Collaborative Output Tasks and their Effects on Learning English Comparative Adjectives

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Abstract

This study aimed to examine the effect of two types of collaborative output tasks on Iranian EFL learners' comparative adjectives with two or more syllables. Thirty Iranian EFL learners participated in this study which were then divided into two experimental and one control groups; one experimental group received dictogloss task in 4-pairs and the other experimental group was given text reconstruction editing task in 6-pairs. Using pretest, posttests and delayed posttests, the data were collected through a grammaticality judgment test (GJT) and audio-recording of the learners' interaction. Comparing the mean scores of three groups in GJT generally indicated that experimental groups gained more than the control group and text reconstruction editing group outperformed dictogloss group in noticing and learning the English comparative adjectives with two or more syllables. The transcripts of the students' verbal interactions indicated that text reconstruction editing group generated larger number of turns and language related episodes (LREs) in comparison to dictogloss group. Findings of this study also indicated that the majority of problems encountered in all the dyads were correctly solved in both dictogloss and text reconstruction editing groups, while the dictogloss group correctly solved more LREs in comparison to the text reconstruction editing group which showed that the dictogloss group was better regarding the quality of LREs. It can be concluded that the current study found evidence in support of Swain and her

colleagues' claims (e.g. Kowal & Swain, 1994) that task implementation required the learners to produce output collaboratively which in turn leads to the internalization of grammatical features.

As a result of the rapid expansion of second language pedagogy in recent decades, language teaching methodologies encountered a large number of reactions and counter-reactions. In recent years communicative language teaching has received a great deal of attention and task-based language teaching has appeared as a turning point in language teaching (Brown, 2007). Some scholars, thus, have suggested using classroom tasks in which the learners are required to work together and produce output collaboratively. It is due to this fact that such tasks give enough and effective opportunities to learners for peer feedback and scaffolding (Lapkin & Swain, 2000; Swain 2005; Swain, Brooks & Tocalli-Bller, 2002). Based on Vygotskian sociocultural theory, Swain (2000) introduced the concept of collaborative dialogues which she argued are effective due to mediating the construction of linguistic knowledge and that this co-construction of a task can be a source of second language learning (Swain 1998, 2000, 2010; Swain et al., 2009). Collaborative output tasks are known as activities in which the learners are encouraged to produce output collaboratively. During such activities, learners will receive guided support through interacting with their peers (Kowal & Swain, 1994; Swain, 2005; Swain & Lapkin, 2001).

Learning English comparative adjectives, especially those with two or more syllables, seems to be a challenge for Iranian EFL learners (Yarmohammadi & Rashidi, 2009). Building and internalizing such structures, it seems, needs more complex processes and their rules might be confusing for EFL learners. As Yarmohammadi (2002) points out, one reason may be the inconsistency between the learners' L1 and L2 regarding this structure. In Persian, comparative adjective is made by only suffixing "tar" to all adjectives (regardless of their length) and there

is no other rule for this grammar in comparison to English grammar. Apart from the pioneering studies investigating the effects of different types of collaborative output tasks on certain English grammatical features (e.g. Abadikhah & Harsini, 2014; Ganji & Ketabi, 2015; Ghari & Moinzadeh, 2011; Kowal & Swain, 1994; Kuiken & Vedder, 2002; Nassaji & Tian, 2010; Tajeddin & Jabbarpoor, 2014), it seems that data are thin on the ground as to the effects of collaborative output-oriented tasks on the acquisition of comparative adjectives particularly those with two or more syllables and that no study has investigated this issue. The present study, therefore, intends to examine the effectiveness of two types of collaborative output tasks (i.e. dictogloss and text reconstruction editing task) on the acquisition of English comparative adjectives with two or more syllables.

Literature Review

The theoretical basis for the centrality of output was initially proposed by Swain in her comprehensible output hypothesis (Swain, 1985, 1995, 2005). Swain (1985) stressed the significant role of output in learning second language, claiming that output is necessary and vital for learners to move from semantic to syntactic processing. Swain (2005) distinguished three functions of output in second language: 1) noticing function, 2) hypothesis testing function, and 3) metalinguistic function (p. 471). The noticing function suggests that while producing output, learners may notice some gaps in their linguistic knowledge because they may find out that they are unable to say or produce what they want to say. The hypothesis testing function proposes that when learners are communicating with others, they attempt to say the same thing in different ways and in this way they may also come to recognize the comprehensibility and accuracy of their utterances. With metalinguistic function, it is asserted that output pushes the learners to reflect consciously upon language and decide what to say and what not to say. Collaboration may expedite these functions as it involves the whole process of learning. It is through collaboration in which the learners are

asked to work collaboratively to reach a common goal, that is, being responsible for one another learning as well as their own. Learners will be able to acquire a new knowledge whenever they go through communication problems and get the opportunity to talk about their solutions regarding such problems. Therefore, their existing knowledge can be consolidated through collaboration with their peers.

Sociocultural perspective of L2 learning supported the importance of using collaborative output tasks in the process of L2 learning through which the language learners are encouraged to be active in cooperation with their peers and produce language collaboratively. Swain contended that such pedagogical activities would be beneficial due to the fact that when learners attempted to produce output collaboratively, "they use language not only to convey meaning, but also to develop meaning" (Swain, 2005, p. 473). According to Swain & Lapkin (2001), such tasks help learners internalize and consolidate their existing linguistic knowledge and give them opportunities for problem-solving and negotiation of meaning. Output does not only play an important role in L2 learning but also prepares ample opportunities for collaborative negotiation. When output performed collaboratively, it may provide opportunities for deeper processing of the language data (Kowal & Swain, 1994).

Collaborative output tasks refer to those activities that are designed to encourage learners to produce output collaboratively and reflect on and negotiate the accuracy of their language use. In such activities, the learners' attention is drawn to both meaning and forms (Kowal & Swain, 1994; Swain, 2005; Swain & Lapkin, 2001). Different types of collaborative output tasks are utilized in second language classrooms. These include dictogloss, in which learners are required to work together and collaboratively reconstruct a text presented to them orally (Kowal & Swain, 1993); cloze tasks, in which learners are asked to reconstruct a text and fill in the missing words collaboratively (Pica, 2005); and editing tasks, in which learners are required to correct a text in order to improve its accuracy (Storch, 2007).

A number of studies have investigated the role of collaborative output tasks in L2 learning (e.g. Kowal & Swain, 1994; Mayo, 2002; Nassaji & Tian, 2010; Storch, 2005, 2007; Swain & Lapkin, 2001). One of the first studies investigating the role of collaborative output tasks on learning grammar was conducted by Kowal and Swain (1994). Dictogloss as a specific kind of collaborative output task was used with a focus on learning French grammar, particularly present tense. Based on the results, Kowal and Swain came to the conclusion that when learners were participating in dictogloss task, they found gaps in their linguistic resources, they noticed the link between form and meaning, and they were given opportunities to receive feedback from their peers.

In a related endeavor, Swain and Lapkin (2001) used two kinds of collaborative tasks (dictogloss and jigsaw) to compare their effectiveness in terms of language related episodes (LREs). They hypothesized that while dictogloss directs the learners' attention to form, jigsaw would put more focus on meaning and they found neither a difference between the two tasks in terms of form nor between their posttest scores. Two other types of output tasks, dictogloss and text reconstruction tasks, were compared in terms of their effectiveness in a study conducted by Mayo (2002). Seven pairs of high intermediate to advanced EFL learners volunteered to take part in the study. The data were analyzed not only quantitatively in terms of the frequency of LREs, but also qualitatively in terms of the learners' attention to forms and the results showed that text reconstruction task created more LREs compared to the dictogloss task.

Storch (2005) examined the accuracy of collaborative pair work in two classes where students created a written text either in pairs or individually. The study analyzed the accuracy, fluency and complexity of their writings and the nature of interaction during collaboration. The results demonstrated that the pair work group produced more chances for communication and peer feedback, and that learners who worked in pairs produced shorter but more accurate and complex texts than those who wrote individually. Storch (2007) also conducted a study to investigate the effectiveness of pair work by examining the learners' performance in

carrying out an editing task in which they were required to correct a short text. Results revealed that the difference between the accuracy of the task whether completed collaboratively or individually was not statistically significant.

In another study by Nassaji & Tian (2010), reconstruction cloze task was compared with reconstruction editing one with regards to the learning of English phrasal verbs. The results revealed that the learners were more successful at completing the tasks collaboratively in comparison to carrying them out individually. Although the collaborative tasks led to more improved knowledge of phrasal verbs, but they did not led to greater gains of vocabulary knowledge. It was also shown that editing tasks were more effective than the cloze tasks in terms of developing negotiation and learning.

It is worth noting that most of the studies so far have examined the impacts of different types of collaborative output tasks on English grammatical features such as simple present tense, verb tense/aspect, use of articles and word forms, passive forms, English past counterfactual conditional, English phrasal verbs, English articles, and English lexical collocations (Abadikhah & Harsini, 2014; Ganji & Ketabi, 2015; Kowal & Swain, 1994; Kuiken & Vedder, 2002; Nassaji & Tian, 2010; Song & Suh, 2008; Storch, 2007). Although several studies were carried out and have provided invaluable insights into the effectiveness of collaborative output tasks, they have not yet been specifically used for English comparative adjectives with two or more syllables. Still another source of problem may be the differences between learners' L1 and L2. According to Yarmohammadi (2002), differences are influenced by the mother tongue and transferred into the learners' language, that is, interlanguage. One of the predictable deviant structures of English in comparison with Persian is comparative adjectives. In English, for one syllable adjectives and two syllables which end in "y", we use –er. For adjectives with more than one syllable, "more" is used. But there isn't any irregularity in Persian grammar in terms of the number of syllables. As such structures

are found to be challenging for L2 learners, we decided to choose them as suitable targets for this study.

Due to these limitations and the abovementioned gaps, this study tries to investigate and compare the possible impacts of using collaborative output tasks (i.e. dictogloss and text reconstruction editing) on the acquisition of English comparative adjectives (with two or more syllables) by comparing three groups: the 'dictogloss group' which completes the dictogloss tasks collaboratively in 4-pairs; the 'text reconstruction editing group' which preforms the text reconstruction editing tasks collaboratively in 6-pairs; and the 'control group' which receives none of the collaborative output tasks. In addition, the collaborative interaction of the learners in dictogloss and text reconstruction editing groups will be recorded and transcribed to identify the LREs for each group. Based on Swain and Lapkin (2002, p. 292), LREs, "are a group of utterances or any segment of dialogue where learners are talking about the language they have produced or are producing, correct themselves or others, or question or reflect on their language use". In this study, therefore, the researchers specifically try to see how the learners are able to solve the linguistic problems they encountered during the reconstruction stages of the above-mentioned collaborative output tasks. Thus, the research questions guiding this study are as follows:

1. Is there any difference in the effect of dictogloss and text reconstruction editing task on using correct comparative adjectives with two or more syllables?
2. Which of the two collaborative output tasks (dictogloss and text reconstruction editing) is more effective with regard to the number and quality of language related episodes?

Method

Participants

Thirty Iranian EFL students, from three intact classes, ranged in age from 14 to 17 participated in this study. They had at least 4-year

experiences of learning English as a foreign language in English institutes. To make sure the homogeneity of the participants, a Solutions Placement Test was used in this study. Based on the results interpreted according to the criterion proposed for determining leaners' proficiency by the test, the participants who scored 21 to 30 for grammar and vocabulary questions, and those who got 5 to 7 on their reading and writing tasks, were classified as pre-intermediate and qualified to be included in the analysis: 8 students formed experimental group 1, 12 students constituted our experimental group 2 and the remaining 10 students were placed in control group. The participants of the two experimental groups were given two different collaborative output tasks to perform under similar conditions: collaboratively, i.e. the experimental group 1 was asked to complete the task in 4-pairs and the other experimental group was required to undertake the task in 6-pairs. Table 1 shows the demographics of participants of this study.

Table 1
Demographics of Participants

	Dictogloss	Text reconstruction editing	Control
Number	8	12	10
Female	8	12	10
Age range	14-17	15-17	15-17

Instruments

   Solution placement test. A solution placement test, a standardized proficiency test developed by Oxford University press (2013), was given to the students at the beginning of the study. The test contained 50 multiple choice questions aimed to measure learners' grammar and vocabulary knowledge, a reading passage followed by 10 multiple-choice comprehension tests and a writing test. To ensure the intra-rater reliability and reduce the subjectivity in scoring, the writing task was rated anonymously at two different times by one of the researchers and the assessment was based on the IELTS writing assessment criterion.

Intra-rater reliability was used as one of the accepted methods in estimating rater reliability and a high degree of reliability was found between the two measurements. This test was designed to be done in approximately 65 minutes. It is also worth noting that as the speaking ability of the learners was checked at the beginning of the term by the institute and they were assigned to homogeneous classes regarding their speaking, no other speaking test was given to them.

Grammaticality judgment test (GJT). In order to assess the participants' knowledge of the comparative adjectives before and after the treatment, a timed Grammaticality Judgment Test was utilized. This test consisted of 40 items. Twenty out of 40 test items were comparative adjectives with more than one syllable and the remaining 20 non-targeted items were distracters which dealt with structures other than comparative adjectives. Ten grammatical and 10 ungrammatical sentences were among the 20 targeted test items and for statistical analysis only the results of the 20 targeted test items were used. The time allowed for answering the test was approximately 45 minutes.

Dictogloss task. According to Wajnryb (1990), dictogloss is defined as a procedure in which the students are pushed to reflect on their output. In this task, an authentic text, that contains comparative adjectives with more than one syllable, is read twice by the teacher at a normal speed to the learners. For the first time, students should just listen, but for the second time, they could take notes of the key words that could be helpful in reproducing the original text. Then, the pairs combined their data to reproduce their version of the text. In the final stage, the pairs analyzed and compared the version produced by the students closely. The authentic text for dictogloss task was adapted from Pre-intermediate Oxford Living Grammar book (Harrison, 2009). It included a 180-word passage and its content was about comparing working at home with going out to work. The text consisted of all types of comparative adjectives but due to the focus of the study, attempt was made to change some of them into ones with more than one syllable without distorting the content.

Text Reconstruction Editing Task. For this task, the teacher first read the original text twice at a normal speed to the students. Second, the students were required to focus just on the content and take notes. Then, they were given an incomplete version of the original text that contained 7 errors regarding the comparative adjective forms with more than one syllable. The learners were required to identify those erroneous parts, add, delete or change them to improve its accuracy as closely as possible to the original text collaboratively in pairs. The text used for this task was exactly the same as dictogloss one in terms of its format, length, content and information. This text was also a 180-word passage and its focal structure was comparative adjectives with more than one syllable.

Data Collection Procedure

The study lasted four sessions and involved a pretest, treatment session, posttest and delayed posttest. Solutions Placement Test was given to the students of all three groups in the first session to determine their language proficiency. During this session and before the treatment sessions, a pretest was established to assess the learners' initial knowledge of comparative adjectives with more than one syllable that were supposed to be used in the treatment sessions.

In the second session, the experimental group 1 was familiarized with the dictogloss task. In this session, first the stages of dictogloss were introduced (i.e. preparatory, dictation, reconstruction, and analysis and correction stages) and then the learners were asked to complete a dictogloss task as a model. This text contained some examples of the simple past tense. The teacher read the text and students should just listen carefully. For the second time, the teacher read the text and students were allowed to take some notes. In the next phases students were asked to work in pairs to reconstruct the text using their notes, compare their text with each other and original text, and make the necessary corrections. They had 20 to 30 minutes to complete the modal task. In this session, exactly after completing the model task, experimental group 1 was asked to complete the main dictogloss task. The text used for this task

contained some examples of the targeted structures (i.e. comparative adjectives with more than one syllable) and the time allocated to complete the task was 20 to 30 minutes and the learners' interactions were also recorded. The time allowed for two treatment sessions (i.e. one for experimental group 1 and the other for experimental group 2) was determined earlier in the pilot study and it was approximately 90 minutes.

The second session of experimental group 2, likewise, was spent acquainting the learners with text reconstruction editing procedure. The stages were introduced and they were asked to complete a text reconstruction editing task as a model. The stages in this task were similar to those of dictogloss task except the last stage, in which each pair received an incomplete version to correct collaboratively. They had 20 to 30 minutes to complete this task. The text was exactly the same as the text used in dictogloss procedure. Following this, the experimental group 2 was required to complete a text reconstruction editing task and the text contained some instances of targeted features (i.e. comparative adjectives with two or more syllables). The time on this task was controlled allowing 20 to 30 minutes to complete the task and the learners' interactions were recorded.

The second session for the control group lasted at least 90 minutes. In this session, the learners' course book was used as teaching material. The procedure plan performed in this session for control group had different steps. In the first step, before the students read and listen to the conversation, the teacher prepared some general questions about the topic of the conversation and immediately after the students read and listen, the teacher asked the comprehension questions. In the second step, the teacher briefly explained the grammatical point (i.e. comparative adjectives). In the third step, the teacher introduced the new vocabulary of that lesson and asked the students to listen to carefully and then repeat those words both chorally and individually. And in the last step, the students were given an integrated practice in the form of a conversation,

in which they should complete it with the new vocabulary and grammatical rule they had learned.

In the third session, after the treatment sessions, a posttest (GJT) was given to the students of all groups to investigate their development in terms of comparative adjectives. In the fourth session, which was held exactly within two-week interval, again the learners' knowledge on each of comparative adjectives was tested using the same GJT. The main reason for administering the delayed posttest two week later was to examine the learners' long-term learning of comparative adjective structures. In addition, the interaction of the dictogloss and text reconstruction editing groups in the process of accomplishing the task collaboratively was audio-recorded to be analyzed for instances of LREs.

Data Analysis

The data analyses of this study were done both quantitatively and qualitatively. For quantitative analyses, the mean scores of learners' performance were calculated on pretest and posttests of GJT by awarding one point for each sentence that was identified correctly as grammatical or ungrammatical. The mean scores of all three groups on GJT were further analyzed by means of ANOVA with Tukey's Post-hoc multiple comparison tests. For the qualitative analyses, the learners' verbal interactions were recorded and then the written transcriptions were analyzed to probe the possible differences in the nature of interaction and attention to grammatical forms between the dictogloss and text editing tasks. In so doing, the participants' turns in carrying out each task were examined and coded. The data were the transcripts of audio-taped interactions of 10 groups (four pairs for dictogloss and six for text reconstruction editing). Then, these transcriptions were numbered and identified using the participants' initials. Following the works of Swain & Lapkin (1995) and Kowal & Swain (1994), all the transcriptions were closely examined and analyzed for finding the instances of language-related episodes (LREs) by one of the researchers. Further, all the transcriptions were also checked by another researcher to ensure the

inter-coder reliability for which there was about 90 percent agreement and all the instances of inconsistencies were removed in the final analysis of the data.

Results
Collaborative Output Tasks and GJT

Table 2 presents the means and standard deviations for the pretest, posttests and delayed posttests of all three groups in grammaticality judgment test. The first research question investigated the effects of dictogloss and text reconstruction editing tasks on the acquisition of comparative adjectives with two or more syllables. Table 2 shows that although the three groups were very similar in terms of mean at the time of pre-test, only the two treatment groups (dictogloss and text reconstruction editing) were able to increase their mean at the time of post-tests. Very little change was recorded for control group in terms of accuracy throughout the three testing time.

Table 2
Descriptive Statistics for the GJT

Groups	N	Pre-test		post-test		delayed post-test	
		M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Dictogloss	8	11.12	1.45	15.12	1.12	13.25	1.03
Text editing	12	11.00	1.41	18.08	1.31	15.16	1.19
Control	10	11.00	1.33	12.70	1.25	11.80	1.13

A series of ANOVAs were used to compare the three groups over time. As a one-way ANOVA indicated no statistically significant difference between the three groups in pre-test (F [2, 29] = .023, p = .977), a two-way repeated measure ANOVA was conducted to probe the first research question (Table 3).

As Table 3 indicates there is no significant interaction effect between time and task type. Both time and task types were significant, showing significant differences between the three groups and differences across three testing times. Results of one-way ANOVAs indicated that

there were significant difference between the three groups at the time of the post-test (F [2, 29] = 51.435, p = .000), and the delayed post-test (F [2, 29] = 24.347, p = .000). Tukey's Post-hoc multiple comparison tests were also used to examine the differences between pairs of groups and to find the exact location of the difference. Results of Tukey's test revealed that both at the time of post-test and delayed post-test the treatment groups (Dictogloss and Text editing) performed significantly better than the control group and the mean difference between the two treatment groups was also significantly different leading to the conclusion that both treatments groups performed significantly better than the control group and text editing group as a treatment group outperformed the dictogloss as another treatment group.

Table 3
Two-way Repeated Measures ANOVA

Source	df	F	p
Between subjects Task type	2	17.614	.00
Within subjects Time	1	218.647	.00
Time * task type	2	15.840	.52

Language Related Episodes (LREs)

To determine which of these collaborative output tasks have a direct effect on the number of turns produced, the number of turns in each group (i.e. dictogloss and text reconstruction editing tasks) was investigated. Table 4 displays the number of turns produced during reconstruction stages of such collaborative output tasks. It was shown that the reconstruction editing group elicited larger number of turns (306) in comparison to the dictogloss task (97).

Table 4

Number of the Turns for Pairs of Students and Groups

Group	Pairs of students	Number of turns	Total turns for group
	group 1	31	
	group 2	19	
Dictogloss	group 3	22	97
	group 4	25	
	group 1	45	
	group 2	88	
Text editing	group 3	34	
	group 4	49	306
	group 5	64	
	group 6	26	

Table 5 shows a striking difference in the number of LREs generated by the two tasks. Specifically, the results reveal that the text reconstruction editing task generated more LREs than dictogloss task (56 vs. 26).

Table 5

Number of LREs for Pairs of Students and Groups

Group	Pairs of students	Number of LREs	Total turns for group
	group 1	6	
	group 2	7	
Dictogloss	group 3	7	26
	group 4	6	
	group 1	10	
	group 2	10	
Text editing	group 3	8	
	group 4	11	56
	group 5	9	
	group 6	8	

Attempt was also made to see how the learners resolved the linguistic questions and problems they encountered during the reconstruction stages of the collaborative output tasks. Therefore, the LREs were coded for their outcomes. According to Swain & Lapkin (1998), a language-related episode (LRE) "is any part of a dialogue where language learners talk about the language they are producing, question their language use, or correct themselves or others" (p. 326).

Following Swain (1998), the LREs fell into one of three possible outcomes:

1. The problem or question was solved correctly either by one learner's self-correction or by one learner answering or correcting the other (other correction);

2. LREs that were left unresolved or abandoned;

3. LREs that were solved incorrectly by one or both of the learners (p.77).

Table 6 compares the results of the LRE outcomes, the amount, and the percentage of the different LRE outcomes of the total number for each of the dyads in dictogloss and text reconstruction editing groups. Figure 1 also charts these percentages for dictogloss and text reconstruction editing groups. According to statistics, as is shown in Table 6 and Figure 1, 88.46% of LREs were correctly solved in the dictogloss group and 58.93% of them were correctly solved in the text reconstruction editing group. In two instances (7.69%) of 26 LREs did learners in dictogloss group leave a problem unresolved. But the learners in the text reconstruction editing group left exactly ten instances (19.64%) of 56 LREs unresolved. Only one instance (3.84%) of 26 LREs was incorrectly resolved in dictogloss group whereas the rate for the text reconstruction editing group was twelve instances (21.43%) of 56 LREs.

All the dyads in both dictogloss and text reconstruction editing groups correctly solved a majority of the language problems they encountered. But according to the results of Table 6 and Figure 1, the dyads in the dictogloss group correctly solved more LREs in comparison to the dyads in the text reconstruction editing group. It shows that among

the two groups, the dictogloss group was better regarding the quality of LREs.

Table 6

Comparison of LRE Outcomes across Dyads

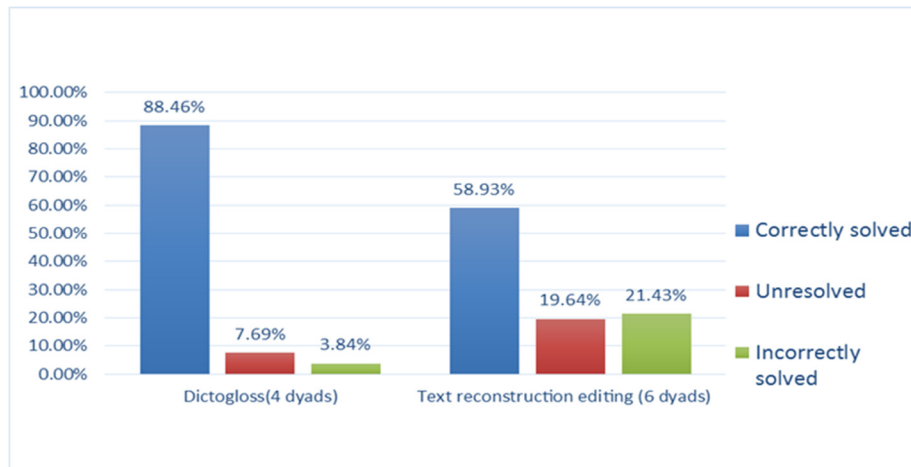| Group	LRE outcome	Sum	% Total LREs
	1 (correctly solved)	23	88.46
Dictogloss (4dyads)	2 (unresolved)	2	7.69
	3 (incorrectly solved)	1	3.84
	Total LREs	26	100.00
	1 (correctly solved)	33	58.93
Text editing (6dyads)	2 (unresolved)	11	19.64
	3 (incorrectly solved)	12	21.43
	Total LREs	56	100.00

Figure 1. Comparison of LRE outcomes

Discussion

This study mainly tried to investigate the possible impacts of utilizing dictogloss and text reconstruction editing tasks, as two types of collaborative output tasks, on learning English comparative adjectives with two or more syllables. Attempt was also made to compare dictogloss and text reconstruction editing tasks with regard to the number and quality of LREs produced in their interactions in accomplishing the required tasks. Results revealed that both dictogloss and text reconstruction editing groups outperformed the control group in grammaticality judgment test at the time of post-tests. This result corroborates the findings of Ghari and Moinzadeh (2011) in that they studied the impact of picture-cued writing tasks and reconstruction tasks on noticing and learning English past modals and the results of their study supported the claim that the two output task groups performed better that the control group. This result also showed a parallelism with Storch's (2005) finding that the pair work group produced more chances for communication and peer feedback, and that students who created the text in pairs were able to write shorter but more accurate texts than those who worked individually.

Text reconstruction editing group also outperformed the dictogloss group in GJT at the time of post-tests, which shows the superiority of this task in improving EFL learners' noticing accurate comparative adjectives structure with two or more syllables. In this regard, text reconstruction editing group was better than dictogloss in terms of having better performance on GJT, number of turns and LREs. It was possibly related to the advantages of text reconstruction editing task and its nature that could improve the learners' performance in producing accurate target items (Kowal & Swain 1994; Swain 1998). The learners in dictogloss group did not identify all problems and mistakes. These findings were also observed in Kowal and Swain's (1994) study. This result is also in favor of Ghari and Moinzadeh's (2011) findings in that for promoting noticing of the target structure the reconstruction output tasks were more effective. This finding of the present study is also partially similar to the

findings of Ganji and Ketabi (2015) in that the editing tasks are more effective than cloze tasks in the learning of lexical collocations. And it is also believed that pair editing tasks is beneficial as it helps develop individual mental resources and provides focus on form opportunities for the learners when they attempt to express their intended meaning accurately. Considering the research findings related to the difference in modality of stimulus presentation (Leow 1995; Murphy 1997), it is expected that the text reconstruction editing task caters for more attention to form as the learners had the written version of the task to talk about more form-related issues while completing that task. But in the dictogloss task, the learners first should understand the aural text provided to them and then reproduce it based on their notes. This finding is possibly related to the learners' skill in collaborating effectively with their peers and their potential to find solutions for language-related problems correctly and collaboratively in pairs. Other factors such as the composition of the groups (Bennett & Cass, 1988; Tocalli-Beller, 2003) and participants' cognitive and developmental readiness (Lesser, 2004) might also affect the nature of interaction. Such factors may all intervene in the effectiveness of dictogloss over text reconstruction editing group regarding the quality of LREs. Thus, the results of this part of our study may not be attributed to the learners' previous knowledge or their speaking ability as the participants did not differ greatly in their proficiency level. Nevertheless, as the oral proficiency of the participants was not assessed by the researchers and it was taken for granted that they were homogenous based on the placement test administered by the institute, future researchers are advice to take care of the effect of oral proficiency of the learners on their production.

      This finding also conforms to the findings of a study conducted by Mayo (2002) in which a text with some missing grammatical words was given to the learners and they had to supply them. Along with the findings of Nassaji and Tian (2010), the above results also show the beneficial effect of editing task in promoting learning and providing opportunities for form-focused interactions. Similar to the study

conducted by Mayo (2002), the qualitative analysis of the data in this study revealed that the text reconstruction editing task produced larger number of turns and more LREs in comparison to dictogloss task, and the difference between the two groups regarding LRE turns in dyadic interaction was statistically significant.

Findings from this study also indicate that all the dyads in both dictogloss and text reconstruction editing groups correctly solved a majority of the linguistic problems they encountered. But the results of Table 6 and Figure 1 show that the dyads in the dictogloss group correctly solved more LREs in comparison to the dyads in the text reconstruction editing group (88.46% vs. 58.93%). It seems that the learners in the dictogloss group were more engaged in developing coherent writings than with discussing LREs. These results are not in line with Swain and Lapkin's (2001) finding that there was no significant difference between dictogloss and jigsaw task in terms of the overall degree of the learners' attention to form as reflected in their LREs. They also claimed that the difference in the two groups' posttest scores was not significant and it was revealed that those tasks produced comparable degrees of language gains.

The results of this study also revealed that by taking part in interaction, the learners in the text reconstruction editing group received more examples of English comparative structures (with two or more syllables) and they produced more output in comparison to the learners in the dictogloss group. It is believed that the text reconstruction editing task can be useful in learning a variety of linguistic items in their negotiated interactions. It can be said that the current study found evidence in support of Swain and her colleagues' claims (e.g. Kowal & Swain, 1994; Swain & Lapkin, 1998) that the task implementation required the learners to produce output collaboratively and that lead to the internalization of grammatical features. The current study partially confirms the findings of Nassaji and Tian's (2010) study regarding the advantages of text reconstruction editing task over dictogloss task in

promoting negotiations which could led to the in depth internalization of the target items.

Following the study of Nassaji & Tian (2010), a reason for solving less LRE outcomes in text reconstruction editing task might be related to the nature of the task and the nature of the learners' interaction in accomplishing this task. In many cases, the interactions among learners were limited and brief. The learners' interactions with their partners may not have been rich enough. Thus, given this fact, text reconstruction editing groups were somewhat successful in solving the LRE outcomes. In addition, Kowal & Swain (1997, cited in Ellis, 2003, p. 156) commented that "the dictogloss approach might be better suited to promoting syntactic processing skills in general than as a means for drawing attention to a particular grammatical point". According to Kowal & Swain (1994), dictogloss was found as an effective language learning task due to providing a context for negotiation. Wajnryb (1990) also claimed that dicogloss promotes negotiation of meaning. In dictogloss task, the role of input actually appeared to be different and the learners' access to original text is limited. At the beginning, the students are given the original text aurally without having any negotiations with their partners. And once they are engaged in reconstruction, they do not have further opportunities to hear the original text. They have to depend on the limited input data which are their notes, their memory and their partner. Thus, this issue doesn't appear to hold for text reconstruction editing group. Thus, the contradiction between the results obtained from these two output tasks can be explained in this way that the two tasks may cater for and need different cognitive processes and as a result may be used for learning different L2 skills and aspects.

It can be stated that the learners' interaction and collaboration about what they are producing or writing may be a source and sign of second language learning. Therefore, it is consistent with the results of a study conducted by Swain and Lapkin (1998), in which they discussed what they termed "collaborative dialogues" in "language-related episodes". They stated that such "language-related episodes provide evidence of

language use as both an enactment of mental process and as an occasion for L2 learning" (p. 320). These results are also in favor of Vygotsky's (1978, 1986) sociocultural theory of mind, in which language learning is essentially social and collaborative interaction is the main component in the process of language learning. So, this study supports this claim that new knowledge begins in interaction and also becomes internalized and consolidated through collaboration with others (Vygotsky, 1978, 1986).

In general, the results of this study did indicate that both text reconstruction editing group and dictogloss group gained more scores than the control group in the grammaticality judgment test (GJT). In addition, it is also revealed that text reconstruction editing group outstripped dictogloss group in noticing and learning the target structure, i.e., English comparative adjectives with two or more syllables. As noted earlier, the analysis of the transcriptions of the learners' interactions showed that it was text reconstruction editing group that produced larger number of turns and LREs in comparison to dictogloss group. They also produced more output during their interactions which lead to deeper understanding of the target items. According to the results of this study, all the dyads correctly solved a majority of the LREs during their interactions either in text reconstruction or dictolgoss groups. But it is showed that dictogloss group performed better than text reconstruction editing group in terms of the quality of LREs since they correctly solved more LREs during their interactions.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the motivation for the present study was to find a way for teaching English comparative adjectives especially those with two or more syllables which is an area of weakness for both teachers and learners. The present study tried to shed light on the possible effects of two types of collaborative output tasks (dictogloss and text reconstruction editing) on the acquisition of English comparative adjectives with two or more syllables. The study showed the preliminary results on the facilitative effects of collaborative output tasks on learning English

comparative adjectives. The study revealed mixed results in that text reconstruction editing group was better in producing larger number of turns and more LREs, but regarding the quality of LREs, dictogloss group had a better performance and had been claimed to be more successful in resolving more LREs. It seems reasonable, based on these findings, to conclude that text reconstruction editing and dictogloss tasks may be utilized simultaneously for different pedagogical purposes.

The miscellaneous findings of this study revealed how collaborative output tasks can be utilized for both theoretical and pedagogical purposes. Similar study could also be accomplished over an extended period of time to investigate the long-term performance of the learners. Another implication of this study refers to how the method of stimulated recall can be employed within EFL context. Stimulated recall interviews might provide opportunities for learners to check their linguistic performance and notice the errors within their output. The pedagogical implications of the study call for using text reconstruction editing tasks in the language classroom due to engaging learners in more negotiated interactions within a supportive classroom context which leads to language learning.

The findings of this study have also significant pedagogical implications for foreign language teachers teaching in large-size crowded classes that can give feedback to only a limited number of students. Further investigation is needed to find out how such collaborative output tasks could be designed or implemented more effectively. It is essential for L2 researchers to examine whether and to what extent collaborative output tasks such as dictogloss and text reconstruction editing are effective for different proficiency levels. Clearly, more research is still needed on whether these two types of collaborative output tasks promote language learning for all participants. Further research is also needed to investigate the role of learner variables such as their attitudes to collaboration, their learning strategies, their preferred language learning styles, and even their second language proficiency as well as the quality of the learners' participation.

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