Cooperative Writing through Dictogloss: An Investigation Regarding Accuracy and Complexity

Massoud Yaghoubi-Notash[1] (PhD)
Farzaneh Abbasi Shahir[2]

[1, 2] English Department, Faculty of Persian Literature & Foreign Languages, University of Tabriz, Tabriz, Iran P O BOX: 5166616471

Abstract: *Despite rich potentials for research, theorizing and practice, cooperative learning has not received a due acknowledgement in education and particularly in ESL/EFL. Building upon humanistic notions such as social community, CL lays emphasis on group potentials and working towards a common goal. This study, against the background of studies in literature, compared individualistic and cooperative instructional approaches to writing accuracy and complexity elicited through dictogloss. Participants in the study were 32 male and female EFL learners taking spoken English courses. The writing tasks were also selected through a rating process by the teachers and the students themselves from among topics mostly contained in their textbooks. Accuracy and complexity were operationalized as the percentage of error-free sentences, and the percentage of error-free sentences, respectively. Having met the assumptions, the Independent-Samples T-test was employed to compare the means of accuracy and complexity data across the two groups. Findings indicated a significantly higher accuracy for cooperative group, but complexity did not vary as a matter of cooperative engagement in dictogloss-elicited writing. Implications are discussed.*

Key word: cooperative learning, dictogloss, accuracy, complexity

Introduction

Education as a system is primarily commissioned to transfer knowledge, which "is collectively constructed and shared" (Malmqvist, 2005, :128) and is, therefore, inherently cooperative in structure, mechanisms and the ultimate goal. The concept of cooperation, however, has traced a winding path of development before it could be theoretically formulated. The earliest attempt to theorize cooperation began in the 1700s by J. Lancaster and A. Bell. Around two centuries had to go by before a deeper appreciation of cooperative human behavior when scientists like Dewy inaugurated a trend of thought to highlight the educational and instructional value of cooperation (see Klimoviene & Statkeviciene, 2006).

Despite the theoretical merits, cooperative learning was quite unknown and unused for decades due to the cultural resistance mainly rooted in the social Darwinist paradigm that enhanced competition among people with slogans such as, 'it's a dog-eat-dog world' and 'survival of the

fittest'. Therefore, it remained, at best, an alternative to competitive approach rather than a proliferating approach until the 1970s. As competition began to be questioned, cooperative techniques began to be accepted as a more forward-looking approach to learners, education and instruction.

Definition of Cooperative Learning

There are different definitions for cooperative learning, but a number of the most remarkable one follow:

1. Cooper and Mueck (1990) believe that "CL is a structured and systematic instructional design in which small groups work together toward a common goal." (p. 68-76).

2. According to Slavin (1992) CL is the set of instructional methods which help students to work together in small heterogeneous groups toward a common goal. Later, Slavin (1995) delineated that:

   > Cooperative learning refers to a variety of teaching methods in which students work in small groups to help one another learn academic content. In cooperative classrooms, students are expected to help each other, to discuss and argue with each other, to assess each other's current knowledge and fill in gaps in each other's understanding (p. 2).

3. Johnson and Johnson (1994) pointed out that CL is not just asking students to work together in groups; conscious thoughts, however, is needed to make the learning process as successful as possible. Moreover, CL should create inclusive classroom environments to meet all the students' needs.

4. According to Millis and Cottell (1998), CL is a technique that students use to work together and succeed as a team. They de-emphasize the use of competition in class.

5. According to Jacobs, Power, and Loh (2002) CL embraces the principles and techniques for helping students work together more effectively.
6. Keyser (2000) sees cooperative learning as one variety of active learning which structures students into groups with defined roles for each students and a task for the group to accomplish.

7. Cooperative learning can be characterized as a social process in which knowledge is acquired through the successful interaction between group members (Cohen, 1994).

8. The instructional use of small groups so that students work together to maximize their own and each other's learning (Jacobs, McCafferty, & Iddings, 2006a).

9. Principals and techniques for helping students work together more effectively (Jacobs, 2004 :1).

10. CL is according to (Maden, 2011) a

> Group learning activity organized so that learning is dependent on the socially structured exchange of information between learners in groups and in which each learner is held accountable for his or her own learning and is motivated to increase the learning of others. (p. 360).

Proponents of cooperative learning adopt various approaches and stress different pedagogical dimensions; however, the beneficial aspects which can be enumerated are:

a. enhanced self-esteem (e.g. Ghaith & Yaghi, 1998; Lazarowitz 1994),
b. cooperation spirit (e.g. Dinc, 2009; Prichard, Stratford & Bizoo, 2006)
c. team work for learning (e.g. Clinton & Kohlmeyer, 2005),
d. creativity (e.g. Majidi, Kahbazi & Ghebleh, 2007)
e. motivation for learning (see Mehdizadeh, Nojabaee, & Asgari, 2013)
f. positive interdependence (e.g. Jacobs & Small, 2003; McCafferty, Jacobs & Christina, 2006)
g. active and simultaneous involvement of the majority of learners in the classroom context (e.g. Smith, 2011)
h. individual accountability / personal responsibility (see Johnson & Johnson, 2009a),
i. (face-to-face) promotive interaction (see Johnson & Johnson, 2009b)
j. appropriate use of social skills (see Klimoviene & Statkeviciene, 2006; Gillies and Khan, 2008)
k. group processing (see Johnson & Johnson, 2009a).

Cooperative learning and language learning experience

Conventionally, language learning takes place in the same context as does the education at large. What characterizes these contexts is typically the rigorous structures and above all frozen environments where the learners will have to sit quietly and listen and take notes more or less at the cost of suppressing their tendency to socialization. This is in sharp contrast to the fundamental goals of education since

a) students and teachers have strong desires to contact and communication with others;

b) many students come to school in order to be with friends;

c) each student, teacher, and community member has a strong desire to be accepted, to belong, and sometimes influence others.

Baines, Blatchford & Kutnick (2008) believe that

> Almost in all of the language classes that you step in, you will confront a kind of grouping. Regardless of the kinds of the groupings and whether or not they are being structured, this shows the general acceptance of cooperative learning both by educational policy makers and by teachers. (p.57)

This can be consistent with interactionist approach believe in and according to Jacobs (1997), "there are many parallels between CL and the work of the interactionists in language acquisition"(p. 2). Another idea advocating cooperative learning comes from Harris (1998). Harris (ibid as cited in Jacobs 2003, p.3), holds that "peers' influence on children and adolescents is stronger than that of parents and other adults." Her ideas may have been influenced by Vygotsky, who posited that students learn from someone that is more skilled rather than powerful (Bawn, 2007, p.4). Cognitive psychologists, also, emphasize the role of learners rather than teachers and materials (Slavin, 1995 as cited in Murphy & Jacobs, 2000). Therefore, process gains more attention than product. As stated in Murphy and Jacobs (2000), teachers working from learner-centered, cognitivist perspectives try to do their best to facilitate students' learning since they know they cannot control it.

Findings on cooperative learning

Following Baines et al. (2008), the literature review over the last decade of the twentieth lead to a range of conclusions that can be summarized below:

a) children work better in smaller than in larger groups,

b) the cooperative and collaborative approaches to language learning are generally more effective than individualistic or competitive approaches,

c) pro-social and pro-school attitudes improve considerably in cooperative or collaborative situations.

Earlier studies on cooperative learning mostly focused on its psychological aspects. Gunderson and Johnson (1980) and Slavin (1995) reported that cooperative learning could develop positive attitudes towards learning and towards other learners. Clement, Dornyei and Noels (1994), Szostek (1994), and Ushioda (1996) suggested a positive effect on enhancing intrinsic motivation. Nichols and Miller (1994) advocated that cooperative learning creates solidarity

among team members through their working together to achieve group goals. Also, Daniel (1994) indicated that cooperative learning increases social backing for academic achievement.

Johnson and Johnson (1989 as cited in Johnson & Johnson, 2009) found out that cooperative efforts, when compared with competitive and individualistic experiences, promoted considerably greater interpersonal attraction among individuals. More recently, Ghaith (2002) could show that cooperative learning and the degree of academic support are positively correlated with achievement, whereas learners' feelings of alienation from school were found to be negatively correlated with achievement. Bejarano, Levine, Ohlstain, and Steiner (1997) suggested that the use of social and modified interaction strategies by small cooperative groups helped upgrade the communicative competence of EFL learners, Thomson (1998) reported that using CL increased opportunities for interaction and enhanced learning autonomy in a Japanese language classroom at an Australian university

Stevens (2003) observed that students experiencing cooperative instruction outperformed students experiencing traditional-based reading instruction on the measures of reading vocabulary, reading comprehension, and language expressions. Wigglesworth and Storch (2009) found that although fluency and complexity could not be improved through pair work accuracy did in fact improve as a result of engagement in cooperative tasks

Jalilifar (2010) investigated the impact of Student Team Achievement Division (STAD) and Group Investigation (GI) on students' reading comprehension achievement of English as a foreign language. The results revealed that STAD is a more effective technique in improving EFL reading comprehension achievement whereas GI and CI didn't enhance reading comprehension significantly (Jalilifar, 2010). Chen and Goswami (2011) indicated that improvement could not be attributed robustly to cooperative technique effect. Er (2012) investigated the effects of cooperative learning techniques on foreign language self-concept and the relationship between the foreign language self-concept and academic success. The findings demonstrated that the effect of cooperative learning on foreign language self-concept was insignificant. Moreover, there was no significant correlation between foreign language self-concept and reading comprehension scores (ibid).

As it has been stated so far, literature on cooperative learning has shown diverse outcomes. Although many studies have proved cooperative learning as a successful method there are reports of no significant difference between CL and the traditional methods. Moreover some studies have indicated mixed results. This conflicting evidence accompanied by some researchers' belief that cooperative learning cannot be conducted in Asian countries due to the passivity of the students (Gow & Kember,1990; Go & Mok, 1995 as cited in Liang, 2002) motivated the present study.

Dictogloss as cooperative elicitation technique

Language learning tasks are defined as goal-oriented classroom activities in which language learners exchange information and communicate to achieve a meaningful outcome (Nabei, 1996). Dictation as a teaching and learning technique has been used for so long especially in second language education. In a dictation procedure the teacher reads a text slowly and repeatedly and the students have to write exactly what they hear. The rationale behind dictation has been questioned since it is considered to be a mechanical form of literacy in which students only produce a copy of what the teacher says without doing any thinking (Jacobs & Small, 2003: 1). For those interested in learners' internalization of linguistic knowledge, like Swain and her colleagues, dictogloss was an answer (Nabei, 1996).

Dictogloss, a dictation-based task was introduced by Ruth Wajnryb in 1990 as a substitution for the traditional dictation. Unlike dictation which is an individualistic task dictogloss is a "collaborative task that promotes communication competence through the use of all four skills (listening, reading, writing and speaking) while primarily shining a light on grammar" (Smith, 2011, p.69). Another important difference between dictation and dictogloss is that dictation requires learners to replicate what they have heard word by word, but dictogloss allows learners to use their own linguistic and grammatical knowledge to produce a parallel text as long as their production is grammatical and is carrying the same content as the original (Kondo, Sano, Tashiro, et al, 2012). Following Smith (2011), dictogloss:

- allows L2 learners to process and activate language in a collaborative writing task,
- promotes writing to learn (meaning making), rather than learning to write (skill),
- encourages learners to focus on form,
- encourages learners to think critically and take risks in their language use,
- result in synchronous interaction with means that more students speak more often.

Moreover, in many cases, students are so busy reconstructing text and collaborating with each other that they overcome their reluctance to perform naturally in L2.

With the background reviewed of the cooperative learning on the one hand and dictogloss on the other, the present study seeks to answer the following questions:

1) Is there a significant difference between cooperative versus individualistic performance of EFL learners in terms of their writing accuracy?

2) Is there a significant difference between cooperative versus individualistic performance of EFL learners in terms of their writing complexity?

3. Methodology
3.1. Participants & context of the study

For the purpose of the study, thirty-two male and female intermediate level students were chosen from among a private language institute learners in Tabriz. The selection was made based on a standard proficiency test, i.e. Cambridge FCE examination. They were divided into two equal groups of 16. Male and female students were not segregated since the idea behind cooperative learning is inclusion rather than exclusion. All of the students were from Tabriz and spoke the same mother tongue, namely Azerbaijani and they aged 20-25. In the Iranian context, English is taught and learned as a foreign language both in state-run schools and in private language institutes; however, there is a big difference in the quantity and the quality of the language learnt in these two different situations since the former makes language learning an obligatory task whereas the latter doesn't. As the aim of the researcher was to implement cooperative learning, more eager and enthusiastic students were needed. As it is usually the case, students learning English in state schools are not that much interested as those learning it in private language institutes. Therefore, the researcher chose an English language Institute in Tabriz named Jahad-e-Daneshgahi. The instructional materials in this institute are *Summit* series with *504 Absolutely Essential Word*s (used as a supplementary material**.**

3.2. Materials

First of all, a proficiency test had to be administered to ensure inter-group homogeneity. That was Cambridge FCE examination. The focus of the present study was on the students' writings. In order to make the students attend to writing and at the same time avoid uncontrolled writing, dictogloss technique was used. Of course, care had to be taken in selecting the texts that were to be used in this technique. Following the literature on dictogloss, students should be interested in the topics of these texts. To guarantee learner interest in texts, lists of topics were prepared and rated regarding personal interests by teachers and students. The selected topics then helped the researcher compile the texts used in dictogloss. The data gathered was then analyzed using SPSS software, version 19.

3.3. Data Collection Procedures

First the researcher chose four intermediate level classes in Jahad-e-Daneshgahi institute and administered Cambridge's FCE test in order to make sure that the participants are roughly at the same level of proficiency. Based on the results of the FCE test, 32 students out of 48 students were chosen as the participants of the study. The participants were then divided into two equal groups (16 each). Male and female students were not separated since the idea behind cooperative learning is of inclusion rather than exclusion. Also, considering real life situations one may come to work with an opposite gender colleague, therefore there is no point in separating males and females. One of the groups served as the control group in which the students were instructed to

deal with the task materials individualistically which is the most common practice in most of the classes in Iran. The other group served as the experimental group of the study in which students worked in pairs cooperatively. The next step was to prepare the texts of dictogloss. To do this, the researcher made a list of ten topics and asked five teachers at the same institute, teaching intermediate levels to rate them based on their interests (see appendix C). Five highly ranked topics (Figure 3.3) were then given to the participants to be rated according to their interests (see appendix D) and three highly voted topics were chosen as the dictogloss topics, namely Music, Enjoying the World, and Money Matters. The rating results appear in Figure 3.4. The texts used in the technique were all taken from the participants' current or past books in order to ensure topic familiarity and prevent bewilderment on the side of the participants. Dictogloss technique was conducted three times on each group to have a stable result of the participants' performance and avoid affecting factors such as fatigue, sleepiness, boredom, and not feeling well. The average of the three performances for each participant functioned as one performance for the participant.

According to Inoue (2010) the most commonly used measurements for these aspects of writing are the percentage of error-free sentences and the number of words per T-units respectively. Therefore, a variance of these measurements was used in this study.

4. Data Analysis

After the participants were assigned to two different groups of cooperative learning (pair work) and individualistic learning, Dictogloss was implemented 3 times for each group. The next step was to gather the students' writings and analyze them with respect to syntactic accuracy and complexity. The measurements used in the present study were the ratio of error-free clauses and the mean length of error-free clauses for syntactic accuracy and complexity respectively. Clause has been chosen as the unit of analysis in this study since the participants were not proficient enough to produce longer correct strings of words. After obtaining accuracy and complexity data, the type of statistical measure had to be determined. Taking into account that

a) both of the variables, syntactic accuracy and complexity, are ratio variables,
b) there were two independent variables,
c) the data under the investigation are in written forms, it guarantees the independence of observation or the data gathering procedure,
d) normality tests (Kolmogrov-Smirnov test) consolidated normality of distribution for both accuracy and complexity (see Tables 4.2, 4.3, 4.4, and 4.5 alongside)
e) normality of variance employing Levene's test (see tables

Table 4.1.
Test of normality for cooperative group regarding accuracy

		Kolmogorov-Smirnov[a]					Shapiro-Wilk
	Group	Statistic	d*f*	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Accuracy	C	0.20	16	0.08	0.92	16	0.18

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

C = cooperative

As can be seen in Table 4.1., absence of normality of distribution could not be statistically significant; therefore, the cooperative group data on accuracy distributed normally beyond any chance.

Table 4.2.

Test of normality for cooperative group regarding complexity

		Kolmogorov-Smirnov[a]					Shapiro-Wilk
	Group	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Complexiy	C	0.17	16	0.20[*]	0.96	16	0.60

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

*. This is a lower bound of the true significance.

C = cooperative

As illustrated in Table 4.2., lack of normality of distribution is not significant as far as the cooperative groups' complexity data is concerned.

Table 4.3.

Test of normality for individualistic group regarding accuracy

		Kolmogorov-Smirnov[a]					Shapiro-Wilk
	Group	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Accuracy	I	0.09	16	0.20[*]	0.977	16	0.93

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

*. This is a lower bound of the true significance.

Note. I = individualistic group

Table 4.3. clearly shows that absence of normal distribution in individualistic group's accuracy data is not statistically significant. In other words, the data shows normality of distribution beyond all chance.

Table 4.4.

Test of normality for individualistic group regarding complexity

	Group	Kolmogorov-Smirnov[a]	Shapiro-Wilk

		Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Complexity	I	0 .136	16	0.20*	0 .939	16	0.33

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

*. This is a lower bound of the true significance.

I = individualist

As can be seen in Table 4.4., the null hypothesis in Kolmogorov-Smirnov tests (normality of distribution) could not be rejected. In other words, non-normality was not statistically significant, and normality assumptions could be met in terms of the individualistic groups' complexity data.

Table 4.5.

Test of Homogeneity of Variance

		Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
Complexity	Based on Mean	0.36	1	30	0.55
	Based on Median	0.36	1	30	0.55
	Based on Median and with adjusted df	0.36	1	29.87	0.55
	Based on trimmed mean	0.39	1	30	0.53

Table 4.6.

Test of Homogeneity of Variance

		Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
Accuracy	Based on Mean	0.25	1	30	0.61
	Based on Median	0.04	1	30	0.83
	Based on Median and with adjusted df	0.04	1	29.62	0.83
	Based on trimmed mean	0.26	1	30	0.61

A glance at the tables 4.5. and 4.6. can assure that the variances of the groups are the same, and therefore they are comparable. With all the assumptions met, the right statistical method is independent samples t-test.

To answer the first question, "*Is there a significant difference between cooperative versus individualistic performance of EFL learners in terms of their writing accuracy?*", the researcher had to compare the average performance of the two groups with respect to syntactic accuracy. Table 4.7 illustrates the average performance of each group.

Table 4.7.

Cooperative and individualistic performance group statistics in terms of accuracy

	Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Accuracy	C	16	60.5700	15.28	3.820
	I	16	37.9544	16.39	4.10

C = Cooperative group; I = Individualistic group

As can be seen in Table 4.8, the mean difference in accuracy between the individualistic and cooperative group was significant. In accordance, a look back at Table 4.7 can give us the basis for comparison. To put it differently, now that the difference is significant, the group that has a higher mean (i.e. cooperative group) has performed much better than the other (i.e. individualistic group).

Table 4.8.

Independent samples t-test results for

t-value	df	Mean differences	Sig.
4.39	30	23.66	0.00*

The second research question that was posed was: "*How does cooperative versus individualistic performance of a task influence the syntactic complexity of Iranian EFL learners' written products?*" In order to answer this question, the researcher had to compare the average performance of each of the groups regarding syntactic complexity.

Table 4.9.

Cooperative and individualistic performance group statistics in terms of complexity

	Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Complexity	C	16	6.53	1.67	0.42
	I	16	5.39	1.81	0.45

Note. C = cooperative group; I = individualistic group

Independent-samples T-test was run for these two groups and the results can be seen in Table 4.10. Considering the table, it is evident that there is not much difference between groups' performance with respect to syntactic complexity. This fact is obvious from the statistics as the level of significant is higher than 0.05 (0.075 > 0.05). Means of the two groups do not seem to be different, that is 6.53 and 5.39 for cooperative and individualistic groups, respectively.

Table 4.10.

Independent Samples Test

t-value	df	Mean differences	Sig.
1.84	30	1.137	0.07*

* not significant at $p < 0.05$

5. Discussion and Conclusion

The first research question concerned the syntactic accuracy of the EFL learners' written productions and whether a significant variation could be achieved as a matter of cooperative involvement in task performance versus individualistic performance. In other words, the study primarily sought to compare the two methods in terms of accuracy of written performance. Findings could show that the cooperative group outperformed the individualistic group. This finding can be attributed to the conceptualizations and findings by Bejarano, Levine, Ohlstain, and Steiner (1997); Clement, Dornyei and Noels (1994) ; Clinton & Kohlmeyer, (2005) , Cohen, (1994) , Cooper and Mueck (1990), Jacobs & Small, (2003); McCafferty, Jacobs & Christina, Daniel (1994)' Ghaith (2002); Gunderson and Johnson (1980), Slavin (1995), Jacobs, (2004), Jacobs, McCafferty, & Iddings, (2006a), Jacobs, Power, and Loh (2002), Jalilifar (2010), Johnson & Johnson, (2009a), Johnson & Johnson, (2009b), Johnson and Johnson (1989), Johnson and Johnson (1994), Keyser (2000), Maden, (2011), Mehdizadeh, Nojabaee, & Asgari, (2013); Millis and Cottell (1998); Nichols and Miller (1994); Slavin (1992); Stevens (2003); Szostek (1994), and Ushioda (1996); Thomson (1998); Wigglesworth and Storch (2009). On the other hand, Er (2012) and Gow & Kember, (1990 as cited in Go and Mok, 1995) do not lend support to the accuracy enhancement. Interestingly enough, the teachers reported that the learners who engaged in cooperative performance demonstrated a growth of enthusiasm which led to a more cheerful environment in the class. However, there were no reports of the kind from the classes engaged in individualistic performance. Also, they said that students perceived the task as a quiz towards which they were reluctant. Therefore, the results advocate the idea of implementing cooperative learning methods in ESL/EFL classes.

The second research question of the study concerned the syntactic complexity of EFL learners' written products and whether cooperative versus individualistic performance of a task had any impacts on it. Results obtained through employment of the appropriate statistical analysis, the two different conditions (cooperative vs. individualistic) didn't affect the learners' performance significantly. These results are in sharp contrast to the most of the studies already cited in the review of literature, i.e. Bejarano, Levine, Ohlstain, and Steiner (1997); Clement, Dornyei and Noels (1994); Clinton & Kohlmeyer, (2005) , Cohen, (1994) , Cooper and Mueck (1990), Jacobs & Small, (2003); McCafferty, Jacobs & Christina, Daniel (1994)' Ghaith (2002); Gunderson and Johnson (1980), Slavin (1995), Jacobs, (2004), Jacobs, McCafferty, & Iddings, (2006a), Jacobs, Power, and Loh (2002), Jalilifar (2010), Johnson & Johnson, (2009a), Johnson & Johnson, (2009b), Johnson and Johnson (1989), Johnson and Johnson (1994), Keyser (2000), Maden, (2011), Mehdizadeh, Nojabaee, & Asgari, (2013); Millis and Cottell (1998); Nichols and Miller (1994); Slavin (1992); Stevens (2003); Szostek (1994), and Ushioda (1996); Thomson (1998); Wigglesworth and Storch (2009). Contradicting the earlier supportive effect, the fact that complexity couldn't be improved is in line with Er (2012) and Gow & Kember, (1990 as cited in Go and Mok, 1995).

Vercellotti (2012, p.2) cites Skehan and Foster (1997) and Yuan and Ellis (2003) who have reported the existence of a trade-off between the components of CAF (complexity, accuracy, and fluency) with whom the results of the present study are in compliance. From cognitive information processing framework a competition between CAF elements has been anticipated due to the limited attentional resources. In other words, learners cannot attend to all aspects of language performance simultaneously because it is greater than their capacity. Hence, they prioritize their language performance. It can be delineated that despite some researchers' beliefs cooperative learning can be implemented in Asian countries as well as other countries.

As seen in this study, engaging learners in their own learning processes and encouraging them to help each other yielded the best results towards improving syntactic accuracy. Therefore, this study will have some important pedagogical implications both for teachers and learners. The strongest implication can be that through cooperative instructional approach more communicative and pedagogical needs can be addressed. Awareness raising in teachers and learners about the potentials of cooperative techniques, especially dictogloss, can promote a sense of responsibility and accountability. Teaching/learning process may be aided in this way by having the teachers step aside and let the learners share, negotiate, co-construct the communicative situation and practice learner autonomy. Also, cooperative learning is expected to improve integrative motivation to deal with the process rather than the product.

It is clear that teachers are usually trained before entering their classes, therefore those involved in teacher education and TTC courses can also benefit from the results of the study. They can reconsider their syllabuses and rely more confidently on the implementation of cooperative techniques of learning. Teacher educators should bear in mind that using cooperative learning in pre-service and in-service courses provides the teachers experience it from the learners' perspectives which in turn may lead to better implementation of cooperative learning in classes. On the other hand, research in SLA can shed light on various dimensions of cooperative learning through examining classroom context as a social community.

Syllabus designers are the last but not least important authorities who should consider making use of cooperative learning. They can distinguish parts in a syllabus for which syntactic accuracy is needed and recommend cooperative learning for those parts (if not all the parts).

References

Aminloo, M. S. (2013). "The effect of collaborative writing on EFL learners writing ability at elementary level", *Journal of language teaching and research*, 4, pp. 801-806.

Bromberg, M., Liebb, J., Jackson, A., Traiger, A., Buren, M. V. , 2005, *504 Absolutely Essential Words,* USA, Barron's Educational Series.

Chang, J.H. , 2003, *The effects of various ability groupings on learning attitude and academic achievement of cooperative learning*, Taipei, Taiwan, Tamkang University Press.

Chen, H. U. & Goswami, J. S. ,2011, "Structuring Cooperative Learning in Teaching English Pronunciation" *English Language Teaching,* 4, pp. 111-123.

Chen, M. L. ,2005, The effects of the cooperative learning instructional approach on Taiwanese EFL students' motivation, English listening, reading, and speaking competencies. Unpublished doctoral thesis, La Sierra University, Riverside, California, United States. Retrieved September 2012 from: http://www.iingroups.com/idl/EBSCOhost

Chiu, N.Y. ,2002, *Cooperative learning in one junior high school English classroom: An action research,* Taipei, Taiwan, National Normal University Press.

Cooper, J. & Mueck, R. ,1990, "Student involvement in learning: Cooperative learning and college instruction", *Journal on excellence in college teaching,* 1, pp. 68-76.

Coulman, F. ,1989, *The Writing Systems of The World,* United Kingdom, Basil Blackwell.

Dinc, A. P. ,2009, "Experimental evaluation of the effects of cooperative learning on kindergarten children's mathematics ability", *International Journal of Educational Research ,* 48, pp. 370 – 380 .

Er, M. ,2012, "Boosting Foreign Language Self-Concept in Language Classrooms through Cooperative Learning Activities", *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences,* 69, pp. 535-544.

Feigenbaum, E. J. ,2007, *The Role of Language Anxiety in Teacher-Fronted Versus Small Group Interaction in Spanish as a Foreign Language: How is Pronunciation Accuracy Affected?* Unpublished MA thesis, University of Pittsburg.

Finkbeiner, C. & Koplin, C. ,2002, "A cooperative approach for facilitating intercultural education", Reading Online, 6(3). Retrieved August 2012 from: http://www.readingonline.org/newliteracies/lit_index.asp?HREF=/newliteracies/

Finkbeiner, C. & Fehling, S. , 2006, Investigating the role of awareness and multiple perspectives in intercultural education. In: P. R. Schmidt & C. Finkbeiner (Eds.), *ABC's of cultural understanding and communication: National and international adaptations* (pp.93-110). Greenwich, CT: Information Age Publishing.

Finkbeiner, C. ,2004, "Cooperation and collaboration in a foreign language teacher training program: The LMR-plus model", in E. G. Cohen, C. M. Brody & M. Sapon-Shevin (eds.), *Teaching cooperative learning: The challenge for teacher education.* Albany, NY, State University of New York Press, pp. 111- 127.

Fogarty, R. ,1999, "Architects of the intellect", *Educational leadership*, 57 (3), pp. 76-78.

Gaith, G. & Yaghi, M.H. ,1998, "Effect of cooperative learning acquisition of second language rules and mechanics", *System*, 26, pp. 223-234.

Ghaith, G. M., 2002, "The Relationship between Cooperative Learning, Perceptions of Social Support, and Academic Achievement", *System,* 30, pp. 263-273.

Hudson, G. , 2000, *Essential Introductory Linguistics.* USA: Blackwell.

Inoue, C. , 2010, "Investigating the Sensitivity of the Measures of Fluency, Accuracy, Complexity and Idea Units with a Narrative Task", *Papers from the Lancaster University Postgraduate Conference in Linguistics and Language Teaching,* 4,pp. 1-24.

Jacobs, G. (2004, September). *Cooperative Learning: Theory, Principles, and Techniques*. Paper presented at the 1st International Online Conference on Second and Foreign Language Teaching and Research. Retrieved from http://www.readingmatrix.com/confrence/pp/proceedings/jacobs.pdf

Jacobs, G. M., McCafferty, S. G., Iddings, C. , 2006, "Introduction", in S. G. McCafferty, G. M. Jacobs, & Iddings, C. (eds.), *Cooperative learning and second language teaching*. New York, Cambridge University Press, pp. 3-8.

Jacobs, G. M., Power, M. A., & Loh, W. I. , 2002, *The Teacher's Sourcebook for Cooperative Learning: Practical Techniques, Basic Principles, and Frequently Asked Questions,* Thousand Oaks, CA, Corwin Press.

Jalilifar, A. ,2010, "The Effect of Cooperative Learning Techniques on College Students' Reading Comprehension", *System,* 38, pp. 96-108.

Johnson, D. D. P, Stopka, P . & Knights, S. , 2003, "The puzzle of human cooperation", *Nature,* 421, pp. 911–912.

Johnson, D. W., Johnson, R. T., & Holubec, E. J. , 1994, *New Circles Of Learning: Cooperation in the Classroom and School.* Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Johnson, D. W., Johnson, R. T., & Smith, K. A. ,1998, *Active Learning: Cooperation in the College Classroom*, Edina, MN: Interaction Book Company.

Kao, E.S. ,2003, *The effectiveness of small-group discussion on the improvement of EFL learners' reading ability in large,*Taipei, Taiwan, Tamkang University Press.

Keyser, W.M. ,2000, "Active learning and cooperative learning: Understanding the differences and using both styles effectively", *Research strategies,* 17, pp. 35-44.

Lazarowitz , R . ,1994, "Setting academic achievement and affective outcomes" *Journal of research in science teaching ,* 31, pp. 1121-1131 .

Liang, T. , 2002, *Implementing cooperative learning in EFL teaching***:** *Process and effects.* Retrieved August 2011, from: http://www.asian-efljournal.com /Thesis_ Liang_T sailing.pdf

Maden, D. , 2011, *Cooperative Learning in ELT: A Literature Review.* Paper presented at the 1st International Conference on Foreign Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics, Sarajevo.

Majidi, Z., Khabazi, M. & Ghebleh, F. ,2006, "The attitude of participants in Arak population research base towards communication skills, team work and boosting creativity workshops at Arak University of Medical Sciences, Summer 2005", *Arak medical science university research journal,* pp. 54-60.

Malmqvist, A., 2005, "How Does Group Discussion in Reconstruction Tasks Affect Written Language Output?", *Language awareness,* 14, pp. 128-141.

McCafferty, S. G., Jacobs, G.M., & Christina, D.I. ,2006, *Cooperative Learning And Second Language Teaching.* New York, Cambridge.

McCaffety, S.G., Jacobs, G.M., & DaSilva Iddings, A.S. ,2006, *Cooperative Learning and Second Language Teaching.* Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

Mehdizadeh, S. , Nojabaee, S., Asgari, M.H. ,2013, "The effect of cooperative learning on math anxiety, help seeking behavior", *Journal of basic and applied science research,* 3, pp. 1185-1190.

Millis, B.J., & Cottell, P.G. ,1998, *Cooperative Learning for Higher Education Faculty.* Phoenix, Pryx Press.

Oxford, R., 1997, "Cooperative learning, collaborative learning, and interaction: Three communicative strands in the language classroom", *Modern Language Journal, 81,* pp. 443-56.

Porto, M. ,2001, "Cooperative writing response groups and self-evaluation", *ELT Journal,* 55(1), pp. 38-46.

Prichard , J., Stratford , R. J . & Bizo, L. A ,2006, "Team-skills training enhances cooperative learning", *Learning and Instruction,* 16 , pp. 256 – 265.

Rahimpour, M., 2008, "Impact of Task Condition on L2 Learners Oral performance", *Journal of Faculty of Letters and Humanities,* 208, pp. 13-23.

Saslow, J., Ascher, A., 2006, *Summit: English for Today's World,* USA, Pearson Education.

Savignon, S. , 1983, *Communicative Competence: Theory and Classroom Practice,* Reading, MA, Addison-Wesley.

Slavin, R.E. ,1990, *Cooperative Learning: Theory, Research and Practice,* Englewood Cliffs, NJ, Prentice Hall.

Slavin, R. E. (1995). *Cooperative Learning: Theory, Research, and Practice* (2nd ed.). Boston, Allyn & Bacon.

Smith, K. M. , 2011, Dictogloss: A Multi-skill task for accuracy in writing through cooperative learning. Retrieved August 2013, from: http://tht-japan.org/proceedings/2011/069-080_smith.pdf

Storch, N. , 2011, "Collaborative Writing in L2 Contexts: Processes, Outcomes, and Future Directions", *Annual review of applied linguistics*, 31, pp. 275-288.

Talebi, F. & Sobhani, A., 2012, "The impacts of cooperative learning on oral proficiency" *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences,* 3, pp. 75-79.

Thousand, J.,Villa, R., & Nevin, A. , 2002, *Creativity and Collaborative Learning: A Practical Guide to Empowering Students, Teachers, and Families* (2nd ed.). Baltimore: Paul H. Brookes.

Tsai, S.C. , 1998, *The Effects of Cooperative Learning on Teaching English as a Foreign Language to Senior High School Students.* Taipei, Taiwan: Normal University Press.

Vercelloti, M. L. , 2012, *Complexity, accuracy, and fluency as properties of language performance: The development of the multiple systems over time and in relation to each other.* (Unpublished Doctoral Thesis). University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, USA. Retrieved August 2012 from: http://d-scholarship.pitt.edu/12071/)

Wilden, E. , 2006, "The ABC's online: Using voice chats in a transnational foreign language teacher exchange" in P. R. Schmidt & C. Finkbeiner (eds.), *ABC's of Cultural Understanding and Communication: National And International Adaptations*, Greenwich, CT, Information Age Publishing, pp. 189-211,

Appendices

Appendix A

Dear teachers,

Below is a list of topics. Please put this list in order of interest for you from 1 to 10, with 1 being the most interesting.

☐ Books and magazines

☐ Inventions and technology

☐ Controversial issues

☐ Enjoying the world

☐ Music

☐ Money matters

☐ Looking good

☐ Animals

☐ Advertising and consuming

☐ New perspectives

Thank You

Appendix B

Dear participants,

Below is a list of topics. Please put this list in order of interest for you from 1 to 5, with 1 being the most interesting.

☐ Books and magazines

☐ Controversial issues

☐ Enjoying the world

☐ Money matters

☐ Music

Thank You

Appendix C

Ecotourism:
Ecotourism includes activities in which visitors enjoy hands on experiences, such as bird-watching, hiking in the mountains, or participating in a traditional village celebration. Local guides usually accompany small groups of tourists, teaching them all about local plants and animals and the culture of the region. Tourists typically stay with local families, or at small, environmentally friendly hotels.

Ludwig van Beethoven:
Beethoven is remembered for his great genius but also for his strong and difficult personality. Despite this difficult personality, many in musical and aristocratic circles admired Beethoven, and music lovers were always Beethoven's greatest supporters. This fact did not prevent him from losing his temper with one or another of them. However, because of his talent, Beethoven's friends always excused his insults and moody temperament.

Credit Cards:
Credit cards can be wonderful things. You can treat yourself to a spa retreat or a gourmet dinner without worrying whether you have the cash to pay for it. The down-side, of course, is that credit cards let many people live beyond their means. So use credit cards but pay the bill in full each month.

Appendix D

The First Text reconstructed by a Student from the Cooperative Group

---

Ecotorism includes a lot of activities such as bird watching, hiking on the mountains and etc. Local guys usually teaching them about the plants and animals and the culture of the local place. Torists tipicaly live at a local person's house or at the small friendly hotels.
Syntactic Accuracy (the ratio of error-free clauses): 75
Syntactic Complexity (mean length of error-free clauses): 9.33

The First Text Reconstructed by a Student from the Individualistic Group

---

It's includes activities that makes visitors enjoying like climbing, traditional village celebration and ...
Local guides are giving the visitors information about animals and cultures of village animals, plants, cultures and stay with together in hotels.
Syntactic Accuracy (the ratio of error-free clauses): 33.33
Syntactic Complexity (mean length of clauses): 9

The Second Text reconstructed by a Student from the Cooperative Group

---

Bethoven is always remembered because of his strong and different personality. Music lovers always were his supporters, but it never made him lose his temper and because of his talent, his friends used to excuse of her bad temper.
Syntactic Accuracy (The ratio of error-free clauses): 75
Syntactic Complexity (Mean length of clauses): 8.66

The Second Text reconstructed by a Student from the Individualistic Group

Bethoven is remmred for his great jenious he have difficult personality and every one admired him.
This fact didn't cause to lose temper. Hower because of his talent always his friends excused him.
    Syntactic Accuracy (The ratio of error-free clauses): 40
    Syntactic Complexity (Mean length of clauses): 6.60