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Chapter 7

The effect of interaction in acquiring the grammar of a second language

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Abstract

In this paper the effect of interaction between learners of English as a second language during a dictogloss task on the acquisition of the passive form is investigated. Subjects were 34 Dutch high school students in their fifth year of English. The experimental group was given two dictogloss tasks, which consisted in the reconstruction in small groups of two texts read by the teacher (+interaction). The control group was submitted to the same tasks, but this time the students had to reconstruct the texts individually (−interaction). Knowledge of the passive was established by means of a pre-test. After the treatment a post-test and delayed post-test were administered. By means of a quantitative analysis it could not be demonstrated that recognition and frequency of use of the passive differ depending on the degree in which learners are encouraged to interact with each other. A qualitative analysis makes clear that numerous instances of interaction lead to the noticing of passive forms.

Keywords: Collaborative dialogue; Dictogloss; Interaction; Metacognition; Modified input; Noticing; Output Hypothesis; Text reconstruction

1. Introduction: theoretical assumptions

Lately, there has been much research in the field of second language acquisition on whether noticing a particular linguistic form may promote the acquisition of that form (e.g. Doughty & Williams, 1998; Izumi, Bigelow, Fujiwara, & Fearnow, 1999; Norris & Ortega, 2000; VanPatten, 2000). Noticing a linguistic form in the input is thought to operate as a necessary, though not a sufficient condition for processing

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(VanPatten, 1996, 2000; VanPatten & Cadierno, 1993; Schmidt, 1995). As stated by Robinson (1995, 1996), Schmidt (1990, 1995) and Skehan (1998), there seems to be a connection between learners' awareness of linguistic forms in the input and successful learning. Skehan's Information Processing Model (Skehan, 1998, p. 52), which stands at the base of the present study, is centred on the concept of noticing. For a definition of noticing we refer to Schmidt (1990) who describes it as 'a conscious attention to input'. The Information Processing Model emphasizes input processing and the interaction of input features, via noticing, with the interlanguage system of the learner. According to Skehan, various influences affect noticing, such as the frequency and salience of the input, classroom instruction, task demands on processing resources, individual differences between learners in processing ability, and readiness to pay attention to certain linguistic forms (see Fig. 1).

A second line of research concentrates on the role of interaction. According to Swain's Output Hypothesis (1985, 1998), output may influence noticing and promote L2 acquisition. Swain also attributes an important role to collaborative dialogue, i.e. dialogue in which learners are engaged in negotiating meaning and language building. Through collaborative dialogue learners engage in co-constructing their second language and in building knowledge about it. Collaborative language production tasks may therefore prompt learners to deepen their awareness of linguistic rules. This may trigger cognitive processes that may both generate new linguistic knowledge and consolidate existing knowledge (Swain & Lapkin, 2000, 2001). In this study whenever the term interaction is used, it must be interpreted in this sense of collaborative dialogue.

Related to the Output Hypothesis and the role attributed to interaction is the assumption that metacognition may have a facilitative effect on L2 acquisition. As argued by Ellis (2000), there are properties in a task that will predispose or induce learners to engage in certain types of language use and mental processing that are beneficial for acquisition. Particular language production tasks, such as problem-solving activities, may encourage learners to talk about the linguistic problems they encounter. Verbalization of problems in contexts in which learners are engaged in meaningful interaction may help learners to understand the relation between meaning, form and function, since these kinds of activities may lead to a greater metacognitive awareness.[1] Metatalk about language may therefore help learners to understand the relation between meaning, form and function (Long & Robinson, 1998).

Noticing and interaction (i.e. collaborative dialogue) as important conditions for second language learning are the theoretical assumptions underlying the dictogloss procedure, in which learners are encouraged to reflect on their own output. As described by Wajnryb (1990), a short text is read at normal speed

[1] The hypothesized beneficial effect of metacognition, as triggered by collaborative dialogue, seems to be indirect and language independent, in so far that the increased awareness of linguistic rules and formal and functional relationships promotes L2 acquisition in general, but does not necessarily lead to better conversational skills. It is therefore irrelevant whether the interaction between the L2 learners takes place in L2 or in L1.

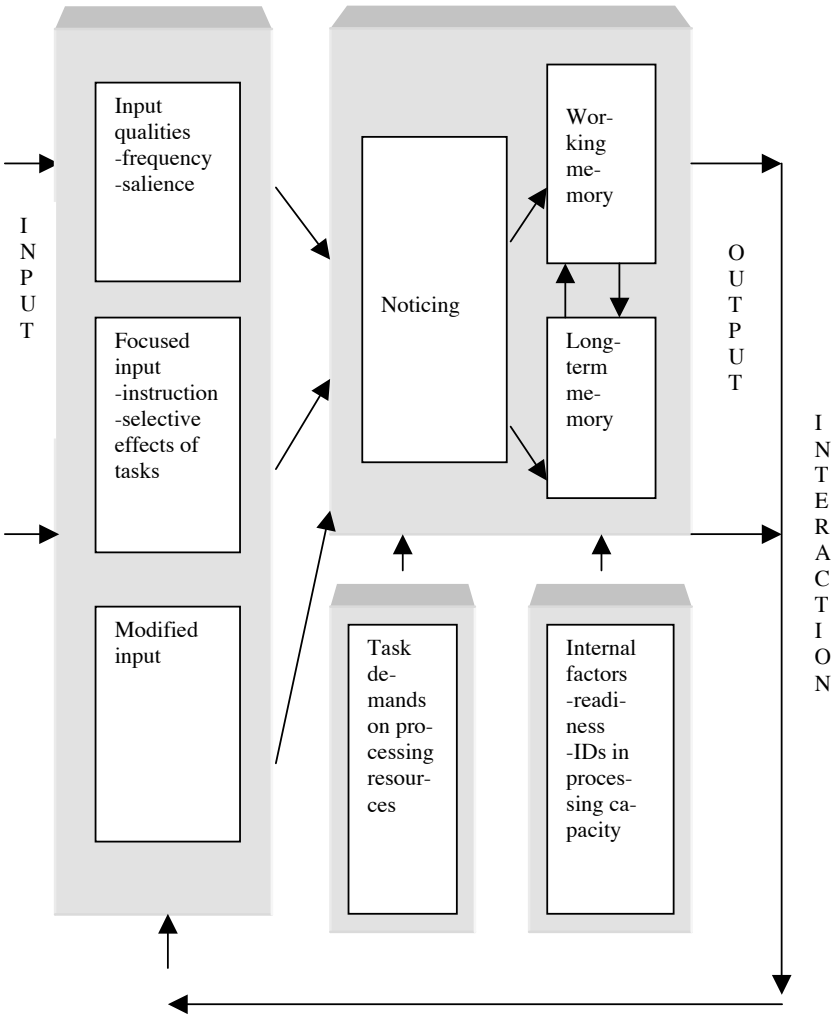

Fig. 1. Types of noticing based on Skehan (1998).

to a group of L2 learners. This text, which is either a constructed or an authentic one, is intended to provide practice in the use of particular linguistic forms or constructions. While the text is being read, learners take notes; they then work together in small groups to reconstruct the initial text from their shared resources. After the reconstruction phase the final version is compared with the original text, and then analysed and commented upon by the teacher. It is hypothesized that while learners interact with each other, their language ability improves, as far as their morpho-syntactic, lexical and pragma-rhetorical skills are concerned (García Mayo, 2001a, b, 2002).

Skehan's Information Processing Model applies to dictogloss in the following ways. In the text read to the learners, the focus is on a particular grammatical construction, which occurs frequently and stands out saliently in the input. The learners' attention will already have been drawn to it in the classroom. Through its characteristics, the dictogloss task itself makes the structure more prominent. In terms of cognitive complexity, the task demands of dictogloss are probably neither too high nor too low, so it may be assumed that they will not overload the learners' internal system in such a way that noticing is less likely to occur (Robinson, 2001). Between the learners of each group there will be differences in processing capacity and readiness to concentrate on certain linguistic forms. During the text reconstruction phase, output and interaction may lead to an increased metacognitive awareness: learners find out what they know, should know and do not know about the target language.

In this paper the effect of interaction between learners during a dictogloss task on the acquisition of the passive form is investigated. The research question and design of our study are described in the next section. These are followed by the results of the experiment. First, we will investigate whether recognition and frequency of use of the passive are affected by the degree in which learners have the opportunity to interact with each other. Then a further qualitative analysis of the interaction between the learners will be made, in order to find out how reflections and discussions may result in more noticing of the passive. In the final section we will discuss the results of the study as well as the implications of our findings.

2. Research question and design

Our research question was whether the outcome of a particular language task (the dictogloss task) with respect to a particular construction (the passive) differs depending on the degree to which learners are encouraged to interact with each other.

The participants were 34 Dutch high school students, aged between 16 and 18, who were in their fifth year of English. They were divided into an experimental group (20 students) and a control group (14 students). The former group was asked to perform two dictogloss tasks. After the text was read out by the teacher, the learners had to reconstruct the original text in small groups consisting of three or four students. In total there were six of these groups. Those in the control group were given the same tasks, but they had to reconstruct the text individually, so that there was no possibility for them to interact.

Two texts were used: 'The Stolen Painting' (text A) and 'The Nazca Lines' (text B). The original version of 'The Stolen Painting' contains 13 passive structures with three different levels of complexity. Type I passives are verbal constructions with one auxiliary, e.g. *was owned* and *was arranged*, type II passives consist of two auxiliaries, e.g. *had been stolen* and *cannot be named* and type III passives consist of three, e.g. *may have been presented* and *should have been given*. Appendix A contains the original version of text A as well as an example of a reconstructed version of the text

made by one of the groups. The discussions between the students during the reconstruction phase were tape-recorded and transcribed.[2] These were mainly in Dutch with the occasional use of English. Appendix B contains an excerpt taken from a discussion between three students while they were reconstructing 'The Stolen Painting'. All excerpts cited in this study have been translated into English. Quotation marks indicate that those (parts of) utterances were spoken in English.

Pre-existing knowledge of the passive in English was established by means of a detection test. This pre-test consisted of 32 sentences containing passive structures which the students had to underline. The test included eight passive structures of each type. After the dictogloss tasks, a post-test similar to the pre-test was administered (Appendix C). Two weeks later the learners took a delayed post-test.

We hypothesized that the opportunity for the participants to interact with each other in the experimental condition (+interaction) would result in a higher score on the post-test and delayed post-test and in the more frequent use of passive forms in the reconstructed texts than for the learners in the control group (−interaction). By means of a qualitative analysis we tried to determine how noticing of the passive took place and how different proposals for text reconstruction could be characterized.

3. Quantitative analysis

In this section the results of the pre-test, post-test and the delayed post-test are presented for the experimental group and the control group. First, the reliability of the administered tests was established by means of Cronbach's alpha. The reliability scores ranged from 0.7920 to 0.8711, as can be seen in Table 1. These coefficients show that the data are reliable.

As far as the mean overall scores on the three tests are concerned, the subjects performed slightly better with time: on the pre-test about 55 items were scored correctly, on the post-test about 56 and on the delayed post-test about 58 (see Table 2).

In all the tests, the recognition of passive structures of types I and II was better than that of type III. This is not surprising as types I and II structures are less complex than those of type III. The average score on types I and II structures was 6–7 and on type III structures around 5 (see Table 3). However, with time learners were better at identifying type III structures, their mean scores were 4.9 on the pre-test, 5.4 on the post-test and 5.7 on the delayed post-test.

Although the participants had been randomly assigned to one of the two groups, there was a difference between the experimental group (+interaction) and the control group (–interaction) at the start. The mean score for the experimental group

[2] Although our research concentrated on the acquisition of passives in English, the L2 learners were not aware of this fact. The only instruction they received during the experiment was that they had to reconstruct the original text read out to them by the teacher. The transcriptions of the discussions show that dictogloss is a language task which calls on many linguistic and cognitive resources at the same time, as postulated by Wajnryb (1990), since during the reconstruction phase not only passives but several syntactic and lexical structures were discussed.

Table 1
Reliability analysis

	Pre-test	Post-test	Del. post-test
Cronbach's alpha	0.8525	0.7920	0.8711

Table 2
Mean overall test scores

Test	*N*	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	SD
Pre-test	34	44	69	55.7	7.1
Post-test	34	46	68	56.2	6.0
Del. post test	29	44	69	58.4	7.0

Table 3
Mean overall test scores on types I–III structures

Type	*N*	Pre-test		Post-test		Del. post-test	
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
I	34	6.5	1.3	7.1	1.4	6.7	1.6
II	34	6.2	1.7	6.4	1.4	6.3	1.9
III	29	4.9	2.4	5.4	2.2	5.7	2.5

Table 4
Mean test scores for the experimental group and the control group

Group	Pre-test			Post-test			Del. post-test		
	N	Mean	SD	*N*	Mean	SD	*N*	Mean	SD
Experimental	20	57.6	7.7	20	57.9	6.5	18	58.5	7.2
Control	14	52.9	5.43	14	53.7	4.2	11	58.2	7.1

on the pre-test was 57.6, but for the control group it was only 52.9 (see Table 4). This difference still existed at the time of the post-test (57.9 for the experimental group versus 53.7 for the control group). With a score of about 58 for both groups, the difference between them had more or less disappeared at the time of the delayed post-test.

In order to test the effect of group interaction, an analysis of covariance (Ancova) was carried out. This made it possible to check for differences between the subjects at the beginning of the experiment. No significant differences could be determined between the experimental and the control group at the post-test, as shown in Table 5 ($p = 0.452$), nor at the delayed post-test, as can be seen in Table 6 ($p = 0.407$). As a

Table 5
Ancova for post-test with pre-test as co-variate

Source	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	*F*	Sig.
Pre-test	656.548	1	656.548	52.611	0.000
Exper/control	7.244	1	7.244	0.580	0.452
Error	386.859	31	12.479		

Table 6
Ancova for delayed post-test with pre-test as co-variate

Source	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	*F*	Sig.
Pre-test	484.488	1	484.488	14.096	0.001
Exper/control	24.455	1	24.455	0.711	0.407
Error	893.649	26	34.371		

Table 7
Ancova for passive ratio of text A 'The Stolen Painting' with pre-test as co-variate

Source	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	*F*	Sig.
Pre-test	1.406	1	1.406	0.010	0.920
Exper/control	260.527	1	260.527	1.906	0.178
Error	3964.211	29	136.697		

consequence, these findings do not support the hypothesis that giving learners the opportunity to interact with each other during a dictogloss task will result in a better score on the post-test or on the delayed post-test.

A second analysis was performed in order to examine whether the two groups differed from each other in their use of passive structures in the reconstructed texts. Therefore the passive ratio was calculated. This ratio was determined by dividing the number of passive forms used in the reconstructed texts by the total number of verbal phrases used in the texts. For example, in the reconstructed text in Appendix B, there are 6 passive forms out of a total of 18 verbal constructions, which gives a passive ratio of 0.3 (6 divided by 18).

In order to determine the differences between the passive ratio of the experimental group and that of the control group in the reconstructed texts, analyses of covariance were carried out. These analyses did not result in a significant difference between the two groups, for either text A 'The Stolen Painting' ($p = 0.178$; see Table 7) or text B 'The Nazca Lines' ($p = 0.244$; see Table 8). Thus, contrary to our expectations, the opportunity for interaction did not result in the more frequent use of passive sentences in the reconstructed texts.

We then further analysed which types of structures were used in the reconstructed texts (see Table 9). It turned out that in the great majority of cases the simpler type I

Table 8
Ancova for passive ratio of text B 'The Nazca Lines' with pre-test as co-variate

Source	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	*F*	Sig.
Pre-test	213.571	1	213.571	2.980	0.094
Exper/control	101.037	1	101.037	1.410	0.244
Error	2221.907	31	71.674		

Table 9
Mean overall passive ratios obtained on text A 'The Stolen Painting' ($n = 32$) and text B 'The Nazca Lines' ($n = 34$)

Type	Text A 'The Stolen Painting'		Text B 'The Nazca Lines'	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
I	21.8	9.8	24.9	8.6
II	3.2	3.7	14.9	6.9
III	1.7	2.9	4.4	6.9
Total	26.6	11.7	44.1	8.6

structures were used (on average 21.8 in text A and 24.9 in text B). Type II structures were used to a far lesser extent; there were some in text B (14.9), but hardly any in text A (3.2). The use of type III structures was even more rare (1.7 in text A, 4.4 in text B).

As a consequence we have to conclude that interaction during the reconstruction phase does not result in the better recognition of passives and a higher score in the detection test, nor in the more frequent use of these structures in the text reconstruction task.

4. Qualitative analysis

In the transcripts of the discussions we have identified all the cases in which noticing of a passive structure was taking place. We made a distinction between what we have called 'simple noticing' and 'elaborate noticing'. By 'simple noticing' we refer to passives which are mentioned with more or less emphasis, but which are not discussed by the students. In case of 'elaborate noticing' passives are put into question, discussed and alternative structures may be proposed. A similar distinction between 'simple noticing' and 'noticing with metalinguistic awareness' is made by Leow (1997).

Examples of respectively simple and elaborate noticing are represented in (1) and (2) below. The relevant structures are in italics. In (1) the passive 'were based on' is mentioned, but not discussed. In (2) the passive 'she was supposed to', which is proposed first, is put into question, but finally accepted, after the formulation of a grammar rule ('after 'to be' there is no…, there is always an infinitive').

(1) *Simple noticing*:

Jarno: '*They were based on*…'
Joanne: '…models by spiders, birds and' ehm…, well…, these geometric forms or something like that.
Jarno: '*based on*… spiders…'

(2) *Elaborate noticing*:

Lovella: Okay. Ehm… '*She was supposed to* receive it as a wedding present in forty-one', right?
Fabe: Yes.
Hester: Ehm…
Lovella: Nineteenforty-one.
Fabe: Yes.
'But she…'
Lovella: 'But she got…'
Okay, but let's make first the whole sentence. What did I say? '*She was supposed*…'
Fabe: '*to*…'
Hester: Yes.
Lovella: Come on, say it!
Fabe: 'To get it', I think?
Hester: Yes.
Lovella: '*She was supposed… and she was supposed*', no… '*She was supposed*', don't you think so? '*She was supposed*'.
Fabe: But… but… after 'to be' there is no…, there is always an infinitive.
Lovella: Oh yeah…
So… wait a moment, '*she was*…'
Fabe: '*She supposed*…'
Lovella: No, that's wrong. '*She was supposed… to*…', yes, okay, that should do.

The outcome of a discussion may be that an active structure, which was initially proposed, is substituted by a passive. Also the opposite (a passive structure becomes an active structure) may happen. In example (3) 'who created them' is substituted by 'pictures were created'. In (4) the students, struggling both with a collocational and a syntactic problem ('to draw' versus 'to make' and the use of the passive 'were drawn'), decide in the end to avoid 'were drawn' and to substitute it by the active structure 'they made' ('who cares, write down 'made'').

(3) *Substitution of an active structure by a passive*:

Denise: 'Until now…' yes, 'it's still unclear… *who created them* and why.'
Maarten: Yes.

Denise: 'Until now… who designed and *created them* and why.'
Maarten: Yes, 'who…, who built…'
Tin Choi: … who copied…
Denise: Yes, that's possible, I think. Yes, sounds good.
Maarten: 'Created', yes, 'created'.
Maarten: '*Pictures were created*', or… ehm… yes, '*were created*'.
Tin Choi: That's still better probably.

(4) *Substitution of a passive by an active structure*:

Janis: 'These pictures *were drawn*…'
Jarno: '*were made*…'
Janis: '*were drawn*…'
Jarno: '*made*…'
Jarno: '*drawn*' is… to p… paint… and… to make a 'picture in the desert by stones and sand…' Not '*drawn*'.
Janis: But right in the beginning… I'm sure they used '*drawn*'. That's what I have here, on my paper, '*drawn*'. Come on, write it down!
Joanne: The last time they said '*made*', I think.
Jarno: 'Until now the scientists do not know…'
Joanne: '*By who*…'
Janis: Who cares, write down '*made*'.
Jarno: '… how and why…'
Joanne: '*Made*', that's it.
Janis: '*They made*.' Okay.

What these examples show is that noticing may result in the use of the passive. In all cases the learners were aware of the problems they encountered. They attempted to overcome their shortcomings by discussing these problems and working together to find a solution. In (1) and (2) a passive structure is chosen. Also in (3) the process of noticing leads to the use of a passive, while in (4) the outcome of the discussion is that the passive which is proposed first is substituted in the end by an active construction the students feel more sure about. Also in this case, however, their attention is focused on language form.

Table 10 shows the total number of cases of simple noticing and elaborate noticing, during the reconstruction of 'The Stolen Painting' and 'The Nazca Lines', for all the six groups. As can be seen from the table, in 'The Nazca Lines' there are almost twice as much cases of noticing of passives. As a consequence, we may infer that the process of noticing is affected by factors like genre, difficulty and familiarity with the subject of the text (Gass, 2002).

With regard to the number of cases of simple and elaborate noticing for each single group, there turn out to be noteworthy differences, as can be seen from Table 11: for groups 1 and 5 we find the highest number of instances of noticing (with totals of 20 and 16), for groups 2 and 4 the lowest (with a total of 9). These differences may be due both to differences in L2 proficiency and to factors having to

Table 10
Number of cases of simple and elaborate noticing for all the groups (G1–G6)

Type of noticing	The Stolen Painting	The Nazca Lines	Total
Simple	12	16	28
Elaborate	17	34	51
Total	29	50	79

Table 11
Number of cases of simple and elaborate noticing for each group (G1–G6)

Text	G1	G2	G3	G4	G5	G6
The Stolen Painting	5	6	2	3	8	5
The Nazca Lines	15	3	10	6	8	8
Total	20	9	12	9	16	13

do with the interaction process itself: some students may take a more active part in the discussion than others (Storch, this volume). We will come back to the effect of group dynamics in the next section.

Example (5) shows how a type I passive is substituted by a more complex form: 'was given' (type I) is first changed into 'should be given' (type II) and finally into the type III structure 'should have been given'.

(5) *Type of passives*:

Denise:	'And *it was given* to her as a wedding pres…'	Type I
Maarten:	'*Should be given*… It *should be given* to her at her…' Yes, 'at her wedding'.	Type II
Tin Choi:	Maybe we should say…, probably it should be '*should have been*'.	Type III
Denise:	'*Should*', yes? How do you say that?	
Maarten:	'*Been. Should have been given*'.	

To sum up, the qualitative analysis of the discussions shows that there are numerous instances of interaction leading to simple and elaborate noticing. This noticing leads in general to new linguistic proposals and so to modified input, which often results in the use of more complex verbal forms. For 'The Nazca Lines' there are many more examples of noticing than for 'The Stolen Painting'. Finally, there are substantial differences between the six groups concerning the number of cases of noticing.

5. Discussion

The quantitative analysis of the data has shown that the opportunity for interaction during the reconstruction phase did not result in a better score on the

detection test nor in a more frequent use of the passive in the reconstructed texts. The qualitative analysis, however, has revealed that interaction often stimulated noticing. The instances of simple and elaborate noticing in the transcripts demonstrate that the students were focusing on language form by searching for the correct structure. Although they were mostly not formulating explicit rules about the use of passive structures, it is clear from the examples that they were aware of the problem and that noticing of the passive had taken place. Based on the qualitative analysis, we may therefore conclude that in general noticing, as a result of interaction, gives way to new linguistic proposals. In terms of Skehan's Information Processing Model this means that during the reconstruction phase the cycle noticing, output/interaction, modified input is completed several times. This is even true for those discussions that do not result in alternative proposals, when learners decide to write down what has been suggested first, or in cases in which the outcome of the discussion is the choice of a less complex form. Whether this noticing leads in the end to a better knowledge and a more frequent use of passives could not be confirmed. So in our study interaction leads to noticing, but not to acquisition.

Some limitations of our study have to be taken into account. First, the number of participants involved in our study was relatively small and we had to deal with differences between the experimental group and the control group right from the beginning, as pointed out in Section 3. Secondly, we have to consider the duration of the treatment (the two dictogloss tasks), which was about 90 minutes. It seems likely that language learners may need several opportunities to notice and work on a structure before it appears in their language production. Since the students had already been exposed on several occasions to the explanation and use of the passive in English, it may be assumed, though, that this knowledge was reactivated during the dictogloss tasks. It would nonetheless be interesting to see what happens when learners are given more dictogloss tasks over a longer period of time.

There are other factors involved which complicate the relationship between interaction, noticing and acquisition. One factor concerns the text presented to the participants. As shown by the different passive ratios in 'The Stolen Painting' and 'The Nazca Lines', results of similar dictogloss tasks may vary. As demonstrated in Table 9 for 'The Nazca Lines', there were more examples of simple and elaborate noticing, and also the number of passives actually used in the reconstructed version was much higher. So noticing is probably influenced by factors like genre, subject, style and difficulty of the text.

Other complicating factors are L2 proficiency and group dynamics. As stated by Long (1996), interaction seems to take place especially in case of an information gap, when learners with different levels of L2 proficiency question each other's linguistic proposals. For less proficient learners, this information gap is certainly an advantage: they are able to profit from the correct solutions proposed by more advanced learners. The opposite, however, may not always be the case: an incorrect structure proposed by a less proficient learner may be accepted by other learners simply because he or she has a more extrovert personality and more social prestige (Storch, 2002). This complicates the comparison of the group results of the dictogloss text with the individual results of the pre-test, post-test and delayed post-test.

We may conclude that, although the quantitative analysis does not show significant gains when learners are given the opportunity to interact, the results of the qualitative analysis seem to be promising. In future research, a more detailed analysis of the nature of the interaction which is taking place during the reconstruction phase of the dictogloss task should reveal how discussions between learners lead to more noticing and, in the end, to the use of more target structures. Such a qualitative study should also make clear in which cases learners decide whether or not to accept alternative linguistic proposals and to incorporate them into their texts.

Appendix A. Text A 'The Stolen Painting'

(In the texts below type I structures are underlined, type II structures double underlined, while type III structures are printed bold.)

Original text

Two men tried to sell a painting that had been stolen. The painting was owned by Mary Jones, aged 84, who said it **may have been presented** to one of her ancestors by the artist himself. It **should have been given** to her in 1941 as a wedding present, but due to threat of war, she did not receive it until 1945. One of the accused men, Mr X, who cannot be named for legal reasons, pleaded guilty. He told the police that even though a high price **should have been paid** for the painting, he was willing to sell it cheap, in order to get rid of it. A meeting was arranged with a potential buyer, at an airfield near Liverpool. There the money for the painting was to be flown in and exchanged, but the airfield had been staffed by police officers in plain clothes. Mr X took the painting to the airfield and was shown the money in a suitcase. The buyer was then taken to see the painting in a barn, where he was arrested by the police.

(Text adapted from D. Willis, 1991, Collins Cobuild Student′s Grammar, HarperCollins Publishers, London, p. 171.)

Reconstructed text

Two men tried to steal a painting, a painting who was owned by Mary Jones, aged 84 years old. She said that maybe an ancestor showed the painting to the two men. She should have received the painting as a wedding present in 1941, but she didn't receive it until 1945. Mr X (whose name can't be told for legal reasons) who was accused of stealing it, wanted to sell the painting for a cheap price to get rid of it. At Liverpool airport the exchange took place. The buyer was flown in there with the money. At first, he was shown the painting in a banner, then he showed the money in a suitcase to Mr X. But the police had already surrounded the airport and they arrested Mr X.

Appendix B. Excerpt from a discussion between three students while reconstructing text A 'The Stolen Painting'

(Discussion translated from Dutch. Quotation marks indicate parts spoken in English.)

Tom: Her sisters, how… what…? 'Ancestors'? Was it 'ancestors'?
Ornella: 'Ancestors'.
Tom: 'Were given it'. Shouldn't it be…, wait a minute, 'it was given by her ancestors', or something like that?
Boris: No, that's wrong. How did the ancestors get it, that's the point.
Ornella: They got it from the artist.
Tom: Oh.
Boris: And then they wanted to hand it over to…
Tom: Okay. So: 'It was given to her ancestors'?
Boris: Yes, that should do.
Tom: I'm afraid, it has become a bit of a mess now, I don't know how to…
Boris: Don't worry, this is right, sounds good.
Tom: Yes, but…
Boris: 'Her ancestors were given it'.
Tom: 'Were given it'?
Boris: Yes, that should be the right form.
Tom: Yes, but… I think… You cannot say it that way in English.
Boris: Why not? Past tense, passive.
Tom: But 'it'… 'It' shouldn't stand all the way at the end.
Boris: Oh that's what you mean, so: 'It was given to…'
Tom: Yeah, that's it, because 'her ancestors were given it'… I think you're not allowed to put 'it' at the end, that's not possible, sounds wrong, so: 'It was… it was given to her ancestors.'

Appendix C. Post-test (instruction and sentences 1–10)

Underline the passive constructions in the following sentences.
Examples:

A concert to raise money for the refugees <u>will be held</u> next Saturday night. Several years ago Richard Anderson, a former astronaut, <u>was informed</u> by his superior at the aircraft corporation that he could no longer be a test pilot.

1. According to a recent survey, out of every guilder a Dutchman spends on drinks, twenty-eight cents is spent in bars.
2. According to the president the reconstruction of the railway should have been finished by the end of last year.
3. Many engineers believe that wind energy will be used extensively in the next decade.

4. Registration forms should be returned by 8 July.
5. The front door was shut by our babysitter when we left the house.
6. Because the sun was shining so brightly, the blinds of the museum should have been closed.
7. Lady Di will never be forgotten. She was a woman whose name will go down in history.
8. The doors should have been painted while we were away.
9. The tents were all blown away during the storm by the heavy winds.
10. Nine of the pupils were unable to do the test. I think that the test should have been cancelled.

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