2 Reasons why L2 speakers incur dysfluencies in speech

Understanding what are the main elements that have an effect on fluency is an important step if we are to get closer to understand how the whole cognitive fluency process works and how the impact of these elements could be tackled with the aim of developing fluency. There have been some initial studies on the implications of macroplanning and microplanning for fluency. For instance, Roberts and Kirsner (2000) examined the spontaneous speech of nine native speakers of English speaking about themselves for five minutes. The results indicated that fluency decreased during topic shifts. This suggests that

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

59

macroplanning (elaboration of the communicative intention) happens at the time of a topic shift and that this activity takes resources away from the microplanning (speech preparation and execution). They concluded that speech does not become fluent until the whole macroplanning process is complete, and all resources become available to the speech preparation and production process. The implication of this for L2 fluency seems to be that the more macroplanning is required, the more susceptible L2 speech will be to dysfluencies due to the diversion of the processing resources. Therefore, L2 users who struggle with microplanning in an automatic fashion will require extra time to ensure that macroplanning is completed before attempting to speak. This may prove useful to improve their fluency rates in speech.

According to Levelt's model, speech formulation processes are lexically driven, that is, "grammatical and phonological encoding are mediated by lexical entries" (1989, p. 181). Drawing on Levelt's framework, Poulisse (1993) describes the process of lexical communication as follows when it does not happen according to plan: once the message is planned in the conceptualizer, the speaker issues the preverbal plan. However, the formulator is unable to retrieve the lemma corresponding to that chuck of the preverbal plan, thus the speech production process comes to a halt and an alarm signal is sent to the monitor, which feeds this information back to the conceptualizer. This issues a new preverbal plan which the formulator processes or, if unable, sets this whole process in motion again. The speaker uses lexical problem-solving mechanisms in an attempt to overcome problems in lemma retrieval. Also, insufficient knowledge of the grammatical form and the structure of lemmas can prevent encoding and thus speakers resort to problem-solving mechanisms. When the retrieval of the lexeme (the morpho-phonological form) of a lemma is hampered, learners might experience problems in the phonological encoding (Levelt, 1989, 1993). As Kormos points out, when the speaker attempts to retrieve a lexeme with incomplete phonological information, they experience a "tip of the tongue" phenomenon, whereby several versions of the item are articulated through audition and speech comprehension to be able to select the best version Kormos (2006, p. 149). This provides an essential insight to fully understand the process of speech production and the strategies learners apply to maintain communication when encoding of certain items has proven a problem. It also suggests that L2 speakers do not just focus on producing utterances but, as we will see, in maintaining the process of communication. As we will see,

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

60

speakers try to meet various demands in their interactions with others in addition to producing the language they need in each case.

L2 learners may also experience difficulties retrieving the appropriate word for the linguistic context they are immersed in in conversation. Indeed, specific lexical retrieval may also prove to be a frequent stumbling block for many L2 learners. In line with this, De Bot (1992) suggests that sometimes L2 learners simply do not know the lexical items needed for microplanning in order to convey their intended construal. In this cases, L2 learners are left with the only option to formulate the preverbal message in a way that gets around any linguistic limitations they may be experiencing. As this would imply extra time to reformulate the preverbal message, it would undoubtedly have a negative influence on fluency.

With regards to word retrieval, Segalowitz (2010) highlights the importance of distinguishing between lexicon and vocabulary and refers to Paradis (2009) who made this distinction. He agrees with Paradis (2009) that the lexicon is the repository of the speaker's implicit knowledge about the meanings and uses of words, including the interactions between lexical items and their syntactic properties. This is procedural knowledge of which the speaker has no awareness or formal understanding. He illustrates this by referring to the L1 which is represented in this way as it is not learned through formal instruction but communicative experience (implicit knowledge). On the other hand, vocabulary is the repository of the speaker's explicit knowledge of word knowledge acquired through instruction (declarative knowledge). L2 learners acquire an L2 vocabulary through explicit instruction and possess an L2 lexicon acquired implicitly through experience. It is important to make this distinction because in the case of L2 learners they appear to have to draw from two different stores in order to retrieve the correct words for each context: firstly, they have to select the correct word from their vocabulary store and, secondly, they have to decide whether this is indeed appropriate for the context by accessing their knowledge on the uses of this word from their lexicon. Contrary to the case of an L1 speaker, whose lexical knowledge is implicit and stored in one place, the L2 learner is forced to access two different stores before they are able to select the correct word. This has clear implications for fluency as it adds an extra level of difficulty and processing time in the process of word retrieval.

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

61

Another possible element that may lead to dysfluency is the difficulty accessing syllables during the creation of the surface structure. De Bot (1992) explains that the grammatical encoding level is linked to the lemmas in the mental lexicon. As we have seen, once the intended message has been formulated as a surface structure it has to be converted into a form realized as overt speech. According to Levelt's (1989, 1999a) model, this takes place in the phonological/phonetic system. The morphological codes associated with each lemma are stored in the mental lexicon and this facilitates the generation of a phonological score for overt speech. De Bot (1992) suggests that if the L2 speaker does not have automatic access to syllable programs, this will lead to reduced fluidity which will show as hesitations. This highlights another potentially critical point for L2 fluency at the level of morpho-phonological encoding, in particular, in the case of Spanish.

Levelt (1999) also posits a syllabary which is a knowledge source that contains the gestural scores for turning phonological score information into speech. The process of using these scores to convert a phonological score into an articulatory score is the phonetic encoding described by Levelt (1999). If the L2 speaker is not able to automatically select the appropriate gestural score and attempts to execute it this would again lead to fluency issues that would manifest themselves as a dysfluency. Further research would no doubt be helpful in shedding more light on what strategies L2 learners may employ, for instance, practising verbalising their ideas in the L2 in order to facilitate this conversion to the articulatory score which may have a positive impact on L2 fluency as it may help automatize the gestural scores needed in the L2.

Another aspect that may impact fluency may be due to the cognitive load demanded by tasks in the classroom. Drawing on Skehan's (2003) concept of fluency based on the capacity of the L2 speaker to mobilize their linguistic resources for real-time communication, it could be argued that tasks may at times hinder the L2 speaker's speech process by making high cognitive demands when they are perceived to be too complex. This may lead to the speaker incurring dysfluencies as they try to process the cognitive load presented in the task and finding that their speech processing system becomes overwhelmed. In this sense, Segalowitz (2010) argues that understanding how task design affects oral production is extremely important as this has pedagogical value for L2 instruction, and this is one of the fields of enquiry of the current study. There has been ample research that suggests that

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

62

manipulating task structure, for instance, influences cognitive processes involved in language production and promotes accuracy and fluency of L2 performance (Foster & Skehan, 1996). Indeed, from a teaching practitioner's perceptive, tasks are used as instruction tools and can be manipulated in different ways depending on the linguistic outcomes that are intended to draw from the L2 learners. Teaching experience is perhaps the main tool that helps inform the process of designing tasks that activate specific cognitive processes that will drive learners to use the intended language resources whether it be any necessary lexical elements, or the morphological components required within them.

L2 speakers are aware that in order to remain part of a communicative exchange, they need to observe certain temporal principles such as the need to avoid lengthy silences in speech that would end the conversation or deter the interlocutor. They use strategies to overcome the time constraints of real time language production. They may resort to message reduction or abandonment, employ faster alternative ending mechanisms or apply stalling mechanisms. In order to minimise this type of dysfluency, Dörnyei (1995) believes *communication strategies* (CS) should be taught in L2 courses. He argues that these play an important role as they contribute to increased fluency, facilitate communication, allow speakers to hold the floor and lead to increased output. It seems that teaching CSs could be the answer to helping L2 speakers fill the silences in speech and maintain fluency levels in speech production.

Another important aspect that may lead to dysfluencies is the effect of self-monitoring has during speech production. Self-monitoring is a process that allows speakers to identify their own errors and reformulate their message when they make a planning error. A study by Seyfeddinipur, Kita and Indefrey (2008) on a group 12 native German university students of English interrupting themselves on detection of an error in their spontaneous speech concluded that they preferred to optimize the fluency of their speech over stopping to repair inaccuracies. Thus, in self-monitoring there can be a trade-off between maintaining accuracy versus fluency in speech. Self-monitoring occurs frequently in L2 speech, as this is more cognitively demanding, although it ultimately depends on the speaker's level of proficiency and the speaking context (Segalowitz, 2010). For instance, at times when optimal proficiency may be required, maximal self-monitoring may be called for. Self-monitoring is thus another potential locus of dysfluency.

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

63

As we have seen, there are fluency vulnerability points concerning the speaking system where processing difficulties may lead to L2 dysfluencies. However, these only provide a snapshot of the speaker at one moment in time and do not show how the speaker environment interactions impact of the act of the speaker and the underlying processes (Segalowitz, 2010). However, as Segalowitz (2010) points out, the act of engaging in L2 communication and the social context in which this takes place provided a set of perceptual and cognitive experiences that may influence the operation of the speaker's cognitive system and directly affect fluency. These include the opportunities to hear and produce L2 words under conditions that promote the development of automatic word retrieval. Since the social contexts in which L2 speakers are immersed change over time this may have a significant impact on the speaker's fluency in the L2. Similarly, the cognitive and perceptual experiences that arise from the communicative interaction can also change as the communicative context also changes.

Within the context of communicative interaction, Gatbonton and Segalowitz (2005) argued that by engaging in authentic communication and having a real stake in the success of the communication, the L2 speaker is continually exposed to the variability and unpredictability inherent in normal communication. However, for many different reasons they are not always able to handle unpredictability and this may jeopardise their attempts to communicate fluently. It seems, however, that engaging in authentic communication and, therefore, being exposed to this unpredictability is a necessary process for developing fluency. As Swain (2005) explained in reference to her output hypothesis, it is crucial for speakers to generate output that they can monitor, matching what the intend to say and the responses from the interlocutor. This output enables the speaker to fine-tune their speaking skills and thus reinforce and further develop fluency. This can only take place when speakers are engaged in genuine communication. It seems that, in order to be able to overcome any obstacles for fluency, the L2 leaner must be exposed precisely to the elements that may impede it at first. As Oxford (2003) points out, it is only by becoming an autonomous L2 user able to deal with any communicative environment that a L2 learner can consider themselves a fluent L2 speaker

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

64

2.6 Chapter summary

In this chapter, I have reviewed the main theories in L2 fluency and speech production that have shaped the understanding of these fields in SLA. I have explained the most influential definitions of fluency in L2 including Segalowitz's conceptualization of this construct from a cognitive and utterance perspective as this are adopted in the current study. I have included the definitions of fluency provided in the CEFR that describe the linguistic achievements of L2 learners and are used for assessing their speaking skills. I have explained the process of automaticity, which is at the centre of this study, and what it means for L2 speech production. I have detailed the sociolinguistic demands that come with all communicative situations and the impact they have on L2 fluency. I have explained the impact instruction in the learning environment has on L2 fluency as this is a crucial element for fluency development in the classroom. I have pointed out the main specific aspects of fluency that are perceived by L2 learners of Spanish that differ from other languages and make developing fluency in Spanish challenging in its own unique way. I have reviewed the attempts made in SLA with regards to measuring L2 fluency including Skehan's framework based on speed, breakdown and repair. I have concluded which are the most reliable L2 fluency measures. Finally, I have explained the definition of dysfluency for the purpose of the current study and explained the main reasons why L2 speakers incur dysfluencies in speech. Next, I will turn to the role of tasks and motivation in L2 fluency development.

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

65

Chapter 3: Role of tasks and motivation in L2 fluency development

3.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I will explore the role that tasks and motivation have to play in the development of L2 fluency in the classroom. I will define the concept of 'task' within the pedagogical framework in which L2 is currently being taught, that is, 'task-based language teaching' (TBLT). I will explore the role of input in TBLT and what it means for cognitive processing. Then, I will look at the impact that task engagement has on fluency development. I will examine the importance of task engagement and the role the teacher has in the classroom to help L2 learners achieve higher fluency outcomes. I will also explore the influence of content on task engagement. I will explore the fluency teaching framework known as ACCESS (Gatbonton & Segalowitz, 2005), designed to promote automatisation within task-based teaching in the classroom. I will then turn to define the construct of motivation and review major theories in Motivation research including the notion of 'vision' and 'envisioned self', the L2 Motivational Self System and how it may be conceptualised in a three-level framework on an L2 learner and learning situation level. Finally, I will investigate how motivation may be used as a tool for L2 classroom instruction including the role that the teacher has as a 'transformational leader', the motivational aspects of ACCESS for L2 development, the effect of motivation on Willingness to Communicate (WTC) and the influence of motivational content topics for L2 development.
I will conclude this chapter with a brief summary.

3.2 Tasks and TBLT

Understanding tasks and their impact on fluency development within TBLT is crucial, not only from a pedagogical point of view, since they are at the core of L2 teaching and assessment, but also from a research perspective. This is because this understanding can help advance knowledge on how their design could be improved to best promote fluency. It is also important to get closer to understanding the meaning of the current task-based approach to L2 teaching (TBLT). Therefore, the first step is to define the concept of 'task'.

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

66

3.2.1 Defining 'task'

Over the years, many have been the attempts made to define 'task' in SLA. It is an issue that has received much attention both in research and language pedagogy as they are at the centre of L2 fluency and teaching. As Ellis (2003) points out, the multiple definitions that task has received reflect its multifaceted dimensions in relation to its scope, the perspective from which is viewed, its authenticity, the linguistic skills required to perform it, the psychological processes involved and the outcome of a task (Ellis, 2003). Along the same line, Ahmadian (2016) also stresses their versatility as tasks "may take on different forms and could be used under various guises – that is, real-world tasks which promote situational authenticity or pedagogic tasks which foster interactional authenticity in the classroom" (Ahmadian, 2016, p. 1). It is this versatility that makes it essential to define what makes a 'task' and how this is different from an 'activity' and what makes it important to define each for the purpose of this study.

According to Skehan (1998), successful L2 learning takes place through a process of lexicalisation (i.e., learning of words), grammaticisation (i.e., words become grammatical markers) and re-lexicalisation (i.e. adding of words to a lexicon). Through these phases, the learner pays attention to fluency, accuracy and complexity with all these processes competing with each other for attention. Skehan (1998) argues that L2 teaching must engage learners into taking part of all three processes through the use of tasks. It is on the basis of his conception of the L2 learning process that Skehan (1998) defines 'task' as an activity in which "*meaning* is primary, there is a goal which needs to be worked towards; the activity is outcome-evaluated and there is a real-world relationship" (Skehan, 1998, p. 268, *my emphasis*). Traditionally most L2 language teaching had been centered on learning about the rules that governed language through drills "to focus attention on a pre-selected language item or items, as in a drill involving the production of a particular vowel sound or a minimal pair contrast without attention to meaning" (Samuda & Bygate, 2008, p. 8). Skehan's concept of 'task' represents a shift in perspective in L2 teaching instruction in the 1970s which placed more importance in the communicative aspect of L2 learning and which led to the introduction of 'communicative activities' designed to foster more authentic communication between learners in the new pedagogical frame of CLT and TBLT.

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

67

In line with this focus on *meaning*, Ellis (2003) defines this term as a workplan that involves primary focus on meaning and real-world process of language use in the four skills, it engages cognitive processes and has a clearly defined communicative outcome. He explains that L2 learners are required to function primarily as 'language users', as they are expected to employ the same communicative processes as those involved in real-world activities. When performing a task, learners' focal attention on message conveyance may switch momentarily to form, as they temporarily adopt the role of 'language learners' from their role as 'language users' (Ellis, 2003). The implication of this is that learners are expected to perform a dual role: on one hand, they are required to perform tasks as they would in a real-life situation and, on the other, they are urged to gain linguistic knowledge from this communicative interaction by paying attention to form (Ellis, 2003). According to Ellis' holistic conception of 'task' learners are expected to engage in task performance in the classroom not only for the purpose of communicating, but also in order to develop their linguistic knowledge and speech production ability. It is in terms of its function that makes the distinction between 'task' and 'activity' clearer, with 'task' representing the L2 as this is used in the real world where *meaning* is the priority whereas an 'activity' is designed to direct the L2 learners' focus to the linguistic *form*, for instance, to the use of grammar or specific vocabulary. The study task for this research is a debate which has a communicative focus and a direct application in the real world.

Samuda and Bygate (2008) also stress this pedagogical dimension of 'task' and agree with Ellis that this should be understood as a workplan and should therefore have a pedagogical focus. They point out that it also is essential to consider how learners respond to and engage with tasks and how they interpret them themselves. Thus, their definition of 'task' takes on a more holistic approach as a pedagogical activity with *language use* at the core as this is socially and interpersonally conveyed. Samuda and Bygate (2008) also propose a richer conceptualisation of the cognitive processes that may be engaged through working with tasks as they agree that tasks are aimed at promoting language development. They explain that, with regards to communicative outcome, tasks have an explicit non-linguistic outcome which is L2 mediated but not in itself the main focus. Therefore, they define 'task' as follows: "A task is a holistic activity which engages language use in order to achieve some non-linguistic outcome while meeting a linguistic challenge, with the overall aim of promoting language learning, through process or product or both" (Samuda & Bygate, 2008,

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

68

p. 69). Tasks should involve learners in making on-line choices of meaning and form, choosing words and grammar with the corresponding pronunciation thus integrating different aspects of language for a communicational goal. In contrast with Ellis' (2003) concept of task which demands the L2 learner to perform a dual role of L2 learner and user, Samuda and Bygate (2008) place the main emphasis on the promotion of L2 learning over the accomplishment of non-linguistic outcome of the task. Since the primary goal of L2 learning should be the acquisition of the necessary oral skills to enable communication, Samuda and Bygate's concept of task seems to favour the pedagogical dimension of task over their communicative purpose. In this study, Ellis' concept is adopted as indeed the L2 speaker is required to perform the dual role of learning and using the L2 for communication. The study task proposed for this study is an example of a classroom free-communication activity with a focus on 'learning while communicating'.

Van den Branden stresses the communicative aspect of tasks and defines them as "an activity in which a person engages in order to attain an objective, and which necessitates the use of language" (Van den Branden, 2007, p. 4). He points out that in the process of communication, the L2 is used as a means to an end. This means that, in order to achieve their communicative goal, learners are required to understand language input and produce language output as well as interact with other people in real-life situations through the use of language. In this sense, tasks are understood as a tool that enables communication between learners as they become the vehicle for that meaningful interaction. However, despite their communicative dimension, Van den Branden (2007) agrees that TBTL should be based on holistic, functional and communicative tasks as the basis for all instruction in the classroom as learners learn the L2 by making functional use of it. For this reason, there should be a close link between the tasks performed by learners in the classroom and in the outside world. Tasks should reflect what the learners will need to do in the real world. They should be focused on meaning, they should facilitate meaningful interaction and offer the learner the opportunity to both process and produce meaningful output in order to reach relevant communicative goals. In this process, learners act as both language users and learners. This is the main reason why a debate was selected as the study task for this research.

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

69

Therefore, examples of pedagogic oral tasks that are designed to develop L2 fluency for advanced L2 learners could be debates, used in the current study, role-plays, short talks, show and tell, interviews, storytelling, story completion, simulations, oral information gap, brainstorming of ideas, reporting, picture narrating or describing, Others include telling stories, give advice, opinions and instructions (Willis & Willis, 2007). Debates are a speaking task that is commonly used by teaching practitioners in the classroom in a task-based pedagogical framework with the purpose of developing fluency in L2 learners. As defined by Freeley and Steinberg (2008), a debate is "the process of inquiry and advocacy, a way of arriving at a reasoned judgement on a proposition" (Freeley & Steinberg, 2008, p. 4). It involves considering different viewpoints in order to make a judgement (Goodwin, 2003; Kennedy, 2007, 2009). In language pedagogy, debates were introduced as a tool to develop learners' fluency through the practice of discussing issues in the L2 in a way that contrasted a more traditional methodology which was based on tasks which were more repetitive. It started to be a tool of choice by many teaching practitioners looking for fluency enhancing activities in the classroom moving away from inherently repetitive tasks which may be perceived by learners as 'boring' (Ahmadian, Mansouri, & Ghominejad, 2017). Teaching instructors felt that debates allowed learners to produce language freely without the constraints of any set structures and most suitable for developing speaking ability. Adopting this new type of free-production activity teaching practitioners achieved that learners could engage more in the learning process as they were asked to maintain the flow of the discussion and contribute to it with their owns views. All these pedagogic oral tasks illustrate the concept of tasks as pedagogic activities that are designed for use in the classroom which are meaningful and engaging and prompt the L2 learner to use the L2 to carry out real life like oral activities to achieve a communicative goal. This concept of tasks for meaningful communication has been adopted in the current study.

3.2.2 Task-based language teaching (TBLT) in SLA and in the classroom

As we have seen, L2 learning has evolved from its original concern with the acquisition of grammar through drill repetition (Samuda and Bygate, 2008) towards a more communicative teaching approach in the classroom. Within this new educational framework of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), Johnson (1979) was the first to articulate the

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

70

need for a concept of 'task' to incorporate language processing into materials used for L2 fluency development. He argued that "fluency in communicative process can only be developed within 'task-oriented teaching'… [providing] 'actual meaning' by focusing on tasks to be mediated through language…" (Johnson, 1979, p. 198). With this statement, he stressed that learners would only be able to develop their fluency by working with specific tasks which they could focus on whilst using the L2.

From the mid- to late 1980s, the term 'task-based' heralded a new pedagogical approach which evolved to the current and widely spread task-based learning and teaching (TBLT). This new approach to L2 learning in the classroom refers to contexts where tasks are the central unit of instruction, they drive classroom activity, they are selected on the basis that they simulate relevant real-world activities, they define curriculum and syllabuses and determine assessment (Samuda & Bygate, 2008). Within this new educational framework adopted in English curricula, L2 attainment is measured by performance on target achievement tasks. Learners are assessed on 'competencies' or 'attainment targets' to evaluate their learning (Samuda & Bygate, 2008), as reflected in the CEFR attainment criteria explored in the previous chapter on fluency. Tasks provide learning opportunities and are used as pedagogic tools to be exploited in the classroom for linguistic aims, with the teacher providing support through on-line support and feedback. They have a pedagogic focus which focuses learners' attention on the L2 learning process within a communicative dimension (Samuda & Bygate, 2008). From the point of view of research, this new concept of task has become an important object of enquiry in SLA as researchers have focused on the impact of specific tasks on different aspects of L2 production. This has highlighted the importance of TBLT for both language pedagogy and research. Indeed, as Ahmadian (2016) highlights "TBLT is now construed as a very broad area of enquiry and there are obviously scores of debated topics from different vantage points which are worth exploration" (Ahmadian, 2016, p. 377). Indeed, as we will see, the current study is concerned with the effect that a conclusion-outcome debate, a commonly used oral task in the L2 classroom, has on fluency outcomes.

In line with this new pedagogic focus, Samuda and Bygate (2008) point out that tasks must be designed to motivate, channel and support learners' effort to learn as they are aimed at leading to the processes of acquisition, transformation and evaluation in contexts of holistic

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

71

language use. In this sense, tasks have begun to be considered as pedagogical units that can be used as a basis for designing language courses (Long & Crookes, 1992). This is because task design provides the blueprint for the specific language use aimed at promoting L2 development which has prompted the focus of SLA in this field to shift towards drawing on the theoretical constructs and empirical task-based research to feed this enquiry and inform TBLT for improved L2 development in the classroom. Consequently, this provides significant value to both task design and L2 teaching methodology, a principle that underpins the current study as this is concerned with advancing knowledge and informing teaching practice for best fluency outcomes.

Next, I turn to exploring the roles played by the learners and the teacher in the classroom since this is important for TBLT and its intended pedagogical impact on L2 development. With regards to the roles that the teacher and learners should play in this pedagogical context, these take on a different dimension from those in a traditional pedagogical context. The focus of instruction switches from being teacher-directed to being learner-centred in a new communicative pedagogical frame based on learning through tasks. Van den Branden (2007), for instance, agrees that the learner needs to take up a central role and become the main negotiator of linguistic forms, drawn from their own repertoire, and evaluator of their performance during task-based instruction. This is in line with the principles supported in Communicative language teaching (CLT) in the 1970s in terms of learner autonomy and learner-centredness and the ability to communicate in the L2 as the main goal of instruction. Van den Branden (2007) also believes that the teacher's main role should shift from dominating the instructional activities to motivating learners to engage in natural communicative behaviour, supporting them in the performance of the task and evaluating the outcome (Van den Branden, 2007). In this new pedagogical context, the teacher becomes a learning facilitator which facilitates the successful communicative interaction between learners.

In this new TBTL pedagogical focus, in which tasks are selected to be used to develop specific aspects of the L2, it becomes more important than ever that teachers are clear about which aspect of the L2 they intend to exploit in the classroom. Samuda and Bygate (2008) explain that this is both in terms of product and processes with the aim of focusing instruction precisely and be able to provide feedback. Any task can be exploited in multiple

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

72

ways to contribute to different aspects of L2 development. Therefore, being clear about which learning goal to target is particularly important due to the complexity of language development which involves a significant number of processes such as social interaction, perception, ideational comprehension, contextual mapping, etc. (Samuda & Bygate, 2008). In relation to developing L2 fluency, the exploitation of tasks in the classroom needs to take into account other aspects that may influence the learning environment and, more specifically, the way in which learners develop their fluency in the L2. When developing L2 fluency, teachers need to ensure that the environment is conducive to learners being able to work towards developing this aspect of the L2. In the L2 classroom there is an array of external factors which may have an effect on learners and their ability to develop their L2 fluency. These range from time pressure in speech, competition and collaboration among learners, their emotional state and attitude towards learning, the atmosphere and ethos of the class, their perception of how tasks contribute to their learning and, most importantly, their engagement in the task. All of these have an influence in the way L2 learners approach their L2 fluency development in the classroom. For reasons of scope, however, I will focus exclusively on task engagement in more detail in this chapter since this is a determining factor for L2 fluency development.

3.2.3 The role of task input in TBLT

One of the main aspects believed to influence L2 development is task input. Some SLA research in the 1980s focused on the task input learners were exposed to in different types of oral interactions. In 1977, Krashen formulated the Input Hypothesis, which claims that language acquisition is input-driven, in other words, learners acquire an L2 subconsciously when they are able to comprehend the task input they are exposed to. This input becomes comprehensible when it is contextually embedded and tuned to the learners' level or proficiency. This theory seems to substantiate that comprehensible input is essential for L2 acquisition. However, the question arises as to how this input can be made accessible to the learners, depending on their level of proficiency, in a way that it leads to them acquiring it subconsciously and without introducing too many new linguistic elements. Also, it could be argued that other factors may also have a bearing on the degree to which L2 development may take place, for instance, the learner's interest in engaging in a task based on a familiar topic as opposed to a less engaging unfamiliar task. This would contradict

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

73

Krashen's theory as it would imply that for L2 learning to take place, the learner has to be actively involved in the process and not be just a mere recipient of subconscious L2 acquisition.

Long's Interaction Hypothesis (1996), which states that L2 development is promoted by oral interaction and communication, places similar emphasis on the role of task input but claims that the best input for L2 acquisition is that which arises when learners have the opportunity to experience negotiated meaning in exchanges where an initial communication problem has occurred. In SLA, *negotiation of meaning* is a process interlocutors engage in to overcome comprehension issues and reach a clear understanding of each other by means of asking for clarification, rephrasing and confirming comprehension. Long (1996) suggests that meaning negotiation can contribute to acquisition in other ways such as the negative feedback that learners receive in the form of recasts or opportunities to reformulate their own erroneous utterances in a more correct way. Indeed, from the specific classroom examples cited by Long (1996), it is clear to see how learners benefit from their interlocutors' negative feedback leading them to produce a linguistically improved version of their prior utterance and, therefore, contributing to their L2 fluency development. This clearly illustrates the claim Long makes about the value of oral interaction and the essential role this has as a form of input for the learner in the classroom. As we will see, in the current study the value of the oral interaction in the debate that the participants took part in was clear as the contributions made served as input to generate further contributions to move on the narrative of the debate. In cases where specific language resources were repeated or used to develop their arguments, this input contributed to enhance the speech processing skills of the participants.

Other input-oriented research has been based on theories of language competence and of speech production. Skehan (1996a, 1998a) suggests that language competence is comprised of both lexis, including fixed and formulaic expressions, and grammatical rules. When required to speak spontaneously, L2 learners depend on *lexicalized processing*, that is, the encoding, search and retrieval of specific linguistic items. He suggests (Skehan, 1996a, 1998a) that it is possible to identify the task conditions and procedures that prompt learners to place an emphasis on fluency (i.e., performance free of undue pauses and false starts), complexity (i.e., the use of a wide range of grammatical structures) and accuracy,

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

74

(i.e., the correct use of grammatical structures). Variables that have been so far investigated include input features of tasks, such as, topic familiarity (e.g. Bui & Huang, 2016; de Jong, 2013), structure, task procedures (whether the task was to be performed dialogically or monologically, e.g. Sato, 2014 and Tavakoli, 2016) and the effect of planning (e.g. Eliis, 1987; Foster & Skehan; 1996; Ortega, 1999). The findings from this extensive body of literature provide valuable insight as to how tasks may be manipulated in different ways to elicit an improved performance from the learner in terms of fluency, complexity or accuracy. Although this may be the case, it can be argued that manipulating tasks may not elicit the same type of performance form every single learner given that there may be other variables such as their individual characteristics and other external learning factors as mentioned above which may influence performance. In this study, as we will see later, it will be suggested how the main study task based on a debate can be manipulated to integrate teacher and peer feedback and allow learners to benefit from it to promote their L2 fluency and task engagement.

3.2.4 The impact of task cognitive load

As we have seen, in SLA the value of tasks for L2 instruction and acquisition has been increasingly acknowledged to the extent that they have become the centre of instruction in the current TBLT educational approach in the classroom. However, designing tasks that meet all the requirements to enable L2 learning is not a straightforward process. Indeed, most researchers agree that a main challenge for L2 teachers is to "create tasks that provide learners with opportunities to engage in meaningful interaction and to direct their attention to linguistic form" (McDonough & Mackey, 2000). Some argue that most tasks are likely to be associated with the use of some language features with a degree of probability (Newton and Kennedy, 1996; Bygate, 1999; Mackey, 1999). Another challenge faced in the process of task design is to gradually increase task complexity and keep the learning potential of the task intact, while ensuring that the gap between the learners' current level of proficiency and that demanded by the task does not become too wide (Van den Branden, 2007). From a practitioner point of view, this challenge can only be overcome by acquiring a sound knowledge of the learners' cognitive and linguistic processing level, developing the expertise to exploit the learning potential in tasks and being able to anticipate the scope for any potential further fluency development for those particular learners. This is, undoubtedly,

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

75

a complex and lengthy process that can be carried out in the classroom and one that that requires regular assessment of the learners' level of fluency accomplishment and their potential for further development, always keeping the learner at the centre of this task design process.

An important aspect that needs to be considered in the process of task design is *task load*, that it, the degree of complexity demanded from the learner for the completion of a task. It is essential to find a balance in terms of the complexity of the task as too light a load may not stimulate the learner's cognitive processes sufficiently to elicit the necessary linguistic resources to complete the task. On the other hand, too heavy a load may overwhelm the learner and cause anxiety, reduced interest in the task or inability to complete it successfully. In an attempt to explore this issue, Robinson developed his Cognition Hypothesis (2001b, 2003b, 2005a, 2007), a framework that accounts for the complexity of tasks and distinguishes between complexity, conditions and difficulty. He argues that task complexity is the result of the attentional, memory, reasoning, and other processing demands imposed by the task on the learner. He found that task complexity was influenced by two cognitive dimensions: resource-directing (amount of information and reasoning demands); and resource-depleting (presence of planning, subtasks and prior knowledge). He claims that increasing the cognitive demands of tasks pushes learners to greater accuracy and complexity of L2 production, as they attempt to meet the greater communicative demands, promote interaction, negotiation of meaning and heightened attention and learning from input, and also lead to automaticity in L2 task output (2001b, 2003b, 2005a, 2007). In opposition to Ellis (2003), for instance, who argues that task complexity is based on how inherently easy or difficult a task is, Robinson (2001b, 2003b, 2005a, 2007) claims that it is the learners that perceive a task to have a greater load or complexity, as they register the processing demands made on them and are influenced by their affective characteristics, their aptitude and proficiency variables. Robinson (2003b) argues that task-based pedagogy facilitates the cognitive processes involved in L2 production and development. However, as we have seen, it is essential that task design offers an appropriate degree of complexity that triggers the learner's cognitive and linguistic processes to complete the task in such a way that it leads to potential L2 development. Effective task design for increased L2 fluency development involves a process of

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

76

adjustment in the creation of tasks that constantly targets the gap in the learners' potential for enhanced fluency.

Given the importance of how L2 learners perceive task load in terms of how they engage in completing it, it is important to consider the type of interaction it intends to elicit from the learner. In this sense, Foster and Skehan (1996), Skehan and Foster (1997) and Skehan (2001) agree that the nature of the task may be partly reflected on the type of discourse it aims to generate. They investigated whether personal, narrative and argumentation tasks had a different impact on the learners' fluency, accuracy and complexity. The findings of their studies showed that while personal tasks generated more fluent but less complex language, narrative and argumentation tasks elicited more complex language. One possible explanation for this increased fluency outcome is that personal tasks are familiar to learners and, therefore, they may involve fewer cognitive demands that the other types of interaction, hence giving rise to less complex use of language. In this case, the task is perceived to have a lighter cognitive load, due to the familiarity of the content, and leads to increased fluency. Following Levelt's speech production model (1989, 1999a) explained in chapter 2, conceptualization of the preverbal message becomes easier given the familiarity of content and this is linguistically encoded prior to articulation, making this whole process faster. However, the trade-off seems to be that it compromises complexity. What seems to be crucial for tasks designed to develop fluency is the relationship between task content and the learners' background knowledge. When they possess well-structured information that they are familiar with and that they are able to encode by their L2 speech processing system, they seem to perform with increased fluency. In contrast, when they need to allocate attentional resources to macro-planning and rule-based sentenced constructions, fluency and accuracy are likely to suffer. Given that the current study primarily concerns fluency and the aspect that may have an impact on it, I will explore topic familiarity as a significant factor for L2 development later on in this chapter.

The type of load structure contained within an oral task can also determine the nature of the task outcome. Ellis (2003) explains that the following factors that may have an impact on the task outcome, for instance, whether the outcome required is open or closed, the specific structure required in the outcome, and the discourse mode the task is designed to elicit. In line with this, Tong-Fredericks (1984) compared three tasks, a closed problem-solving task,

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

77

and two open ones, a role-play task and an authentic interaction task where students had to find out from their partners what they had done the previous day. He found that the first task elicited more spontaneous speech and a wider incidence of meaning negotiation. In contrast, the two open tasks led to a rigid question-and-answer discourse but elicited greater attention to accuracy and more complex language. This study shows that different tasks trigger different fluency outcomes and, therefore, careful consideration needs to be given to the product outcome intended from the learner in order to design the most appropriate type of task for this purpose. Careful consideration must be given to the intended product outcome, and this should, therefore, be the first step when designing tasks to develop oral fluency, as is the case with the current study task.

As we have seen, cognitive and pedagogical perspectives in SLA have yielded much research aimed at understanding how manipulating tasks affects cognitive mechanisms and, in turn, L2 acquisition and production. They have also shed light on how task design features may be manipulated to suit learners' different cognitive abilities and product outcome. As Ahmadian and García Mayo explain "the cognitive-interactionist perspective has a focus on input, output, task-based procedures and internal cognitive mechanisms" (Ahmadian & García Mayo, 2017, p. 2). Variables such as the task load, interaction, structure and topic, for instance, have been identified as playing an important role in the learners' performance since they elicit different degrees of task engagement and speech output. These variables were also taken into consideration in the design of the current study which is based on the performance of a debate. This is a dialogic open task based on a current affairs news, a familiar topic for the participants. This task was adjusted to the cognitive and linguistic level of the participants who took part in the debate with the aim to elicit speech that would allow the investigation of fluency outcomes and dysfluencies incurred.

3.2.5 The importance of task engagement and the role of the teacher to achieve it

One of the determining factors for L2 fluency development in the classroom is the ability that learners have to engage in the tasks designed for this purpose. Finding ways in which to help learners better engage in these tasks has increasingly been the focus of educators.

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

78

The beginning of the 19th century heralded a new shift in educational goals directed towards making learning purposeful and functional. Prior to that, learning had traditionally been based on the acquisition of knowledge without any connection to the learners' broader experiences of the world and expectations for their own lives (Samuda & Bygate, 2008). By 1913, Dewey, an influential educational theorist, had argued that learning had to be focused and shaped in order to meet the personal interests and goal of the learners. He argued that traditional learning mostly unconnected with learners' interests and goals was 'abnormal' and that acquiring any learning 'in isolation' meant that this would not be available later in life as it was not connected with the actual conditions of life (Dewey, 1938). Thus, he proposed a functional approach to learning that makes knowledge relevant by connecting it to personal experience. This would, in turn, bring learners into active engagement leading to the acquisition of new knowledge. According to Dewey (1910), what brings together the learner's experience of the real world, the logic of the subject matter and the accumulated experience of educators was through 'overt and executive activities' in which the learner learns through the interaction between thought and action.

Dewey's new educational approach was so influential at this time that it would soon filter through to SLA pedagogy as learner relevant knowledge took centre stage in the classroom with tasks being more directly linked to the real world. In the classroom, content started to become accessible, useful and relevant and was beginning to be matched to the experience and understanding of learners. As content became more directly related to the L2 learner and research put tasks at the centre of SLA pedagogy, as we have seen, in the new educational shift of TBTL, *task engagement* became a crucial task related process for L2 learning. The term *task engagement* has been defined by Bygate and Samuda (2009) as the extent in which L2 learners endorse the goals of the task, connect with its content and make an effort to complete it with their linguistic resources. Bygate and Samuda (2009) go a step further and define it as a crucial condition for developing fluency in the L2:

> "We see 'task engagement' as a central issue in instructed second language acquisition because we believe it is a prerequisite for any language processing to take place. To put it broadly, if students are not actively involved in the instructional tasks and do not produce a certain amount of language output, the tasks are unlikely to be effective in developing communicative skills. Therefore, all the cognitive and

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

79

linguistic processes discussed in the L2 task literature depend, to some extent, on this initial condition". (Bygate & Samuda, 2009, p. 281)

In a new pedagogical framework, which puts tasks at the centre of L2 learning, it is an essential consideration that L2 learners are able to actively engage in the tasks presented to them to improve their fluency. Without sufficient engagement, L2 learners cannot get involved in meaningful communicative interaction using their linguistic resources hindering their progress in terms of developing their fluency. Tasks, therefore, must be engaging. In this sense, Willis and Willis (2007) agree that this is particularly important because "without engagement, without genuine interest, there can be no focus on meaning or outcome. Learners have to want to achieve an outcome, they have to want to engage in meaning" (Willis & Willis, 2007, p. 13). Tasks seem to have acquired a new dimension in that they are not only at the centre of L2 instruction, but they have become a crucial learning tool with the potential to persuade L2 learners to engage in the process of communicative interaction in which they negotiate meaning through the use of the linguistic resources that are available to them with the goal of completing the task. In order for tasks to be engaging and persuade the learner to actively engage in them, they have to promote oral interaction. Only if they are engaging will they stand a chance of helping the learner develop their fluency. In this sense, Van den Branden (2008) proposes that these tasks are those that offer "a workable, and fruitful compromise […] with a clearly defined goal […], but which allow the pupils a great deal of intellectual and creative freedom to design their own route towards the solution of the problem" (Van den Branden & Van Gorp, 2000, p.48). In this sense, for tasks to be engaging they have to allow L2 learners to feel that they have the reins with regards to how they go about completing them with their only limitations being their accessibility to linguistic resources for communication.

As we have seen, task engagement is a crucial prerequisite for L2 fluency development. However, this does not exclusively depend on the task itself. A number of studies in SLA have revealed that other factors may have a strong effect on task engagement. These are, for instance, the social relations between peers in the classroom, the roles the learners take, their status in the group, their personalities, the extent to which they are willing to cooperate and support each other or even their interpretation of the task, amongst others (see for instance regarding affect, Schumann, 1997; Swain, 2013; regarding social factors, Philp &

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

80

Duchesne, 2008). These factors are so influential on the learners that it would be fair to say that any teaching practitioner would agree that the same task performed by different groups could indeed lead to different outcomes in terms of task engagement and oral interaction. Since the degree of engagement and effective interaction determines the extent to which learning that takes place, it is crucial that this process is carefully monitored in the classroom as it could otherwise compromise the learning outcome. For this reason, in those instances where this quality interaction does not take place smoothly, it is the teacher's role to intervene to refocus the learners' engagement on the task or support the learners during the interaction (Van den Branden, 2007). In other words, the teacher needs to adopt their role as facilitator and step in to activate task engagement. I will now turn to explore the role played by the teacher with this specific purpose.

In the context of a TBLT classroom, the teacher plays a crucial role in ensuring task engagement. This is primarily because teachers have a sound knowledge of the learners and the ability to activate learner engagement in the task so that this leads to sound learning. Teachers are able to support task engagement by triggering processes such as negotiation of meaning, paraphrasing, lexical retrieval, production of output, focus on form, etc., all core issues in L2 learning. Their role could be summarized in three different stages as set out by Van den Branden (2007): the planning stage, the performance stage and the post-task assessment stage. In the first stage, the teacher has to assess whether the task they are planning has the potential to engage the learners and elicit cognitive and interactional processes that lead to language learning. They need to tailor the learning objective to the learners' needs and assess whether the content will be of interest to the learners and elicit the type of oral interactions that would be most suited to the task, i.e., in pairs or in groups. During the performance phase, the teacher's role consists on supporting task engagement and monitoring the interaction. Finally, in the post-task stage, the teacher evaluates the learners' engagement and assesses whether the task was effective in terms of language learning outcomes and how this effectiveness could have been further promoted (Van den Branden, 2007). Whist both the learner and the tasks are at the centre of the current pedagogical approach in the L2 classroom, the role of the teacher as a facilitator is undoubtedly important from the task planning stage, throughout the learner interaction, and during the informative assessment of the task performance. It can be

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

81

concluded that the teacher's intervention in this whole learning process is crucial to ensure active task engagement that leads to increased fluency development.

However, one major limitation of Van den Branden's vision of the crucial role of the teacher for task engagement, is that it does not account for the fact that it is the learners that ultimately make the decision to engage in the tasks presented to them. Even in cases where tasks are deemed to be of interest and suited to the learning outcome and the intended interaction, they may decide to only partially engage in these or indeed not at all, depending on whether they perceive them to be more or less meaningful (Murphy, 2003). Regardless of the teacher's experience or adherence to best practice, it is not possible for them to always be fully aware of the learners' perspectives in relation to what makes tasks meaningful for them or are most successful in eliciting active engagement on their part. This calls for further task-based studies focusing on learners' feedback of the elements that a task needs to contain to be perceived as an engaging task that would activate interaction for L2 fluency development and would, therefore, merit further research.

For task engagement to be conducive to learning the L2 learner needs to be both actively but also intensively involved in the interaction. In this sense, Van den Branden (2007) points out that the teacher also has to be able to lead the learners towards an *achievement orientation* which drives the learner to perform the task with maximum effort. The term *achievement orientation* was first developed in a social-cognitive framework and it refers to how learners react to tasks based on their reasons for achieving their goal of developing their oral performance, in this case. If the development of oral fluency depends on how intensively the learner engages in the task, the teacher needs to appeal to the learner's sense of purpose in the learning process to achieve learner active involvement in the task. This is a process that starts at the beginning of the instruction, when they bring to life the task that the learners will be involved in. Van den Branden (2007) explains that this is so that the learners mentally construe the task and set goals for themselves which they can then launch into action. These goals should have the effect of motivating them to want to achieve them and drive their desire to engage in meaningful interaction with the goal of developing their fluency. Van den Branden (2007) adds that there many ways in which the teacher can direct the learner towards achievement orientation, for instance, raising the learners' enthusiasm for the task, arousing their curiosity or even negotiating lesson content

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

82

(Van den Branden, 2007). However, despite the teacher's best efforts in this sense, it is possible, as we have seen, that other external factors interfere in this process. For instance, the task might be perceived by the learners as too challenging or not relevant enough for them and they may become disinterested or possibly disengaged.

As I have mentioned above, one of the main roles the teacher has to play is to support the learner with the linguistic and cognitive difficulties they may encounter during the performance of the task. This is because oral interaction in the L2 places complex cognitive and linguistic demands on the learner. Van den Branden (2007) adds that the teacher needs to provide support in a way that the learner is able to continue with the interaction but also, they learn new linguistic resources that will help them overcome the difficulty they have struggled with, restore interaction, and be useful when similar problems arise in the future. For instance, the teacher may decide to include some new but relevant vocabulary during interaction with the intention to draw the learners' attention to it to extend their learning or their strategies to cope with similar linguistic difficulties. Alternatively, the teacher may also use unplanned interventions to support the task in process, for instance, by providing learners with feedback to help the learner maintain tense coherence asking questions that prompt the learner to reflect on the most appropriate tense for the context they are describing in their interaction. In chapter 9, we will see how this can be integrated into a debate to enhance its potential to draw the best fluency and task engagement outcomes from the learners.

At times, the teacher may also prioritise the momentum of the interaction to preserve task engagement over the grammatical accuracy of the learners' speech. As Van den Branden (2007) points out, in the interest of best practice, the teacher will often use their knowledge in a very strategic manner by abstaining from offering linguistic solutions to the difficulties experienced by the learner but guiding them to these through effective questioning (Van den Branden, 2007). This is in line in line with Ellis, Basturkmen, and Loewen (2001a), who examined *learner uptake* (Ellis, 2008), that is, the learner's response to teacher's corrective feedback for error correction, in a communicative ESL classroom and concluded that learner uptake "occurs as a reaction to some preceding move in which another participant (usually the teacher) either explicitly or implicitly provides information about a linguistic feature" (Ellis, Basturkmen, and Loewen (2001a, p.286). This will ultimately help the learner

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

83

build up on their own skills when it comes to resolving linguistic difficulties in interaction and it will equip them with the necessary strategies to manage these issues themselves in future. However, the importance of role of the learner cannot be underestimated as they themselves have to process their own uptake which is "successful […] when students were focused on linguistic problems that they perceived as important and when they had the chance to negotiate extensively around a problem" (Ellis, 2001a, p. 313). The onus is on the learner to engage on active interaction to resolve any linguistic issues they encounter and to place the importance of this learning uptake on their ability to focus on this interaction. In terms of developing automatisation, Tavakoli et al. (2016) add that this is promoted when "opportunities for meaningful interaction and rich exposure to L2 input" are created in the context of "learner awareness and independent practice" (Tavakoli et al., 2016, p. 466). These conditions are under the control of the teacher whose role it is to ensure they are provided in the classroom. The conditions in this study tried to replicate these to allow for meaningful interaction and elicit rich data.

3.2.6 The influence of content on task engagement

Two of the main characteristics that make task engagement more easily achieved and more conducive to negotiation of meaning is *topic familiarity* and *topic importance*. These refer to the degree to which the learner feels comfortable and knowledgeable in speaking about certain issues and how relevant they feel these are. These have direct links to motivational issues dealt with below. Gass and Varonis (1984) investigated the effects of topic familiarity and found that this influenced the amount of negotiation in interaction that took place, with less familiar topics leading to less negotiation. In a study involving both L1 speakers and L2 learners, Zuengler and Bent (1991) found that when the topic was perceived to have little importance, L2 learners were actively involved in the interaction while L1 speakers adopted the role of active listeners. However, when the topic was deemed to be important the roles were reversed. For instance, during interaction on a shared field of expertise, L1 speakers would become more dominant. These studies seem to suggest that topic familiarity and topic importance have indeed a significant influence on the amount and quality of interaction that results from performing a task. Working on the assumption that interaction leads to increased L2 learning, this has an implication for potential improved oral production and

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

84

provides justification for considering *topic familiarity* and *importance* essential elements in task design.

Cognitive theories of motivation acknowledge that learners' intrinsic motivation is of vital importance for successful learning (Ushioda, 2008). A crucial element that forms part of intrinsic motivation, which regulates autonomous behaviour, is *learner interest*, that is, inherent enjoyment or interest in the task (Ryan & Deci, 2000). This is because when learners are interested in a task they become motivationally, emotionally and cognitively active (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011). Dewey (1913) was first in acknowledging the value of *interest* as a key motivating aspect in influencing active engagement in learning tasks but this concept was first incorporated in L2 motivation when it was defined by Crookes and Schmidt (1991) as ""a positive response to stimuli…such that learners' curiosity is aroused and sustained" (Crookes and Schmidt, 1991, p. 481). Besides promoting attention, memory and learning, *interest* also increases learners' motivation and enjoyment of learning (Pressley, El-Dinary, Marks, Brown, & Stein, 1992; Sweet, Guthrie, & Ng, 1997). What distinguishes interest from other variables that influence motivation is that it is always content specific and includes both affective and cognitive components that interact together (Hidi & Renninger, 2006). A distinction is made between *personal interest*, centered on the learner's disposition to engage with a specific content, and *situational interest*, triggered by specific external stimuli. For the current study, the focus is on the latter given that the aim is to identify interest elements in tasks that can be incorporated in task design to promote task engagement.

Given the importance of *learner interest,* it becomes essential to identify *interestingness* characteristics so that teachers and researchers can ensure these are included in the content of tasks during the process of task design. Despite their significance, Poupore (2014) claims that not enough research has been carried out to date on the influence of task characteristics on learner motivation for engagement, in particular, in relation to task topic. This is surprising since teachers often base their task-based instruction on thematic content. Research on *learner interest* has found that this is positively related to increased attention, motivation and learning (Krapp, 2002). Dörnyei and Ushioda (2011) also identified the concept of interest as a powerful motivational conglomerate with important implications for L2 learning as it blends motivational, cognitive and affective dimensions. It all points to

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

85

the fact that learner interest acts as a key variable in relation to both task motivation and promotes active learner engagement on the task. Thus, this issue merits further research to shed light, for instance, on the precise way in which it exerts an influence on learners' L2 production.

I will now turn to explore a significant study by Poupore (2014) who investigated the influence of content on L2 learners' task motivation from an 'Interest Theory' perspective. This study was carried out on 38 adult Korean English learners of intermediate proficiency during a conversation course as part of a TESOL program. A mixed method approach was used which included a motivation questionnaire, a topic preference questionnaire and interviews. The results showed that content associated with immediate personal life themes such as personal growth, human relationships and life challenges were perceived as more intrinsically interesting than those related to global issues and current affairs. Consequently, it follows that incorporating life themes into task design may prove significant for improved motivational engagement during task-based interaction. The significance of this study is that it clearly identifies specific interestingness characteristics which have clear implications for both L2 task design and pedagogy. In the current study, the topic chosen for the debate was current affairs. However, this was made more relevant to the participants as the news selected for the stimulus sheet were those which would have an impact on the lives of young people. This was a deliberate decision in the design of the study in the interest of promoting oral interaction.

Poupore (2014) points out that communicative tasks are widely used in the current TBLT pedagogical approach. As cognition becomes increasingly recognised as associated to affect (Dörnyei, 2009b), learner motivation takes on a higher level of importance. As Dai and Sternberg claimed, "intellectual functioning and development never occur as solely cognitive events but involve motivation and emotion" (Dai & Sternberg, 2004, p. 24). A highly engaged learner is more likely to be cognitively active on both a receptive and productive level, which may facilitate L2 learning. This seems to point to the assumption that there is an undeniable link between motivation and increased cognition which, in turn, may lead to enhanced L2 learning. The investigation into motivational properties contained in tasks has acquired increased interest in SLA and it has a central role in the current study in which I

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

86

will explore whether a specific formula for increased learner engagement and motivation could be integrated in task design which could positively influence fluency outcomes.

Most of the research on identifying conditions that elicit situational interest, or what Hidi and Baird (1986) refer to as *interestingness*, has focused on text characteristics. Schank (1979), identified three informational conditions that generate interest: abnormality or non-normative qualities (unusual things that deviate from our expectations); relevant but missing information; and absolute interests (e.g., romance, sex, danger, power, death). In addition to life themes and novelty, Anderson et al. (1987), identified the following two interestingness characteristics: character identification (material involving characters with whom one can readily identify) and material involving intense action or feelings. From an L2 education perspective, Tomlinson, a materials development specialist, has also provided some interesting insights into the issue of content and interestingness. He has also argued that there are indeed absolute interests: "These include birth, growing up, going to school, making friends, falling in love, starting a career, getting married and death". (Tomlinson, 2006). These interests are all related to the stages any individual goes through in life and this makes them relevant to the L2 learner who feels confident they are able to draw on their own experience and speak about them without the need for any specific acquired knowledge. Having said this, in order to speak about these topics that are so close to their own personal experience, L2 learners may need to ensure that they feel they are in a trusting and safe environment in the classroom before they are able to engage in this type of tasks and speak about any personal experiences in any detail.

Similarly, Poupore (2014) agrees that the most common topics that generate learner interest have humanistic and utilitarian value and seem to be related to personal growth. With regards to topic importance, this seems to be attributed to topics which are personally relevant and relating to meaningful and immediate life issues and themes such as love, relationship conflicts, challenges and personal growth. Additionally, life difficulties and dilemmas such as drug use, abusive relationships and suicide were also shown to be interesting (Poupore, 2014). This seems to support Tomlinson's (1998) argument which states that controversial topics related to life themes will be more intrinsically motivating than other more neutral topics. A possible explanation as to why these are all perceived to be interesting by the leaners is that they may trigger meaningful reflection and comparison

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

87

with their own personal life experiences. In contrast, topics related to current affairs and global issues are generally perceived as less interesting by the learners. This could be due to the assumption that the learner may lack sufficient background knowledge to engage in the task or that these topics are deemed to be too serious or complex to trigger sufficient interest and task engagement. The main limitation of this argument is, however, that it cannot be applied universally to all learners as indeed many would find these topics cognitively stimulating and, therefore, worth engaging in interaction.

The most prominent finding in relation to interestingness in Poupore's (2014) study was the emergence of life themes as intrinsically motivating topics. This is linked to the issue of topic familiarity dealt with above. However, despite this, as Tomlinson points out (1998), some of these themes often fail to appear in L2 study programs and deserve greater consideration for inclusion in task design. In addition to this, as learners can easily relate to these and may have prior experience, a lack of background knowledge does not emerge as a problematic issue. This is an important consideration in L2 as a lack of background knowledge can negatively influence task engagement and may hinder L2 production. From a pedagogical perspective, life themes can provide an initial motivational basis for task design. As a practical example, Poupore (2014) suggests adopting a response-centred approach to the use of story-based tasks in which learners respond to thematic content focusing on their personal experience as a sound pedagogical framework. This could indeed be one of the myriad practical applications of life theme topics in L2 instruction that would lead to increased L2 learning. In this study, the debate was based on global news that could affect young people with the intention of affording participants the opportunity to openly discuss these, adding their own related experiences, if they so wished, so that the debate was regarded as intrinsically motivating and, therefore, worth investing themselves in this task.

In sum, there seems to be an increasing acknowledgment in SLA that learner interest is crucial for task engagement and, ultimately, enhanced L2 learning. Indeed, as Poupore's (2014) study shows, the degree to which learners engage in different tasks is highly dependent on how they are able to relate to topics presented within the tasks, with life themes, as we have seen, being the most stimulating and engaging. It follows that task design should always take into account topic familiarity and relevance as the most

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

88

motivational for L2 learning if we are to successfully engage them in their own learning. Thus, further task-based research on interestingness seems a most worthwhile endeavour.

3.3 Fluency teaching framework 'ACCESS'

As we have seen, in the 1980s, the development of fluency in the classroom within the context of TBTL was given increased importance. In 1988, Gatbonton and Segalowitz proposed a framework for teaching fluency through tasks which they called "ACCESS" (Automatisation in Communicative Contexts of Essential Speech Segments) (Gatbonton & Segalowitz 2005, p. 328). *Essential Speech Segments* refer to the set of utterances that students learn and represent tangible learning content they acquire by means of these tasks. The main tenet of this framework was that, as explained in chapter 2, in order to develop fluency, learners had to work with tasks that were "genuinely communicative, inherently repetitive and functionally formulaic" (Gatbonton & Segalowitz, 2005, p. 331). This framework was significant since it was the first and novel attempt at proposing tasks with a specific structure incorporating tangible learning content with the aim of developing fluency.

This new methodology was illustrated with a learning task called Family Relationship (FAMILY), aimed at learners of any level. For this task, the class is divided into two groups of 8 to 10 students and they have to decide how they are related and draw a family tree that reflects their family relationships. Then, they have to explain their family's structure and present the other group's family tree to the whole class. With a clear aim that learners are able to focus on, this task illustrates the focus on genuine communication and the repetition of terminology and formulaic resources to accomplish the task. ACCESS lessons are conceived in three phases: Creative Automatisation, Language Consolidation and Free Communication (Gatbonton & Segalowitz, 2005) which I explore next.

The Creative Automatisation Phase is designed to be communicative and capable of promoting automatic fluency (Gatbonton & Segalowitz, 2005). Althogh it bears the same name as the construct that underpins this study, it must not be confused with it. In this instance, it is the first phase of ACCESS and its main focus is to equip learners with the necessary linguistic resources to be able to achieve automaticity in their speech. A different

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

89

name for this phase to distinguish it from the construct would have been helpful, however, the intention of the researchers was for this phase to be automacity-enabling to the learners within the context of this framework. It consists of a Pre-task and a Main Task. The Pretask has a diagnostic goal, to ensure the learners have the start-up utterances necessary and the pedagogic support to assist them in acquiring them, if needed. The Main Task contains activities that are genuinely communicative, inherently repetitive and functionally formulaic. According to Gatbonton and Segalowitz (2005), a task is genuinely communicative when it implies that the learners need the information they seek for an overall goal. In FAMILY, for instance, the role-Play is genuinely communicative as the learners have to decide the relationships they have amongst themselves and all the information given is needed to constitute a pretend family. The Main Task has to be inherently repetitive, that is, repetition is the means by which the activity goal is attained (Gatbonton & Segalowitz, 2005). In FAMILY, the learners complete their family tree after all roles have been described using repeated essential utterances many times. The Main Task also has to be functionally formulaic, that is, the activities must lead to the use of utterances with clear pragmatic functions (useful in real world communication) and have high re-use potential. For instance, in FAMILY, the function-carrying utterances elicited regarding family roles are accompanied by associated utterances related to relationships and marital status, for instance. Finally, in the final Free Communication Phase, *essential speech segments* (Gatbonton & Segalowitz, 2005)*,* that is, essential utterances that may be repeated or new language chunks, are used in a more open context about issues related to the given theme. Learners are encouraged to talk about the topic broadly and to express ideas that are not so predictable using the essential speech segments of the earlier communication tasks. In this way, utterances that have been automatized can be reused with new communicative purposes. This is achieved in FAMILY, for instance, by asking the learners to discuss and compare the families they have created in an open discussion that allows the learners to reuse speech segment used before at the beginning of the task.

The main benefit of using ACCESS (Gatbonton & Segalowitz, 2005) is that it is intended to promote learning and practice through communicative activities within a free communication tasks framework which may be adapted to many communication activities, in line with previous definitions of task, and can be applied widely to different groups of learners. Students learn the form-meaning correspondence for each utterance and discover how it is

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

90

used in relation to other utterances, how its form changes and what alternative utterances can be used. The end result is that students learn a range of useful, reusable utterances that they can produce with increased fluency and accuracy (Gatbonton & Segalowitz, 2005). As Gatbonton and Segalowitz (2005) point out, teaching in ACCESS involves assigning students to communicative tasks, observing them as they carry them out and checking that they have the linguistic resources to complete them. Direct feedback on targeted utterances during pair work, as we have seen when referring to the role of the teacher, most useful when supporting learner interaction, can be used to enhance language development. Gatbonton and Segalowitz (2005) claim that learning can be assured so long as students are encouraged to use full utterances so that they improve their control of the language. This also encourages them to formulate the structure needed for delivering the words within the utterances. This is in line with Swain's (1993, 2000) 'Output Hypothesis', which suggests that learners' need to formulate well-structured utterances in genuine conversation leads them to improve their mastery of the underlying system: "through producing language, either spoken or written, language acquisition/learning may occur" (Swain 1993, p. 159). This is because, as they produce output, learners are more likely to notice gaps in their knowledge and try to fill that gap, which results in increased learning (Swain 1993). It can be argued, however, that learning may not take place every time such a gap in knowledge is detected given that it may be beyond the learner's capabilities to fill in this gap appropriately with linguistic resources that could not be retrieved for the first time in speech. On the other hand, being able to detect this gap may trigger cognitive processes which activate the retrieval of adequate linguistic resources or the necessary grammatical encoding to formulate the message. Also, feedback received during the interaction may facilitate the process of filling in these gaps. This self-monitoring process was identified by Levelt in his model of the native speaker (Levelt, 1989, 1999a) and was later adapted to L2 speech and widely accepted in SLA, as explained in chapter 2.

Above all, ACCESS is aimed at placing learners at the centre of their efforts to develop fluency. This is because it is a framework that responds to the learners' linguistic needs and it helps them access the utterances they need to use in speech to communicate with others. The main goal in using this framework is to develop fluency is by promoting automaticity. Tomasello and Herron (1989) explain that this is achieved through sustained interaction between learners who have to manipulate utterances and be simultaneously exposed to

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

91

both correct and incorrect versions of the essential speech segments. This exposure allows them to notice discrepancies and inherent repetition leads them to hear and use the same essential speech segments repeatedly. Much recent research has associated task repetition with fluency development (i.e., de Jong & Perfetti, 2011). Repetition promotes automatisation by leading to cognitively more efficient ways of processing information (Schneider & Chein, 2003), which leads to faster, more accurate, and more cognitively efficient production of utterances. Repetition also ensures that students who produce an utterance incorrectly have further chances to attempt correct versions. Repetition can thus become both a source and a vehicle for learning (N. Ellis, 2002). This type of repetition is understood as exposure to repeated linguistic resources and it is different to the repetition favoured in traditional L2 pedagogical methodology which aimed at learning how the L2 worked by involving learners in repetitive grammar drills and patterns, as explained in chapter 1.

Segalowitz (2010) explains that there are two types of repetition that are needed for the learner to be able to develop fluency: "frequent exposure to elements in the target language (*input repetition*) and massive production practice (*output repetition*) are critical for attaining proficiency and fluency" (Segalowitz, 2010, p. 75, *my emphasis*). He adds that this is possible because these types of repetition help critical cognitive processing skills become automatic. When the learner is exposed to repeated L2 linguistic chunks and is given the opportunity to use them to produce their own speech repeatedly, this enhances cognitive fluency which, in turn, eases the learner's speech process and leads to higher levels of utterance fluency. For this reason, Gatbonton and Segalowitz (2005) point out that learning activities in the classroom should not only recreate the mental processing involved in communication in the real world, but also provide learners with opportunities for systematic repetition in order to activate the cognitive processes required. It seems that, in terms of designing fluency-enhancing tasks that are most effective, a balance needs to be struck between retaining the free-production element of tasks, allowing the learner to speak creatively, and including an in-built repetition component of key language resources together with a communicative goal to be reached by the end of the task. This process becomes even more complex if we take into account that significant interestingness factors would also need to be integrated to promote task engagement, as we have seen. The result is that task design for fluency development inevitably needs to become a process that aims

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

92

at encompassing a wide range of elements, that is, input and output repetition, free-production, communication-oriented and topic-engaging all of which would lead to the enhancement of cognitive fluency, automaticity and, ultimately, utterance fluency. At the end of this study, when discussing the pedagogical implications, I will explore in detail how this can be achieved.

3.4 Major theories in Motivation research

In the last five decades, learner motivation has been increasingly acknowledged to the extent that it has become a popular object of enquiry in SLA. Together with task engagement, it is a determining factor in L2 learning. As L2 Motivation research has gained acceptance and a more focal point in SLA, it has evolved as a multifaceted field as different disciplines have exerted their influence, for instance, by encompassing the social, psychological, behavioural and cultural complexities that characterise affective aspects in L2 learning (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011). It seems a fair assumption that the construct of *motivation* has earned an important place in SLA as it has become increasingly acknowledged that motivation plays a determining role in L2 learning. I will now turn to explore in some detail the main theories that have attempted to explain this construct over the years.

The construct of *motivation* originated in the late 50s with the work of social psychologists, Lambert and Gardner, working in the bilingual social context of Canada, who considered motivation as the main force for successful intercultural communication and affiliation. They also highlighted motivation as one of the main 'affective' factors that determines variability for successful L2 learning (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011). It does not seem surprising that their belief in the causal role of motivation in L2 achievement would shape L2 motivation research for the next two decades. As we will see, the original role of motivation in the affiliation of L2 learners to linguistic communities would evolve to its current pedagogical application to the learning of L2 in a task-based instructional context in recent years.

The origin of this construct is deeply rooted on Gardner's view of 'motivation' which he defines as a mental 'energy-centre' that encompasses effort, want/will (cognition) and task-enjoyment (affect) (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011). His motivation theory (Gardner, 1985) is

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

93

based on the relationship between motivation and orientation, with orientations taking the role of arousing motivation towards a set of goals. Two of these orientations, integrative and instrumental, have become the most widely known of Gardner's concepts. The first is defined as 'willingness to be like valued members of the language community' (Gardner & Lambert, 1959, p. 271) and the latter is concerned with the potential pragmatic gains of L2 proficiency such as pursuing a higher employment status. This concept gained such popularity that the most researched aspect of Gardner's theory was the integrative motive defined as 'motivation to learn a second language because of positive feelings towards the community that speaks the language' (Gardner, 1985, p. 82-3).

Since then, many studies have shown the association of L2 motivation with a positive outlook towards the L2 community. However, this has also been the centre of critical debate around its applicability to all languages, in particular, to the learning of English in a globalised world by L2 learners who may have little or no knowledge of the L2 community and whose motivation for learning English may be simply of an instrumental nature as they pursue a more promising professional future.

In this sense, it would not seem adequate to assume that L2 learning motivation is always associated with a positive view of the L2 community and more certain that motivation for learning any language varies and may indeed be influenced by other factors. This leads to the assumption that there does not seem to be a single influential factor that may exert its impact on motivation, but a combination of elements at different levels. This makes a strong case for the need to approach this construct from a holistic perspective in relation to the L2, the learner's L2 future guide and the impact that the learning environment may have on their motivation. The current study will explore this construct on these three levels.

After a period of research where motivation for L2 learning seems to be firmly rooted on the learner's need to belong to the target community and is firmly linked to the concept of identity, following the Gardnerian integrative theory, this was followed by the need to bring motivation research in line with a cognitive revolution in motivational psychology and focus on a more situated analysis of motivation in classroom settings (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011). The significance of this is that the understanding of this construct on the basis of the need

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

94

for affiliation and identity by the L2 learner began to be explored in the context of education as is the case in the current study.

Another influential model in this new shift in motivation research is that of Deci and Ryan's (1985). Their theory of *intrinsic/extrinsic motivation* and *self-determination* in educational psychology resulted in the long-recognised importance of intrinsic motivation in the language classroom. *Intrinsic motivation* refers to "the inherent tendency to seek out novelty and challenges, to extend and exercise one's capacities, to explore, and to learn", whereas extrinsic motivation refers to "the performance of an activity in order to attain some separable outcome (Ryan & Deci, 2000, p. 70-71). The difference between these two terms lies in that intrinsic motivation involves carrying out an activity for the "inherent satisfaction of the activity itself" (Ryan & Deci, 2000, p. 71). The development of Deci and Ryan's (1985) 'self-determination theory' (SDT) in L2 based on these two types of motivation is mainly due to the work of Noels and her colleagues (2000) who set out to develop a new L2 specific instrument for assessing L2 learners' orientations from a self-determination perspective, measuring the intrinsic and extrinsic orientations in L2 learning. The main achievement of their work seems to be that they highlighted the importance of the learning setting, which may exert much influence on the learners' intrinsic or extrinsic motivation. Despite the validity of this influential theory, its main drawback is that it seems to overlook other factors that have an influence on motivation and are learner-related, for instance, the learners' own perspective on the learning, that is, how they approach their own learning and the personal investment they are willing to make in their learning. In this study, the learners' perspectives in relation to how to best develop their fluency and the aspects that motivate them most to invest themselves in a task were collected to provide a fuller picture of how fluency can be best developed in the classroom.

This changing period in motivational research also coincided with growing task-based research, as we have seen, based on authentic learner-centric learning, which enabled the analysis of the language learning processes and the cognitive processing mechanisms involved. During this time, Julkunen (2001) developed a task motivation model that captured a situation-specific motivation dichotomy based on the *trait* (general motivation) and *state motivation* (situation-specific motivation), which tried to capture situation specific motivation and relate it to a general motivational orientation. Despite being successful at focusing on

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

95

task motivation little attention was paid to other influential factors. Indeed, this model was critiqued by Dörnyei (2002) who believes a learner's task motivation is likely to be the combined dynamic outcome of a complex range of contextual influences, learner-internal factors and the intrinsic properties of the task and, crucially, both likely to vary in the task engagement process and, indeed, during the learning process itself. Given that Julkunen's model does not take into account the changing nature of all these complex aspects, his model of motivation may be perceived as rather static and, therefore, not adequate to encompass the changing nature of this construct over time. This realisation has heralded the beginning of a concern with the dynamic nature of motivation and its changing dimension and a new shift in motivation research based on a process-oriented theoretical approach. Although the researcher acknowledges the influence that all of these contextual aspects may exert on the learner's motivation for task engagement and their learning process, they are beyond the scope of the current study.

L2 motivation research has only recently began to address this temporal aspect of motivation due to the predominance of the traditional quantitative research paradigm in SLA which was mainly been concerned with the measures and characteristics of the Gardnerian social psychological tradition and the cognitive approaches to motivation (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011). The newly emergent focus on the temporal dimension of motivation has called for more qualitative research approaches which are more sensitive to exploring the dynamic nature of motivational processes (Ushioda, 1994). Ushioda's conception of L2 motivation from a temporal perspective 'integrates the phenomenon of evolution over time, which seems central to the learners' experience of and thus conception of language learning motivation' (1998, pp. 82-3). However, and in spite of the clear value of this new perspective in motivational research, the current study is specifically concerned with the motivational force that learners draw from specific tasks they engage in in the classroom. The changing nature of learner's motivation over time is, therefore, beyond the scope of this study.

Contemporary approaches in motivation research aim to integrate the notions of self and context in a dynamic and holistic way and explore how motivation develops and emerges through the interactions between the self and the learning context. Norton (2000), for instance, questions the notion of an 'ahistorical' language learner characterised as instrumentally or integratively motivated and a clear identity since motivation and identity

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

96

are socially constructed and subject to constant change. She believes that there is not a comprehensive theory of identity that integrates the language learner and the learning context. Her novel concept of identity refers to the learner and their relationship to the world both in the present and in the future. Norton also introduces the motivational concept of *investment* to capture the relationship of learner to the target language and their desire to learn it (Norton, 2000). This is a construct adopted in this study as it will be exploring how tasks may be designed to activate the learners' motivational drive to best promote their task investment to optimise their fluency. Norton's approach to motivation seems to be in line with current L2 motivation research that suggests language learning should be viewed as a sociocultural and sociohistorically situated process, rather than the traditional cognitive psycholinguistic one. This heralds a new shift towards a dynamic systems perspective that takes into account evolving interactions between individual and contextual processes. It is the combined effect of these interactions that ultimately seems to shape the motivational forces that drive learners to invest themselves in the process of learning a L2. Analysing these, beyond the scope of the present study, is the purpose of current motivational research in SLA and, seemingly, a step in the right direction if we are to pursue a better understanding of the motivational construct in L2 learning.

A further final approach in motivation research, the 'dynamic systems' theory (Dörnyei, 2009b), has been developed to describe development in systems that are multicomponential and whose interplay results in changes in the overall system. Traditionally, motivation was conceived within the framework of *individual differences* (IDs), that is, traitlike attributes that are unique to every individual. However, Dörnyei (2009b) proposes that these attributes should not be considered robust, but subject to contextual and temporal variations. Given this variability, he refers to motivational processes such as motivation, cognition and affect which he considers as principles of learner-based characteristics in line with a dynamic systems approach, and which have complex interactions with each other. He explains that a more effective way to view motivation would be to take a systemic approach and identify these motivation conglomerates such as interest, motivational flow, motivational task processing and future self-guides (Dörnyei, 2009b). For reasons of scope, this current study will focus on exploring motivational task design that is in line with the learners' future self-guides at a specific time in their learning process.

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

97

3.5 Defining motivation in L2 Spanish

Every year, thousands of students in the UK embark on the study of Higher Education Spanish courses as part of their degree studies. From the beginning, they set themselves the goal of continuing with their Spanish studies they started prior to university driven by a desire to develop the necessary oral skills to be able to speak fluently. Some take on this challenge having no prior knowledge of Spanish when they begin their studies. However, they all seem to have the common goal of being able to hold fluent conversations with Spanish native speakers in a personal and professional context. Their motivation for committing to the often arduous process of language learning seems to be focused on acquiring a high level of fluency which they would be able to use in their future professional careers. This commitment to study Spanish to achieve a high degree of fluency is evidenced by the hundreds of students who enrol on degree courses which include a period of time spent studying abroad, for instance at a Spanish or Latin American university, as part of their degree.

Indeed, Spanish has become a L2 of choice by an increasing number of university students in the UK. According to a recent poll of prospective language students in the UK commissioned by the British Council in December 2017, 21% of the respondents said that they wished to make a start learning Spanish in 2018 and be able to speak it fluently (Kennedy, 2018). Indeed, it seems that if the UK is to remain globally competitive in the current and future economic climate, it has never been more important for people of all ages to learn a L2, with Spanish being the first choice for adult learners (Kennedy, 2018). As Vicky Gough, Schools Adviser at the British Council, also points out: "As the UK comes to reposition itself on the world stage, language skills matter now more than ever. […] The reality is that speaking another language not only boosts job prospects but also enables you to connect with another culture" (Kershaw, 2017). It seems that an increasing number of undergraduate students are realising that speaking Spanish fluently will go a long way towards enhancing their chances of accessing high profile international jobs in an extremely competitive and global jobs market.

As we have seen, learning and, in particular, acquiring fluency in a second language is an often arduous process which makes a great demand on the learner in terms of time

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

98

dedicated to learning and experiencing both success and failure when attempting to communicate successfully in this L2. In order to make progress in developing their fluency in the classroom, it is essential, as we have seen, that they actively engage in the tasks' designed with this purpose. However, this is not sufficient to maintain their learning progress, as learners will often experience learning challenges in their L2 classroom which can only be overcome provided they have the motivation to remain engaged in their learning.

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, learner motivation has been increasingly acknowledged in the last five decades to the extent that it has become a popular object of enquiry in SLA. During this time, the definition of the construct of *motivation* has undergone changes in Motivation research as researchers have tried to explain what drives human behaviour in L2 learning. One of the most influential researchers in this field, Dörnyei, defines this construct highlighting the role it plays in L2 learning success as it "provides the primary impetus to initiate L2 learning and later the driving force to sustain the long and often tedious learning process" (Dörnyei, 2005, p. 66). In his view, motivation acts as the engine that fuels the learner's drive to want to start learning a new language and is used to overcome the multiple challenges the learner encounters in the, often life-long, learning process. Given that this learning process is constantly changing as the L2 is gradually acquired and mastered to a varying degree, Dörnyei and Otto point out that motivation is a "dynamically changing cumulative arousal" (Dörnyei & Ottó, 1998, p. 65) that the learner is aware of, that affects their learning behaviour and fluctuates during the process of L2 learning. However, regardless of the dynamic nature of this construct, anyone who has ever been involved in learning a new language would agree that motivation significantly impacts the L2 learning process and it is essential to accomplish success. Therein lies its significance in SLA and the reason why it is included in the current study.

An important influence on L2 learners' motivation is how they see themselves as users of the L2 in the future. With this aim, they pursue different future self-guides. In order to explain how future self-guides exert their motivational impact, Higgins (1987, 1996) presented his 'self-discrepancy' theory. This was based on the tenet that people are motivated to reach a condition where their self-concept matches their personally relevant self-guides, thus reducing the discrepancy between one's self and the projected ideal/ought selves. Drawing

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

99

on this theory, Dörnyei explains that future self-guides provide impetus for action as the discrepancy between these and the actual self triggers self-regulatory strategies aimed at reducing this discrepancy (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011). He realised that *ideal* (shaped by an ideal image of the future self) and *ought to* (shaped by external expectations) guides are both related to the attainment of a desired end-state but are motivationally different (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011). He saw a clear distinction between ideal guides as having a promotion focus concerned with self-accomplishment and ought to self-guides a prevention focus associated with failing to live up to responsibilities (Higgins, 1998). Drawing on Higgins' model and establishing this distinction, Dörnyei goes a step forward in showing his understanding of the impact that these motivational forces exert in learners and adopts this concept to formulate his own motivational model.

In 2005 Dörnyei presents a new perspective on L2 motivation based on the 'L2 Motivational Self System', which he acknowledges did not provide a comprehensive answer to motivation in SLA, given its dynamic and changing nature, but attempts to explain what drives individuals in their pursuit of L2 learning. The central tenet of his theory is that 'motivation' is an essential factor for L2 learning to the extent that the L2 learner's ultimate success will always depend on the level of motivation they have and that "without sufficient motivation, even individuals with the most remarkable abilities cannot accomplish long-term goals, and neither are appropriate curricula and good teaching enough on their own to ensure student achievement" (Dörnyei, 1998, p. 117). There is no doubt that Dörnyei places great importance on the L2 learner's motivation as one of the determining factors for the learner's general disposition to L2 learning which greatly accounts for their potential future success in learning the L2.

According to Dörnyei's L2 Motivational Self System, the learner's motivation to learn the L2 is driven by self-guides which help the learner visualize how they see themselves as future L2 users. Since the current study focuses on how tasks may be designed to activate learners' engagement, the construct of *motivation* adopted in this study will be understood as the L2 learners' inherent state affecting their capacity to engage in tasks designed to help them achieve that intended or 'envisioned' (Dörnyei, 2005) level of fluency required. This concept of 'envisioned self' is an emergent aspect of motivation but fits well with the communicative competence framework adopted in this study, which will explore how L2

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

100

learners' motivation to reach their fluency developing goal activates their intent for task engagement.

As we have seen, Dörnyei adopts a concept of 'motivation' which enables the learner to 'see' themselves as a potentially competent L2 user, to become excited about the value of learning an L2 and take action to learn it (Dörnyei, 2005). He argues (Dörnyei, 2005) that most learners are willing to invest effort in learning when they have a clear vision of where the process can take them and that, when this goal remains clear, there would be no learners who would give up their attempts to learn the L2. However, despite the weight of his model, Dörnyei's argument has main drawbacks. Whilst it would seem reasonable to agree that motivation is a crucial aspect to ensure a sustained learning effort, its impact on the learner may not override that of other external factors that may present themselves in the course of the learning process and that may have a detrimental effect on its outcome. These may act as competing demands on the learner, for instance, other pressing commitments, time constraints, increased lack of energy, the effects of routine in learning, etc. These are all factors that need to be considered and that may at times inevitably hinder or even impede the learning process regardless of the strength of the motivational forces experienced by the learner to learn the L2 throughout the whole process.

3.5.1 The notion of 'vision' and 'envisioned self'

Dörnyei motivational model does not emerge in isolation but as a natural progression from Gardner's theory (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011) as it addresses many of the theoretical concerns raised regarding integrativeness/integrative motivation in varied learning environments. At this time in motivational research, there is a gradual merge of self and motivation theories in mainstream psychology which led to the exploration of how the self regulates behaviour by setting goals and expectations centred around the concept of 'possible selves'. These are understood as visions of the self in a future state and represent the individuals' ideas of what they would like to become and what they are afraid of becoming (Markus & Nurius, 1986). This system seems to conceptualise the individuals' unrealised potential by drawing on their hopes and wishes. In this way, possible selves act as 'future self-guides' and this explains how individuals move from the present toward the future, from L2 learners to L2 users. In this new stage of motivation research, social

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

101

psychology seems to have fused with individuals' expectations for their future highlighting the 'remarkable power of imagination in human life' (Markus, 2006, p.11). This motivational drive experienced by learners in their pursuit to approximate their future selves is the core theoretical framework which underpins the current study. In particular, it focuses on how this drive is activated through task design to promote task engagement that leads to fluency development.

Dörnyei's L2 Motivational Self System (2005), which was dealt with earlier in this chapter, is fundamentally based on his notion of 'vision' and 'envisioned self'. Dörnyei and Kubanyiova (2014) explored the nature of 'vision' and its role in human behaviour. They defined this concept as 'personal vision' which concerns 'giving meaning to one's life, helping to make shifts in professional careers and coaching yourself in realising a personal dream' (van der Helm, 2009). This captures a core feature of Dörnyei's L2 motivation theory which is the learner's desire to approximate their preferred future state, that is, the ideal self they have envisaged for themselves. This desire represents a pull towards an imagined future state, and it relates to human motivation because the envisioned target mobilises the current self to change in order to approximate the future. This could be interpreted as the learner wishing to close the gap they perceive exists between their current L2 self as a learner and their ideal future L2 self as a L2 user. It is their desire to close this gap that prompts action on their part to accomplish this approximation. In terms of the current study, this is interpreted as the learner's motivation to close this gap to approximate their future guide as a L2 user drives their desire to learn and activates their task engagement, which is helped by a purposeful and engaging task design.

Dörnyei and Kubanyiova (2014) understand the concept of 'vision' as a 'personalised goal' (Markus & Ruvolo, 1989) to which the learner has added the imagined reality of the actual goal experience. For them, vision has significant motivational capacity, and this is the reason they suggest it has been utilised in sports psychology, for instance, where generating vision in an athlete could lead to a winning performance (Dörnyei & Kubanyiova, 2014). Similarly, when a learner becomes excited about their projected vision in the future they are motivated to put in the effort required in the learning process. However, it could be argued that the learners acquiring a visionary future self-image as a successful learner does not guarantee that they will become active and effective learners in the classroom. This is

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

102

because, although visionary future self-guides have the capacity to motivate action, this does not always happen automatically as it depends on numerous conditions. The need for these conditions to be optimal for visionary guides to motivate action is the main drawback of Dörnyei's motivational model as vision in itself is not sufficient to influence motivation. The conditions that are also essential for this to happen are as follows (Dörnyei & Kubanyiova, 2014): the learner does have a desired future self-image; the future self is sufficiently different from the current self to generate motivation; their self-image is elaborate and vivid; it is perceived as plausible; it is not perceived as comfortably certain to reach; it is in harmony with the rest of the learner's self-concept and other social expectations; it comes with effective procedural strategies that lead towards the goal; it is regularly activated in the learner's working self-concept; and, finally, it is counteracted by a feared possible self that reminds the learner of the potential negative consequences of failing to achieve the desired goal (Dörnyei & Kubanyiova, 2014). The need for these conditions to be present seems to weaken the powerful potential impact of this visionary future self-image model and reduce it to an approach to promote learner motivation, all be it highly dependent on the above-mentioned conditions for it to lead to successful L2 learning.

Undoubtedly, Dörnyei and Kubanyiova (2014)) place a crucial role on motivation on L2 learning as they believe that the L2 learner's ultimate success will always depend on the level of motivation they have, activated by a powerful future self-guide, and having met the above-mentioned conditions. Therefore, it can be concluded that a strong 'envisioned self' is essential for learners to invest in their learning that may ultimately lead to their success in developing their fluency in the L2. The impact of this notion has made motivation the target of intensive research in SLA over the last five decades and its importance is reflected throughout this study.

3.5.2 The L2 Motivational Self System

I now turn to explore the L2 Motivational Self System more in depth which, as we saw earlier in this chapter, was presented by Dörnyei in 2005 with the aim of synthesising research on the main dimensions of L2 learning motivation and achieve a better understanding of L2 motivation. It represents a novel approach to motivation research as it is based on psychological theories of the self with a tendency to move towards a more dynamic

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

103

approach, whilst being rooted on previous motivational research. Dörnyei's motivational model (Dörnyei, 2005) comprises three constituents, that is, the Ideal L2 self, which refers to the learner we would like to become; the Ought-to self, the learner that one ought to become based on social pressures and expectations; and the L2 learning experience, which concerns the learning environment such as the positive impact of success in L2 learning. With this model, Dörnyei successfully encompasses the main motivational dimensions that may exert an influence in L2 learners and the way they behave throughout the L2 learning process.

This system points to the three primary sources of motivation that a learner may experience in the process of learning an L2: the learner's internal desire to become an effective L2 user; the social pressures of the learner's environment to learn the L2; and the actual experience of being engaged in the learning process. Dörnyei (2005) points out that the first two involve future self-states that the learner would experience if they became real and the third one focuses on the experience of the actual self. This system seems to provide a plausible explanation of the type of motivational forces learners are influenced by, which trigger a forward pull in the learners' motivational drive towards achieving their future-guides.

As we have seen, Dörnyei's model was based on previous psychological research, in particular, on 'possible selves' and future self-guides'. The 'possible self' concept concerns how learners conceptualize their unrealized potential, and it draws on their hopes and wishes for the future. It acts as a 'self-guide' and this can explain how the L2 learner is moved from the present to the future because it impacts their purposive behaviour. These possible selves correlate to what learners experience when they are engaged in goal-directed behaviour (Dörnyei, 2005). It may therefore be concluded that this ideal self-guide has a guiding function towards self-set standards. As it triggers a motivational force that comes from within the L2 learner, it is clear to see how this has the potential to exert a remarkable influence on the learner in their pursuit to learn the L2.

Dörnyei conceived his L2 Motivation Self System when evaluating the results of his large-scale motivation survey in Hungary that involved more than 13,000 students over 12 years (Dörnyei, 2006) and focused on attitudes towards five L2 languages. With the aim of determining the learners' motivational disposition, Dörnyei realised this was connected with

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

104

their Ideal L2 self. This led to the link between L2 motivation and future self-guides and the proposal of his model which has become a very influential and has received much attention in SLA in recent years.

In addition to the future self-guides, Dörnyei completes his model with the motivational dimension offered by the classroom learning context experience by the L2 learner. Indeed, this acknowledgement that the learning context can also have a significant motivational impact on the learner seems to be one of the main achievements of Dörnyei's model. He believes that learners can draw on their motivation to learn an L2 from their successful engagement with the language learning process. Indeed, most teaching practitioners would be in agreement with this argument. After decades of motivation research focusing on the Gardnerian integrative and instrumental theories, it appears that Dörnyei has finally put the L2 learner and all possible motivational influences on their L2 learning at the centre of investigations. In line with this new approach, this study will explore how activating the learner's envisioned self through tasks designed with this purpose can lead to the promotion of task investment and ultimately increased fluency outcomes.

3.5.3 Three-level framework conceptualization of L2 motivation on an L2, learner and learning situation level

A new social psychological approach to motivation research led to the development of Dörnyei's (1994a) three-level framework of L2 motivation which conceptualized motivation at a language, learner and learning situation level, which will be explored in more detail below. The intention for this new framework was to offer a number of motivational components categorised in main clusters which seem to have a significant effect on motivation, with each able to influence others independently. This new framework seemed to address the need to conceptualize the construct of motivation from an all-encompassing perspective, taking into account all elements that may have an impact on it, in response to the need for a multidimensional approach to this construct.

As we have seen, Dörnyei's L2 Motivational Self System has three constituents, that is, the Ideal L2 self; the Ought-to self; and the L2 learning experience. This system points to three primary sources of motivation that may exert an impact on the learner: the learner's internal desire to become an effective L2 user; the social pressures of the learner's environment to

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

105

learn the L2; and the actual experience of being engaged in the learning process. Dörnyei (2005) argues that the ideal self needs to be in harmony with the learners' ought self and needs to be accompanied by relevant procedural knowledge and goal-specific plans. He adds that, as motivation involves a combination of factors, a dynamic systems approach offers a useful way of examining their combined effect. He believes that when these three constituents of his model are in harmony, there will be a cumulative effect on the learner's behaviour to learn the L2 (Dörnyei, 2005). As opposed to a linear approach, a dynamic systems approach would indeed facilitate a more thorough investigation on how motivation influences the learner to take action in the process of learning an L2. This will lead, in turn, to the possibility of exploring the pedagogical implications derived from this process with the aim of informing task design for increased fluency outcomes.

The current study will explore motivation from a tripartite perspective that includes the L2, the learner and the learning situation. The main tenet of my adopted motivational construct is based both on theoretical and empirical data of learners' intentions in developing fluency as aiming to being able to hold meaningful conversations with native speakers of the L2. This study will explore how the L2 learner's motivation to learn the L2 resulting from the influence of their own future self-guides leads to increased task engagement, further promoted by purposeful task design, and this, in turn, to increased fluency. In the current study, the interactions between these two-way phenomena will be the object of my investigations.

3.6 Motivation as a tool for L2 classroom instruction

The importance of learner motivation on task engagement has also been supported by Dörnyei, who proposed the construct of *engagement-specific perspective* (Dörnyei 2019), which refers to the active participation and involvement in learning tasks by the L2 learner. This has recently been hailed as "the holy grail of learning" and of increasing interest in educational psychology (Sinatra, Heddy, & Lombardi, 2015, p. 1). Dörnyei explains the recent popularity of this construct as it implies active involvement in the learning process which is considered by current educational theories as essential for learning success. This construct is equally crucial in L2 fluency development as it involves active practice by the learners in the current communicative task-based pedagogical methodology. Focusing on

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

106

the learner, Dörnyei (2019) also proposes a notion of *student engagement* within the task motivation paradigm as motivation only indicates the learner's potential for successful learning but it is only the learner's active task engagement can realise this potential *in action*. He explains that when learners experience task engagement they are being driven by motivation that powers their action and has prevailed over a plethora of obstacles and distractions to the learning process (Dörnyei, 2019). It is clear that learner motivation on its own is not enough to achieve task engagement and that task design must be engaging in itself. Having seen the importance that learner motivation has on task investment and L2 learning, it is no surprise that Dörnyei places such importance on L2 teaching sparking learners' motivation. For this to happen, he points out that the following conditions should be met in the design of the tasks used for instruction: they should always be meaning-focused and personally engaging with regards to their content and format; their purpose should always be clearly explained to the learners; they should contain an optimal balance between meaning-based and form-focused activities; they should also include the practice of formulaic sequences; they should offer learners extensive exposure to L2 input that feeds the learners' implicit learning mechanisms; and, finally, they should be offer ample opportunities for learners to participate in genuine L2 interaction focused on a functional goal (Dörnyei, 2009b). This seems to advocate the integration of meaningful communication with relevant declarative input to provide the necessary 'spark' that promotes learners' motivation with regards to L2 learning.

More recently, Dörnyei goes a step further in detailing the characteristics an engaging task must have and explains that these should be based on the *directed motivation currents* (DMCs), defined as motivational surges which dominate one's life, "within which the energy generated by pursuit of the goal is amplified to a degree that goal-oriented actions are automatized and experienced as effortless and enjoyable! (Dörnyei, Henry, & Muir, 2015, p. 1). These characteristics are: *task presentation* (an engaging task that clearly sets out its contribution to reaching the learners' overall L2 vision); *task goals* (it contains issues of significance and value to the learners); *task content* (relevant and real to the learners which allows them to behave with authenticity and entertaining); *task ownership and challenges – skills balance* (offering learners some control and ownership on the activity and the necessary skills to meet its demands); *task structure* (with subphases for completion and subgoals including affirmative feedback); *positive emotional tenor of task completion* (the

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

107

social wellbeing within a cooperative, accepting and cohesive class (Dörnyei, 2019). Having specified all the elements that make a task engaging, Dörnyei concludes that the effectiveness of a task is entirely dependent on its capacity to engage the learners. It seems that it is the design of the task, which is to encompass all these elements, that becomes centre stage in activating learner motivation and task engagement, a tenet supported in the current study.

As we have seen before, Dörnyei (Dörnyei & Kubanyiova, 2014) agrees that vision is crucial for successful L2 teaching and learning. This is rooted in Dewey's theory (1987), the eminent American philosopher and educational reformer, who stated that the central issue in education is vision-building, or what he called 'image-formation'. He believed this to be the great instrument of instruction since learners absorb from any subject they are taught the images that they form in relation to it. Dewey believed that training the child's power of imaginary was the most effective tool for instruction, Dörnyei (Dörnyei & Kubanyiova, 2014) goes a step further by elevating the concept of 'vision' to the most powerful tool for successful learning and they explore new techniques that may be used in order to exploit the potential of what is potentially a very effective tool. Indeed, most teaching practitioners would agree that the most successful learners are those with a clear vision of themselves as language users in the future and a purpose for their L2 learning.

Dörnyei (Dörnyei & Kubanyiova, 2014) also makes reference to the concept of 'learner agency', that is, the learners' proactive investment in the learning process which they place at the heart of the educational process. Learners enjoy a more meaningful learning experience when they are in charge of their own learning, when their motivation is generated from within and they are given opportunities to make the learning material their own. Learner agency implies that learners are allowed to exercise their capacity to act in coherence to their own lived experiences and identities (Dörnyei & Kubanyiova, 2014). It follows then that the teacher should try to help them create a strong L2 self-image that includes learner autonomy as one of the main components. However, Dörnyei and Kubanyiova (2014) believe that the L2 teacher's role is not to 'construct' a specific future image for the learners, but to create opportunities that will allow them to try out various versions of their possible L2 selves. They explain that these are important because they constitute image-seeds that can aid the construction of the learners' L2 selves in the future (Dörnyei & Kubanyiova,

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

108

2014). They believe the most powerful way for motivating action is to allow learners "to taste the future in order to desire it" (Dörnyei & Kubanyiova, 2014, p. 46). It would be a fair assumption that, for this to happen, teachers play a significant role as they can create a rich variety of 'future-self-immersion' opportunities in the classroom that give the learners a taster of what it would be like to be a successful user of the L2.

3.6.1 The role of the teacher as a 'transformational leader'

One of the most important aspects highlighted by Dörnyei and Kubanyiova (2014) for successful L2 learning is the need for classrooms to be transformed into environments that facilitate L2 learning. They state that this transformation starts with the teachers, who are best placed to shape this process (Dörnyei & Kubanyiova, 2014). If teachers become transformational leaders with vision for change and improvement they will have the power to lead effective learning in their classrooms. They believe that their contagious vision has the potential to infect the students and create a powerful vision for language learning in them (Dörnyei & Kubanyiova, 2014). In this process, both teacher and learner are inextricably linked as "the former is needed for the latter to blossom" (Dörnyei & Kubanyiova, 2014, p. 3). Consequently, this has clear pedagogical implications for L2 learners as they feed off the teachers' vision, values, attitudes and empathy to form their own L2 future selves.

Dörnyei refers to the concept of 'teacher cognition' as an influential element in the classroom, in relation to 'the unobservable cognitive dimension of teaching', that is, what teachers 'know, believe and think' (Borg, 2003). This is concerned with the teachers' mental lives and how these shape their classroom practices. This includes their beliefs, conceptions, emotions, identities, selves, ideologies, knowledge, maxims, philosophies, principles, theories and values (Dörnyei & Kubanyiova, 2014). Given the variety of teaching approaches, there is no doubt that there is a complex dynamic which underpins the teachers' understanding, interpretation and implementation of new ideas in the classroom. This is of paramount importance as it is this dynamic that determines the direction learning takes in the classroom and, ultimately, how it impacts on the learner's motivation to learn the L2.

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

109

Dörnyei (Dörnyei & Kubanyiova, 2014) believes that the way in which teachers could transform their L2 classrooms into a motivating environment depends on the baggage of prior beliefs, knowledge and experience they carry with them as well as their vision of themselves in the future. Effectively, it could be argued that their own vision determines how their learners' vision will be shaped in the classroom. Therefore, it is crucial how they engage with new ideas and how they grow as professionals. The uptake and implementation of new input is shaped by their beliefs about what L2 learning should be like. Their cognition determines how they view themselves as classroom practitioners and it is their mindset that will lead to a successful teaching and learning experience (Dörnyei & Kubanyiova, 2014). It is not unreasonable to conclude, then, that the way in which teachers view themselves has a powerful influence on the learning opportunities they create for learners in the language classrooms as well as they image they are able to form of themselves as future L2 users.

As we have seen, offering learners the opportunity to shape their own visions of themselves as L2 users in the future is crucial. Dörnyei and Kubanyiova (2014) refer to this as exposing L2 learners to realistic models of *roadmaps* to their L2 selves. However, it is possible that even when L2 learners have a clear vision of their future selves, they may lack an understanding of the strategies for achieving it. They explain that a practical way of training learners to see the paths to their vision is to ask them to list individualised pathways that are achievable and realistic for themselves for executing their own particular vision (Dörnyei & Kubanyiova, 2014). This could lead to the generation of an action plan that, together with the learner's visualisations, would increase their belief in their ability to achieve it. This seems like a practical and effective way of focusing learners' attention to the strategies they would need to follow and the steps to take to work towards achieving increased fluency in the classroom.

For learners to work towards their future L2 selves, it is crucial that this vision is kept alive in the classroom. Dörnyei and Kubanyiova (2014) suggest that a very effective way for teachers to achieve this is to prime a positive affective state in the classroom. They refer to *priming* as a well-known technique in psychological research which consists in activating certain mental mechanisms indirectly without the learners being aware of this process (Dörnyei & Kubanyiova, 2014). The teacher can offer vision-reminders by including *priming*

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

110

stimuli in the teaching content with the inclusion of themes and language content that is particularly relevant to the learners (Dörnyei & Kubanyiova, 2014). As we will see, this study will explore the ways in which this may be achieved in the design of oral tasks aimed at activating the learners' motivation for increased task engagement and fluency development. Despite the unquestionable impact of the role of the teacher in L2 learning and the construction of the learners' vision of themselves in the future, it goes beyond the scope of this study, although it undoubtedly merits further research.

3.6.2 Motivational aspects of ACCESS for L2 development

I now turn to address an area of SLA which is directly related to motivation research. It concerns the framework for teaching fluency that Gatbonton and Segalowitz presented in 2005 called 'ACCESS' (Automatisation in Communicative Contexts of Essential Speech Segments) which was explored previously in this chapter. As we have seen, the basis of this framework is that, in order to be able to develop their fluency, learners need to work with tasks that are "genuinely communicative, inherently repetitive and functionally formulaic" (Gatbonton & Segalowitz, 2005). They add that this type of tasks not only leads to fluency development but that, in doing so, they may have a motivational influence in L2 learners. Below, I will explain how this happens.

As we have seen, ACCESS aims to promote learning and practice through communicative activities within a free communication tasks framework, which may be adapted to many communication situations (Gatbonton & Segalowitz, 2005). Learners focus first on the form-meaning correspondence for each utterance and then they discover how it is used in relation to other utterances, how its form changes and what alternative utterances can be used. The result is that students learn a range of useful, reusable utterances that they can then produce fluently (Gatbonton & Segalowitz, 2005). These utterances are chosen for their functional currency in fulfilling communicative functions. This system will be thoroughly explored in this study as I look at ways of making further improvements to it taking into consideration the findings of my study. In particular, I will be drawing on the results of the task used in this study, that will be detailed below, and the perceptions of the participants with regards to what they feel constitute the most effective methods for developing L2 fluency.

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

111

Teaching in ACCESS (Gatbonton & Segalowitz, 2005) involves assigning students to communicative tasks, observing them as they carry them out and checking they have the linguistic resources to complete them. Direct corrective feedback on targeted utterances during pairwork can be used to enhance language development (Gatbonton & Segalowitz, 2005). Learning can be assured so long as students are encouraged to use full utterances so that they improve their control of the language. This also encourages them to formulate the structure needed for delivering the words within the utterances (Gatbonton & Segalowitz, 2005). This is in line with Swain's (1993, 2000) output hypothesis, which suggests that learners' need to formulate well-structured utterances in genuine conversation leads them to improve mastery of the underlying system. ACCESS is, therefore, a truly student-centred fluency developing approach as it is the students' needs that dictate which utterances are to be learned and are then reused for communicative purposes.

One major limitation of this method is, however, that for it to be completely successful it would require the learner to be highly motivated and trained in this method in order to maintain a significant level of concentration through the learning process. The teacher would also be required to offer their full commitment to ensure the essential criteria are maintained and to fulfil their role as facilitator and monitor. In order to address this limitation and retain its purposefulness, it seems that it would have to include elements that boost the learners' motivation and promote their task engagement. Communicative tasks have the potential to activate the learners' ideal future selves. However, this can only take place when these tasks offer them the opportunity to invest their own experiences, opinions and imagination. Learners need to be allowed to be themselves in order to link the learning tasks to their personal future visions. Language learning tasks needs to be personally engaging so that they succeed in capturing the learners' interest and allow them to link the L2 practice to their L2 vision which will help them sustain their effort during the learning process. This represents a real challenge for any L2 practitioner and will be explored in chapter 8.

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

112

3.6.3 The influence of motivational content topics for L2 development

As we have seen, one of the aspects that seems a determining factor in boosting motivation in learners and task engagement is the need to base task design on relevant content topics and intrinsically interesting elements to the learner or, as Poupore called them, *interestingness conditions* within task content (Poupore, 2014). Cognitive theories of motivation acknowledge that learners' intrinsic motivation is of vital importance to successful learning (Ushioda, 2008). A crucial element that forms part of intrinsic motivation is *learner interest* (Ryan & Deci, 2000). When learners are interested they become motivationally, emotionally and cognitively active which represents what Dörnyei and Ushioda, (2011) have coined as a 'powerful motivational conglomerate'. It seems crucial to include motivational or interestingness characteristics within the content of tasks so that teachers can provide motivational tasks that offer opportunities for L2 development.

With the aim of assessing which themes are perceived as most intrinsically interesting by L2 learners, Poupore (2014) carried out a mixed method study on 38 adult Korean English TESOL students which included a motivation questionnaire, a topic preference questionnaire and interviews. The results of this study showed that content associated with immediate personal life themes such as personal growth, human relationships and life challenges are perceived as more intrinsically interesting than those related to global issues and current affairs. Consequently, incorporating life themes into adult L2 courses, especially through story-based texts, may be considered important for motivational engagement during task-based interaction. A central motif concerns the importance of content and topics being perceived as personally relevant and relating to meaningful and immediate life issues and themes such as love, relationship conflicts, challenges and personal growth. These are all common to the human condition and represent absolute interests. Utility seems to also be important to learners as they need to feel that the content in related to and helpful for their own lives. Life themes and dilemmas were also shown to be interesting. These findings seem to support Tomlinson's (1998) argument which states that controversial topics related to life themes will be more intrinsically motivating than other more neutral topics.

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

113

The most prominent finding in relation to interestingness in Poupore's study (2014) is the emergence of life themes as an intrinsically motivating topic, whether they relate to the development of one's character, love and romance or scandalous life-related issues. Despite the apparent obviousness of this, some of these themes often fail to appear in L2 programs (Tomlinson, 1998) and deserve greater consideration as L2 learning material. In addition, as learners can easily relate to these and may have prior experience, a lack of background knowledge does not emerge as a problematic issue. This is an important consideration in L2 as a lack of content schema can negatively influence motivation and may hinder language production. From a pedagogical perspective, life themes can provide at least an initial motivational basis for material selection and to create and design tasks. Adopting a response-centred approach to the use of story-based materials in which learners respond to thematic content focusing on their personal thoughts and reflections would provide a sound pedagogical framework. Then, learners discussing its thematic content in small groups would add to a strong motivation foundation for task design and the promotion of L2 development.

In sum, there seems to be an increasing acknowledgment in SLA that task motivation is crucial for enhanced learner cognition and that this may have a significant influence on L2 learning. Indeed, as this study shows, the way in which learners react to different topics and tasks is dependent on how they are able to interact to the themes and task design with life themes resulting more stimulating and engaging. It follows that task design should always take into account the learners' interests and the topics that they find most relevant and motivational for learning if these tasks are to successfully stimulate them and engage them in their own learning.

3.7 Chapter summary

In this chapter, I have explored the definitions of 'task' and the pedagogical framework in which L2 is being taught in recent times, 'task-based language teaching' (TBLT). I have looked at the role of input in TBLT and what it means for cognitive processing. I have assessed the impact that task engagement has on fluency development. I have examined the importance of task engagement and the role the teacher has in the classroom to help L2 learners achieve it. I have explored the influence of content on task engagement. Finally,

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

114

I have explored the fluency teaching framework known as ACCESS (Gatbonton & Segalowitz, 2005), designed to promote automatisation within task-based teaching in the classroom. I have explained how L2 learners aim at speaking the L2 fluently despite this being a challenging goal to accomplish. I have established the importance of learner motivation, in particular, that of an internal nature, to sustain and be successful in the arduous process of learning the L2. I have reviewed how motivation research has evolved in the last five decades from a Gardnerian integrative and instrumental orientation to become the centre of the L2 learning process in the classroom as the cognitive-psychological perspective has shifted towards an educationally centred approach culminating in the current all-encompassing 'dynamic systems' theory. I have delved into the concept of 'vision' and 'envisioned' self as the seed that helps the L2 learner construct their future self-guide as L2 users and the crucial role this plays in the stimulation of learner motivation for task engagement and L2 fluency development. I have explained Dörnyei's influential L2 motivational self-systems and its three constituents, that is, the Ideal L2 self, the Ought-to self and the L2 learning environment which attempts to encompass all potential motivational forces that may be exerted on the L2 learner. I have detailed the three-level framework conceptualization that I have adopted in this study based on Dörnyei's model which will drive my exploration into L2 motivation including the L2, learner and learning situation level. I have explained how motivation can be used as a tool for L2 instruction using the power of imaginary to stimulate task engagement. I have illustrated the transformational role the L2 teacher can play in creating a motivational learning environment and how they may project their own vision of themselves to help L2 learners construct and execute theirs. I have shed light on how ACCESS aims to be a new methodological approach in L2 fluency learning and the motivational aspects that may be exploited within it to boost L2 fluency. Finally, I have shown how life related topics can enhance task engagement in L2 learners with significant pedagogical implications. In the next chapter, I will present the rationale and research questions that have led this study, arising from the evaluation of the literature covered previously. This will be followed by an explanation of the main mixed-methods study design which includes the study task, the use of novel dysfluency explanatory cards and a questionnaire on the participants' perceptions on fluency, all of which have been designed to reveal a fuller picture on L2 fluency and which show the interactions between this, motivation and task design.

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

115

Chapter 4: Rationale, RQs and Assumptions of the present study

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I set out the rationale for the current study prior to introducing the research questions that have guided this research and the assumptions made with regards to the potential findings.

4.2 Rationale

In Chapter 2, I explored how L2 fluency has taken centre stage in the last few decades in SLA, with most research studies focusing on repetition tasks to investigate the role of repetition in oral L2 fluency. The arrival of the 'communicative revolution' at the end of the 20th century saw the prioritization of fluency of speech and focused on achieving 'communicative competence'. I explained how this led to a shift in pedagogical approach, culminating in Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) and the current Task-based Language Teaching (TBLT) aimed at helping learners develop their fluency through free speaking communicative activities such as role-plays, games, debates, etc. In research, the new creative automaticity model (Segalowitz, 2010) was introduced underpinned by the fluency methodology ACCESS (Gatbonton & Segalowitz, 2005), aimed at enabling learners automatise their speech to produce fluent and creative speech within a genuine communicative context. However, as well as measuring fluency, it is also important to further our understanding of the causes that surround the occurrences of dysfluencies, or pausing in speech, as this knowledge can inform task design for classroom instruction with the aim of improving fluency outcomes. Whilst the main body of research has focused on measuring the impact of repetition tasks on L2 fluency, based mainly on role-plays or picture stories, there has been less emphasis on investigating the effects on L2 fluency on other types of free-speaking tasks. Thus, the present study seeks to explore the impact of a conclusion-based debate on fluency and creative automatisation.

In Chapter 3, I showed how L2 learning had been traditionally focused on the *form*, that is, the rules that govern language, through the repetition of drills by the learners (Samuda & Bygate, 2008) and how this focus had shifted to place more importance on the *meaning*, with tasks becoming goal-oriented, outcome-evaluated and linked to the world (Skehan,

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

116

1998). In line with this new focus, Ellis (2003) defined tasks as a 'workplan', a real-world process of language which engages cognitive processes with a clearly defined communicative goal. Learners were required to perform a dual role as language learners and users, both carrying out tasks as they would in a real-life situation and gaining knowledge from this interaction by paying attention to form (Ellis, 2003). In this way, the definition of tasks had evolved from being tools for instruction aimed at teaching about the grammar, to activities designed for real-life communicative interaction from which to draw linguistic knowledge.

In this new conception of task, Samuda and Bygate (2008) stress the importance of the pedagogical focus of tasks, that is, how learners respond to and engage with tasks and how these are interpreted by them. This new perspective taken from the learners' point of view leads to a more holistic definition of task as a pedagogical activity with a focus on *language use* (Samuda & Bygate, 2008). Tasks take on a new holistic perspective and they are now understood as activities which are L2 mediated to achieve a non-linguistic outcome with the main aim of promoting L2 learning. Learners are required to make choices of meaning and form for a communicational goal with the overall aim of learning about the L2. Within this new pedagogical approach to the concept of task, Van den Branden (2007) places the focus on their communicative dimension, arguing that learners use the L2 to attain an objective. Tasks are understood as a tool that enables communication for meaningful interaction. This new perception encompasses the holistic, functional and communicative dimensions of tasks (Van den Branden, 2007) as the basis for instruction in the classroom within the framework of TBLT and with a real link with the outside world. In line with this new concept of tasks, these need to reflect what learners will have to do in the real world and facilitate meaningful interaction for the learner to achieve their communicative goals. Debates are one of these fluency enhancing tasks, and this type of task was selected for the present study as, to the researcher's knowledge, it has received little attention in research studies. However, for a debate to be an appropriate tool for the present study, it had to have a specific communicative goal beyond simply engaging in oral interaction. It needed to have an added element the learners could focus on achieving. For this purpose, and as will be explained in Chapter 5, the debate was given an outcome, that is, a conclusion that some of the participants of the study had to reach at the end. In this way, and following the newest concept of task, participants had

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

117

a specific communicative goal in addition to taking part in the debate, with some of them having to focus on producing a conclusion at the end that summed up the contributions of their peers.

As explained in Chapter 3, one of the determining factors that may contribute to L2 fluency is task engagement, as only when learners are able to engage in a task, will they commit themselves to taking an active role in performing the task with the potential implications for increased fluency outcomes. For task engagement to take place, Dewey (1910) proposed a new educational approach that favoured making knowledge relevant to the learner by connecting to their personal experience. As tasks were placed at the centre of SLA pedagogy within the frame of TBTL, the concept of task engagement took on greater importance and efforts were centered on aiming at designing tasks for classroom instruction that learners could connect to and that enabled them to interact with their peers using the linguistic resources available to them (Bygate & Samuda, 2009). Task engagement became a central issue in L2 instruction as it was deemed a prerequisite for language processing by the learners and potentially develop their L2 fluency. Tasks did not only have to meet specific linguistic requisites, they also had to be engaging for the learners, as without engagement learners could not focus on engaging in meaningful interaction (Willis & Willis, 2007). In line with Dörnyei's motivation model, task engagement powers the learners' action (Dörnyei, 2019) to get involved in the interaction and, ultimately, the learning that results from it. Van den Branden and Van Gorp (2000) proposed a new type of task which was workable and provided a defined goal but allowed learners the creative freedom to work their own way towards achieving this goal. As mentioned before, in the present study, the task proposed is a debate in which the participants are able to make their own contributions freely on a subject they are familiar with such as news relating to issues that affect young people. These news include the climate emergency, the uncertainly of youth employment, the lack of affordable housing, the effects of social media on mental health, terrorism, etc.

Given that this type of fluency study seems to be lacking in SLA research, the present study seeks to open a new line of enquiry using a debate as the proposed task for investigation. It seeks to make a novel contribution to research which encompasses learners' perceptions about what causes them difficulties in speech, learner motivational

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

118

aspects in terms of task engagement, and how their fluency is measured and affected by reaching a conclusion at the end of a debate.

4.3 Research Questions

As we have seen, in the present study a debate has been used as a tool for investigating the effects on fluency outcomes of reaching an outcome at the end of it, for conclusion-utterers in group A, compared to not reaching an outcome for final speakers in group B, that is, those participants in this group who spoke last before the conclusion was uttered. A detailed account of the methodology used in this study will be provided in Chapter 5. The overall questions which have guided this research were:

RQ1 (a) What is the main reason for dysfluencies incurred during the debate and what are the most recurrent types?

RQ1 (b) Does creative automatisation, defined as the ability to speak faster without unintentional pauses, improve as a result of having to reach a conclusion at the end of a debate?

RQ2 Are there any correlations between performance on the debate and participants' perceptions on fluency development?

4.4 Assumptions

Based on previous L2 fluency research and the researcher's own pedagogical experience, the following assumptions have been made relating fluency outcomes and participants' perceptions on fluency based on potential correlations between questionnaire responses and the fluency measures adopted for this study.

4.4.1 Fluency outcomes

1(a) Difficulty retrieving the appropriate word over conceptualizing the intended message will account for most incidences of dysfluencies with lexical selection issues being more recurrent than grammatical formulation ones (Gatbonton & Segalowitz, 2005).

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

119

1(b) Creative automatisation overtly shown with raised fluency will be higher for the conclusion utterers in group A during the production of the conclusion at the end of the debate, compared to the last utterances by final speakers in group B.

4.4.2 Participants' perceptions on fluency based on potential correlations between questionnaire responses and fluency measures adopted in this study

The assumptions relating to tested correlations between performance on the debate and participants' perceptions on what they believe helps improve their fluency are fivefold:

1a Most of the pauses experienced during speech in the debate are due to the difficulty retrieving the required word for that specific context and lead to decreased fluency (Segalowitz, 2010).

1b Reaching a conclusion at the end of a debate leads to higher fluency outcomes (for genuinely communicative oral tasks see Gatbonton and Segalowitz, 2005; for goal-directness and meaningful interaction see Van den Branden (2007).

1c Debates are an effective oral task in improving fluency (Gatbonton & Segalowitz, 2005; Ellis, 2003).

1d An appropriately designed task increases motivation for task engagement and thus fluency outcomes (Willis & Willis, 2007).

1e When the speaker's motivation is high due to feeling prepared to speak with sufficient linguistic resources, their fluency outcomes are higher (for motivation that leads to L2 learning success see Dörnyei, 2009 in Chapter 3).

Having presented the theoretical rationale and introduced the research questions and assumptions that have driven this study, I now turn to discuss the methodology followed for the completion of the current study.

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

120

Chapter 5: Design and execution of the present study

5.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I set out the design for the present study and how it was executed. I will include the main elements such as the pilot study, the participants, the context of the experimental intervention, the project design, the task designed for the intervention and the post-intervention questionnaire. I will explain the rationale for each of these elements. I will set out the how the transcription and the coding of the oral samples was carried out and describe the independent and dependent variables used for the data analysis.

5.2 Pilot study

The design and methodology of the current study have been informed by a pilot study which was carried out prior to undertaking this research. This was aimed at assessing the following:

- the feasibility of collecting samples for analysis of fluency, dysfluency during an authentic classroom-type debate task.
- the logistics of carrying out the proposed tasks, including whether the type of topic for discussion and instructions given were suitable for the participants, their use of the cards issued to them to show what they attributed the causes for their dysfluencies to, and the issues associated with audio and video recording a small group of participants simultaneously.

For this pilot, 5 participants from one class of first year university students of Spanish were recruited on a voluntary basis. They were instructed to carry out a 10-minute debate on 'the aspect of university life that has helped you the most so far to make the best-informed decisions in all aspects of your life', after a 10-minute individual preparation time. Some guidelines were suggested to them as to what to include in their discussion such as a general description of the aspect of university life that they wished to discuss; how it helped them grow as a person; the way in which it changed their attitude or approach when tackling difficulties in their daily life and how their experience of university life so far had helped them

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

121

in their relationships with others. The topic for this oral task was chosen for its familiarity as it would enable students to speak at length from their own experience. As we have seen in chapter 3, topic familiarity is one of the factors that is suggested to aid speech fluency (see for instance Poupore, 2014). In order to preserve the integrity of the study, the topic chosen for the pilot was different to that of the actual study. In order to give it the attention it deserves, topic familiarity is explored in a separate section further on in this chapter.

The five participants for the pilot study were divided into two different groups: participants in group A would take part in the debate with an outcome focus to reach a conclusion at the end; those in group B would only engage in the interaction without aiming for an outcome. The outcome for group A was to identify the aspect that they and their fellow participants in both groups agreed to be the most influential in helping them make the best informed decisions in all aspects of their life. In order to achieve this outcome, they were expected to listen carefully to the views and experiences of their fellow participants and reach a conclusion that reflected the most salient aspect in helping them reach the most important decisions in their lives and explain why they believed so. This task was chosen as it was based on a similar debate-type task the participants had completed in class so they would find the challenge of completing this task an achievable one (for ease of performance in a task due to task familiarity (see, for instance, Lynch & Maclean, 2000, 2001).

The main tenet followed for the design of the task used in both the pilot and the main study was the same Gatbonton and Segalowitz (2005) used for the design of ACCESS (Automatisation in Communicative Contexts of Essential Speech Segments). As we saw in chapter 3, this is a fluency enhancing methodology designed to promote automatisation within a "genuinely communicative" framework based on the principle of tangible learning content, or essential speech segments, used by the learners in a communicative context, that is, one in which the learners use the information they discuss in speech for an overall goal (Gatbonton & Segalowitz, 2005, p. 331). The design of the current study was based on the premise that the task should be communicative, and the focus should be oriented at a goal, in this case, reaching an conclusion in the case of the participants in group A. All participants were encouraged to broadly debate how university life had informed their life decisions. In order to do this, they were able to make use of the speech segments that they

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

122

had been exposed to during their interaction with their fellow participants as well as come up with their own original phrases to express their own views and conclusions.

The dependent variables of the present study are the fluency measurements which will be employed to measure fluency baseline in terms of speed (articulation rate), breakdown or silence (mid or end-clause pausing more than 250ms) and repair (repetitions and reformulations), which will be detailed further in this chapter. These correspond to Skehan's (1998) original categories of speed, breakdown and repair and are often used as fluency indicators in fluency research studies. As previously outlined in chapter 2, it seems a fair assumption that there is a link between cognitive fluency (automaticity) and these three fluency indicators which are present in speech, that is, speed, breakdown and repair, as increased automaticity in processing speech should lead to an increased speed of speech and less breakdown. In cases in which L2 speakers have lower cognitive fluency, they may try to compensate in their speech by employing a range of communicative strategies which may be included in the repair category, such as repetitions, reformulations or self-corrections (Skehan, 2003). The assumption is that higher cognitive fluency leads to increased speed of speech and lower incidences of repair. This is tested by measuring and analysing all incidences of speed, breakdown and repair to indicate overall speech fluency.

In the current study selected fluency indicators have been adopted for their relevance to the specific experimental process undergone by the participants with specific attention to the flow and smoothness of speech. These are mean length of run (average number of words between pauses) and speech rate ('pruned' words per minute) as these have been agreed to provide the most reliable fluency measures. In L2 fluency studies, 'pruning' refers to the analysis of speech excluding syllables or words, as it is the case in the current study, that are part of any repair mechanisms used by the speaker such as repeating words, reformulating or self-correcting speech. 'Pruned' speech has been adopted in the current study because it seems to reflect best the speaker's intended message in speech, devoid of any incidences of repair. By analysing pruned speech, actual fluent speech is separated from repair mechanisms which are sometimes used by the speakers to buy time and could give an erroneous impression of fluency (Derwing et al., 2004).

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

123

Within the breakdown category, frequency and location of pausing have been analysed in line with Tavakoli's (2010) research, which showed that L2 speakers generally pause more often in their speech compared to L1 speakers and they are likely to pause within AS units and clauses (e.g., Tavakoli, 2011; De Jong, 2016). As explained in Chapter 2, pausing has been associated with dysfluency as speakers experience problems relating to grammar formulation and/or lexical retrieval, or broader issues with conceptualization, which cause them to pause in their speech. In this study, the focus of speech analysis is on mid-clause pausing associated to grammatical formulation and lexical retrieval issues (Fulcher, 1996). This is because the focus of the current study is on delving deeper into the causes for pausing in the middle of utterances, which is the best indicator of breakdown fluency (e.g., Lambert et al., 2017), rather than in between utterances as end-clause pausing has been associated with difficulties with message planning and not a clear indicator of fluency (N.H. de Jong, 2016; Lambert et al., 2017). Given that the participants in this study were expected to have a high degree of fluency and knowledge of the L2 at B2 level, it seemed most worthy to investigate the potential reasons for pausing mid-clause.

Finally, with regards to repair, the frequency of reformulations and self-corrections has been analysed. This is most evident in more fluent speech, as that uttered by the participants of this study, all at varying B2 level degrees, as more fluent speakers may have an increased ability to reformulate and correct production on-line (Lennon, 1990b, p. 412). The types of repair incurred and the possible explanations for these were then based on the context. The analysis of these set of dependent variables for the whole study has yielded systematic measurements that will lead to pedagogic recommendations that have implications as they can lead to fluency development in the classroom.

The pilot accomplished the two objectives outlined at the beginning of this chapter and that were the main reason for carrying it out. It was confirmed that it was feasible to collect the speech samples for analysis during a classroom-type debate task and the logistics with regards to the task, the type of topic, the instructions given to participants, the use of cards and the simultaneous audio and video recording of the debate. The pilot yielded a small collection of samples for analysis of baseline fluency and dysfluency during the debate as very clear audio and video samples were collected for the required time. The findings pointed to a slightly higher degree of task investment in group A who had to reach a

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

124

conclusion although the degree of creative automatisation seemed comparable in all participants. This could be due to the fact that the expectation to participate in the debate may have been perceived as enough of a goal for all participants to cause them to invest themselves fully in the task, not just the participants in group A tasked with reaching a conclusion.

It was also found that the debate topic and instructions were suitable for the participants as they understood very quickly how to complete the task, the differences between the groups A and B, and how to use the cards issued, explained below. This may be due to the fact that these participants are used to this type of task as it is often used in their usual oral lessons. A final observation is that, the very sensitive nature of the voice recorder used meant that some of the background noise outside the library research group room where the pilot took place was also picked up which could potentially hinder the automatic detection of silence and the manual data annotation and analysis carried out using PRAAT. This is an important aspect to consider as the real data collection process was due to take place in the participants' usual teaching rooms, some of which are within a short proximity of the main corridors and could pose a noise problem. Background noise and problems with recording are a common aspect of fluency studies carried out in the classroom (Hilton, 2014). One solution to this would be to ensure the whole experimental process was conducted a few minutes into the lesson time and concluded shortly before the end. Finally, the visual quality of the video recording, needed to be able to observe the participants' use of the cards, was extremely good, however, due to the high intensity lighting in the room, at times this reflected on the cards, making it more difficult to distinguish them. In order to resolve this, video recording in the main study would be carried out from a position taking into account the light source so that the writing in the cards was more easily distinguishable.

With regards to the analysis of the data, using PRAAT it was only possible to analyse certain fluency measures automatically, such as speech rate (de Jong & Wempe, 2009). However, as PRAAT can detect but not analyse pauses these had to be identified, and manually annotated on the speech sample textgrids. It was necessary to annotate pause duration, position and frequency in the textgrids as well as pruned word counts and type of repair. As Witton-Davies (2014) pointed out, this was a time-consuming process, but it was the only possible way to conduct an accurate speech analysis, thus making it a worthwhile process.

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

125

Another observation made as a result of this pilot is that the interactive nature of this debate-type task made it difficult to assess the fluency of individual participants as other elements such as turn-taking, overlapping interventions, etc., also play a part. Despite the need for analysing fluency in dialogic form in future research (Tavaloki, 2016), there is yet not an agreed method for this analysis. This was not part of this study as it goes beyond its scope. Anticipating this, instructions were given to the participants to try for their interventions not to overlap with those of others and to speak at a normal pace for them. The aim for this was to obtain improved clarity of samples and for fragments of the speech to be of a more monologic nature and, therefore, more suitable for fluency analysis using PRAAT. This was adhered to by the participants in all but one case and it did not diminish their chances for discussion.

5.3 The main study design

The study design is a quasi-experimental, mixed methods design with two phases of data analysis resulting from an experimental empirical process and a post-intervention questionnaire, which will be detailed later in this chapter, which was completed by all the participants. These phases were designed to address the three research questions central to this project, as outlined in chapter 4. Intact classes of a varying number of learners formed 10 groups and were randomly assigned one of two conditions:

Group A: debate participants to reach a final conclusion (n= 30)
Group B: debate participants only (n= 26)

The study involved a total of 83 participants divided in 15 different classes. Only 10 of these groups were selected as they met the criterion of being formed by a minimum 5 participants. The maximum number of participants was 11. This criterion was adopted to ensure a significant amount of data samples was collected as it was anticipated that some participants may not wish to take part in the debate. Indeed, some participants in some of the groups chose to not speak during the intervention. The final number of participants who took part in the intervention was 56. Within each of the 10 classes there were two randomly assigned groups, that is, group A and group B. All participants were given a stimulus sheet (see Appendix 3) with a selection of current affairs news which were selected as they

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

126

reflected the main problems that affect young people in England and Spain in particular. This selection was made in line with the importance of topic familiarity for fluent speech in L2 (e.g., Poupore, 2014) They were all given 10 minutes planning time to prepare individually for the debate and were allowed to make notes on a separate piece of paper to use for reference only during the debate. Allowing planning time before an oral task has been suggested to increase fluency in terms of speed of speech (Tavakoli & Skehan, 2005) and mean length of run (Skehan & Foster, 2005) as it enables the participants to carry out some conceptualising prior to performing the task rather than having to do both at the same time which would affect their fluency outcomes as they would compete with each other during speech (Skehan, 1998; 2003). All the participants completed a post intervention questionnaire to collect their perceptions on how best to develop their fluency. This will be dealt at length below in this chapter. The whole data collection process took a total of 5 working days with several groups taking part in this study each day in their usual scheduled teaching classes.

5.4 Context and groups

The study was carried out at the University of Leeds within the Faculty of Languages, Cultures and Societies from 3rd February until 7th February 2020. The participants were all Spanish Language Skills 2 module students in the second year of their degree, totalling 154 for the whole cohort. This intervention was offered to them as an extra practice session in preparation for their forthcoming assessed debates starting the following week and to breach the long gap between the last debate at the end of the previous semester in December. It was important that this experimental process was offered as an optional choice for students to take part, given the voluntary nature of this study which allowed them to take part or opt out, if they so wished. It was also important that it took the shape of a debate as they were used to this format, having participated in a few assessed debates in the previous term. Finally, It was also essential that the students saw a practical purpose for participating in the debate, as they respond best if this is the case, i.e., helping them ease back into the routine of assessed debates, and that the intervention took place before the beginning of semester 2, time after which they may have had less availability to attend.

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

127

The experimental process took place following the usual format of their weekly assessed debates which focusses on developing their oral skills by giving them an opportunity to apply the knowledge and linguistic resources learned from preparatory articles and videos on a different current topic 1 week prior to their debates. It was explained to all the participants both in written form and verbally that the debate, whether they decided to take part or not, was completely separate from their course and that it would have no implications for their course marks. The research took place within 50 minute classes, which included the individual reading of the participant information and the signing of their consent to take part, an explanation of the instructions for the activity, also provided on paper, 10 minutes planning time, 10 minutes for the actual debate and another 15 minutes for completing the post-intervention questionnaire. Any remaining time was not part of the procedure and was used to allow the participants to add any additional contributions to the debate that exceeded the allocated time, ask questions about vocabulary, grammar or indeed any issues raised during the debate.

As mentioned above, the research involved 10 classes with a minimum of 5 and a maximum of 11 participants (see appendix for a breakdown of the anonymised participants in each group). As we have seen, the proficiency level of these groups was Advanced (B2) with all classes showing some variability in the participants' levels of proficiency, as evidenced in their speech. This was an unavoidable factor as some students would have had more exposure to the L2, in addition to scheduled instruction, for a variety of reasons such as having Spanish-speaking native relatives, having travelled to countries where the L2 is spoken, etc. Other factors that may affect individual fluency could be linked with the speaker's extrovert personality, the dynamics of the class, how comfortable they feel speaking in front of the researcher who was unknown to most of them, etc. Finding a variability of fluency levels within classes is a common occurrence at all levels of proficiency and it is indeed part and parcel of any fluency study based on intact classes grouped, as in this case, by year of study rather than by fluency level. This variability was observed in individuals regardless of whether they were in group A or B. The overall level was however fairly similar and homogeneous with only a handful of students showing increased fluency. The implications of these additional variables are beyond the scope of the current study.

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

128

5.5 Participants

In total, 83 students consented to take part in the study voluntarily. All of these completed the questionnaires at the end of the debate. However, not all of the participants chose to take part in the debate, with a total of 56 doing so. Therefore, there were 56 datasets available for analysis. The age of the participants was approximately 19-20 years, and their first language was English. As participant age and L1 were considered variables outside the scope of this study, no specific descriptive data were collected. They were all in their second year at university which precedes their Year Abroad in a Spanish speaking country.

The researcher was the sole person responsible for conducting the intervention fulfilling the function of facilitator of the process. It must be noted that the researcher also teaches on this module: three of the researcher's students were present in a merged group formed by two different classes that clashed on the same day and at the same time and another group was formed exclusively by five of the researcher's students. The data from these two classes was not used in this study to preserve objectiveness, as their level of fluency of these participants might have been conditioned by feeling more at ease and therefore less anxious with my presence in the room. This is in line with the so called 'Hawthorn effect' (Landsberger, 1950) or 'Observer's Paradox' (Labov, 1972) which refers to the unwitting influence the researcher may have on the participants' performance when present in the course of a research task as they may feel either slightly intimidated or more at ease depending on the influence the researcher may have over them. The researcher was unknown to the rest of the participants other than by name. The researcher remained silent to preserve objectivity throughout the intervention other that when it was necessary to refocus the debate (once, when participants diverted from the focus topic of the debate) or to give them a two-minute warning for them to formulate their conclusions (all debates).

5.6 Ethics approval for the study

University Ethics approval was granted for this project (see Appendix 12) and all participants signed a consent form to participate (see Appendix 11). The assumption is that their main reason for taking part was to take advantage of the offer of an extra oral practice before their forthcoming assessed debates due to start the following week. They were made aware

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

129

that they were taking part in a research study to look into how oral fluency may be developed more effectively in Advanced students of Spanish and their own experience as learners building up their fluency. They were not given any further information about 'fluency', the project or how the data would be analysed. This was so that they were not influenced in any way prior to take part in the study, thus safeguarding the integrity of the study. They were made aware that they were free to withdraw from the project at any time and, indeed, one student asked permission to leave before planning time started and was reassured that this decision would not have any bearing on their course assessment, as this intervention was completely optional and separate from their course. All other participants who attended agreed and signed their consent to take part in the study.

5.7 Study task and procedure

As we have seen, the intervention was based on participating in a debate. The rationale for this choice is threefold: this type of task elicits spontaneous speech; being able to speak spontaneously is a skill required of L2 learners at this level and this is thus an ecologically valid test of their speaking ability (Segalowitz, 2010); and finally, all participants would have a level playing field to participate freely and independently without being subordinate to a specific role as would have been the case in a different type of oral task that demanded for them to fulfil role specific instructions, such as a role-play. All of these conditions would lead to the elicitation of speech data that would accurately reflect the participants' fluency outcomes.

Therefore, this task is directly linked to SLA in L2 as it provides the learner with the opportunity to be able to discuss their views drawing from their own knowledge about topical issues and making use of their own linguistic resources as well as those resulting from their exposure to those of their fellow participants during the course of the debate. Finally, this task fits within the main motivation theories presented in Chapter 3, in particular the learner's concept of 'vision', as the participants are able to immerse themselves fully and spontaneouly in this debate which would serve to activate their vision of being competent L2 users in the future (Dörney, 2005). Finally, this task would provide the appropriate conditions for 'creative automatisation' (Segalowitz, 2010) to take place, giving the

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

130

participants the chance to formulate their ideas using original speech in addition to primed speech.

The main purpose of the debate was to identify the type of news that had had the most impact on all the participants' lives. The instructions for this task suggested that the participants may include a general description of the nature of news they wished to discuss; how it had had an impact in their lives; the feelings that it triggered when they first learnt about it; the reasons why they felt this news had had or will have an impact in their life; and the way their life may have changed since then, or they anticipate changing in the future. This is in line with adhering to topic familiarity as an influential factor for increased fluency (Poupore, 2014).

This study task also falls within the realm of the main aims of the CEFR (2020), which promotes teaching and learning as a means of communication with a new vision of the learner as a "social agent". This is understood as the learner who engages in the learning process and actively participates in the communicative process of the debate proposed in this study, which is a "real life" oriented task based on "real-world communicative needs" (CEFR, 2020, p. 28). This type of task falls within the category of "sustained monologue: putting a case (e.g. in a debate)" (CEFR, 2020, p.64). At B2 level, participants would be expected, within varying degrees of ability, to discuss their views on topical issues including significant points and relevant detail, examples and reasoned arguments, and be able to point out the advantages and disadvantages of different issues. They would be expected to do this taking into account the interlocutor's perspective, making their points in a precise manner using well-structured language (CEFR, 2020).

In order to provide inspiration for their thoughts and contributions, a stimulus sheet containing a selection of current topical headline news was given to each participant. These were in Spanish and were taken and adapted from Spanish newspaper El Pais' website. The headlines included news set in either Spain or Great Britain that affect young people negatively and were deliberately selected to promote discussion and potential varying viewpoints. The headlines for each of this selected news are as follows (see Appendix 3, from top left and clockwise): Fridays for Future protesters in 30 Spanish towns demand that polititians ackowledge the 'climate emergency'; A model of university education with an

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

131

anglosaxon tradition; The figures that prove the precarious nature of youth employment; Surviving the world of me; The UK raises the terrorist alert to critical fearing an imminent attack; The Uk is already paying the consequences of Brexit; Nationalism, an enemy at the gates; What is involved in purchasing a house nowadays? Higher mortgages and less disposable capital. Participants were advised to think about these news and any associated linguisitc resources during their planning time in order to be able to discuss all or just some of these headlines or, indeed, others that may affect them more, and to use them for reference during the debate to aid their thoughts. As these participants were used to discussing topical news in their weekly scheduled tutorials, they would have been famililiarised with the nature of this task although the topical issues raised in each of the headlines would have been new to all, giving them a level playing field.

As previously explained, the main aim of the study was to investigate whether having to reach a conclusion at the end of the debate led to increased fluency outcomes compared with only participating in the debate. For this purpose, two instruction cards were designed for the task. Participants in each class were randomly divided into two groups approximately equal in number. Participants in each group were given a card, A or B, containing the instructions for the activity with one significant difference. Participants with card A had to reach a conclusion at the end of the debate and those with card B only had to take part in the debate without having to reach a conclusion. The instructions given to all groups in writing on their cards and stressed orally before the start of the task were that one participant in group A in each of the groups would have to say at the end of the debate what the main views of the participants were in terms of the issues that had the most impact on their lives. The content for this conclusion would be decided by this person only and should contain the views expressed by most of the participants during the debate. To ensure compliance with these instructions, the researcher ensured that these were understood and clarifications were given when requested prior to the start of the task.

Another aspect to be explored in the current study was the main dysfluencies incurred by the participants and the possible causes for these. To inform this investigation, all participants were given two small cards. One of them had the question 'What to say?' and they were instructed to show it they paused as a result of being unsure of the content of what they wanted to say at that moment. The other card said 'How to say?' and participants

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

132

were asked to show this card if they were struggling with how to express what they intended to say, i.e. the word or expression with which to articulate their intended message. The use of the first card would suggest that the participant was experiencing issues with conceptualizing their intended message whereas the use of the latter would be suggestive of issues with the articulation of the message (Levelt's, 1989; 1999a), as explained in chapter 2. The experimental process followed a set schedule (see Appendix 1) from beginning to end to guarantee that this was exactly the same in all classes. This process was repeated for each of the 10 groups included in the study.

5.7.1 Topic familiarity

In order for the debate to elicit useful data, it was essential to ensure that participants were able to engage in discussing a topic with a reasonable level of fluency in both groups, that is, A (conclusion outcome) and B (discussion only). As Poupore (2014) points out, task content associated with immediate personal life themes such as life challenges is perceived as more intrinsically interesting than current affairs. Therefore, it was decided that a combination of these, that is, current news directly affecting the participants' lives would ensure that participants would engage in the task and felt that the topic was relevant enough for them to want to discuss it. For this reason, it was necessary that a topic was selected that was sufficiently known to all of the participants to avoid the situation whereby they would not have enough base knowledge to discuss. At the same time, it was felt that participants would benefit from a stimulus which would trigger their thoughts and level them up in terms of base knowledge to make a start with the debate. Therefore, the topic chosen was current news that may have an effect on young people and a stimulus sheet was designed to aid preparation containing a selection of the most salient headlines affecting young people adapted from El Pais, a main Spanish newspaper, as previously outlined.

5.7.2 The role of the researcher during the study task

The role the researcher in the experimental process was key in order to ensure that this was carried out in a smooth manner and that the integrity of the task was safeguarded at all times. As we have seen, the stimulus sheet provided for the preparation of the debate was given to the participants 10 minutes prior to the beginning of the debate and the

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

133

researcher was available to provide any clarification or vocabulary explanation during this time. Online dictionaries were also allowed during planning time although they were scarcely used as participants were already familiar with most of the vocabulary needed from the stimulus sheet and they had a general awareness of the news. Participants are encouraged to keep up to date with current affairs in Spanish speaking countries. The main role of the researcher was to facilitate the intervention by providing instructions for the intervention task, ensuring that both groups were clear about what was expected of them during the debate, refocusing the debate when required and advising them two minutes before the end for the participants in team A to reach a conclusion. From a logistical perspective, the researcher also ensured that a signed register was completed, that preparation materials were handed out together with the cards and that audio-visual equipment, i.e., video camera and voice recorder, were both switched on prior to the start of the debate. Finally, the researcher also ensured that all questionnaires were completed, handed in and signed for participant identification.

5.8 Video and audio recording of the task

The debates were simultaneously video recorded with a camera and a voice recorder which had a good quality in-built microphone. A few minutes before each session, the researcher set up the chairs in each class in a horseshoe shape and took a position in the middle of it. The voice recorder was placed in the centre for optimal recording for each of the classes. The camera was held by the researcher as it needed to be moved to record each of the participants as they spoke. This was done discreetly from a sitting down position and from a good distance from the participants so that they did not perceive it as an intruding or intimidating presence.

Participant consent was granted in writing by signing the consent form. In addition to this, participants were verbally reassured that none of the recordings would be released to the public domain and that all data collected would be kept safe at all times. The main purpose for recording the debates with a camera was to be able to observe the use the participants made of the cards they were issued with and to double check any words or fragments of speech that were more difficult to identify solely from their voice recordings during the transcription process. Another reason was to be able to identify each of the participants as

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

134

they had been asked to place a sticker with their name on it on their tops at the beginning of the session. Participant identification, all be it with anonymised names, was necessary for data analysis purposes. Finally, recording the intervention using a range of resources was felt necessary as it allows for triangulation as it enables the analysis of data from a variety of sources which aids credibility (Mackay & Gass, 2005) and veracity.

5.9 Participants' use of novel dysfluency explanatory cards while on task

In order to shed light on whether the main reason for the participants pausing in their speech was due to them struggling with word retrieval or with conceptualising the intended message, they were all issued with two cards prior to the beginning of the debate and were instructed on how to use them. Each card had a question on it, namely "What to say?" and How to say?". The participants were asked to select one of these cards when they experienced pauses in their speech during the debate to show the reason for this pause. They had to pick and hold up one or the other to show whether they were struggling with the message they were trying to convey ("What to say?") or the way in which to express it ("How to say?") respectively.

All ten videos of the debates were thoroughly scoured several times for evidence of card use by the participants. This involved pausing the video repeatedly while a card was being shown as this was done very quickly and the correct video frame had to be paused to enable identifying the card. Only a small number of participants used the cards, generally one or the other. Whilst in some groups no use was made of either card, in some others they were used on one or more occasions. The lack of use of these cards does not mean that the participants in these groups were able to speak more fluently, as indeed most participants experienced pausing in their speech. This may have been caused due to their attention being completely focused on following the contributions of their fellow participants as well as producing their own, feeling nervous of drawing attention to themselves or perhaps not being willing to share the cause of their hesitancy in speech. It was also observed that once a participant used one of the cards, their fellow participants showed less hesitation in using theirs as required. Similarly, when a participant used a card but no one else did, afterwards this participant did not use any cards again.

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

135

5.10 Post-task questionnaire

After the completion of the debate, all participants were issued with a questionnaire. The rationale behind this questionnaire was to gather their insights on what they perceived was most effective in helping them develop their L2 fluency. The qualitative data gathered from this questionnaire would then be the basis for a set of assumptions made in line with relevant research models and compared to the participants' speech data from their oral performance in the debate. The aim was to assess how their perceptions corresponded with their oral performance in the debate. These assumptions, as outlined in chapter 4, were in relation to the causes for pausing in their speech; whether reaching a conclusion at the end of a debate leads to higher fluency outcomes; the effectiveness of debates in improving fluency; and whether task design increases motivation and task engagement and leading to increased fluency outcomes. The analysis of the responses to this questionnaire would lead to potential correlations between their perceptions and their fluency outcomes and it would also shed light on how to best promote L2 fluency development. Questionnaires are a useful research tool in fluency studies as they help gauge participant views which may triangulate and expand findings based in quantitative data (Riazi & Candlin, 2014).

All of the participants, including those who chose not to speak during the debate, completed this questionnaire, totaling 83. This was mainly for practical reasons, so as not exclude any participants as well as collecting the views of all, even though the correlations could only be run with speech data of those participants who took part in the debate. They all completed all the questions in their entirety. As for the debates, the age of the participants was between 19 and 20 years old and of mixed gender. Their first language was English, and their level of proficiency in Spanish was B2, albeit with varying degrees of competence. They had all been studying Spanish as a L2 for 1 year and 1 semester prior to their participation in this study at the beginning of February 2020 at the University of Leeds. The participants completed this questionnaire in their usual teaching groups within their Spanish Language Skills module at the end of their debates. As we have seen, there were 10 participant groups in total, with two of them having merged with another two as they were timetabled for their usual Spanish class at the same time. There was no selection of participants. The opportunity to participate in this study was offered to all second-year students of Spanish who wished to take part, a total of 154 students in this module. They all had different

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

136

language tutors and a mixture of students of varying proficiency and fluency levels of Spanish. Since the researcher is also a Spanish tutor at the University of Leeds, a small number of these students were her own students, either from the previous academic year or the current one. All the students were following the same programme of studies of weekly assessed oral debates in the second semester. Many of them study Spanish as a discovery module or as part of an honours degree together with a range of other specialist subjects across the faculties. All of the students were in the year prior to spending a year abroad in a Spanish speaking country either studying or working full-time.

In the space of one week, one by one, all of the teaching groups, 15 in total, were taken by the researcher who administered the questionnaires on completion of the debates. This meant that some days up to 4 different teaching groups would be seen. In groups where attendance was 4 or below, students were offered to take part in the debates, but these were excluded from the study as the numbers were deemed to be insufficient for a suitable and fully developed debate. Given that this experimental process had to be conducted in their timetabled lectures but out of the scheduled teaching semester, there was no option to offer these participants the opportunity to join another group. The remaining 10 groups were included in the study.

The main purpose of this post-task questionnaire was to be able to answer RQ2 of this study, as outline in chapter 4, i.e., are there any correlations between performance on the debate and participants' perceptions on fluency development? The intention was to gather qualitative data from the participants on L2 fluency on reflection of their participation in the intervention. Participant perceptions can potentially prove very useful in helping increase our understanding of how fluency may be improved through the completion of oral tasks and how task investment may be promoted for increased fluency outcomes. In addition to this, it was deemed important to gather their perceptions on the main aspect of the debate, that is, whether they felt that having to reach a conclusion in a debate would lead to improved fluency outcomes. As previously explained, this was so that these perceptions could be contrasted with the results speech analysis data gathered in the debates. Therefore, 15 questions were included in a 6-point Likert scale type questionnaire and they were fivefold: those regarding what the participants may perceive to be the main cause for their pauses in speech (Q1-Q3), the influence of topic familiarity on fluency (Q4), the impact

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

137

of reaching a conclusion on fluency (Q5-Q6), the efficiency of debates on improving fluency (Q7-Q8) and the impact of their own motivation on fluency outcomes (Q9-Q15). As explained in chapters 2 and 3, fluency in L2 may be impacted by several factors including dysfluent speech characterised by unintentional pauses (Segalowitz, 2010); the topic being unfamiliar to the speaker (Poupore, 2014), and insufficient learner motivation for task engagement (Dörnyei, 2005, 2009. 2014). As we have seen, Gatbonton and Segalowitz (1988, 2005) proposed a fluency teaching framework, ACCESS, based on genuinely communicative tasks, but exploring whether reaching a conclusion in a debate would lead to increased fluency outcomes represents a step forward in fluency research studies.

The following are the questions (see Table 2 below) included in the questionnaire and their corresponding variable item clusters or multi-item scales (Gillham, 2008; Dörnyei & Csizér, 2012):

Table 2: Variable item clusters or multi-item scales in questionnaire

Questionnaire Questions	Variable item clusters or multi-item scales
1. During debates in Spanish, I usually experience some pauses in my speech.	**Perceived cause of pauses** incurred in speech
2. These pauses are due to the difficulty retrieving the required word.	
3. Instead, these pauses are due to me being unsure as to what to say next.	
4. Participating in a debate on a familiar topic helps me speak more fluently.	**Influence of topic familiarity** on fluency
5. Having to reach an outcome at the end of the debate causes me to say what I intend more fluently.	**Impact of reaching an outcome on fluency**
6. Being asked to take part in the debate without reaching a final outcome makes my speech less fluent.	
7. Debates are an effective oral task to improve the fluency of my speech.	

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

138

8. Debates are more effective in helping me improve my fluency than delivering presentations on different topics or role-plays.	**Efficiency of debates on improving fluency**
9. I tend to speak more fluently when I feel more motivated.	**Impact of motivation on fluency**
10. The way in which an oral task is presented can affect my motivation to engage in it.	
11. I feel most motivated when I have prepared the topic and vocabulary beforehand.	
12. My motivation is best enhanced when I know I have to accomplish a goal during the task.	
13. Only if I am very interested in the topic will I feel motivated to speak fluently.	
14. Having the knowledge or experience to add to a debate will motivate me to invest myself in it.	
15. If there is a balance of known language resources and new ones to apply in an oral task, I feel motivated to invest myself in it.	

The above questionnaire (see Table 2) was designed in English for ease of use and to avoid potential issues with understanding the questions properly. It included a 6-point Likert scale answer section where participants were asked to tick the response that most accurately reflected their own opinion from 'strongly disagree' to 'strongly agree'. Numbers were also added from 1 to 6 and mathematical symbols, from --- to +++ respectively, to make it easier for participants to pinpoint exactly where their responses should be ticked (see Appendix 6, which shows the questionnaire's format). This additions were the researcher's piloted approach to make questionnaires easier to interpret.

Participants were administered this specifically designed post-task questionnaire just after the completion of the debates for two main reasons: firstly, to avoid influencing the oral task

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

139

in any way, thus maintaining its integrity; and secondly, so that they were able to base some of their answers on their experience of the debate they had just participated in. Questionnaire results were recorded and double-checked twice ensuring the results for all the answers totalled the overall number of responses per question, that is, 56. This ensured data was cleaned of possible errors or inaccuracies prior to analysis in SPSS. As all questionnaire questions were completed in their entirety, there were no missing data to report. Since the questionnaire in this study was specifically designed and made-to-measure (though inspired in Dörnyei & Csizér, 2012) for the current study, it is not possible to provide a general accurate measure of its external validity and reliability, but its internal consistency was checked for the degree of homogeneity of the items that integrate the multi-item scales in the questionnaire (Dörnyei, 2003). The alpha score for this test is presented in chapter 7. The premise for this analysis is that if several items can be shown to measure the same construct, this must be the intended construct (Dörnyei, 2003).

On completion of the debate with each group, the questionnaires were administered by the researcher via hard copy and the instructions for completing it explained. Participants were instructed to respond to all questions by ticking the response that most accurately reflected their own views. It was stressed that there were no right or wrong answers so that they felt able to provide their own answers freely. They were asked to write their names on their questionnaires, but they there reassured that these would be anonymized and that the content would remain confidential. It was explained to them that the purpose of the questionnaire was to better understand how students of Spanish may improve their fluency in oral tasks and how their investment in these tasks could be increased to further promote fluency outcomes. The questionnaires were completed in approximately 15 minutes with participants needing longer being allowed to stay until the end of the class to finish. All participants finished the questionnaires within the allotted time for each class. It was important not to put added pressure on the participants to complete the questionnaires as they needed to reflect on their experience as students of Spanish in general and the actual intervention that they had just participated in to be able to answer the questions. All questionnaires were completed, signed and returned to the researcher in person.

As has been mentioned before, a small number of participants chose not to take part in the debate. This represents a limitation with regards to the effectiveness of the questionnaire

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

140

results as these participants would not have been able to use their personal experience of the debate to answer the questions relating the intervention. In addition to this, and despite the relatively high number of participants from the overall cohort who opted in to complete the questionnaire, the sample for this study remains relatively low and therefore the findings drawn from the analysis of the data should be interpreted with caution.

5.11 Data analysis

The aim of this section is to set out how the design of this study meets the methodological prerequisites of my research questions. The current study aims at answering the following research questions, as previously outlined in chapter 4:

RQ1(a) What is the main reason for dysfluencies incurred during the debate and what are the most recurrent types?

RQ1(b) Does creative automatisation, defined as the ability to speak faster without unintentional pauses, improve as a result of having to reach a conclusion at the end of a debate?

RQ2 Are there any correlations between performance on the debate and participants' perceptions on fluency development?

RQ1(a) looks into the main dysfluencies incurred and the main reason that causes them;

RQ1(b) explores the effect on fluency of reaching a conclusion at the end of a debate; and finally,

RQ2 investigates the correlations between performance on the debate and the participants' perceptions through card use and through questionnaire responses.

RQ1(a): main dysfluencies incurred and the main reason that causes them

The aim of RQ1(a) was to investigate the main dysfluencies incurred by the participants in both groups A and B and look into the main underlying reason for these for instance, word retrieval difficulties, a change of topic, struggling to formulate what they intend to say, problems when articulating the intended message, hesitation caused by being unsure about specific morphological rules, etc. In order to look into this, the oral data collected was analysed to identify the commonest dysfluencies. The analysis of both transcriptions drawn

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

141

from the voice recordings was taken into account to identify the reasons behind these dysfluencies and provide a more comprehensive overview of these in context.

For RQ1(a) there is one independent variable *group*, which separates the participants in group A which would potentially incur less dysfluencies as they had to reach a conclusion which may have had a positive effect on their fluency, and those in group B who were only asked to engage in discussion during the debate.

RQ1(b): the effect on fluency of reaching a conclusion at the end of a debate

With the aim of investigating the effect on fluency of reaching a conclusion at the end of a debate, data collected during the 10 interventions was analysed. The focus of analysis was to investigate whether the fluency rate of participants in group A (conclusion-outcome) was higher than that of participants in group B (discussion only) in each of the debates. This included data from all participants in varying numbers in each class and establishing a comparison between them to identify the highest fluency levels.

For RQ1(a), there is also one independent variable *group*, which distinguished the participants which were randomly allocated to group A, required to reach a conclusion at the end of the debate, and those assigned to group B, who were instructed only to take part in the discussion.

RQ2: correlations between performance on the debate and the participants' perceptions

The main aim of RQ2 was to explore whether there were any correlations between performance on the debate from both groups A and B and their perceptions on whether having to reach a conclusion had a positive influence on the performance of group A or not. This would naturally mean comparing the participants' perceptions, subjective in nature, with their objective fluency scores. Despite the different nature of these data, the potential findings drawn from these could potentially shed light on what L2 learners perceive is most effective for improving their fluency. These findings would of course have to be interpreted with caution. For this purpose, speech data from the debates was collected to ascertain fluency rates and the data drawn from the participants' questionnaires was analysed to be able to establish any correlations.

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

142

As for the previous two research questions, for RQ2 there is also one independent variable *group*, which separates the participants in group A and B with their varying fluency rates and replies to the questionnaires.

5.12 Dependent variables

In order to answer RQ1(b) regarding the effect on fluency of reaching an conclusion at the end of a debate, some dependent variables were used to measure participants' *fluency*. Other variables such as *complexity* and *accuracy,* although part of the conventional CAF triad (Skehan, 1996; 1998) for measuring L2 oral performance, were not measured as the focus of the present research is on fluency and the decision was made that these are beyond the scope of this study.

In this section I will introduce the dependent variables of fluency that have been used for analysis and the rationale for doing so as well as an explanation of how these measures have been calculated (see Tables 3 and 4, respectively):

Table 3: Overview of aspects, fluency measures and usual generic calculations

Dependent Variable	Aspect	Measure	Calculation
Fluency	**Speed**	Speech rate	Total number of pruned words produced in 60 seconds divided by total time taken to produce the sample (incl. pauses) and multiplied by 60.
		Mean length of run	Total number of pruned words produced in 60 seconds divided by total number of 'runs' produced (i.e., stretches of speech uninterrupted by pauses >250ms)

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

143

		Articulation rate	Total number of words produced in 60 seconds divided by total 'speaking time' excluding all pauses and multiplied by 60 (or total sample time minus all pauses >250ms)
	Breakdown	Frequency of mid-clause pause (filled and silent)	Number of mid-clause pauses >250ms divided by time taken to produce the sample, multiplied by 60
	Repair	Frequency of self-corrections and reformulations	Total number of self-corrections and reformulations divided by time taken to produce the sample multiplied by 60

Table 4: Overview of fluency measures with specific calculations used in this study

Speech rate	Total number of pruned words produced in the analysed speech sample (20 sec) divided by the sample time (incl. pauses) and multiplied by 60.
Mean length of run	Total number of pruned words produced in the analysed speech sample (20 sec) divided by total number of 'runs' produced (i.e., stretches of speech uninterrupted by pauses >250ms)
Articulation rate	Total number of words produced in the analysed speech sample (20 sec) divided by total 'speaking time' (20 secs) excluding all pauses >250ms and multiplied by 60 (or total sample time minus all pauses >250ms)
Frequency of mid-clause pause (filled and silent)	Number of mid-clause pauses >250ms divided by analysed speech sample (20 sec), multiplied by 60
Frequency of self-corrections and reformulations	Total number of self-corrections and reformulations divided by analysed speech sample time (20 sec), multiplied by 60

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

144

Although measuring fluency is a challenging endeavour, as we saw in chapter 2, the measures selected for this study have been identified as being most reliable in SLA research. Also, there is consensus among researchers that the most salient aspects of fluency are speed, breakdown and repair (Skehan, 2003). Thus, the focus on these specific aspects of fluency.

Speech rate measures how fast the delivery of the speech takes place and the extent of the pausing that occurs. Speech rate has often been calculated as syllables or words per minute. In the current study words per minute have been chosen as Spanish is a more morphologically rich language than English, for instance, and, therefore, words are more likely to be pronounced with more variation, as errors in the prefixes and suffixes are more common. As this study is concerned with the main reasons that dysfluency happens in speech, it makes more sense to measure fluency in terms of words as these are conceptual units and the learner strives to retrieve these from the lexicon (Levelt, 1989) rather than syllables. As Witton-Davis (2017) points out, they seem to be a more suitable measure for the speed of the conceptualizer and formulator whereas syllables may be used to measure the speed of the articulator. This study is concerned with exploring the dysfluencies that are originated in the learners' conceptualizer and formulator rather than those due to problems related to the articulator. For this study, speech rate has been calculated as the total number of pruned words produced in 60 seconds divided by total time taken to produce the sample (incl. pauses) and multiplied by 60.

Mean length of run is another fluency measure that is applied in this study. Typically, it provides a measurement of the average number of syllables, words in this study, uttered between two pauses. It reflects the speed of speech as well as how much oral content the learner is able to utter in between pauses. It also provides insightful information about where pauses are positioned within learners' utterances whether it be at the beginning, in the middle or at the end of clauses, which allows for the exploration of why these occur in those specific places in the utterance and the pedagogic implications of this in the design of oral tasks. It is important to clearly define pauses as they have an impact in the length of run. In this study, pauses will be considered such if the silence is a minimum of 250ms (de Jong et al., 2012) and they may be silent or filled. Therefore, for this study the mean length of run

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

145

was calculated as the total number of pruned words produced in 60 seconds divided by total number of 'runs' produced (i.e., stretches of speech uninterrupted by pauses >250ms).

Speed fluency is measured by calculating the articulation rate of the participants' utterances. Although it represents the speed of the articulatory processes (de Jong & Perfetti, 2011), it does reflect occurrences such as when the participants lengthen the last syllable of any word as a form of pausing in a way which is similar to a filled pause such as "ehm", ""er", etc. Thus, this measure has been chosen for this study and was calculated as the total number of words produced in 60 seconds divided by total 'speaking time' excluding all pauses and multiplied by 60 (or total sample time minus all pauses >250ms).

The study will also look at the dysfluencies that take place in the participants' speech. The two phenomena that will be explored are breakdown fluency, in particular, mid-clause pauses, whether filled, silent or composite, and frequency or reformulations and self-correction. As the main focus of this study is to investigate why breakdown and repair occur, rather than produce a set of measurements that reflect pause length or amount of pausing, these will be explored from the actual transcriptions and speaking samples. The aim will be to capture any patterns or changes between participants and look into the they in which these use breakdown and repair when struggling with fluency in speech.

Both filled and silent pauses (Jong & Perfetti, 2011) can be seen as signs of breakdown fluency and their main function is to allow the speaker to deal with any difficulties processing and articulating speech. As Hunter (2017) points out, the only difference between them is that when producing a filled pause the speaker is not only dealing with a fluency processing difficulty but they are also trying to 'hold the floor' as it is less likely they would be interrupted in this case than if they remain silent for a while. This shows that the speaker is keen to maintain the oral interaction although they seem temporarily unable to do so as they experience a problem with speech processing.

An insightful aspect in breakdown fluency is provided by the positioning that pauses have in speech, whether these occur in the middle of a clause/speech unit or at the end. Skehan and Foster (2007) and Tavakoli (2010), for instance, have found that L2 speakers are more likely to pause within AS units and clauses as it is argued this means they are more likely

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

146

to struggle to formulate the message they intend to say and, therefore, they tend to need longer pauses to allow themselves planning time (de Jong, 2016). Therefore, this study will focus on the pauses that take place within utterances as these may provide more insight with regards to the linguistic processing difficulties the speaker is going through.

Finally, repair fluency is investigated in the current study in terms of the frequency of reformulations and self-corrections and their implications on speech fluency. For instance, error repairs could be of linguistic nature or they could be made to adjust meaning or appropriateness, for instance, by reformulating a new message (Levelt, 1983; Kormos, 1999, 2006). This study will look at self-corrections which seem to be more linked to cognitive fluency and the speaker's monitoring process.

5.13 Data coding and analysis

In this section, I set out how the oral speech samples collected from the participants were coded and analysed. In particular, I explain how the data was transcribed orthographically and analysed using computer software such as PRAAT.

All data samples were audio-recorded using an Olympus VN-540PC voice recorder. This was placed for each debate in the middle of the semicircle the participants were positioned in in every classroom so that all their voices were optimally recorded for best quality samples. It was operated only by the researcher and turned on and off as required prior to the start and after the end of each debate. Participants were also instructed in their information sheets to speak clearly at their normal speed and try not to overlap their contributions to the debate with those of others.

Despite the popularity of the use of computer software such as PRAAT to analyse L2 speech, this was tricky as, inevitably, with the data samples having been collected in classrooms, there were instances of overlapping and occasional outside noise which could prove a problem for PRAAT in detecting silence when automatically detecting pauses (Hunter, 2017). Another issue is that PRAAT can calculate speech rate but not pruned speech rate and it cannot consider filled pauses as pauses. It soon become apparent that in order to overcome such limitations, manual annotation would have to be used to identify

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

147

filled pauses and that fluency measures would also have to be calculated manually. A drawback of using PRAAT is that it requires the researcher to commit to a significant time investment to manually annotate these speech phenomena. The decision to do this instead of using a specifically designed computer script (Hunter 2014) was made to ensure the complete precision of the measurements. Manual annotation, although time-consuming, made possible the quantitative analysis of speech samples produced and collected in a language classroom environment in this study.

Figure 5: PRAAT textgrid illustrating analysis of a speech sample with manually annotated information including pausing and segments for all 5 tiers
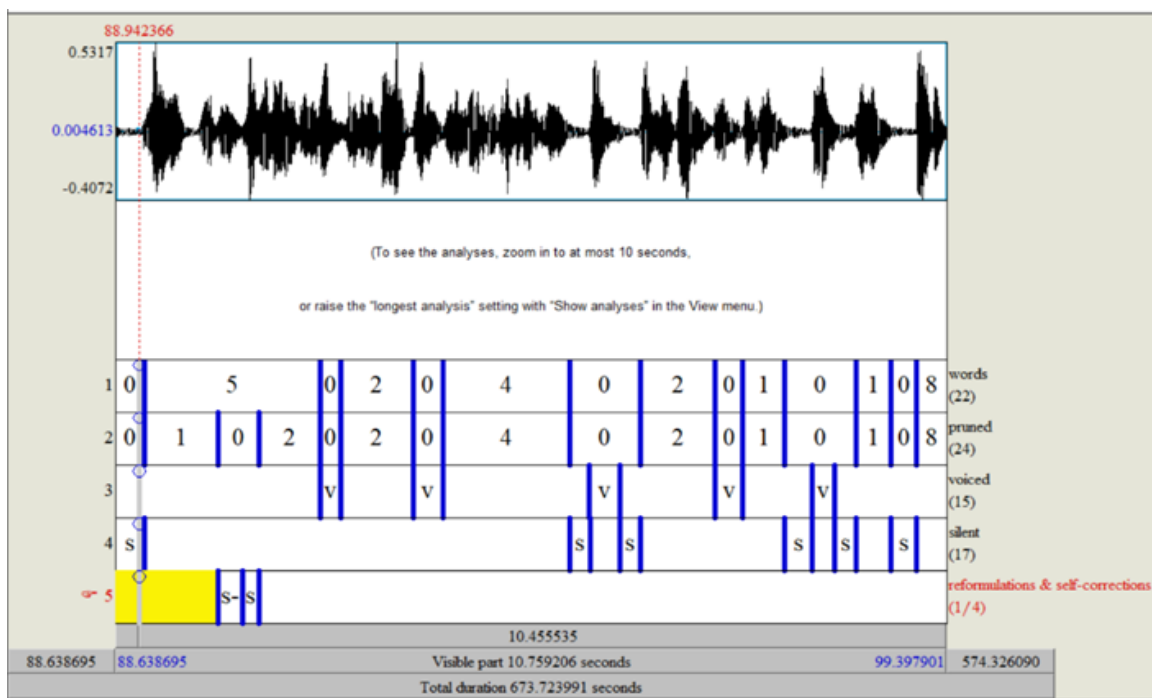
56 speech samples from the intervention were analysed. These were converted to .WAV files as this is the only compatible format for PRAAT. Each sample produced a spectrogram with a textgrid in which the researcher was able to annotate the speech sample (see Figure 5 above). The analysis began at the first word or filled pause uttered by the participant in a maximum length of speech of 20 seconds. Initially, this limit was intended to be 1 minute, however, after closer inspection of the samples, it soon became apparent that 20 seconds was the maximum length of speech produced by most of the participants in all debates. Considering a longer duration would have meant having to disregard a considerable number

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

148

of samples for analysis. Keeping the duration to 20 seconds meant that most of the samples were utilised, resulting in a higher number of samples being analysed, thus adding to the reliability of the study. Thus, the judgement was made to cut off each participant recording sample at 20 seconds in order to maintain consistency across all the samples. A similar strategy had to be adopted by Hunter (2017) who also made the judgement to analyse the first minute of her samples as most of the participants in her study stopped speaking before the initially intended period of 2 minutes. In order to be able to measure the fluency rate of the conclusion this was selected over the first utterance of the specific participant and in a maximum of 20 seconds. This could be of lexical content (i.e., 'Estoy'. A filler (i.e., 'sí') or a non-verbal filler (i.e., 'ehm'). The screen view could be zoomed in at .2 of a second for a very detailed measurement and to provide additional information such as pitch and intensity facilitating the identification of beginnings and ends of pausing (Hunter, 2017).

Filled pauses were identified following a process of repeatedly listening to fragments of the speech samples whilst studying the spectrogram. Filled pauses were selected for analysis as well as the occurrences of silent pauses. The use of filled pauses could be due to the fact that specially during a debate, participants are very conscious of holding the floor as they know that being silent for a period of time would be the cue for another participant to take a turn in the debate. A filled pause may be a sign that the speaker in trying to maintain the floor when speaking as it is more difficult to interrupt a person who is saying 'um', for instance, than someone who has temporarily stopped speaking, especially in a culture that supports this type of interaction between speakers (Hunter, 2017). Therefore, only filled or silent pauses totalling .25 of a second or longer (de Jong et al., 2012) were annotated on the textgrid for analysis. Very often silent and filled pauses appear together in the data also carrying out the function of allowing the speaker planning time to conceptualize content or formulate speech. These composite pauses are considered as a 'cluster' of pauses or 'hesitation group' (e.g., Hilton, 2009; 2014; Roberts & Kirsner, 2000) and they constitute a pause phenomenon that amalgamates both filled and voiced pauses together within a run.

Both the beginning and ends of these two types of pauses were annotated in the textgrid for the whole speech sample. Each pause was marked as either a filled or silent pause. After completing the annotation process, each pause was inspected again to identify its position (mid-clause as opposed to end-clause). This was achieved by listening to the

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

149

recording again and studying the transcription previously marked with clause boundaries. This information was also added on the textgrid. The speech runs between pauses were listened to again and a manual count of the words was registered on the textgrid. The number of words pronounced by the participant in each speech run was checked against the transcription and was entered manually into the textgrid. This resulted in an advantage when compared with studies where syllables were counted as the number of anticipated syllables may not always coincide with the number of actually uttered ones (Hunter, 2017). Counting words, whether these have been uttered with the correct number of syllables or not is like counting units and reduces the margin for error that would be expected in other studies where syllables are counted instead. It is also a measure that has visual confirmation in the transcripts. Moreover, fluency does not depend on whether a participant is able to pronounce all syllables in a word.

Non-verbal fillers shorter than .25 of a second were counted as a unit as well as partially uttered words, repetitions, etc. Other non-verbal phenomena such as laughter, throat-clearing and verbal such as short utterances in English were not taken into account in the analysis. The time spent producing these phenomena was discounted from the sample calculation for speech rate. These phenomena were considered the end of runs where appropriate. When the speech sample overrun the 20 seconds, the analysis stopped at the previous run boundary and any other pauses produced after this were discounted from the analysis. All recordings were analysed again in order to manually annotate reformulations and self-corrections on the textgrid. A final analysis was done in order to count pruned words on the textgrid. Pruning involved removing the following: non-lexical fillers (*um; er*) shorter that 250ms; words which were part of repair, lexical fillers ('*sí', 'bueno', 'bien'*) (Derwing et al., 2004). This pruned word count was then added to the textgrid below the raw word count. The complete analysis resulted in a file containing the speech data with manually annotated information about the raw and pruned words, pause segments, type and position of pauses (filled and silent) and incidences of repetitions and self-corrections.

Once the analysis for all 56 speech samples had been completed, all calculations for all fluency measures selected speed, breakdown and repair for were carried out separately in excel and an accurate record was kept on file. These data were used to calculate the dependent variables of fluency preciously outlined.

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

150

Summary of analysis procedure

1.   Analysis starts at the first word uttered, filler or non-verbal filler

2.   Screen view zoomed in to .2 of a second to identify beginning and ends of runs   of speech and pauses.

3.   Silent, filled and composite pauses to be identified and marked totaling .25 of a second or longer.

4.   Identify pause position (mid-clause or end-clause).

5.   Words in each run to be counted and annotated.

6.   Non-verbal fillers shorter than .25 sec were counted as a word as well as partially uttered words, repetitions.

7.   Non-verbal phenomena such as laughter, coughing and throat -clearing were ignored. The time spent in these was removed from the sample although it did mark the ends of runs.

8.   When speech is cut off in the middle of a run, the analysis stopped at the previous run boundary and any subsequent pause was removed from analysis.

9.   Recording is analysed a second time to annotate reformulation and self-correction phenomena.

10.   Recording is analysed a third time to count pruned words and mark them on the textgrid. Pruning involved discounting the following:

a. Non-lexical fillers (*um; er*) shorter that 250ms.

b. Lexical fillers ('*bueno', 'bien', 'sabes'*, etc.).

c. Words involved in repair.

The pruned word count was then added to the textgrid below the unpruned or 'raw' word count.

11.   The final analysis produces a file which combines the speech data and manually-annotated information about raw and pruned words, beginnings and ends of pauses, type and position of pauses and incidences of repetition and reformulation.

5.14 Transcription procedure and coding

The WAV. sound files of the debates with a duration of approximately 10 minutes each were transcribed as follows:

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

151

1.   The words from all participants were typed, using MCH Software Suite, which allows easy access to functions such as rewind, play and fast forward and enables the repetition of the last few words before proceeding with playing the subsequent ones.

2.   The recording was then listened to again, fragment by fragment, to ensure all words and pauses were faithfully transcribed.

3.   Writing conventions (i.e., punctuation) were not used except for question marks (in Spanish at the beginning and at the end of the intended question) as they are a marker for intonation. Capital letters were only used for participants' anonymised names, for clarity purposes. Accents were added accordingly as they show where the stress falls on a specific syllable within accentuated words. It was found that intonation and accentuation aid the transcription process. Words were transcribed the way they were pronounced rather than the way they are orthographically spelt, which means that some spellings look incorrect in the transcriptions.

Table 5: Transcription symbols

Transcription symbols	
Symbol	**Symbol Explanation**
Boundary Markers	
| |	|Vertical lines| are used as boundary markers for the beginning and end of a speech unit, named by Foster, Tonkyn and Wigglesworth (2000) analysis of speech units or AS units. An AS unit consists of one clause, or two or more connected clauses. In AS units with more than a single clause, one clause should be identifiable as the main clause and the others as subordinate or coordinate clauses. Two clauses without any subordination or linking phrase (e.g., a conjunction, adverb, relative pronoun) are classed as two AS units. For Foster et al. (2000), elliptical expressions can count as AS units, even if they only consist of one word. Thus, 'sí' (yes), 'para mí' (for me), 'de verda'' (really) or 'quizás' (perhaps), standing alone, were counted as an AS unit. However, when these expressions begin an utterance, they were included within the following unit, of which they are considered a part.
::	A double colon marks the beginning of a new clause or verbal group within a speech unit.

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

152

Breakdown	
	Filled pause written as '*um'*, *'er'* or *'erm'*.
Repair	
{ }	{Curly brackets} are used for all speech that is not considered part of the final utterance and is not included in "pruned" speech. This includes repair (or more properly, "reparanda– language that is later repeated, corrected or abandoned), filled pauses, laughter.
[ ]	Repetition involving re-utterance of speech, coded in transcriptions but not analysed as beyond the scope of this study.
[//]	Self-correction – involving one or several attempts at correcting previously uttered
[///]	Reformulation - Only reformulations that involve replacements was analysed in this study. The symbol [///] was placed before the replacement.

The coding process was also completed in different stages to ensure all the phenomena to be analysed were coded accurately according to a series of selected CLAN conventions (see Table 5 above), including fragmentation in speech or AS units (Foster et al., 2000):

1.   Firstly. the speech was divided into analysis of speech (AS) units and clauses, following Foster et al. (2000). This involved listening again to the recordings.

2.   Then, the AS units were divided into clauses, marking the beginning of a new verbal group.

3.   Filled pauses were also marked as '*mm', 'um'*, '*erm'* or *'er', uh* following the convention for marking this type of pauses. In order to consider only those measuring over .25 second for analysis they were all marked until PRAAT analysis was completed per transcription where only these length pauses and over would be marked and counted in the analysis. Other noises such words spoken in English, throat clearing sounds, laughter, etc. were also coded.

4.   Curly brackets were added to separate off words and sounds that were removed in pruned speech (Lennon, 1990, p. 406). This included *reparanda*

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

153

(words later repeated, reformulated or abandoned as false starts), filled pauses, speech in English, throat clearing and laughter.

5.   Repetition of words or phrases was also marked when the participant would start uttering a words or words and then stop before repeating the same words without change.

6.   Finally, reformulations that involved replacements were also marked.

5.15 Chapter summary

In this chapter, I set out the details of the pilot study which help inform the current study design. I explain the context in which the study took place and the characteristics of the groups and participants who took part in it. I detail the intervention task and procedure and the role of the researcher in the whole data collection process. I also explain the rationale for the use of novel dysfluency explanatory cards to shed light on the reasons for pausing by the participants. I explain the filming and voice recording of all interventions and the process of completing the post-task questionnaire to gather the participants' perceptions on fluency and task design. I set out the details of the speech data coding and analysis for this study. I detail the steps to calculate fluency measures by using the computer software PRAAT to generate automated speech analysis data and manually annotated speech phenomena such as type and pause segments and incidences of repair previously selected. I also set out the CLAN symbols used for coding the transcriptions and the phenomena to be marked for analysis.

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

154

Chapter 6: Quantitative and qualitative results

6.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the results of the quantitative and qualitative analyses carried out in the current study are presented. This chapter is divided into three sections. The first section seeks to answer RQ1 (a), that is, what the main reasons may be for dysfluencies incurred and what the most recurrent types are, specifically comparing data from two groups - the task or conclusion-focused group and the non-conclusion focused group. The second section seeks to answer RQ1(b), that is, whether creative automatisation, defined as the ability to speak faster without unintentional pauses, improves as a result of reaching a conclusion at the end of the debate. Finally, the third section seeks to answer RQ2, that is, whether there are any associations between the participants' performance on the debate and their perceptions on fluency drawn from their use of the cards and their responses to the questionnaire. Finally, an overview of the results is provided to indicate whether there is a task effect to conclude each section in this chapter.

6.2 RQ1 (a) – Types of dysfluency: Quantitative Results

This section begins with an explanation of the screening of the study task data aimed at checking for outliers, normal data distribution and homogeneity of the data. This is followed by word by word analysis carried out on the speech data which was collected during the study task and the presentation of the findings in relation to the mean length of run, type and frequency of dysfluencies incurred based on specific data selected from the whole data set. This includes findings with regards to repair carried out by the participants in their speech.

6.2.1 MLR, type and frequency of dysfluencies and repair with specific data findings

In chapter 5, breakdown and repair were selected to measure pausing in speech and how dysfluencies were repaired in the present study. Breakdown was operationalised as frequency of mid-clause pauses (filled and silent) and repair as frequency of self-corrections and reformulations. Firstly, I will present the screening of the study task data which includes

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

155

all the descriptives, and checking for outliers, normal data distribution and homogeneity of the data. Then, both quantitative and qualitative analyses of the findings with regards to the three main variables investigated, that is, MLR, type and frequency of mid-clause pauses and type and frequency of repair.

6.2.2 Screening of study task data

The analyses relating to fluency were conducted on the data drawn from the study task. These are presented all together as a cohort to show the general fluency values overall. In order to analyse the speech data for impact of task, the data was then split by group: A (conclusion-focused) and B (non-conclusion focused). In this instance, descriptives are given for these two groups separately. The following are the fluency measures and their abbreviations used in this study (see Table 6):

Table 6: Fluency measures and their abbreviations used in this study

Measure	Abbreviations
Speech rate	**SR**
Mean length of run	**MLR**
Articulation rate	**AR**
Frequency of mid-clause pause (voiced and silent)	**Freq-MCP**
Frequency of self-corrections and reformulations	**Freq-R**

Table 7 below presents the main data for the fluency measures. In order to present a clear overview of the distribution of the data with regards to the study task, three types of statistics were used: measures of frequency, central tendency and variability. Since the mean for all fluency measures is the basis for the statistical tests selected further on for data analysis, this is reported here together with the standard deviation (SD), range and the minimum and maximum data points. As the standard deviation measures the dispersion of the data, that is, whether these are tightly clustered around the mean or spread out from it, it provides important information.

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

156

The SD for MLR (M=1.737) and Freq-R (M=2.308) are smaller in contrast with the rest of the fluency measures, SR (SD=23.058), AR (SD=25.282) and Freq-MCP (SD=10.412). Although typically low SD indicates that the data are clustered around the mean and high SD means that data are more spread out, the whole unit needs to be taken into account for accurate interpretation of the data. The range is the difference of the maximum and minimum data points, and it is also included as it gives a sense of the spread between the ends of the data points. The minimum point for Freq-R is 0 as many participants did not incur any repair during their speech.The low absolute SD value for MLR and Freq-R would suggest that these are are clustered around the mean. However, it can be appreciated that Freq-R is very spread out if we look at the range values. This is also the case with SR, AR and Freq-MCP.

Table 7: Measures of Central Tendency and Dispersion used in the fluency data analysis

	N	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
SR	56	111	54	165	94.88	23.058
MLR	56	9	2	11	4.50	1.737
AR	56	125	65	190	112.96	25.282
Freq-MCP	56	45	12	57	32.73	10.412
Freq-R	56	9	0	9	1.98	2.308
Valid N (listwise)	56					

The outliers represent data which are atypical of the rest of the data set and suggest that the data need to be looked at carefully to determine whether these atypical data are representative of the rest of the group data. After careful inspection of the all the boxplots for each of the fluency variables based on the calculations of two inter-quartile range multipliers 1.5 and 3.0, no outliers were detected in any of the fluency variables. It can be concluded that there were no atypical data in these variables.

Another aspect that is important to check for is normal distribution of data as extreme skewness may not show actual group differences and it also serves the purpose of verifying that the distribution shown corresponds to the numerical data it is based on. In addition to this, it shows whether there are any anomalies in the data before the inferential tests are

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

157

run. For this reason, the scores for skewness and kurtosis are also shown in Table 8 (see Appendix 7). The scores for skewness are generally under 1 with the exception of MLR (1.510) which is also considered normal as skewness should be less than 2.

In order to check for the normal distribution of data, histograms with an overlaid normal curve, Stem-and-Leaf plots and Q-Q plots were produced. Following close inspection of these, it was observed that the data are normally distributed. However, since histograms provide only a general measure, Stem-and-Leaf plots and Q-Q plots were also produced to get a full picture of the data distribution. The Stem-and-Leaf plots scores show the frequency count and the actual values, all data points and their distribution, which appears to be normal for all variables. The Q-Q plots plot the quantiles of the data against those of the normal distribution and they show that the sampling distribution line follows the same line as the normal distribution, which confirms that data are normally distributed. To conclude, the assumption of normality has been met for the above mentioned tests.

As well as assessing graphic data summaries for normal distribution, it is also important to evaluate numerical values. For this reason, normality tests (goodness-of-fit Kolmogorov-Smirnov and the Shapiro-Wilk) were also run (see Table 9, Appendix 7). Kolmogorov-Smirnov test of normality show that the p-values for SR, AR and Freq-MCP were equal ($p = .200$) and above 0.05, which means that the null hypothesis (H_0) has to be rejected and the alternative hypothesis (Ha) accepted, that is, that these data do not follow a normal distribution. These scores are atypical of the rest of the dataset and can be considered outliers. Similarly, the Shapiro-Wilk test indicates that the scores for SR ($p = 0.21$), AR ($p = 0.73$) and Freq-MCP ($p = 0.444$) are also above 0.05 leading to the conclusion that these data are not normally distributed. This could be due to the strength of these tests as data were shown to follow a normal distribution in the previous tests. To conclude, these tests have shown that the normal distribution assumptions have not been met in this case and, for this reason, the data can only be considered approximately normally distributed.

Given that the group data do not meet the assumption of normal distribution in all tests, the decision was made to run non-parametric tests as these do not rely on the normal distribution of the data. These are considered robust statistics which perform well in cases of violation of assumptions such as deviation from a normal distribution (Larson-Hall, 2016).

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

158

These tests were run on two specific samples: the participants in group A who uttered the conclusion at the end of the task and the final speakers in group B who spoke last before the conclusion. The decision to use these specific samples from each data set was to be able to detect any differences between the distribution of the conclusion-focused group and the non-conclusion focused group which would lead to inferences as to whether the independent variable had an effect on group A.

In order to assess whether the two independent samples of this study were selected from populations having the same distribution, the independent samples Mann-Whitney U test was run (for test summary see Table 10, Appendix 8). Since the p values for all fluency measures were greater than 0.05, it can be concluded that the null hypothesis based on the premise that the distributions of both data samples are equal has to be retained for all fluency measures.

Normality statistics and plot tests were run to compare the two specific groups, that is, A (conclusion-focused) and B (final speakers) including range, minimum and maximum points, mean and SD, as shown in Table 11 below. Close inspection of plots i.e., histograms, Stem-and-Leaf plots and Q-Q plots, interestingly, revealed normal distribution of data.

Table 11: Measures of Central Tendency and Dispersion for A (conclusion-focused) and B (final speakers)

Experiment		N	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
A	SR	10	63	54	117	84.90	19.902
	MLR	10	4	2	6	3.90	1.370
	AR	10	59	74	133	111.10	19.267
	Freq-MCP	10	27	24	51	33.00	9.274
	Freq-R	10	9	0	9	3.30	2.627
	Valid N (listwise)	10					
B	SR	10	39	75	114	98.70	13.149
	MLR	10	5	3	8	4.80	1.398
	AR	10	66	65	131	109.80	19.938
	Freq-MCP	10	39	18	57	37.50	11.937
	Freq-R	10	6	0	6	1.80	2.530

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

159

		10				
Valid N (listwise)		10				

To determine whether there was a difference in the means of these two specific groups, an Independent-Samples Mann-Whitney U Test was run (see Table 12 below). While four of the target variables were significantly different between the two groups, it was not always in the expected direction.

Table 12: Results of the Independent-Samples Mann-Whitney U Test for A (conclusion-focused) and B (final speakers)

	Experiment	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
SR	A	10	8.35	83.50
	B	10	12.65	126.50
	Total	20		
MLR	A	10	8.80	88.00
	B	10	12.20	122.00
	Total	20		
AR	A	10	10.75	107.50
	B	10	10.25	102.50
	Total	20		
Freq-MCP	A	10	9.35	93.50
	B	10	11.65	116.50
	Total	20		
Freq-R	A	10	12.20	122.00
	B	10	8.80	88.00
	Total	20		

The SR for Group A (Mean Rank = 8.35, N = 10), was lower than for Group B (Mean Rank = 12.65, N = 10), U = 28.500, Z = -1.633, p = .105 (not corrected for ties).

The MLR for A (Mean Rank = 8.80, N = 10), was lower than for B (Mean Rank = 12.20, N = 10), U = 33.000 Z = -1.334, p = .218 (not corrected for ties)

The AR for A (Mean Rank = 10.75, N = 10), was higher than for B (Mean Rank = 10.25, N = 10), U = 47.500, Z = -189, p = .853 (not corrected for ties).

The Freq-MCP for A (Mean Rank = 9.35, N = 10), was lower than for B (Mean Rank = 11.65, N = 10), U = 38.500, Z = -874, p = .393 (not corrected for ties).

The Freq-R for A (Mean Rank = 12.20, N = 10), was higher than for B (Mean Rank = 8.80, N = 10), U = 33.000, Z = -1.377, p = .218 (not corrected for ties).

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

160

It can be concluded that the effect of the task on group A was found in AR and Freq-R, specifically, which showed higher values compared to the same variables in group B. This means an increase in AR and frequency of repair in group A compared to group B. Also, the task effect on group A was found in Freq-MCP, showing a lower value compared to the same variable in group B. This means a reduced incidence of pausing in group A compared to group B. No statistically significant effect was found in any of these fluency measures. This lack of significant effect in the comparison of these two groups means it cannot be ruled out that chance may have played a role in the performance of group A rather than exclusively being the artefact of task effect.

Articulation Rate, Frequency of Repair and Frequency of Pausing
As we have seen, the speech data analyses carried out on the fluency measures for the debate reveal an effect for the conclusion utterers in group A on AR, which was higher compared to that of the final speakers in group B, and on Freq-R which was also higher, as well as an effect on Freq-MCP which was lower than that of the final speakers in group B. These are the main quantitative findings on fluency performance in this study. The study task effect was not found to have an impact on the other fluency measures adopted in this study, that is, speech rate and mean length of run which showed lower values for the conclusion utterers in group A that the final speakers in group B.

Although the results of the speech analyses reveal that the conclusion utterers produced their conclusion slightly faster than the final speakers in group B, the difference in AR scores is very small. However, the difference in mean ranks between the two groups for Freq MCP and Freq-R is larger. This means that the conclusion utterers spoke with less pausing and more repair than final speakers in group B. This could be due to the conclusion utterers' intention to produce more focused and accurate conclusions in comparison to the final speakers perhaps putting more emphasis on uttering their contributions to the debate over speed or accuracy. The responsibility felt by the conclusion utterers to produce a final conclusion to the debate may have had the effect of reinforcing their vision of themselves as L2 users performing this specific function on behalf of the whole group resulting in them prioritising their "performance" in uttering their conclusions and focusing on more targeted speech output.

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

161

Type and frequency of mid-clause pauses

As explained in Chapter 2, the frequency of mid-clause pauses reflects how often the speaker speaks with pauses greater than 250ms in the 20 seconds taken to produce the sample to be analysed. Given the specific finding emerged from this study regarding this fluency measure, that is, a reduced incidence of pausing in the A group participants, it is worth discussing the context in which pausing took place in this task by all the participants, the type of pausing and the possible causes for this.

As we have seen, the presence of pausing in speech has been attributed by Segalowitz to the inability on the part of the speaker to produce speech fluently, that is, without "undue hesitation or pauses" (Segalowitz, 2007) and it evidences the lack of automaticity in speech. Whilst end-clause pauses have been related to difficulties in conceptual planning, mid-clause pauses have been linked to problems with formulation (Skehan, Foster & Shum, 2016) as some speakers may pause to try and formulate the next message.

In this study, mid-clause pausing was prioritised for analysis over end-clause pausing as it aims to focus on disfluencies caused due to problems with formulation and it seems to be the most common phenomenon, thus warranting a more focused analysis. After careful observation of the entire set of participants' speech data, most of the incidences of mid-clause pausing took place before specific words which the participants struggled to formulate due to the specific context, echoing Pawley and Syder (1983) who point out that the delivery of fluent speech is based on the ability of the speaker to construct one clause at a time: "the speaker must be able regularly to encode whole clauses, in their full lexical detail, in a single encoding operation and so avoid the need for mid-clause hesitations." (Pawley & Syder, 1983, p. 204). The following data examples (see Tables 13 and 14 below) are characteristic of this type of lexical or encoding dysfluencies and support the argumentation that this type of encoding dysfluencies lead to hesitation and pausing mid-clause:

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

162

Table 13: Example of lexical dysfluencies from speech data and likely causes for these

Example of dysfluency (in bold)	Likely cause for dysfluency
Ambie: […] por ejemplo yo pienso :: que {erm} **las redes sociales** aumentan la preción por los jóvenes {erm} **con respecto a** {erm} su {image} **imagen** […].	Difficulty retrieving specific word for context, i.e., nouns and adverbial phrases.

However, the data analysis revealed that the instances where the pausing preceded a difficulty with grammatical or syntactical encoding were far greater, as the characteristic examples below show:

Table 14: Example of grammatical encoding dysfluencies from speech data and likely causes for these dysfluencies

Example of dysfluency (in bold)	Likely cause for dysfluency
Eli: las noticias :: {que} [que] {erm} **involven** la política son los más importantes	Difficulty formulating the correct verbal form.
Cice: y puedes pensar {sobre la} [///] sobre el reto de la {erm erm} **del** conocimiento sobre el cambio climático comparada a hace cinco años	Difficulty remembering the correct gender agreement between definite article and noun.
Alexi:	por supuesto	y {er} para mí {er} {un} {er} **una** diferencia muy increíble entre nuestra generación	Difficulty remembering the correct gender agreement between indefinite article and noun.
Gigio: y entonces hemos causado mucho {erm} [//] **mucha** destrucción en esos países	Difficulty remembering the correct gender for a quantifier.
Hols: {erm} bueno para mi yo creo que {erm} las redes sociales	y la perfecta imagen que {erm}{proponemos} :: [//] **proponen** a [//] al mundo y especialmente a los jóvenes	Difficulty selecting the correct verbal form.

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

163

Pitto: | sí | y también {erm} **ten** en cuenta las generaciones futuras :: que es un aspecto muy importante |	Difficulty selecting the correct verbal tense.
Alexi: | y también a mi modo de ver puede que {er} Brexit {er} **sea** no tan importante	Difficulty selecting the correct verbal mode i.e., subjunctive.
Rosman: | pienso que hay mucho miedo {er} alrededor de este tema especialmente en nuestro pais :: porque hemos {er} **sufrido** de ataques terroristas	Difficulty remembering the past participle of the verb being conjugated.
Mari: | sí y también con el aumento de la otra derecha no solo en el Reino Unido pero en todo el mundo {erm} {afecta} [///] **nos [afecta]** mucho	Difficulty remembering the correct reflexive pronoun.
Soph: porque el gobierno {erm} **tiene {mucho a ganar}** sí [mucho a ganar]	Difficulty remembering verbal construction equivalent to the English 'has much to gain'
Elena: 1:56 | estoy de acuerdo | y un argumento vinculado a tu punto es :: que {er} **hoy en día** muchas personas	Difficulty remembering the correct adverb
Kitty: {erm} intento :: {erm} **no dejar {la} [la] problema {cambi :: que no no le deja} :: [///] dejo :: cambie cosas** |	Difficulty assembling the correct grammatical construction

It is clear that speakers face multiple problems in relation to grammatical encoding and that these cause them to pause in their speech in order give themselves extra time to try and retrieve the correct linguistic items or morphosyntactical encoding. It can be concluded that for these participants, the pausing they experienced was more likely to concern an issue with grammatical encoding than lexical retrieval. This could be due to the assumption that applying grammatical rules may pose a higher cognitive demand on them than simply retrieving specific lexis. In line with Gatbonton and Segalowitz's automaticity model which "refers to the speed and ease of handling utterances; the greater the automaticity, the faster the recognition and production of grammatically correct and communicatively appropriate

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

164

utterances" (Gatbonton & Segalowitz, 1988, p. 474), the focus is on the speaker's ability to produce speech without undue pausing.

However, the ease with which a speaker is able to retrieve lexical items is not comparable with that of being able to manipulate the language in order to produce the correct morpho-syntactical encoding required. This is because lexical encoding is based on the retrieval of memorised language items in a single-step (Kormos, 2006) whereas smooth morpho-syntactical encoding necessitates automatized or proceduralised knowledge (DeKeyser, 2017; Kormos, 2006). Non-automatised speech therefore poses a greater cognitive load on the L2 speaker and it would explain the increased frequency of dysfluencies due to grammatical encoding over lexical retrieval issues. This may have been aggravated by the fact that the original speech produced by the conclusion-utterers was not primed as specific grammatical rules are needed for each utterance. This is in contrast with the lexical resources that participants were exposed to throughout the debate which could have had a priming effect and could have eased lexical retrieval. In sum, it does not seem surprising that most incidences of dysfluencies observed in the data analysis were, indeed, related to difficulties experienced by participants with morpho-syntactical encoding as this presents a higher cognitive load in the speech process.

Type and Frequency of Repair

As was outlined in chapter 5, in this study repair fluency was operationalised in terms of the frequency of reformulations and overt self-corrections. In this study, an effect was found with regards to the frequency of repair in the conclusion produced by the conclusion utterers in group A at the end of the debate. The analysis of the data revealed that there were less incidences of repair. Other studies based on the effects of task repetition (see for instance, Hunter, 2017; Lambert et al, 2017), also found a reduction in the need for repair in the last performance at the end of a repetition-based task. Overt repair can be measured by analysing the speech data produced as opposed to covert repair which necessitates the participants to produce comments on the speech (Kormos, 2000a; 2000b), which does not apply in this study. Overt repair was chosen as it can be analysed in detail using the speech data and has clearer links to cognitive fluency and the monitoring processes (Kormos, 1999). It is important to distinguish between error repairs (ER) which concern the linguistic form, and appropriateness repairs (AR) which consist of producing a new or rephrased

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

165

version of the originally uttered (Levelt, 1983; Kormos, 1999; Kormos, 2006). For the purpose of this study, this distinction has been used to categorise the errors found in the data analysis.

Repair has been perceived to be more frequent in speakers with more advanced linguistic skills, as indeed would be the case with the participants in this study, as it may involve *increased* ability to reformulate, monitor and self-correct production on-line (Lennon, 1990b, p. 412). Indeed, in this study the findings point to an increase in the incidences of repair in the conclusions in comparison to the final speakers' speech data in group B. This could be due to processes of repair being activated not only when the speaker perceives a difficulty, for instance, when there are new or increasing resources being monitored, but also when they are able to overcome this situation by repairing any inaccuracies once they are uttered. The activation of repair processes would decrease when these difficulties would have been overcome by the speaker, either through exposure or resolution leading to speech which is more linguistically accurate. Another possible explanation for the increased incidences of repair in the conclusion utterers is that these speakers may have opted to optimize the accuracy of their speech in their effort to produce a more focused conclusion (Seyfeddinipur, Kita & Indefrey, 2008). A reason for this is that these speakers could have felt additional pressure as they had to produce a conclusion to the whole debate capturing the general consensus on the views of all participants and be seen to be able to do so in an articulate and accurate manner.

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

166

Table 15: Examples of Incidences of repair i.e., reformulations and overt self-corrections in the speech data by final speakers

Speech data by final speakers	
Incidences of repair i.e., overt self-corrections [//] and reformulations [///]	**Error repair (ER) and appropriate repair (AR) and causes for these incidences**
Group 3	
Jas: 7:42 | sí y sí me ay {laughter} {erm} también me concierne {los} {erm} [///] que (1) los precios de las viviendas :: {erm} que subiera tanto que no podemos :: {erm} {permitir} [///] permitirnos (2) :: comprar un [//] una (3) casa | {erm} así que como 8:02	AR to include relative. AR to include pronoun. ER to correct article gender.
Group 4	
Ambie: 5:13 | y que pensáis {de} [//] del (1) problema de {lo} [//] las (2) redes sociales hoy en día {erm} | por ejemplo yo pienso :: que {erm} las redes sociales aumentan la preción por los jóvenes {erm} con respecto a {erm} su {image} imagen | 5:33	ER to include article contraction. ER to correct article gender and number.
Group 5	
Ray: 8:26 | creo :: que es una problema :: que preocupa más la gente joven la gente de nuestra generación :: {erm} porque por ejemplo mis padres o mis {erm} abuelos no les preocupan tanto {erm} | el otro día fui {a} [a] casa [///] a mi casa (1) en Londres | y mi padre 8:46	ER to include possessive pronoun.
Group 10	
Angie: 8:40 | sí estoy de acuerdo es {erm} | mucho más difícil para los jóvenes la juventud de {hoy día} [//] hoy en día (1) :: para comprar {erm} casas | y :: independizarse {de} [//] del (2) hogar {familiar} [familiar] :: porque [well] hemos hablado sobre {la preca} la precariedad del empleo juvenil 9:00	ER to correct set time expression. ER to include article contraction.

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

167

Table 16: Incidences of repair i.e., reformulations and overt self-corrections in the conclusions

Speech data by the conclusion utterers	
Incidences of repair i.e., overt self-corrections [//] and reformulations [///]	**Error repair (ER) and appropriate repair (AR) and causes for these incidences**
Group 1 Mari: 9:03 **| pues es obvio que {muchos}** muchas (1) **cosas :: que están sucedendo en este mundo ::** nos afectan mucho como el medio ambiente y el crisis climático el Brexit **y el mundo político y también** 9:**23 temas muy específicos para los jóvenes como** la falta de trabajo **y la falta de las oportunidades | y pues nos muestran :: como el mundo se cambia {en nuestras vidas} [///]** durante (2) **nuestras vidas | y es algo muy importante :: para ver :: para enfocar |**	ER to correct gender. AR to replace adverb of time.
Group 3 Ali: 8:59 **| ah sí estoy de acuerdo | y también pienso :: {que es concluido} :: [que] [///]** ha {llega} [llega]do al a la conclusión (1) **:: que ahora para no nosotros es los problemas :: que** nos afectan mucho 9:**19 :: es son problemas personal como y la renta de casas |**	AR to replace whole phrase.
Group 4 Gigio: 9:09 **| sí | eso es probablemente la culpa de nuestro gobierno :: porque nos hemos metido en esos países {erm} | y hemos empezado conflictos | y entonces hemos causado mucho {erm} [//]** mucha (1) **destrucción en esos países | y entonces las personas de ahí nos tienen mucha venganza |** 9:29	ER to correct gender.

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

168

Group 5	
Hols: 9:15 **| bueno para mi yo creo que** las redes sociales | y la perfecta imagen **que {proponemos} :: [//]** proponen (1) **a al mundo y especialmente a los jóvenes es un verdadera problema 9:35 para nuestra generación :: porque :: yo se ::** *[///]* conozco (2) **a muchas chicas :: que tienen anorexia y bulimia y la depresión a causa de** las redes sociales |	ER to correct verb form AR to replace verb
Group 9	
Kitty: 10:18 **| no creo que {erm}** el {Brexit} [Brexit] es {la} **[//]** el (1) **problema más grande :: porque es verdad que hoy en día es un gran {pro} problema | {ya} [///]** sin embargo (2) **creo :: que va a {tranquilar} [//]** tranquilarse (3) **en** 10:38 **unos años mientras que** el precio de las casas :: **en mi opinión continuara :: a aumentar la población también continuará :: a aumentar :: entonces sigue :: [//]** seguirá (4) **siendo mucho caro | y también el problema {del} [del] {cli}** clima **no va mejorar {pronto} [pronto] en mi opinión entonces |**	ER to correct gender. AR to replace conjunction. ER to correct verb. ER to correct verb tense.
Group 10	
Harrison: 10:02 **| creo :: que** la emergencia climática **es un {erm} problema :: que afecta a todo el mundo {no} :: pero** la situación económica como la precariedad de empleo y los precios de {cas} [cas]as **es más {específica} [//]** específico (1) **10:22 a los jóvenes |**	ER to correct gender

The speech data above (see Tables 15 and 16) show the incidences of repair, i.e., overt self-corrections and reformulations, of both final speakers in group B and conclusion utterers in group A and the possible causes for these occurrences. A careful analysis of these data shows that the causes for repair for the final speakers in group B concern mainly with simple grammatical aspects such as the correction of gender and inclusion of pronouns. In contrast, the cause for repair for the conclusion utterers deals mainly with correcting verb forms and tenses and replacing verbs, adverbs, conjunctions and phrases.

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

169

This may be due to the conclusion utterers' perception that the more basic morphological difficulties have been overcome, freeing up more attentional resources to monitor and repair grammatical issues of a more complex nature. It is also noteworthy to point out that the incidences of repair in the conclusions occur on chunks of original speech output in all cases rather than in repeated language. This suggests that exposure to these language resources is followed by accurate production in the conclusion. The implication of this finding points to the proceduralisation of linguistic knowledge and, as we will see in the next chapter, an improvement in fluency as evidenced with a slightly higher articulation rate and reduced pausing in the conclusion.

6.2.3 Summary of task effect of reaching a conclusion on fluency and type and frequency of dysfluencies and repair

The task effect of reaching a conclusion on fluency is that articulation rate and repair for the conclusions uttered by conclusion-utterers in group A were higher in comparison with the final speech of final speakers in group B. This task effect was also evident on the decreased incidences of pausing observed in the conclusions compared to the final speakers' speech, although this was not significant. Given that no significant differences were found, it cannot be completely ruled out that chance may have played a role in the performance of group A, rather than it solely being due to task effect. The dysfluencies observed in the conclusion utterers' speech were mainly due to more complex grammatical encoding difficulties they experienced in their speech process compared to the simpler ones presented to the final speakers in group B. This type of grammatical encoding dysfluencies was more common that those due to lexical retrieval issues. This may be due to the higher cognitive load presented by grammatical encoding in comparison to lexical retrieval which necessitates proceduralised knowledge (DeKeyser, 2017; Kormos, 2006). Finally, the task effect also seems to have an effect on the reasons for repair with conclusion utterers repairing more complex grammatical issues such as correcting verb forms and tenses and replacing verbs, adverbs, conjunctions and phrases and final speakers dealing mainly with the correction of gender and inclusion of pronouns. This could be due the attentional resources of the conclusion utterers becoming freer to repair more complex grammatical issues having overcome the simpler ones in the process of completing the task.

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

170

6.3 RQ1(b) – Creative Automatisation : Quantitative Results

This section deals with the fluency data results which resulted from the task carried out to assess whether or not reaching a conclusion at the end of the debate would lead to increased creative automatisation. In terms of fluency, this is how the conclusion utterers spoke with slightly increased articulation rate, increased repair and less pausing as a result of the effect of the task by analysing in detail the type of speech runs they produced and whether they uttered primed or original speech. Firstly, I will deal with the study task impacts on creative automatisation, with regards not only to fluency, but also on the ability to produce speech that is original and therefore creative rather than primed speech. I will include the differences between conceptualisation and formulation and creative versus primed speech with examples from selected speech data.

Conceptualisation versus lexical and grammatical formulation
As was outlined in chapter 2, Levelt's speech production model (1999a) adapted to L2 speech (de Bot, 1992; Kormos, 2006; Segalowitz, 2010) has four components, namely, conceptualisation, formulation, articulation and self-monitoring which are activated in this order in the process of speaking. In L1 this process is incremental with the preverbal message being passed on to the formulator and then the conceptualiser starts working on the next chunk as the previous one is being processed (Levelt, 1999a). This parallel processing is possible in the L1 because most of the production mechanisms are automatic, and it leads to increased fluency in speech. In L2, however, this process seems much harder to accomplish as speakers may have difficulties with conceptualising the message, if they are unsure as to what to say. This was the case in some cases during the debate carried out for the present study as some participants struggled with having to follow on a previous contribution from another participant. This is dealt with in more detail in the last section of this chapter when presenting the results of the dysfluency explanatory card use made by the participants.

As we have seen, formulation is the second stage of the speech process (Levelt, 1999a). It is the lexical, grammatical and phonological encoding of the message drawing on the linguistic knowledge of the speaker (Segalowitz, 2010). In this encoding phase the information from the speaker's mental lexicon is retrieved and the preverbal plan activates

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

171

the syntax which triggers the grammatical encoding which is then followed by the morpho-phonological encoding (Segalowitz, 2010). L2 speakers have an incomplete knowledge of the L2, and their speech processing is not automatic which means that they often experience problems when trying to express the message they originally planned. This often results in speech output that is less smooth, that is, with more pauses, and slower. Some types of encoding can pose more a difficulty in the formulation process. As we saw in the previous section of this chapter, grammatical encoding seemed to cause more dysfluencies that lexical retrieval leading to repair in the self-monitoring stage of the speech process.

Creative versus primed speech

As was explained in Chapter 2, creative automatisation takes place when this speech process works smoothly and allows the speaker to access the lexical and grammatical stores without the need for slow speech, excessive pausing or self-correction (Segalowitz, 2010). However, creative automatisation goes beyond proceduralisation and smooth access to linguistic encoding. It also involves the ability on the part of the speaker to utter speech that is original rather than primed speech, that is, speech that may have been repeated before during the task. It is important to distinguish between simple recitation of primed speech that the speaker may have been exposed to during the debate and the ability to formulate new ideas creatively using their own linguistic resources.

The results of the data analysis of the speech data of the final speech fragments of the final speakers and the conclusions by the conclusion utterers and (see tables 15 and 16 above, respectively) reveal that the latter were able to utter a great number of language chunks that were original (highlighted in bold), that is, not uttered before during the debate, compared to the speech of the final speakers. This includes lexical items such as topic related nouns and adjectives, for instance, "mundo politico" (political world), "falta de las oportunidades" (lack of opportunities), "destrucción" (destruction), "depresión" (depression), "específica" (specific). It also includes grammatical resources, albeit not completely correct, such as "que están sucedendo" (that are happening), "el mundo se cambia" (the world changes), "hemos empezado conflictos" (we have started conflicts), "conozco" (I know), "seguirá siendo" (will continue to be), "que afecta a" (that affects). The utterance of this original speech not previously produced in the debate points to an enhancement of

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

172

conclusion utterers' cognitive fluency leading to the easing of their speech processing at the end of the debate during the production of the conclusions.

6.3.1 Summary of task effect on creative automatisation

The task effect on creative automatisation is an increase in original lexical and grammatical formulation in the conclusions uttered by the conclusion utterers in group A, in comparison with the final speech of the final speakers in group B. This task effect was evident due to the presence of new lexical and grammatical resources in the conclusions that had not been the result of primed speech as they had not been repeated previously by other participants in the debate and may be the result of an easing effect in the speech process of the conclusion utterers.

6.4 RQ2

6.4.1 Quantitative Results

This section deals with the findings of the correlations run between a set of assumptions based on the participants' fluency performance in the debate and their perceptions on fluency drawn from their responses to the questionnaire. As previously, this section begins with an explanation of the screening of questionnaire data which were aimed at checking for outliers, normal data distribution and homogeneity of the data. This is followed by the presentation of the assumptions in relation to the participants responses in the questionnaire and their speech rate results. Speech rate has been chosen as it encompasses the speed of speech, the amount of pausing and the tendency to repair and it has traditionally used as a commonly used measure in fluency studies (i.e., Ahmadian & Tavakoli, 2010; Lambert et al., 2017). Then follows a presentation of the correlation results.

6.4.2 Screening of questionnaire data

As we saw in chapter 5 (see also Appendix 6), the following, included here for quick reference (see Table 17 below), are the questions presented to the participants in a Likert

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

173

scale questionnaire style. The possible responses ranged from strongly disagree to strongly agree in a scale from 1 to 6:

Table 17: Questions presented to participants in questionnaire

Q1	During debates in Spanish, I usually experience some pauses in my speech.
Q2	These pauses are due to the difficulty retrieving the required word.
Q3	Instead, these pauses are due to me being unsure as to what to say next.
Q4	Participating in a debate on a familiar topic helps me speak more fluently.
Q5	Having to reach an outcome at the end of the debate causes me to say what I intend more fluently.
Q6	Being asked to take part in the debate without reaching a final outcome makes my speech less fluent.
Q7	Debates are an effective oral task to improve the fluency of my speech.
Q8	Debates are more effective in helping me improve my fluency than delivering presentations on different topics or role-plays.
Q9	I tend to speak more fluently when I feel more motivated.
Q10	The way in which an oral task is presented can affect my motivation to engage in it.
Q11	I feel most motivated when I have prepared the topic and vocabulary beforehand.
Q12	My motivation is best enhanced when I know I have to accomplish a goal during the task.
Q13	Only if I am very interested in the topic will I feel motivated to speak fluently.
Q14	Having the knowledge or experience to add to a debate will motivate me to invest myself in it.
Q15	If there is a balance of known language resources and new ones to apply in an oral task, I feel motivated to invest myself in it.

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

174

Table 18: Measures of Central Tendency and Dispersion used in the questionnaire responses analysis

	N	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness		Kurtosis	
								Std.		Std.
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Error	Statistic	Error
Q1	56	5	1	6	5.25	.899	-2.235	.319	8.270	.628
Q2	56	3	3	6	4.71	.825	-.021	.319	-.605	.628
Q3	56	4	2	6	4.18	.974	-.617	.319	-.075	.628
Q4	56	3	3	6	5.46	.713	-1.277	.319	1.452	.628
Q5	56	5	1	6	4.07	1.204	-.206	.319	-.168	.628
Q6	56	5	1	6	3.41	1.187	.018	.319	-.312	.628
Q7	56	3	3	6	5.09	.859	-.712	.319	-.053	.628
Q8	56	4	2	6	4.86	1.017	-.887	.319	.676	.628
Q9	56	3	3	6	5.32	.741	-.880	.319	.397	.628
Q10	56	4	2	6	4.84	1.023	-.934	.319	.680	.628
Q11	56	3	3	6	5.38	.822	-1.214	.319	.841	.628
Q12	56	5	1	6	4.46	1.095	-.940	.319	1.961	.628
Q13	56	5	1	6	3.68	1.309	.174	.319	-.796	.628
Q14	56	2	4	6	5.21	.706	-.331	.319	-.918	.628
Q15	56	5	1	6	4.29	.825	-.987	.319	3.523	.628
Valid N (listwise)	56									

Table 18 above presents the main data for the questionnaire responses. In order to present a clear overview of the distribution of these data, three types of statistics were used: measures of frequency, central tendency and variability.

After careful inspection of skewness levels, histograms with overlaid normal lines, scatterplots, Q-Q plots and stem-and-leaf plots, dependent variables were shown to have a normal distribution. The skewness level scores for all variables are under 1 which means the shape of the distribution for all variables does not represent a cause for concern and can be attributed to the numerical data corresponding to the samples collected (Larson-Hall, 2015). The assumption of normality has therefore been met for the above mentioned tests.

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

175

Normality tests (goodness-of-fit Kolmogorov-Smirnov and the Shapiro-Wilk) were also run (see Table 19, Appendix 9). The p-values (Sig. column) for all scores are below 0.05 with the exception of Q6B (p-value=.070 and .167 respectively) and Q13A (.051 and .114 respectively). This means that the null Assumption has to be rejected for most of the scores and the alternative Assumption accepted, that is, that the data are not normally distributed. However, as these scores are atypical of the rest of the dataset, they can be considered outliers. In order to deal with these the best approach is to use robust methods or transformations to correct this problem such as or Levene's test to check for the homogeneity of variances assumption, t-tests in group datasets. This difference in the results in these normality tests confirms the importance of analysing both numerical results and graphics together in order to get a full picture of the normality of the data distribution (Wilkinson, 1999).

6.4.3 Participants' perceptions on fluency development based on their questionnaire responses

In order to answer RQ2, that is, whether there are any correlations between performance on the debate and participants' perceptions on fluency development, the following observations were gathered from the participants' responses to the questionnaire in relation to the following specific and most salient questions regarding fluency development and learner motivation. These perceptions have been selected from all the questionnaire responses for their relevance to fluency and learner motivation and are presented below in themed clusters:

Q1   During debates in Spanish, I usually experience some pauses in my speech.

78 out of 83 (93.9%) participants reported that they experienced pauses in their speech as reflected by the typical score M=5.25. This suggests that indeed only a small number of them feel they are able to speak without any pauses at all. This could be due to the fact that all the participants are second year students and, therefore, only halfway through their studies. In addition to this, this study task took place the year prior to their year abroad, after which they are expected to have reached a higher level of fluency, with some peaking in terms of their ability to speak fluently. This is the expectation for some although it does

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

176

mean that this is the case for all (for the effectiveness of study abroad on fluency development see, for instance, Llanes & Munoz, 2009; Mora & Valls-Ferrer, 2012; Segalowitz & Freed, 2004; Valls-Ferrer & Mora, 2014).

Q2   These pauses are due to the difficulty retrieving the required word.

Q3   Instead, these pauses are due to me being unsure as to what to say next.

The majority of the participants reported that they attribute the reason for pausing in speech to either struggling to retrieve a specific word (79 out of 83, 95.1%) or being unsure as to what to say (64 out of 83, 77.1%). There is little difference in the mean scores for these two answers with 'difficulty retrieving a word' (M=4.71) being slightly higher than 'being unsure as to what to say' (M=4.18) as the reasons for pausing in their speech. Analysis on the use of the cards and body language during pausing, dealt with in chapter 7, will shed further light on the main reason for pausing for the participants in this study.

Q4   Participating in a debate on a familiar topic helps me speak more fluently.

The majority of the participants, that is, 80 participants out of 83 (96.3%) felt that topic familiarity helps them speak more fluently, with a score of M=5.46. This is in line with research literature in relation to tasks based on familiar topics having a positive impact on fluency outcomes. This is so as they present fewer cognitive demands on the speaker who, therefore, needs to allocate less attentional resources to macro-planning, enabling them to encode their intended messages on familiar topics by their L2 processing system with greater ease and fluency (Foster & Skehan (1996), Skehan & Foster (1997) and Skehan (2001).

Q5   Having to reach an outcome at the end of the debate causes me to say what I intend more fluently.

Q6   Being asked to take part in the debate without reaching a final outcome makes my speech less fluent.

62 participants out of 83 (74.6%) with a score of M=4.07 agreed that having to reach an outcome caused them to speak more fluently. The assumption here is that having to reach

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

177

an outcome, a conclusion in the present study, gives the task a specific focus which requires the participants (those in group A in this study), to listen more attentively to their fellow participants to be able to take their contributions into account to inform their conclusion at the end of the debate. This assumption seems to have been met. However, less participants (51 out 83, 61.4%), with a score of M=3.41, reported that not reaching an outcome was not a determining factor for speaking with less fluency. This suggests that although the focus demanded from group A to reach a conclusion was deemed significant for the majority of the participants, for others this was not a determining factor that may have had an impact on their fluency.

Q7   Debates are an effective oral task to improve the fluency of my speech.

78 out of 83 participants (93.9%) with a score of M=5.09 reported that they believe debates are effective for improving their fluency. This is in line with predictions based on the researcher's classroom observations in relation to fluency improvement for most participants over the duration of the course and their own perceptions of increased fluency, as recorded in the module reviews and assessment of independent language skill development they record in their portfolio submissions during the academic year.

Q9   I tend to speak more fluently when I feel more motivated.

The majority of the participants (80 out of 83, 96.3%), with a score of M=5.32 reported that the more motivated they are, the more fluently they speak. This is in line with cognitive theories of motivation which acknowledge the importance of learners' motivation for successful learning and deem that when learners are interested in a task they become motivationally, emotionally and cognitively active (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011) which may lead to increase fluency in speech.

Q11 I feel most motivated when I have prepared the topic and vocabulary beforehand.

Most participants (80 out of 83, 96.3%) with a score of M=5.37, felt that they feel most motivated when they have prepared for an oral task beforehand. This reaffirms the importance of planning time before the beginning of the intervention as it gives the

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

178

participants time to conceptualize their intended message without the time pressure that is always present in real-time oral interaction. This is in line with Skehan (1998; 2003) trade-off model whereby the speaker can only focus on one single aspect of the oral performance to the detriment of others as attention is limited. Thus, planning time provides the speaker with a chance to conceptualize prior to their performance, increasing their chances to speak with greater fluency.

Q12   My motivation is best enhanced when I know I have to accomplish a goal during the task.

71 out of 83 (85.5%), with a score of M=4.46, participants agreed that having to accomplish a goal, such as reaching a conclusion in a debate in the present study, is one of the elements that influences participants' motivation positively. In line with this, Van den Branden (2007) stresses the importance of *goal-directness* and *meaningful interaction* of tasks for maximum learning potential. Van den Branden and Van Gorp, 2000) propose (2008) that engaging tasks that motivate the learner to actively take part offer "a workable, and fruitful compromise […] with a clearly defined goal […], but which allow the pupils a great deal of intellectual and creative freedom to design their own route towards the solution of the problem" (Van den Branden & Van Gorp, 2000, p.48).

Q14   Having the knowledge or experience to add to a debate will motivate me to invest myself in it.

All of the participants to a varying degree (M=5.21) reported that having the knowledge or experience to contribute with to a debate motivates them to invest themselves in it. In this line, Gass and Varonis (1984) found that topic familiarity influenced, whether due to being knowledgeable about a topic or having related personal experience, influenced the amount of negotiation in interaction that took place, with less familiar topics leading to less negotiation. This stresses the importance of feeling able to contribute to a debate for maximum task engagement.

Q15   If there is a balance of known language resources and new ones to apply in an oral task, I feel motivated to invest myself in it.

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

179

A significant number of participants, 75 out of 83 (90.3%), with a M score of 4.29, reported that having a balance of known linguistic resources and new ones to be able to use in an oral task, such as a debate, motivates them to invest themselves in the task. Gatbonton and Segalowitz's (2005) framework for teaching fluency through tasks (ACCESS) through communicative activities was also based on reusable utterances and new linguistic resources (segments) that the learner could use for their interaction in the task. This has the effect of encouraging learners to invest themselves in the task thus increasing their chances of improving their fluency as they feel they are in control of the linguistic resources they are using.

The data resulting from this questionnaire was analysed to explore any potential associations between the participants' beliefs regarding how best to improve fluency and the speech rate results from their performance in the debate. Although it could be argued that it would be unlikely for any such associations to be present, given the comparison between beliefs and speech rate scores, if present, they would give an indication of how the participants perceptions' regarding fluency development and motivation would play out in their speech during the study task. Analyses were run, however, no significant correlations were found.

6.4.4 Qualitative results

In this section, the results of the qualitative analysis of the participants' use of the cards issued to them for use during the debate are presented. As was explained in chapter 5, two cards were issued to each participant, one saying, "what to say" and the other "how to say" and the participants had to show one or the other when they incurred in dysfluencies to explain the cause for these, i.e., conceptualisation or formulation, respectively. The analysis of the use of these cards can help understand perceptions that these few participants may have had on their fluency as they spoke during the study task.

The aim was to give the participants the chance to shed light on the causes of the dysfluencies in speech and reveal any potential associations between their performance in the debate and their responses to the questionnaire, in answer to RQ2 in relation to any possible correlations between the two. This section begins with a set of assumptions drawn

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

180

from research related to the possible outcome of the analysis (first explained in Chapter 2), an analysis of the card use made by the participants, with specific reference to 3 chosen case studies. There is then a comparison with the fluency scores and questionnaire responses for a selection of data deemed noteworthy. This is followed by the presentation of the findings and whether the assumptions are met.

6.4.5 Participants' perceptions findings on fluency drawn from their use of the cards and compared to their questionnaire responses

Assumptions

The following are the assumptions drawn from research which has investigated L2 fluency in SLA, in particular with regards to pausing, fluency enhancing methods, task design for increased motivation and learner's preparedness for increased motivation leading to greater fluency outcomes. Despite the Spearman correlations run between the questionnaire responses and the SR scores of conclusion utterers in group A not revealing any significant results, as we will see in next chapter, analysis of both these and other 'typical samples' (Dörnyei, 2007) by the participants in the intervention will shed light on these aspects and the cognitive process in general. These have been analysed in order to identify any associations between them and the participants' performance during the intervention. It is important to note that this section of the study is exploratory and interpretative in nature and, due to the small sample size considered, the findings that emerge must be interpreted with caution. They are aimed at providing clear insights rather than generalisable findings.

Assumption 1a

Assumption 1a is as follows: *most of the pauses experienced during speech in the debate are due to the difficulty retrieving the required word for that specific context and lead to decreased fluency* (Segalowitz, 2010). In order to explore this assumption, the research findings on the use of the cards revealed that out of the 24 instances in which the participants used the cards, 19 used the card stating "How to say?" and 5 selected the card with the question "What to say". This indicates that the pauses experienced by these participants in this study were mainly due to the inability to retrieve the appropriate word in speech or, as we saw was most frequent in the previous section of this chapter, the

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

181

appropriate morphosyntactic encoding. In any case, the participants perceived a formulation issue to be the main reason for their pausing. According to Segalowitz's model of automaticity (2010) this may be a sign that highly efficient cognitive processing has not yet been developed by the learner which is usually acquired through significant exposure and experience using the L2. Therefore, it becomes a real obstacle when formulating the intended message in speech and leads pausing in an attempt for the speaker to formulate the next intended construal.

Given that this exploratory part of the study is based on "typical samples" (Dörnyei, 2007), the following has been selected for analysis as it shows the highest use of the card saying "How to say". This is the performance by one of the participants known as Sammie *(08B01, in group 8B)*. Not surprisingly, this participant's response in the questionnaire to "pauses are due to the difficulty retrieving the required word" is "strongly agree". This suggests that this participant is highly aware that this is the main obstacle he faces when speaking in the L2 and explains the frequent use of this card during the debate.

SR	111
MLR	5
AR	111
Freq-MCP	33
7Freq-R	0

Figure 6: Fluency results analysis for Sammie (08B01)

In terms of the analysis of fluency measures (see figure 6 above) which corresponds to one of his contributions to the debate, despite the frequent pausing in his performance, which indeed explain the frequent use of the card "How to say", Sammie's speech rate was slightly higher than the mean for group B (see Table 11 above), MLR was the same, there was a small decrease in the articulation rate and the frequency of mid-clause pauses and null frequency of repair (self-corrections and reformulations), which could be due to the sample having to be cut at 20 seconds in duration for analysis purposes. The difference between Sammie's fluency measures and those for group B is very small. This could be explained

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

182

as Sammie's individual scores were compared with the mean of the 10 final speakers in this group.

In order to further explore the causes for the pausing in speech, whether these were related to lexical retrieval or grammatical encoding, the data transcription of Sammie's sample below was analysed (Figure 7):

Sammie: | eh no sé las {erm} las [How to say?] {er} cifras exactas pero {erm} {la la} [How to say?] [tt] {er} {la tipo de} [///] el tipo de noticias :: que más destaca para mí son el terrorismo {er} y también las [How to say?] redes sociales | sí hay argumentos :: que causan muchas problemas de la salud mental pero en general | pienso que las redes sociales son una cosa buena {er} porque | y se puede decir :: que nos da más felicidad :: {er} mantener en contacto con amigos {de} {del} [del] colegio y [y] {er} {del} {er} [del] pasado {ahr} {alguien tie} {er} alguien} {erm} [///] para alguien le {er} importa otro tipo de noticias :: que no hemos discutido |

Figure 7: Intervention data transcription with highest use of "How to say?" card

Intervention data transcription with highest use of "How to say?" card and analysis

Following careful analysis of the audio recording and the transcription of Sammie's sample above, a number of observations with regards to utterance fluency emerged. Firstly, there are two pauses that are connected with the difficulty to retrieve two lexical items, i.e., the word "cifras" (figures) and "pasado" (past) which are eventually delivered after pausing to search. This slows down fluency at these two precise moments as Sammie pauses and struggles to recall and retrieve the appropriate words for the context from his mental lexicon. This is in line with Segalowitz (2010) concept of dysfluency caused by difficulties with lexical retrieval. Sammie also pauses before uttering the word "tipo" (type) as he is unsure about the gender for this word which is implicit in the article preceding this noun. He repeats the feminine article "la" and then his monitoring system kicks in which results in self-correcting by uttering the correct masculine article "el". Selecting the correct gender for a specific noun is a common stumbling block in Spanish as it adds an extra level of difficulty and processing

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

183

time at the point of word retrieval. Finally, the card is used again as the participant struggles to express his question to his fellow participants and uses pausing in order to change its formulation in his mind to adjust it to his knowledge of grammatical encoding. In this process the intended question is uttered "¿alguien, alguien tie…?" (does anyone have…?) and moves away from that to reformulate it to "¿para alguien le importa otro tipo de noticias que no hemos discutido?" (does anyone care about other types of news that we have not discussed so far?) to move on the debate and give way to another participant. The use of this card in this performance suggest that this participant struggled with both word retrieval and grammatical encoding in equal measures and both lead to dysfluencies in speech.

Intervention data transcriptions with the use of "What to say?" card and analyses

The following were selected as two "typical samples" (Dörnyei, 2007) of the use of the "What to say?" card, also followed by an analysis (Figure 8):

Jemma: | sí {um} [What to say?] aunque {um} entiendo :: [What to say?] que {um} la {um} que necesitamos :: incluir todos los estudiantes en el campus obviamente es importante :: sin embargo deberíamos :: considerar {um} los problemas más mundiales como el calentamiento global {ahm} y especialmente hoy en día el Brexit {ahm} | y hoy hay [///] tenemos :: que considerarlos los problemas grandes sí |

Teo: | yo creo :: que es importante distingüir {er} entre lo que nos [What to say?] afecta ahora | y lo que nos va a afectar en el futuro por ejemplo [What to say?] obviamente {erm} el tema de Brexit ha sído un problema de [de] mucho [What to say?] debate en {en en en este} [//] en esta época :: pero {er} ya no hemo ya no hemos {erm erm} {sen} sentido {erm} los efectos y {erm} y las cosas así :: pero yo creo que…

Figure 8: Intervention data transcriptions with use of "What to say?" card

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

184

As we have seen, the card with the question "What to say?" was only used in 5 instances, three of which are suspected erroneous use as the participants seem to be searching for the correct verbal tense to use or seemed unsure as to how to express a specific phrase. In the other two cases this card is used correctly, and its use is markedly different. For instance, in Jemma's case, the participant pauses shortly after the beginning of her contribution after what seems a momentaneous loss of train of thought, visibly in the video recording, which may have been caused by nerves as this was her first contribution. After pausing and showing this card, she rapidly continues to try and express what she wants to say. In this case, the reason for pausing does not seem to be related to lexical retrieval as she does not show any evidence of stalling again for a specific word or phrase but a difficulty with macroplanning, in particular, with conceptualizing the intended message. This could be due to introducing a new topic shift which, in line with Roberts and Kirsner (2000), leads to a decrease in fluency as macroplanning that happens at a time of a topic shift takes processing resources away from microplanning, which in turn is impaired in the production of linguistic resources required for speech. In Teo's case, the first time he uses the card he seems to struggle with conceptualising the message as he starts talking about a new topic. The second time he seems to make an erroneous use of the card as he seems to be searching for the past participle of the verb "sentido" (felt) in order to use the perfect tense, which would be a grammatical encoding issue. Finally, the last time he seems unsure as to what to say next and resolves with "cosas así" (things like that) before moving on to expressing a new idea. The erroneous use of the cards suggests that the participants were unclear about the nature of their pausing or were perhaps too nervous to clearly identify them.

Although, as we have said, any conclusions drawn from this card analysis are exploratory, they have revealed some possible explanations for the causes of dysfluencies in L2 learners in this study. It seems that most incidences of dysfluencies are due to formulation issues, in particular, with the retrieval of appropriate linguistic resources or morphosyntactic structures to express the intended message rather than its conceptualization in the macroplanning stage. The almost unanimous use of the card "How to say?" can be thus interpreted as the participants' fluency being interrupted by their inability to express what

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

185

they had intended on two different levels; lexical, when they were struggling to retrieve the correct word for that specific context; and grammatical, when they were unsure about gender agreement between an article and a noun, for instance, or unable to retrieve the correct verbal form or an appropriate syntactical structure to express what they intended. Assumption 1a, therefore, seems to be partially supported. This finding points to a combination of not only lexical retrieval but also grammatical encoding as the main cause for dysfluencies in L2 speech in this study.

Assumption 1b

Assumption 1b is as follows: *reaching an outcome at the end of a debate leads to higher fluency outcomes* (for genuinely communicative oral tasks see Gatbonton and Segalowitz, 2005; for goal-directness and meaningful interaction see Van den Branden, 2007). In order to explore this assumption, and as we will see in detail in the next chapter, the quantitative findings on the fluency measures analysis were considered. As we have seen, these revealed that the effect of the intervention in this study, i.e., reaching a conclusion for group A, has shown an increase in mean length of run and a lower rate of frequency of repair. This means that participants in group A who reached the conclusion were able to produce more words within speech runs thus speaking with increased fluency and required less repair in speech. Therefore, reaching a conclusion at the end of the debate seemed to have an impact on fluency outcomes in the case of conclusion-utterers in group A. Since the fluency increase was only shown in one of the fluency measures, it is possible to conclude that the main assumption for this study is partially supported.

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

186

Table 20: Questionnaire Responses by conclusion utterers on Q5

1=strongly disagree; 2=disagree; 3= slightly disagree; 4=slightly agree; 5=agree; 6=strongly agree			
ID Number	Anonymised Name	Response	Mean length of run
01A01	Mari	6 - Strongly agree	4
02A02	Jess	4 - Slightly agree	6
03A01	Ali	6 - Strongly agree	3
04A05	Gigio	6 - Strongly agree	6
05A02	Hols	3 - Slightly disagree	2
06A02	Aba	1 - Strongly disagree	3
07A02	Yas	3 - Slightly disagree	5
08A02	Eli	5- Agree	3
09A01	Kitty	5- Agree	4
10A03	Harrison	4 - Slightly agree	3

Looking at the findings on the questionnaire responses for this subset (see Table 25 above), it is seen that most of the participants agreed that having to reach an outcome caused them to speak more fluently (M=4.07). This is in line with Gatbonton and Segalowitz (2005) who proposed that for best fluency outcomes the repetition of key language resources had to be accompanied with a communicative goal to be reached by the end of the task. In this study, participants in group A had to reach a conclusion at the end of the debate. This goal seems to have given the task of the debate a specific focus which led those participants in group A who reached a conclusion to have an increased mean length of run in their fluency scores. Fewer participants reported that not reaching an outcome was a determining outcome for speaking with less fluency (M=3.41). This suggests that for these participants reaching a conclusion was not a determining factor that may influence their fluency outcomes in speech. For instance, one of the participants in group 8, Teo, scored the highest MLR (11) rate out of all of the groups. However, with regards to the question of whether or not having to reach an outcome at the end of the debate leads to speaking more fluently he responded "slightly agree". This suggests that for this particular participant there are other factors at play which influence the fluency at which he is able to speak and that reaching an outcome

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

187

is not necessarily the one that has the most impact in determining his fluency outcomes. Questionnaires are often used in mixed-methods L2 fluency research studies as a way to add to the findings drawn from their quantitative data by gauging participant opinions about different issues (see for instance Lambert et al., 2017). However, the opinions elicited from all participants in any study do not necessarily complement these findings, as it is the case in this instance, they simply add to the data obtained to reveal the full picture.

Similarly, if we look at the responses to Q5 of the questionnaire of those participants in group A who uttered the conclusions at the end of the debates, overall, 7 participants agreed (selecting slightly agree, agree or strongly agree) and 3 disagreed. Taking into consideration that the mean length of run was the only fluency measure that was raised in the findings, from the 7 participants who agreed only three scored above the mean (M=4.5) with two of them responding "slightly agree" and one "slightly disagree". It can then be concluded that whilst reaching a conclusion at the end of a debate may enhance the mean length of run in the case of some participants, other factors are clearly at play which may have an impact on fluency outcomes for instance the level of proficiency of the learner, their knowledge of specific vocabulary, their ability to retrieve the appropriate lexical items under time pressure, etc. Interestingly, most of the participants in group A who uttered the conclusion seemed to believe that reaching a conclusion would have more of an impact in their fluency in speech. In sum, as we have seen, this assumption was partially met as the increased fluency was only shown in mean length of run. However, it seems to be a premise that most of the conclusion-utterers were in agreement with although the effect of other factors on fluency cannot be ignored.

Assumption 1c

Assumption 1c is as follows: *debates are an effective oral task in improving fluency* (Gatbonton & Segalowitz, 2005; Ellis, 2003). As we saw in chapter 3, debates are a commonly used oral task used by teaching practitioners to develop fluency in the classroom. In this study this oral task is taken a step further by adding another component to it which consists on reaching a conclusion at the end taking into account the views discussed with their peers. This is in line with Segalowitz and Gatbonton (2005) who agreed that a

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

188

communicative goal had to be reached in speaking activities, as well as an in-built repetition component for these to promote enhanced creative automatisation and, ultimately, fluency in speech.

Table 21: Questionnaire Responses by conclusion utterers on Q7

1=strongly disagree; 2=disagree; 3= slightly disagree; 4=slightly agree; 5=agree; 6=strongly agree			
ID Number	Anonymised Name	Response	Mean length of run
01A01	Mari	5 - Agree	4
02A02	Jess	5 - Agree	6
03A01	Ali	6 - Strongly agree	3
04A05	Gigio	6 - Strongly agree	6
05A02	Hols	5 - Agree	2
06A02	Aba	6 - Strongly agree	3
07A02	Yas	6 - Strongly agree	5
08A02	Eli	6 - Strongly agree	3
09A01	Kitty	6 - Strongly agree	4
10A03	Harrison	5 - Agree	3

In order to gauge the perceptions of the participants of this study on whether they felt debates are an efficient tool to develop fluency this was included as another question in the questionnaire they completed at the end of the intervention. Considering the responses to this question by the conclusion utterers in the intervention who showed an increased MLR in the findings over their counterparts in group B, all of them without exception found that debates are indeed effective for improving their fluency in the L2 (see Table 26 above). It can be concluded that assumption 1c on the efficacy of debates for improving fluency in the L2 is thus supported.

Assumption 1d

Assumption 1d is as follows: *an appropriately designed task increases motivation for task engagement and thus fluency outcomes* (Willis & Willis, 2007). As we saw in chapter 3, in the evolution of SLA from the acquisition of the L2 through repetitive activities, such as drills,

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

189

towards a more communicative pedagogical approach within the frame of Communicative Language Teaching (CTL), the concept of 'task' took center stage. This new educational approach evolved to the current task-based learning and teaching (TBLT) in which tasks became the central unit of instruction and are based on real-world activities for the development of linguistic aims including fluency. Tasks have therefore gained a significant value in L2 methodology as they are considered the main vehicle for L2 learning. However, since they are a tool that needs to be manipulated by the learner (Van den Branden, 2007), attention to form is also of paramount importance if they are to achieve that learners focus on the language in the context of a meaningful activity (i.e., DeKeyser, 2006; Ellis, 2002; Long, 1991). The focus on form, i.e., the design of the task, has therefore become an important consideration as this should be integrated into tasks in a way that learners are able to interpret it and use it as a valid support in their learning process. Tasks have to be engaging if they are to be used as useful learning tools in communicative interaction. As Willis and Willis explained "without engagement, without genuine interest, there can be no focus on meaning or outcome" (Willis & Willis, 2007, p. 13).

Table 22: Questionnaire Responses by conclusion utterers on Q10

1=strongly disagree; 2=disagree; 3= slightly disagree; 4=slightly agree; 5=agree; 6=strongly agree			
ID Number	Anonymised Name	Response	Mean length of run
01A01	Mari	5- Agree	4
02A02	Jess	4- Slightly agree	6
03A01	Ali	6 - Strongly agree	3
04A05	Gigio	6 - Strongly agree	6
05A02	Hols	5 - Agree	2
06A02	Aba	6 - Strongly agree	3
07A02	Yas	4 - Slightly agree	5
08A02	Eli	4 - Slightly agree	3
09A01	Kitty	6 - Strongly agree	4
10A03	Harrison	6 - Slightly agree	3

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

190

In order to assess the participants' perceptions on the value they place on task presentation as an element that may affect their motivation to engage in oral interaction, Q10 was included in the questionnaire. The responses of the conclusion utterers were analysed together with their MLR scores (see Table 27 above) to assess how these may have been influenced by the stimulus task presented to them for preparation before the debate. Although in varying degrees, all these participants without exception showed their agreement to the statement that presentation of an oral task affects their motivation with consequences for their task engagement and fluency development. This suggests that tasks seem to be the single most important tool that can have a positive impact on the learner's engagement in communicative interaction. Therefore, their design and presentation cannot be underestimated as they are what first draws the attention and the engagement of the learner. As Willis and Willis claim, "the most effective way to teach a language is by engaging learners in real language use in the classroom". […] This is "done by designing tasks […] which require learners to use language for themselves" (Willis and Willis, p. 1). Given the unanimous agreement on this statement, it can be concluded that assumption 1d on the effect of appropriate task design on motivation for task engagement is also supported.

Assumption 1e

Assumption 1e is as follows: *when the speaker's motivation is high due to feeling prepared to speak with sufficient linguistic resources, their fluency outcomes are higher* (for motivation that leads to L2 learning success see Dörnyei, 2009). As explained in chapter 3, as the learner became the centre of the L2 learning progress, a new social psychological approach to motivation research within SLA emerged. This was heralded by Dörnyei's motivational theories and it highlighted the importance of learner's motivation in task engagement in the process of L2 learning. He pointed out that in order to spark learners' motivation tasks should not only contain an optimal balance between meaning-based and form-focused input, but they should also include the practice of formulaic sequences and offer extensive exposure to L2 input that feeds the learners' implicit learning mechanisms in a way that they are able to participate in genuine L2 interaction (Dörnyei, 2009). Careful task design and presentation by itself is not sufficient to motivate learners to engage in the task and their own learning process. It is essential that these tasks contain the input the

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

191

learners will need to engage in meaningful interaction in the right balance between known and new linguistic resources. It is only when this balance of linguistic resources is present in the tasks, that they can feel prepared and motivated to tackle them and be appropriately equipped to engage in meaningful communication.

Table 23: Questionnaire Responses by conclusion utterers on Q15

1=strongly disagree; 2=disagree; 3= slightly disagree; 4=slightly agree; 5=agree; 6=strongly agree			
ID Number	Anonymised Name	Response	Mean length of run
01A01	Mari	5 - Agree	4
02A02	Jess	5 - Agree	6
03A01	Ali	5 - Agree	3
04A05	Gigio	6 - Strongly agree	6
05A02	Hols	3 - Slightly disagree	2
06A02	Aba	3 - Slightly disagree	3
07A02	Yas	5 - Agree	5
08A02	Eli	5 - Agree	3
09A01	Kitty	3 - Slightly disagree	4
10A03	Harrison	4 - Slightly agree	3

In order to evaluate how important having the right balance between known and new language resources was for participants in this study and how this may have influenced their fluency in the debate, the responses of the conclusion utterers in the intervention were analysed (see Table 28 above). Interestingly, 7 out of 10 participants agreed with this statement, with those in agreement showing the highest MLR scores. This assumption is therefore partially supported.

6.5 Chapter Summary

In this chapter, I have presented the quantitative analyses and results of the speech data collected during the study task with the aim of investigating, firstly, the type and frequency of dysfluencies incurred by the participants in answer to RQ1 (a). The type and frequency

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

192

of repair was also explored. The results of the analyses revealed that, interestingly, most instances of mid-clause pausing were due to a difficulty with grammatical or syntactical encoding over lexical retrieval. With regards to repair, it was found that this concerned mainly with simple grammatical aspects in the case of the speech data of final speakers in group B, whereas in the case of the conclusion utterers' data, the incidences of repair were less frequent but of a more complex nature and mainly on chunks of original speech which had not been uttered before. This could point to the proceduralisation of linguistic knowledge leading to a reduced need for repair and an increase in mean length of run.

Secondly, I have also presented the quantitative results drawn from the analysis aimed at answering RQ1 (b), that is, whether or not creative automatisation, defined as the ability to speak faster without pauses, improves as a result of having to reach a conclusion at the end of a debate. The main finding drawn from the speech data analysis was that there was a task effect in the speech of the conclusion utterers in group A shown only in three of the fluency measures, namely, a increase in articulation rate and repair and a decrease in pausing. Therefore, reaching a conclusion at the end of the debate was not found to impact on the other two fluency measures selected for this study, that is, speech rate and mean length of run.

Thirdly, the results of the quantitative analysis were also presented in answer to RQ2 in regard to the correlations between performance on the debate and participants' perceptions of fluency development. The participants' perceptions on fluency development revealed that most participants agree that they experience pauses in their speech; that these pauses are due to the difficulty they experience with lexical retrieval; that topic familiarity helps them speak more fluently; that having to reach a conclusion at the end of a debate causes them to speak more fluently, although this was not a determining factor in their fluency outcomes; that debates are an effective oral task to improve their fluency; that they speak more fluently when they feel more motivated; that their motivation was increased when they had prepared the topic and the vocabulary before the task; that their motivation was enhanced when they have to accomplish a goal during the task; all participants agreed that having the knowledge or experience to add to a debate motivates them to invest themselves in it; and, finally, most agreed that a balance of known language resources and new ones to apply in an oral task makes them feel motivated to invest themselves in it. However, interestingly, the results

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

193

drawn from the correlations run reveal no significant correlations between the participants' responses and their SR scores for any of the outlined assumptions.

Finally, I have also presented the findings regarding the participants' perceptions on fluency drawn from their use of the novel dysfluency explanatory cards and whether the related assumptions with regards to the responses of the conclusion utterers to the questionnaire have been met. This analysis, although exploratory in nature, pointed to difficulties with formulation in two levels, i.e., lexical retrieval and morphosyntactic structures, as the most common cause for dysfluency over conceptualization of the intended message. Interestingly, the assumption that reaching a conclusion at the end of the debate leads to higher fluency outcomes was supported by an observed slight increase in AR, however, as the fluency increase was only shown in this measure, it was concluded that this assumption was only partially supported. It was also concluded that whilst reaching a conclusion at the end of a debate may enhance the articulation in some participants, there are other factors at play that have an impact on fluency outcomes such as the learner's proficiency level. It was also revealed that the assumption of the efficacy of debates for improving fluency in the L2 was supported by the data as well as the effect of appropriate task design on motivation for task engagement. The assumption that task presentation increases motivation for task engagement and thus fluency outcomes was also supported and was unanimously agreed on by all participants which highlights the importance of task design for capturing the attention and motivation of the learner. Finally, the assumption that a speaker's motivation is enhanced due to feeling prepared to speak with a balance of linguistic resources leading to higher fluency outcomes is partially supported with most participants agreeing. In the next chapter I turn to provide a detailed discussion of the findings presented in this chapter.

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

194

Chapter 7: Discussion of findings

7.1 Introduction

In the current chapter, I proceed to summarizing, interpreting and discussing the findings of this study in light of the research questions. This chapter is divided into several sections. Firstly, I summarise the original assumptions based on the research questions of the present study and whether these have been met or not on the basis of the research findings. Secondly, I discuss the findings of the study with regards to the effects of the conclusion of the debate on fluency and creative automatisation. Finally, I discuss the participants' perceptions findings on fluency. The chapter concludes with a brief summary.

7.2 Findings overview

In this study, adding a conclusion at the end of a debate has been used as a tool for exploring the effects this may have on fluency. The overall questions which guided this research were:

> **RQ1 (a)** What is the main reason for dysfluencies incurred during the debate and what are the most recurrent types?
>
> **RQ1 (b)** Does creative automatisation, defined as the ability to speak faster without unintentional pauses, improve as a result of having to reach a conclusion at the end of a debate?
>
> **RQ2** Are there any correlations between performance on the debate and participants' perceptions on fluency development?

The original study hypotheses and a judgment based on the findings are presented below (see Table 29):

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

195

Table 24: Assumptions, whether supported and judgement

Assumptions	Whether supported	Preliminary Judgement
1(a) *Difficulty retrieving the appropriate word over conceptualizing the intended message will account for most incidences of dysfluencies with lexical selection issues being more recurrent than grammatical encoding.*	No	Most incidences of dysfluencies in the speech data analysed were caused due to the difficulty formulating the appropriate grammatical encoding over lexical retrieval, and this showed to be most recurrent.
1(b) *Creative automatisation overtly shown with raised fluency will increase for the conclusion utterers during the production of the conclusion at the end of the debate if compared to final speakers who did not have to reach a conclusion.*	Partially	Fluency for the small number of conclusion utterers did increase but only with regards to one fluency measure, that is, articulation rate. Conclusion utterers also used a combination of repeated lexical items and original speech. They produced an increased output of primed and creative speech in combination between pausing.
2 The assumptions for the whole cohort of participants relating the correlations between performance on the debate and participants' perceptions are fivefold:		
1a *Most of the pauses experienced during speech in the debate are due to the difficulty retrieving the required word for that specific*	Yes	Participants' card use during the debate evidenced a higher incidence of dysfluencies caused due to difficulties with

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

196

context and lead to decreased fluency (Segalowitz, 2010).		retrieval, in particular, lexical retrieval. This is in contrast with the observed increased recurrence of formulation and reformulation of grammatical encoding.
1b *Reaching an outcome at the of a debate leads to higher fluency outcomes* (for genuinely communicative oral tasks see Gatbonton and Segalowitz, 2005; for goal-directness and meaningful interaction see Van den Branden (2007).	Partially	Fluency did increase for the conclusion utterers in one fluency aspect, that is, articulation rate. However, this is only a single fluency measure that accounts for the increased fluency outcome. The lack of significant results in the performance of groups A and B means that chance may have played a role as well as task effect.
1c *Debates are an effective oral task in improving fluency* (Gatbonton & Segalowitz, 2005; Ellis, 2003).	Yes	Fluency did increase for the conclusion utterers who all agreed on the efficacy of this task type for increased fluency outcomes. The highest MLR scores (4, 5 and 6) were observed in 4 out of 7 participants.
1d *An appropriately designed task increases motivation for task engagement and thus fluency outcomes* (Willis & Willis, 2007).	Yes	Fluency did increase for the conclusion utterers and they all agreed, as most non-conclusion utterers did, that presentation of oral tasks, in

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

197

		general, affects their motivation and task engagement.
1e *When the speaker's motivation is high due to feeling prepared to speak with sufficient linguistic resources, their fluency outcomes are higher* (for motivation that leads to L2 learning success see Dörnyei, 2009).	Partially	Fluency did increase for the conclusion utterers with most of them agreeing with this statement regarding motivation positively affecting fluency outcomes, showing the highest MLR scores.

7.3 Conclusion-based debates, fluency and creative automatisation

In this section, I focus on discussing the findings of the research relating to all assumptions corresponding this study's research questions, that is, 1(a), 2(b) and 2 (1a – 1e). I discuss the impact of reaching a conclusion on the fluency, in particular, the articulation rate of conclusion utterers in group A. I draw on the literature with the aim of providing an explanation based on research for the main findings. I then discuss the specific changes in fluency during the production of the conclusion with regards to the fluency dimensions and specifically to speed (mean length or run), breakdown (filled and silent pauses) and repair (reformulations and self-corrections) within the framework of existing literature and offering possible explanations for the phenomena observed. I conclude this chapter with a brief overview of the generalisability of findings.

The main finding with regards to fluency was a slight increase for articulation rate, frequency of repair and a decrease in pausing for the conclusion utterers in group A. The significance of this is that Assumption 1(a) was partially supported by this result. As previously mentioned, L2 fluency development has often been understood in SLA research as being part and parcel of increased proficiency, as it was commonly believed that fluency was developed alongside proficiency in the L2 and that it could not be taught through classroom instruction (Chambers, 1997; Lennon, 1990). The majority of fluency studies have

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

198

traditionally been focused on investigating the impact of task repetition on fluency (i.e. de Jong & Perfetti, 2011; García Mayo et al., 2017, Lambert et al., 2017; Ahmadian, 2011; Ahmadian & Tavakoli, 2010; Bygate, 2001). These and other fluency studies have emerged from Levelt's (1989; 1999) models of speech production which based fluency development on task repetition.

To the researcher's knowledge, there are no previous main studies that have investigated the effect on fluency of specific tasks added to debates. Contrary to this commonly held assumption that L2 fluency developed with proficiency, Gatbonton and Segalowitz (1988, 2005) proposed a fluency teaching framework called ACCESS (Automatisation in Communicative Contexts of Essential Speech Segments), which was aimed at developing fluency within a communicative instructional framework. The main novel aspect of this framework was that L2 learners could develop their fluency working with communicative tasks that allowed them to produce language creatively, using given language resources by the teacher, rather than merely producing speech based on repeating these linguistic resources. The expected outcome of using this framework was the increase of speech automaticity with learners being able to produce language more fluently.

The findings of the current study would, therefore, support the expected outcome in using this framework with an observed increase of fluency, albeit only in three of the measures analysed, that is, articulation rate and frequency of repair and a decrease in pausing. The noteworthy contribution of this study is that having to reach a conclusion at the end of a debate leads to the conclusion utterers being able to produce more words the sample time of 20 seconds (excluding all pauses), thus producing slightly more speech than the final speakers in group B, measured by the articulation rate. I will now turn to discuss the specific findings on the conclusion utterers' performance data in order to offer some possible explanations on the specific cognitive processes undergone by them which may have led to an increase in AR. But firstly, I will explore the use of verbatim repetition and priming.

The analysis of the conclusion data by the conclusion utterers with the highest MLR, measure selected to focus on speech produced between pauses, scores in group A with a top score of 6, reveals some use of verbatim repetition, that is, the exact repetition of previously uttered words, in the delivery of the conclusion in each case. This could be

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

199

explained as these participants listened to small chunks of speech produced by other participants earlier on in the debate and repeated them in the conclusion. This process would correspond to the second phase of ACCESS which "aims to provide […] communication-based exercises focusing on target sentences already elicited in the main activity" (Gatbonton & Segalowitz, 1988, p. 481). This main activity referred here is aimed at creating the need in the learners "to use target utterances repetitively while conveying genuine messages" (Gatbonton & Segalowitz, 1988, p. 480) and would correspond to the debate exchanges between all participants prior to the conclusion.

Another possible explanation that could be given for the raised MLR scores of the conclusion utterers could be due to the inevitable conscious selection of lexical items and grammatical structures better known to them they would have made in order to express their conclusions. By the end of the debate, the conclusion utterers would have had ample opportunity to listen to and monitor a variety of lexis and grammar used by their fellow participants. This would have had a *priming effect* on their speech processing, triggering other ways of expressing similar ideas with better known resources to them that they would have felt more comfortable with, and therefore possibly willing to use, themselves. This *priming effect* refers to the way in which the production and exposure of specific utterances facilitates the processing and production of subsequent utterances with the same or similar forms. This is because it creates a 'blue-print' of these utterances which allows the activation of "recently used linguistic constructions" (Lambert et al., 2017, p. 5) in subsequent times. The monitoring and selection process carried out by the conclusion utterers could have served to them as a pre-rehearsal of message formulation which they could have then benefitted from when uttering their own conclusions. Finally, another possible explanation for the raised MLR scores in the conclusion utterers speech could be due to the 'pressure' they may have felt when it came to producing their conclusions knowing that the onus was on them to provide a conclusion that reflected the issues discussed by all during the debate. Gatbonton and Segalowitz refer to this as "the normal psychological pressures felt by people engaged in real communication […] [and] include […] making appropriate utterances to continue, redirect, or terminate the course of the conversation without outside help (Gatbonton & Segalowitz, 1988, p. 486). These pressures were deemed by Gatbonton and Segalowitz as essential for L2 learners to be able to develop strategies to deal with them.

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

200

In this study, the participants in charge of reaching a conclusion may have felt a similar pressure enabling them to finish the debates successfully.

Despite the presence of some verbatim in the delivery of the conclusion, there were also new linguistic phrases which were delivered as part of the conclusion which had not been uttered prior to this by any of the other participants and that were used to summarize in different words the ideas that had been discussed. This evidences that although the partial use of verbatim repetition undoubtedly played a role in the fluency gains, seemingly reflected on the increased MLR, the delivery of original speech output could be interpreted as evidence of increased creative automatisation.

As set out in Chapter 2, speech production is made possible thanks to specific mechanisms which determine the speed and manner with which speech is delivered defined as cognitive fluency by Segalowitz (2010). Speech automaticity can only take place when the speaker is able to access their lexical and grammatical stores without undue hesitancy. When the speaker is able to produce language fluently and creatively, that is, using new linguistic resources, this is evidence of creative automatisation. The construct of creative automatisation within the context of ACCESS, is the process whereby L2 learners are able to communicate with others by producing appropriate utterances according to their understanding of the communicative situation they are in (Gatbonton & Segalowitz, 1988, p. 476-477). The findings of this study revealed from the speech data analysis point to the assumption that there was indeed an element of creative automatisation in the speech of the conclusion utterers. The examples below correspond to the conclusion utterers who scored highest for MLR (6). The words and phrases highlighted in bold were checked for prior in the debate and were found not to have been uttered by any participants before them. They can therefore be considered original speech output and not simple repetition of previously uttered speech, or verbatim repetition. This original speech output was produced by the conclusion utterers in response to the need to come up with a conclusion in accordance with their understanding of the communicative situation all participants engaged in during the debate. In the first case, it includes the 20 second fragment that was analysed and the remainder of the contribution that exceeded this time limit (Figure 9):

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

201

Group 2

Jess: 6:56 | pienso que es la idea a manifestar :: **para combatir** {erm} la emergencia climática **está bien :: porque puede {erm} aumentar el conocimiento del asunto entre el público | no obstante creo que :: {er} voy a concluir** 7:16 **:: que {erm} debemos :: {erm} llevar a cabo acciones {erm} entre los individuos :: para combatir {erm} el asunto | y esto puede ser más efectivo que** las manifestaciones |

Group 4

Gigio: 9:09 **| sí | eso es probablemente la culpa de nuestro gobierno :: porque nos hemos metido en esos países {erm} | y hemos empezado conflictos | y entonces hemos causado mucho {erm} [//] mucha destrucción en esos países | y entonces las personas de ahí nos tienen mucha venganza |** 9:29

Figure 9: Showing the original speech output in bold for the highest MLR conclusion uttering scorers.

It is clear from these two examples that the majority of the speech output is original and not a repetition or a reassembly of previously uttered words or phrases. The conclusion utterers thus have demonstrated that they have been able to produce language creatively at the end of the debate and this is argued to be due to their speech processing having been enhanced to a certain degree during the debate, causing them to be able to produce a conclusion which was mainly based on original language. For instance, some of the original phrases produced in Groups 2 and 4 were the following: "**puede aumentar el conocimiento del asunto entre el público"** (it could advance the wider understanding of this issue); "**debemos llevar a cabo acciones entre los individuos para combatir el asunto y esto puede ser más efectivo"** (as individuals, we must take action to fight this issue and this could be more effective); "**eso es probablemente la culpa de nuestro gobierno, porque nos hemos metido en esos países y hemos empezado conflictos y entonces hemos causado mucho mucha destrucción en esos países y entonces las personas de ahí nos tienen mucha venganza"** (that is probably the fault of our government, as we have interfered in those countries and we have started conflicts and then we have caused much destruction in those countries and their people are seeking vengeance).

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

202

Group 1

Mari: 9:03 **| pues es obvio que {muchos} muchas cosas :: que están sucedendo en este mundo ::** nos afectan mucho como el medio ambiente y el crisis climático el Brexit **y el mundo político y también** 9:23 **temas muy específicos para los jóvenes como** la falta de trabajo **y la falta de las oportunidades | y pues nos muestran :: como el mundo se cambia {en nuestras vidas} durante nuestras vidas | y es algo muy importante :: para ver :: para enfocar |**

Group 3

Ali: 8:59 **| ah sí estoy de acuerdo | y también pienso :: {que es concluido} :: [que] ha {llega} [llega]do al a la conclusión :: que ahora para no nosotros es los problemas :: que** nos afectan mucho 9:19 **:: es son problemas personal como y la renta de casas |**

Group 5

Hols: 9:15 **| bueno para mi yo creo que** las redes sociales **|** y la perfecta imagen **que {proponemos} :: proponen a al mundo y especialmente a los jóvenes es un verdadera problema** 9:35 **para nuestra generación :: porque :: yo se :: conozco a muchas chicas :: que tienen anorexia y bulimia y la depresión a causa de** las redes sociales |

Group 6

Aba: 9:13 **| así de todos los problemas de que hablamos :: que piensas que es** el problema más grande **especialmente para los jóvenes | para mi es entre el mundo digital y la precariedad del empleo |**9:33

Group 7

Yas: 9:57 **| teniendo en cuenta :: todo [todo] hemos dicho :: pienso :: que hay muchos problemas en la sociedad hoy en día :: pero lo más grandes** 10:17 **son los :: que afectan el futuro de los jóvenes por ejemplo** el Brexit **y la falta de empleos ::**

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

203

pero también la salud mental **es muy importante para los jóvenes | y** las redes sociales **tienen un efecto grande en eso |**

Group 8

Eli: 11:09 **| creo :: que como grupo hemos decidido que ::** las noticias :: **{que} [que] involven la política son los más importantes :: pero no creo :: que** 11:29 **estamos de acuerdo con específicamente que articulo |**

Group 9

Kitty: 10:18 **| no creo que {erm}** el {Brexit} [Brexit] es {la} **el problema más grande :: porque es verdad que hoy en día es un gran {pro} problema | {ya} sin embargo creo :: que va a {tranquilar} tranquilarse en** 10:38 **unos años mientras que** el precio de las casas :: **en mi opinión continuara** :: **a aumentar la población también continuará :: a aumentar :: entonces sigue :: seguirá siendo mucho caro | y también el problema {del} [del] {cli}** clima **no va mejorar {pronto} [pronto] en mi opinión entonces |**

Group 10

Harrison: 10:02 **| creo :: que** la emergencia climática **es un {erm} problema :: que afecta a todo el mundo {no} :: pero** la situación económica como la precariedad de empleo y los precios de {cas} [cas]as **es más {específica} específico** 10:22 **a los jóvenes |**

Figure 10: Showing the original speech output in bold for the remainder of the conclusion utterers.

If we look at the conclusions uttered by the rest of the participants in the other 8 groups who scored below 6 in the MLR scores, shown above in Figure 10, it is clear that this pattern continues as, once again, the bulk of the speech output is original. It is only those phrases that refer to the specific problems that most affect young people discussed in the debate that seem to be repeated in the conclusion. The rest of the ideas uttered that involved taking into account all the participants' contributions, the conclusion utterers have been able to express in their own original words drawing on their cognitive skills to complete this task. For example, in Group 1, Mari, the conclusion utterer, sums up to all the issues facing young people as "**falta de las oportunidades**" (lack of opportunities) and explains why "**pues nos**

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

204

muestran como el mundo se cambia en nuestras vidas durante nuestras vidas" (then this shows that the world is changing during the course of our lives) and how this "**es algo muy importante para ver para enfocar**" (is something very important for us to see, to focus on). In Group 8, Eli, the conclusion utterer explains that "**como grupo hemos decidido que**" (as a group we have decided that) the news that "**que que involven la política son los más importantes"** (news that involve politics are most important), "**pero no creo que estamos de acuerdo con específicamente que articulo**" (but I don't think we are in agreement on a specific article).

This increased automaticity could be due to three main factors: firstly, all participants in group A had been made aware of the expectation that one of them would have to reach a conclusion at the end of the debate. This could arguably have had the effect of enhancing their alertness and readiness to listen attentively to the contributions of their fellow participants and could have been as a result of the normal pressure felt by speakers (Gatbonton & Segalowitz, 1988), as explained earlier. This enhanced state of alertness would have activated their readiness to listen and remember key language chunks and ideas which they may have needed to draw on for their final conclusion. This assumed role as conclusion utterers may have also enhanced their focus on performing well and producing a focused conclusion at the end of the debate. Secondly, their ability to easily access lexical and grammatical resources which resulted in the delivery of verbatim repetition could have been caused by lexical priming (i.e., Lambert et al., 2017). The repetition of these linguistic chunks could have been made possible because these were primed by other participants during the whole debate. The conclusion utterer would have been able to tap on these resources when formulating the conclusion resulting in a speedier delivery. Thirdly, conceptual planning could have also played a role in contributing to increased automaticity because listening to the other participants' contributions to the debate could have aided the process of conceptualizing their own message when it came to forming a conclusion. In adding a conclusion at the end of the debate, it seems that not only the participants have benefited from conceptual priming in the macroplanning stage of their speech production, but they have also cashed in on the lexical and grammatical priming in the microplanning stage. The result is an increased language processing capacity leading to a speedier delivery of a mix of repeated lexical chunks and original speech (Gatbonton & Segalowitz, 1988) and the production of an increased number of words in between pausing, in line with the raised MLR scores for the conclusion utterers in group A.

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

205

It could be argued that this increase in creative processing capacity found in the conclusion utterers could have been due to an artefact of the task rather than a genuine effect of it, for instance, that less creativity was required of these participants to produce the conclusion. However, no specific instructions were given to any participants for the production of the conclusion other than they had to take into account the views expressed by their fellow participants during the debate. They had complete freedom to express themselves freely when uttering their conclusions. Yet, the findings revealed that the conclusion utterers managed to produce their conclusions using a combination of repeated lexical chunks and original speech at an increased delivery speed. Whether this effect might have a long-term impact on their ability to process language is beyond the scope of the present study but warrants future investigations.

For the task of producing a conclusion, comprehension of other participants contribution was an essential element. The conclusion utterers had to be able to understand the issues and ideas discussed during the debate, process them and prioritise those that had most consensus among the participants. All of this had to be done whilst also contributing themselves with their own ideas to the debate. All the participants in group A had to be prepared to potentially produce a conclusion at the end of the task. However, the participant who ended up doing this was not decided until the very end, when one of them spontaneously took over this task. This meant that they all had to maintain a high level of concentration in order to make sense of all the contributions that were made until that point. The consequence of this is that they could only form a conceptual plan of their conclusion just prior to uttering it. This process may have been facilitated, however, by having their attentional resources freed up due to topic familiarity gained during the debate, allowing them to focus on dealing with the task of recalling the most recurrent contributions, conveying the nuances with which they were expressed and formulating a conclusion in their own words. This idea of competing demands is in line with Skehan's Trade-off Hypothesis (1998; 2009; Skehan & Foster, 2001) based on the need for speakers to divide their attention resources to attend to all the processes a task requires, with only those receiving enough attention reaching optimal performance. In sum, the advantages afforded by topic familiarity resulting in a more focused approach to producing the conclusion seemed to have been key in the completion of this task.

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

206

The findings in this study also revealed that no significantly statistical difference between the outcome-focused participants in group A, that is, those reaching the conclusion at the end, and the final speakers in group B with regards to the other two fluency measures adopted in this study, namely, speech rate and mean length of run. Whilst the reason for this remains unclear as the data does not reveal any apparent reason for this, the data analysis revealed a slight difference in the articulation rate between the two groups which underpins the findings highlighted in this section.

7.4 Participants' perceptions findings on the use of cards

As explained in chapter 5, two cards were issued to all participants prior to the debate taking place and after being instructed on how to use them. The aim of these cards was to allow the participants to provide some insight as to the causes for their pausing during the debate. They had to pick and show one or the other to show whether they were struggling with the message they were trying to convey ("What to say?") or the way in which to express it ("How to say?") respectively.

All ten videos of the intervention were thoroughly scoured several times for evidence of card use by the participants. Repeated checks were completed carefully to ensure reliability in the final analysis. Only a small number of participants used the cards, generally one or the other. Whilst in some groups no use was made of either card, in some others they were used on one or more occasions. The lack of use of these cards does not mean that the participants in these groups were able to speak more fluently as indeed most participants experienced pausing in their speech. This may have been caused due to their attention being completely focused on following the contributions of their fellow participants as well as producing their own, feeling nervous of drawing attention to themselves or perhaps not being willing to share the cause of their hesitancy in speech. It was also observed that once a participant used one of the cards their fellow participants showed less hesitation in using theirs as required. Similarly, when a participant used a card but no one else did, afterwards this participant did not use any cards again.

In total there were 19 instances in which the participants used the card stating "How to say?" and 5 in which the card with the question "What to say?" was selected. Regardless of the

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

207

incorrect use of the cards by one of the participants, the much increased use of the card showing "How to say?" shows that the speech process of the participants who selected this card was affected by the impossibility of uttering their intended message in speech. More specifically, the main obstacle in uttering what they intended was, in most cases, retrieving the appropriate word for the context or, as we have seen, being able to use more complex syntactical structures. This supports the findings of the data analysis which revealed, as explained above, that the incidences of dysfluencies due to morphosyntactical encoding superseded those of lexical nature. The use of this type of cards represents a novel tool for gathering insight at the same time as the speech is being produced., This is a novel methodology as, to the researcher's knowledge, this has no precedent in L2 fluency research with most studies relying on participant recall adding comments on performance during the completion of the study task. The real value of this method was that the participants could provide real-time spontaneous feedback on the causes for pausing which could prove to have more veracity than providing comments that may have resulted from reflection and may not truly reflect the underlying causes for their dysfluencies. However, as with all methods, the use of cards also had its limitations, the main one being that not all participants chose to use them which meant that the real extent of the reasons why they incurred in dysfluencies could not be known. Other limitations on the use of these cards is that it is possible that they may have some impact on the task itself by possibly increasing the metalinguistic awareness of the participants who used them or even have a distracting effect which could have exacerbated the dysfluencies experienced by the participants.

7.5 Generalisability of findings

Given this study is based on classroom research, limitations apply in terms of the generalisability of findings, which are outlined in more detail in chapter 9. The main limitation is that this research study is based on a relatively small number of participants, although comparable with other studies of this type, which may mean that the findings drawn from it may not be generalised to larger numbers of learners. It has also been conducted in a very specific learning context which means that its findings may not be applicable to other cohorts of learners in different educational institutions, pedagogical methodology or learning objectives. It is also worthwhile noting that the number of participants and data sample

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

208

collected, although significant, may well be enlarged in future studies to increase the likelihood of the generalisability of findings.

One of the positive aspects of this study is that it has relied on intact classes of learners which means that the findings have been drawn from groups of learners of Spanish with a level B of proficiency and varying degrees of prior L2 exposure and baseline fluency levels. As mentioned in chapter 2, through exposure to the L2 and much practice, cognitive processing skills that deal with language production become automatised resulting in increasing fluency (Segalowitz & Hulstijn, 2005). It would be possible that any increase in fluency observed in the intervention through a slightly higher articulation rate could have been impacted by any additional interactions these participants may have had with L2 native speakers. This may have been a factor in the results of the current study. Despite all the participants having a B2 proficiency level, inevitably, every participant would have had a varying degree of fluency with which they tackled the study task. Level variability is, as we have seen, part and parcel of this type of classroom-based fluency studies. It would not be possible to ensure that the baseline fluency for all participants was exactly the same. This is an inevitable limitation of this study. Despite this, the findings of this study reflect the benefits of reaching a conclusion at the end of a debate, both on utterance fluency and the reduced need for repair which lead to increased global fluency outcomes. The task proposed in this study of adding a conclusion at the end of a debate has not only been advantageous for fluency but it is easily applicable to all classroom contexts and it can be tweaked by teaching practitioners to suit their own fluency development objectives or to include all the participants by, for instance, asking them to provide a conclusion of the debate as an oral post-debate homework task that they can record and submit themselves.

7.6 Chapter summary

In this chapter, I have summarised the original assumptions based on the research questions that have driven the present study. The findings revealed that not all assumptions had been completely met. For instance, it was found that the most recurrent type of dysfluencies in the speech data analysed was due to the difficulty formulating the appropriate grammatical encoding rather than lexical retrieval. With regards to the increase of creative automatisation of the conclusions compared to final speakers' speech, it was

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

209

found that this assumption was partially met as this increase in fluency was only shown in three of the fluency measures, that is, increased articulation rate and frequency of repair and reduced pausing. It was found that conclusion utterers were able to produce an increased speech output of primed and creative speech between pausing. With regards to the assumptions on the possible correlations between performance on the debate and the participants' perceptions, they were all met or partially met. Participants' card use during the debate pointed to a higher incidence of dysfluencies caused by lexical retrieval in contrast with the observed increased formulation issues of grammatical encoding. Reaching a conclusion at the end of a debate had an effect on fluency but this assumption was only partially met as this was only reflected in AR, Freq-MCP and Freq-R. The assumption based on debates being an effective oral task in improving fluency was met as fluency did increase for the conclusion utterers who all agreed on the efficacy of this task type. With regards to the assumption based on whether task design increased motivation for task engagement and fluency outcomes, this was also met as fluency did increase for the conclusion utterers and they all agreed with this statement. Finally, in relation to whether motivation being high due to feeling prepared to speak in an oral task with sufficient linguistic resources leads to higher fluency outcomes, this was partially met as fluency increased for the conclusion utterers, with most of them agreeing with this statement showing the highest MLR scores. I then discussed the findings of the study with regards to the effects of the conclusion of the debate on fluency and creative automatisation. The main finding, and the noteworthy contribution of this study, is that there is a task effect in having to reach a conclusion at the end of the debate evidenced in the higher AR scores achieved by the conclusion utterers. These were able to produce a combination of primed and creative speech in their conclusions, possibly as a result of the priming effect of being exposed to their fellow participants' contributions which may have facilitated the processing and production of their own speech output. This could have served the conclusion utterers as a pre-rehearsal of message formulation which would have facilitated the production of their own conclusions at the end of the debate. In any case, the delivery of original speech output could be interpreted as evidence that their speech processing had been enhanced leading to increased automaticity. The use of the cards by the participants supports the findings of the speech data analysis which point to the incidences of dysfluencies due to morphosyntactical encoding superseded those of lexical nature. This novel method adds real value to this study as the participants provide real-time spontaneous feedback on the causes of pausing

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

210

which could yield most robust findings that the traditionally used participant recall which could compromise the veracity of the data as this is based on commentary provided after the study task has taken place. Finally, with regards to the generalisability of findings, given that this study is based on a small number of participants in a classroom setting, this may mean that the findings may not be generalised to larger cohorts in different educational institutions. Similarly, the level variability of the participants in this study, which is part and parcel of this type of fluency studies, is an inevitable limitation of this study although it does not take away the benefits on utterance fluency and reduced need for repair observed by reaching a conclusion at the end of a debate as well as being easily applicable to all classroom contexts.

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

211

Chapter 8: Theoretical, methodological and pedagogic implications

8.1   Introduction

In this chapter, the implications of the current research study are set out in three different dimensions: theoretical, methodological and pedagogic. Firstly, I will detail how this study contributes to creative automatisation in L2 speech within the framework of Segalowitz' automaticity model and ACCESS (Gatbonton & Segalowitz, 2005) as well as motivation research following Dörnyei's model (2005). Secondly, the methodological implications will focus on the difficulties of L2 classroom-based research, the use of PRAAT, the effectiveness of the use of dysfluency explanatory cards and the benefits of adopting a mixed-methods approach. It will also highlight the contributions this study has made in terms of its findings with regards to grammatical encoding having more weight than lexical retrieval as the causes for dysfluency in speech. Finally, I will discuss the pedagogical implications drawn from the current study focusing on the benefits of integrating a conclusion at the end of debates, suggestions on how to extend these benefits based on the findings and participants' perceptions, and ways in which to reduce dysfluencies further enhancing fluency in speech from a teacher's and learner's point of view. I will conclude with some reflections with regards to the extent to which the findings of this study are widely generalisable, its limitations and some suggestions for future research.

8.2 Theoretical implications

As we have seen, SLA research on fluency development has mainly focused on the effect of repetition on fluency with little focus placed on the impact of debates on fluency outcomes. This is despite this being a commonly used tool in the classroom within the TBLT instructional context. Similarly, the effect of reaching a conclusion at the end of a debate has, to the researcher's knowledge, never been the focus of previous research study. This warranted investigation as it takes this commonly used free speaking activity in the classroom, based simply on oral interaction, a step further by adding the final prerequisite of providing a conclusion at the end. In order to be able to produce this conclusion, participants are expected to remain attentive to their fellow participants' contributions

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

212

throughout the debate to take them into account in their conclusion. Exploring the effect of having to produce this conclusion seemed a promising way of yielding interesting findings with regards to the speech process of the conclusion utterers. Indeed, this proved to be the case as the findings of the present study revealed an increased AR and Freq-R and reduced pausing in the conclusion uttered by the conclusion utterers in group A, compared the that of the final speakers in group B.

Despite speech analysis revealing that the conclusion utterers were able to produce a significant volume of speech that had not been previously uttered during the course of the debate, the remainder of the speech comprised of specific lexis which had been previously used by the rest of the participants prior to the conclusion being uttered. The repetition of language resources in speech has often been attributed to a 'priming' effect on speakers which enables them to draw on the pre-verbal plan for those utterances for subsequent speech (Wang, 2014; Skehan, 2014; Lambert et al., 2017). Although the repetition of language resources can be explained by this 'priming effect', it poses the question as to how the original fragments of speech were produced and how they impacted fluency in the utterance of the conclusion and possibly in the development of fluency for the learner. This chapter will shed light precisely on these issues and, following the novel multifaceted approach of the present study, I explore the interactions between speech production, motivation and task research. In the section below, I delve into the theoretical implications of this study with a focus on the links between the whole process of delivering a conclusion-focused debate and the resulting enhanced fluency in the production of the conclusion. Firstly, I will focus on pre-task conceptual planning, the effect of priming and how this affects monitoring. Then, I explain any associations between these processes and creative automatisation. Then, I look into how motivation and task engagement affect fluency. Finally, I outline how fluency may be enhanced in formal classroom instruction.

8.2.1 The processes of planning, priming and monitoring and their effect on creative automatisation

As we saw in the discussion chapter, the increase in AR in the conclusion uttered by conclusion utterers at the end of the debates, compared to final speakers' speech, is associated to a greater ease of conceptual planning, priming and it also had an effect on monitoring which leads to an increased frequency of repair, i.e., self-corrections and

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

213

reformulations. In SLA, priming through repetition has been highlighted as a process which leads to increased fluency (see, for instance, Ahmadian, 2016). However, as we have seen, a significant number of language chunks uttered by the conclusion utterers was not previously repeated language. A lexical priming effect could also be partly responsible for this outcome given that topic relevant lexical resources were repeated throughout the debate. This priming could have had the effect of activating the retrieval of topic related lexis from the conclusion utterers' mental lexicon (Levelt 1999a; Kormos 2006) through the process of lemma activation which takes place by retrieving the lemma whose meaning best matches the semantic information of a specific chunk of the preverbal plan which is then uttered in the formulation stage (Segalowitz, 2010). In this way, the conclusion utterers would have benefited from this priming effect leading to the utterance of previously unuttered language chucks but related in topic to other repeated lexis.

This priming effect would have had an impact on cognitive fluency, making lexical retrieval faster and freeing up attentional resources (Skehan, 1988) for the conceptualization and formulation of newly created language chunks from their own topic relevant lexis stores. This increase of cognitive fluency in speech production could have also led to more attentional resources being directed towards the monitoring of the speech output which could explain the decreased rate in frequency of repair. The confluence of all these processes would have led to a *processing stability* (Segalowitz, 2010) making the speech process more efficient and faster and without the need of consciously controlling the speech production process. This study has, therefore, supported Segalowitz's argumentation for speech to become the result of creative automatisation. Further research into how the confluence of these processes fits into Skehan's trade-off hypothesis (Skehan, 1988, 2009, 2014; Skehan & Foster, 2001) would provide further insight aided with the input of participants in recall interviews to shed light into how these processes are prioritized by attentional resources.

8.2.2 The effect of motivation and task engagement on fluency

As we saw in Chapter 3, a central aspect for creative automatisation is the role played by the learner in channelling their motivation for learning into actively engaging on the task designed for this purpose, in the case of the current study, the debate and, more specifically,

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

214

the production of a conclusion at the end. As Dörnyei pointed out, "the essence of the notion of [learner engagement] […] concerns *active participation* and *involvement"* (Mercer & Dörnyei, 2021, p. 8), in particular, "because the automatisation of L2 skills requires an extended practice period" (Mercer & Dörnyei, 2021. p. 10). However, as Dörnyei warns, even when all the right conditions are there to promote automaticity, it does not necessarily create it (Q & A session with Zoltan Dörnyei, 2019). One of the aspects of Segalowitz' cognitive science framework for fluency (2010) is indeed motivation which engages learners within a classroom context to develop their fluency. He refers to the "L2-specific sense of self" (Segalowitz, 2010) that is centre stage in the acquisition process that ultimately leads to fluency. This is directly linked to Dörnyei's theory of the Motivational L2 Self System (2005), to which Segalowitz makes direct reference, and the abilities developed by L2 learners to regulate their own behaviour by setting expectations which reflect the image they have of themselves as L2 users in the future. Segalowitz believes that the L2 learner's sense of self will determine how they interact in their learning and task engagement to achieve the goals they set themselves with regards to L2 fluency development. The findings of the current study support this aspect of Segalowitz's framework as the observations gained by the researcher during the debates point to the evidence that the effect that this task had on the participants, in particular the conclusion utterers, was motivational. This is backed up by the high level of attention shown to their fellow participants' contributions, the willingness to participate in the task and, finally, the increased fluency outcome, specifically in AR, in the production of the conclusion. This enhanced fluency could not have been achieved had the conclusion utterers shown a negative or unwilling approach towards this task. Their motivation to engage on this task could have been influenced by the confidence they felt, given that they were accustomed to taking part in assessed debates as part of their language module, that is, due to task familiarity (see, for instance, Plough, India & Gass, 1993; Mackey). Their confidence could have been further enhanced as the debate progressed at the realisation that they were familiar with the topic and felt able to express their views successfully, be understood, and able to interact with their fellow participants (e.g., Gass et al. 1984; Bui & Huang, 2016; de Jong, 2013). Moreover, their perception that there were succeeding in communicating with their peers could have fuelled their motivation to contribute to the debate on repeated occasions and, for some of them, put themselves forward to reach a conclusion which encompassed the main views expressed during the debate. This is in line with Dörnyei's motivational model which refers to the L2 speaker

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

215

future self-guides, that is, how the speaker sees themselves as an L2 user. The perception by these participants that they were successfully interacting with their peers in the L2 during the debate may have had a motivational effect on them to actively engage in the task. Their increased cognitive fluency may have also had a positive impact on their L2 sense of self as it causes learners to engage in further interactions which would lead to further fluency outcomes Segalowitz (2010). It is precisely this that could be tapped into in formal instruction as we will see in the chapter on pedagogical implications below.

8.3 Methodological implications

The methodological implications of this study apply to wider fluency and task-based research. They can be divided into the following categories: the difficulties of L2 classroom-based research; the use of PRAAT for data annotation; the effectiveness of the participants' use of dysfluency explanatory cards while on task; and, finally, the benefits of adopting a mixed research method.

8.3.1 Difficulties of L2 classroom-based research

As explained in chapter 5, the current study took place in an authentic L2 setting at the same time the participants would have had scheduled classes on Spanish Language Skills Practice. Intact classes of students were used, and they were all invited to take part in the study without undergoing a selection process of any kind. The study was then based on those students who were happy to consent to take part in the study, respecting the decision made by a minority of those who did not take part in the debate or did not speak for over 20 seconds to quality for data analysis. The decision to use intact classes was taken, not simply for convenience, but also because it is not typical of experimental research traditionally conducted in laboratories (Mackey & Gass, 2005), and it offers the advantage of enhancing the validity of the findings given that the research is based on non-selected participants within a standard teaching environment. This adds much value to the field of second language research thus making up for the complexity and time-consuming nature of classroom research. The speech data collected for analysis via audio recording was triangulated by the video recording of each of the research sessions.

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

216

Given the nature of this research being carried out in a classroom environment, it presented a number of difficulties which had to be overcome with regards to the recruitment of participants, the use of intact classes, data collection and data analysis. These difficulties are, however, part and parcel of carrying out research with intact classes. Firstly, the difficulties of recruiting a sufficient number of participants for the study to have validity. Recruitment was first attempted in the previous semester to take place out of scheduled classes. As this approach did not yield sufficient numbers of participants, a different approach was negotiated with the Spanish department within the faculty in order to carry out the research one week prior to the beginning of the second semester in what would have been scheduled lesson time. In order to ensure recruitment levels, it was explained to the students that the advantages of participating in this study were twofold; on one hand, they would have the chance to practice their oral skills before their oral assessed classes starting the following week and after a long spell over December and January of not having the chance to do any practice; on the other hand, they would be taking part in a study which would add to the long research tradition carried out at their university. The advantage of carrying out the research in scheduled lesson time was that students were already used to this schedule and this did not compromise other lectures they may have had or indeed their time for extracurricular activities, sporting or otherwise. As it took place a week before the beginning of official classes, any students who opted not to take part were not expected to attend and did not miss any scheduled teaching. This second approach worked well, and recruitment was accomplished to the desired level for the study to take place. This recruitment process, although arduous, proved worthwhile and added ecological value to the study as, in the end, all participants took part in the same conditions out of term time, and they all had had a long period of holiday and exams prior to commencing.

Secondly, using intact classes of students and not selecting them by their level of fluency meant that these were heterogeneous in nature and a variation in the fluency levels would have to be expected despite all of them being in their second undergraduate year. This variation of fluency levels would have been due, for instance, to one or more of the following: the degree of fluency development the participants would have been able to achieve during previous classroom instruction whether it be due to the participants being exposed to varying degrees of the L2 in or outside of the classroom, or the individual experience that each of the participants would have previously had in a Spanish speaking country out of

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

217

term time. Although, ideally, the participants would have had exactly the same fluency level, this would have been an unrealistic expectation to have. This is because the intention from the beginning was to base this study in the classroom to ensure it had ecological validity, using intact classes and randomly dividing each class and assigning each half to a condition, group A (conclusion-based) and B (non-conclusion based), with one participant in group A voluntarily reaching a conclusion at the end of the debate. The differences in fluency outcomes were then based on the conclusions uttered by the conclusion utterers in group A and the final speakers' speech data in group B.

A decision to audio and video record every class was made early on in order to be able to conduct the analysis on the speech data and study the videos for participant recognition and the analysis of the cards used in the debates. Therefore, the quality of the recordings was important for methodological reasons. For this reason, prior to the debates, all participants were instructed to remain silent during any contribution made by their fellow participants and to try and not overlap their own speech with that of their peers. This was observed with very few exceptions resulting in quality recordings with occasional background noise coming from outside the classroom, which greatly facilitated data analysis, in particular, the detection of pausing using PRAAT. The chairs for the participants were placed in a semicircle at the beginning of each class with the voice recorder placed on another chair in the middle of the semicircle to capture all the participants' voices at the same distance. The video camera was held by the researcher as it had to be manually operated to record each of the participants as they spoke. As the researcher was the only person in charge of the whole research project, it was her responsibility that all classes received the same instructions at the beginning of the class, that all debates and questionnaires were administered following the same schedule to maintain the integrity of the study, and that all recordings were carried out safely and ensuring quality. The researcher's extensive experience as a teaching practitioner facilitated this task and ensured that all data collection was carried out following the same guidelines to preserve the validity and authenticity of the study.

With regards to data analysis, all participants engaged on the debate with most actively participating and a minority only listening. Some of the participants who contributed to the debate, however, did not speak for a sufficient amount of time. The cut-off point was decided

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

218

on 20 seconds as a minimum. This meant that the speech data from participants who spoke for less than 20 seconds was excluded from the analysis. Similarly, a small number of classes did not have a minimum of 5 participants deemed necessary to hold a meaningful debate and were also excluded from the study. The students who decided not to take part in the debate may have done so for several reasons including potential lack of confidence on their oral ability or speaking in front of the researcher who they had not met before; because they did not succeed at finding a gap in between the contributions to include theirs; may have felt intimidated by the fluency shown by their fellow participants; or they simply did not feel comfortable sharing their views on the topic of the debate. The implication of this is that the study had to be based on a smaller data set. A small number of students who were known to the researcher from teaching them the previous or the same year were assigned to group B, so as not to compromise the results of the study.

As we have seen, the data collection phase of this study did not come without its challenges. Sharing these difficulties as part of this study is intended to stress that these can always be overcome by selecting the best approach. It is also intended to highlight the value that L2 teachers can contribute with in this type of L2 research as they can benefit from their knowledge of the teaching environment to conduct key research that makes a significant contribution to SLA based on real working classes as opposed to more traditional clinical laboratory environments.

8.3.2 The use of PRAAT for data annotation

The need to analyse data using specific fluency measures has led to the introduction of specialist software such as PRAAT (Boersma & Weenink, 2008) which is designed to detect pausing and makes data analysis accurate provided speech data is of quality, something that could present a challenge if conducting research in a classroom environment, as we have seen, and was more readily available in traditionally laboratory conducted L2 research. However, the advantages of conducting research in the classroom are clear, not least because it reflects 'learning in action' within a realistic environment which proves more valid and ecological for research purposes in SLA. In order to be able to use PRAAT for data analysis in this research, the researcher had to train herself on how to correctly use it and how to annotate it in an efficient manner. These annotations were then used to calculate

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

219

the different fluency measures selected and allowed the researcher to observe specific linguistic patterns and phenomena which lent themselves for further exploration. This data annotation may have been incredibly time-consuming, but it proved certainly worthwhile as it allowed the researcher to reap the rewards in terms of describing salient dysfluency patterns and exploring the possible rationale behind them.

8.3.3 Effectiveness of the participants' use of dysfluency explanatory cards while on task

As we have seen, one of the novel aspects of the study was the introduction of dysfluency explanatory cards for the participants to use during the debate to indicate whether each pausing incidence was due to a difficulty with the conceptualization of the intended message (What to say?) or one with the formulation of the message (How to say?). This was devised to shed much needed light on the speech process and the potential issues that cause it to be interrupted, thus affecting fluency in speech. Although it was found that most participants understood how to use these cards, it is fair to say that not all of them did so or at least not all the participants used these cards correctly, whether this was due to a misunderstanding or confusion while they were speaking. The researcher understood the methodological value of using this cards, and this was tested successfully in the pilot, which led the researcher to the conclusion that this correct use would be replicated in the main study. However, in retrospect it does seem quite an expectation to ask the participants to think about using these cards at the same time as they were speaking as this would mean diverting some of their attentional resources from formulating their speech and overcoming any difficulties they encountered to indicating the causes of these potential difficulties with the use of the corresponding card. During the debate, it was found that the majority of the participants were not able to do this simultaneously which led to a limited use of the cards. The reasons for not using these cards could have been due to the inability to decide which card to use at each pausing instance, that they forgot to do so as they got caught up in the act of speaking or that they simply were a bit anxious to draw attention to the fact that they were pausing or admit the reason for doing so in front of their peers. Some of the participants may have felt peer pressure as they stopped using the cards when they notice others did not either for whatever reason. Nevertheless, despite these issues, the qualitative data drawn from the use of these cards, referred to in chapter 6, was worth introducing them in the first place although, they would, arguably, work best with participants with a

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

220

higher level of fluency and less incidences of pausing who are less affected by the diversion caused by using these cards.

8.3.4 The benefits of adopting mixed-methods approach

Finally, with this study combining a mixed-methods approach, it has illustrated the benefits of investigating fluency in L2 in a classroom environment. As we have seen, data has been collected using a combination of methods, namely, through an oral task, the use of pausing explanatory cards and a questionnaire. This combination of quantitative and qualitative methods was the appropriate choice for the research questions that led this study, and it provides unique insights which would be unidentifiable if statistical analyses were used in isolation instead. An enriched picture of the phenomena being investigated can be obtained through this mixed-methods approach. For instance, being able to observe the annotation of linguistic patterns on the speech data allowed the researcher to observe the pausing incidents and the circumstances that may have led to them. Similarly, the questionnaire responses enabled the researcher to take into account the views of the participants with regards to fluency issues which would have been otherwise completely absent from the study. This study is consequently richer and deeper for this approach. Combining both methods was at the core of this study and has a clear methodological value as was key in answering the research questions outlined.

8.4 Pedagogic implications

Given the findings of this study, it would be fair to say that there are clear benefits of using debates for pedagogical purposes. The main benefit is that debates allow learners to be exposed to and use topic related linguistic resources which allow learners to perform at a higher level of fluency towards the end of the debate. In this section, I set out specific pedagogic recommendations based on the findings of the current study. Firstly, I explore the benefits and drawbacks of using debates as a teaching tool. Secondly, I suggest ways in which debates could be better exploited as teaching tools for reducing dysfluencies and increasing fluency. Finally, I look at ways in which language and performance feedback can be integrated into this task for optimal outcomes.

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

221

8.4.1 The benefits of using debates for L2 fluency

In order to achieve increased fluency outcomes in learners, teaching practitioners need to employ instructional tools in the classroom that are motivational to learners so that they have the effect on them to want to invest effort in engaging in the task. A central issue in language education since the end of the 20th century has been vision building as a crucial element for effective L2 learning. This stems from Dewey, an eminent educational reformer, who believed that learners will absorb from any subject they are taught the images that they form in relation to it (Dewey, 1987). In L2 learning and from a motivation research perspective, tasks used in the classroom have to be motivational, that is, they have to show learners the value of learning the L2 in their own lives (Dörnyei & Kubanyiova, 2014). In this sense, debates offer a great opportunity for learners to see themselves as potentially competent L2 users as they are able to take part freely in the discussion of a previously planned topic. In doing so, they can become excited about the task and it is entirely up to the teaching practitioner to take advantage of this to optimize the learning potential that debates offer in terms of fluency development. They need to harness the learners' vision of who they would like to become as L2 users and exploit their impact on motivation to achieve maximum fluency outcomes.

In this study, I have shown that uttering a conclusion at the end of a debate increases cognitive processing speed due to conceptual planning and priming, resulting in higher articulation rate and decreased frequency of repair. This can be interpreted as increased automaticity or cognitive fluency which may result in learners having to repair their output speech with less frequency. Learners may benefit from this increased cognitive fluency and the priming effect of listening to specific topic related language resources during the debate to increase their speech output, producing more words between pauses thus achieving higher levels of fluency in the conclusion. This increased cognitive fluency allows conclusion utterers to integrate their language knowledge in their speech output (Bygate & Samuda, 2005). However, no such fluency effect is seen in the speech output of final speakers in group B.

The main drawback of using conclusion-based debates in the classroom, at least from the data found here, is that, inevitably, not all the participants may have the chance of reaching

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

222

a conclusion. Therefore, they may miss out on the opportunity to take advantage of the increased cognitive fluency achieved during the debate and integrating this into their speech output. Whilst it was not possible in the debates carried out for this study, in the classroom environment this could be remedied by allowing each participant to draw their own conclusion to the debate allowing them to include the ideas that they would have deemed most salient and expressing this conclusion with their own linguistic resources. Another drawback of using debates is that a small number of participants may not feel confident enough to take an active part and contribute with their own ideas or may feel slightly intimidated or unable to find a gap in the contributions for them to take their turn to speak. The recommendation here for teaching practitioners would be to build up a relationship with the learners based on trust and acceptance from the beginning of teaching instruction so that these feelings are reduced to a minimum when they are asked to participate in debates. In this sense, teaching practitioners have a very important role to play in providing a motivating and accepting learning environment in which learners can thrive. More confident and outspoken learners could also be encouraged to be more inclusive of more hesitant learners and proactively direct their contributions and questions to them in order to elicit a response, thus making the debate more inclusive and effective. This would be in line with the questionnaire responses on the effectiveness of debates for fluency improvement which resulted in the majority of participants agreeing with debates being the most effective oral task for this purpose.

8.4.2 Teachers' instructional strategies for reducing dysfluencies in L2 speech

The ultimate aim of using debates as a pedagogical tool in the classroom is to enhance the learners' fluency. In order to highlight this goal and focus the learners' efforts on achieving it, it would be advisable to present this task not just as an opportunity for learners to discuss a topic openly and freely in the L2 but, more specifically, as a tool for 'fluency training' (de Jong & Perfetti, 2011). In that study, participants were given the chance to reflect on their fluency after the performance of each speech given under increased time pressure on the same and different topics. Learner self-reflection upon performance is a very useful tool for improving fluency outcomes and it could also be integrated in the classroom when using debates as an instructional tool. The main metalinguistic reflection that could be drawn from the findings of the present study, based on how to best facilitate automatisation, could be

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

223

applied to using debates in the classroom fostering the learners' conscious thinking about language use for this specific task. The debate could be divided into four different stages which address the difficulties encountered by the participants of this study with lexical retrieval and syntactic encoding and led to most of the dysfluencies. It could be divided into a series of fluency training activities and performance debriefs. The first stage would aim at dealing with potential lexical retrieval issues in the shape of a briefing on topic related words and phrases which both the teacher and the learners anticipate could be needed in the debate. These could be shared by all at the same time whilst clarifying their use and meaning in context. This first stage could also include a short word replacement activity, whereby learners would be encouraged to suggest alternatives to a series of selected topic related words out of context in order to help them adopt this strategy in speech during the debate.

The second stage would target potential syntactical encoding issues in the debate, and it could be based on asking learners to express different messages using a variety of syntactical structures. Then, the planning stage would take place with a stimulus sheet such as the headlines sheet designed for the current study. Then, the debate would ensue. Halfway through the debate, learners could be asked to think about the specific issues they may have encountered in the first stage with regards to the pronunciation of certain words, the retrieval of terms or the formulation of specific thoughts or phrases. A few minutes could then be spent on resolving these issues together with the teaching practitioner who could provide further examples for the learners to take note of. Then, the second half of the debate could resume, thus giving the learners the opportunity to put into practice the resolution of their dysfluencies which could lead to enhanced fluency outcomes.

Integrating fluency training and performance debriefs within other oral tasks would increase the teaching practitioner and learner's understanding of speech fluency and the pedagogical tools they employ in the classroom to promote it. The results of a study on L2 teachers carried out by Tavakoli and Hunter (2017) devised to assess whether fluency was being neglected in the classroom, revealed that teachers often define fluency in a broad sense and that they would use activities that were useful for enhancing speaking practice instead of fostering fluency, highlighting the mismatch between the recommendations made in fluency research and teachers' methodology in the class. By engaging in discussing a

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

224

narrower understanding of fluency with learners, a more effective pedagogical methodology would be used for fluency promotion. Teaching practitioners could be better trained in fluency analysis measures and how different oral tasks, such as using debates, promote fluency outcomes. This could be achieved by offering L2 teachers fluency training specifically on fluency measures, how to foster fluency through specific pedagogical activities and how to use this knowledge to enhance awareness in learners and apply it in assessment of their oral performance. Ultimately, this enhanced knowledge would help clarify the difference between fluency and proficiency in L2 teaching and learning narrowing the gap between research and teaching in the pursuit of fluency development.

8.4.3 Integration of feedback on L2 use and performance in debates

Feedback on L2 use is a crucial element in fluency promotion. Providing feedback on general performance in the debate can also be beneficial for learners and it should have a place in the process of engaging in this oral task. This feedback could include aspects such as level of participation in the debate, quality of interaction with fellow learners, relevance of questions directed to peers, ability to take turns and appropriateness of references to stimulus material used for planning the task. Feedback could be collected in writing during the first half of the debate and shared with the whole group in general terms so that they would be able to act on it in the second half. In order to encourage ownership of this feedback, learners would also be encouraged to contribute with their own suggestions to improve their performance, drawing on previously acquired knowledge and experience of prior debates. This would also contribute to the motivational aspect of this task as it would help the learners perceive it as a group task which can be improved with their combined efforts and suggestions.

Whilst this may present the drawback of interrupting the debate, this would be outweighed by the opportunity it would offer the participants, in particular those who may indeed need to improve their performance the most, to act on this feedback and put into practice some or all of the points raised by the teaching practitioner and their fellow learners. With a raised awareness and understanding on the aspects that need to be improved on, learners would have the opportunity to tweak their performance and aim to improve it. The result would be an improved performance which would hopefully tackle some of the potential initial

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

225

shortcomings and would lead to a second half of the debate marked by a higher level of participation with excellent interactions and appropriate turn taking, relevant questions asked, and good reference to stimulus content.

If learners were given the chance to provide their own feedback on their performance, this would stress to them the importance of collaborative work and it would add another perspective from the point of view of the learner to the professional feedback that can be provided by the teaching practitioner. According to Segalowitz (2010), fluent performance of a skill involves adapting to new situations and performing quickly without loss of stability. If the learner was to receive reliable feedback during learning, their ability to develop higher speech processing mechanisms would stand a better chance of increasing. This is the case in particular with oral tasks performed for communicative purposes such as debates, which mirrors L2 use in the real world. Access to feedback in learning allows learners to become attuned to the ways in which they can accomplish their communicative goals. It improves their fluency performance in the task, and this has a positive impact in the overall communication achieved. In the process of offering feedback, learners would also have the benefit of truly learning from each other and it would help them believe in the process of peer reviews aimed at improving their performance in debates and, ultimately, in working together for higher fluency outcomes.

The findings of the questionnaire revealed that participants believed in the efficiency of using debates to increase their fluency in speech. In the current study, they took part in a debate that had to be constrained by the demands of the research, both in time and procedure. However, in the classroom, debates offer a versatility that enables the teaching practitioner to adapt them to best suit the class ability, knowledge and specific dynamics with the aim of developing their fluency further.

8.5 Chapter summary

In this chapter, I have set out the theoretical, methodological and pedagogic implications of this study. I have explained how this study contribute to creative automatisation in L2 speech through the processes of planning, priming and monitoring. The priming effect of being exposed to topic related lexis by their peers would have had an impact on the

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

226

conclusion utterers, resulting in increased cognitive fluency making lexical retrieval faster and freeing up attentional resources for the formulation of new language chunks. This would have led to an increased AR in their conclusions compared to the speech of final speakers. I also explained the effect of motivation and task engagement on creative automatisation and suggest that experiencing an increase in cognitive fluency may have had a positive impact on the conclusion utterers L2 sense of self which could have fuelled their motivation for investing themselves in the study task. With regards to the methodological implications of this study, I outlined the difficulties of classroom-based research that are outweighed by the benefits it grants in terms of ecological validity. I explained the benefits of using PRAAT for data annotation in terms of providing a clear picture of dysfluency patterns leading to insightful findings. I also referred to the effectiveness of the participants' use of the dysfluency explanatory cards and the justification for using these in this study. I explored the benefits of adopting a mixed-methods approach as the most suited approach for answering the research questions of the current study and able to provide unique insights drawn from all the data collected. Finally, in relation to the pedagogical implications, I explained the benefits of using debates for L2 fluency and how to apply a selection of instructional strategies for reducing dysfluencies in speech by adapting debates into a four-stage task which includes a set of fluency training activities and performance debriefs that include feedback from the teaching practitioner and the peers on how to improve their performance in the debate.

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

227

Chapter 9: Concluding chapter

In this chapter, firstly, I set out the generalisability of findings of this study; then, I explain the limitations that it has in terms of procedure and outcome; I then suggest potential avenues for future research and reach a general conclusion.

9.1. Generalisability of findings

It is inevitable that all research, including the current study, has a series of limitations with regards to the generalisability of findings. Despite the relevance that research carried out in the classroom has in terms of its application to L2 teaching, as opposed to that carried out in a laboratory, the fact that it has been carried out in the classroom, a very specific environment, does pose the question as to how generalisable its findings can be. This is because classroom research is designed for cohorts of learners following a specific programme of study which may be very different to that of other educational institutions. However, it would be fair to say that, if conducted within agreed research parameters, the findings of this study can be applied to a wider context.

The main advantage of this study is that it has been conducted using participants who are all in their second year of their studies in Spanish and have English as their L1. There has been no selection of participants and all students of Spanish in this year were given the option to participate in the study. The advantages of using intact classes has been discussed in chapter 5. Additionally, all students were studying this module of Practical Spanish Skills as linguistic preparation for their year abroad the following academic course. The very specific nature of this cohort, however, may mean that the findings of this study may only be applicable to other groups of learners with similar characteristics and following a similar programme of studies in Spanish. As we have seen, all participants took part in this study with varying degrees of fluency which may have been impacted by any time spent in a Spanish speaking country prior to the study or indeed exposure to communicative interactions with native speakers of the L2. These are indeed aspects of the study that are not possible to control for and could have had a bearing on the fluency patterns observed in the study. Therefore, this study was based specifically on the comparison between the

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

228

speech data of the conclusion of conclusion utterers in group A and that of final speakers in group B with their different levels of fluency. The findings were drawn from the comparison of the speech analyses of these data from both groups in all classes rather than taking into account initial base levels. This decision was made to focus on the effects of having to draw a conclusion for those participants in group A in comparison to the final speech output of those in group B. This way any differences observed could only be due to having to reach a conclusion regardless of the inherent differences in fluency levels which all participants may have presented in both groups. It is worth stressing that allocation to groups was completely random and the decision to utter the conclusion by one participant in group A was taken spontaneously and voluntarily by this participant alone at the end of the debate. Evidence of the differences in fluency levels between the conclusion utterers in group A and the final speakers in group B is that mean length of run increased for the conclusion utterers. All other fluency measures remained comparable between groups, with similar means observed. The participants in this study were all B2 level and whilst, as we have seen, proficiency and fluency levels are not necessarily interlinked, it could be possible that initial levels of speech processing ability may have impacted on the participants ability to speak with increased fluency both in A and B groups. The fact remains that individual differences between participants are always an inherent part of any study and cannot be removed in the interest of a completely aseptic study. These differences need to be acknowledged and embraced and the focus needs to be on the differences in speech performance brought on by the dependent variable introduced, in this case, the task effect of reaching a conclusion.

Despite the above, given that the findings of this study are based on an authentic classroom environment using intact classes, they do provide evidence of the benefits of conducting conclusion-based debates which could be widely applied to other oral tasks for Spanish learning as a L2. This is due to the fact that the increase in articulation rate observed in the speech analysis of the conclusion is based entirely on rigorous quantitative analysis. This supports the general tenet that conclusion-based debates help improve fluency and that, as we have seen in the previous chapter, they can be adapted by teaching practitioners to achieve specific pedagogic purposes, topics and initial levels of fluency.

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

229

9.2. Limitations

Whilst it is crucial that every aspect of this study conforms with agreed methodology in the interest of achieving maximum reliability, there are a series of limitations which need to be acknowledged. On one hand, this study remains small in terms of the number of participants used although it is comparable in this respect to other fluency studies in SLA research. Having said that, it would not be possible for a single researcher led study like this to tackle the manual analysis of a higher volume of speech data without additional help as this process is both highly intensive and time-consuming. Larger studies seem more suited to teams of researchers with the necessary manpower to carry out significantly higher numbers of speech data analyses.

The choice of debate format and topic was done on the bases of the researcher's knowledge of the programme of study followed by the participants and the prior general knowledge they may have had about current affairs. This insight was gained through the researcher being one of the teachers of this module. Future research might focus on debates on topics completely different from those dealt with in the programme of studies and observe how fluency may be impacted when the topic of the debate is completely unknown to the participants and they have no prior experience of speaking about it in a debate or, indeed, of tacking debates in the classroom. It would be interesting to see how participants' fluency would fare in these circumstances and whether similar benefits would be observed.

Another potential limitation of this study is that, as well as individual differences between participants with regards to their initial fluency, it would be fair to say that none of the classes were completely homogenous either in terms of their motivation and task engagement in the debate. Indeed, a small number of classes were recorded but were excluded from the study as an established minimum of 5 participants did not take part in the debate for varying reasons which have already been mentioned above. Also, within the classes whose speech data was part of the study some participants opted not to take part. This means that, inevitably, only the most outspoken and motivated participants may have taken part in the study which means that the benefits for fluency could only be observed in this group, excluding how fluency could have been impacted on those participants who were more

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

230

reticent to take part. Whilst this may be limiting, it has to be embraced as part and parcel of working with intact classes of learners with different attitudes and individual characteristics.

A final limitation of this study is that the initial plan to conduct two cases studies after the debates could not be carried out given the restrictions imposed due to the global pandemic. The aim of these case studies was to gain further insight from the participants into how they felt the debate helped them, or not, in terms of their fluency outcomes and how they felt it could be adapted for it to become a more efficient teaching tool for fluency development, Future research could be focus on collecting the views of the participants in similar fluency studies as they are often an enriching source of insight.

9.3. Suggestions for future research

This study has been aimed at answering specific research questions, as it is customary in SLA research. However, it has also opened the door for new lines of fluency research which I outline below.

The main finding of this study that reaching a conclusion led to an increase solely in articulation rate and frequency of repair and a decrease in pausing in the conclusion of conclusion utterers, demands further investigation as to the reasons why the other fluency measures used for the data analysis, that is, speech rate and mean length of run did not show a statistically significant increase. Conclusion utterers produced a raised number of words within the 20 second sample (excluding pausing) compared to final speakers in group B, however, this did not seem to affect their overall speech rate and mean length of run. It would be interesting to find out the underlying reasons that caused conclusion utterers to produce slightly more speech but not show an increase in their speech rate and mean length of run compared to final speakers in group B. This study also revealed that conclusion-utterers experienced an increase in frequency of self-corrections and reformulations in their speech. A deeper insight into both these issues could be gained through stimulated recall interviews whereby learners would review selected sections of a debate they would have participated in and explain their mental processes behind the formulation of those fragments of speech.

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

231

Another noteworthy issue that was raised from the speech analysis in this study is the greater incidence of dysfluencies relating to syntactical encoding over lexical retrieval. This also warrants further investigation in future studies. An interesting perspective for further analysis would be to determine specifically which aspects of syntactical encoding cause B2 learners to incur in dysfluencies given that at this level their knowledge of syntax should be sufficiently developed not to cause frequent pausing in their speech. This may be due to a number of reasons such as interference with their L1, hesitancy caused by having to produce speech under time restraints, confusion between syntactical structures, inability to select the appropriate syntax for a specific lexical term, etc. The participants' perspective in stimulated recall interviews would shed light on the most troublesome cause for syntactical encoding dysfluencies. The findings of this new investigation would have novel and interesting pedagogical implications that could be adopted in fluency training in future L2 instruction in the classroom.

From a motivation research perspective, further studies would be welcome into the construction of 'vision', following Dörnyei's model (2005) and how this plays out in the participants' psyche while taking part in a debate. This would be particularly important as, the more we know about how learners perceive themselves as competent L2 users and the value they place in L2 learning in their future lives, the better placed teaching practitioners will be to be able to tap into the power of this imaginary by designing motivational oral activities that foster this inner 'vision' to power learner task engagement to further promote higher fluency outcomes. This could be achieved by engaging the participants of such future studies to explain what drives them to learn and take part in oral tasks such as debates and, indeed, whether they believe other elements could be included in the design of these to enhance their task engagement. This would lead to direct pedagogical recommendations, and it would also contribute to building on task engagement (e.g., Willis & Willis, 2007; MacIntyre's, 2007).

Another aspect that would warrant future studies, which was beyond the scope of the current study, is the impact of the learner's proficiency level or cognitive fluency (Segalowitz, 2010) on their ability to develop their fluency to higher levels and at faster pace. Although this would pose its difficulties in terms of operationalizing this type of study, it would broaden the understanding on how linguistic ability affects fluency development and whether it is

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

232

possible for some learners to reach a glass ceiling which determines the level of fluency they are able to achieve in their process of L2 learning.

With regards to a methodological perspective, further research would be welcome into the use of the dysfluency explanatory cards, perhaps focusing on the syntactical encoding difficulties experienced by learners by adding a small selection of other cards that indicate specific syntactical issues, such as, the use of idiomatic expressions, phrasal verbs, reflexive verbs, impersonal constructions, subordinate clauses with subjunctive, etc. This insight would be crucial to increase the understanding of teaching practitioners on the aspects of syntax that should receive most attention during instruction and how their methodology could be adapted to help learners internalise this syntactical knowledge and learn to apply in real-time oral tasks.

Finally, and given the importance of motivation for learning highlighted throughout this study, it would also be of interest to carry out further investigations to try and develop the understanding of how learners absorb the specific 'teacher cognition' (Dörnyei & Kubanyiova, 2014) from their L2 teaching practitioners, that is, their mental dimension, which is undoubtedly a complex dynamic underpinning their teaching. The insight gained in these studies would help understand what makes certain teaching approaches most motivational and effective for fluency development and how these could be maximised through specific training for implementation in the L2 classroom to shape the learning trajectory of learners.

9.4. Chapter summary

In this chapter, I have discussed the generalisability of the findings of this study, its limitations and I have suggested further avenues of enquiry for future research. I explained that classroom research and the specific environment that it offers could put into question how generalisable its findings are although this should not be the case if conducted according to established research parameters. I also explained that the very specific nature of the cohort of students used in this study may mean that its findings may only be applicable to similar learners and that there are aspects of the study which are not possible to control for, such as the exposure the learners have had to the L2 out of the classroom, which may

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

233

have had some influence in the findings. I explained that this drove the decision to base the analysis, and therefore the findings of this study, on the conclusion uttered by the conclusion utterers in group A and the final speech for group B. I argued that individual differences between participants are inherent in any study and part and parcel of this type of classroom research studies. I concluded this section pointing out the benefits of conclusion-based debates for fluency and their adaptability for instruction in the classroom.

Next, I discussed the limitations of this study which are the small number of participants, although comparable to other fluency studies, and the impossibility to conduct a much larger scale study as a single-handed researcher as this which would require much increased manpower for the speech data analysis part of it. I explained that this study was based on the researcher's knowledge of the programme of study for this module and that further research may focus on the impact of debates based on topics not included in the curriculum followed by the students. I pointed out the heterogeneous nature of the classes included in this study both in terms of motivation and task engagement which led to some classes not being included in the study and it would imply that only the most outspoken learners would have taken part. I explained that this had to be accepted as part and parcel of working with intact classes of learners with their own individual characteristics. Finally, I added that two case studies had been planned to take place as part of this study and that this would have yielded interesting insight into how the participants felt the debate had helped their fluency and how it could be adapted for maximum efficacy in the classroom. Unfortunately, this did not come to fruition due to the constraints introduced as a result of the global pandemic.

Finally, I drew on this study's findings to suggest further avenues for research. I explained that it would be interesting to fully understand why only articulation rate and frequency of repair were raised and not the rest of the fluency measures analysed and suggested that stimulated recall interviews with the participants of future studies could be used to gather deeper insights into this. I also explained that further understanding of why there is a greater incidence of dysfluencies relating to syntactical encoding over lexical retrieval and how engaging learners in future studies in stimulated recall interviews would help shed light on the most troublesome causes of this type of dysfluency which would lead to useful pedagogical implications. I also explained the usefulness of reaching a better understanding of how 'vision' is constructed in the process of a debate and how individual interviews with

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

234

the learners of future studies would help gauge what drives them to learn and how this can be used in the design of future oral task that increase their task engagement. I also argued how cognitive fluency can impact the learners' ability to develop their fluency both in higher levels and at a faster pace and whether this might restrict the ability of some learners to reach very high levels of fluency. I then added that, from a methodological perspective, the use of dysfluency explanatory cards could be extended to enquiry about specific syntactical encoding difficulties experienced by the learners in speech which would provide a further understanding of how to adapt the syntax teaching methodology in the classroom. Finally, I added the importance of future studies on focusing on how 'teacher cognition' affects teaching and how the mental conglomerate of some teachers may be more motivational and effective than that of others in the shaping of the fluency development trajectory of learners.

9.5 Conclusion

From the very start, this study was motivated for the following two main drivers: on one hand, understanding the concept of fluency in practical terms and devising a way in which oral tasks, such as the debate used in this study, could be designed for classroom instruction with the aim of maximising their potential in terms of task effect and motivation for developing the learners' fluency.

I conducted an extensive literature review which led me to deepen my knowledge of fluency and the different research approaches to this complex construct, its different levels (cognitive, utterance and perceived) and aspects for its analysis (speed, breakdown and repair). The rigorous data analysis of the speech samples and dysfluency card use collected for this study provided a further understanding of this construct in practice at cognitive and utterance level as well as a syntactical encoding and lexical retrieval levels. This analysis allowed deeper exploration into the concept of creative automaticity and the underlying speech processing mechanisms that allow this to be enhanced.

This study has shown that producing a conclusion at the end of a debate leads to an increase in articulation rate and repair and a decrease in pausing in the conclusion speech of the conclusion utterers in group A compared to the final speakers speech in group B.

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

235

This means that the conclusion utterers were able to produce more words in the 20 second samples (excluding pausing), they paused less and repaired their speech more, leading to an increase of reformulations and self-corrections when compared to the speech of final speakers in group B.

The use of dysfluency explanatory cards by the participants has shown that the main reason that these participants incur in dysfluencies in speech is due to syntactical encoding difficulties over lexical retrieval issues. This is because of the higher cognitive demand that syntactical and morphological encoding puts on the speaker due to the complexity of applying its rules in the context of a L2 real-time speech. This study has shown that lexical retrieval issues have also been a cause for dysfluencies but to a lesser extent. The reason for this is that this implies the selection of single items from the lexicon which are not bound by complex syntactical structures. These are topic sensitive and could hinder the correct lemma retrieval process.

In terms of how the type of oral task used in this study can be operationalised in the classroom for fluency promotion, this study has suggested that debates are highly versatile and can be adapted to suit the cognitive fluency and prior knowledge of specific cohorts of learners and deal with different topics. This study has also explored the different stages debates can be exploited in the classroom in order to integrate language and performance feedback debriefs and offer the leaner the opportunity to act on this to improve their levels of engagement and fluency outcomes. This study has shown that this would maximise the efficacy of debates in line with the learners' perceptions in the questionnaire responses that this type of oral activity is effective in improving their fluency.

In order to accomplish the two aims of this study, a mixed-methods approach has been employed which has combined rigorous quantitative data analysis and insightful qualitative dysfluency explanatory card and questionnaire responses analysis. Although adopting a single method would have simplified the work of the researcher, this more complex combined approached has succeeded in yielding much richer data which has led to more insightful findings into complex constructs, and often intertwined, such as fluency analysis within a classroom environment, cognitive fluency, motivation and task design.

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

236

Further research is welcomed to further our understanding of how aspects such as learner motivation and their concept of 'vision', their cognitive fluency, task design and engagement, the causes of syntactical encoding issues and the impact of teacher cognition can influence and, more importantly, be a determining factor in learners being able to reach higher levels of fluency in their L2. My hope is that this rigorous and methodical study has contributed to the current fluency research discussion and has somewhat paved the way for future investigations into this exciting field and what it can do for teaching fluency in the L2.

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

237

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246

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The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

247

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248

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The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

249

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The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

250

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The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

251

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The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

252

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Agenda for task-based and non-task based investigation for w/b 3/2/20

1. Welcome and thank participants for their cooperation with the study.

2. Participants sign register.

3. Participants display their names on stickers to place on their tops.

4. Participants read Participant Information Sheet and sign Consent.

5. Questions raised and procedure (both debate groups and card use) clarified.

6. News headlines sheet and paper for notes is given out.

7. 10 mins planning time is given.

8. Debate is simultaneously video and audio recorded.

9. Opportunity is given for additional contributions outside time and vocabulary/grammar queries.

10. Participants complete questionnaires.

11. Headlines sheet and cards are collected for re-use.

12. Thank again and end session with participants.

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

253

Appendix 2 – Table showing numbers of students and participants involved in the study

Class	Group	Students involved in the session	Participants involved in the study
1	A=3	6	6
	B=3		
2	A=3	8	7
	B=4		
3	A=5	11	8
	B=3		
4	A=3	6	5
	B=2		
5	A=3	11	6
	B=3		
6	A=3	6	6
	B=3		
7	A=2	7	3
	B=1		
8	A=3	6	6
	B=3		
9	A=2	5	3
	B=1		
10	A=3	6	6
	B=3		
		Total=72	**Total=56**

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

254

Appendix 3 - News headlines stimulus sheet for debate planning

Las protestas del Fridays For Future piden en 30 ciudades españolas que los políticos admitan la "emergencia climática"

Centenares de jóvenes protestan para "situar la lucha contra el cambio climático en un lugar prioritario dentro de la agenda política" de cara a las elecciones

Un modelo de educacón universtaria de tradición anglosajona

Los sistemas de préstamos buscan financiar mejor los campus sin perder equidad, pero pueden acabar ahogando a muchos deudores

Las cifras que demuestran la precariedad del empleo juvenil

El paro, la temporalidad y los bajos sueldos lastran las posibilidades laborales de la población más joven

EMPLEO

Sobrevivir en el mundo de

Los comportamientos narcisistas nos rodean. El exhibicionismo en las redes sociales, la obsesión por los 'selfies' y la propia imagen.

¿Qué implica comprarse una casa ahora? Hipotecas más altas y menos renta disponible

Una encuesta a potenciales compradores del último Salón Inmobiliario de Madrid (SIMA) revela un aumento del número de personas que dicen requerir más del 50% de sus ingresos para pagar una casa

El Reino Unido ya paga la factura por el Brexit

Las incertidumbres generadas por la salida de la Unión Europea llevan al Banco de Inglaterra a recortar las expectativas de crecimiento

Reino Unido eleva al máximo la alerta terrorista ante el temor de un atentado inminente

El gobierno ha tomado la decisión tras la explosión de una bomba casera en el metro de Londres que ha ocasionado 29 heridos

El nacionalismo, enemigo a las puertas

El triunfo de la pasión identitaria sobre el diálogo ilustrado ha comenzado a hacer ya serios estragos. El populismo nacionalista constituye hoy una seria amenaza a las democracias en Europa

Accessed and adapted from www.elpais.es on 13/1/20

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

255

Appendix 4 - Treatment tasks for groups A and B

Full name:
(to be anonymised, for potential selection for case study)

A

February 2020

Treatment task

1. This treatment task will be performed by a group of approximately 10 participants. The participants will be divided into two groups of 5 and will perform the same dialogic task (debate) with two differences: group A will participate in the task to reach an agreed outcome; and group B will only take part, without aiming for an outcome, only engaging in discussion. Group A will also briefly answer a few questions before preparing for the task. The agreed outcome for group A will be to "**identify the type of news that has had the most impact on all the participants' lives by the end of the debate**". You may include a general description of the nature of news you wish to discuss; how it has had an impact in your life; the feelings that it triggered when you first learnt about it; the reasons why you feel this news has had/will have an impact in your life; and the way your life may have changed since then or you anticipate changing in the future.

2. You will have 10 minutes preparation time in order to plan and rehearse the discussion individually before making a start. You can use the paper provided to write any notes to help you plan.

3. You will perform this oral discussion for 10 minutes, with each of the students participating for a maximum of 2 minutes.

4. You will be given two cards which will be placed in front of you. You will push forward the card saying "what to say?" when you experience a pause in your speech that you feel is due to being unsure as to what to say next; the other card will say "how to say?" and you will push it forward when you feel that you are pausing in your speech as you may be unsure as to how to express what you intend to say.

5. Please ensure that your contribution does not overlap that of others, i.e. try not interrupt when others are speaking for clarity of speech samples. Speak clearly at a pace that is normal for you.

6. This task will be video and audio recorded.

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

256

Treatment task

1. This treatment task will be performed by a group of approximately 10 participants. The participants will be divided into two groups of 5 and will perform the same dialogic task (debate) with two differences: group A will participate in the task to reach an agreed outcome; and group B will only take part, without aiming for an outcome, only engaging in discussion. Group A will also briefly answer a few questions before preparing for the task. The agreed outcome for group A will be to "**identify the type of news that has had the most impact on all the participants' lives by the end of the debate**". You may include a general description of the nature of news you wish to discuss; how it has had an impact in your life; the feelings that it triggered when you first learnt about it; the reasons why you feel this news has had/will have an impact in your life; and the way your life may have changed since then or you anticipate changing in the future.

2. You will have 10 minutes preparation time in order to plan and rehearse the discussion individually before making a start. You can use the paper provided to write any notes to help you plan.

3. You will perform this oral discussion for 10 minutes, with each of the students participating for a maximum of 2 minutes.

4. You will be given two cards which will be placed in front of you. You will push forward the card saying "what to say?" when you experience a pause in your speech that you feel is due to being unsure as to what to say next; the other card will say "how to say?" and you will push it forward when you feel that you are pausing in your speech as you may be unsure as to how to express what you intend to say.

5. Please ensure that your contribution does not overlap that of others, i.e. try not interrupt when others are speaking for clarity of speech samples. Speak clearly at a pace that is normal for you.

6. This task will be video and audio recorded.

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

257

Appendix 5 - Cards for participant use during debate

What to say?	How to say?

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

258
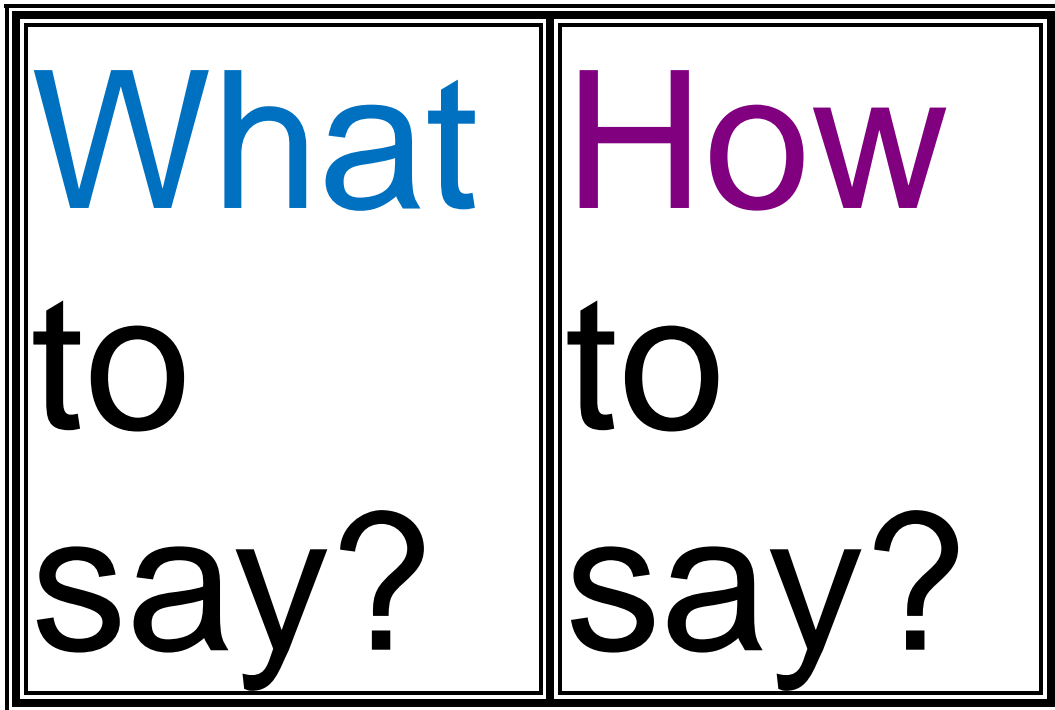
Appendix 6 – Post-task questionnaire

Post-task questionnaire (February 2020)

The purpose of this survey is to better understand how proficiency students of Spanish may improve their oral fluency by taking part in oral tasks, and how their investment in these tasks may be promoted for increased fluency outcomes. Please read each statement below carefully and **tick the one response that most accurately reflects your own opinion**. There is no right or wrong answer.

Your collaboration is greatly appreciated.

	Strongly disagree - - - 1	Disagree - - 2	Slightly disagree - 3	Slightly agree + 4	Agree ++ 5	Strongly agree +++ 6
1. During debates in Spanish, I usually experience some pauses in my speech.						
2. These pauses are due to the difficulty retrieving the required word.						
3. Instead, these pauses are due to me being unsure as to what to say next.						
4. Participating in a debate on a familiar topic helps me speak more fluently.						
5. Having to reach an outcome at the end of the debate causes me to say what I intend more fluently.						
6. Being asked to take part in the debate without reaching a final outcome makes my speech less fluent.						
7. Debates are an effective oral task to improve the fluency of my speech.						
8. Debates are more effective in helping me improve my fluency than delivering presentations on different topics or role-plays.						

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

259

9. I tend to speak more fluently when I feel more motivated.					
10. The way in which an oral task is presented can affect my motivation to engage in it.					
11. I feel most motivated when I have prepared the topic and vocabulary beforehand.					
12. My motivation is best enhanced when I know I have to accomplish a goal during the task.					
13. Only if I am very interested in the topic will I feel motivated to speak fluently.					
14. Having the knowledge or experience to add to a debate will motivate me to invest myself in it.					
15. If there is a balance of known language resources and new ones to apply in an oral task, I feel motivated to invest myself in it.					

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

260

Post-task questionnaire (February 2020) – with answers

The purpose of this survey is to better understand how proficiency students of Spanish may improve their oral fluency by taking part in oral tasks, and how their investment in these tasks may be promoted for increased fluency outcomes. Please read each statement below carefully and **tick the one response that most accurately reflects your own opinion**. There is no right or wrong answer. <u>Your collaboration is greatly appreciated</u>.

	Strongly disagree - - - 1	Disagree - - 2	Slightly disagree - 3	Slightly agree + 4	Agree ++ 5	Strongly agree +++ 6
1. During debates in Spanish, I usually experience some pauses in my speech.	1	0	4	9	38	31
2. These pauses are due to the difficulty retrieving the required word.	0	1	3	31	35	13
3. Instead, these pauses are due to me being unsure as to what to say next.	0	7	12	30	29	5
4. Participating in a debate on a familiar topic helps me speak more fluently.	0	0	3	7	28	45
5. Having to reach an outcome at the end of the debate causes me to say what I intend more fluently.	1	8	12	33	18	11
6. Being asked to take part in the debate without reaching a final outcome makes my speech less fluent.	3	16	32	19	11	2
7. Debates are an effective oral task to improve the fluency of my speech.	1	0	4	14	36	28
8. Debates are more effective in helping me improve my fluency than delivering presentations on different topics or role-plays.	0	4	7	17	30	25
9. I tend to speak more fluently when I feel more motivated.	0	1	2	6	37	37
10. The way in which an oral task is presented can affect my motivation to engage in it.	0	2	4	18	34	25

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

261

11. I feel most motivated when I have prepared the topic and vocabulary beforehand.	0	0	3	9	23	48
12. My motivation is best enhanced when I know I have to accomplish a goal during the task.	2	2	8	36	23	12
13. Only if I am very interested in the topic will I feel motivated to speak fluently.	2	17	20	23	12	9
14. Having the knowledge or experience to add to a debate will motivate me to invest myself in it.	0	0	0	14	38	31
15. If there is a balance of known language resources and new ones to apply in an oral task, I feel motivated to invest myself in it.	1	1	6	40	31	4

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

262

Appendix 7 – Normality test for the whole study cohort

Table 8: Measures of normal distribution used in the fluency data analysis

	N	Skewness		Kurtosis	
	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
SR	56	.767	.319	1.566	.628
MLR	56	1.510	.319	3.025	.628
AR	56	.511	.319	1.129	.628
Freq-MCP	56	.237	.319	-.308	.628
Freq-R	56	.924	.319	.190	.628
Valid N (listwise)	56				

Table 9: Results of the tests of normality used in the fluency data analysis

	Kolmogorov-Smirnov[a]			**Shapiro-Wilk**		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
SR	.096	56	.200[*]	.950	56	.021
MLR	.226	56	.000	.850	56	.000
AR	.074	56	.200[*]	.962	56	.073
Freq-MCP	.091	56	.200[*]	.979	56	.444
Freq-R	.305	56	.000	.772	56	.000

*. This is a lower bound of the true significance.

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

263

Appendix 8 – Summary of Mann-Whitney U test for groups A and B

Table 10: Results of the Independent-Samples Mann-Whitney U Test in the fluency data analysis
Hypothesis Test Summary

	Null Hypothesis	Test	Sig.	Decision
1	The distribution of **SR** is the same across categories of Participants randomly allocated to A or B.	Independent-Samples Mann-Whitney U Test	.114	Retain the null hypothesis.
2	The distribution of **MLR** is the same across categories of Participants randomly allocated to A or B.	Independent-Samples Mann-Whitney U Test	.294	Retain the null hypothesis.
3	The distribution of **AR** is the same across categories of Participants randomly allocated to A or B.	Independent-Samples Mann-Whitney U Test	.500	Retain the null hypothesis.
4	The distribution of **Freq-MCP** is the same across categories of Participants randomly allocated to A or B.	Independent-Samples Mann-Whitney U Test	.609	Retain the null hypothesis.
5	The distribution of **Freq-R** is the same across categories of Participants randomly allocated to A or B.	Independent-Samples Mann-Whitney U Test	.398	Retain the null hypothesis.

Asymptotic significances are displayed. The significance level is .050.

A Mann-Whitney U test indicated that the SR for A (*Mean Rank* = 25.30, *N* = 30), was lower than for B (*Mean Rank* = 32.19, *N* = 26), *U* = 486.00, *z* = 1.58, *p* = .114; the MLR for A (*Mean Rank* = 26.43, *N* = 30), was lower than for B (*Mean Rank* = 30.88, *N* = 26)), *U* = 452.00, *z* = 1.050, *p* = .294; the AR for A (*Mean Rank* = 27.13, *N* = 30), was lower than for B (*Mean Rank* = 30.08, *N* = 26)), *U* = 431.00, *z* = .674, *p* = .500; the Freq-MCP for A (*Mean Rank* = 27.47, *N* = 30), was lower than for B (*Mean Rank* = 29.69, *N* = 26), *U* = 421.00, *z* = .512, *p* = .609; and, finally, the Freq-R for A (*Mean Rank* = 30.07, *N* = 30), was higher than for B (*Mean Rank* = 26.69, *N* = 26), *U* = 343.00, *z* = -.846, *p* = .398.

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

264

Appendix 9 - Measures of normal distribution used in the questionnaire responses analysis

Table 19: Measures of normal distribution used in the questionnaire responses analysis

Tests of Normality

	Participants randomly allocated to A or B	Kolmogorov-Smirnov[a] Statistic	df	Sig.	Shapiro-Wilk Statistic	df	Sig.
Q1	A	.328	30	.000	.720	30	.000
	B	.281	26	.000	.744	26	.000
Q2	A	.233	30	.000	.855	30	.001
	B	.213	26	.004	.879	26	.005
Q3	A	.243	30	.000	.828	30	.000
	B	.225	26	.002	.873	26	.004
Q4	A	.313	30	.000	.754	30	.000
	B	.382	26	.000	.650	26	.000
Q5	A	.234	30	.000	.913	30	.017
	B	.205	26	.006	.912	26	.030
Q6	A	.217	30	.001	.907	30	.012
	B	.164	26	.070	.944	26	.167
Q7	A	.278	30	.000	.781	30	.000
	B	.262	26	.000	.866	26	.003
Q8	A	.247	30	.000	.833	30	.000
	B	.262	26	.000	.866	26	.003
Q9	A	.277	30	.000	.762	30	.000
	B	.288	26	.000	.777	26	.000
Q10	A	.186	30	.009	.877	30	.002
	B	.378	26	.000	.742	26	.000
Q11	A	.335	30	.000	.722	30	.000
	B	.322	26	.000	.764	26	.000
Q12	A	.203	30	.003	.877	30	.002

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

265

	B	.223	26	.002	.862	26	.002
Q13	A	.159	30	.051	.944	30	.114
	B	.171	26	.049	.895	26	.012
Q14	A	.254	30	.000	.793	30	.000
	B	.263	26	.000	.798	26	.000
Q15	A	.244	30	.000	.847	30	.001
	B	.323	26	.000	.753	26	.000

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

266

Appendix 10 – Information Sheet and Letter for Participants

Information Sheet

Research project: The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

You are being invited to take part in a research project. Before you decide to participate it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully. Feel free to ask if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Thank you for taking the time to read this.

What is the purpose of the project?
This project aims to investigate how oral fluency may be developed more effectively in Advanced students of Spanish and your own experience as a student in building up your fluency.

Why have I been chosen?
We are recruiting all Spanish Advanced students (B2, C1) who are willing to participate in this study. It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. Refusal to take part will not affect your rights in anyway. If you do decide to take part you will be given this information sheet to keep (and be asked to sign a consent form). If you take part you are still free to withdraw at any time, without penalty or loss of benefits and without giving a reason. **Taking part or not in the study activities will not affect your marks or assessments of progress in any way.**

What will happen if I take part?
You will be asked to complete usual classroom speaking tasks such as class discussions and oral narratives on familiar topics as well as a questionnaire asking you about your own perceptions on developing your fluency in Spanish. You will also be asked to come in for a 20-minute audio-recorded interview to discuss these. The speaking tasks will be carried out in lesson time and the interviews will be arranged at a mutually convenient time to take place before or after the lessons.

What happens when the research study stops?
If the study ends before it is completed, you will, of course, be told why. Once the data collection is completed, there will be some time spent in the analysis and interpretation. The research will be formally presented to the academic community and other relevant professionals. You will be able to contact us after the data collection is finished.

Will my taking part in this project be kept confidential?
All information which is collected about you during the course of the research will be kept strictly confidential, and saved on password-protected university servers to which only the researcher and her supervisor will have access. Any information about you which is disseminated will be fully anonymised so that you cannot be recognised from it.

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

267

What will happen to the results of the research project?
Our findings will appear in the lead researcher's dissertation, and may later be shared with the academic and relevant professional communities through articles in academic journals, or presentations at conferences.

What happens to the data collected after the research project is finished?
The data will be added to a corpus of similar materials to facilitate ongoing research and teaching; your details will be kept confidential and your anonymity protected.

Who is organising and funding the research?
This research is being undertaken and self-funded by Lola Ramos-Brown, based at the department of Linguistics and Phonetics at Leeds University, and is supervised by Dr Wright and Bettina Hermoso Gómez. This project has been reviewed and approved by the ethics procedure at Leeds University.

Contact for further information:
Lola Ramos-Brown
Department of Linguistics and Phonetics, School of Languages, Cultures and Societies, Michael Sadler Building, University of Leeds, Leeds, LS2 9JT.
Email: L.Ramos-Brown1@leeds.ac.uk

Information letter for participants

Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Cultures

School of Languages, Cultures and Societies

UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS

B48, Michael Sadler Building,

Leeds LS2 9JT

Thesis Title: Oral Fluency Development in Spanish through instructional tasks on the basis of dysfluency analysis, cognitive fluency and motivation

Name of researcher: Lola Ramos-Brown

Email: L.Ramos-Brown1@leeds.ac.uk

This study will be part of my PhD research in the School of Languages, Cultures and Societies at the University of Leeds.

The aim of the research is to investigate the dysfluencies or involuntary speech disruptions presented in speech by Proficiency students of Spanish, the effectiveness of rehearsal and repetition tasks on improving fluency and the participants' motivation in terms of their perceptions of the most effective tasks for oral fluency development.

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

268

If you agree to participate, you will be involved in a three-stage experimental process that will include impromptu dialogic class discussions and a monologic narrative on familiar topics as well as a written questionnaire and a 20-minute interview with the researcher on motivational issues. This process will take place in your normal Spanish classes over a period of three weeks with the exception of the interview which will be carried out at a mutually agreed time before or after each class. Your speaking contributions will be video-recorded and the interviews will be recorded using a voice-recorder. This process will be preceded by a pilot study which will serve as a rehearsal.

Your data will be assigned a code to keep it completely anonymous and your names will be replaced by fictional ones. Your data will be kept safe and confidential. Your data will be included in the thesis that follows this study, however, it will not be identifiable or traceable back to you in this or any future publication.

With your signature below, you give your consent to willingly participate in this research study. Your participation will have no bearing in any way on any course summative assessment or marks overall and may be withdrawn at any time.

Should you would wish to receive a summary of the results of this research, please write your email address on the attached consent form so that this can be forwarded to you.

Your collaboration would be greatly appreciated.

Lola Ramos-Brown

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

269

Appendix 11 – Consent form for participants

Consent form

Participant Consent Form

Consent to take part in the following research project: The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

Lead Researcher: Lola Ramos-Brown

This study will be part of my PhD research in the School of Languages, Cultures and Societies at the University of Leeds. It aims to investigate how oral fluency may be developed more effectively in Advanced students of Spanish and your own experience as a student in building up your fluency.

	Initial the boxes next to the statements you agree with
I confirm that I have read and understand the information above dated November 2018 explaining the above research project, that I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the project and that I have received contact information for the project.	
I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason and without there being any negative consequences. Should I not wish to answer any particular question or questions, I am free to decline.	
I agree to be video and audio recorded in line with standard speaking assessment regulations. I understand that no audio or video recording will be disseminated in any way.	
I understand that my responses will be kept confidential. I give my permission for members of the research team to have access to my anonymized responses, and to directly quote me. I understand that my name will not be linked with the research materials, and I will not be identified or identifiable in the thesis or reports that result from the research.	
I agree for the data collected from me to be stored safely and used in relevant future research.	

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

270

I understand that relevant sections of the data collected during the study, may be looked at by auditors from the University of Leeds or from regulatory authorities where it is relevant to my taking part in this research. I give permission for these individuals to have access to my records.	
I agree to take part in the above research project and will inform the lead researcher should my contact details change during the project and, if necessary, afterwards.	

Name of participant (printed)	
Participant's signature	
Date	
Name of lead researcher	Lola Ramos-Brown
Signature	
Date*	

*To be signed and dated in the presence of the participant. Once this has been signed by all parties the participant should receive a copy of the signed and dated participant consent form, the information sheet and any other written information provided to the participants. A copy of the signed and dated consent form should be kept with the project's main documents and must be kept in a secure location.

I have been informed about the nature of this study and willingly consent to take part in it.

I understand that I will be video-recorded and my interviews taped and that the content of all recordings and questionnaires will be kept safe and completely confidential.

I understand that I may withdraw from the study at any time.

Name (printed)…………………………………………………………..

Signed………………………………………………………………….

Date………………………………………………………………….

Email (optional)…………………………………………………………..

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

271

Appendix 12 – Full Ethics Form

UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS

UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE APPLICATION FORM [1]

Please read each question carefully, taking note of instructions and completing all parts. If a question is not applicable please indicate so. The superscripted numbers (eg**[8]**) refer to sections of the guidance notes, available at http://ris.leeds.ac.uk/uolethicsapplication. Where a question asks for information which you have previously provided in answer to another question, please just refer to your earlier answer rather than repeating information. Research ethics training courses: http://www.sddu.leeds.ac.uk/research-innovation/research-ethics-training-and-guidance

To help us process your application enter the following reference numbers, if known and if applicable:

Ethics reference number:	LTSLCS-091
Student number and/ or grant reference:	200981462

PART A: Summary

A.1 Which Faculty Research Ethics Committee would you like to consider this application?[2]

◉ Arts, Humanities and Cultures (PVAR)

○ Biological Sciences (BIOSCI)

○ ESSL/ Environment/ LUBS (AREA)

○ MaPS and Engineering (MEEC)

○ Medicine and Health (Please specify a subcommittee):

○ School of Dentistry (DREC)

○ School of Healthcare (SHREC)

○ School of Medicine (SoMREC)

○ School of Psychology (SoPREC)

A.2 Title of the research[3]

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

272

A.3 Principal investigator's contact details[4]	
Name *(Title, first name, surname)*	Mrs María Dolores Ramos-Brown (Lola)
Position	Full-time PhD Student at the University of Leeds and Part-time Spanish Lecturer at Leeds Beckett University
Department/ School/ Institute	School of Languages, Cultures and Societies
Faculty	Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Cultures
Work address *(including postcode)*	Department of Languages Leeds Beckett University, 214 Macaulay, Headingley, Leeds LS6 3QS
Telephone number	07796908214
University of Leeds email address	L.Ramos-Brown1 @leeds.ac.uk

A.4 Purpose of the research:[5] (Tick as appropriate)

- ☑ Research
- ☑ Educational qualification: *** Please specify:** *__PhD__
- ☐ Educational Research & Evaluation[6]
- ☐ Medical Audit or Health Service Evaluation[7]
- ☐ Other

A.5 Select from the list below to describe your research: (You may select more than one)

- ☑ Research on or with human participants
- ☐ Research which has potential adverse environmental impact.[8] *** If yes, please give details:***

    _____

- ☑ Research working with data of human participants
- ☑ New data collected by qualitative methods
- ☑ New data collected by quantitative methods
- ☑ New data collected from observing individuals or populations
- ☐ Routinely collected data or secondary data
- ☐ Research working with aggregated or population data
- ☐ Research using already published data or data in the public domain
- ☐ Research working with human tissue samples (*Please inform the relevant Persons Designate if the research will involve human tissue*)[9]

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

273

A.6 Will the research involve NHS staff recruited as potential research participants (by virtue of their professional role) or NHS premises/ facilities?

☐ Yes ☑ No

If yes, ethical approval must be sought from the University of Leeds. Note that approval from the NHS Health Research Authority may also be needed, please contact FMHUniEthics@leeds.ac.uk for advice.

A.7 Will the research involve any of the following:[10] (You may select more than one)

If your project is classified as research rather than service evaluation or audit and involves any of the following an application must be made to the NHS Health Research Authority via IRAS www.myresearchproject.org.uk as NHS ethics approval will be required. **There is no need to complete any more of this form***. Further information is available at http://ris.leeds.ac.uk/NHSethicalreview and at http://ris.leeds.ac.uk/HRAapproval. You may also contact* **governance-ethics@leeds.ac.uk** *for advice.*

☐ Patients and users of the NHS (including NHS patients treated in the private sector)[11]

☐ Individuals identified as potential participants because of their status as relatives or carers of patients and users of the NHS

☐ Research involving adults in Scotland, Wales or England who lack the capacity to consent for themselves[12]

☐ A prison or a young offender institution in England and Wales (and is health related)[14]

☐ Clinical trial of a medicinal product or medical device[15]

☐ Access to data, organs or other bodily material of past and present NHS patients[9]

☐ Use of human tissue (including non-NHS sources) where the collection is not covered by a Human Tissue Authority licence[9]

☐ Foetal material and IVF involving NHS patients

☐ The recently deceased under NHS care

☑ None of the above
You must inform the Research Ethics Administrator of your NHS REC reference and approval date once approval has been obtained.

The HRA decision tool to help determine the type of approval required is available at http://www.hra-decisiontools.org.uk/ethics. If the University of Leeds is not the Lead Institution, or approval has been granted elsewhere (e.g. NHS) then you should contact the local Research Ethics Committee for guidance. The UoL Ethics Committee needs to be assured that any relevant local ethical issues have been addressed.

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

274

A.8 Will the participants be from any of the following groups? (Tick as appropriate)

☐ Children under 16[16] ***Specify age group:***
_____

☐ Adults with learning disabilities[12]

☐ Adults with other forms of mental incapacity or mental illness

☐ Adults in emergency situations

☐ Prisoners or young offenders[14]

☑ Those who could be considered to have a particularly dependent relationship with the investigator, eg members of staff, students[17]

☐ Other vulnerable groups

☐ No participants from any of the above groups

Please justify the inclusion of the above groups, explaining why the research cannot be conducted on non-vulnerable groups.

The data will be collected from students from Leeds Beckett University or those from the University of Leeds. Not all will necessarily be my own students but I am completing this version of ethical approval in case some participants are recruited through classes I may be teaching in my part time role as lecturer at LBU.

It is the researcher's responsibility to check whether a DBS check (or equivalent) is required and to obtain one if it is needed. See also http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/agencies-public-bodies/dbs and http://store.leeds.ac.uk/browse/extra_info.asp?modid=1&prodid=2162&deptid=34&compid=1&prodvarid=0&catid=243.

A.9 Give a short summary of the research[18]

*This section must be completed in **language comprehensible to the lay person**. Do not simply reproduce or refer to the protocol, although the protocol can also be submitted to provide any technical information that you think the ethics committee may require. This section should cover the main parts of the proposal.*

The participants will be selected from two Advanced classes with varying levels (B2-C1) of oral proficiency at Leeds Beckett University and/or, at University of Leeds, for the academic year 2018-19. It is anticipated that one of these classes will be my own given my long-standing experience with such classes. The other class will be a colleague's, who will be approached for permission to use their students during the experimental part of in this research. Both groups will be informed about the general research aims, their voluntary collaboration will be requested and consent sought in writing. Due to the intact class recruitment (to ensure fair inclusion and access to all students to the treatments), it will not be possible to avoid the teachers knowing who is taking part. But it will be made clear that their participation will have no bearing in any way on any judgement of progress, particularly summative assessment or marks overall.

The following are the proposed RQs (which may be subject to slight future modifications as a result of dysfluencies found and treatment tasks results):

RQ1:

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

275

(a)   What are the dysfluencies evidenced in the pre-test impromptu dialogic class discussion on a familiar topic by adult Proficiency (B2-C1) Spanish students?
(b)   Are there improvements observed on these dysfluencies after the application of 2 treatment tasks, namely, a repeated monologic narrative with increased time pressure and a rehearsed dialogic class discussion on a familiar topic?
RQ2:
(a)   What are the participants' perceptions on the most helpful tasks for more flowing speech with less undue pauses?
(b)   To what extent do they perceive these tasks as having an effect on their motivational behavioural responses?
(c)   Are there any correlations between the participants' improved speech performances and their motivational behavioural responses?

A.10 What are the main ethical issues with the research and how will these be addressed?[19]
Indicate any issues on which you would welcome advice from the ethics committee.

Research will be conducted in a non-biased, impartial manner, having previously gained consent from the participants who wish to take part as well as the university and having included a non-coercion clause in the instructions for participants.

No specific issues have been identified as requiring further advice from the ethics committee.

PART B: About the research team

B.1 To be completed by students only[20]	
Qualification working towards (eg Masters, PhD)	PhD
Supervisor's name (Title, first name, surname)	Dr Clare Wright, Lecturer in Linguistics and Language Teaching
Department/ School/ Institute	School of Languages, Cultures and Societies
Faculty	Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Cultures
Work address (including postcode)	School of Languages, Cultures and Societies University of Leeds B48, Michael Sadler Building, LS2 9JT United Kingdom
Supervisor's telephone number	+44 (0)113 343 1852
Supervisor's email address	c.e.m.wright@leeds.ac.uk
Module name and number (if applicable)	n/a

B.2 Other members of the research team (e.g. co-investigators, co-supervisors) [21]	
Name *(Title, first name, surname)*	Bettina Hermoso Gómez
Position	Lecturer in Spanish

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

276

Department/ School/ Institute	School of Languages, Cultures and Societies
Faculty	Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Cultures
Work address *(including postcode)*	School of Languages, Cultures and Societies University of Leeds Room 2.37, Michael Sadler Floor 2 LS2 9JT United Kingdom
Telephone number	0113 343 7107
Email address	B.Hermoso-Gomez@leeds.ac.uk

Name (Title, first name, surname)	
Position	
Department/ School/ Institute	
Faculty	
Work address (including postcode)	
Telephone number	
Email address	

Part C: The research

C.1 What are the aims of the study?[22] (Must be in language comprehensible to a lay person.)

My research work will aim at analysing the dysfluencies present in speaking tasks pre- and post-intervention, carried out by adult Advanced students of Spanish, identifying any improvements in speech performance after the application of two treatment tasks; examining the participants' motivation in terms of perceptions of the most effective tasks for oral fluency development; exploring any possible correlations between their improved speech performances and their motivational behavioural responses.

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

277

C.2 Describe the design of the research. Qualitative methods as well as quantitative methods should be included. (Must be in language comprehensible to a lay person.)

It is important that the study can provide information about the aims that it intends to address. If a study cannot answer the questions/ add to the knowledge base that it intends to, due to the way that it is designed, then wasting participants' time could be an ethical issue.

The proposed methodology will comprise of a mixed-method approach: for RQ1 a quantitative method will be followed and RQ2 will be explored following qualitative survey and interview methods. The participants will be informed of the expectations for each of the requested interventions and their consent will be sought separately.

For RQ1 the participants will be asked to take part in a three-stage experimental process that will provide the necessary data to validate the research findings. This process will consist of a pre-test task, an impromptu dialogic class discussion on a familiar topic such "the most memorable day of your childhood"; two treatment tasks, such as an oral monologic narrative on "the person that has been the best influence in your life" and a rehearsal prior to dialogic class discussion on "the best achievement in your life so far". Finally, there will be a post-test task such as an impromptu dialogic class discussion on "the most memorable day of your adulthood". The pre-task will help identify dysfluencies (at utterance or underlying cognitive planning level, Segalowitz 2010), the treatment tasks will aim at 'treating' those dysfluencies; the post-test task will aid the identification of potential improvements in fluency outcomes in the participants. This three-stage experimental process will take place in scheduled lesson time during the academic year. A pilot study will be carried out prior to this to gather any useful insights and be able iron out any potential issues in the definitive experimental process. The participants will be filmed in the classroom (routinely done for oral assessments, so prior consent to be video recorded is already given as part of their student engagement, and they are familiar with the procedures) in order to record the interventions and see how they use a couple of cards that will be placed in front of them identifying the reasons for any pauses they make in their speech.

For RQ2 the participants will be asked to complete a written questionnaire with a mix of closed and open-ended questions about their perceptions on effective tasks for oral fluency development and the influence specific task types may have on their motivational behavioural responses. There will also be 20-minute audio-recorded semi-structured interviews with individual participants (voluntarily recruited) in order to discuss their responses to the above, with the aim of obtaining additional insights and explanations of cognitive strategies being used, which could shed light on their underlying cognitive fluency processes.
(see appendices)

All data collected will be anonymised when referred to in the thesis. No class recordings, particularly video data, will be disseminated in future presentations, to ensure no violation of anonymity and confidentiality.

C.3 What will participants be asked to do in the study?[23] *(e.g. number of visits, time, travel required, interviews)*

Please refer to the previous question for this answer.

Participants will be asked to participate in the pre-test, treatment and post-test during lesson time and the 20-minute interviews before or after scheduled lessons at mutually agreed times.

C.4 Does the research involve an international collaborator or research conducted overseas:[24]

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

278

(Tick as appropriate)

☐ Yes ☑ No

If yes, describe any ethical review procedures that you will need to comply with in that country:

Describe the measures you have taken to comply with these:

Include copies of any ethical approval letters/ certificates with your application.

C.5 Proposed study dates and duration

Research start date (DD/MM/YY): _____01/10/2017____   Research end date (DD/MM/YY): _____30/09/2020____

Fieldwork start date (DD/MM/YY): _____01/11/2018_(pilot)____   Fieldwork end date (DD/MM/YY): _01/03/2018 (final experimental part of research) __

C.6. Where will the research be undertaken? (i.e. in the street, on UoL premises, in schools)[25]

Either at Leeds Beckett University or at the University of Leeds.

RECRUITMENT & CONSENT PROCESSES

How participants are recruited is important to ensure that they are not induced or coerced into participation. The way participants are identified may have a bearing on whether the results can be generalised. Explain each point and give details for subgroups separately if appropriate.
C.7 How will potential participants in the study be:
(i) identified?

They will be all students at B2-C1 level with different levels of fluency who are willing to participate in the research. The activities they will be undertaking will be of similar nature to the ones they usually complete to develop their oral skills in the classroom. They will be in groups of 4 participants of their choosing and they will be familiar with the topics they will be discussing for the research.

(ii) approached?

They will be briefed on the general purpose and nature of the research to be undertaken and they will be asked to participate if they are willing to do so. For them it will seem like a familiar speaking activity they are used to completing in class. They will be given the chance to ask any questions they have about what will be asked of them for the study.

(iii) recruited?[26]

They will be recruited on the basis of their willingness to participate and boost their speaking skills in the same process. It will be explained to them in person and in writing that they participation or decision not to participate will strictly not have any bearing on the results of their course

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

279

assessments. Those students not wishing to participate will be given an alternative activity to complete in the same time as part of their classwork.

C.8 Will you be excluding any groups of people, and if so what is the rationale for that?[27]
Excluding certain groups of people, intentionally or unintentionally may be unethical in some circumstances. It may be wholly appropriate to exclude groups of people in other cases

Only those students who do not wish to participate will be excluded from the research.

C.9 How many participants will be recruited and how was the number decided upon?[28]
It is important to ensure that enough participants are recruited to be able to answer the aims of the research.

The intention is to recruit around 20 participants per group as it was agreed with my supervisor this would be a sufficiently large number to be able to collect enough data, draw meaningful conclusions from the results and provide the study with validity.

Remember to include all advertising material (posters, emails etc) as part of your application

C10 Will the research involve any element of deception?[29]
If yes, please describe why this is necessary and whether participants will be informed at the end of the study.

No

C.11 Will <u>informed consent</u> be obtained from the research participants?[30]
☑ Yes   ☐ No
If yes, <u>give details</u> of how it will be done. Give details of any particular steps to provide information (in addition to a written information sheet) e.g. videos, interactive material. If you are not going to be obtaining informed consent you will need to justify this.

Consent will be sought in writing after briefing the students on the nature of the research, in person and in writing. All aspects of the experimental process will be explained as well as the expectations from the participants and the aims of the research. They will be asked for consent on being video-

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

280

recorded and audio-recorded (routine procedure for oral assessments and one they are familiar with) and the data analysed at a later date.

See attached for consent forms
If *participants are to be recruited from any of potentially vulnerable groups, <u>give details of extra steps</u> taken to assure their protection. Describe any arrangements to be made for obtaining consent from a legal representative.*

Copies of any written consent form, written information and all other explanatory material should accompany this application. The information sheet should make explicit that participants can withdraw from the research at any time, if the research design permits. Remember to use meaningful file names and version control to make it easier to <u>keep track of your documents</u>. Sample information sheets and consent forms are available from the University ethical review webpage at http://ris.leeds.ac.uk/InvolvingResearchParticipants.

C.12 Describe whether participants will be able to withdraw from the study, and up to what point (eg if data is to be anonymised). If withdrawal is <u>not</u> possible, explain why not.
Any limits to withdrawal, eg once the results have been written up or published, should be made clear to participants in advance, preferably by specifying a date after which withdrawal would not be possible. Make sure that the information provided to participants (eg information sheets, consent forms) is consistent with the answer to C12.

Participants will be told in person and in writing that they will be able to withdraw from the study at any point and that data will be anonymised so it will become untraceable. Video and audio recordings will not be disclosed or published in any way.

C.13 How long will the participant have to decide whether to take part in the research?[31]
It may be appropriate to recruit participants on the spot for low risk research; however, consideration is usually necessary for riskier projects.

The participants will be given around four weeks to decide whether they would like to take part in the pilot and then the final research.

C.14 What arrangements have been made for participants who might have difficulties understanding verbal explanations or written information, or who have particular communication needs that should be taken into account to facilitate their involvement in the research?[32] *Different populations will have different information needs, different communication abilities and different levels of understanding of the research topic. Reasonable efforts should be made to include potential participants who could otherwise be prevented from participating due to disabilities or language barriers.*

n/a

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

281

C.15 Will individual or group interviews/ questionnaires discuss any topics or issues that might be sensitive, embarrassing or upsetting, or is it possible that criminal or other disclosures requiring action could take place during the study (e.g. during interviews or group discussions)?[33] *The <u>information sheet</u> should explain under what circumstances action may be taken.*

☐ Yes ☑ No *If yes, give details of procedures in place to deal with these issues.*

C.16 Will individual research participants receive any payments, fees, reimbursement of expenses or any other incentives or benefits for taking part in this research?[34]

☐ Yes ☐ No

If Yes, please describe the amount, number and size of incentives and on what basis this was decided.

The participants will be offered a free refreshment voucher as a token of gratitude for their participation at the expense of the researcher.

RISKS OF THE STUDY

C.17 What are the potential benefits and/ or risks for research participants in both the short and medium-term?[35]

Participants will benefit from the speaking activities they take part in in terms of their oral skills and they will also have an opportunity to reflect on the tasks that help them develop their fluency skills best and the reasons for this.

There are no risks whatsoever associated with taking part in this research study.

C.18 Does the research involve any risks to the researchers themselves, or people not directly involved in the research? *Eg lone working*[36]

☐ Yes ☑ No

If yes, please describe: _____

Is a <u>risk assessment</u> necessary for this research?

☐ Yes ☑ No If yes, please include a copy of your risk assessment form with your application.

NB: If you are unsure whether a risk assessment is required visit http://ris.leeds.ac.uk/HealthAndSafetyAdvice or contact your Faculty Health and Safety Manager for advice.

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

282

RESEARCH DATA

C.19 Explain what measures will be put in place to protect personal data. E.g. anonymisation procedures, secure storage and coding of data. Any potential for re-identification should be made clear to participants in advance.[37] Refer to http://ris.leeds.ac.uk/ConfidentialityAnonymisation and http://ris.leeds.ac.uk/ResearchDataManagement for guidance.

All research data and signed consent forms will be deposited in the University of Leeds repository once the project has finished. If required, a management data plan will be completed and adhered to. The data will be stored in password protected storage; data will be in the form of CD files, and software files stored on university servers such as PRAAT, SPSS and Microsoft Office files in the short-term. Long-term all these data will be transferred to one of the University drives, as advised by the university IT team, to prevent data loss or misuse. Only the researcher and the supervisor will have access.
Data will be anonymised using different names for the participants.

C.20 How will you make your research data available to others in line with: the University's, funding bodies' and publishers' policies on making the results of publically funded research publically available. Explain the extent to which anonymity will be maintained. *(max 200 words)* Refer to http://ris.leeds.ac.uk/ConfidentialityAnonymisation and http://ris.leeds.ac.uk/ResearchDataManagement for guidance.

No funding has been received to date for this research study.

C.21 Will the research involve any of the following activities at any stage (including identification of potential research participants)? (Tick as appropriate)

☐ Examination of personal records by those who would not normally have access

☐ Access to research data on individuals by people from outside the research team

☐ Electronic surveys, please specify survey tool: _____ (further guidance)

☐ Other electronic transfer of data

☐ Use of personal addresses, postcodes, faxes, e-mails or telephone numbers

☑ Use of audio/ visual recording devices (NB this should usually be mentioned in the information for participants)

☐ FLASH memory or other portable storage devices

Storage of personal data on, or including, any of the following:

☑ University approved cloud computing services (Microsoft Office 365 for email (Exchange online) and Microsoft OneDrive for Business)

☐ Other cloud computing services

☐ Manual files

☐ Private company computers

☑ Laptop computers

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

283

☐ Home or other personal computers (not recommended; data should be stored on a University of Leeds server such as your M: or N: drive where it is secure and backed up regularly: http://ris.leeds.ac.uk/ResearchDataManagement.)

C.22 How do you intend to share the research data? (Indicate with an 'X) *Refer to http://library.leeds.ac.uk/research-data-deposit for guidance.*

☐ Exporting data outside the European Union

☐ Sharing data with other organisations

☑ Publication of direct quotations from respondents (may be used in anonymised form during dissemination)

☐ Publication of data that might allow identification of individuals to be identified

☐ Submitting to a journal to support a publication

☐ Depositing in a self-archiving system or an institutional repository

☐ Dissemination via a project or institutional website

☐ Informal peer-to-peer exchange

☐ Depositing in a specialist data centre or archive

☐ Other, please state: _____.

☐ No plans to report or disseminate the data

C.23 How do you intend to report and disseminate the results of the study? (Indicate with an 'X) Refer to http://ris.leeds.ac.uk/ResearchDissemination and http://ris.leeds.ac.uk/Publication for guidance.

☑ Conference presentation

☑ Peer reviewed journals

☑ Publication as an eThesis in the Institutional repository – you should be doing these

☐ Publication on website

☐ Other publication or report, please state: _____

☐ Submission to regulatory authorities

☐ Other, please state: _____.

☐ No plans to report or disseminate the results

C.24 For how long will data from the study be stored? Please explain why this length of time has been chosen.[38]   Refer to the RCUK Common Principles on Data Policy and http://ris.leeds.ac.uk/info/71/good_research_practice/106/research_data_guidance/5.
***Students**: It would be reasonable to retain data for at least 2 years after publication or three years after the end of data collection, whichever is longer.*

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

284

____2____ years,	____12____ months (just 3 years probably clearer)

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

C.25 Will any of the researchers or their institutions receive any other benefits or incentives for taking part in this research over and above normal salary or the costs of undertaking the research?[39]

☐ **Yes**   ☑ **No**

If yes, indicate how much and on what basis this has been decided _____n/a_____

_

C.26 Is there scope for any other conflict of interest?[40] *For example, could the research findings affect the any ongoing relationship between any of the individuals or organisations involved and the researcher(s)? Will the research funder have control of publication of research findings? Refer to http://ris.leeds.ac.uk/ConflictsOfInterest.*

☐ Yes   ☑ No

If so, please describe this potential conflict of interest, and outline what measures will be taken to address any ethical issues that might arise from the research.

n/a

C.27 Does the research involve external funding? (Tick as appropriate)

☐ Yes   ☑ No   ***If yes, what is the source of this funding?***
_____

NB: If this research will be financially supported by the US Department of Health and Human Services or any of its divisions, agencies or programmes please ensure the additional funder requirements are complied with. Further guidance is available at http://ris.leeds.ac.uk/FWAcompliance and you may also contact your FRIO for advice.

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

285

PART D: Declarations

Declaration by Chief Investigators

1.   The information in this form is accurate to the best of my knowledge and belief and I take full responsibility for it.

2.   I undertake to abide by the University's ethical and health & safety guidelines, and the ethical principles underlying good practice guidelines appropriate to my discipline.

3.   If the research is approved I undertake to adhere to the study protocol, the terms of this application and any conditions set out by the Research Ethics Committee.

4.   I undertake to seek an ethical opinion from the REC before implementing substantial amendments to the protocol.

5.   I undertake to submit progress reports if required.

6.   I am aware of my responsibility to be up to date and comply with the requirements of the law and relevant guidelines relating to security and confidentiality of patient or other personal data, including the need to register when necessary with the University's Data Protection Controller (further information available via http://ris.leeds.ac.uk/ResearchDataManagement).

7.   I understand that research records/ data may be subject to inspection for audit purposes if required in future.

8.   I understand that personal data about me as a researcher in this application will be held by the relevant RECs and that this will be managed according to the principles established in the Data Protection Act.

9.   I understand that the Ethics Committee may choose to audit this project at any point after approval.

Sharing information for training purposes: Optional – please tick as appropriate:

☐   I would be content for members of other Research Ethics Committees to have access to the information in the application in confidence for training purposes. All personal identifiers and references to researchers, funders and research units would be removed.

Principal Investigator

Signature   of   Principal   Investigator: .... (This   needs   to   be an actual signature rather than just typed. Electronic signatures are acceptable)

Print name: María Dolores Ramos-Brown (Lola)................. Date: (25/06/2018): ....

Supervisor of student research: I have read, edited and agree with the form above.

Supervisor's signature:

....
(This needs to be an actual signature rather than just typed. Electronic signatures are acceptable)

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

286

Print name: ...Clare Wright.......................................   Date: 6/7/18:

....

Please submit your form **by email** to researchethics@leeds.ac.uk or if you are in the Faculty of Medicine and Health FMHUniEthics@leeds.ac.uk. **Remember to include any supporting material** such as your participant information sheet, consent form, interview questions and recruitment material with your application.

To help speed up the review of your application:

❑ Answer the questions in plain English, avoid using overly technical terms and acronyms not in common use.

❑ Answer all the questions on the form, including those with several parts (refer to the guidance if you're not sure how to answer a question or how much detail is required).

❑ Include any relevant supplementary materials such as

❑ Recruitment material (posters, emails etc)

❑ Sample participant information sheet

❑ Sample consent form. Include different versions for different groups of participants eg for children and adults, clearly indicating which is which.

❑ Signed risk assessment (If you are unsure whether a risk assessment is required visit http://ris.leeds.ac.uk/HealthAndSafetyAdvice or contact your Faculty Health and Safety Manager for advice.).

Remember to include use version control and meaningful file names for the documents.

❑ If you are not going to be using participant information sheets or consent forms explain why not and how informed consent will be otherwise obtained.

❑ If you are a student it is essential that you discuss your application with your supervisor.

❑ Submit a signed copy of the application, preferably electronically. Students' applications need to be signed by their supervisors as well.

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

287

Questionnaire used to elicit information for justification of part of the research project at transfer interview. Questionnaires designed for qualitative part of research study (RQ2) will be of similar fashion.

Post-course questionnaire on proficiency students' perceptions on a multidimensional effect of oral task-based activities.

The following questions have been formulated to gather your insight into how you perceive the effect of some of the oral tasks we have completed this year on your oral fluency, your oral interaction with your peers, your engagement in the tasks, and finally, your motivation to complete them. You only are required to consider oral tasks of your choice that we have completed over the course, where these have been performed individually, in pairs or in groups. Please briefly describe specific tasks and the effects you have noticed. Your answers will be compiled and used anonymously in interview only to justify the grounds for my research doctoral work aimed at exploring oral fluency development.

Please note that your participation will have no bearing in any way on any course summative assessment or marks overall and may be withdrawn at any time.

Your collaboration is greatly appreciated.

1. Effects of tasks on your oral fluency
1.1. Which has been the oral task that has helped you improve your oral fluency the most? What change have you noticed? Why do you think this has been the case?
1.2. What elements does an oral task have to include to help improve oral fluency?
2. Effects of tasks on your oral interaction with your peers
2.1. Which oral tasks are best to promote oral interaction with your peers? What are the reasons for this?
2.2. What benefits to you own oral performance do you notice in completing an oral task while interacting with your peers?

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

288

3.	**Effects of tasks on your engagement in completing them**
3.1.	Which oral tasks cause you to engage the most when completing them?
3.2.	What aspects of an oral task help you feel fully engaged when completing it?
4.	**Effects of tasks on your motivation to complete them**
4.1.	How in particular does an oral task motivate you to want to complete it?
4.2.	Which oral tasks do you feel add to your private enjoyment when completing them? What are the reasons for this?

Draft interview questions on motivational issues for Case Study participants

The following are a couple of example draft questions similar to the ones that will be used in the interview with the participants to discuss motivational issues resulting from their questionnaires, their perceptions on the experimental process and the tasks they feel most help them improve their fluency. These draft questions are provided here to show the type of information that will be elicited from the participants. Please note that the final interview questions will need to be developed after the pre-test treatment analysis.

These draft questions will be based on those used in the second part of a composite questionnaire of a study by Saito, Dewaele et al. (2018) which was adapted from the Foreign Language Enjoyment Questionnaire, which was also granted ethical clearance, to explore private and social enjoyment in the classroom. This study was carried out on 108 Japanese students of EFL and it aimed to analyze L2 motivation, emotion and experience as key factors for explaining varied outcomes of L2 oral proficiency development.

Examples of draft questions to be used in the interview with participants:

- Do you feel the treatment task you completed has helped you improve your fluency? If so, which aspects of your oral delivery did you feel have improved the most and why?
- When you realize that you are enjoying a specific speaking task, do you think this has an impact on your fluency during the process of completing it?

The effect of a conclusion-outcome debate on L2 Spanish learners' oral fluency and the interactions between dysfluencies, motivation and task design

289

Speaking Tasks used for the experimental process

These will be designed by myself in line with usual speaking tasks that are used in the classroom for these levels for speaking practice and they will be based on familiar topics that the participants will be able to speak about at length so no anxiety will be caused.

These will be of a similar nature to those used on a study by Ann Marie Hunter (2017) on 64 foreign ESL students which investigated the effects of two repetitive pedagogic task sequences on short-term fluency based on Lynch and Maclean's 'Poster Carousel' (1994). Students were required to create posters based on academic journal articles and then to respond to visitors' questions about their posters. In my study participants will be given planning time before taking part in class discussions in which they will need to interact with each other to ask and answer questions as well as producing a monologic narrative on familiar topics.

Please note that further versions of all instruments used in the experimental part of my study will be available for inspection by the ethics committee at their convenience, should this be considered appropriate.

References

Hunter, A.-M. (2017). *Fluency development in the ESL classroom : the impact of immediate task repetition and procedural repetition on learners' oral fluency* (doctoral thesis). St Mary's University, https://ethos.bl.uk/OrderDetails.do?uin=uk.bl.ethos.725127.

Saito, K., Dewaele, J.-M., Abe, M. and In'nami, Y. (2018), Motivation, Emotion, Learning Experience, and Second Language Comprehensibility Development in Classroom Settings: A Cross-Sectional and Longitudinal Study. Language Learning, 68: 709-743. https://doi.org/10.1111/lang.12297.