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The Effect of Pushed Output Collaborative Tasks on the Writing Skills of EFL Learners

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I dedicate this thesis to

my wife without whose constant encouragement and care

it was virtually impossible to carry out this study

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Abstract

There is less published research about how teachers in EFL contexts respond to students who are relatively less mature and less competent L٢ writers. While writing researchers have examined various issues concerning peer and teacher response in writing-oriented classes, little research has centered on the effect of collaborative tasks particularly dictogloss on writing skills. Output collaborative tasks are among the methods applied to enhance students' writing skills.

The purpose of this study is in twofold. First, it is intended to compare the effect of pushed output collaborative tasks in particular dictogloss on overall writing quality of Iranian EFL learners at high , intermediate and low proficiency level.Second, it is meant to examine this effect on male vs. female groups. The participants were ١٢٤ Iranian EFL students at Iran Language Institute (ILI)ranging in age from ١٥ to ٥٠.

The study led into three main conclusions:First, the present study found that dictogloss had a significant effect on writing proficiency and did help students reduce their errors. The difference between the experimental group and the control group was significant (T=-٧,٨١ P<.٠٥).

Second, it was found thatlow proficiency learners (EL) made more progress in their post-test compared to intermediate ones, and intermediate ones made more progress in their post-test compared to high proficiency ones (F= ٥٦,٨٩ df=٢ P<.٠٥). Third, it was found that the effect of dictogloss is statistically independent of gender for all groups. The difference between the two groups is not significant as the means for the male group

(١٦,٩٤) and female one (١٧,١٢) resulted in **t** value which is so low (t = -.٦٣٩, p=.٥٢٣) not significant at p<.٠٥.

The findings of this research would be of interest for the language teachers, by helping them how tohelp students enhance writing skills effectively.

The researchers recommend implementing collaborative tasks for improving the students' grammatical accuracy and general writing skill sincesignificant improvements in accuracy can result from collaborative tasks and teacher corrective feedback on students' errors. The study has also demonstrated that dictogloss is more beneficial to low proficiency learners than high proficiency ones. Therefore, teachers may find it helpful to know the importance of collaborative tasks for low proficiency students on their grammatical errors and writing skills.The writing instructors can also integrate collaborative tasks into the writing classroom with confidence that it canbe effective in promoting overall writing quality of male and female learners.

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CHAPTER 1
Introduction

1.1 Introduction

No matter how fluent language learners are at speaking, they sure have challenges in second language writing. Second language writing became an important instructional issue in the mid-20th century since writing would enable learners to plan and rethink the communication process (Celce-Murcia, 2001). Due to the fact that writing involves not just a graphic representation of speech, but the development and presentation of thoughts in a structured way, it is often considered to be the hardest skills even for native speakers of a language.

Many scholars believe that collaborative learning will work because the tasks often require positive interdependence among the students. And when students know that they are all in the same boat, they will be motivated to help their teammates, to tutor them or practice with them. In writing too, if the students try to share their knowledge and try to use the experience of their teammates, they will gain more. When they are writing individually, there is no motivation for them and they don't try to use their full competency and energy.

Writing skill is a production skill where learners should focus more on form in order to improve their accuracy. It indicates what learners notice in input becomes intake for learning. In other words, the first condition for converting input to intake is noticing. Ellis (1994, p. 708) defines intake as "that portion of the input that learners notice and therefore take into temporary memory". According to Ellis (1994), corrective feedback provides such "noticing" by drawing learner's attention and therefore helps learners with opportunities to produce comprehensible output. This won't be realized

unless they can work in some kind of group so that they can interact with each other and change the input into intake.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Output collaborative tasks are among the methods applied to enhance students' writing skills. Despite the general belief that L2 teachers should provide corrective feedback on the students' writing task, there is little agreement on which kind of feedback (teacher vs. peers) is more likely to enable students to improve their grammatical accuracy and overall writing quality. Most research about the impact of teacher versus. Peer feedback on students writing proficiency investigated the effects a fresh on students' revision (i.e., from one draft of a paper to the next) rather than the new writing task.

There is less published research about how teachers in EFL contexts responding to students who are relatively less mature and less competent L2 writers. While writing, researchers have examined various issues concerning peer and teacher response in writing-oriented classes.However little research has centered on the effect of collaborative tasks particularly dictogloss on writing skills. Moreover, previous collaborative studies have been conducted in the United States with advanced students, and most of them at college or university level.The present study was thus motivated by the above-mentioned limitations of the previous studies. The prime purpose of this study is to investigate the effect of collaborative tasks particularly dictogloss on EFL students' grammatical accuracy in writing.