Making meaning through mediational tools: A case study of writing development in the secondary English classroom

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1. Introduction

By March 2019, my school English department had spent three years collectively reviewing texts and pedagogy. The only area we had left to consider was our approach to teaching writing, which we had planned to address in the summer term when we were due to teach our key stage four argumentative writing scheme. However, the first UK lockdown due to the COVID-19 pandemic necessitated a quickfire curriculum evaluation, and we had to make decisions about the ensuing term within a couple of hours, considering what we could meaningfully teach in the asynchronous format and what to keep for our return. Though we did not then have a chance to explore why, we knew that we wanted to avoid teaching our key stage four argumentative writing scheme asynchronously, and the review of our writing pedagogy was put aside.

Our desire to explore writing instruction had initially been prompted by a local university's informal trail of a free writing intervention with our key stage four pupils. Some pupils felt it did not improve their writing, a criticism reflected in the arguments against writing pedagogies aimed more at developing the child, rather than developing writing (Myhill, 1999; Myhill, Jones & Lines, 2018), and in Currie and Alexander's (1998) warning that writing without intervention means pupils 'just ramble on'. However, the intervention had gone some way to addressing our key frustration with our previous approach to teaching writing, which was that it had veered towards the formulaic. When we surveyed our pupils on what good argumentative writing meant, they would explain that it followed formalised constraints, such as acronyms, and they frequently evaluated their work quantitively, considering the number of generic features they had included regardless of intended effect on a reader.

We were not alone in this frustration, as reflected in Gibbons' (2019) complaint of the sorry state national writing pedagogy due to the increasingly constrained genre approach which has led many

English teachers to see mastery of writing structures as the end, not the means to an end. This, he argues, has led to heavily teacher-directed, highly structured, assessment objective-driven writing teaching, leaving little space for pupil choice. Gibbons' concerns are further reflected in Barrs' (2019) criticism of current reductive approaches to the teaching of writing in the UK due to the national curriculum prioritising form over content and disregarding the creative and expressive aspect of writing. Barrs particularly condemns the teaching of technical accuracy in writing, arguing that standardised testing of a narrow range of specific features is an invalid means of assessing writing ability. Myhill and Wilson (2013), however, have defended the teacher-directed approach, instead criticising the risk adverse attitude of English teachers towards creativity and the need to reject 'redundant', decontextualised learning about grammar or writing skills and emphasise playful innovation and fooling around with language.

Beyond these different ideological viewpoints, national literacy data points to much writing teaching not meeting the needs of our pupils: England's Department for Education (2012) has reported that children perform less well in writing compared to other subjects, and research from the National Literacy Trust (2020) concludes that writing is weaker than reading at the end of key stage two and that this continues into secondary school. Their research on children and young people's writing during the first COVID-19 lockdown (2020) also shows that children and young people's enjoyment of writing is at almost its lowest level in a decade. This national data was also reflected in my own school's data: pupil voice surveys in 2019 told us that many of our pupils enjoyed writing far less than reading, felt less confident in writing than in reading and very rarely wrote for pleasure.

Our first post-lockdown return to school meant a return to the concerns we had put aside since those hurried hours in March. I was set to review and teach the key stage four writing scheme alongside two other teachers, and it is our discussions, debates and experimentation in developing our new writing pedagogy which formed the basis of this research. Our guiding principle was initially very

general: we wanted our pupils to be able to make meaning, as opposed to blindly reproduce strict formulas or thoughtlessly rambling on. We also wanted to explore our hunch as to why we had felt that a seemingly solo activity should take place within the dialogical context of a physical – or at least synchronous – classroom. Despite voices in the media touting the benefits of remote learning and a significant number of schools – including our own – losing pupils to home learning (Ofsted, 2020), we had felt that the monologic nature of distance learning during the first lockdown had posed a particular challenge for teaching writing. As we returned to physical classrooms, we therefore felt that the time was ripe both to renew our focus on writing and for a focus on the benefits of developing writing within a social space.

We started with four key questions when developing our new approach and these same four questions led my review of the literature:

1. What is the theoretical and/or empirical evidence for common writing pedagogies which encourage pupils to either make or write with meaning?
2. What is the role of the teacher in the writing classroom in each of these pedagogies?
3. What criticisms have been made of these writing pedagogies?
4. Which more precise guiding principles can we draw from the overview of the literature?

2. Literature Review

2.1. Making Meaning Through Personal Expression

When teachers refer to 'traditional' writing teaching, they are likely to mean the trivium-based approach that dominated English grammar school classrooms in the first half of the twentieth century (Gibbons, 2019). This approach is often seen as characterised by explicit, didactic instruction and a view of grammar as principally concerned with rules, compliance and error eradication (Myhill, Jones

& Wilson, 2016). From the depiction of Grammar holding a switch to discipline the children at her feet on the medieval Chartres Cathedral to Dickens' Thomas Gradgrind in 'Hard Times', this 'traditional' teaching method has long been associated in the Western imagination with discipline, compliance and restrictions on personal expression and meaning.

Popularised in the 1960s and 70s by American composition theorists such as Peter Elbow, Ken Macrorie & Donald Murray, expressivism offered counter approaches to these 'traditional' writing pedagogies. Interested in meaning-making as personal exploration, expressivist theorists tend to emphasise how writing classrooms should foreground pupils' authentic self-expression and authorial presence (Jeffery, 2010). Expressivists favour the notion of writing as deriving meaning from individual expression over the functionalist notion of writing as a way for writers to achieve a specific communicative purpose; they therefore tend to de-emphasise audience and the social purposes of writing. As a result of the theory's popularity during the middle sixties, a strong movement towards creative writing developed in some English schools and it was assumed that successful writing would develop from attractive stimuli and that teachers should not interfere with the free expression of the creative imagination (Britton et al., 1975). In his 1998 book 'Writing Without Teachers', Elbow suggested that writing cannot be effectively taught in the traditional sense: the role of the teacher is de-centered and learning is implicit. Instead, teachers act as facilitators in assisting pupils to make meaning by cultivating their authentic voice through exploring personally meaningful topics.

Expressivists frequently regard voice as the most important feature of writing with Elbow (1968) proposing that teachers should initially judge pupils' writing on authentic voice over cogency. Rather than teaching children formal writing structures, the expressivist's goal is to free pupils from these, so expressivist pedagogy tends to de-emphasise academic genres, 'master' texts and audience awareness. Instead, pupils write as individuals and create meaning through language in their engagement with experience. Expressivists also assume that written language learning is analogous

to oral language acquisition, believing that pupils do not require an explicit understanding of language structures to write well because we do not require one to speak well (Jeffery, 2010).

Expressivist theory is linked to two key writing pedagogies: the natural process and the process approach. Hillocks (1986) defined the natural approach as involving general objectives for writing, free writing using self-selected topics, writing for and receiving generally positive feedback from peers, opportunities to revise written work and high levels of student interactions. Having risen in popularity in the 1970s, the natural approach continues to exert an influence on contemporary writing research and professional literature. The National Literacy Trust's 2020 report on children and young people's writing, for example, argues that teachers should use writing to encourage their pupils' self-expression and that they should prioritise time for free writing in order to increase pupils' enjoyment of writing. Other recent research, such as that by McKnight (2019), rails against the ubiquity of writing structures in favour of a 'natural, organic and authentic' approach; in particular, McKnight promotes encouraging pupil autonomy and agency through having teachers skilled in facilitating pupils' 'fundamental compulsion' to write and focusing on 'feeling coming first' in any writing act.

2.2. Making Meaning Through Writing Processes

Although the two are similar, Hillocks distinguished the natural approach from the process approach by its greater emphasis on free writing and the teacher as facilitator. The process approach, on the other hand, emphasises pupils engaging in cycles of planning and how writing for meaning takes place in the context of a wider set of processes which provide an underlying structure and condition for learning (Keen, 2020).

The foundations for the process approach can be found in work of James Britton, who formulated and validated a system for categorising pupil writing (Britton et al., 1975). Britton's core notions were

children needing to write from experience and that writing was a process that should involve thought, talk, drafting, editing and redrafting. Significantly, Britton divided pupil writing into three types: expressive, transactional and poetic, and he suggested that pupils make meaning through moving from the expressive to the poetic, but that transactional writing – writing which teachers use to understand what a pupil has learned – increasingly dominates in schools as children age. Aligned to this view, Emig (1971) undertook a study of the composing processes of school children and argued that they composed in two modes: reflexive, writing concerned with personal experiences and emotions; and extensive, writing concerned with communicating information. Emig argued that school children did not have sufficient opportunities to write in a reflexive mode; likewise, Britton argued that pupils needed more expressive and poetic writing as transactional writing only developed effectively if writers also wrote expressively.

Britton et al. (1975) advocated a shift in focus in the study of writing from analysing the product to the process and divided pupil writing into three stages: conception, incubation and production. The conception stage is characterised as the writer relating his task to his own hierarchical construct system. The incubation stage is an expressive stage during which a writer defines the nature of the task, devises ways of tackling it and explains its meaning to himself. It is at this stage that the free flow of talk allows for the tentative testing of new ideas and relationships and supports self-explanation. The final production stage is the moment at which the writer is alone and writing. Britton et al. also observed the recursive nature of writing and argued that a writer will only feel prepared to let the completed writing go to a reader when he can tell that the words he has used have achieved the embodiment of his thoughts. Unlike the expressivist conception of the pupil as individual meaning maker, Britton et al. suggested that the interaction of pupils with readers, teachers, parents, other adults and other children influences and promotes the development of writing.

In America, Flower and Hayes (1981) built on Britton's work to propose a shift from the stage process model, which describes the composing process as linear, to a cognitive process model. The model identifies three major writing processes (planning, translating and reviewing) and several sub-processes. Significantly, the model is hierarchical and recursive; the process of writing is a series of optional actions, rather than a sequence of stages (Flower & Hayes, 1981). They also use the model to explain the concept of learning through the act of writing: writers may start with goals but the reciprocity between writing and planning mean that these goals can be replaced by new, more complex goals as a writer learns from his failure. The key contrast between expert and novice writers, in this view, is that experts develop complex goals for their text and generate ideas in order to satisfy these goals, but novices retrieve ideas prompted spontaneously by the topic and translate them directly into text (Galbraith, 1999). Likewise, Sommers (1980) compared experienced and neophyte writers' views on revision, concluding that experienced writers see revision as a non-linear process of discovery and take a recursive and holistic approach.

Building on Flower and Hayes's single-process model, Bereiter and Scardamalia (1987) proposed a two-process cognitive model of writing, contrasting a knowledge-telling and knowledge-transforming model. Knowledge-telling is a simpler, direct task execution model characteristic of novice writers in which ideas are retrieved from memory in response to a topic or genre and then presented in writing. By contrast, expert writers using the knowledge-transforming model to engage in a problem-solving process which involves interaction between 'content space' – what to write – and 'rhetorical space' – how to write, thus generating new ideas and goals as a result of conflicts. Bereiter and Scardamalia (1987, p.143) therefore use this knowledge-transforming process to explain why expert writers report how their understanding of what they are trying to say changes over the course of writing.

Whilst this cognitive theorising was ongoing, the work of Donald Graves contributed to the process approach that developed in the 1980s. For Graves (1983), 'process' refers to everything a writer does

from the time he first considers the topic to the moment of finishing the task. His approach centered around highly structured regular writing conferences (Graves, 1983), during which pupils generate their own topic for writing and revise their writing towards a finished product whilst the teacher acts as an editor who gives oral feedback to individual pupils. Writing is framed as a craft – a controlled process of shaping material towards an end – which demands constant revision and seeing information, words and syntax as manipulable, and teaching is also framed as a craft, a process towards helping children control their writing. As Britton (1975) observed how children only feel prepared to let go of their writing once the words satisfactorily achieved the embodiment of their thoughts, so Graves saw writing as a process towards matching the pupils' intended meaning or voice. Seeing voice as the driving force underlying the entire writing process, Graves (1983) highlighted how professional writers rewrite to make better choices until words match their 'inner 'yes' feeling'.

Graves was particularly interested in the idea of choice in writing development, defining it as 'the essence of art in writing'(Graves, 1983. For Graves, writers develop as they make choices and growth comes when problems are solved; children therefore develop as they change the problems they solve and their consciousness of what they do when they write. Despite acknowledging the 'chasm' between writing and speech, Graves implies that children can become effective problem solvers by treating writing development in a similar way to how he sees speech development, whereby children are not afraid of experimentation, errors and repetition. For teachers, the 'teaching edge' should come at the point of pupils wrestling between intentions and problems at hand, where pupils are most consciously aware of what they need to solve to satisfy their intentions. Graves argued that children need to learn to read their own writing and the writing of others through experience and through working with someone who will expand their vision through questions and responses to work in progress. Once children learn to draft, they have taken control of the writing process because they adapt their writing to find out what they mean for themselves about the topic (Graves, 1983).

The process approach continues to exert significant influence over writing classrooms and research in Britain (Graham & Sandmel, 2011). The UK National Curriculum, for example, requires pupils to be taught to plan and draft their compositional work (DofE, 2014) and the Education Endowment Fund (2019) recommends the explicit teaching of planning strategies so that pupils become fluent in as many of the processes involved in writing as possible. John Keen's study of the Process Writing Project shows how process-based writing schemes enable pupils to write more effectively and sometimes discover what they want to say through the process of composition (Keen, 2020). The project, carried out with mainstream secondary school classes, planned schemes on the basis that writing tasks should be anchored in pupils' own experiences and ideas, and pupils then composed texts by using and developing procedural knowledge of learning in a recursive process of drafting and revision. The research concluded that procedural knowledge underlines most writing development and that writing tasks should allow pupils to both draw on existing procedural knowledge and push their forms of expression towards further staging points in their development as writers. By engaging in recursive processes, the relationship between thinking and writing becomes dialectical as what has been written influences the writer's thoughts and the pupil experiences the same kind of discovering processes that more practised writers report. Keen also emphasises the need for teachers to enable pupils to evaluate and respond to the meanings of texts they read in order that they can read their own texts as if they were someone else's.

In a meta-analysis of 29 experimental and quasi-experimental studies on the effectiveness of the process approach (Graham & Sandmel, 2011) the results were more mixed. The review acknowledged the lack of a single definition of the process approach so focused on studies in which common features of the approach were explored. For pupils in general education classes, process writing instruction resulted in a statistically significant, but relatively modest improvement in the overall quality of writing (average weighted effect size of 0.34). However, the process writing approach neither resulted

in a statistically significant improvement in pupils' motivation nor enhanced the quality of struggling writers' compositions. The researchers considered that it was possible that the approach was not effective with these pupils as they need a greater focus on basic text transcription and sentence construction skills and strategies for planning and revising. The meta-analysis therefore concluded that they would advocate using the approach alongside other effective writing practices, such as increasing the amount of explicit and systematic instruction.

The approach has also received more explicit criticism. Myhill (1999) has argued against its decentering of the teacher and commented that it focuses on development of the child, rather than development of the child's writing. Myhill and Wilson (2013) also found evidence of teachers nervous of evaluation and placing creativity in 'a kind of judgement-free limbo', and she argued that this had led to teachers inculcating pupils in a school version of creative language, divorced from 'real-word evaluations, tensions and constraints that writers need'. Martin (1985) has also criticised the approach due to teachers' reluctance to intervene constructively during conferencing, arguing that this mystifies what children must learn to develop their writing and privileges active, bright middle-class children who have already inculcated many of the written discourses valued in school. Others have pointed out that there has been very little robust research into the efficacy of the process approach (Cremin & Myhill, 2013), citing the fact that only classroom observation, success stories or very small-scale projects are reported.

2.3. Making Meaning Through Appropriation: The Genre Approach

As the process approach developed in Britain in the 1980s, the genre approach emerged from the work of Australian genre theorists (Kress, 1982; Martin and Rothery, 1986; Derewianka, 1996). The approach emerged in a series of large-scale action-research projects which looked at how schools can more effectively redistribute the semiotic resources of contemporary culture to democratise the

outcomes of education (MacArthur, Graham & Fitzgerald, 2017). The research projects drew on the model of text-in-context developed within systemic functional linguistic (SFL) theory (Halliday, 1978; Swales, 1990; Hyland, 2003) and the model of pedagogic contexts developed in the sociological theory of Bernstein (MacArthur, Graham & Fitzgerald, 2016). The research applied the SFL model to describe the systems of knowledge genres that students are expected to read and write in school. It also applied Bernstein's (2003) theory of pedagogic discourse to describe the curriculum genres through which control of the written genres of schooling is acquired and evaluated.

For Halliday and proponents of SFL, human learning is a process of making meaning; it is a semiotic process whose prototypical form is language (Halliday, 1993); language learning is therefore a social process of learning to mean. This view of language as social semiotic underlies Halliday's educational linguistics: the process of learning involves participation in acts of meaning as learners build awareness of types of discourse with a focus on texts or genres in social contexts (Peter Mickan, 2019). SFL is therefore a text-based pedagogy as it means that learning to use lexicogrammatical resources is a process of socialisation which depends on pupils' engagement with texts. By observing the features of selected text types and responding to the content of texts, pupils are prepared to express meaning in their own texts.

The first stage of research into the genre approach, with projects such as the 'Writing Project' (Martin & Rothery, 1980) and 'Language and Social Power' (Callaghan et al., 1988), aimed at designing an explicit pedagogy for teaching writing in primary schools. The next phrase, 'Write it Right' (Rothery, 1994), explored relationships between writing and knowledge in secondary schools and workplaces. The third phrase included the 'Reading to Learn' (Rose & Martin, 2012) programme, which promotes using texts to teach reading and writing skills, and the 'DISKS (Disciplinarity, Knowledge and Schooling)' project (Maton, 2013). These research projects informed an umbrella approach termed the Teaching and Learning Cycle (TLC) (Derewianka & Jones, 2016; Humphrey & Feez, 2016;

Humphrey, 2017), which scaffolds pupils' learning about language and meaning in texts. Rather than personal growth, the approach promotes explicit teaching of the characteristics of a range of genres through the use of model – or mentor – texts as mediational tools. Through explicit learning about the features of genres, writers can imitate those genres more effectively and appropriate their characteristics (Myhill, 1999). Within this approach, the research focus shifts from cognitive accounts of learning to write to pupils gaining knowledge of genre conventions within a structured social setting (Thompson & Wittek, 2016). By the mid-1990s, Britain's New Labour Literacy Strategy strongly advocated this genre pedagogy, placing greater emphasis on non-fiction writing and on pupils identifying the generic features of different text types and reproducing these features through modelling and guided writing (Gibbons, 2019).

Genre-based pedagogies have been criticised for promoting formulaic responses (Freedman & Medway, 1994) yet have been popularised to the point that highly structured approaches 'have been seen to be necessary' (Gibbons, 2019). Gibbons bemoans this influence, arguing that the national writing pedagogy is in a 'sorry state' and 'increasingly constrained, stifling and overly structured' due to the genre approach. Gibbons points to his interviews with English teachers in England in which he found systemic evidence of the dominance of structures governing pupils' writing, to the extent that, in the words of one teacher, 'often the teaching of English becomes reduced to doing paragraphs or Epi paragraphs or Peel Link paragraphs or whatever' (Marshall et al., 2018). Gibbons concludes that, for many English teachers, mastery of the writing structures has become the end, rather than the means to an end, and that the heavily teacher-directed, highly structured, assessment objective-driven writing teaching has left little space for pupil choice.

2.4. Making Meaning Through Appropriation: Metalinguistic Awareness

The genre approach has also received criticism from the other end of the ideological spectrum with Myhill (1999) arguing that the specificity of the genre theorists' analysis has been lost in the gap between theory and practice. Myhill notes how teachers make much wider use of general descriptions of structures and, despite the approach's grounding in Halliday's research, she argues that explicit teaching of linguistic characteristics of genres, as advocated by systemic functional linguistics, is rare outside of the English language A level classroom. This lack of focus on what pupils can *do* to be successful in their writing and what they need to *know* in terms of linguistic characteristics or accuracy is, for Myhill, a crucial problem with both process and genre approaches to writing. She cites the evidence of pupils' writing attainment in national testing lagging behind their attainments in reading and oracy as evidence that neither the process nor genre approaches are successful and argues that greater precision in describing writing will promote better teaching and learning. In support of this, Myhill cites a 1998 research project by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority into what discriminated an A grade writer at GCSE from a C or F grade writer. The research found specific linguistic features contributed a higher grade, such as considerable elaboration and expansion around the finite verbs and fewer sentences per 100 words.

In later research, Myhill, Jones and Wilson (2016) have termed this precision in describing writing 'metalinguistic awareness', a subset of metacognition which can allow pupils to 'take ownership of metalinguistic decision-making when writing'. They staunchly distinguish metalinguistic awareness from traditionalist views of grammar, citing Carter and McCarthy's (2006) distinction between grammar of structure, whereby language is organised as a system, and grammar of choice, whereby grammar choices make meaning. The grammar of structure is seen as automated or implicit choices while the grammar of choice is explicit rhetorical strategies, and metalinguistic understanding is more concerned with this explicit decision-making than with writing fluency or system mastery. As pupils develop their metalinguistic awareness, they develop their ability to look at words, sentences and

texts and make choices or talk about how they are working in the text (Cremin & Myhill, 2012). The framework therefore adopts a meaning-orientated theorisation of grammar (Myhill & Newman, 2016), drawing on Halliday's principle of learning language as learning how to mean (Halliday & Mattiessen, 2004). Unlike proponents of the process approach, the metalinguistic awareness approach argues that pupils shape text not only to satisfy their own authorial intentions, but to show attentiveness to the needs of the implied reader and the socially shaped expectations of the genre. Teaching grammatical choice not only helps pupils understand the choices that expert writers make in their texts but allows them to understand the repertoire of choices available to them for deliberate structuring and authorial decision-making (Myhill, 2021).

Unlike within a process approach, proponents of the metalinguistic awareness approach argue that most children need explicit teaching of how linguistic choices in writing alter how the text shapes meaning (Myhill, Jones & Wilson, 2016). To support this, Myhill has pointed towards theoretical and empirical evidence which suggests that teaching the knowledge and skills needed to use writing processes – rather than just the processes themselves – gives pupils independent and continued access to such strategies (Myhill, 2008). Unlike talking, writing is seen as a deliberate activity which has to be learned (Cremin & Myhill, 2012). Rather than being facilitators, teachers are therefore centerised as powerful mediators and dominant co-authors as they develop their pupils' metalinguistic understanding through dialogic conversations in order that pupils make 'writerly' decisions. Due to this, teachers' own pedagogical and subject knowledge influences how they teach writing, and the limitations of their grammatical knowledge mediate their pedagogical actions (Myhill, Jones & Wilson, 2016). Myhill et al. (2013), for example, found that the most effective teachers in their study had sufficient metalinguistic knowledge themselves to encourage active discussion about the repertoire of writing choices and could make meaningful connections between grammar and writing for their pupils. Other research has focused on how teachers can encourage pupils to deepen

their consciousness about writing through discursive interaction and setting metawriting tasks (Barbeiro, 2011). Building on Graves' view for the need for teachers to be writers (1983), the metalinguistic awareness approach promotes teachers writing in classrooms and seeing themselves as writers. Alongside how this can create reciprocal writing communities, practice in writing as a fellow artist in the classroom develops teachers' 'insider knowledge' of the writing process, bringing implicit knowledge to conscious awareness (Cremin & Myhill, 2012).

The approach is not without its opponents, and Barrs (2019) has particularly criticised Myhill's study of linguistic features of different grade levels of writing in GCSE English, arguing that direct teaching of particular linguistic features is less impactful than substantial and extended experience of reading and writing. Barrshighlights the persistent focus on form over content in the teaching of writing and criticises the problematic 'disregard' for the creative and expressive aspects of English and writing, going so far as to say that 'Teachers are implementing a curriculum which is built on a reductive, ideological and pedestrian view of literacy and they know it.' Despite Barrs' indication of otherwise, however, proponents of the metalinguistic awareness approach stress that pupil writing is not only mediated through teachers, but through texts (Myhill et al., 2013). Pupils are not taught to learn grammar, but to consider and discuss grammatical constructions in texts in order to reinforce the importance of context. This helps pupils understand the different effects that different structures can create and the creative possibilities open to a writer, developing the concept of writing as a craft (Myhill et al., 2013).

The approach draws upon Aristotle's theory of art as imitation, or mimesis, and his argument that it is intrinsic to human nature to be imitative and learn through imitation (Aristotle, 1996). Whilst the genre movement promoted using whole texts as scaffolds for pupils to imitate structural and generic features, the metalinguistic awareness approach promotes imitation at sentence or phrase level (Myhill et al., 2013), with pupils thereby internalising new structures cognitively within their writing

repertoires. Pupils are encouraged to 'fool around' with the language of texts and engage in linguistic playfulness (Myhill et al., 2013) with examples and patterns alongside using grammatical metalanguage. Pupils therefore develop an apprentice relationship with great authors (Ehrenworth, 2003) whereby they gradually learn to use their grammatical tools by analysing their use by experts and having structured opportunities to imitate the use of these tools (Paraskevas (2006).

Alongside Aristotle, these ideas are grounded in the theories of Bakhtin, particularly his notion of heteroglossia, or multivoicedness, which focuses on how developing writers learn to use resources in the language to move from a position of monoglossia to heteroglossia. The notion suggests that speakers make meaning through appropriating the words of others to their own semantic and expressive intention (Bakhtin, 1981). Bakhtin therefore argues that text is dialogic and intertextual; it incorporates the voices of previous language users and text creators in an on-going chain of meaning (Jesson & Rosedale, 2016). Bakhtin's ideas are commonly described as 'dialogism' (Holquist, 2002) and, although his analysis is primarily literary, Bakhtin applies the concept of dialogue to the idea of meaning making, describing how dialogic relationships permeate all human speech and everything that has meaning and significance (Bakhtin, 1984). From the perspective of dialogism, pupils as writers position themselves in dialogic connection to their audience and draw from other texts through negotiation and appropriation of the voices in these texts; learning to write is learning to participate in a dialogue (Jesson, Fontich & Myhill, 2016), and a pupil's essay is never just the pupil's own words and ideas (Bakhtin, 1981; Olsen et al., 2018).

2.5. Making Meaning Through Talk

The term 'dialogic pedagogy' builds on this concept and refers to the importance of dialogue for effective teaching and learning (Thompson, Wittek, Line, 2016). Beyond expert texts, a range of voices become relevant for developing pupils' writing skill (Jesson, Rosedale, 2016) and the voices of texts,

of the teacher and of other students are sources of dialogue which can support instruction. Kamberelis and Scott (1992) illustrated this in a study of children's writing by 'excavating' each utterance in pupils' texts for the other voices within the utterance, drawing on classroom and community observation and interviews with other pupils, parents, friends and teachers. Similarly, Olsen et al. (2018), offered an intertextual analysis of pupils' writing in classrooms and their data indicated intertextual traces in pupils' essays with patterns of resonances in themes. The research suggested that the pupils in the classroom were conversing with one another as they wrote and that conversations continue into their writing; the words were two-sided acts of pupils' social participation and cultural and historical traces. From a dialogical perspective, learning is not located purely in an individual cognitive process but in contextual social activity or the combination between self and other (Thompson, 2016).

This dialogic pedagogy draws on Vygotsky's view that a child's cognitive development requires it to engage through spoken language with adults, other children and the wider culture (Vygotsky, 2012), all of whom take on the role of scaffolds to learning (Bruner & Haste, 1987). As more knowledgeable others, they bridge the zone of proximal development, the gap between the child's existing knowledge and ways of solving problems unaided and the understanding which can be attained only with the guidance of a teacher or a more capable peer (Vygotsky, 2012). Vygotksy argues that 'the only good kind of instruction is that which marches ahead of development and leads it; it must be aimed not so much at the ripe as at the ripening functions' (Vygotsky, 2012, p.200), which again challenges the approach of the teacher as facilitator as learning requires intervention and support by others.

Beyond generalised comments on collaboration and direction, Vygotsky did not specify specific forms of social assistance to leaners (Moll, 1990). For Alexander (2004), the principal means by which teachers can constructively intervene is through talk, and he identifies dialectic as the essential

element that distinguishes dialogic from mainstream oral teaching. He determines that many teachers draw on a repertoire of three kinds of talk: rote, recitation and instruction/exposition and, more rarely, two types of talk which are likely to meet the criteria of dialogic teaching, discussion and scaffolded dialogue. Teachers use dialogic means to probe children's understanding, discover how to take this understanding forward and to scaffold how that further understanding might be secured. In an EEF-funded study (Alexander, 2018), an iteration of the dialogic teaching framework was subjected to a randomised control trial, and it was reported that after a 20-week dialogic teaching programme pupils in the intervention group were up to two months ahead of their control group peers in standardised tests of English, maths and science.

Alexander's overview of dialogic talk draws on the work of Neil Mercer and his identification of three different types of talk: disputational, characterised by an unwillingness to take on the other person's point of view, cumulative, in which speakers build on each other's contributions, and exploratory, in which partners engage critically but constructively with each other's ideas to come to a joint conclusion (Mercer, 2000). Mercer's idea of exploratory talk (following Barnes & Todd, 1977), draws on Vygotsky's model of individual development which stresses the way in which higher mental functions internalise external sources (Vygotksy, 1997) and how an individual's ability to perform cognitive tasks stems from a prior socialisation process. Mercer and others (Mercer, Wegerif and Dawes, 1999) have combined a dialogical view of reasoning with a neo-Vygotskian view of development to argue that learning to reason is induction in a social practice and that exploratory talk mimics this as it makes joint reasoning explicit. Studies of Collaborative Reasoning (CR) (Reznitskaya et al., 2001) have also found it to have benefits for writing, such as essays for CR groups containing significantly greater numbers of features of successful arguments than control groups, and they support the premise that oral argumentation develops individual thinking through socialisation of valued reasoning processes.

The concern for the facilitating capacity of teachers' talk in the context of teaching writing draws on these theories of talk as a socially constructed tool for meaning-making (Myhill & Newman, 2016), particularly Vygotsky's belief that moving from thought to written language requires 'deliberate semantics — deliberate structuring of the web of meaning' (Vygotsyky, 2012, p.273). Myhill and Newman have drawn attention to Vygotsky's repetition of 'deliberate', taking it to signal the primacy of explicitness and, by extension, of metalinguistic understanding in writing development. For the proponents of metalinguistic awareness as predicate to writing development, dialogic teaching within a writing classroom is characterised by a teacher sustaining and extending conversations about writing which support pupils' metalinguistic learning about writing and language choices (Myhill, Jones & Wilson, 2016). 'Metatalk', the verbalisation of metalinguistic thinking about linguistic choices in writing and how they realise the writer's authorial intention, is seen to enable the transfer of learning about grammatical choice into pupils' own writing (Myhill, Newman, Watson, 2020).

Myhill and Newman (2016) cite a range of empirical studies which explore metatalk as a pedagogical tool, whereby pupils are encouraged to verbalise metalinguistic knowledge and levels of thinking are revealed through that verbalisation (Swain, 1998; Qi and Lapkin, 2001; Storch, 2008; Ishikawa, 2015; Schaeffer-Lacroix, 2016). These studies were found to suggest that activities which generate metatalk can foster language learning and that metatalk is important pedagogically in allowing teachers to understand what pupils are learning (Myhill & Newman, 2016). In their own study, Myhill and Newman explored how teachers' orchestration of metatalk supports learners' ability to engage in metalinguistic discussion about writing and the role of a dialogic pedagogy in securing high-quality writing talk and writerly decision-making. Having been mentored in paying attention to grammatical choices and metatalk, teachers were found to frame pupils' capacity to think metalinguistically and to create dialogic spaces for metatalk through the adoption of more open dialogic discourse roles (Myhill & Newman, 2016). Dysthe (1996) also argues for the use of dialogic pedagogy and identifies

the significant role of the teacher in encouraging dialogue around pupils' writing, resulting in a development of pupil thinking and reflection.

Alexander's original concept of the three types of talk was born out of a criticism that talk is not highly valued in English classrooms, yet he has now iterated that there remains a gap between research and practice (Alexander, 2020). In synthesising evidence from studies undertaken in British and American classrooms, he reports on the rarity of true dialogic pedagogy: interactions are brief, controlled by the teacher and there is little thinking time or time for speculation and thinking aloud (Alexander, 2020). Similarly, studies of patterns of classroom talk frequently report that they are not generative chains of meaning making characteristic of dialogue, but teacher led discussions characterised by typical initiation, response and feedback/evaluation (IRE) sequences (Jesson & Rosedale, 2016). Jesson and Rosedale's analysis suggests that teachers use texts as exemplars but the classroom dialogue around the text is led by the teacher, with few opportunities for discussion, meaning that the author's craft remains tacit and direct teaching is done separately to textual exemplars. On the other hand, Lefstein and Segal (2016) criticise the idealistic nature of some research on dialogic pedagogy, pointing to how it overlooks the realities of classrooms and school contexts.

2.6. Making Meaning Through Mediational Tools

The research advocating metatalk as part of a dialogic writing pedagogy primarily focuses on teachers' discussions with pupils. Other researchers, however, have focused on broader social interactions within the learning process, reflecting Britton's assertion that writing takes place 'afloat a sea of talk' between pupils as well as between a pupil and teacher (Britton, 1970). Haas Dyson (1987), for example, analysed primary pupils' spontaneous talk whilst writing stories and concluded that social talk can be a catalyst for intellectual growth and that writing should by supported by interactive experiences. Focusing on secondary-age pupils, Thompson (2013) has explored the immediate culture

of teaching and learning and its effects on pupils' writing abilities. Through analysing video data, Thompson explored a pupil's progression through the phases of his ZPD and how he appropriated the psychological and physical tools of writing as he exerted his own agency on his learning environment. This pupil completed a collaborative writing task with the teacher-researcher acting as co-constructor, but Thompson cites Vygotsky's notion of there being several potential layers of assisted performance that may develop a pupil and that different pupils require different types and amounts of assistance. These means of assisting performance, or mediational tools, may take a variety of forms, such as direct instruction, feedback, questioning, peer collaboration or scaffolding, but all allow for negotiation of shared meaning with the learner through collaborative activity. Vanderburg (2006) also pointed to the shared focus on how teachers could use a range of forms of scaffolding to aid pupils' writing development, such as peer tutoring, teacher-developed writing guides, pupil write alouds in peer groups and peer writing monitors.

Thompson, like Myhill, cites Vygotsky's concept of writing as the deliberate structuring of the web of meaning (Thompson, 2013, 2016), but he interprets this as a writer appropriating a written sign system as a cultural and psychological tool and then attempting to externalise this in a written text to be read by others. This view means that writing development involves interaction not only with culturally developed tools of language but also with a variety of dialogue partners, whether these be physically present co-authors, generalised others based on modes of thinking, or speech genres and social languages (Thompson, 2016). To facilitate development, this interaction takes the form of recontextualisation as pupils both incorporate some aspects of meaning from other sources/contexts but also develop new meanings. Learning to write effectively is thus dependent on the degree to which students recontextualise the mediational tools they interact with during the writing process (Thompson, 2016). To explore how actions related to writing formed mediational tools for development, Thompson observed a collaborative writing task and established three critical incidents

that facilitated productive collaborative work: students responding dialogically to teacher instruction, cumulative interaction leading to disputation, and recontextualisation through exploratory collaborative composition. The empirical dataset illustrated both the variety of interactions involved in the collaborative writing task and how such activities can develop sense making and consciousness as pupils make their own thinking visible and therefore develop understanding about the relationship between thought and language.

3. Guiding Principles of the Research

Having reviewed the literature, my collaborative partners within my school English department and I outlined our key principles for our writing pedagogy. With our primary focus of writing development as making *meaning*, we drew primarily on dialogism and Vygotksy's theory of learning through social interaction; however, we also focused on the explicit choices needed for our pupil writers to actively *make* meaning, as opposed to just expressing it. We therefore drew on research underpinned both by Hallidayan functional linguistics and the concept of writing development as a recursive crafting process:

Principle 1: Writing is a social and cultural practice rather than a technical skill (Thompson, 2012) and writing development is a process of socialisation whereby pupils learn to mean; learning to write is learning to participate in a dialogue (Jesson, Fontich, Myhill, 2016).

Principle 2: Pupils develop their writing by progressing through their zone of proximal development through mediated activity (Thompson, 2012). Any dialogue partner – whether a teacher, peer or text – can act as a mediational tool (Thompson, 2016).

Principle 3: Texts are dialogic, and pupils develop their writing through recontextualising textual fragments from different places and voices. Learning to write involves reworking the language of

others for one's own use and thereby taking increasing ownership over one's own language (Jesson, Fontich, Myhill, 2016).

Principle 4: Written language requires 'deliberate structuring of the web of meaning' (Vygotsky, 2012, p.273), and pupils develop their writing through metatalk as this reveals their intentionality and ability to make conscious choices to reduce discrepancies between words and syntax and intended meaning (Myhill & Newman, 2016). It is possible for pupils to develop this intentionality through everyday language and without the use of grammatical terminology (Myhill & Newman, 2016).

Principle 5: Writing is a process that should involve talk, drafting, editing and redrafting (Britton et al., 1975), and children learn to control the writing process and make meaning through problem solving as they shape words and syntax towards a rhetorical goal (Graves, 1983; Bereiter and Scardamalia, 1987). This process, however, is recursive and a series of optional actions, rather than distinct stages (Flower & Hayes, 1981) and the process may look different for novice and expert writers (Bereiter and Scardamalia, 1987).

We therefore refined our core aim of the project from developing our pupils' writing to developing our pupils' deliberate meaning making. We then drew on a range of principles and supporting research to develop a practical pedagogy which might allow us to achieve this aim and decided upon 'assisting pupils' performance through mediational tools'. The research questions for the project were therefore designed to explore how the core mediational tools we would make available impacted pupils' meaning making, thereby assisting their performance:

Research Question 1: Does the use of an intertextual recontextualisation activity promote pupils' deliberate meaning making during the act of writing?

Research Question 2: Does the use of a collaborative writing activity promote pupils' deliberate meaning making during the act of writing?

Research Question 3: Does the use of mediational tools promote pupils' awareness of deliberate meaning making when reflecting on writing?

4. Methodology

The case study presented here is drawn from talk data of four Year 11 English lessons that I taught in a comprehensive girls' academy in 2020. The academy was a state inner London secondary academy of largely Afro-Caribbean and South Asian intake with examination results above the national average. The academy had 861 pupils aged between 11 and 19.

A case study format was chosen to allow for an explanatory approach (Yin, 2018), enabling a consideration of not only whether the intervention promoted meaning making, but how this came about. Rather than evaluating the success of the writing outcome, the format allowed for an in-depth empirical inquiry into the pupils' writing processes as contemporary phenomena within the real-world context of our classroom (Yin, 2018). Given Yin's recommendation that case study research benefits from prior development of theoretical propositions to guide design, data collection and analysis (2018, p.15), the data collection was undertaken only once we had developed our guiding principles and framework for analysis.

4.1. The Intervention

The research focused on a data set involving five pairs of pupils across two classes and the analysis concentrates on the communicative activity of these pupils as they negotiate and construct a non-fiction written text through paired collaboration and intertextual recontextualisation. We chose these specific mediational tools in order that the pupils were exposed to different dialogic partners – both peers and texts. Due to the restrictions on teacher and pupil movement around classrooms during the pandemic, it was not possible for pupils to work in groups and teachers could only offer limited one-to-one support to mitigate close contact.

The devised tasks for the classes involved pairs constructing arguments in response to a provocative statement on government spending on foreign aid, the aim of education, the use of robots, or the value of fashion. The writing sequences took place over the course of forty minutes each and in four separate lessons. I had planned to record each pair over two separate lessons and for them to complete one collaborative writing activity and one collaborative writing activity in which they were provided with a relevant opinion article which they could use for recontextualisation. The pupils were also given a mini whiteboard to draft sentences before writing them into their exercise book and were told that they could either both write their article down or one pupil could choose to be the sole writer. Due to restrictions on pupil movement during the COVID-19 pandemic, the pupils were seated according to school-wide seating plans. I collected the first data set of three pairs completing the collaborative task and two pairs completing the collaborative recontextualisation task in the final week of the autumn term; I was unable to obtain the second half of the data set due to the third English COVID-19 lockdown.

4.2. The Participants

The pupils involved were the members of two Year 11 classes (aged 15–16) in an all-girls' comprehensive academy in inner London. The two classes were a 'top' and a 'nurture' set, and the pupils ranged significantly in their prior-attainment levels. The case study presented here is drawn from talk data of four pairs of pupils from these classes. To preserve the pupils' anonymity, I refer to them throughout the case study as the following:

Pair 1: Alicia and Amy

Pair 2: Binta and Beverly

Pair 3: Caira and Carmel

Pair 4: Danielle and Diana

Pair 5: Caira and Eri

All pupils, bar Danielle, spoke English as an additional language, and all pupils were of Afro-Caribbean or South Asian heritage.

Alicia, Amy, Binta and Beverly were from the 'top' set and all fluent in English. Alicia was a particularly confident and high prior attaining pupil who regularly wrote for pleasure at home. Amy and Binta were much quieter orally but confident writers. Beverly was a gregarious pupil who lacked confidence in her written work and often rushed her responses.

Caira, Carmel, Danielle, Diana and Eri were from the smaller 'nurture' set and all of them, bar Danielle, had moved from African countries to London at the start of their secondary schooling and had previously received school-based support for their English language learning. Caira, Carmel and Eri were confident students who took pride in their writing and ability to develop ideas orally but who struggled to transform these ideas into written form and relied heavily on support from teachers. Eri particularly disliked collaborative tasks and preferred to work independently but with significant teacher support. Danielle was a confident pupil who wrote quickly and with ease but rarely re-drafted and re-read her written work whilst Diana was an exceptionally quiet and low-prior attaining pupil with little confidence and who rarely spoke or wrote in lessons.

Due to limitations placed on movement during the pandemic, all pairs of pupils had been seated together for the entirety of the term and usually had a good working relationship with each other.

4.3. Collaborators

A significant aspect of this research project was collaboration with my English department colleagues. In a format which followed the intervention itself, we jointly planned our approach before presenting

our guiding principles and planned activities to our fellow colleagues. Our development sequence involved us working within a shared ZPD; each teacher had slightly different area of expertise and, at various points, we each acted developmentally as more knowledgeable others for our fellow colleagues. One of the teachers, Lucy, was the school's literacy coordinator; another, Caroline, was the head of key stage three, and I was the English Lead Practitioner and had more experience in teaching both our lowest and highest prior attaining pupils. We therefore drew on our shared knowledge and experience of not only teaching argumentative writing for the GCSE English language course, but of our pedagogy and pedagogical content knowledge for writing across key stages and ability groupings.

Having developed our writing pedagogy's guiding principles, we collectively designed writing tasks in line with these. Our plan had been for me to complete my initial study of these tasks in action with my Year 11 classes and for them to later implement and observe in action the same principles with key stage three classes. Due to the third lockdown, however, we had to abandon any further form of data collection. Therefore, using only my Year 11 data, I plan to share the findings of my study with both these teachers and my other colleagues in the English department in order that we might explore the use of our writing pedagogy across our curriculum.

4.4. Ethical Issues

Prior to work commencing on the research project, ethical approval was obtained from the Central University Research Ethics Committee. As part of this process, I also obtained the formal consent of my school's principal.

All pupils were informed of the research due to take place and were provided with an information sheet outlining what to expect if they agreed to participate in a recording. The information sheet outlined the background and aims of the study and made clear the following:

- The process and nature of the research.
- That all pupils would receive the intervention but that pairs could voluntarily agree to be recorded.
- That the participants had the right to withdraw their recording at any stage.
- That research and personal data would be stored confidentially on the school system and that this data would be destroyed soon after the write up of this study.
- That their identities would be protected by referring to them by pseudonyms.

The most significant ethical issue which could have influenced this research project was the presence of power between myself as a teacher-researcher and my pupil participants. Whilst some of the pairs of pupils actively asked to be recorded, I asked others if they would be happy to participate and there was the risk that they may have felt obliged to agree. To address this, I explicitly asked pupils once they had been recorded whether they gave consent for me to listen to the recording; the pupils also had the option to turn off the recorder at any time throughout the task, though none of them chose to do this. There was also the risk that – as the pupils knew the focus of the research – they may have tried to adapt their conversation and approach in order to be seen to do the task 'well' and please me as their teacher; however, the length of the recordings, at 40 minutes, may have gone some way to reducing this risk as it would have been difficult for them to not lapse into authentic dialogue over this period of time. It is also important to note that these recordings were made before either the pupils or I knew that I would be responsible for submitting their teacher assessed GCSE grades.

The intervention was carried out with the two entire Year 11 classes and whilst this mitigates the ethical issue of some pupils having different experiences, there is also some possibility that the intervention may prove counter-productive for the group as a whole. Unlike my colleagues, the pupils were not involved in negotiating the aims of the research or its implementation and some may have

chosen not to undergo an experimental intervention in the months before external exams. However, experimental interventions are part of the normal way of working for my department as we frequently trial and measure different approaches with different year groups and it is therefore unlikely that the pupils would have seen this research as unusual either in its form or timing.

As for Lucy and Caroline, the other teachers in the department with whom I planned the intervention, our relatively equal positions of seniority in the school mean that our group negotiations were unlikely to have been affected by any perceived issues regarding power. Debating aspects of our pedagogy and pedagogical content knowledge is, again, part of our normal way of working.

Finally, it could be argued that there is an ethical issue surrounding the use of pupils' discussions about their writing as data to be analysed. Creative writing can sometimes be of a personal nature and using this writing as part of a research project exposes it to a wider audience than the pupils may have considered. However, the tasks were purposefully chosen as 'neutral' topics, which did not demand personal commentary of a potentially sensitive nature, and anonymity was maintained both through pseudonyms and in the typed transcripts of the pupils' discussions.

4.5. Research instruments

To understand writing as a complex social and cultural activity (Thompson, 2013) is to recognise the layers of influences and processes which affect its development. A finished text may reveal little of the challenges that went into its production, yet the draft versions and social interactions that the writer engaged in are inextricably part of the act of composition (Thompson, 2012). When considering how to analyse the impact of the writing intervention, it was therefore decided to focus on the act of composition, rather than the finished text. Importantly, the goal of the research was not to evaluate the success of this finished text, but to evaluate the extent to which the writers engaged with the mediational tools of the classroom to develop their meaning making and, by extension, writing. Given

that one of these mediational tools was collaborative writing, the only way to capture this for analysis was through direct listening or recording.

This talk data took the form of recordings on a school-provided recording device. Rather than listening to the students or recording them myself as they completed the task, the students placed the recording device on the desk in front of them. This was partly to comply with social distancing restrictions, but this observation-style research also offered me an opportunity to gather live data within the natural environment of our classroom. Rather than changing my classroom role to that of researcher, I was able to continue in my teaching role whilst the recordings were taking place and, other than the presence of the recorder and the intervention activity, no other changes were made to our classroom environment. This allowed me to look directly at what was taking place in situ, rather than relying on secondhand accounts, thus creating the potential to yield more authentic data than through a mediated or time-delayed method (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2017). It also increased the reliability of the data as, unlike with direct observation, there was no need for multiple observers (Yin, 2018) and thus the natural classroom environment was largely maintained. As qualitative research, the data had the potential to draw me into the phenomenological, as well as linguistic, complexity of the pupils' worlds and connections, causes and correlations could be observed as they grew over time (Cohen & Manion, 2007). It also allowed me to capture the dynamic nature of dialogue, to identify intentionality and to seek trends and patterns in pupils' talk (Cohen & Manion, 2007), as well as capturing talk that would otherwise go unnoticed.

For Britton et al. (1975), the insights that can be gained from processes come in three ways: learning from watching and listening to the writer at work; studying what people say about what they do and sometimes inferring something about the process from the product itself. I had, therefore, planned to also present follow-up interviews with the pupils about these pieces of writing in order to further

understand their levels of volitional control; however, this element of the data collection was not possible due to circumstances brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic.

4.6. Limitations of the Methods Employed

As a piece of small-scale practitioner research, there were several key limitations to the methods employed. Firstly, as the research method is qualitative, no statistical claims or generalisations can be made from it (Cohen & Manion, 2007). Secondly, the small sample size of 10 pupils from just two classes also means it is difficult to make generalisations and means that the results may be highly context dependent. Following from this, given that all pupils other than Ciara only completed the activity once, it is difficult to judge whether they would have had a similar discussion repeating the activity or completing it with another similar-prior attainment peer or with a different question or text. Finally, using a recording rather than a filming device meant that aspects of the pupils' interactions may have been missed and, rather than just recontextualising their peers' voice, there were possibly times at which pupils developed meaning through interpreting non-verbal communication which was not observed as part of the research.

4.7. Framework for Analysis

In the following sections I present extracts and descriptions from the talk data of the pairs working collaboratively in order to explore how dialogic partners – both peers and texts - act as mediational tools in the development of deliberate semantics. For researching case studies, Yin (2018) recommends the use of an analytic strategy based on theoretical propositions. These propositions – or what I termed principles – reflect the research questions and review of the literature and therefore gave priorities to relevant analytic strategies (Yin, 1984). In this case, the relevant analytic strategy to interpret the talk data was a framework developed for investigating the pupils' meaning making. This involved categorising critical incidents, defined as moments in the pupils' talk about writing that

exemplify important developments in their journeys from superficial discussions to disputation and cumulative talk and then to exploration, negotiation and volition. The theoretical basis of the codings used to identify critical incidents leading to deliberate meaning making was initially based on Thompson's (2016) coding of types of instruction and activities related to collaborative classroom writing, which themselves were based on Mercer's (2000) definitions of disputational, cumulative and exploratory talk:

1. Disputational talk related to writing: instructional/directional talk statements by the teachers or students relating directly to the process of written composition and disputational student interactions relating to the process of writing;
2. Mediation through talk and collaboration related to writing: dialogical teacher/student and student interactions specific to the process of writing;
3. Exploratory talk and activities related to writing: questions put by the teacher or students related to the process of writing that were instructional, directional or developmental; exploratory and collaborative student talk about composition; exploratory student interactions that appeared to be off task but led to periods of sustained writing.

Our categories built on this coding to develop a hierarchy of talk related to meaning making in which writing development is observed not just as a series of processes but a series of stages of increasing volition:

1. **Surface talk**: organisational or corrective statements whereby pupils directly discuss the process of written composition or correct grammatical errors within the text without any reference to meaning.

2. **Monologic talk:** disputational and cumulative talk related to writing whereby pupils talk about the writing essentially monologically and without shared negotiation of or decisions on meaning.
3. **Generative talk:** mediational pupil interactions through which pupils negotiate and generate meaning with a dialogic partner – whether that be a peer, teacher, another text or their own text.
4. **Volition:** deliberate meaning making decisions whereby pupils intentionally engage in recontextualisation.

In addition to Thompson and Mercer's codings, the concept of generative talk draws on Myhill, Jones and Wilson's (2016) characteristics of dialogic talk about writing:

- Fosters the justication of language choices made;
- Is prepared to challenge cliché or forced, overdone writing;
- Generates questions and pursue misunderstandings;
- Encourages experimentation and language play;
- Is prepared to discuss constructively why some attempts are less successful.

I have not included in this list is talk which supports writers to make links between the grammar feature and its effect in shaping meaning. As stated above, we took as a guiding principle for the research the idea that pupils can develop intentionality without needing to label grammatical features.

5.Findings

Research Question 1: Does the use of an intertextual recontextualisation activity promote pupils' deliberate meaning making during the act of writing?

Both Alicia and Amy and Caira and Eri completed the intertextual recontextualisation activity. Both pairs of pupils were given an article on the same topic and told that they could use it for inspiration or support as they wished.

Alicia and Amy start the writing tasks with limited formal planning. As opposed to considering the organisational structure of the texts, the pair first considers their core meaning, establishing the communicative function of the text:

Episode 1.A.

Amy: Ok, so. We're agreeing, right?

Alicia: So. Agree.

Amy: So, we're saying how... You know how we were saying like free school meals and stuff?

Alicia: For what?

Amy: You know how they're saying like children who need like food?

Alicia: Yeah...

Amy: Isn't it how they say that the government should pay for school children's food in the summer? So they don't... So they're not... Basically you could say how like people in our country they need like help – because they don't even have the money...

Alicia: Yeah, so we can say that like England – like Britain – is too busy. Like how they may be seen to like...

Amy: Neglect.

Alicia: Neglect. That's a good word. [Reading own work] 'Governments may be seen to neglect their own nations.'

Amy: Mmhmm. Ok. So now...

Alicia: This is our main thesis. So let's expand on this.

The pupils' immediate focus is on what they wish to express: 'We're agreeing... So, we're saying how... so we can say that...' The language is tentative and questioning as they collaborate to generate shared meaning and come to a common understanding. Initially, Amy appears to act as a significant other for Alicia, drawing on her prior knowledge of the topic to verbalise her inner speech and then deliberately selecting an appropriate word to capture their argument. Despite first acting as the significant other, Amy too draws on other mediational tools in the form of voices from the media and previous conversations: 'You know how they're saying...You know how we were saying...Isn't how they say that...'. Alicia then draws on the layers of mediational tools – both her peer and her peer's recontextualisation of opinions from external sources – to move quickly into volition. She deliberately confirms the word choice and then recontextualises it to build on her previous utterance: the verbalised inner speech of 'Like how they may be seen to like...' becomes the audience-oriented sentence, 'Governments may be seen to neglect their own nations'. By evaluating 'neglect' as 'a good word', Alicia moves from thinking about what to say and then writing it down to choosing how to represent ideas in text and consciously shaping what to say and how to say it, thus moving from 'knowledge-telling', to 'knowledge transforming' (Bereiter & Scardamalia, 1987). Alicia further demonstrates her volition by confirming 'This is our main thesis', conveying how she has deliberately structured a web of meaning (Vygotsky, 2012) by gathering the background information and adapting it to her semantic and expressive intention (Bakhtin, 1981).

For Caira and Eri, the process is slower, but they still start with generative talk before moving into volition:

Episode 1.E.

Caira: What do you think for the first word?

Eri: [Reading article] The most peculiar thing has happened... Wait. What's the meaning of 'peculiar'?

Caira: Miss said it's like. Wait. Let me ask Miss again.

Eri: Miss, what's the meaning of 'peculiar'?

Mrs S: Strange, unusual.

Eri: Strange. So it means strange.

Caira: Yeah. So what do you think?

Eri: I feel like...

Caira: The most peculiar thing has happened... So, are you for or are you against the motion?

Eri: Is it emotion or motion?

Caira: Motion. Motion means... motions means... against and for the motion means that you like want it or...

Eri: Ooh. You want like more people to focus on...

Caira. Yes. Do you think fashion is damaging waste or do you think fashion is a positive thing?

Eri: I feel like it should be in the middle. But I don't know.

Caira: But Miss said...

Eri: Like we should choose one. So I feel like fashion is a damage.

Caira: So what do you want to write first?

Eri: The most peculiar thing...has happened.

Caira: And what do you think?

Eri: The most peculiar thing has happened. I really now think that fashion...fashion... is a damage...because...because... Because it's creating bad impact... because it's influencing kids to do bad things because not every kid... nowadays... kids...

Caira: It's creating what? Bad what?

Eri: Influence. Damage. Because it's creating bad influence. How do you spell influence?

Caira: I-N-F-L-U-E-N-C-E

Eri: I-N-F-L-U-E-N-C-E. Influence.

Caira: On the youth.

Eri: Oh yeah. Influence on the youth.

Caira. To the youth. I think its influence to... Is it influence on the youth or to the youth? I'm going to write on the youth. [Reading own work] 'A most peculiar thing has happened. I really think that fashion is a damage out there because it's creating bad influence on the youth.'

Caira acts as the dominant more significant other here, guiding Eri to reflect on ideas and refine her language. Initially, Caira prompts Eri to express her own thoughts, but Eri turns to another mediational tool in the form of the article, considering how she can appropriate its language. When she realises that she does not have the background knowledge to meaningfully appropriate the text, she turns to her other immediate mediational tool, Caira, who herself turns to the teacher. The teacher's short intervention allows the pupils to return to their ZPD and Caira realises that, before they appropriate the text, the pair need to establish their expressive mode: 'So are you for or against the motion?'. Eri again here relies on Caira as a more knowledgeable other to distinguish the meaning of 'motion' from 'emotion'.

When Eri first says that she does not know which side to agree with, Caira once more draws on the teacher as a mediational tool, referencing my earlier recommendation that they choose one side of the argument. Eri then generates her expressive thought as the tentative utterance of 'So I feel like fashion is a damage'. Prompted by Caira, Eri returns to the article as a mediational tool, starting to recontextualise its opening phrase into her own utterance: 'The most peculiar thing has happened. I really now think that fashion...fashion... is a damage...because...because'. As Eri verbalises her

thoughts, she actively generates and negotiates meaning with herself, immediately editing her own language: 'Because it's creating bad impact... because it's influencing kids to do bad things.' Caira then further recontextualises Eri's language, adapting the tone to meet the communicative function of the text: 'On the youth'. Like Alicia, she then moves to volition as she confirms her externally-orientated sentence at the end of the extract.

Throughout the activity, Caira and Eri continue to engage in a dialectical process of attempting to resolve tension between thought and composition:

Episode 2.E.

Eri: I think we should steal one of these… [Reading article] 'But still with the exemption of the cashmere jumpers I haven't worn'… No.

Caira: That doesn't make sense. Doesn't link to this.

Eri: No.

Caira: But still… but still… is not taking them nowhere. But still is not taking them no… nowhere. Eri: What's the meaning of 'astonished'? [Reading article] 'I'm slightly astonished at myself'…

Caira: Like shocked. [Reading article] 'I have stopped spending…'

Eri: [Reading article] 'I am slightly astonished at myself… I have stopped spending on materialistic things.'

Caira: Yeah. No wait. I am slightly astonished at myself… The creativity. Wait, I want to write something. The creativity of urm… the creativity of the outfits that keep attracting me. Do you get it?

Eri: But that means that we are agreeing. Because if we say the creativity… that means we are agreeing that fashion is, urm, kind of necessary. Like, you know what I'm saying? Because if you are getting that you like fashion… that you… I am slightly astonished at myself, but…

Caira: Not wearing expensive clothes. That not wearing expensive clothes cannot damage your image.

Eria: Not damage… your… image.

Caira: No, don't write image. Beauty. Your beauty.

Eri: Not damage your beauty.

Caira: And outlook. Of yourself. [Reading own work] So. A most peculiar thing has happened. I really think that fashion is a damage out there because it's creating bad influence on the youth, and yet here we are. People spending money on clothes rather than them helping spend on charities for people that can't afford to get clothes. Still is not… But still, it is not taking them nowhere. Anywhere. Yeah, anywhere.

Eri: Anywhere.

Caira: [Reading own work] I'm slightly astonished at myself but not wearing expensive clothes cannot damage your beauty and outlook of yourself.

The pupils engage with the article as a dialogue partner, whereby they assess the extent to which they can meaningfully recontextualise its words, syntax and ideas, rather than simply reproducing its generic features. By negotiating with the text, they continually problem solve, developing and reshaping their language in the process. Both pupils, for example, reject the article's sentence on cashmere jumpers for not making sense within the context of their work; despite this, they do appropriate the phrase 'But still' and recontextualise it to link to their previous comment. Similarly, Caira plays with the phrase 'I am slightly astonished at myself' and verbalises her inner speech in

generating an oral rough draft: 'The creativity of urm… the creativity of the outfits that keep attracting me.' Eri, however, takes on the role of the significant other and acts as mediational tool between words and their intended meaning: 'But that means that we are agreeing'. Caira then responds by consciously adapting her words to match the meaning: 'That not wearing expensive clothes cannot damage your image'. The pupils continues working within their ZPD as they as they reshape words and subtly negotiate meaning, as well as engaging in quick surface-level talk both with their own inner voice and each other.

By using the article as a dialogue partner, Eri and Caira also make use of creative imitation as they experiment with new constructions and patterns in their writing, thereby developing conscious control of authorial craft (Myhill et al., 2013):

Episode 3.E.

Eri: We should write a question now like that.

Caira: You think fashion is good?

Eri: Do you think fashion is ok? Don't care about it.

Caira: Or we can say, do you think fashion... erm...is for anyone else? For anyone? Or for everyone? Do you think fashion is for everyone? What do we say...? 'Don't care about that.' 'Do you think fashion is for everyone? Don't care about that.' Let's ask Miss.

Mrs S: Ah, so in the article she's saying, [reads with emphasis] 'Hemlines? Don't care. Accessories? Got some.'

Caira: Ah, I've got one. Jordans? Don't care.

Eri: Or Dior. Dior? Don't care.

Caira: Dior? Don't care. Accessories? The first one is supposed to be like, 'Accessories? Don't care. Dior? Don't care. And I have no interest in it.'... 'Because I have no interest in that'.

Despite the pupils' limited rhetorical or metalinguistic knowledge, they explore how the sentence works and how it can be adapted to their purposes. Having attempted to appropriate the structure through verbalising a range of rough drafts, Caira realises that there is a discrepancy between their recontextualised version and the original meaning and asks from support from the teacher as a more significant other. After a simple intervention, the pupils successfully and deliberately reappropriate the structure without needing to be able to label it grammatically. In reading the article in order to select words or syntax to recontextualise, the pupils make informed choices in their writing and see writing as a visible process of shaping meaning (Myhill, 2021), thereby fostering their development of a repertoire of possibilities and authorial responsibility (Myhill et al., 2013). As opposed to completing teacher-supplied checklists of techniques, the pupils exhibit volition and writerly decisions by selecting which aspects of the article support their meaning and how they can be manipulated.

Alicia and Amy also use the article to prompt problem solving and dialectical interaction:

Episode 2.A.

Amy: [Reading] 'Only about 15% of the UK's foreign aid is spent on humanitarian aid.'

Alicia: So where's the other money going? Ooh.

Amy: So that's quite a good point we can get down. Ok. So we should write that one down, right?

Alicia: Yep. [Reading article] 'With the rest focused on strategic or long-term goals.'

Amy: Also, you know how we could say like you know how they give it to some countries which are corrupt, so are they actually using it for what they need to be using it for?

Alicia: [Writing]. Because we can say like, 'Is it really working? That's the second point. So first we need to say about this – how, urm, where's the other 85% going?

Amy: Exactly.

Alicia: But we don't want to write it like that. We want to be formal and precise. If it were that foreign aid was. If it were that foreign aid was so important. For providing.

Amy: Um. The best form of lifestyle?

Alicia: A better chance for development… in such countries, then how is it that only such. Yes. How is it that such a small percentage of that aid is spent… on… this cause?

Amy: Spent on the main, on the…

Alicia: 'If it were that foreign aid was so important for providing a better chance for development in such countries, then how is it that such a small percentage is spent on this? On this, because this refers to…

...

Alicia: This implies that the other 85% must be… spent… on…

Amy: Minor, urm… unnecessary…

Alicia: Urm. Unnecessary political aims.

Similarly to Caira and Eri, Alicia and Amy consider how they can appropriate aspects of the article to strengthen their own meaning, but they do not use it as a tool to recontextualise specific words or syntax or to shape linguistic features. Instead, they largely use the text as a springboard to generate new thought and language: 'So where's the other money going? Ooh... Also, you know how we could say like...'. Compared to Caira and Eri, the pair is less reliant on the text as a scaffold to develop their vocabulary and grammatical knowledge and instead interact with it as a dialogic partner. Alicia, for example, takes the factual statement on foreign aid and recontextualises it to a persuasive question designed to elicit a response from an audience. Rather than appropriating any of the vocabulary or syntax of the original sentence, she uses her own prior grammatical knowledge to attempt to use the

subjunctive mood in order to achieve her conscious purpose of being 'formal and precise'. Whilst Caira and Eri appropriate words and phrases from the article, Alicia and Amy expand on the facts in the article to deliberately generate new conceptual meaning; for example, by moving from the fact of 15% of foreign aid being spent on humanitarian aid to 'This implies that the other 85% must be spent on unnecessary political aims', the pupils manipulate the language of the article to express a new point and to match their own intended meaning of criticising the superficial purpose of foreign aid.

Research Question 2: Does the use of a collaborative writing activity promote pupils' deliberate meaning making during the act of writing?

Beverly and Binta, Caira and Carmel, and Danielle and Diana completed the collaborative writing activity. Beverly and Binta alternate in acting as more significant others as they both question each other and offer advice and prompts.

Episode 1.B.

Binta: Now we need to think what we should say. In the introduction.

Beverly: What's our main point first?

Binta: Our main point is that the best education anyone can give you is valuable in society because in a world where you're tested on paper, your knowledge is not as…

Beverly: Yeah, knowledge isn't as useful. It's what's written in paper about stuff that's useful. So exams are the most highest value. Of paper! It's kind of cynical, but…

Binta: That's the point.

Beverly: That is the point. So how do we introduce…?

Binta: Urm. Like a problem. A problem we're going to answer.

Beverly: So the problem is that people think…

Binta: In a world where…

Beverly: It's because people. Maybe we should start about how you know how people… are motivated by the fact that education is their life – it's going to be their life forever… Maybe. I don't know. Just give them a reality check – that even though this is the reality, you need to make use of your life. Unless you wanna...?

Binta: So we could describe how people think that their education is going to define who they are. It does.

Beverly: Yeah, it's does. But you need to add in the fact that it does.

Binta: You need to talk about how depressing it is. About how students think about that education doesn't define them. But then be like, yes, it does.

Beverly: So we'll start with the fact about the general idea… whatever people think. And then we'll go into like… our own spice! You can add a thesis later.

Binta: Ok, so.

Beverly: Urm, how do we?

Binta: Should we talk about a specific student? Or in general?

Beverly: In general. And then we can go into specifics.

Binta: I know. We can be like: grades define. Maybe like… you spend. Like write it as a quotation – with apostrophes. Write like, 'No matter how much we try and convince ourselves that education…'

Beverly: Say that 'It doesn't define you as a person; it defines you in society'.

This episode is taken from early on in their interaction where they quickly engage in generative talk and establish a dialogic space whereby their voices interact, developing intersubjectivity. (Jesson, Fontich, Myhill, 2016). The pair co-construct knowledge, building on each other's questions and ideas

to generate meaning towards volition. Beverly's initial trying out of "Maybe we should start about how you know how people" demonstrates her attempts to communicate with Binta as an audience. In order to encourage co-construction, Beverly verbalises her inner speech, as shown in her tentative language of "Maybe...Maybe. I just don't know...Unless you wanna?". Binta is then able to appropriate the ideas generated by Beverly; whilst Beverly initially sounds out ideas, Binta builds on them to communicate their decisions as she shapes their thoughts into written language: "So we could describe how...You need to talk about...And then be like, yes, it does... We can be like...Like write it as...". Binta becomes increasingly directive and deliberate as the generative talk develops and their utterances become more audience orientated. This deliberacy is also shared by Beverly as she also communicates conscious decisions, rather than just exploratory ideas: "And then we can go into specifics...Say that." This can also be tracked through the way in which, throughout the episode, the pupils' expressive utterances, such as "It's because people", become more explicit, 'such as "No matter how much we try and convince ourselves that education... doesn't define you as a person, it defines you in society."

As with Alicia and Amy, the pupils' immediate focus is on their intended meaning. As Binta first questions what they need to "say", Beverly reframes this to what their main "point" is, conveying an awareness of the need for conscious meaning beyond knowledge-telling. The pupils then continue to show awareness of communicated meaning. Beverly, for example, muses that an audience would interpret their point as "cynical", but Binta reassures her that this reinforces their intended meaning: "That's the point". Beverly also communicates deliberate awareness of meaning by commenting that she wants to give her audience "a reality check". As opposed to having a separate stage for planning their response, the pair moves between these negotiations on intended meaning and comments on textual organisation in an interwoven and recursive manner. Binta, for example, explains the need to "talk about how depressing it is... But then be like, yes, it does." She here makes a structural decision,

focusing on the order of ideas, but does so in a way that the structure of the article is generated from the intended meaning, in contrast to the conventions-first approach advocated by genre pedagogy (Myhill, 1999).

By sharing their tentative and un-refined inner speech, indicated by pauses, repetition and questions, the pupils implicitly invite each other to refine their language. This process of refinement also means that, as the pupils co-construct the sentence, they generate new meaning as ideas subtly change with different language choices:

Episode 2.B

Binta: Ok, let's write about why that's wrong.

Beverly: They're not wrong?

Binta: No, they're wrong by how… society is. Yes, our friends and families see pressure…

Beverly: No, they don't!

Binta: Ok, but… You know when you're going to university and there's someone sitting behind a desk judging you just based on paper? That's why they're wrong.

Beverly: Ok…

Binta: Does that make sense?

Beverly: Do we need to argue about how… because their thing – that life is about education… We're saying that. You know? We need to show why life is… like *life*. If you want to…

Binta: They're not saying that life isn't about education. We're saying that. They're saying that grades… like what you get on paper isn't the main thing. It's about your knowledge… and you as a person. We're saying.

Beverly: Society will judge you based on what you're graded on.

Binta: When you go to university. We're saying they're wrong about not… about how saying it's not important what you look like on paper. Does that make sense?

Beverly: Yep.

Binta: So now we need to collect. To write it down.

Rather than planning all ideas in a distinct pre-writing stage, the pupils' generative talk breeds more generative talk as they build on previous comments and create new meaning. Within this stage, the pupils' ideas and language are flexible and they are open to immediate revision. Even though some of Beverly's language appears disputational – "No, they don't!" – Binta show implicit awareness of the discussion as being in a drafting stage and develops her thoughts in response to Beverly's evaluations, tensions and constraints (Myhill & Wilson, 2013). The ideas remain in this flexible, playful stage until Binta's moment of volition: "So now we need to collect. To write it down." In using the term "collect", Binta conveys a sense of intended organisation and deliberate shaping which had not been present during the exploratory discussion. As with Amy and Alicia, the pair's focus is largely on refinement of ideas, rather than grammatical or vocabulary choice; as opposed to one pupil using the other as an editing tool to ensure accuracy, they use each other as dialogic partners to dispute, evaluate and shape intended meaning.

Interaction, however, does not automatically support learning as, whilst analysis of dialogic space captures the knowledge generating potential of classroom discussions, not all conversations are necessarily dialogic and focused on building meaning within dialogue (Jesson, Fontich, Myhill, 2016). Generative talk does not therefore characterise all pupil discussions, and rather than taking monologic talk to mean one speaker being in control of the discourse (Napier, 2007) our framework takes it to mean talk without true dialogue, whereby pupils do not have the aim of shared negotiation. In contrast to the other pairs discussed so far, Caira and Carmel's discussion was largely composed of

monologic talk as the pupils each attempted to impose their own set of ideas. Analysis of classroom talk has often focused on monologic discourse patterns led by teachers, in which the teacher is in a position of epistemological dominance and the discussion reveals asymmetric power relations within the classroom (Jesson, Fontich, Myhill, 2016). The discussion between this pair, however, shows how pupils' discourse can be characterised as monologic when their talk does not generate shared meaning and the pupils do not develop intersubjectivity:

Episode 1.C.

Caira: Ok, so. I'm starting the thing. 'I'm amazed…'

Carmel: No, that's later. We should say 'Dear Sir/Madam.'

Caira: Oh. What are you writing? I'm waiting for you because we are meant to do it together.

Carmel: Oh, I though you wanted to do it by yourself.

Caira: Eh? No!

Carmel: So I started to do it.

Caira: I didn't say I wanted to do it by myself though.

Unlike the other pairs whose discussions open with a shared negotiation of what they were saying or their point, Caira opens by declaring her autonomy: "I'm starting the thing." Whilst the other pupils evaluated their partner's utterances through questions, Carmel then evaluates Carmel's offering with the unambiguous judgement of "No, that's later" and then asserts her autonomy by writing without shared volition with Caira. Having opened the discussion without shared negotiation, the talk then shifts into organisational talk as the pupils move away from meaning and towards attempts to understand each other. Carmel interprets Caira's declaration of autonomy in the beginning to signal

her rejecting collaboration entirely, but Carmel does not understand how Caira comes to this conclusion without explicit communication: “I didn’t say I wanted to it by myself though.”

Once the pair move out of organisational talk by agreeing on a collaborative approach, their talk again moves into monologic talk:

Episode 2.C.

Carmel: When my dad once came home and said that they are sacking people from their jobs because they have too much robots…

Caira: You said what? A few months ago, your dad. Comma. Let me say – ‘My dad…’

Carmel: Came home.

Caira: Came home and…

Carmel: Start to complain that…

Caira: My dad came home and complained… about… them… sacking

Carmel: Because

Caira: Sacking people

Carmel: Oh, you add your idea.

Again, rather than engaging in generative talk in which they negotiate and create new meaning, the pair’s talk here can be classified as monologic: Carmel dictates to Caira what she should write down, and Caira’s questions are to check the accuracy of what she is transcribing, as opposed to enabling the generation of new meaning. Towards the end of the episode, the roles reverse as Carmel tells Caira to contribute her idea. Instead of jointly creating ideas, the pupils work largely independently of one another, using each other as a physical as opposed to cognitive tool. Unlike the other pairs in

which one pupil frequently took on the role of significant other, here neither pupil takes on this role as Carmel's language is not used to develop Caira's thinking.

This focus on transcription as opposed to developing thinking continues throughout the discussion:

Episode 3.C.

Carmel: Yes, what I'm trying to say is that the space in the world for us to continue.

Caira: Oh, you write it.

Carmel: Yeah, that's what I'm trying… to say.

At moments of grappling with ideas and intended meaning, the other pairs of pupils entered generative talk and used each other's evaluations and questions to shape and refine points. Here, however, Carmel appears to be in dialogue with herself; her affirmation of "Yeah, that's what I'm trying... to say" is in response to her own verbalisation of inner speech, as opposed to Caira's direction of "Oh, you write it." Rather than entering shared negotiation, Caira's comment removes herself from the dialogic component of the discussion and does not allow for a moment of flexible planning, drafting and editing as seen with the other pairs.

Later in the discussion, the pupils attempt, unsuccessfully, to evaluate and edit each other's contributions:

Episode 4.C.

Caira: Listen to what I wrote down: 'A few months ago, my dad came home and complained about the manager sacking people from his workplace due to the robots they have got in the workplace. I was shocked about what my dad said…' And you said, 'due to the office?'

Carmel: No! You know the office?

Caira: What office? The office here is the workplace.

Carmel: Am I the one that?

Caira: Don't argue. Yeah.

Carmel: You just put it then.

Caira: I don't know why you put that then. Because you can't just say, 'office, office, office.' Because you can't say office… Because of the office.

Carmel: I didn't say, 'because'. I said, 'about the office'.

Caira: 'I was shocked about what my dad said…' What did you say?

Carmel: Don't…

Caira: No, say your point so I can understand.

Carmel: About… about… the office.

Caira: I wrote workplace. You have to say why you were shocked. Why you were shocked. You can't say just about the office. That's why I'm trying to explain… to you but... Right now I was shocked about what my dad say. Say here – say something. Your dad came home and say that…

Carmel: About the workplace? I don't have idea. I don't want to.

Caira becomes frustrated that Carmel's writing does not make grammatical sense: "Because you can't just say 'office, office, office'." She then attempts to move the discussion into generative talk – "No, say your point so I can understand" – but does not listen to Carmel's response of "about the office" and instead repeats her decision again: "I wrote workplace." With limited prior grammatical knowledge, the pupils struggle to communicate the idea they want to express and also struggle to engage in meaningful metatalk about each other's contributions. By asking questions and attempting to develop Carmel's understanding, Caira comes close to the role of significant other but falls short

due to unsuccessful attempts at "trying to explain". These unsuccessful attempts appear to cause frustration on both parts: Caira attempts to assert control over Caira's contributions, giving commands throughout, whilst Carmel distances herself from any dialogicity: "I don't have idea. I don't want to."

The pupils' monologic talk continues until near the end of the discussion when the teacher offers a prompt:

Episode 5.C.

Carmel: If you have ideas, you put it, you know. Because I don't have ideas. And my idea you say is not nice.

Caira: I didn't say is not nice. Because you can't say that I was shocked about what my dad says because of the office. You can't say 'because of the office'.

Mrs S: Maybe 'due to his experience'?

Caira: Yes.

Carmel: Due to the experience he has gone through.

Caira continues to try to explain the error in Carmel's sentence, repeating "you can't say", but does not successfully generate an alternative utterance. It is only when the teacher interjects that Carmel successfully recontextualises the phrase to clearly communicate her intended meaning. For this pair, therefore, it is only when they have access to an additional mediational tool – in the form of the teacher's voice – that they successfully appropriate language to support communication.

The difficulties of collaborating to generate meaning are also found in the discussion between the final pair, Danielle and Diana:

Episode 1.D.

Danielle: Wait, what did I write so far? So we've talked about home. Ok. Full stop. And then say, 'A few weeks ago… my child.' Wait. No, no, no. Let's give an example. Like, when I was younger, my mum always used to teach me about finance, childcare, everything… for the outside world. Because she felt that schools were for an educational purpose. Like they should be teaching us maths and English and all of that stuff. Like anything like cooking and anything should be taught outside at home. Because we should learn how to be independent. So… When I was younger.

Diana: When I was… my mum.

Danielle: Had taught me...taught me at the age of 13 that I should learn how to do things independently. Like cooking. As, on the outside world, when she's not there who's going to be there to help me? I won't be at school. I can't be as…

Diana: Independent.

Danielle: Because school is not always going to be there for you. It's not always going to be there for me. Urm… To help me face struggles on the outside world.

Diana: To help what?

Danielle: Be there for me to…

Diana: Especially when I have to go university and stuff?

Danielle: Yeah… to help. School is not always going to be there for me to help on the outside world. In the outside world. No out. No in. Wait? Miss, when you say 'the outside world', do you say 'on' or 'in'? I don't know… is it 'in' the outside world or 'on'?

Mrs S: In.

Danielle: In the outside world. Yeah, that's done now. Next paragraph. We're going to talk about… I've been saying my opinion; now I'm going to explain… urm. Ok, let's talk about other people and how they feel about our problems.

As with Carmel and Caira, Danielle's talk is often monologic or organisational: her utterances are 'knowledge telling' (Bereiter and Scardamalia, 1987) as she dictates thoughts for Diana to transcribe, rather than engaging Diana in meaning making. Danielle, for example, states "I've been saying my opinion; now I'm going to explain", revealing how she sees the writing as an individual act. When she does include Diana, she controls the flow of thought through directive instructions, imposing her preformed set of ideas: "Let's give an example...We're going to talk about..." When Diana attempts to generate ideas and offers up words and phrases for negotiation, Danielle does not dismiss them directly, but overlooks them, continuing her own flow of thought. It is only when Danielle has an organisational problem, without any reference to meaning, that she looks for external support by asking the teacher a question.

To some extent, Diana does negotiate meaning with herself as she edits her thoughts ("Wait. No, no, no. Let's give an example") and rephrases her utterances so that they are more explicit and therefore audience orientated: "Like, when I was younger, my mum always used to teach me about finance, childcare, everything…" becomes "When I was younger... my mum...taught me at the age of 13 that I should learn how to do things independently". However, the writing is developed at a far greater pace than the first three pairs as Danielle dictates her thoughts without being forced to problem solve or negotiate with an external dialogic partner. She moves quickly to finish the paragraph – "Yeah, that's done now. Next paragraph" – but with limited volition as the focus is on task completion, being "done", rather than deliberately making choices to achieve intended meaning. This focus on task completion and organisational talk is also evident later in the discussion:

Episode 2.D.

Danielle: How many lines is that?

Diana: 1,2, 3, 4, 5.

Danielle: Yeah, that's about right… Ok, imagine if this was your. No. Grrr. Imagine if this was your child. Question mark. No. Not question mark. Imagine if this was your child. Comma.

Again, rather than making a deliberate choice focused on communicating intended meaning, Danielle judges the success of the work based on her preformed idea of the conventions of argumentative writing: "Yeah, that's about right." This organisational focus on accuracy, rather than meaning, is then seen in her surface-level editing in which she edits out a comma for a question mark. Later in the discussion, Danielle spends a significant amount of time reading over what Danielle has transcribed and editing accuracy errors:

Episode 3.D.

Believe. B-E-L-I-E-V-E. Wait. Do you have any other spelling things? Wait, let me read it. Need a comma. This should be taught… to be taught to them at home. As… Comma. Learn how to do things independent… No. Independently. Learn how to do things independently because… she…is… not… always… going to be there for me… be there… be there… to help me… in the outside world. Yes. Other people around the world… have also been facing this kind of issue. Comma. For example, university students… majority… of them… M-a-j-o-r-i-t-y.

In this short extract from the longer monologue, Danielle uses her prior grammatical knowledge to make spelling, punctuation and grammatical corrections. Whilst she verbalises her thought process, she does so monologically, reading the script to herself. When Danielle come across a problem that she cannot solve, she either ignores it or turns to the teacher for support, rather than collaboratively generating meaning with Diana: "In the future… In the olden… In the Victorian times? I'm just going to say Victorian times because I don't know how else to say." Similarly to Caira and Carmel, Danielle

clearly sees Diana as a physical, rather than cognitive tool: at the end of her editing monologue she asks whether Diana wants to write something because she doesn't want to feel like she is "just the one writing". This demonstrates Danielle's awareness of the monologic nature of her talk; however, she does not show any signs of wanting to engage in a generative discussion. Interestingly, Danielle here terms her oral utterances "writing", rather than Diana's act of transcription, implying limited refinement between thought and written language. Having asked Diana to take over, Danielle directs her to "just tell me if you don't know how to spell a word though, okay?" Rather than setting herself up as a significant other to develop Diana's thinking, Danielle frames herself as an organisational tool to improve accuracy.

The lack of deliberate choice in their talk is again made clear by Danielle once more counting the lines in the next paragraph and directing Diana to "just write two lines if you want". Once Diana adds to the writing, Danielle reads the texts and concludes, "And we're finished. We've done five paragraphs." The writing is finished not when it has met the pupils' intended meaning, but when it has met superficial, organisational aims. This lack of deliberate intended meaning is then underscored by Danielle commenting that she was not sure what side of the argument they were on anymore; by directly transcribing thoughts without negotiating meaning and going through the flexible stage of generative talk, the pair struggled to understand what they were communicating, a critical stage in the writing development of the first three pairs.

Beyond the correction of accuracy errors and replacement of words with synonyms, the pair also engage in limited recursive processes. It is only when the teacher asks what the pair wants to see in the future that they edit the ideas in the writing:

Episode 4.D.

Danielle: Let's redo this paragraph. What I would like to see more in the future. Would like… not 'will'… is parents are more involved. More involved in their children's life. Do you know what 'their' it is?

Diana: Hmm? No.

Danielle: T-h-e-i-r. Lives – like lives. L-I-V-E-S. I… As a child myself, I believe it's the parents' job. I believe it's the parents' job to teach their child… important… type of domestic skills.

Diana: How do you spell?

Danielle: D-O-M-E-S-T-I-C. Skills. Life still not spelt… just cross that out. Do it here. Wait, no, no, no. Here. Here. Then be like… as I believe. No, not I believe. As school. No. Wait. Put 'secondary schools'… secondary schools should focus more… on academic subjects… like maths, English, history, science to help them… help them… to help educate them… in life. Not become a baby… a baby-sitter for the parents, who should be teaching… not become a baby-sitter towards… to the students. Baby-sitter to the students. And teach them stuff… and teach them the stuff… the stuff… the things… put things instead. Cross that out. And teach them things. Teach them things they should be learning at home. Full stop! Done! I'm done now! I think we did actually well. Do you think we did?

Diana: I do.

Again, the cognitive development falls on Danielle whilst Diana takes on the role of scribe. Danielle edits her own language to become more explicit, but her negotiation is only ever with her own verbalised inner voice. Despite Danielle's assertion that "we actually did well", the pair's writing process is better summarised by her initial triumphant call of "Done! I'm done now!" The writing throughout was overwhelmingly an individual, monologic effort aimed at task completion – being "done" and being done accurately - as opposed to refining and communicating meaning.

6. Discussion

Despite the similar tasks and context, there were differing approaches across the pairs and it is useful to draw comparisons between them in order to identify patterns and trends, even if on a small scale:

Pair	Prior Attainment Compared to Other Pupils in Study	Mediational Tools Engaged With	Coding of Interactions
Alicia and Amy	Alicia: High prior attainment Amy: High prior attainment	Peer's voice Expert text	Characterised largely by generative talk and volition
Ciara and Eri	Ciara: Low prior attainment Eri: Low prior attainment	Peer's voice Expert text Teacher's voice	Characterised largely by generative talk and volition
Binta and Beverly	Binta: High prior attainment Beverly: High prior attainment	Peer's voice	Characterised largely be generative talk and volition
Ciara and Carmel	Ciara: Low prior attainment Carmel: Low prior attainment	Peer's voice Teacher's voice	Characterised largely by organisational and monologic talk
Danielle and Diana	Danielle: Mid prior attainment Diana: Low prior attainment	Peer's voice Teacher's voice	Characterised largely by organisational and monologic talk

Broadly, the pupils with high prior attainment had fruitful discussions, largely characterised by generative talk in which they actively negotiated intended meaning and language choices to achieve this meaning before moving into 'deliberate structuring of the web of meaning' (Vygotsky, 20) or what

we termed ‘volition’. Pupils did not rely on teacher intervention, and Alicia and Amy engaged with the text given to them as dialogic partners, using it not only to supply background knowledge but also to explore ideas and develop new meaning. In their negotiations, the pupils also sought support from previous experiences, discussions and voices both inside and outside of the context of the classroom (Thompson, Wittek, 2016). Alicia and Amy did not significantly rely on their text to provide words or syntax to communicate intended meaning. The process, instead, was of sharing inchoate meaning, developing this in response to information and ideas from the text and then using each other’s voices to select and refine language to communicate this meaning. This was a recursive process: new ideas from the text and new language choices gave way to new meaning and new language choices to communicate it. Similarly for Binta and Beverly, the process was of sharing inchoate meaning, orally developing this meaning through paired negotiation and then choosing and refining language to communicate it with the external audience of the invisible reader. Organisational talk was the least frequent form of talk throughout the data; if a pupil was conscious of an error, they quickly asked for the correction from a peer, or the more knowledgeable partner identified the error and offered a correction without disturbing the flow of dialogue. The writers therefore exhibited the qualities proponents of the metalinguistic approach associate with mature writers, who engage in sophisticated decision-making to make their writing match their rhetorical intentions (Myhill et al., 2013).

This first layer of analysis seems to point to the common factor in meaningful talk and successful volition being the high prior attainment of pupils. It appears that their tacit linguistic knowledge allows them to focus on explicit rhetorical choices, rather than implicit linguistic choice – or text creation, rather than text production – thus supporting the proponents of the metalinguistic awareness approach in that writers develop internalised writer knowledge to write without conscious choice (Myhill, Jones & Wilson, 2016). The generative talk, however, was not limtied to the high prior

attaining pupils: Ciara and Eri, both low prior attaining pupils, frequently engaged in generative talk, developing their language through negotiation and arriving at shared volition, although they did engage in more organisational talk than the two high prior attaining pairs, checking the meaning of words with their teacher and each other. The pair also relied more heavily on the text provided for linguistic support, rather than purely generation of meaning; Eri, in particular, frequently used the text to appropriate new vocabulary. It appears that whilst the high prior attaining pupils may have been more fluent at negotiating and communicating complex meaning, Eri and Caira still developed their meaning making through the task; to do this, however, they relied more heavily on a broader range of mediational tools.

As all these successful pairs of pupils attempted to articulate their fragmented inner thoughts through speech, they entered a playful, social world in which both pupils shared the interaction and actively shaped meaning (Thompson, Wittek, 2016). This phase – generative talk – included agreement, disagreement and exploration as the pupils tacitly acknowledged the need to be flexible and edit and refine their language before they could move into volition. The existence of another pupil's voice and the text created evaluations, tensions and constraints (Myhill & Wilson, 2013), meaning that each aspect of the writing was discussed as a choice in response to a dialogic partner rather than just directly transcribed. This therefore supported Thompson and Wittek's argument that disputational and exploratory dialogues create an impetus for writing and that dialogic classrooms are not always spaces of concord and agreement (2016). It also supports our use of the terms 'monologic' and 'generative' talk as opposed to Mercer's hierarchy of talk (1995) from disputational to cumulative to exploratory. Generative talk can, to an extent, include disputation if the pupils share the ultimate common goal of developing, negotiating and shaping shared intended meaning.

For Ciara and Carmel, however, this disputation outweighed their sense of a common goal, and their discussion was chiefly characterised by organisational and monologic talk with limited shared volition.

Eri was of a similar prior ability to Carmel, but Caira and Carmel were unable to develop their writing when working together. With limited prior linguistic knowledge, Carmel struggled to communicate accurately, and Caira struggled to meaningfully comment on Carmel's suggestions or offer alternatives ("...you can't just say, 'office, office, office'"). It was only when the teacher offered a suggestion towards the end of the discussion that the pupils were able to appropriate a phrase and communicate their intended meaning. Both pupils were limited in their linguistic knowledge and, without access to another mediational tool, they struggled to progress. This reflects Thompson's (2013) Vygotskian-inspired argument that pupils cannot develop beyond the first phase of writing development without contextual stimuli, such as peer collaboration. However, it also demonstrates that peer collaboration alone does not assist writing performance; instead, the pupils need access to language and ideas beyond their current capabilities, whether these come from a more capable peer, teacher or text, to allow for recontextualisation.

This argument is further supported by the evidence from Danielle and Diana's discussion. This pair had a very different experience of the task compared to Caira and Carmel; using Mercer's framework, their discussion could be labelled as largely cumulative – with Diana simply agreeing with Danielle's suggestions – compared to the disputational discussion of Caira and Carmel. However, using our framework, their discussion was similarly classified as largely organisational or monologic talk. Danielle and Diana felt more successful and produced more text than the other pair, but without the tensions and constraints of a true dialogic partner, there was limited development of meaning and a significant focus on task completion. Where Danielle did make deliberate decisions to shape her language to match intended meaning, this was largely in response to her own verbalised thoughts, as opposed to her collaborative peer. Rather than consistently going through a dialectical process of translating inner speech and therefore developing consciousness about the relationship between thought and language when interacting with Diana (Thompson & Wittek, 2016), much of Danielle's

talk took the form of knowledge-telling. Being paired with Diana, a significantly lower prior attaining – as well as shy – pupil, Danielle had limited exposure to interaction and negotiation within her ZPD, a key precursor to writing development (Thompson, 2013). It was only when the teacher intervened and she decided to "redo" an already written paragraph that she entered negotiation within this zone and began more consistent deliberate editing of her verbalised inner speech. Whilst Danielle's monologic dictation towards the beginning of their discussion was similar to that of Caira and Carmel, after her decision to redraft the paragraph, her language mirrored that of the first three pairs as it became increasingly recursive and generative, exploring meaning and then exhibiting volition, deliberate control of words.

7. Conclusion

Perhaps appropriately for an act as complex as developing writing, the data did not provide a single straightforward answer to both research questions:

In relation to the first question, yes, it did appear that the intertextual recontextualisation activity promoted our pupils' deliberate meaning making during the act of writing. Both pairs of pupils frequently engaged in generative talk, using the text as a mediational tool to prompt the exploration of previously unconsidered meanings and to communicate this meaning through appropriation and refinement of words and syntax. As well as acting as a scaffolding tool to close gaps in the pupils' background content and linguistic knowledge, the text acted as an additional dialogic partner, compelling the pupils to make conscious choices as to what they would appropriate or not and, by extension, promoting deliberate meaning making. Interestingly, the two pairs of pupils used the text in a somewhat different way: the higher prior attaining pair largely used the text to both recontexualise and prompt new ideas, thus shaping intended meaning, whilst the lower prior attaining pair heavily relied on the text to appropriate vocabulary and syntax. Without losing sight of

the small sample size and other limitations, this therefore supports the use of collaborative intertextual recontextualisation as a mediational tool to support writing development in the secondary classroom. For these pupils, seemingly by adding an additional layer of problem solving within their ZPD, the activity promoted generative talk and volition regardless of their prior attainment.

In relation to the second question, the collaborative writing activity prompted deliberate meaning making during the act of writing for some pupils, but not all. The high prior attaining pair frequently engaged in generative talk and volition, negotiating meaning with each other, refining and appropriating each other's language and, at different points, each acting as significant others. The collaborative partner also promoted the verbalisation of fragmented inner speech and, therefore, deliberate editing decisions in order that the language more clearly encapsulated thought and intended meaning, thus enabling immediate communication, as well as communication with an abstract reader-audience. For the mixed ability pair, however, this oral text production and editing was largely monologic as the higher prior attaining pupil largely negotiated meaning with her own inner speech or written text. Without a mediational tool – either in the form of a text or peer – within her zone of proximal development, she had limited tensions or constraints and therefore limited problem-solving opportunities to foster deliberate meaning making. The low prior attaining pair, on the other hand, faced the opposite issue and experienced too many unsolvable problems, tensions and constraints to allow for development, as well as lacking the will to work collaboratively. With limited linguistic knowledge and without the presence of an expert text or more significant other to act as a scaffold, the pupils struggled to evaluate each other's language or to develop new meaning. Again, without losing sight of the small sample size and other limitations, this evidence therefore supports collaborative writing as a mediational tool to support writing development in the secondary English classroom, but only to an extent. According to this data, it can be effective if the pupils work

within each other's zones of proximal development and, if the pupils' writing fluency and oral communication is limited by limited linguistic knowledge, then they are likely to benefit more from access to additional voices, whether that be the comments of a teacher or the words of an expert text.

Drawing the answers to these questions together, there are several tentative implications for our school in the further development of our writing pedagogy and, potentially, for other teachers aiming to develop pupils' writing in secondary English classrooms:

Firstly, some of our pupils were able to make meaning in their writing without being exposed to what has been termed 'explicit functionally-oriented grammar teaching' (Myhill, Newman, Watson, 2020). More so than discussing grammatical patterns, the pupils who developed their writing did so through engaging in intertextual recontextualisation: appropriating ideas and consciously and playfully imitating vocabulary and syntax from other voices within and outside of the classroom, which acted as mediational tools. This is not to say that robust grammatical metalanguage would not further develop the pupils' writing, as this was not measured, but that some pupils are able to develop their writing without it.

As the pupils were able to develop their meaning through playing with language and engaging in conscious imitation, it follows that we should possibly be less afraid of plagiarism when pupils are developing their writing. Instead, we should focus on promoting students' use of texts as mediational tools to develop meaning in writing, rather than solely relying on their background knowledge or inner expressive self.

Thirdly, whilst the higher prior attaining pupils were able to develop their writing just through using their peer as a mediational tool, the lower prior attaining pupils benefitted from access to a wider range of voices, including that of an expert text and the teacher. For lower prior attaining pupils,

therefore, a collaborative peer is not always enough to spark generative talk and foster volition, possibly due to their limited implicit linguistic knowledge, meaning that they struggle to evaluate their peer's utterances or devise meaningful alternatives. This also applies to pairs where one of the students is considerably higher prior attaining than the other: if the pupils are working outside of each other's ZPDs, they may struggle to engage in generative talk and to come to shared volution.

It follows from this that, rather than – or at least in addition to – teaching distinct processes of writing of planning, drafting, editing, etc., we should teach students that successful pupil writers engage in a recursive process of drawing on and recontextualising the mediational tools around them to match their intended meaning. The talk data also demonstrated how writers of widely different prior abilities can benefit from this recontextualisation process by drawing on the different resources embedded within voices, whether these be ideas, vocabulary, syntax or organisational features.

Finally, it further follows that silent classrooms and independent writing tasks in which students are without access to resources are not necessarily precursors of students' writing development and may even hinder writing development. Without access to the rich linguistic mediational tools available within classrooms, students may struggle to develop new meanings beyond those which they have already internalised and writing tasks may risk becoming moments for text production, rather than text creation (Myhill, Jones & Wilson, 2016). Instead of seeing other texts and voices as distractions, we should recognise them not only as rich linguistic resources which allow our students to appropriate vocabulary and grammar, but also as dialogic partners who foster students' problem-solving andf deliberate making of meaning.

7.1. Implications for Further Research

Any conclusions drawn from this research are limited due to the small sample size, so a logical next step would be to explore whether the outcomes are mirrored with a larger group of pupils. There also

remains the possibility that the outcomes were impacted by eight of the nine pupils being classified as EAL; it would therefore be interesting to explore the extent to which outcomes differed with a group of native speakers, particularly low prior-attaining native speakers, or to compare outcomes between native and non-native speakers. Due to the data being collected at a time of significant restrictions on teacher and pupil movement, it would also be interesting to explore the impact of the pupils interacting with a wider range of meditational tools under 'normal' conditions, such as with a teacher, learning assistant and wider groups of pupils. Finally, despite our department's hesitancy to teach writing in an asynchronous format, considering the precarious nature of our current freedoms it would be prudent to research how teachers can use linguistic meditational tools to effectively develop pupils' writing remotely.

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