Again and again: an immediate repetition oral task viewed in light of Swain's output hypothesis

De 'novo': uma tarefa oral de repetição imediata analisada a partir da hipótese da produção de Swain

*Rafael Zaccaron**

ABSTRACT: Using Swain's (1985) output hypothesis as a basis, this article investigated the effect an immediate repeated oral task had on the performance of participants. Two groups of beginner learners of English as an additional language in Brazil performed a decision-making oral task in groups. Drawing from Lynch and MacLean's (2001) carousel task, the learners changed groups and repeated the oral task in three successive cycles. A qualitative analysis of two learners' oral production is discussed in terms of accuracy. Furthermore, their perception on the immediate repeated task is also examined.

KEYWORDS: Immediate repetition. Tasks. Oral performance. Additional language.

RESUMO: Tendo como por base a hipótese da produção de Swain (1985), esse artigo analisa o efeito que uma tarefa oral envolvendo repetição imediata teve na performance dos participantes. Dois grupos iniciantes de aprendizes de inglês como língua adicional no Brasil desempenharam uma tarefa oral de decisão em grupos. Inspirada na tarefa-carrossel de Lynch e MacLean (2001), os aprendizes desse estudo foram reagrupados de forma diferente e repetiram a tarefa oral em três ciclos sucessivos. Uma análise qualitativa baseada na produção oral de dois participantes é discutida em relação à acurácia. Além disso, a percepção dos aprendizes em relação a tarefa de repetição imediata é discutida.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Repetição imediata. Tarefas. Performance oral. Língua adicional.

1. Introduction

A task can be defined as a meaning-focused activity in which learners need to rely on their linguistic and non-linguistic resources in order to achieve a communicative outcome (ELLIS, 2009a). Task repetition, in turn, is defined by Bygate and Samuda (2005) as "repetition of the same or slightly altered tasks – whether whole

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* UFSC. Mestre pelo Programa de Pós-Graduação em Inglês.

tasks, or parts of a task" (p. 43). Considering the aforementioned definitions, immediate task repetition fulfils both Ellis' and Bygate and Samuda's propositions, additionally they occur in successive cycle(s).

Task repetition may be viewed as a negative resource by some L2 teachers (BYGATE & SAMUDA, 2005). One of the possible reasons for this is the link that repetition per se has to behaviorism pedagogy (LARSEN-FREEMAN, 2012). Research, on the other hand, has shown robust data validating the beneficial aspects of task repetition on learners' performance (BYGATE, 2001b; LYNCH; MACLEAN, 2000, 2001; FINARDI, 2008; BEI, 2013, among others). Yet, only a few studies focused on immediate task repetition (LYNCH; MACLEAN, 2000, 2001). Therefore, more research that investigates this task condition can contribute to the large body of research in the additional language acquisition[1].

The focus of the present study is on the effect immediate repetition task has on accuracy of the output of additional language learners of English in Brazil. Different from most studies on task repetition that are based on a quantitative analysis (BYGATE, 2001b; FINARDI, 2008; BEI, 2013), the present piece of research adopts a qualitative stance for data analysis. A similar approach is found in Lynch and MacLean (2000, 2001). This investigation agrees that attention resources are limited and play a role in speech production (LEVELT, 1989; SCHMIDT, 2001). Therefore, the use of task repetition considers that learners might move their attention from message content, once it has been formulated, to a focus on form over the cycles (BYGATE, 2001b; BYGATE; SAMUDA, 2005). Moreover, the immediate repetition cycles were planned possibly to allow learners to notice gaps in their production, test hypothesis and reflect

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[1] This paper adopts the term additional language for (a) language(s) learnt other than the mother tongue in opposition to the terms foreign and second language. According to Saraceni (2009) "English should no longer be presented and taught as a foreign language, and hence as somebody else's language, but as an additional language to be added to one's linguistic repertoire, with the advantage of international currency" (p. 184). The term second language is only used on instances when quoted as such by the cited author.

language aspect through metatalk; these are the three concepts of Swain's (1985) output hypothesis. A secondary objective was to unveil learners' perception on the repeated task. In order to achieve these objectives, the following research questions were posed:

I – Does learners' production gain accuracy from repetition?

II – How do learners perceive the immediate repeated task?

2. Review of Literature

2.1. The Output Hypothesis

Speaking is one of our most complex cognitive skills according to Levelt (1989), thus this complexity can be extended to speaking in an additional language. Research on how we produce and acquire speech has flourished over the last 50 years. The same movement happened for research concerned with second language acquisition (RITCHIE; BAHTIA, 1996). While Krashen's (1985) input hypothesis highlighted the importance of input for the acquisition of an additional language and Long (1996) shifted the focus to the interaction on his interaction hypothesis, Swain (1985) further argued that interaction and input alone were not enough for language learning to occur, instead learners had to produce pushed output.

In her output hypothesis, Swain argues that learners can notice their linguistics gaps while performing a production task. According to Swain and Lapkin (2005). noticing is viewed as an opportunity to "trigger cognitive processes that are involved in second language learning" (p. 371). These cognitive processes are fundamental in Swain's hypothesis and they are present within the three claims that constitute the output hypothesis.

The first one is that output may generate noticing. This is relevant when considering that there should be some level of noticing for learning to occur (SCHMIDT, 2001; SKEHAN, 1996). On Swain's view, learners might notice gaps in

their knowledge online "learners may notice that they do not know how to express precisely the meaning they wish to convey *at the very moment of attempting to producing it*" (2000, p. 100). In the process to rectify the gap, learners may turn to additional resources (e.g. asking a peer or a teacher) and through this action new knowledge can be generated or existing knowledge be consolidated, according to Swain (2000). As far as her research and other studies that aimed at testing the output hypothesis go, a substantial number made use of communicative tasks (KOWAL; SWAIN, 1994; SWAIN, 2001, to name a few), validating the use of this important pedagogical tool, strengthening the link between tasks and output for additional language. Because a clear link between output and learning still remains elusive (DE BOT, 1996), therefore more research is needed.

The second claim is related to hypothesis testing by the learner. De Bot (1996) reviewed three studies, which tested Swain's proposal, analysing think-aloud protocols finding that hypothesis testing was present in all three. The third function states that output may lead to metacognition awareness through metatalk. Swain (1998) noticed that learners were using the time allotted for communicative tasks to discuss language aspects. In that respect, she adds that collaborative tasks can focus both on meaning and form (SWAIN, 2001). Finally, Swain (2000) has also highlighted the importance of the co-constructed knowledge in what she terms "collaborative dialogues". From this perspective these interchanges are viewed as knowledge-building dialogues that additionally entail linguistic knowledge. The collaborative knowledge is at the intersection between language use and language learning (SWAIN, 2001).

Considering the output hypothesis, it is foreseen that once the message had been conceptualized, learners could move their attention to formal aspects of the language freeing up processing space (LARSEN-FREEMAN, 2012). Accordingly, this view places the output of learners' interaction in prominence. In this context, the immediate task repetition may offer extra opportunities for noticing, hypothesis testing and metatalk to occur.

2.2 Immediate Task Repetition

There is a vast literature on repetition in second language acquisition (LARSEN-FREEMAN, 2012). This study, however, is concerned only with repetition within the task-based approach, more specifically its immediate form. Literature about immediate task repetition is scarce; therefore a panorama on task repetition theory is presented in order to establish valid links with studies closely related to the present one.

Extending Bygate and Samuda's (2005) definition, provided in the introduction, Larsen-Freeman (2012) contributes to the discussion adding the motivation a learner might have to repeat a task "the learner is learning to adapt his or her language resources to new situations and in pursuit of new goals" (p. 206). In adapting and 'recycling speech' – a term used by Lynch and MacLean (2000; 2001) to refer to speech 're-used' in a cycle of immediate repeated task – it is believed that learners may shift their attention to different aspect of their interlanguage, as seen in the previous section. In turning their attention to different aspects of the message, during the repeated task, it might be possible for learners to notice their linguistics gaps, which is a requirement for language learning to happen.

In the classroom context, Larsen-Freeman (2012) sees repetition as a valuable activity "for being able to make the adaptations learners need when faced with a different context or task" (p. 204). When considering the possible effects of task repetition for learners, Duff (2000) notes "the academic and cognitive benefits of repetition are to hear multiple occurrences of a potentially problematic term, to practice articulating the term, and to join together with other classmates in the common pursuit of new knowledge" (p. 135). These two propositions have a clear pedagogic link. Also, they are in line with the task implemented in this study and the collaborative dialogue proposed by Swain.

In relation to the process involved in task repetition, Bygate and Samuda (2005) argue that online planning favours production as "speakers are likely to be better able to attend to the conceptualisation, the formulation and even the articulation of their messages" (p. 41) when compared to allowing planning time for learners to plan the task strategically. The rationale behind this proposition is that working memory will be under a lighter overload during online planning. Concerning the limited attention capacities, Oxford (2006) adds "the more that a learner tries to hold in his or her head at a given moment, the harder the learning is and the more likely there will be a cognitive overload" (p. 51) highlighting the positive aspect of task repetition planning that occurs online. Next, a few studies that have close ties to the present one are reviewed.

Bygate (2001b) conducted a seminal piece of research on task repetition, in which subjects performed two different tasks: a picture-cued narrative and an interview over a period of 10 weeks. Participants' productions were analysed for three different speech measures, viz. accuracy, complexity and fluency. Three hypotheses guided Bygate's study. The first predicted that the narrative task would produce less accurate and less fluent but more complex output. The second hypothesis predicted that task repetition would improve fluency, accuracy and complexity on the repeated tasks. Finally, hypothesis three predicted that the effects of task repetition would also occur in other types of tasks. The results showed improved performance by the subjects when repeating the same task type, especially in terms of complexity, which was gained at the expense of accuracy and fluency.

One study has direct relevance for this piece of research, due to the link established between immediate repetition and task performance. It is Lynch and MacLean (2000) that had its results reviewed and extended in 2001. Fourteen English language learners, who were enrolled in an English for Specific Purposes course performed a task called poster-carousel that required participants, in dyads, to

respond repeatedly to questions from fellow students about a poster they had previously prepared. After preparing the poster a student of each dyad stood next to it and was instructed to answer questions posed by the visitors in successive cycles. Altogether, each host had six visitors. Taking into account that questions would be similar, there was substantial opportunity for recycling. The results showed general improved performance in different linguistic aspects.

After searching a number of different journal sources (e.g., CAPES, Scielo, ResearchGate) the only studies focusing on immediate repetition of an oral task in additional language found were Lynch and MacLean (2000, 2001) and Bei (2013) although the latter made use of a story-telling task that does not involve collaborative dialogue. Therefore, the present study intends to tap on this gap.

3. Method

3.1 Participants

The participants of this qualitative small-scale study were eight learners from two different groups, four in each class, enrolled in a private language institute in Brazil. Their age ranged from 15 to 52 years old. The first group was composed of four adult learners whereas the second group consisted of 3 adults and 1 teenager student. The participants had previously agreed to take part in the study, signing individual consent forms, including the under-age participant whose form was signed by his mother. The researcher was also the teacher of both groups.

Both groups were in the second semester of the English course as an additional language and were considered to be beginners. Although learners were assigned to a group following a placement test, both groups had learners that showed slightly different levels of proficiency. This was possibly due to their prior exposure to the L2 as learners or extended contact with the target language out of class. Prior to the study, both groups had lessons about food and the use of

comparative forms in the target language. Therefore, the planned task was intended as a freer task, which could serve as an opportunity to allow learners to use potentially recent acquired knowledge.

3.2 Instruments and Procedures

The instruments used in the present study were: a decision-making task and a semi-structured interview, which were both audio recorded. There were also notes taken by the researcher during learners' interaction. Next, these instruments and procedures are described.

The decision-making task chosen for this piece of research consisted of learners' agreement on a restaurant they should go, which was selected from three leaflets offered to participants containing menus from different restaurants. The task required learners to justify their choice of restaurant and try to convince the partner(s) to reach an agreement. Generally, there was no time constraint for task completion.

First, the researcher offered an example of the upcoming task as a pre-task, presenting and comparing the different leaflets of three restaurants to the whole group, eliciting and asking for contributions about where the group should go to after class. This interaction served to demonstrate the need to show arguments to validate the choice (e.g., restaurant X did not have many options of dishes, restaurant Y had only junk food, etc.). This procedure was carried on until an agreement was reached. After that, the group was split in two dyads and each pair was given three leaflets from restaurants. Prior to task performance, two minutes were allowed for the menus to be analysed and questions to be asked.

Secondly, the oral instruction for the task was that learners should reach an agreement about the restaurant choice based on arguments, as the modelled task. At this moment two mobile phones started recording the interactions. Once each pair had decided about the restaurant, new dyads were formed and the menus were changed,

with one of the menus familiar to each participant of the new dyad kept from the previous cycle, plus a new menu added, totalling three restaurants. Learners were then asked to perform the task a second time[2]. Finally, after the two pairs had reached a decision for the second time, the four learners were grouped together and asked as a group to explore all available options (six different menus now) and reach a consensus. In total, each learner performed the same task in three successive cycles.

The third and final part of data collection, which was also recorded, involved a semi-structured interview (DÖRNYEI, 2007, p. 136) that followed a sequence from general to specific questions (see Appendix B). In order to minimise possible misunderstandings, the interviews were conducted in Portuguese. The format of the interview allowed students' contributions not only answering but also posing further views on the task.

The aforesaid procedures were repeated with the second group on a different day. All recordings from both sessions were transcribed (see Appendix A) for subsequent analysis. Based on the contributions during the interview, two learners - R and N - who demonstrated opposite views upon the task (i.e., they explicitly classified the overall task as positive and negative) were selected to have extracts from their production analysed in this study.

4. Results

4.1 Interviews

First, a brief presentation of the interviews responses is offered, in table 1. Next, the analyses of transcripts of the task production from the two learners chosen are examined to evaluate whether there was an impact in terms of accuracy.

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[2] Unfortunately, due to a technical issue with one of the voice recorder two interactions from the first group could not be retrieved.

Table 1 – Summary of the interview contributions.

1 What helped you to complete the task? (more than one option was possible)	Modelling	5
	Previous cycle	2
	Others	2
2 In which cycle did you perform best? (more than one option was possible)	First	2
	Second	4
	Third	5
	Can not determine	1
3 Could you correct any mistakes over the cycles?	Yes	5
	No	3
4 What was your perception of the task?	Positive	6
	Negative	1
	Neutral	1
5 Was the task too repetitive?	No	8

The first question aimed at identifying what helped learners to complete the task having in mind its objective, that is, the agreement on the restaurant. A considerable number of participants mentioned the pre-task modelling as the main source of help. The repeated previous cycle(s), even when elicited, were only mentioned by two students. Other aspects, such as familiarity with partner and clear restaurant menus, were also mentioned twice.

Next, when learners were asked in which cycle they perceived their performance as the most appropriate, a mixed number was yielded. Still, most learners viewed both their second and third performances as the most appropriate. One learner - F - said she could not determine it. Concerning their awareness of error correction, five learners answered that they were able to notice and correct mistakes, totaling 62% of the sample.

Finally, the last two questions attempted to unveil learners' perception of the task. A considerable number of students, 75%, deemed the task as positive. On the other hand, one participant thought the task was negative, while another learner judged the task neither positive nor negative.

4.2. Production Transcripts

Now the extracts from transcripts (see appendix A) of the two selected participants' task production are analysed.

4.2.1. Learner R

R displayed an overall positive attitude towards the task. It is worth mentioning that he signalled his first cycle as his most appropriate performance. According to him "the best one was the first, on the second turn I got lost having the new menus"[3] (my translation). However, regarding error corrections he adds "it was possible to notice (the mistakes) because we could recollect things that we had seen previously"[4] (my translation), denoting that he may have corrected his speech. R lost accuracy on the second cycle when compared to his first performance.

In the following passages, the focus is on the adjective-noun construction, underlined, which seemed to offer a challenge to R. This construction can be an issue for L1 Portuguese speakers since the syntactic order is inverse in this language.

1st cycle R: I don't like, very much, <u>vegetarian food</u>, L. I *preFER* pizza, junk food (laughs).

2nd cycle R: I, I like to eat <u>*food s-spacey*</u>, F.
      R: Salads. I like, like eat <u>Caesar salad.</u>

      R: I, I eat, I eat, I eat…
      F: <u>Spicy rice</u>?
      R: <u>Spicy rice</u>. Yeah.

      R: No, I don't like. I prefer <u>Caesar salad</u>, <u>spicy rice</u>.

3rd cycle R: I, I don't agree, R. I prefer <u>Japanese food</u> because food is very tasty is *more tasty* than Maze Grill, and you F?

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[3] "a primeira foi melhor, a segunda eu me perdi com os novos menus"
[4] "deu pra perceber (os erros) porque a gente conseguiu voltar coisas que a gente tinha visto lá atrás"

In the first cycle the correct construction "vegetarian food" appears. In the second cycle R hesitates and produces "food space". This hesitation might indicate that he was either unsure about its construction or trying to retrieve vocabulary. The next correct adjective-noun construction is "Caesar salad" still in the second cycle. However this might have been retrieved as a language chunk, especially considering that "Caesar salad" can occur in Portuguese. The following episode is very significant; R repeated, "I eat" three times. It denotes that he encountered difficulties as seen in Levelt (1989). We cannot be sure whether the problem was of a semantic or syntactic order. But this construction required an object that was provided by his partner. The cue, "spicy rice", was appropriately used not only in the next turn, but also recycled afterwards. Finally, there is the appropriate use of "Japanese food". All in all, it is not possible to infer from the transcripts whether repetition impacted on this correction, considering how the appropriate form was present in varied cycles. A similar pattern was found for issues with indefinite and definite article, plus the use of null subject (see appendix A) that seemed to have not benefitted nor suffered from the repeated cycles.

A challenging aspect for R was pronunciation. The same issue occurred with the less proficient student in Lynch and MacLean (2000). The underlined words are the ones that showed variance in pronunciation over different cycles and are the focus of this analysis. The number in brackets refers to the number of that particular occurrence within the cycle.

		Pronunciation
1st cycle	R: Yes? I preFER(x2) Pizza Expert.	Stress on second syllable
	R: Is more, more cheap?	Appropriate "cheap"
2nd cycle	R: I. I like to eat food *s-spacey*, F .(x3)	/speɪsɪ/
	R: …is an *espensive* or cheaper?	Appropriate: "cheaper"
	R: Is more *sheapie*, no? Is more *sheap*	/ʃiːpɪ/ and /ʃiːp/

	R: I <u>prefer</u> Caesar salad. <u>Spicy</u> rice(x2)	Appropriate: "prefer" "spicy"
	R: … is a very <u>cheaper</u>, is a more <u>cheaper</u>	Appropriate: "cheaper"
3rd cycle	R: I agree, L. I <u>prefer</u> too.(x2)	Appropriate: "prefer"
	R: Price is a <u>*sheaper*</u>	/ʃiːpər/

In the first cycle, R produced a prosodic error pronouncing the verb "*preFER*" with the wrong stress twice. Interestingly, in the second cycle his interlocutor produced the appropriate form "pre'fer" which was only used correctly by R 78 seconds afterwards and once again in the third cycle twice. It could be that the interaction prompted his correction as a recast. However such a long gap between the appropriate forms, in such a demanding cognitive task, might indicate self-correction in opposition to automatic recast. This line of thought is in consonance with his perception of error correction during the interview, when he said he was able to "access things that were seen before", rendering a possible positive effect for the task repetition. As a matter of providing a recast example, the word "spicy" in cycle two, was wrongly uttered /speɪsɪ/ moving to the correct cue provided /spaɪsɪ/ that is used appropriately twice by R.

Finally, the pronunciation of "cheap" seems to follow the same u-shape curve seen previously for the adjective-noun form. This lexis has a voiceless postalveolar affricate word initial that was erroneously pronounced as a sibilant. It is appropriately pronounced in cycle 1 and at the beginning of cycle 2 too. However, during the second cycle it is pronounced as /ʃiːpɪ/ and /ʃiːp/ to be followed again by the appropriate word in its comparative form "cheaper". Different from the syntactic issue that presented correct-wrong-correct occurrences, in this case an additional wrong occurrence happened in the third cycle when /ʃiːpər/ was produced. The task repetition seems to have not influenced this issue.

4.2.2 Learner N

From the second group analysed, N showed a negative perception of the task repetition, according to her "it would have been better if we could had done the first part (cycle) only, because it would have been possible to develop further with the first partner[5]". (my translation) This is consistent with her answer when she indicated the first cycle as her most appropriate performance. Following next, few excerpts where N shows accuracy variation over different cycles are presented, which are underlined for this analysis.

1st cycle   N: is cheaper <u>than</u> Nando's restaurant
             N: *I* have *food ve-veg-vegetarian*(x3) but
             N: is more *espensive <u>that</u>* Green restaurant

2nd cycle   N: but I like <u>Chinese food</u>
             N: Healthy food? (x2)
             N: and <u>than</u> Kazan

Similar to R's difficulties, N also had issues with the syntactic adjective-verb construction. In the first cycle this mistake occurred four times, as in "food vegetarian" for instance. The cycle that followed next provided N with the opportunity to use this structure again. In the first episode the correct use for "Chinese food" could be due to an automatic language chunk use. But the next two occasions when prompted by her colleague's cue N produced the appropriate "healthy food". What denotes that "Chinese food" was used as an automatic language chunk was her uncertainty when saying healthy food, which she uttered as a single question waiting for her partner's reaction. In the attempt to produce what Swain calls pushed output, learners go beyond their consolidated knowledge and test hypothesis.

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[5] "seria melhor se a gente tivesse ficado só na primeira parte, pois daria pra desenvolver melhor só com o primeiro par"

Another aspect where variance of forms was found was the use of the conjunction "than" for the construction of the comparative form. Initially, in her first sentence of the primary cycle the construction was appropriate: "cheaper than Nando's"; however, it also appeared incorrectly as "is more *espensive that* Green restaurant". In the second cycle N used the form correctly again. These two modifications, the syntactic word order and the incorrect use of "that", were not mentioned during the post-task interview when N was asked to remember an error she was able to correct.

However, there was an error N was able to remember during the interview. Her use of the pronoun "I" instead of "it" or "the restaurant" when she said her intention was to express the kind of food the restaurant had (e.g., "*I* have *food ve-veg-vegetarian*"). N was one of the few to recall and mention the error she corrected in her speech "that I was saying *I*"[6] (my translation), which her partner of the first cycle added "It′s a matter of pronouns. When she was talking about the restaurant, she was using the singular first person pronoun"[7] (my translation). In this respect, the task provided the opportunity for both noticing and metatalk to occur between learners, corroborating two claims Swain established in her output hypothesis. The repeated cycle offered the opportunity for N to adjust her utterance using the appropriate pronoun. In terms of pronunciation, although N showed quite a few issues for this linguistic aspect, modified pronunciation over cycles was seldom found.

> 1st cycle   N: and Nando's *restauRANT* (x4)
>   N: *healster*
>
> 2nd cycle   N: I think go to Kazan restaurant
>   N: Healthy food?

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[6] "Que eu tava falando I"

[7] "É, questão de pronomes. Quando estava falando do restaurant ela usava a primeira pessoa"

During the first cycle N pronounced the word *"restau'rant"* placing the stress wrongly on the last syllable four times. It is worth noting that she also pronounced it correctly once in the initial cycle and used "restaurant" again with the appropriate stress in the second cycle. A second issue was the pronunciation of the word "healthy" that was pronounced as /hɛlstər/ in the first cycle, which N was able to amend in the second cycle. The possibility that N was hypothesis testing when uttering "healthy food?" is also valid to raise. However, it is difficult to infer if she was testing the syntactic structure of the sentence, the pronunciation of the word or both.

5. Discussion

First, the overall performance of the participant who had a positive view on the task is discussed. When considering the performance of R over the three different cycles, the first one was when he produced fewer errors in relation to the number of clauses produced, besides, during the post-task interview he also indicated cycle 1 as his best performance. One of the reasons for it could be that the focus of his attention on the following cycles was to re-conceptualize his initial speech. Therefore accuracy could have been penalized at the expense of other aspects, as postulated by Skehan (1998) and seen in Bygate's (2001b) results. This is supported by R's contribution during the interview when he stated that he was "lost" when the menus were changed. Still, R was able to adjust some errors in his speech over the repeated cycles.

N's, who negatively viewed the task, performance in the different cycles is difficult to be compared. She displayed a lack of involvement with the task in cycle 2 and 3, especially in the latter when she barely spoke. This appeared to be her own choice as her interlocutor paused on a few occasions waiting for her contribution in both cycles. It is important to consider her perception, not only on this task, but also about the language course as a whole. N had previously complained to the teacher she was not progressing at the same pace as her classmates. Although she was

making improvements in her performance, as noticed in this study. Clearly she was not aware of how she was progressing. This is similar to the result Lynch and Maclean (2001) found with less proficient learners. Often these learners are not aware of their improvements.

Considering what Duff (2000) said about repetition offering an opportunity for learners to hear and practice a problematic term, especially in terms of articulation, both learners' production present evidence of this cognitive process happening. The collaborative dialogue helped learners to test and improve their pronunciation.

Although there were a few occurrences of noticing over the cycles as seen in the results, these occasions were not sufficient for learners to eradicate errors. It is relevant to consider that this study used a demanding cognitive task that required online planning (BYGATE; SAMUDA, 2005). Furthermore, the approach adopted was not to constrain learners to focus in any particular aspect of the language. They were free to complete the task. In this respect, Krashen (1998) has criticised the output hypothesis for providing reduced empirical research showing that noticing happened through output. To which de Bot (1996) counterbalanced the argument affirming that Krashen missed Swain's hypothesis point, as the emphasis of it should be placed on quality of those occurrences, rather than quantity. All in all, considering the answers from the interviews, all learners perceived the immediate repetition task as an opportunity for self-correction and to some extent they were able to do so, rendering the task a positive outcome.

The results of this piece of research corroborate Swain's (1985) output hypothesis, a similar result found in Bei (2013). The output helped learners in realising gaps in their production of the target language, to test hypothesis and also reflect about language aspects through metatalk. This finding strengthens the link of the output hypothesis to immediate task repetition.

6. Limitation of the Study

This study had a few limitations. The first concerns the nature and size of the sample, which is small. A second aspect of the sample was that it consisted of a large age range and that makes it difficult to extend and or compare the results to other studies. Additionally, when opting for a naturalistic environment for data collection, namely the classroom, that may have caused less control over the oral task performance, hence diminishing the opportunity for learners to focus on form. Finally, still regarding opportunities for focus on form, the small number of cycles may have also restricted the occurrence of those.

7. Conclusion

Nowadays, when the focus of teaching an additional language seems to be directed to introducing novelty in the classroom through technology, and teachers move fast from one task to the next one, that often means a few students who are not quick learners might lack the necessary opportunity for further practice a particular linguistic aspect. Working with task repetition in the classroom, which might initially seem obsolete to some for its link to behaviourism, has been endorsed by research (BYGATE, 2001b) as it actually offers the opportunity for students to improve their performance in a cycle of task repetition as seen in Lynch and MacLean (2000, 2001) and in the present study.

In summary, the data from this piece of research have shown that the use of immediate task repetition yielded benefits in accuracy for the two learners whose oral production were analysed. The combined analyses of both interviews and task productions corroborated Swain's output hypothesis. Furthermore, the majority of the participants had a positive perception about the immediate repetition task, endorsing it as a pedagogical tool that promotes opportunities for cognitive processes to happen. However, not all participants noticed their improvement over the cycles.

This is a relevant finding. If learners are not able to perceive their development over the immediate repeated task, this turns the post-task stage into a crucial step so learners can assess their own progress. Moreover, the positive perception participants had about the repeated task highlights the fact they did not perceive it as repetition per se. Therefore, the challenge when working with repetition in the classroom is to offer slightly modified tasks over the repeated cycles, so that learners might feel motivated to perform them and students who have high and low performance can benefit from this movement.

Acknowledgments

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APPENDIX A

This appendix contains the transcriptions of the repeated task recorded in audio for the two learners analyzed.

Convention of transcription

A, L, F, R, H, N and F – students
T – teacher/researcher
[ ] – speech in brackets indicate overlapped speech
= - equal signs at the end/beginning of utterances indicate no gap between the two lines
caPItals - words in capitals indicate loud utterance or wrong stress
italics – indicate an error considering the standard norm

GROUP ONE

First cycle (R and L)

R: Hello L=
L: =Hello. How are you, today?
R: I'm fine, fine. And you?
L: Fine. Thanks.
R: Ahm. What what kind of restaurant. Do you like L?
L: Ahm. I prefer, the Green Restaurant.
R: Yes? I *preFER* Pizza Expert.
L: Mmm… erh… erh.
R: What kind of… food, *have* in Green Restaurant?
L: Breakfast, hot stuff [drink], jacket potato=
R: [Alright] =okay=
L: =salads. Erh.
R: I don't like, very much vegetarian food, L. I *preFER* pizza, junk food (laughs).
L: Mmm. Pizza so so.
R: É?
L: It is, more expensive.
R: Is. Is Gre- the Green Restaurant is *more more cheap*. Than Pizza Expert Expert, but, but, Pizza Expert, is *a* very tasty.
L: I eat. I prefer eat.
T: Okay guys, have you decided? Is it finished?
R: Okay, I, I go to eat in Green restaurant, L. Yes?
L: Yes.
R: Okay.
L: Let's go.
R: Let's go.

Second cycle (A and F)

R: Hello, F.

F: Hello, R. Erh… very options, restaurant, three?

R: Yes, yes. What kind of restaurant do you go to eat, F?

F: I like to restaurant Nando's. I prefer.

R: Nando's restaurant? Oh! food, food very *spacey* in Nando's restaurant, yes?

F: Yes. And you?

R: I. I like to food *s-spacey*, F.

F: Spacey? Hummm. Very spacey. HOT.

R: Yes.

Schuffling paper sounds.

R: What, what dishes in Nando's restaurant? Erh, chicken… chicken.

F: Combination, price.

R: What price is? What price is? is an espensive or cheaper? *Is more cheaper*, no F?

F: Cheapers. YES.

R: I… is… a type*s* of *spaces estra* hot *medium.*

F: *Madium*?

R: *Madium*, yes?

F: Yes, *Madium*!

R: *Estra* hot, don't like?=

F: =Salad. No, *estra* hot, very, very *space.*

R: Salads. I like like eat Caesar salad.

F: Caesar salad?

R: Yeah.

F: I agree, I agree. Price interesting.

R: Is *more sheapie*, no? Is *more sheap*?

F: No.

R: No?

F: No.

R: I. I eat... I eat… I eat.

F: Spi[cy rice]?

R: [Spicy rice], yeah.

F: Spicy rice?

T: Guys, have you decided? Is it finished? You explained why? All good?

R: Yes.

F: Yes.

F: Burgers.

R: No, I don't like, I don't like.

F: No?

R: No, I don't like. I prefer Caesar salad, spicy rice.

F: Yes.

R: *Andy*. chicken drum sticks.

F: Okay.

R: Is a new dish Nando's.

F: Okay, I prefer.

R: chicken drum is a very cheaper is a more cheaper than Caesar salad.

Third cycle A, L, R and F

F: Hi.

A: Hi guys.

R: I prefer Maze Grill.

A: I, I don't agree, R. I prefer Japanese food, because food is very tasty, is *more tasty* than Maze Grill. And you, F?

F: I prefer Nando's.

A: Nando's?

F: Very cheaps.

L: I prefer, Yummy *restauranchi.*

A: I agree, L. I prefer too.

F: Why?

L: Because. I prefer seafood.

F: Price?

A: Price is a *sheaper*.

F: *sheapers*?

A: Yes, yes.

L: Is this free home delivery?

A, R and F: OH!

A: Very good, L.

F: Yes. I think Maze Grill?

R: Erh

A: Is don't. free home delivery?

R: Maze Grill *no don't*. No delivery.

A: And. Yummy restaurant. Is a *lotchy* dish, type of dish.

F: I, I prefer Yummy.

T: So, everybody is going to Yummy, or not R?

R: Yes, yes.

A and F: Yes.

F: I agree. Yummy, very option.

GROUP TWO

First cycle N and R

N: I think there. I think that Kazan restaurant. *is it have*, it *have*? it cheaper, is cheaper than Nando's restaurant.
R: Okay, I like Nando's because they have salads erh vegan food, burguers and appetizers.
N: Okay but. The Green restaurant is, *have* food *healster* and *testy*, is? Erh. *I* have food ve-veg- vegetarian. But.
R: Erh, Nando's *have, estra* hot, hot, medium food.
N: [Laughs] I, I don't, I like, but erh: I. I like chilli but chilli? Chilli? I. I eat food. *light*. And Nando's *restauRANT not* light (laughs) and is more *espensive that* Green restaurant.
R: I like the sandwiches of the Green *hestaurant*. It is good and cheaper.
N: Okay, is cheaper, do you think? I think the *sandwish*, *sandwish* is good, but. N*ot eat*. The Green restaurant is cheaper erh is very cheaper (laughs).
N: I.
R: I think we should go to the Green *hestaurant*.
N: Okay. Finished now.

Second cycle F and N

F: N, what do you think we go to Kazan restaurant?
N: I think is. Good, is good, is cheaper, but I like Chinese food.
F: Okay, erh but Kazan is, is healthier than Chinese food and than Maze Grill, do you agree? or in Maze Grill, is steak house?
N: Steak house.
F: Special, the-there there are *specials*, meat, meats.
N: But is more *espensive*.
F: It's very *espensive*. Maze Grill is more *espensive* than Yummy and than Kazan.
N: And than Kazan.
F: I think we should. Go to Kazan.
N: (whispers for herself) should go to Kazan. Erh, what, what *the kind of*?
F: In Kazan, Kazan *is* healthy food, no, is vegetarian vegetarian (asking the teacher)?
T: Yes, it could be. But salmon, vegetarian? (laughs) it's also vegetarian, but not only.
F: Healthy food.
N: Healthy food?
F: Heatlhy food. And Yummy is Chinese food.
N: Chinese food.
F: What do you think?

N: I think, go to, Kazan restaurant.

F: Yes? Okay.

Third cycle All together

F: Guys, I think, we should go, to. Erh, Hachet.

H: Hachet.

F: Hachet Burguers, because. Erh, erh, there are many *type* of *amburguers*.

H: Okay (laughing) I think, no, I think we should go to Kazan Otoman restaurant.

F: Okay.

H: I, I think, we should try the kost selection.

F: Uhum.

H: It's different food.

F: Uhum.

H: And you guys (laughs) do you think?

R: I think we should go to Pizza Experts (laughing) and create our own pizza.

F: N?

N: I prefer pizzaria, Pizza Experts.

F: But, but I think, Pizza Expert is more expensive, than Hachet Burguer.

H: I don't. I don't think so, erh. The Green restaurant is healthier than the others.

F: Uhum.

R: And cheaper too.

H: Yes.

F: Uhum. Erh, Mmm I think we should go, to Green restaurant (laughs).

H: What kind of food, do you like, at Green restaurant?

F: Ther- there are *sandwich,* soups, quesadillas. Mm I like, all this food.

H: I think quesadilla is spicier than, other food.

F: Uhum.

N: Spicier.

H: And you, N? What do you think, N? (laughs)

N: I think, we go.

F: Do you agree?

N: Yes.

F: And you, R?

R: Okay.

H and F: Okay.

T: So you've decided where you're going to.

F and H: Yes.

T: Where are you going to?

F and H: The Green restaurant.

APENDIX B

Semi-structured interview

1 – Na sua opinião, o que mais te ajudou a completar a tarefa de forma apropriada?

When learners were unable to answer the questions, the following questions were added in order to guide them.

2 – Considerando o exemplo do professor e o fato de você já ter feito a tarefa anteriormente. Algum desses fatos te ajudou a completar a tarefa?

3 – Na sua opinião, sua performance mais apropriada, a que você considera que se saiu melhor, ocorreu na primeira, segunda ou terceira tentativa?

4 – Por que você a considerou melhor, mais apropriada, considerando o objetivo da tarefa?

5 – Você conseguiu corrigir algum erro notando o que seu colega falava? Pode citar o exemplo?

6 – Qual a sua impressão da atividade como um todo?

If not mentioned during question 6 or throughout the interview, the following questions were added.

7 – Você achou a tarefa muito repetitiva?

8 – Você gostaria de acrescentar mais alguma informação?