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Discourse Engagement and Second-Language Acquisition: Evidence from a Pretest–Posttest Study of Singaporean University Students

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***Abstract*—** Discourse-based instruction may connect language knowledge to meaningful communication. This manuscript illustrates a controlled pretest–posttest design for 340 Singaporean university students in Singapore, contrasting authentic-materials instruction with a control condition. To demonstrate the planned statistical analysis, a synthetic dataset of 340 observations was generated. In this illustrative dataset, discourse engagement showed a positive correlation with language score improvement and a positive association with posttest proficiency in a multiple regression adjusting for baseline proficiency and instructional condition. The sample summaries, correlation coefficients, regression estimates, and significance tests presented in the Results are simulated examples only; they are not results obtained from the study participants. Actual conclusions require analysis of the original student-level data.

***Keywords*—** discourse engagement; second-language acquisition; authentic materials; classroom interaction; pretest–posttest design; multiple regression; language proficiency.

1. INTRODUCTION

Learning a second language involves more than learning vocabulary items, grammatical patterns, or conventional sentence forms in isolation. Learners must also understand how expressions acquire meaning in situated exchanges, how speakers organize information across turns and texts, and how linguistic choices respond to audience, purpose, and social context. Discourse is therefore central to language learning: it is the context in which linguistic resources are encountered, interpreted, negotiated, and used.

Earlier work on the influence of discourse in language acquisition provides a direct point of departure for this inquiry (Egitim, 2015). Rather than treating linguistic forms as self-contained learning targets, the present study foregrounds opportunities to interpret, negotiate, and produce language in connected communicative contexts. Egitim (2017a) examines how teachers' prior language-learning experiences can be reflected in their ESL teaching approaches, providing a relevant perspective on instructional choices that shape opportunities for discourse engagement. The present study examines learner proficiency outcomes rather than teacher experience itself.

In many classrooms, however, language instruction still gives substantial attention to decontextualized examples. Such practices can support accuracy, but they may expose learners to a relatively narrow range of communicative purposes, textual structures, and socially situated choices. Authentic materials, such as interviews, news reports, podcasts, public announcements, conversations, and other texts created for real audiences, offer a potential bridge between classroom instruction and the discourse encountered beyond it. Their educational value is not simply that they are "real"; it depends on how learners engage with them, what tasks they complete, and whether exposure leads to noticing, interpretation, discussion, and production.

The choice of instructional texts is also pedagogically consequential. Egitim (2018) examined Japanese university students' perspectives on ESL materials, while Egitim and Price (2020) addressed English teachers' perspectives on ESP/EAP-related materials. Both publications offer relevant educational contexts for considering material selection and learner needs; neither is used here as evidence that the present authentic-materials intervention produced a measured effect.

This study shifts attention from learners' general perceptions of intercultural experience to the empirical relationship between discourse engagement and language acquisition. Drawing on data from 340 students, it examines language performance before and after exposure to authentic materials, incorporating a control condition to provide a basis for comparison. The analysis is organized around multiple regression rather than descriptive comparisons alone. This approach enables the association between discourse engagement

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and language outcomes to be estimated while adjusting for baseline ability and other observed differences.

Three questions guide the investigation. First, is discourse engagement positively associated with language proficiency following the instructional period? Second, do students exposed to authentic materials demonstrate different adjusted posttest outcomes from students in the control condition? Third, does the association between discourse engagement and language development remain after taking account of initial proficiency and other measured covariates? These questions deliberately distinguish the relationship among measured variables from the stronger claim that an intervention caused language acquisition.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Discourse as a setting for language development

Discourse refers to language in use across connected stretches of spoken, written, or multimodal communication. A discourse perspective examines not only formal properties of individual sentences but also coherence, cohesion, turn-taking, stance, pragmatic appropriateness, genre conventions, and the relationships between linguistic choices and social contexts. From this perspective, competence includes the ability to interpret what utterances accomplish in interaction as well as what their component forms mean.

This orientation is compatible with accounts of second-language acquisition that emphasize meaningful input and interaction. Krashen (1985) foregrounded the role of comprehensible input, while Long (1996) drew attention to interaction and negotiation in ways that may connect input, attention, and learner capacities. Schmidt (1990) further argued for the importance of awareness and noticing in learning. These perspectives do not imply that exposure alone guarantees acquisition; they suggest mechanisms through which contextualized discourse may contribute to development when learners process salient linguistic features and respond to communicative demands.

Discourse-mediated participation also requires attention to classroom interaction. Egitim (2024) investigated the relationship between language teachers' intercultural competence and oral participation in EFL classrooms from learners' perspectives. This line of inquiry underscores the importance of considering participation conditions alongside exposure to language, while keeping oral participation analytically distinct from longitudinal proficiency gain.

2.1.1. Discourse competence and language in context

The conceptual foundation for studying discourse is the distinction between knowing grammatical forms and using language appropriately in social situations. Hymes (1972) challenged exclusively grammatical definitions of competence, while Canale and Swain (1980) formalized grammatical, sociolinguistic, and strategic dimensions of communicative competence. Celce-Murcia et al. (1995) subsequently made discourse competence an explicit component of their pedagogical model, emphasizing the organization of language beyond isolated sentences. In this view, language development can be observed in learners' management of cohesive reference, thematic progression, communicative functions, and coherent interaction, rather than in sentence-level accuracy alone.

Halliday and Hasan (1976) describe cohesion through meaning-making relationships that connect clauses and stretches of text; Widdowson (1978) argues for teaching language as communication rather than only as an abstract linguistic system. Corpus-based work by Biber et al. (1998) additionally demonstrates how linguistic features vary across text types and communicative circumstances. Taken together, these approaches motivate an outcome measure that differentiates discourse-level comprehension and production from vocabulary and grammar knowledge. Bachman (1990) offers a broader assessment rationale: proficiency measures should reflect the language abilities the instructional program purports to develop.

2.2. Authentic materials and contextualized input

Authentic materials are texts or recordings originally produced to communicate with an audience outside a language-learning exercise. They can display lexical variation, natural pacing, discourse markers, implicit meanings, genre organization, and sociopragmatic expectations that simplified pedagogic materials may reduce. Gilmore (2007) reviews the potential of authenticity for foreign-language learning, while also highlighting conceptual and pedagogical complexity surrounding the term. Authenticity should thus be treated as a feature of materials and engagement, rather than as a guarantee of instructional effectiveness.

The effect of authentic materials may depend on learners' initial proficiency and the nature of the accompanying tasks. Materials that exceed learners' current comprehension can increase processing burden, whereas guided analysis, scaffolded listening or reading, discussion, and opportunities to reformulate meaning

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can help make discourse features accessible. For a robust investigation, the intervention must therefore be documented in terms of text types, exposure duration, task design, teacher support, and intended learning outcomes.

Classroom materials and their affordances should therefore be evaluated in relation to learner experience and instructional purpose, as raised in the materials-focused studies by Egitim (2018) and Egitim and Price (2020). For the current design, a comparison between authentic and instructional materials is meaningful only when the materials, associated activities, and teacher support are specified and the outcome measures are comparable across groups.

Studies of language-learning materials highlight both the promise and the limits of authentic input. Peacock (1997) found that authentic materials increased observed on-task behavior and motivation under some conditions, although learners did not uniformly rate them as more interesting. Tomlinson (2012) stresses evaluation, adaptation, and purposeful exploitation of teaching materials rather than assuming that text authenticity alone determines educational value. Nation (2001) likewise emphasizes deliberate attention to learning conditions and vocabulary knowledge, which suggests that authentic discourse should be accompanied by activities supporting comprehension, retrieval, and reuse.

Authentic-materials instruction can be operationalized through tasks that preserve a genuine communicative purpose while offering manageable demands. Ellis (2003) and Nunan (2004) place tasks and meaningful language use at the center of instructional design; Skehan (1998) highlights the cognitive demands that may constrain accuracy, complexity, and fluency. For a controlled comparison, these perspectives suggest recording task type, language demands, scaffolding, exposure time, and opportunities for feedback so that the intervention can be interpreted more precisely than a simple authentic-versus-nonauthentic label.

2.3. From exposure to discourse engagement

Exposure and engagement should not be conflated. Two students may encounter the same authentic recording but differ considerably in how they attend to its organization, infer speaker intention, notice unfamiliar forms, and reuse expressions in subsequent communication. For the present study, discourse engagement is conceptualized as the extent to which learners meaningfully analyze, interpret, negotiate, and produce contextually appropriate language in relation to texts and interactions. A scale or coded task-performance index may operationalize this construct, but its items, scoring, and reliability must be established before substantive interpretation.

Swain's (1985) output hypothesis draws attention to the potential value of learner production, including the demands of expressing meaning precisely. This supports a pedagogical rationale for activities that go beyond reading or listening to authentic material and require learners to summarize, discuss, respond, compare communicative choices, or produce genre-appropriate texts. Such engagement may be associated with language development, particularly when it creates opportunities to attend to mismatches between intended and realized meaning.

Collaborative classroom practices offer a possible route from exposure to active discourse use. Egitim (2021a) discusses collaborative leadership in English-language classrooms through leaderful practices, and Kireeti et al. (2024) examine peer evaluation as a collaborative-learning tool in English presentation classes. These works provide pedagogical reasons to distinguish learner contribution, feedback, and interaction from the simple quantity of texts encountered. They do not, however, establish the regression estimates in the illustrative study presented here.

A related institutional perspective comes from Egitim (2021b), who examines how Japanese universities responded to the abrupt transition to remote instruction during the COVID-19 pandemic through adaptive and collaborative leadership practices. Although the chapter does not directly test language acquisition, it highlights how coordinated teaching responses and flexible learning arrangements can support the conditions in which learners participate in instructional dialogue. In a discourse-based language classroom, this offers a pedagogical rationale for considering how instructors organize opportunities for interaction, especially when authentic materials are used in online or blended settings.

2.3.1. Interaction, negotiation, and corrective feedback

The interactionist perspective specifies mechanisms through which engagement with connected discourse might support language development. Pica (1994) synthesizes research on negotiation of meaning,

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including the ways conversational adjustments can facilitate understanding and modified output. Gass and Varonis (1994) examine how interaction and modified input relate to subsequent second-language production, and Mackey (1999) provides pretest–posttest evidence linking active interaction with development of English question forms. These studies offer a rationale for measuring what learners do with authentic language, not merely whether they have encountered it.

Feedback during interaction may also shape the value of discourse-based tasks. Lyster and Ranta (1997) distinguish teacher feedback moves and associated learner uptake, showing that different feedback types do not generate equivalent opportunities for student-generated repair. In a Japanese university EFL context, Sato and Lyster (2012) compared peer-interaction and feedback conditions, reporting differential outcomes for accuracy and fluency. Bardovi-Harlig (2001) further reviews the basis for explicit instruction in second-language pragmatics, supporting attention to speakers' intentions and contextually appropriate responses as meaningful instructional targets.

2.3.2. Individual differences and engagement

Discourse engagement is plausibly related to motivational and cognitive characteristics as well as to instructional exposure. Dörnyei (2005) reviews individual differences such as motivation and aptitude, raising the possibility that students who engage more intensely with discourse also differ systematically in their prior learning dispositions. Such characteristics should be considered during model specification, but only if measured adequately. Adding them retrospectively without suitable data would offer an appearance of statistical control without resolving confounding.

2.4. Research gap and analytical contribution

Classroom studies often describe learner reactions or report unadjusted pretest–posttest differences. These outcomes are useful but do not, by themselves, establish whether discourse engagement contributes information beyond learners' initial language proficiency and background characteristics. A regression framework can estimate the adjusted association between a clearly defined discourse variable and subsequent performance and can assess whether exposure to authentic materials is associated with an additional difference between comparison conditions. The present design places those distinctions at the center of the analysis.

Recent action-oriented language-education research provides additional context. Egitim and Nfor (2026) investigate global competence through an action-oriented approach in Japanese universities. The present project asks a narrower outcome question: whether discourse engagement is associated with subsequent language proficiency after adjusting for baseline performance and instructional condition. This statistical estimand should not be conflated with broader global competence.

Additional work on classroom conditions provides useful context for specifying explanatory variables. Egitim (2022) addresses language-teacher stereotypes through critical cultural competence, while Egitim (2017b) considers the role of autonomy in critical thinking. These publications highlight possible pedagogical conditions for student participation and engagement, but autonomy and critical thinking can only be used as statistical covariates if the present study measured them.

The literature therefore supports a linked but distinct set of constructs: communicative/discourse competence as the learning target (Canale & Swain, 1980; Celce-Murcia et al., 1995), authentic materials and tasks as instructional resources (Ellis, 2003; Peacock, 1997; Tomlinson, 2012), and negotiation, output, and feedback as candidate learning processes (Mackey, 1999; Pica, 1994; Sato & Lyster, 2012). The proposed regression models examine association among operationalized measures of these constructs; they cannot, without additional design features and real measurements, identify the separate causal mechanisms.

3. RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND HYPOTHESES

RQ1: To what extent is discourse engagement associated with language acquisition outcomes among the 340 students, after adjusting for baseline language proficiency?

RQ2: Is assignment to instruction using authentic materials associated with higher posttest language performance than the control condition, conditional on pretest performance?

RQ3: Does discourse engagement predict posttest performance after additional observed learner characteristics are included, and is its association different across the instructional conditions?

H1: Discourse engagement will show a positive adjusted association with posttest language proficiency

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(βdiscourse > 0). H2: Students in the authentic-materials condition will have higher adjusted posttest proficiency than students in the control condition. H3 is exploratory: the association between discourse engagement and posttest proficiency may vary by instructional condition.

4. METHOD

4.1. Research design and participants

The study comprises 340 students assessed before and after an instructional period. Participants were Singaporean university students majoring in international relations, aged 18-21 years; 201 were female and 139 were male. It is framed as a controlled pretest–posttest design with an authentic-materials condition and a comparison/control condition.

The allocation mechanism, number of participants in each condition, target language, course level, intervention duration, and completeness of repeated measurements have not been documented in the materials provided and must be reported from study records. In particular, the design should be described as randomized only if assignment was genuinely random; otherwise, it is a quasi-experimental comparison.

The term "acquisition" refers here to measured development in the assessed language domains over the study interval, not necessarily to durable, generalizable acquisition across all contexts.

A delayed assessment would be required to examine retention. All analyses report the number of students with usable matched pretest and posttest observations.

4.2. Instructional conditions

The authentic-materials condition used pedagogic activities centered on discourse produced for communicative purposes outside the language classroom. Appropriate materials may include naturally occurring conversations, interviews, audiovisual reports, and written genres; the actual texts and tasks must be specified from the intervention protocol. Instruction is expected to involve activities such as identifying discourse organization, interpreting communicative purpose, noticing pragmatics and cohesion, negotiating interpretations, and producing spoken or written responses.

The control condition provides the comparison for changes occurring over the same period. Its curricular content, teaching time, instructor, task difficulty, and assessment exposure must be described explicitly. A useful comparison keeps instructional time and learning objectives similar while varying the extent of authentic-discourse exposure. Without this information, group differences cannot confidently be attributed to the authentic materials themselves.

The intervention protocol should document whether learners analyzed cohesion and genre organization (Halliday & Hasan, 1976; Biber et al., 1998), completed meaning-focused tasks (Ellis, 2003; Nunan, 2004), negotiated meaning with peers (Pica, 1994), or responded to feedback (Lyster & Ranta, 1997). These are analytically distinguishable forms of discourse engagement and should not automatically be treated as interchangeable.

4.3. Measures

Table 1: *Operationalization of Study Constructs and Required Documentation*

Construct	Suggested operationalization	Required documentation
Language outcome	Common proficiency score at posttest; optionally separate receptive/productive measures	Instrument, scoring range, validity, rater procedures
Baseline performance	Same or equated language assessment at pretest	Equating, assessment timing
Discourse engagement	Validated scale or coded performance index assessing noticing, interpretation, interaction, and discourse production	Items, timing, interrater agreement or internal consistency
Instructional condition	Authentic materials = 1; control = 0	Allocation and group sample sizes
Covariates	Prior exposure, instructional hours, proficiency level, attendance, etc., only where actually measured	Coding, missing data and justification

The discourse-engagement variable should not be defined retrospectively solely by posttest success; that would introduce circularity. Ideally, it is measured independently during the instructional period, with

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timing and scoring specified before outcome analysis. If engagement is assessed after the intervention, interpretation should acknowledge possible reverse causation and shared-method influences.

4.4. Procedure and ethical safeguards

The design incorporates (1) baseline assessment, (2) participation in the assigned instructional condition, and (3) post-intervention assessment using comparable criteria. Instructors or evaluators should score the language outcomes without knowing group membership where feasible. The completed manuscript should report institutional ethics approval or exemption, consent procedures, confidentiality measures, and whether students could decline research participation without academic penalty. These details were not available in the uploaded document.

4.5. Data analysis

Descriptive statistics should summarize pretest scores, posttest scores, discourse engagement, and relevant background variables by condition. Preliminary analyses should inspect distributions, missingness, reliability of any multi-item engagement measure, and the comparability of the groups at baseline. Pearson correlations may describe bivariate relationships, but the primary inferential approach is multiple linear regression.

The principal specification is an ANCOVA-style regression predicting posttest proficiency, with baseline score and discourse engagement entered as continuous predictors and instructional condition as a binary predictor:

$$Posttest_i = \beta_0 + \beta_1(Pretest_i) + \beta_2(Discourse_i) + \beta_3(AuthenticCondition_i) + \Sigma\gamma_k(Covariate_{ki}) + \varepsilon_i.$$

β_2 represents the adjusted association between discourse engagement and subsequent language proficiency. β_3 represents the adjusted difference between conditions, subject to group comparability and model assumptions.

An exploratory model can add Discourse × AuthenticCondition to test whether the engagement–outcome relationship differs between conditions. Report unstandardized B estimates, standard errors, 95% confidence intervals, p values, adjusted R^2, and changes in model fit across theoretically ordered blocks. Standardized β coefficients may be added for comparability.

An additional model may predict individual change (posttest minus pretest), but this must not replace the baseline-adjusted primary model without justification. If students were nested in intact classes or instructors, standard errors should account for clustering, or a multilevel model should be considered. Check linearity, heteroscedasticity, unusual influence, residual distribution, and multicollinearity. Do not adjust for post-treatment variables as if they were ordinary baseline confounders when estimating a total intervention effect. The analyses can be implemented in jamovi or equivalent statistical software.

In addition to language scores, researchers could assess pragmatic appropriateness, discourse coherence, or interactional management with independent rating procedures justified by the relevant construct literature (Bachman, 1990; Bardovi-Harlig, 2001; Celce-Murcia et al., 1995). The current illustrative regression does not contain these additional measures, and no such outcomes are imputed.

5. RESULTS

5.1. Sample profile and preliminary results

Table 2 presents an illustrative scenario based on 340 simulated student records (170 in the authentic-materials condition and 170 in the control condition). Language scores are expressed on an illustrative 0-100 scale; discourse engagement uses an illustrative 1-5 scale. These values were generated solely to demonstrate appropriate reporting and are not observed student data.

Table 2. *Hypothetical descriptive statistics from simulated data (N = 340; not observed results).*

Measure	Authentic materials	Control	Total
Students, n	170	170	340
Pretest, M (SD)	56.11 (10.41)	55.78 (10.00)	55.94 (10.19)
Posttest, M (SD)	73.53 (10.58)	66.10 (11.21)	69.82 (11.50)
Change, M (SD)	17.41 (7.88)	10.33 (8.50)	13.87 (8.92)
Discourse engagement, M (SD)	3.25 (0.61)	2.69 (0.67)	2.97 (0.70)

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5.2. Correlation between discourse engagement and language proficiency

In the simulated example, discourse engagement correlated positively with individual language-score improvement (posttest minus pretest), r(338) = 0.395, 95% CI [0.301, 0.481], p < .001. The simulated correlation between discourse engagement and posttest proficiency was r(338) = 0.448, p < .001. Both values are examples, not estimates from the actual study.

5.3. Multiple regression analysis

Table 3 reports an illustrative ordinary least-squares regression estimated from the synthetic dataset, with posttest proficiency predicted from pretest proficiency, discourse engagement, and instructional condition. The estimates illustrate the intended positive adjusted association; they must not be cited as empirical results.

Table 3. *Hypothetical multiple regression predicting posttest proficiency (synthetic data).*

Predictor	B	SE	95% CI	p
Intercept	15.18	2.60	[10.06, 20.30]	< .001
Pretest proficiency	0.70	0.04	[0.62, 0.78]	< .001
Discourse engagement	4.38	0.63	[3.14, 5.62]	< .001
Authentic-materials condition (1 vs. 0)	4.74	0.87	[3.04, 6.44]	< .001
Other covariates	—	—	Not included	—

Illustrative model summary (synthetic data): N = 340; R^2 = 0.601; adjusted R^2 = 0.598; F(3, 336) = 168.81, p < .001. No discourse × condition interaction or additional covariates were included in this example.

Illustrative interpretation only: Controlling for baseline proficiency and instructional condition, each one-point increase in discourse engagement on the simulated 1–5 scale corresponded to a 4.38-point higher posttest score on the simulated 0–100 scale (95% CI [3.14, 5.62]). This is an adjusted association, not evidence of causation.

5.4. Comparison of change across conditions

In this illustrative dataset, the authentic-materials group showed a greater mean pretest–posttest gain than the control group (see Table 2). The adjusted condition coefficient was B = 4.74, 95% CI [3.04, 6.44] in the simulated regression. Such a contrast in the real study would require verified allocation procedures and observed scores before any inference about instructional effects.

6. DISCUSSION

6.1. Discourse engagement as an explanatory correlate

The reported positive association places discourse engagement at the center of the learning process rather than treating authentic materials as a passive instructional resource. Learners who attend to connections across utterances, interpret speaker intentions, recognize genre patterns, and respond communicatively may have more opportunities to connect form with function. This interpretation is broadly compatible with interaction- and noticing-oriented explanations of second-language learning (Long, 1996; Schmidt, 1990). The finding remains correlational unless temporal ordering and alternative explanations are sufficiently established.

This interpretation has affinities with Egitim's (2015) focus on discourse and language acquisition and with research on EFL oral participation (Egitim, 2024). However, the numerical relationship described in this manuscript is generated from simulated data and cannot be used to corroborate either prior study. Moreover, discourse participation, motivation, teacher intercultural competence, and language acquisition should be operationalized separately rather than treated as interchangeable outcomes.

Discourse engagement should not be equated with the amount of material consumed. A learner can encounter numerous texts without analyzing discourse relationships, whereas a shorter but carefully scaffolded encounter may stimulate deeper interpretation and language production. Accordingly, the study's theoretical contribution lies in treating engagement with discourse as a measurable construct that may help explain differences in subsequent performance.

The direction of the hypothetical discourse coefficient is consistent with mechanisms proposed in earlier work on negotiated input and interaction (Gass & Varonis, 1994; Mackey, 1999; Pica, 1994). Still, those studies differ in participant populations, language targets, and outcome measures; their findings should not be represented as validation of the invented numerical example. In particular, the reported correlation is an assumed

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demonstration, not a replication of any published estimate.

6.2. What the controlled pretest–posttest design can establish

The inclusion of a comparison condition strengthens the study relative to a single-group before-and-after evaluation because it creates a basis for distinguishing improvement associated with the instructional interval from changes that could have occurred in either condition. Nevertheless, a causal interpretation requires information about assignment procedures, baseline differences, attrition, instructional equivalence, and possible contamination between groups. A regression-adjusted group coefficient controls only for variables included and properly measured in the model.

If the authentic-materials condition shows an adjusted advantage, that finding would support the educational relevance of discourse-centered instruction, especially when implemented with purposeful tasks and feedback. If the group coefficient is small or uncertain while engagement remains positively associated with performance, the evidence could instead indicate that how learners interact with language matters more than the mere designation of instructional materials. Either outcome would be theoretically informative, provided it is reported without selective emphasis.

A meaningful intervention comparison must also distinguish materials, interaction, and feedback. Peacock (1997) illustrates that observed engagement and self-reported interest may not move together, while Tomlinson (2012) emphasizes how material design and classroom use mediate their pedagogical contribution. Individual differences discussed by Dörnyei (2005) are potential alternative explanations for the engagement–outcome relationship, and baseline adjustment by itself does not eliminate them.

6.3. Pedagogical implications

The pedagogical implication is not that textbook materials should be eliminated, but that instruction should connect linguistic forms with discourse functions. Teachers can use authentic exchanges to examine how participants open and close conversations, establish common ground, signal disagreement, manage coherence, and adapt expression to audience and purpose. Guided comparison between authentic examples and learner-produced discourse can further support noticing and reflection.

A discourse-sensitive instructional approach may combine authentic texts, guided interpretation, purposeful student production, and structured peer response. The pedagogical literature on leaderful English classrooms (Egitim, 2021), peer evaluation (Kireeti et al., 2024), and learner autonomy (Egitim, 2017b) offers complementary perspectives on participation and classroom support. Such approaches should be treated as possible instructional design features, not as demonstrated causal mechanisms in the present hypothetical data.

The broader design of participatory university learning is also addressed by Egitim and Boyce (2023), who use a duoethnographic perspective to explore incorporating leadership education into undergraduate courses. Their attention to reflective teaching practice, feedback, and adaptive program development is relevant to how instructors might distribute responsibility for interpretation and discussion in discourse-centered tasks. This connection is pedagogical rather than empirical evidence of language-acquisition effects: the present study would still need observed language outcomes to test those effects.

Assessment should likewise reflect the intended construct. If the pedagogical aim includes discourse competence, exclusive reliance on grammar or vocabulary items risks underrepresenting development. Complementary tasks could measure comprehension of connected texts, pragmatic interpretation, interactional responsiveness, and coherent spoken or written production. Such outcomes must nevertheless be scored reliably and separated analytically from the engagement predictor.

Where feasible, classroom tasks should connect real-world texts to negotiation of meaning, carefully timed learner production, and feedback opportunities (Ellis, 2003; Lyster & Ranta, 1997; Sato & Lyster, 2012). Text-level assessment criteria might then examine coherence, cohesive links, pragmatic appropriateness, and genre organization, complementing traditional vocabulary and grammar tests (Halliday & Hasan, 1976; Bardovi-Harlig, 2001; Bachman, 1990). Such instructional recommendations are grounded in the literature rather than in the simulated results of this manuscript.

7. LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

The numbers reported in Section 5 are explicitly simulated and serve as worked examples of tables and interpretations, not as evidence collected from 340

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students. Real participant-level scores, group sizes, measurement instruments, intervention details, and assessment procedures remain necessary before substantive statistical claims can be made.

The additional literature cited here establishes theoretical and pedagogical context, not external validation of the fabricated example statistics. In particular, findings from discourse, oral participation, materials selection, critical cultural competence, and global-competence studies cannot substitute for actual pretest–posttest data, validated measures, or a fitted regression model for the present 340-student sample.

Even after regression adjustment, nonrandom assignment and unmeasured differences in learner motivation, previous exposure, or classroom instruction may complicate causal claims. The study also needs to distinguish proficiency at the end of instruction from longer-term acquisition. A delayed posttest, carefully validated discourse-engagement measure, independent scoring of performance, and replication across proficiency levels or learning environments would clarify the durability and generality of the relationship.

Future research could also examine whether different discourse practices, such as interpretive noticing, collaborative negotiation, pragmatic inference, and extended production, make distinct contributions to language outcomes. This would move beyond an overall engagement score toward a more precise explanation of the learning processes associated with authentic discourse.

8. CONCLUSION

This manuscript provides a conceptual and analytical framework for investigating discourse engagement and second-language development in 340 students using controlled pretest-posttest comparisons. The simulated tables demonstrate how a positive discourse-learning association could appear in descriptive statistics, correlations, and multiple regression after adjustment for baseline proficiency and instructional condition. The numerical examples are hypothetical; a valid empirical conclusion must be based on the original study dataset.

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