

# **Peer interaction in the Adult English as a Foreign language classroom: Using Social Discourse to Establish Peer Relationships**

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This study examines how learners establish peer relationships over time, and mediate language learning opportunities during their interactions while working with tasks in the adult EFL classroom. Drawing from a sociocultural framework, I examined the moment-by-moment discourse to identify language-related episodes (LREs) and social discourse to establish *comity* (i.e. solidarity, support and social inquiry). Twenty-four learners (i.e. twelve pairs) participated in the study, and data were collected while they worked with five language tasks. The data comprise transcripts of audio-recorded pair talk, detailed observation notes and a series of individual interviews with the participants. Findings suggest that the development of comity between students may be a vital platform for creating more collaborative interactions that have been found more conducive to learning (Storch, 2001, 2002; Watanabe & Swain, 2007; Watanabe, 2008). This study contributes to SLA research by showing how learners create comity in their peer interactions, and how their social discourse may afford opportunities for second language development.

**Key words:** peer interaction, sociocultural theory, comity, patterns of interaction, LREs