Students’ Perceptions Toward Dyads and Triads in the English Classroom
Naoko Ichii, Shibaura Institute of Technology

Abstract
Collaborative learning such as pair work and group work, has been widely discussed and proven to be an effective tool for teaching English. This study exclusively focuses on a dyad (a pair) and a triad (a group of three) and the students’ perceptions toward these collaborative interactions. 57 second year university students majoring in English, were asked to introduce themselves in dyads and in triads at the beginning of each lesson. The questionnaires were administered to collect the data and the characteristics found in each interaction were categorized respectively. The research results indicated that how they experienced both dyads and triads differed, although they had a positive attitude toward both of them. While participating in dyads is the preferred format for conversational practice as the students could converse quite easily and contribute to the conversation, adopting triad interactions in English lessons may provide a double advantage to students: learning English, and learning communication skills and social skills. This could have some implication when teachers use pair work and group work in English lessons.

Background
> Exclusively focus on a dyad (a pair) and a triad (a group of three) in an English classroom setting.
> Reasons
> 1. Many studies have investigated a pair, a group and individual work. (Fernandez, 2012; Fernandez & Blum, 2013; Sakamoto, 2016; Tsumura, 2013; Williams, 2001)
> 2. Triads are considered as a basic unit of a group which creates a sense of being public. This could have a unique effect on students’ feelings.
> Exclusively focus on students’ perceptions toward dyads and triads in an English classroom setting.
> Reasons
> 1. Few studies have investigated the difference of students’ perceptions between dyads and triads in English classroom setting.
> 2. Psychological aspects could play an important role in promoting a student’s learning English and motivation. (Sakamoto, 2016; Tsumura, 2013)

Research Questions
RQ1: Which of the two interactions, a dyad or a triad, do the students prefer? RQ2: What views do the students have of dyad and triad interactions?

Results
Research Question 1: Which of the two interactions, a dyad or a triad, do the students prefer? (see Chart 1 & 2)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Dyads</th>
<th>Triads</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Easy</td>
<td>Easy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Straight and direct</td>
<td>2 straight and direct</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Close and intense</td>
<td>Close and intense</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Bonded – made new friends</td>
<td>Bonded – made new friends</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Secure and relaxed</td>
<td>Secure and relaxed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Nervous and pressured</td>
<td>Nervous and pressured</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Open</td>
<td>Open</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Research Question 2: What views do the students have of dyad and triad interactions?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Dyads</th>
<th>Triads</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Positive images of dyads and triads: before the interaction – after the interactions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Chart 2</td>
<td>more enjoyable: dyads = triads for future lessons: dyads &gt; triads</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(The difference is minimal.)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reasons for the students’ preference: dyad close relationship with a partner-frequent turn-takings and a sense of responsibility-triads</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Conversation becomes lively content becomes richer communication flows better</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Discussion and Conclusions
Dyad interactions and triad interactions in an English classroom setting.
> RQ 1: Most of the students enjoyed the conversation in both dyads and triads. However, they had a slight preference toward dyad interactions.
> RQ 2: Students’ perceptions were placed into eight categorizations for dyads and ten for triads.
> Participating in dyads is the preferred format for conversational practice. Dyad interactions having only two people, led to a close relationship. However, this also resulted in the students experiencing some pressure, in that they felt a sense of responsibility for actually taking part in the interaction, which could actually force an improvement in their English learning.
> Adopting triad interactions in English lessons may provide a double advantage to students. Triad interactions are more complicated for the students because having three people in a group, brings upon the realization that they need to take care to be inclusive of all participants. This can result in feeling uncomfortable and confused. On the other hand, this negative aspect presents them with an opportunity to learn communication skills and social skills.

Given these beneficial impacts, both dyad and triad interactions could boost students’ motivation and promote English language learning. In order for students to become more actively involved in the English lessons, teachers should incorporate dyad and triad interactions more frequently and keep in mind the psychological factors when planning their lesson.

Limitations
- Other ways of making dyads and triads are possible.
- The number of participants was small.
- The use of multiple data analysis such as triangulation should be incorporated.
- A different framework should be explored and applied.
- Quantitative data should also be included.
- Different task types should be employed.

Contact Information
Naoko Ichii
Email: ichikin0821@gmail.com
Note: An earlier version was presented at the English and American Literature and Linguistics Society on December 1 in 2019, and was subsequently revised and edited.

References