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A research study into beginning German students' individual and group processing of written texts

Ahmed A. Abdelrahman

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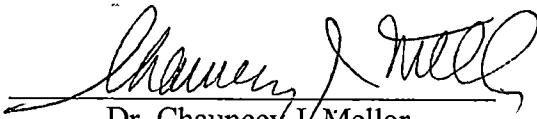(Original signatures are on file with official student records.)
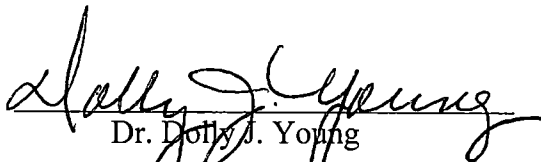
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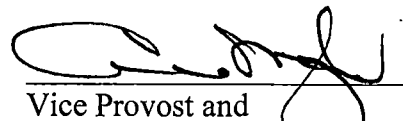
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A RESEARCH STUDY INTO BEGINNING GERMAN STUDENTS'

INDIVIDUAL AND GROUP PROCESSING OF WRITTEN TEXTS

A Thesis
Presented for the Master of Arts Degree
The University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Ahmed Abdelrahman
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ABSTRACT

This work examines the effect of rereading a text as a group effort and individually on beginning German students. The study included eleven participants, all in their second semester of learning German. All participants read a text written in German. The text selected is from the textbook (*Kontakte-4th edition*) used at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville. After reading the text once and writing an individual recall, the participants were divided into two main groups: One group individually reread the text while the other group was divided into two subgroups where the text was discussed instead of rereading it individually. All participants then had to write a second recall. Both recalls were scored. The scores were then normalized, since the study focused on determining the percentages of improvement in the students' performance. The scores were then analyzed by running a t-test on the normalized scores of the two main groups. The t-test indicated that statistically there was no significant difference between the individual rereading group and the discussion group. The results showed however that rereading, both in groups and individually improved the students' reading comprehension.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

As a non-native speaker of German who has recently begun teaching German to American college students, I have become interested in the second language acquisition process. I have always been fascinated with foreign languages. I started learning English very early in the seventh grade. In high school I learned German as a second foreign language in addition to English, and then in college I studied German as a major. Furthermore, I had the chance to learn Spanish. Throughout my years of learning foreign languages I only started to consciously pay attention to how languages are learned in college. Unfortunately, Second Language Acquisition as a field of study has never been part of my education until I joined the Master's program in German at the University of Tennessee in Knoxville (UTK). Also absent from my education until my arrival in Knoxville was group work. All language classes that I have taken prior joining UTK had been teacher-led. The only interaction in classrooms had been teacher-student interaction. Group work had not been part of my pedagogical training.

My first direct contact with group work started at UTK. For almost two years now of assisting and teaching my own beginning level German courses I have become familiar with group work as an effective method of teaching a foreign language. In the communicative language approach in the lower-level German program at the University of Tennessee, group work activities have played a central role in the curriculum. Such activities provide the students with opportunities to practice their language in real life-like situations and compensate for the lack of opportunities to interact with native

speakers of German.[1] Both as a student and as a teacher, I witnessed the success of group work in classroom activities, and how it motivated the students' approach to the tasks. I have noticed, both in the classes I teach and in my colleagues' classes that I have visited, that group work created a more productive atmosphere in the classroom. Moreover, it seemed to lower the anxiety of some of the students. It was no surprise therefore when I discovered that since the mid-1980s there has been a lot of research on the benefits of group work in Second Language (L2) classroom activities (Doughty, and Pica, 1985, 1986; Long and Porter, 1985; Pica, 1987, 1994, 1996; Kucan, 1998). As a teacher I noticed the group work was typically reserved for oral practice and rarely involved reading. As a researcher I decided to examine this possibility.

I personally believe in the essential role that reading plays in learning a foreign language. In my opinion, reading can provide a fruitful context for students to interact in the target language. Much research in L1, as well as L2 reading has been conducted and thus emphasizing the importance of reading in language acquisition. Reading in FL classes, however, has typically not been featured in beginning language instruction and when it is introduced, it is usually viewed as an individual act to be completed out of class, and rarely if ever, in groups. At UTK I have used two different textbooks (*Kontakte* and *Deutsch heute*) to teach German to beginning students. Both textbooks do not emphasize reading. Based on my belief in the important role of reading in SLA and the success of group work in the L2 classroom activities, I decided to examine how effective group work could be in reading comprehension. Another aspect of reading that has been

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[1] A more detailed review of the research in this area is provided in the next chapter.

overlooked in the research and praxis is rereading. In my study, I will also examine the effect of rereading on reading comprehension.

Using written recall (Bernhardt, 1986, 1991) as an assessment tool for reading comprehension, I examine the following two questions:

1) *Can rereading a text, either in groups or individually, help students reach a better reading comprehension?*

2) *Which method is more beneficial for students to better comprehend a text: rereading the text individually or in small groups?*

Other factors affecting reading comprehension such as background knowledge of the text material and vocabulary should also be taken in consideration.

Informing this study are three specific areas of foreign language research: 1) group work; 2) reading comprehension and rereading, 3) written recall as a reading comprehension assessment tool. In the current study, the students' scores on the written recalls were used to compare between rereading the text individually and discussing the text in groups. The score on the recall protocols help assess the improvement of the students' performance in reading comprehension. According to Bernhardt (1986,1991) written recalls will also be helpful, because they could reveal which morphological and syntactic features present students with comprehension problems.

This thesis consists of five chapters: The current chapter provides an introduction to the work done in this study. Chapter Two will provide a relatively detailed review of the research done in the following areas: 1) group work, 2) dictogloss as a group work application, 3) reading comprehension and rereading. Chapter Three will provide an

overview of the research design, participants' background and procedures followed during the study, and Chapter Four will present the results of the study. These results will then be discussed in the final chapter, Chapter Five.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

As discussed in the previous chapter this study examines two main areas of L2 learning, namely reading comprehension and group work. Specifically, the current study focuses on the intersection of those two areas of research, which has not yet been done. In the following sections of this chapter I will be reviewing in more detail a selected subset of the research addressing four main topics that I consider to be an essential background for the current study: 1) reading comprehension, 2) Reading strategies and Rereading, 3) Group Work, and 4) Dictogloss.

L2 Reading Research

Bernhardt's book on reading development in a second language (1991) has been a valuable source for my literature review of the research on reading and reading comprehension. The book examines theoretical models of the reading process and their application to L2 context, in addition to an extensive review of the empirical database from 1973 till 1991.

Much research to date exists in FL reading comprehension. These studies have exposed a variety of variables that affect L2 reading comprehension. Following the model presented by Bernhardt (1991), these variables can be either text-based, such as word recognition and text structure, or reader-based factors, such as prior knowledge, language anxiety and language proficiency. A brief review of some of these variables is provided below.

At one time, word recognition was one of the most investigated areas of reading research. Many of the word recognition studies used reaction or response time as a measure of reading and processing strategies. At the present time there is not much research being done on this area, because, according to Bernhardt, the word recognition studies "provided as much insight as they were going to into comprehension processes". (1991, p. 76) Second language readers of one language begin a second language learning process with orthographic sensitivity they have already acquired. Those readers who much switch orthography from L1 to L2 (English and Arabic) will encounter a different experience than those learning an L2 with overlapping orthographic regularity with their L1, e.g. English and German (Sacco, 1980 as quoted in Bernhardt, 1991, p.76).

A host of studies investigated the effect of the manner the text is configured on L2 reader's comprehension. At one time, studies that focused on examining the text specific features, such as syntactic difficulties, and explicit statements indicated that simplified texts lead to better comprehension than authentic texts and that textually explicit statements enabled better understanding than implicit statements did. However, in a recent study on the effect of text simplification on L2 reading comprehension, Young (1999) noted that "simplified texts do not necessarily provide more effective reading materials than authentic texts." She also indicated that the inconsistent findings of research on this area are the result of the numerous complex variables involved in the reading process.

Young raised interesting points related to the relation between text length and text simplification. She proposed that simplification of short texts might lead to a word-for-

word reading, which in turn does not ensure students' accurate capturing of the ideas in the text. She also suggested that pedagogical simplification of longer texts is unnecessary. The longer length of the input and the redundancy and repetition within longer authentic texts might compensate for the cognitive limitations inherent in a shorter text.

Several studies have examined the effect of background knowledge of the text topic on comprehension. These studies suggested that prior knowledge and topic familiarity are positively correlated to comprehension ability (Johnson, 1982; Alderson and Urquhart, 1988). However, some research studies suggested a less significant role of prior knowledge in reading comprehension (Carrell & Wise, 1998).

Another factor that affects reading comprehension is language anxiety. One study found that students with higher anxiety tended to recall less of the text content than students with low anxiety (Sellers, 2000). Young, however, found no relationship between reading anxiety scores and the scores inferred from two measures of L1 and L2 ability. She suggests that specific features of a text, such as the linguistic density of the text, might increase reading anxiety (Young, 2000), but calls for future research to examine this empirically.

Research studies that examined the relationship between L1 and L2 reading ability strongly suggest the importance of L1 and L2 reading ability in L2 reading comprehension (Bernhardt and Kamil, 1995; Young, 2000). While Bernhardt and Kamil found a sign relationship between L1 and L2 reading, Young found that L1 and L2 reading ability were not significantly related.

Clarke (1979) suggested that in order to read a second language, a certain level of linguistic knowledge in this language should be first achieved (LTH: Linguistic Threshold Hypothesis). More recent studies of L2 reading offer additional indirect evidence and perspective on the LTH (Allen, Bernhardt, Berry and Demel, 1988). In 1980, another study by Clarke also suggested that good L1 readers appear to lose their advantage over poor readers when reading in the L2. In other words, it appears that low level of L2 proficiency "short circuits" the L1 reading knowledge ("Short Circuit Hypothesis").

In addition to text length, text simplification, language anxiety, native language reading ability and L2 proficiency, there have been also some studies to investigate the effect of L1 on the L2 learning process and how the processing strategies of the first language differ from those of the second language (Davis and Bistodeau, 1993; Bernhardt and Kamil, 1995; Swain and Lapkin, 2000).

Re-reading/ Repeated Readings

There has not been much research done on the effect of repeated readings in L2. The previous observation has been supported by Taguchi (1997). Taguchi (1997) went even further to state: "No study in a second or foreign language has investigated the effect of repeated readings." However, many studies examined the effects of repeated readings in L1. Most of these studies concentrated on young children in elementary schools and less able readers. In his literature review on repeated readings, Taguchi summarized the findings of previous investigations on the effect of repeated readings in L1. Taguchi found that many studies had indicated that re-reading a text lead to increase

reading rate and accuracy (Carver & Hoffman, 1981; Chomsky 1976; Dowhower 1987; Herman 1985; Rashotte & Torgesen, 1985; Samuels, 1979). Research had also indicated that the increase of reading speed and accuracy could also lead to better comprehension of a text (Dowhower, 1987; Sindelar, Monda & O'Shea, 1990; O'Shea, Sindelar, & O'Shea, 1985, 1987). The transferability of the effects of repeated readings of one text to new unpracticed texts was confirmed by some researchers in terms of reading rates, accuracy (Carver & Hoffman, 1981; Dowhower 1987; Herman 1985), and comprehension (Dowhower, 1987; Herman, 1985). However, another study concluded that the transferability of gains with regard to reading speed and accuracy depends on the degree of overlapping words between the practiced passage and the unpracticed passages (Rashotte & Torgesen, 1985). The transferability is going to be minimal if the degree of overlapping words was low (Rosette & Torgesen, 1985).

The aim of Taguchi's study (1997) was to determine if the method of repeated readings would be effective for increasing oral and silent reading rates of slow beginning students in a foreign language. His study indicated that repeated readings increased silent reading rates significantly. However, transferability of gains of practice to a new passage was not found to be significant in reading rates.

The main purpose of repeated readings according to Samuels (1979) is to build fluency. However, Samuels confirms that rereading also promotes comprehension. He argues that comprehension may be poor with the first reading of the text but additional readings of the same text will help students gradually overcome the "decoding barrier of comprehension" and thus lead to better comprehension. Repeated readings allow students

to pay less attention for decoding and thus more attention for comprehension. Samuels' repeated readings procedure was built on the automaticity theory presented by La Berge and Samuels in 1974. The automaticity theory suggests that the comprehension difficulties some readers have are due to consuming too much attention with word recognition. The theory is based on the assumption that in order to comprehend what is read, individuals must be able to decode words both accurately and automatically. La Berge and Samuels indicated three levels of the development of word recognition skills:

> "The first level is what may be called the non-accurate stage. The student has great difficulty in recognizing words, even when a reasonable amount of time is provided. The next level is the accuracy stage. The student is able to recognize printed words with accuracy but attention is required...The third and most advanced stage is what we call the automatic stage. At the automatic stage, the student is able to recognize the printed words without attention... " (Samuels, 1979)

Group Work

In terms of group work much research has examined the role of group work in classroom activities (Pica & Doughty, 1985; Long and Porter, 1985; Pica, 1987). Most of this research indicates that group-work can be useful for developing second language acquisition. One area left unexamined in the research is how students' reading together in groups affects their comprehension.

A primary source for research on group work is Pica's 1994 seminal review of the research on the effects of group work in L2 classes. In her research she indicated that

group work is often used in classrooms to provide the students with opportunities to practice the language and speak more. Many L2 learners rarely have the opportunities to interact with native speakers and therefore learners in foreign language classrooms became each other's principle interlocutors and increasingly each other's resource for language learning (Pica, Lincoln-Porter, Paninos, & Linnel, 1995). In addition to being a compensatory practice in classrooms, the researchers note that group-work also creates a non-threatening context for the students to work on their second language skills. Specifically, the research suggests that group work can have the following benefits: 1) greater motivation, 2) less anxiety leading to greater degree of linguistic risk-taking, 3) more practice opportunities, 4) individual tailoring of pace of instruction, 5) positive atmosphere, and 6) real life-like situations and thus better students' fluency in communication strategies (Long, Adam, McLean, & Castaños, 1976; Long and Porter, 1985; Murray, 1994; Pica,1996). Pica (1996) noted that the study by Long, Adam, McLean, and Castaños (1976) suggested that, in comparison to teacher-led instruction, group work could play an important role in the learning process.

Other studies found direct relationships between group work and L2 learning process itself. The findings of these studies were not solely in favor of group work but rather showed strengths and weaknesses of both teacher-led instruction and group work and how both could be used in favor of the L2 learning process. Pica (1994) found conflicting results regarding the learners' L2 accuracy. Some studies found that group work promotes learners' correct production while other studies suggested that group work could limit it. A number of studies that involved immersion classrooms and

bilingual programs had some interesting but contradictory conclusions concerning group work and interaction among L2-speaking classroom peers. Studies, such as French immersion classrooms in Canada (Lightbown & Spada, 1990; White, 1991) and Spanish and Chinese bilingual programs in the U.S. (Wong Fillmore, 1992) suggest that students in such programs are subject to large amounts of incorrect input that seems to increase their own error production and misanalysis of the L2. Other studies have shown, on the other hand, that learners rarely incorporate other learners' errors in their own production. In fact learners have succeeded in modifying and manipulating their initial utterances into more complex forms (Pica, Lincoln-Porter, Paninos, & Linnel, 1993). Learners were also found to use self-generated adjustments to achieve more correct usage (Bruton & Samuda, 1980) and incorporate each other's correct productions (Gass & Varonis, 1989) into their own production.

Group work has also appeared to be more effective for certain groupings than others. Varonis and Gass found that "the overall production and comprehensibility among group members of divergent L1 and cultural backgrounds increased than among those with greater convergence in these areas" (Varonis and Gass, 1985).

Group work has been found to promote and assist certain skills more than others (Pica, 1994, 1996). Pica presented in her literature review a research study conducted in Israel by Bejarano (1987) that indicated that students who participate in small group listening activities had higher overall global L2 proficiency and better Listening comprehension than those who participated in teacher-led activities. This research,

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however, found no significant difference in the L2 learners' reading proficiency (Bejarano, 1987).

Dictogloss

Dictogloss is a procedure that combines listening comprehension and group work where students attempt to reconstruct a short passage after listening to the passage twice. I find this procedure to be closely related to the line of work incorporated in the current study. What interests me in this procedure is how students interact within the groups and share ideas in an attempt to overcome individual limitations to get the main ideas of the text. In this section of the literature review I will attempt to introduce this procedure.

There has been much research on dictogloss (Wajnryb, 1988, 1990; Kidd, 1992; Dunn, 1993; Murray, 1994; Nabei, 1996). Dunn (1993) indicates that the dictogloss procedure has gained wide range of popularity as a classroom task with Ruth Wajnryb's publication of "Grammar Workout" text in 1986. Dictogloss tasks are comprised of three stages: 1) the preparatory phase; 2) the construction phase; 3) the feedback phase (Wajnryb, 1990). In her study, Murray (1994) focused on "dictogloss" as a task that raises learners' consciousness about formal features of L2. In this task L2 learners work together to reconstruct a text they have already heard. The learners are expected to construct a linguistically accepted text that gives the content and main ideas of the original text using words and ideas they remember. Learners are also allowed to take notes and use them to complete the task.

Murray (1994) pointed out that the dictogloss procedure is not meant to test learner's writing creativity but rather improve some major writing sub-skills such as

managing ideas and expressing them using grammar features they can manage. Moreover, dictogloss tasks are also helpful to improve style and monitor grammatical and lexical drawbacks.

The study examined some outcomes associated with dictogloss tasks that Wajnryb (1988, 1990) expected, such as if dictogloss would: promote verbal interaction in a realistic communicative setting; raise consciousness of specific aspects of language use in texts; encourage learners to learn from each other by pooling their knowledge; enable learners to find out what they do or do not know about the language. The goal of the study was to find evidence that supports these expectations or deny them.

Murray's study (1994) confirmed that dictogloss promotes oral fluency. Dictogloss motivated learners to participate and actively interact with each other. Thus, they realized the different usages of language and developed effective communication skills. The researcher suggested that dictogloss also raised the learners' awareness of linguistic and syntactic features of the language. However, the study did not show any evidence that dictogloss could be a reliable method to direct learners' attention towards specific features of language. The study did not prove the validity of the claim that learners explore their accuracy and their own language proficiency. Murray suggested that this flaw in the dictogloss task could produce a feeling of frustration among the learner involved in such tasks due to failure to evaluate their accuracy and acceptability of their production while in the discussion process.

Murray also found, although all groups were given the same instructions, that individual preferences of participants and how they perceive the task and role within the

groups lead to some conflicts and variation in the way the task was carried out in different groups. The study also suggested that "learners may advocate a particular linguistic solution for reasons of group status, rather than because they are absolutely certain the solution is correct."(Murray, 1994)

Murray's study (1994) also suggested that the discrepancies between the dictogloss task's aims and its outcomes could lie in varied interpretations of the task. As a suggested solution to this problem, the researcher recommended a general discussion of the different learners' interpretation of the task and listening to learners' suggestions as to how to tailor the task to accommodate the learners' interpretations.

Nabei (1996) examined whether the dictogloss as a whole promotes learner discussions of meaning, of form or of both. Nabei concluded in his research study that the students' exposure to different input, output, and feedback varied according to the different stages of the task. The study also suggested that the limited access to the input and feedback in the reconstruction stage could negatively affect the students' production. The reconstruction stage was found to be useful in providing a communicative atmosphere for the students and to facilitate the students understanding of how the grammar works. However, for this to happen, the students needed to have proper preparation for the task to help them comprehend the original text.

Dunn (1993) claimed that the dictogloss technique could accommodate a wide range of learning styles. The procedure should be beneficial for students interested in communicative and problem-solving activities as well as those who "prefer a more structured and organized approach". The researcher saw the dictogloss procedure as a

helpful method to engage students lacking confidence and to reduce individual embarrassment.

Dunn's response to the results gathered from her classes after dictogloss activities was that the students were producing less grammatically accurate texts compared to the texts they normally produce in writing classes. Instead of using their incomplete fragmented notes to build a solid text, students just inserted these "battered fragments" into sentences. Although the students often did not understand the meaning of these fragments, the study indicated that the students were able to grasp the general ideas and meaning of the text. The researcher noticed as well that the more familiar the students were with the vocabulary of the passage, the more logically cohesive a text they produced.

In this chapter four areas of research has been reviewed: reading comprehension, rereading as a reading strategy, group work, and dictogloss. The research on reading comprehension indicated that various variables come into play and affect reading comprehension. The studies that examined rereading focused on rereading as a successful method to improve reading rates and speed in addition to accuracy in L1. Very little research examined the effect of rereading on reading comprehension in L1. Moreover, the effect of rereading on L2 reading comprehension has been rarely examined. The literature review also showed that despite the popularity of group work in L2 classrooms, since the mid 1980s, there has not been much research on the use of group work in L2 reading. The current study, therefore, attempts to shed light on the effect of rereading on L2 reading comprehension. Furthermore, this study explores the effect of group work on reading

comprehension. The dictogloss procedure, which shares some similarities with the procedure used in the current study, has been very informing in the way the current study was constructed.

Chapter 3

Research Design

This chapter presents in detail the research design, the background of the participants, the materials used in the study, the procedures employed in this research and the methods utilized to analyze the data derived from the study.

Participants

A total of ten native speakers of English and one native speaker of Russian served as participants for this study. All participants had already finished the first semester course, German 101, or the equivalent and were eleven weeks into their second semester of German at the University of Tennessee in Knoxville (UTK). The participants had a total of sixty-three classroom-contact hours with German.[2]

Only two of the eleven participants had exposure to German prior to enrolling in German 101 at UTK (Table 3-1). One student had studied German for two years in high school and had taken the UTK placement test and was placed into 101.[3] The other student, whose mother is German, had more contact with German than the rest of the participants. This student, however, when asked in a later interview about why he started learning German at the German 101 level, gave two reasons: First, it is a UTK requirement to start with 101 if the student has not taken the language in high school.[4] Second, although he learned a lot of conversational German from his mother, she never

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[2] Students who did not take German 101 at UTK completed an equivalent course at another institution and were granted university credit.

[3] Roughly one-third (33%) of all students who have taken 2 or more years of high school German place into German 101.

[4] This inquiry was made via email.

really taught him any German reading or writing skills because she didn't want it to interfere with his learning to read and write in English. Therefore, he didn't think he was ready for a higher level of German than 101. He also stated that when he started German 101 he knew a lot of conversational German, but he had absolutely no knowledge of spelling or grammar rules except what he could figure out from "sounding things out." He also said that if he had to read something he would sound out the words (much like a young child does when he or she is learning to read their native language), and if he had to write something he would say the word, sentence or paragraph to himself and then try to figure out the spelling and grammar. This student's performance in German 101 and German 102 was very good but not exceptional. He seemed to understand the German spoken in class but his performance on tests and grammar exercises was only as good as the rest of his classmates.

Table 3-1: Background of Participants

No.	Age	Gender	L1	Exposure to L2s other than German	Time learning German
1	20	F	English	Spanish (2 years, high school)	63 hours
2	22	F	English	None	63 hours
3	19	F	English	Spanish (2 years, high school)	63 hours
4	19	M	English	▪ Latin (high school) ▪ Korean (Parents' native language)	63 hours
5	19	M	English	French (2 years, high school)	63 hours
6	20	M	English	None	2 years (high school), 63 hours of German at UTK
7	20	M	Russian	English (fluent)	63 hours
8	18	F	English	None	63 hours
9	19	M	English	Spanish (2 years, high school)	63 hours
10	20	M	English	▪ Spanish and French (2 years, high school) ▪ Gujurati (Parents' native language)	63 hours
11	18	M	English	French (2 years, high school)	63 hours of German at UTK +German mother

With the exception of four participants, all had previous experience with one or more foreign languages: Three participants had studied Spanish in high school, one had studied French, another could read and write Korean but could not speak it, one participant was a Russian native speaker fluent in English. Another student could speak his parents' native language in addition to English as a native language.[5] Participants ranged in age from eighteen to twenty years. Four of the eleven participants were females.

At the time of the study, the German program at UT used the textbook *Kontakte, A Communicative Approach*, 4th edition (Terrell, Tschirner, & Nikolai, 2000) in the first 3 semesters. In German 101 students worked through the first five chapters of the *Kontakte* textbook and the accompanying workbook and CDs to learn the basic German vocabulary, grammar, and culture that is needed to comprehend, speak, read, and write with adequate fluency, breadth, and accuracy about their world and surroundings. In addition they had to read and discuss four chapters of *The Germans* by Gordon A. Craig. This book was meant to provide an introduction to the culture and history of the German-speaking world. The students were encouraged to take an active part in class and critically make the comparison between their culture and the German culture. Students were also introduced to *Germanophone poetry* put together by the Head of Lower-Division German Program. As part of the emphasis on poetry in German 101 students were also asked to make an attempt to experiment with the language and write simple poems in German.

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[5] The researcher was unable to ascertain the language from the survey. In a later interview with the student, he stated that his parents spoke *Gujurati*, which is a regional dialect in India.

The content-oriented curriculum that the German program at The University of Tennessee started implementing in Fall semester 1999 emphasized the use of German to talk about certain topics or themes, rather than talking about the grammar and memorizing the rules. However, the grammatical structures were not entirely neglected. Grammar topics were introduced in order to help the students listen, read, write, and speak about the topics and themes in this course.

Reading instruction in *Kontakte*

Each chapter in the *Kontakte* textbook contains a reading section, "Leseecke". During German 101 course the students had read three texts; each text corresponded with the theme of each chapter and the increasing language ability of the students. The reading in *chapter one* corresponds with the main goal of the chapter, which is extending the students' abilities to exchange personal information. The text consists of "three short first-person introductions of three of the characters in Kontakte."[6] The reading is preceded by a pre-activity where the students are asked to indicate which information they would give when they introduce themselves. After reading the students have to fill another information grid based on the information given in the text about each of the characters. As an aid for comprehension, the text is accompanied by drawings that reflect what is in each paragraph. The text is 277 words in length.

As in chapter one, the reading of *chapter two* introduces more characters of the book. The text is also accompanied by drawings to aid the students while reading. Before reading, the students should fill out grids to identify the characters from the drawings. The reading is followed by a matching activity.

In *chapter three* the reading portion in the textbook was a short simple poem by Ralf Kaiser. The poem describes the daily routine of a person. Every line of the twelve lines of the poem begins with the same two words "mal eben"; only the third word in each line varies. This third word could be a noun or a verb. However, as mentioned earlier, this was not the students' first encounter with German poetry.

During German 102 and till the time of the study the students had read another three texts of more length and increasing difficulty. In *chapter four* the reading was an article in a newspaper. The text consisted of 27 lines and 174 words including the title. The text was preceded by a set of general questions on the topic to be answered before reading the text to establish the context. Another set of direct questions on the reading passage was to be answered after the students finished reading.

The reading passage of *chapter five* corresponded with the main theme of the chapter, which was *Money and Work*. The text was twenty-five lines in length. The reading was preceded by introductory questions to provide the students with a context. Pictures with short texts also accompanied the text. After reading the students had to answer questions about the text.

Chapter six' main theme was "living arrangements". The topic of the reading text in this chapter was describing dream houses. The text consisted of four paragraphs. In each paragraph a person told the reader about his / her dream house. A summary of the texts read by the students from the textbook *Kontakte* is provided in Table 3-2.

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[6] Kontakte, instructor's edition.

Table 3-2: Summary of the texts from *Kontakte* read by participants before the study

Chapter	Text topic	Word count	Average sentence length	Text Type	Special features
One	Self-introduction	277 words	10 words	Unauthentic (Simplified text)	Drawings, vocabulary list
Two	Self-introduction	278 words	11 words	Unauthentic (Simplified text)	Drawings, vocabulary list
Three	Daily routine	36 words	3 words	Poem, authentic	Vocabulary list
Four	Genealogy	169 words	21 words	Newspaper article, authentic	Vocabulary list
Five	Child labor	301 words	12 words	Unauthentic (Simplified text)	Pictures, vocabulary list
Six	Dream houses	210 words	13 words	Unauthentic (Simplified text)	None

Materials

As mentioned in the previous section, each chapter in the *Kontakte* textbook contains a reading comprehension activity. Length and difficulty of the texts increase with each chapter. During the study participants read the non-authentic German text *"Mord im Café König"* (Appendix A.1) from a later chapter in the textbook that had not been covered in class at the time of the study. The text's authenticity was not an issue. This passage has been selected because: a) students had not read it before, b) it was challenging at the syntactic, morphological and semantic levels, yet was also accessible and interesting enough to second-semester students, c) the length of the text was appropriate, and d) the text came from the textbook with which all participants were familiar, and thus one can conclude that the text is consistent with reading texts that the participants had already read.

The text is 486 words long. It consists of a string of interviews with various witnesses to a possible murder. The text's narrator occasionally interjects information in between interviews. The text therefore shifts back and forth between dialogues in the present tense and narration in the past tense. For this reason, the text could be considered more difficult. The potential difficulty of the text made it therefore well suited for a second reading, which was a central focus of this study.

Procedures

Five weeks before the study a memorandum explaining the purpose of the study, the tasks the students were asked to perform, and the expected goals of the study was distributed in all German 102 classes (Appendix E). The students were invited to participate in the study, and, as an incentive, they were offered up to 3 points added to their final grade in 102. To ensure that the participants would do their best on the tasks, they were told that their performance would determine how many points they would get. A time limit for signing-up to participate in the study was also set in the memorandum. The memorandum stated that the study would take no more than 2 hours on a specific day. The students were given three different dates and times to choose from. The study took place at the date and time the majority of the students had signed up for. Eighteen students responded to the memorandum but due to schedule conflicts only fifteen were able to participate in the study. At the time of the study only eleven out of the fifteen showed up; the others had last minute excuses.

On April 3, 2000, at 3:00 PM the eleven students arrived and signed a consent form to secure their agreement to participate in the project (Appendix D). The students were divided into two main groups, group A with five students and group B with six. The researcher explained the first task to the students and made sure they understood what they were asked to do. Each of the participants was provided with a copy of the text, preceded with written instructions. The students were directed to carefully and individually read the text and take as much time as they needed because afterwards they would be asked to recall as much as they could, from general ideas to details. When the students were done with the first reading, the copies of the text were collected and each of the participants was handed two sheets of paper, a green one and a pink one. To reduce memory limitations, the participants were asked to write down individually on the red sheet, in English, anything they could recall from their first reading of the text without worrying about complete sentences or textual organization.[7] The students were then instructed to organize their thoughts, also in English, on the green sheet of paper.

When the students were done with their first individual recall, the five members of group A were asked to reread the text individually and write down a second individual recall. The same procedures as in the first reading were followed.

The second group, group B, was divided into two subgroups of three, B1 and B2. The two subgroups were provided with copies of the same text. The participants were instructed to discuss the text within their two subgroups. The directions concerning which language to use in the group interaction were apparently not clear enough to the students. Therefore, group B2 was allowed to discuss the text in English while group B1 discussed

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[7] Research has suggested that memory limitations could influence recalls.

the text in German.[8] Participants were allowed to refer to the text during the discussion. After discussing the text in groups, the participants turned in the text and wrote individually another recall protocol of the text by following the procedures used to write the first recall; they made notes on the pink sheet and then composed more organized recall on the green sheet. The discussions of the two subgroups were audio taped and later transcribed (Appendix B).

All participants filled out a survey that was meant to shed some light on their previous experiences with foreign languages in general and German specifically as well as their familiarity with the type of the text they read (Appendix C). The students were asked to fill out this survey at the end of the study after their second recall protocol.

After scoring the recalls and based on the results of one of the group discussions (B1), the researcher felt the need to conduct additional interviews with the members of that group to address specific issues, such as the lack of participation of one of the group members.[9] The findings from these interviews will be discussed in detail in a later chapter five.

Pausal Unit analysis

In order to score the recalls, a near native speaker and the researcher, each on his own, divided the text into 276 *pausal units* equally weighted at one point each. Afterwards, the two raters met to compare and discuss each other's *pausal units*. Some

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[8] Running a t-test on the scores of both groups (B1 and B2) indicated that statistically there is no significant difference between the performance of the two sub-groups and, therefore, the researcher will treat both sub-groups as one group (group B) in the comparison with group A.
[9] Some of the interviews were via email and some in person.

Research Design

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┌─────────────────────────────────┐
│   All participants read the text │
│          individually            │
└─────────────────────────────────┘
                 │
┌─────────────────────────────────┐
│   All Participants wrote individual │
│          recall protocols        │
└─────────────────────────────────┘
                 │
┌─────────────────────────────────┐
│ Participants were divided into two main │
│          groups: A & B           │
└─────────────────────────────────┘
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Group B was divided into two subgroups: B1 &B2. Both subgroups discussed the text instead of rereading it individually

Group A members reread the text individually

All participants wrote a second individual recall protocol

Text was divided into pausal units.

Interrater reliability was determined

Recalls were scored

Data were analyzed using the t-test

Figure 3-1:
Research Design

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discrepancies that arose were resolved through discussion. The interrater reliability for establishing the pausal units was r = 0.92. The same raters then individually scored 4, or 20 %, of the recalls together and reported an interrater reliability of 0.92. The remaining 18 recalls were scored independently by the researcher. Sample student recalls are included in Appendix A.2.

Analysis methods

In order to better analyze the data, the researcher felt that a normalization procedure should be followed to determine the improvement in the students' performance between the recalls rather than how high or low they scored. The normalization is performed by calculating the percentage change of the score of each of the students relative to his/her first recall. This calculation is presented in the Equation:

$$\%\text{Normalized Score} = \frac{\text{Recall 2 Score} - \text{Recall 1 Score}}{\text{Recall 1 Score}} * 100\%$$

The normalized score reflects the percentage of improvement in performance between the first and second recalls. The normalization procedure will be further explained in chapter four in light of the results of the study. The normalized scores are also presented in chapter four.

A further analysis of the data was performed by plotting the two normal distributions, representing the two groups, with the average and standard deviation parameters. This graphical representation of the data could indicate whether the two groups, A and B, are statistically different. Performing a statistical test known as t-test further explores this hypothesis. The aim of the t-test is to indicate whether two groups

can be statistically judged to be the same. The results of the t-test are also summarized in chapter four.

Chapter 4

Data Analysis

In the following section of this chapter I present the data collected from the actual experiment; namely the scores of the twenty-two recalls written by the participants. As mentioned earlier in Chapter Three the participants were divided into two main groups: group A and group B. Group B was broken up into two subgroups B1 and B2. The members of all groups individually read a text and wrote a first recall. Afterwards, Group A members reread the text and wrote a second recall while members of groups B1 and B2 discussed the text instead of rereading it individually and then wrote their second individual recall.

Establishing equivalency of groups

1. Group A versus group B

After writing the first recall protocols, students were divided into two main groups, group A (individual rereading) and group B (group rereading). To establish the equivalency of both groups the t-test was performed on the scores of both groups after the first recall protocol. The t-test indicated that statistically there was no significant difference between both groups, A and B. The results of the t-test are presented in Table 4-1.

2. Subgroup B1 versus subgroup B2

As mentioned earlier in chapter Three, group B (group rereading) was divided into two subgroups, B1 and B2. Both subgroups discussed the text. However, one subgroup (B1) discussed the text in German while the other subgroup (B2) discussed it in

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Table 4-1: Comparing groups, A and B, after first recall to establish their equivalency

	Group A	Group B
Student 1	52.5	55.5
Student 2	27.5	48.5
Student 3	10.5	130
Student 4	25.5	41.5
Student 5	34	23
Student 6	NA	21
T-test	0.254106	

English. Running a t-test on the scores of both subgroups after writing the second recall indicated that both subgroups were statistically equal. Thus, they may be considered one group (group B) in comparison with group A. T-test results are presented in Table 4-2

Improvement in reading comprehension between recalls

1. Individual rereading group, group A

Table 4-3 presents Group A's pausal unit score on recall protocols, the average score of the group as a whole and its standard deviation.[10] These results are also presented graphically in Figure 4-1.

From a first examination of the results of Group A, it is clear that the group improved on their second recall attempt. However, the weakest student in the group did not make a significant improvement after the second individual reading of the text.

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[10] The standard deviation is a measure of the dispersion of the data around the mean. A high standard deviation indicates that the data is more dispersed. In reference to table 4-5, a standard deviation of 72% when the mean is 82% can be interpreted as follows: if the experiment is repeated with a new student

Table 4-2: Comparison between the two subgroups B1 and B2.
Performing two-sample t-test on the normalized scores of both subgroups to determine their equivalency

	Group B1	Group B2
Student1	14.41	8.43
Student2	95.88	84.78
Student3	0.00	76.19
T-test	0.63597	

Table 4-3: Group A's pausal unit score on recall protocols

	Recall 1	Recall 2
Student 1	52.5	74.5
Student 2	27.5	40
Student 3	10.5	12
Student 4	25.5	71.5
Student 5	34	81.5
Average	30	55.9
Std. Dev.	15.23975	29.26047
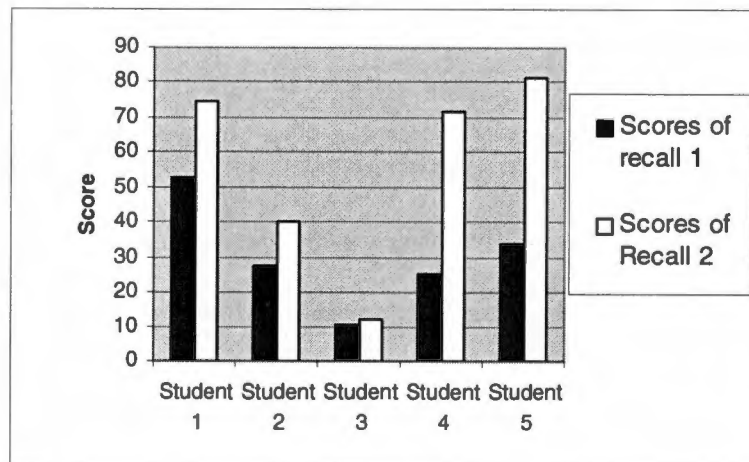
Figure 4-1: Graphical representation of Group A's score on recall protocols

then there is a probability of approximately 99% that the normalized score of this student will be between −128% and +300% which is a very wide range.

Although the average results of the group improved between the two recalls, the standard deviation of the scores increased between the two recalls. This discrepancy signifies that the scores of the students are more dispersed in the second trial. This is, to some extent, the effect of the non-improvement of student number 3. This point is further explored in the analysis section.

2. Group rereading, group B

The scores of the two subgroups of Group B on the recall protocols and the average score of the group as a whole and its standard deviation are presented in tables 4-4 and 4-5. The results are also represented graphically in Figures 4-2 and 4-3. Examining the results of group B reveals that the average of the first and second recalls of group B1 is significantly higher than that of group B2. Group B2 appears to be more uniform as revealed by the standard deviation of the experimental data. A more detailed discussion of the experimental data is presented in the next chapter.
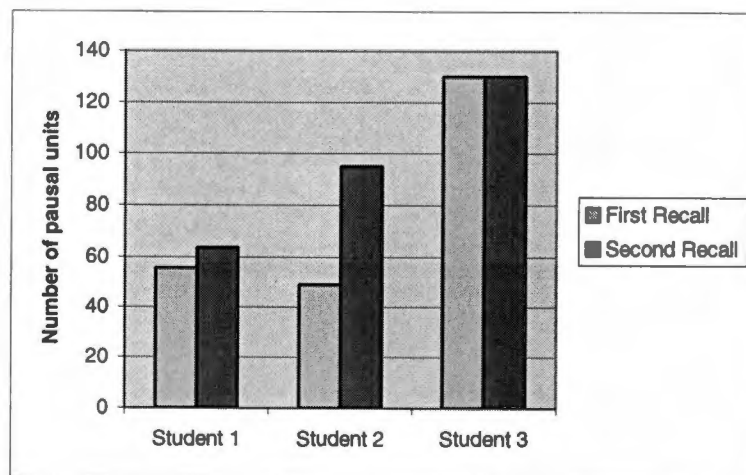
Figure 4-2: Graphical representation of Sub-group B1's score on recall protocols

Table 4-4: Subgroup B1's score on recall protocols

	First Recall	Second Recall
Student 1	55.5.5	63.5
Student 2	48.5	95
Student 3	130	130
Average	78	96.1666
Std. Dev.	45.1691	33.2653

Table 4-5: Sub-group B2's score on recall protocols

	First Recall	Second Recall
Student 4	41.5	45
Student 5	23	42.5
Student 6	21	37
Average	28.5	41.5
Std. Dev.	9.2285788	3.341656276
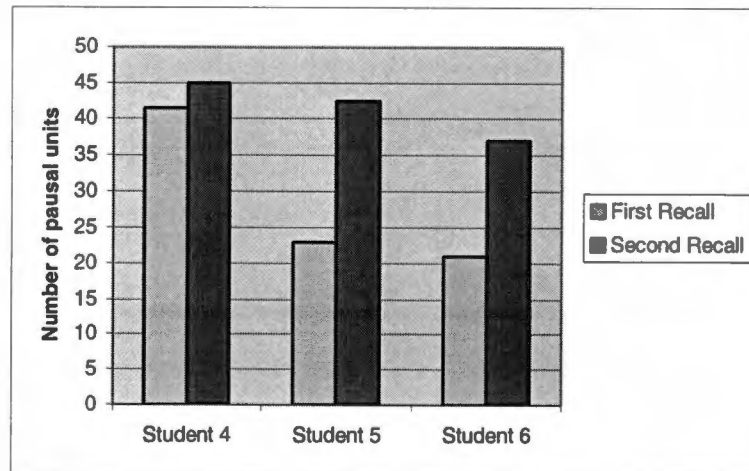
Figure 4-3: Graphical representation of Sub-group B2's score on recall protocols

Comparison between groups

1. Normalizing scores to measure improvement in performance

As discussed previously in Chapter Three, a normalization procedure was used to analyze the results. Since the performance of the students in the first recall varied a great deal, it was essential to have a common base on which to evaluate the improvement in their performance. Thus, the purpose of the normalization procedure was to provide a more uniform measure of the improvement in the performance relative to the initial performance. For example, although the absolute improvement of student 1 between the two recalls was higher than that of student 2 of the same group, the normalized score showed the reverse result. The results produced by the normalization procedure for groups A, B1, and B2 are shown in Table 4-6 and 4-7, respectively. The normalized scores presented in these tables reflect the percentage of improvement in performance between the first and second recalls, the average score of the group as a whole, the average improvement in performance and the standard deviation for this group. The cumulative data for group B is shown in Table 4-8.

Table 4-7 shows that the average of the normalized scores for Group B2 is higher than that of Group B1. Group B2 had more uniform distribution of the scores in the first recall as well as in the second recall. Group B1 had a high achiever (Student 3) whose performance did not change between the recalls.

Examining tables 4-6 and 4-8 indicates that the students' reading comprehension improved after rereading the text either individually or in small groups. The change in the normalized performance of groups A and B from Tables 4-6 and 4-8, shows, however,

that the average increase in the performance of group A (Individual rereading of the text) is higher than that of group B (group discussion). However, the standard deviations for both groups are relatively high. Therefore, as indicated previously, due to the relatively high standard deviations of the normalized scores of groups A and B, the apparent difference of the means of groups A and B should be viewed with caution.[11]

2. Graphical representation of the normal distributions for groups A and B

Figure 4-4 shows the two curves representing the normal distributions for group A and group B. The two distributions are overlapping, which indicates that statistically there is no significant difference between the two groups.

3. Comparing groups using the t-test

The previous stated observation that the two groups are not statistically different was further confirmed by another statistical tool, the two-sample t-test. The t-test could be used to determine whether two sample means are equal. This t-test assumes that the

Table 4-6: Group A's normalized score on recall protocols.
Improvement in performance between the two recall protocols

	First Recall	Second Recall	Normalized Score
Student 1	52.5	74.5	41.90%
Student 2	27.5	40	45.45%
Student 3	10.5	12	14.29%
Student 4	25.5	71.5	180.39%
Student 5	34	81.5	139.71%
Average	30	55.9	84.35%
Std. Dev.	15.23975	29.26047	71.61%

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[11] See previous footnote.

Table 4-7: The normalized score of Group B (B1 and B2) on recall protocols. Improvement in performance between the two recall protocols

		First Recall	Second Recall	Normalized Score
Group B1	Student 1	55.5	63.5	14.41%
	Student 2	48.5	95	95.88%
	Student 3	130	130	0.00%
	Average	78	96.1666	36.76%
	Std. Dev.	45.1691	33.2653	51.70%
Group B2	Student 4	41.5	45	8.43%
	Student 5	23	42.5	84.78%
	Student 6	21	37	76.19%
	Average	28.5	41.5	56.47%
	Std. Dev.	9.2285788	3.341656276	41.82%

Table 4-8: The cumulative data for group B

	First Recall	Second Recall	Normalized Score
Student 1	52.5	57.5	9.52%
Student 2	47	93.5	98.94%
Student 3	130	130	0.00%
Student 4	41.5	45	8.43%
Student 5	23	42.5	84.78%
Student 6	21	37	76.19%
Average	52	67.08333	46.31%
Std. Dev.	38.890873	35.71193	44.89%

variances of both ranges of data are unequal; it is referred to as a heteroscedastic t-test. The results of the t-test, which was performed to determine whether there was a statistically significant difference between the two groups are summarized in Table 4-9. The results show that the two groups are not statistically different.

Research questions revisited

As an answer to the first research question, the study indicates that rereading, either in groups or individually, improves students' reading comprehension. The study also shows that statistically there is no significant difference between rereading in groups or individually, which provides the answer to the second research question. However, the results of the study indicate that group work could be more beneficial for some students than others. A detailed discussion of the results will be presented in the next chapter.
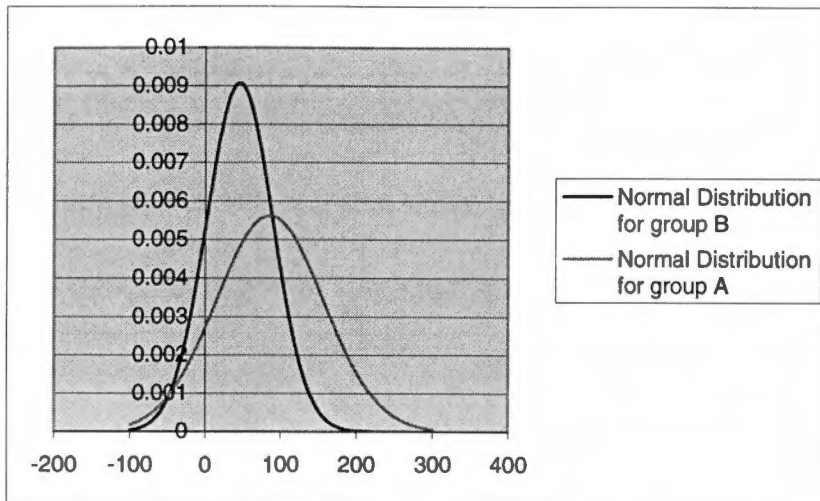
Figure 4-4: Normal Distribution for group A and B

Table 4-9: T-test results for group A and B

	Normalized Score for Group A	Normalized Score for Group B
Student 1	0.419047619	0.144144144
Student 2	0.454545455	0.958762887
Student 3	0.142857143	0
Student 4	1.803921569	0.084337349
Student 5	1.397058824	0.847826087
Student 6	Not available	0.761904762
T-Test	**0.340267644**	

Chapter 5

Discussion and Conclusion

In this chapter I will analyze some of the data presented in the previous chapter for their significance for L2 classroom reading activities.

The main hypothesis of the current study was that one of the two methods used during this study, namely rereading the text individually or discussing it in small groups, might prove superior than the other. The t-test (Table 4-9) as well as the graphical representation of the normalized scores of both groups (A and B; Figure 4-4) confirm that there was no statistically significant difference between the groups, which indicates that the group discussion method does not seem to be superior to the individual rereading method in enhancing the students' reading comprehension and recall. However, it is important to mention that the data collected are very limited in that they incorporate only a limited sample of students from one university reading one text. In addition, the study did not attempt to compare the actual performances of the students, but rather the percentage of improvement in their performance. As mentioned in Chapter Three, this was achieved by comparing the normalized scores of the students of the two groups (A and B). Therefore, the results and conclusion inferred from the analysis should be viewed with these cautions in mind.

In the process of examining the two methods used in this study, however, other interesting findings and observations arose. In the next section these observations and findings will be discussed.

Group dynamics' effect on student performance

The data collected from group B1 discussion shows that this group had a high achiever (Student 3) whose performance did not change between the recalls. This student's language ability, as mentioned earlier in Chapter Three, was considerably higher than the rest of the participants. During the discussion of the text this student informed the other two participants in his group that he understood everything he read. He offered his help to explain whatever they did not understand. The very good language ability of Student 3 raised a question that I found to be very essential for the group reading interaction: *How does having a high achiever in the group affect the group dynamics and the improvement of the other members' performance?*

Also worth mentioning is that all participants wrote their recall protocols in English and not in the target language to allow them to focus on expressing their understanding of the main ideas of the text and thus their recall protocols should provide a more accurate assessment of their comprehension.

As mentioned in Chapter Three, one of the two subgroups (group B1) discussed the text in German while the other sub-group (B2) discussed the text in English. Although the scores on the initial recall protocol of B1 were higher than those of B2, performing a t-test to compare the improvement in performance of the two subgroups after the group discussions indicated that statistically there was no significant difference between the two sub-groups (table 4-2). This finding suggests that when one of the group members has comprehended significantly more of the text and has noticeably higher L2

proficiency, the language used in the group discussion does not appear to make a difference in the group performance.

Despite the fact that the other two members of Group B1 had an equal chance to benefit from the high achiever in their group (Student 3), the performance of one of them barely improved (Student 1) while the other participant (Student 2), who scored lowest in the first recall, made a 99 % improvement (Table 4-4). These results presented an interesting contradiction and called for further investigation. Therefore, individual interviews with the members of Group B1 were conducted. Student 2 (group B1) stated that the high achiever (Student3) in the group provided a great deal of assistance. *Why did Student 1 not benefit to the same degree as Student 2?* An explanation could be extracted from the later interview with Student 1, who disclosed that his unfamiliarity with the other group members, in addition to being intimidated by the high achiever, diminished his willingness to participate in the group interaction. In other words, unfamiliarity with the other group members and intimidation by a superior language ability raised the "Affective Filter" (Krashen, 1982) for this student. This suggests that having a good student in a group is not sufficient to help the weaker students within the same group. Having a good student in a group could be advantageous; it is however not enough to guarantee a successful group interaction. Other factors must be taken into consideration. In my opinion, familiarity among the group members and previous successful group work experience among members could create a fruitful group dynamic.

In group B2, by contrast, from examining the recall protocols of student 4 (Table 4-5), we see that this student scored the highest in his group although he understood very

little of the text and his performance improved only 8%. This student recalled only 45 pausal units out of 277 units. Student 4's proficiency did not differ much from the rest of the group, thus limiting the degree to which he could help the others. This student was, however, outspoken and an analysis of the group interaction showed that the other two group members almost always agreed with him (Appendix B).

Group Interaction versus Individual Rereading: Effect on Students' Performance

In this section I will be comparing group interaction and individual rereading (groups B and A) in terms of their effect on reading comprehension.

Examining the results of groups B1 and B2 (Table 4-7) indicates that the group interaction improved the performance of the groups in general. However, from further observation of the results, it can be seen that the performance of the best performer in each subgroup (B1 and B2) did not improve appreciably in the second recall after the group interaction. In fact Student 3 in group B1 (the high achiever) did not make any improvement in his performance. However, the lack of improvement in this student's performance is pretty much due to his outstanding performance on the first recall. In fact, this student recalled all the main ideas of the text, in addition to many details, and there was very little chance that he could improve any more. Student 4 (group B2) scored higher than the other two members in his group in the first recall protocol, although his recall protocol indicates that he understood very little of the text. The performance of this student barely improved. The other group members, Student 5 and Student 6, made an

improvement of 85% and 76% respectively. Neither of them, however, surpassed Student 4.

Another issue concerning the discussion groups is that the improvement of the weaker students within the group seemed to depend on the language ability of the best student in the group. If the language ability of the best student in the group was limited, then the other members of the group were more likely not to improve considerably. On the other hand, if the gap between the high achiever in the group and the other group members was too big, instructors could face the risk that the negotiation between the group members could turn into another form of instructor-led reading activity with the risk that this secondary instructor was more error prone than the primary one.

In Group A, on the other hand, the student who scored highest in the first recall made an improvement of 42% in the second recall after rereading the text individually. It seems that rereading the text helped the best performer in Group A improve his performance considerably. On the other hand the best performers in the discussion-groups who discussed the text with weaker students, instead of rereading it, hardly improved. Thus, this raises another question: *Does the group interaction impose limits on the improvement of the best performer in the group?*

Taking another look at the results of all the groups reveals another interesting observation. In Groups B1 and B2, the best performers in the first recall remained the best students in the second recall. In Group A (individual re-reading), on the other hand, the student who was ranked first in the first recall retreated to second position in the second recall. The results of the discussion-groups (B1 and B2) indicate that between the

first and the second recalls the best students in Groups B1 and B2 stayed in the lead. In Group A (rereading group), however, Student 5 made an improvement of 140% in his second recall after having the chance to individually reread the text. Student 5 was ranked a distant second in the first recall. This student improved his performance in the second recall and took the lead. While in group discussion the best students stayed at the top, the individual rereading of the text allowed one of the lower ranked students to surpass the original leader of the group in the first recall. This could be considered an advantage of the individual rereading over the group interaction in reading comprehension activities.

Effect of initial language ability on performance

The results of Student 3 in Group A (Table 4-6) suggest that the weakest students might not benefit from a second reading of the same text. This student's performance barely improved (14.29 %, Table 4-6). Due to his lack of the basic language knowledge, this student did not have the basis to build on while rereading the text. In contrast to this case, Students 4 and 5 who were strong to begin with benefited tremendously from rereading the text. These two students were at the time of the study in the researcher's class and thus were known, from prior observation and assessment in the classroom, to possess good command of the language. The study shows, on the other hand, that in both groups (B1 and B2) where the text was discussed instead of being individually reread, the performance of the weak students improved considerably. This conclusion corresponds with Wells' research in 1996 on the role of group work in the classroom:

" it is not necessary for there to be a group member who is in all respects more capable than the others. ... in tackling a difficult task as a group, although no member has expertise beyond his or her peers, the group as a whole , by working at the problem together, is able to construct a solution that none could have achieved alone. In other words, each is forced to rise above himself and by building on contributions of individual members, the group collectively constructs an outcome that no single member envisaged at the outset of the collaboration." (Wells, 1996, p.10)

Thus, one could say here that the group discussion of a text could be more helpful for such a weak student to improve his or her reading comprehension and to get more information out of the text. However, the improvement of the performance of weak students because of group work does not necessarily mean that group work helped them become better readers. The improvement in their performance could be due to the information provided by the other group members. This study therefore suggests that the initial ability of students could decide which method is more effective.

Areas for future research

The current study suggests the need for further extensive research on group work and reading comprehension. The limited data of the present study made it difficult to draw solid general conclusions. For further research it will be useful to have a larger number of participants at different proficiency levels, reading more than one text. The study should also be repeated several times with a variety of group settings. This

variation could lead to more solid conclusions that could be generalized for the use of L2 classrooms.

An important observation of the present study was that a high achiever within the group could affect the group dynamic positively or negatively. As mentioned earlier in this chapter the study indicated that having a high achiever within the group does not necessarily have an equally positive effect on all group members. Other factors must be taken into consideration, such as familiarity among group members, anxiety, gender, age, initial language ability. To further and more accurately investigate the effect of these factors, having more groups could enable us to sort out the relative strength of these factors in each situation.

The current study also suggests further investigation of the role that the initial language ability of L2 learners play in determining the more appropriate and more effective method to utilize in L2 reading activities. The current study implies that group work could be more helpful than individual rereading in improving the performance of the weak students who lack the language knowledge needed to build on and benefit from a second individual reading of a text.

Group work is being successfully used in L2 classrooms in activities such as role play. From my own experience in L2 classrooms, however, both as an L2 learner and as an instructor and a researcher, I have observed a lack of training and guidance on how the students should interact with each other during group work in reading. The majority of instructors tend to divide the students into groups and give them a text to work on without explaining to their students how this task should be carried out and what is expected of

them. This lack of guidance may have a powerful effect on the ultimate success or failure of an "ideally constructed " group. A research study to investigate different ways for setting up groups and training the students to work in groups is needed. A comparison between students who receive group work training and other students, who do not, would be very useful.

Another interesting area of research could be using think aloud protocols to investigate how students process written texts and what aspects of the target language, such as lexicon, syntax or morphology gives them greater difficulty. Think aloud protocols might be also useful to investigate the effect of L1 on L2.

Finally, this study focused on the intersection of two areas of research: rereading and group work. Much research has been conducted on group work but very little research, if any, examined the effect of group work on reading comprehension. Also, there has been very little research conducted to determine the effect of rereading on reading comprehension. The current study, therefore, could be considered a window into a new area of research that needs to be extensively investigated and that offers great promise for the L2 classroom.

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Appendices

Appendix A

A.1 Text Used In Study

Mord Im Café König

Ein Mann steigt auf der Königsallee in Düsseldorf aus einem Taxi, zahlt und geht zu einem Kiosk. Er wirkt nervös, sieht sich mehrmals um.

„Er hat mir über zwei Euro Trinkgeld gegeben", sagte der Taxifahrer nachher aus.

Am Kiosk kauft der Mann eine Süddeutsche Zeitung und eine International Herald Tribune. Wieder sieht er sich mehrere Male um und beobachtet die Straße.

„Ich glaube, er hörte nicht gut, er hat mir dreimal nach dem Preis gefragt", sagte der Kioskbesitzer aus.

Ein dunkelgrauer Mercedes 450 SL mit drei Männern und einer Frau am Steuer parkte gegenüber. Die vier beobachten den Mann. Der sieht sie und geht schnell in die Köpassage, ein großes Einkaufszentrum mit vielen Geschäften, Restaurants und Cafés. Zwei der Männer steigen aus und folgen ihm.

„Sie trugen graue Regenmäntel", sagte ein Passant, als Inspektor Schilling ihm die Fotos der Männer zeigte.

Der Mann mit den beiden Zeitungen betritt das Café König, setzt sich in eine Ecke, schlägt sehr schnell eine der Zeitungen auf und versteckt sich dahinter.

„Er wirkte sehr nervös", sagte die Kellnerin.

Er bestellt einen Kaffee und einen Kognak und zahlt sofort.

„Er verschüttete die Milch, als er sie in den Kaffee goss, aber er gab mir ein sehr gutes Trinkgeld", sagte die Kellnerin weiter aus.

Die beiden Männer in den Regenmänteln betreten das Café und sehen sich um. Als sie den Mann hinter der aufgeschlagenen Herald Tribune erkennen, gehen sie hinüber und setzen sich an den Nachbartisch.

„Sie waren sehr unfreundlich und bestellten beide Mineralwasser", meinte die Kellnerin, die sie bediente.

Eine attraktive Frau, Mitte dreißig, betritt das Café, sieht sich um, lächelt, als sie den Mann mit der Zeitung sieht, wird bleich, als ihr Blick auf die beiden Männer fällt. Sie setzt sich in eine andere Ecke und beobachtet alles.

„Sie war sehr elegant gekleidet", sagte der Kellner, der an ihrem Tisch bediente.

Schließlich geht einer der Männer zu dem Mann mit der Zeitung hinüber, er beugt sich zu ihm hinunter und hinter die Zeitung. Plötzlich fällt der Mann mit der Zeitung mit dem Kopf auf den Tisch . Er bewegt sich nicht mehr. Der andere nimmt ihm den *Herald Tribune* aus der Hand, faltet sie schnell zusammen. Die ersten Leute werden unruhig, weil sie merken, dass etwas passiert ist. Die beiden Männer rennen aus dem Café, über die Königsallee und springen in den parkenden Wagen.

„Sie sind mit quietschenden Reifen davongefahren", berichtete ein Polizist, der gerade Streife ging.

Die Gäste des Cafés laufen jetzt laut schreiend durcheinander. Keiner beachtet die Frau, die zu dem Toten hinübergeht und die Süddeutsche Zeitung nimmt, sie unter den Arm steckt und schnell das Café verlässt.

„Ich erinnere mich so gut an sie, weil sie nicht bezahlt hat", sagte der Kellner.

Die Polizei ist sehr schnell da. Immer noch laufen alle Leute durcheinander, keiner kümmert sich um den Toten. Als die Polizei den Toten sehen will, ist der verschwunden.

Inspektor Schilling fragt: Was ist passiert?

A.2 Sample Recalls

First Sample Recall of Group A

A man who looked nervous jumped into a taxi. He had two newspapers. One was the Herald Tribune the other was an international newspaper. The taxidriver asked for two Euros. A dark grey mercedeez pulled up with an attractive woman and three men. They went into a café. The inspector questioned the waiter and waitress about these people. The servers told them that one sat behind a bar table reading a newpaper. The others hid their head behind a newpaper. A woman wearing a dress came in and sat at a table. Someone requested a minerlwater. Someone else ordered a doughtnut, coffee, and some ice cream. For some reason the people ran into the park and everyone was laughing. They were talking about how slow the police were. And the inspector asked "was ist passiert."

Second Sample Recall of Group A

A man gets out of a taxi and gives the driver more than two Euros. The driver said he seemed nervous. He is standing on a corner with two newspapers. An international Herald Tribune and a german newspaper. A dark grey mercedees pulls up with four people. A woman and three men are in the car. A person on the street said that the man on the corner had on a green raincoat. When he saw the mercedees he ran into a mall. He then entered a Café. The people in the car came in after him. He sat in a corner, and his waitress said he seemed nervous. He ordered a doughnut and coffee. He asked for milk to go in his coffee. Two men enter the café and sit at a bar table. "They are unfriendly and order mineral water", said the waiter. The man in the corner hides his head behind the newspaper. A woman in her thirties enters the café and sits in another corner. She has on an expensive dress. Something happens and the man in the green raincoat ran out and into the park. Guests in the café left. The waitress said the police were slow and asked a lot of questions. The inspector asked "what is passiert?"

First Sample Recall of Group B

A man gets out of a taxi, gives taxi driver a couple of bucks, and buys a newspaper – the International Herald Tribune. Then a car comes up and parks and 3 men and one woman get out and start following the man with a newspaper. These four are wearing gray raincoats. They follow the newspaper guy into a mall, or busy area with lots of shops, etc. He goes into a café and orders coffee and cognac. First, the men come in, look around, see him and sit. Then the woman does the same. The newspaper man does or puts something under the paper, but over the table. And then all of a sudden the police come and pick up the "crooks" as they jump into their car, but they can't catch the woman. Anyways, all of the story that we read seemed to be told, like it was after the fact, and the police were telling the story the way it was told to them. Like a police report.

Second Sample Recall of Group B

Ok, so this guy drives up in a taxi, pays the driver, and looks around. Then the man buys 2 newspapers: The Intl. Herald Tribune and the Southern German paper. A car drives up with 3 men and 1 woman inside. The men get out and look around the street. The first man sees them and goes into the mall. He goes into a café and sits in a corner, hiding under the Intl. Tribune. Later, when questioned, the waitress said he looked really nervous. Anyways, so the guy is sitting there and he orders coffee and cognac. The other men come in (who as a result of the Inspector showing photos to the newspaper man we know were wearing dark gray raincoats), look around, and sit at a nearby table. Then a woman comes in (beautiful, from the opinion of the waiter) and sits in another corner. Then one of the 3 "bad" men gets up and comes over to the first man's table and pulls down his newspaper – onto the table. Suddenly, the first man just falls down dead. The police come and there is chaos! In the midst of the chaos the pretty woman comes over and takes the first man's other newspaper. And then she leaves. (weird) The police catch the three men as they try to jump into their car, but they don't catch the woman. Then the inspector asks "what happened?"

Appendix B

Transcript of Group B1 discussion

Group B1
Student1(S1), Student 2 (S2), Student 3 (S3)

S3: Ich verstehe mehr oder weniger alles. So, du kannst mich fragen.

S2. Was ist der Königsallee (*mispronounced*) auf Englisch?

S3: laughing...oh.. Das weiss ich nicht. Ich glaube, vielleicht .. uh.. ein Platz

auf..uh..diese Strasse? Ich weiss nicht genau.

Long pause (probably looking at the text)

S3: Ok.

S2: Ok.

S1: Uh.. (*thinking*)

S2: Uh.. (*thinking*)

short pause

S2: was.... Was passiert in das Satze? ... Satze? (*checking accuracy of word*)

S3: Satz!

S2: Satz.

S1: Ja.

S2: Ja, in dies Satz. Die Satz.

S3: umm...

S2: Ich verstehe nicht „beobachten"

S1: Ja.

S3: Gucken. (*The student demonstrates the meaning of the verb by looking around*). Ich

beobachte den Zimmer. Das ist "beobachten".

S1 and S2 confirm understanding: Ok.

S2: So, sehen..?

S3: Ja, ich sehe alles. Das ist „beobachten"

S2: Ok.

S3: So...

S1: Was ist uh.. eine süddeutscht..süddeutsch?

S2: Ja. Süddeutsche Zeitung.

S3: Süd.. wie Nord und Süd.

S2: Ahhh…!

S3: Süddeutsch.

S2: Deutsch?

S3: Deutsch, Deutschland.

S2: Deutschland.

S3: Süd.

S2: Nord… und Süd.

S1: Ahhh.

S3: Süddeutsch.

S1: Ja.

S3: Zeitung.

S1: Zeitung.

S2 giggles

Pause

S2: I remember something about "Fotos"? Aber ich sehe ich nicht… ich sehe nicht (tried to locate the word in the text)

S3: uh…

S1(*located the word in the text and read*) : Als Inspektor Schilling ihm die Fotos der Männer ziegt.(*mispronounciation of „zeigt"*)

S2: Ah…ah…

S1 *(corrected himself)*: zeigte.

S2: Was …was passiert hier?

S3: umm. Pause… umm… another pause… Der Inspektor… Inspektor?…Inspektor Schilling (*S2: Ja*) hat jemand gefragt oder ein Bild gezeigt und die haben gesagt, um…, dass die graue Rock…Regenmantel getragt haben.

S2: So, Inspektor Schilling…?!

S3: Inspektor Schilling hat ein Bild und er zeigt zu Leute.

S2: Ja.

S3 continued: ... und jemand sagt (*S2 followed: Ja*): Ja...die ja... die tragten das.. sie tragten..

S2 interrupts: So, ein Passant antworten... Inspektor Schilling.

S3: Dass..umm...was die tragten..

S2: Ja, Ja.

S3: Das.. und es war graue Regenmantel.

S1 in the background and S2: Ja, ok.

S3: Ok? Sie jetzt weiss er das?

S2: Ja.

S3: Inspektor...?

S2: Ja.

S3: jetzt weiss er das.

Pause

S1:Was ist „schnell" auf Deutsch?

S2: Auf Englisch?

S3:uhm. Wenn man von hier bis da... schnell.

S2: Sehr schnell.

Pause

S2: Umm..umm...(*looking for something in the text*)

Ich verstehe das nicht...Plötzlich fällt der Mann mit der Zeitung mit dem Kopf auf den Tisch. Plötzlich fällt..das!

S3: "fällt" ist...(*Then he demonstrates the meaning of the verb by dropping something.*)

S2 and S1: Oh, ok.

S3: Und "plötzlich" ist: umm...nicht, nicht langsam... ummm (*demonstrates the meaning of the verb*) .. plötzlich!

S2 and S1: Ja, OK.

Pause...looking at the text, then S1 and S2 giggled

S2: Und.. was ....was ist den Toten?

S1: Ja... (*indicating that he did not understand the word either*)

S3: umm. (*Demonstrates the meaning of the word by acting*) Tot!

S1 and S2: OK

S1 (*having difficulty reading a sentence in the text then asks*): was ist passiert hier?

S2: Yeah?

S1: Ich weiss es nicht..

S3 examining the section: Oh, yeah. Die Männer ...mit Regenmantel..

S2:Ja.

S3: sitzen am Tisch da...

S1 and S2: Ja.

S3: ..und er sitzt hier mit Zeitung.

S1 and S2: Ja.

S3: Ein Mann kommt da.. (S1 and S2 following)...und ...uh...Zeitung ... uhh. Er kommt
   ..oder er geht hinter den Zeitung. Und dann nächstes Ding..nächstes Ding ist, dass er
   überfällt. Das ist alles. Er sagt nichts.. Er geht und dann... ich glaube..

S2: So, er.. So, der Mann setze im hinter die Zeitung und dann..der Mann geht und ...und
   fällt... I am so confused. Ok. Der erste Mann fällt.

S1: Ja.. Der Mann mit der Zeitung f'llt oder der Mann , der....

S2: der zweite?!

S1: Der zweite Mann in der Regenmantel... was...?

S3: uh..Ich weiss nicht. Das nicht genau auch...ich muss..uh..weisst du, was dies ist?

S1: Ich weiss es nicht.

...

S2: Was ist „Leute durcheinander"..durcheinander?

S3: Umm. Leute überall...durcheinander.. just ..überall..

laughing

S2: Ja... So,...

S3: Ich glaube, uh.. „bügt" (*mispronounciation of "beugt"*) ist uh (*then he demonstrates
   the verb*)

S2: Ah.

S3: .. hinter die Zeitung.

S2: ja.

S2: So, ist der Mann.. sclaft oder ist er...DEAD?

S3: Yeah... tot!

S2: Oh my! *(Laughing)* Oh mich!

Everyone laughs

S3: Yeah. Das ist weil... uh ...warum..tote (*refering to S2 earlier question about „den Toten")*

S2: Toten. Ja.

S3:Ja.

S2: So, was... „...keiner beachtet die Frau, die zu dem Toten hinübergeht und die Süddeutsche Zeitung nimmt".. was ist das?!

S3: Das ist..die Frau kommt, kommt rein ins Cafe, guckt rum, und dann sitzt im andere Ecke und dann nach alles.. wenn er tot ist.. *(S2: Ja)* ..und alle Leute läufen rauf und durcheinander und alles *(S2: Ja)*..uh..dann kommt sie rüber und nimmt die Süddeutsche Zeitung, die andere Zeitung. Der erste Mann hat nur die "international Tribune" *(English pronounciation)* Zeitung genommen.

S2: Ja.

S3: ... und nimmt das andere Zeitung und geht.

S2: Ok.

S3: Ja, das ist alles.

Transcript of Group B2 discussion

Group B2
Student 4 (S4), Student 5 (S5), Student 6 (S6)

(S4 reads) … So he just stands out of a taxi.. in the king something, Düsseldorf… it's like
the king's house

(S5 and S6 start trying to read on) S4 takes over and reads

S6: He and more two… trinken

S4: Yeah like over… Trinkgeld. I think that's two coins euros.

S6: (*at the same time*) Two coins yeah… euros…

(S6 to S4): You are right.

S5: Oh… oh ok…. To a taxi you mean? Or a taxi driver?

S4: He told the taxi driver that he has no more than two euros.

S5: Uh. Ok. Ok. And then…

S4: Am Kiosk and he asks… kauft (*names of the two newspaper*)

(*S4 reads on*)

S4: I don't understand that…

S5: I don't know what that means.

S4: what is that 'beobachten'? Following a signal?

S4: He bought

S5: He bought two newspapers.

S4: yeah he bought the newspapers…

S5: I don't know…is he followed?

S6: is suspicious.

S4: looks over his shoulders.

Students help each other read the next sentence
S5 starts reading; she hesitates at pronouncing, "Preis" but pronounces the word
correctly. S4 corrects her with the wrong pronunciation and she adopts his suggestion

S4: he just hears...I don't know... I just know he didn't hear... uh.

S5: Verstehen Sie alles?

S6: He doesn't hear. uh "er".. er kann hört... uh.

S4: He... that he hears something I guess! He doesn't like what he hears and that's what
he says to the man working at the „kiosk"... so... I donno

S4 reads on

S4: That's a Mercedes. Four people... I don't even think they'll fit in a Mercedes... that's
all... but uh that's life...

S5 and S6 laugh and S4 goes on reading

S4: You all understand that now?

S5: the four (*hesitating*)... yeah

S5 reads

S6 and S4 help her read "Köpassage". They agree on the wrong pronunciation

S5 reads on

S5 stops reading again. S4 helps her read "grosses" then S5 reads to the end of the
sentence

S4: Verstehen?

S5 and S6: yeah

S4 reads

S5: what's a "Regenmantel"?

S4: Regenmantel? That's a raincoat

S5 and S6: Oh... yeah ok.

S6: So, he is wearing a gray ...

S5: He is wearing a gray rain coat or... Inspector Schilling had photos of him or
something like that?

S4: " Sie trugen graue Regenmäntel " he wears..dress up ..tragen.. "Sie trugen graue
Regenmäntel" THEY wear gray raincoats.

The inspector shows him a picture of a man.

S5, S6 (now understand): Oh.

S4: "zeigte"...the two were supposed to meet, maybe?

S4: pose it out.

S5 reads on

S5: what's "dahinter" auf Englisch?

S4: "hinter" is like behind...Er muss die...uh... Café schnell gehen...

S5: Ok. Reads on...

S6) what's...uh, was ist "zahlt sofort"?

This is... he has coffee and

Silence

S5: Anyway.

S6: Salt...zahlt? What it means is, he would have salt around the glass of his Kognak. I
     don't think he would do that. That would be stupid.

S5: No... I don't know what "sofort" means.

S4: I think he is just asking what to do with the coffee.

S5: Oh. Yeah. Asking a waiter. Ok, alright

S4 reads

S5: ok... go ahead.

She reads on

S4: "beiden"!! was ist "beiden"?

Ok.

S6: the pair? Is that what he was saying?

S5: and S6: what did he say?

S4: Er sehen die Manner. He sees the man.

S5: ...in the raincoat?

S4: Ja, im Café.

S6 reads

S5: What's "erkennen"?

S6: erkennen?

S5: "aufgeschlagenen", auf Englisch?! What's "aufgeschlagenen"?

They read on

S5: Well, something about unfriendly and mineral water

S4: I guess..uh..er fragt unfreundlich…der Kellner.. uhm I think they just ordered in a rude manner.

S5: ok

What's "Mitte dreissig" ?

S6: About thirty. She's about thirty.

S5: ok comes into the café or something? ok

What's "bleich"?

S4 rereads the sentence to himself

S5: "wird bleich"? What is that?

Silence

S4: I guess she went and sat with the man… who came in with the newspaper.

S5: oh, ok. She reads on quietly.

S4 (*reads the same sentence*) she sits in another…maybe somewhere else.

S5: oh on a different one…

S6: beobachtet

S5: what is that word?

S4: "an der"?

S5: no. no…

S6: beobachtet

S5: yeah, what is it?

S4: He said … (*It was not clear for me to the researcher.*)

S5: yeah yeah

S4: she is nervous. They are all nervous

S5: ok, yeah, great. What's "gekleidet"?

S4: "sie war sehr gekleidet" she dressed well

S6: she went in nice dressing

S5: ok

S4: reads on

Appendix C

Survey Given to Students Participating in the Study

Name: _____

Age: _____

1. How many foreign languages do you speak?

2. How long have you been studying German?

3. You have just finished reading a text? How familiar were you with this type of texts?

4. You were asked to recall as many information of the text you have read as you can. Describe the difficulties you faced while doing that.

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Appendix D

Consent Form

A RESEARCH STUDY INTO BEGINNING GERMAN STUDENTS' INDIVIDUAL AND GROUP PROCESSING OF WRITTEN TEXTS

CONSENT FORM

You are invited to participate in a research project. You will be asked to dedicate two hours of your time on a specific day to participate in this study. It is hoped that this research study will determine how beginning language learners interact with written texts. In addition you will have the opportunity to gain practice in important language learning skills such as think-aloud protocols, written recalls, and group work interaction.

Participants will be asked to fill out a survey form that should reveal their educational background and their background knowledge of the text material they will be reading. You will then be asked to individually read a text of the researcher's choice. While reading the text you will try to think aloud and put your thoughts on tape. Afterwards you will write down your recall of what you have read. Half of the participants will be divided into two groups and discuss the text instead of the second reading of the text. They will then get out of the groups and write their second individual recall. It is up to the researcher to assign participants to the groups.

Your verbal consent will be included on the audiotape of the think aloud process. Tapes, transcripts and written recalls will be kept in a locked file in the department of Modern Foreign Languages and Literatures at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, after completion.

As an incentive you can earn up to three points added to your final grade in German 102. The incentive correlates with your performance on this study. The most you can earn is three points and the least is just one point.

You are free to choose not to participate in this study or to withdraw from the study at any time by notifying Ahmed Abdelrahman, a Graduate Teaching Associate of German in the Department of Modern Foreign Languages and Literatures.

Your audiotape or transcripts would be destroyed upon request. Any and all information you provide will be kept in confidence. Neither your name nor any identifying information will be used in any reports. At no time will your words be linked or traceable to you.

For any more details or questions participants can contact the researcher by email: a_abdelrahman71@yahoo.com or by phone at 974 4958.

_____

Ahmed Abdelrahman, Principal Investigator

College of Arts and Sciences
Department of Modern Languages and Literatures
701 McClung Tower

SUBJECT'S STATEMENT

This study has been explained to me and I voluntarily consent to participate in this study. I have had an opportunity to ask questions and understand that I can withdraw from this study at any time in the future without penalty. I have received a copy of this consent form. I understand that I may receive a copy of the results of this study.

Signature _____ Date _____

Appendix E

Memorandum To The Students
to invite them to participate in the study

Dear Students:

I am currently involved in an on-going research study for my MA in German here at UTK. My project is to study how beginning students learn German through reading and group work. I am looking for volunteers to participate in this study. Participants in this study will be asked to complete a simple reading activity.

Please note:
- As an incentive, you can earn up to 3% added to your final grade in 102.
- You are not expected to spend more than two hours on this study.
- The study will take place after the spring break.
- If you are interested , please contact me by the 9th of March. The sooner the better.

Here are three suggested dates and times to meet. Please indicate which of the following options is NOT suitable for you:

☐ Friday, the 30th of March between 3:00PM and 5:00PM

☐ Tuesday, the 3rd of April between 12:00PM and 2:00 PM

☐ Tuesday, the 3rd of April between 3:00PM and 5:00 PM

Please include the best way to contact you, your email and phone # in your email or on this form and return it to your instructor.

Ahmed Abdelrahman

VITA

Ahmed A. Abdelrahman was born in Cairo, Egypt on March 3, 1971. He attended elementary and preparatory school and graduated from Al-Fustat high school in Cairo in 1988. He studied German as a major at Al-Alsun College, Ain Shams University. In the summer of 1991 he was selected as one of the top five students in German to participate in a summer course at the University of Essen, Germany. In May 1992 he graduated with a Bachelor of Arts degree in German. While serving in the military in 1993 he taught elementary German at the Military Language Institute in Cairo. Between the years 1994 and 1996 he took various courses in Computer Science at The American University in Cairo. From 1994 until 1996 he was employed as a translator at the Ministry of Finance, where he translated articles and books on economics and the tax system in Germany. From 1996 until 1999 he worked for the Academy of Arts in Egypt. There he taught German as a foreign language, participated in organizing the Cairo International Festival for Experimental Theater, and translated two books from German into Arabic that were published within the 10th session of the aforementioned festival. In 1997 he started his graduate studies in German at Ain Shams University. In August 1999 he joined the graduate program in German at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville with a teaching assistantship. In April 2001 he was presented the Graduate Student Teaching Award for the academic year 2000-2001. In December 2001 he will receive a Master of Arts degree in German.