The Effectiveness of Collaborative Output Task of Dictogloss in Enhancing EFL learners' Emotional Intelligence

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Abstract

In the past two decades, emotional intelligence (EI) has generated an enormous amount of interest within the field of psychology and language learning. EI is assumed to be an essential characteristic in language learning; however, little attention has been paid to the ways of increasing EI in educational settings. The present study is an attempt to investigate the effect of collaborative output task of dictogloss on EFL learners' emotional intelligence. Forty pre-intermediate EFL learners in Sama institute in Iran participated in present study and they were randomly assigned to control and experimental groups. A composition writing test was used to measure participants' writing performance and TEIQUE (Petrides & Furnham, 2003) questionnaire implemented to examine their initial emotional intelligence. Then, the experimental group applied collaborative dictogloss task which focused on form and meaning of the text collaboratively, while the control group was taught under the conventional method which worked individually. The findings revealed that collaborative task of dictogloss had a significant effect on learners' emotional intelligence.

Keywords: Focus on form task, Collaborative dictogloss task, Emotional intelligence

1. Introduction

Emotional intelligence (EI) is unquestionably one of the main factors of developing language learning and increasing academic success. Over the past decade, extensive research has been conducted on the EI which supported the strong relationship between EI and academic success, and also second language performance (Aghasafari, 2006; Fahim & Pishghadam, 2007). EI as an innate potential may provide the strong base for the development of learners' competencies to help the performance of the learners more helpful; however, there are some major barriers through learning process that can hinder the use of EI in language classrooms such as fear, stress, negative self-image, low self-confidence, low motivation and poor relationships (Abdolezapour, 2012). For example, poor relationship among learners when working individually is the common cause of such feelings in the classroom, and this may directly affect the learning quality. Seemingly, one reason may be due to the way of presenting classroom activities. According to Weare and Gray (2003) the activity which is used through learning process have a high degree of impact on emotional and social competences of learners. They also highlighted that appropriate activities including group work and games can nurture mental and emotional health in educational settings.

In this regard, Juwita and Aryuliva (2013) found that a collaborative task can be applied for promoting learners' motivation, the accuracy in the production of language and activation of learners' prior knowledge. Further advantages of collaborative task may be related to the affective factor of motivation. Previous studies indicate that the learners in collaborative tasks would show higher motivation than those in whole-class doing the task individually (Liao, 2006; Pishghadam & Ghadiri, 2011). Several positive points lie in peer support, one of which could be the motivation of shy students. Pishghadam and Ghadiri (2011), for instance, believe that doing a collaborative activity and being a member of group may have also increased the motivation of the shy participants for a better performance. According to Johnson, Johnson and Smith (1991) learners' motivation can be promoted through small group activities because working collaboratively give them a positive feeling in doing a task more than doing it individually. Therefore, being a member of collaborative groups may increase learners' interest, motivation, self-confidence by stimulating each other to show themselves.

In addition, working collaboratively can develop the sense of responsibility and risk-taking among students by encouraging them for more efforts and getting assistance from the team members for the group's success. According to Jacobs and Young (2004), one of the major collaborative learning rules is to understand what is needed to do for having a successful learning and to know that each student has responsibility to share their knowledge in the group and helping others learn. Brown (2001) maintained that in using collaborative activities, students should learn to accept working in a group and share each their opinions and information. Gradually they can learn the meaning of cooperation and sense of responsibility and have an active role.

Storch (2002) also utters when students work in small-groups reconstructing the text, they tend to feel more intimidated and develop responsibility and positive collaboration. He also realizes that students help the members of their own group, they will be less dependent to get

help from the teacher. Anxiety, stress and negative self-image also which have some effects on emotional intelligence (Abdolrezapour, 2012) can be reduced during collaborative tasks. In this regards, the results of the study of Gregreson indicated that "the level of learners' anxiety can be decreased and the frequency of classroom participation can be increased through cooperative learning" (as cited in Ghaffari, 2013, p. 144). Among a variety of collaborative tasks claimed to affect learners' feelings and behaviors such as motivation, anxiety and sense of responsibility, dictogloss was employed in present study as one of the well-known output oriented activity and a type of focus-on-form task.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Focus on Form Task

Recent developments in the field of second language learning have brought about changes in pedagogical approaches in second language instruction. Over the past few decades, after the introduction of communicative approach (CA), the focus of classroom instruction has shifted from an emphasis on knowledge of rules and grammar to communicative ability in real-life encounters and use of language within communicative contexts. While some researchers in communicative approach put emphasis on communication and fluency and argued that when learners are exposed to comprehensible input in real life communication, second language acquisition takes place automatically (Richards & Rodgers, 1986), others state that it is necessary to have particular attention to form (Ellis, 2000; Doughty & Williams, 1999; Long, 1991; Norris & Ortega, 2000).

They believe that when second language learning is completely based on experiential and meaning-centered instruction, some linguistic competence levels of second language cannot develop as well. That is, meaningful input and opportunities for interaction allow learner to achieve fluency but not necessarily accuracy in the target language (Ellis, 2000; Long 1991; Williams, 1999). Seemingly, there is a need to make a balance between the traditional approach which entirely focuses on forms and the communicative approach which put emphasis on meaningful communication in real context (Long & Robinson, 1998; Park, 2004). Consequently *focus on form* instruction was adopted as a new approach which primarily focused on noticing forms in communicative context.

Focus on form (FoF) instruction, which was originally developed by Long (1991), presented as an attempt to "overtly draw students' attention to linguistic elements as they arise in lessons whose overriding focus is on meaning or communication" (pp. 45-46). He contrasts FonF with traditional FonFs which is focused exclusively on forms. Moreover, Doughy and Long (2003) declared that FonF considers the effect of focus on language form syntactically and morphologically within a communicative approach to interact and interpret the meaning in real context. Doughty and Williams claimed "it is likely that focus on form can enhance lexical acquisition. There is mounting evidence that, in the acquisition of lexical items, as with that of grammatical structures, some interaction is helpful" (as cited in de la Fuente, 2006, p. 266). According to Nassaji "using collaborative tasks requiring learners to get involved in deliberate and cooperative comprehension and production of language, e. g. through the use of dictogloss can be a way of integrating (FoF) and communication by

process" (as cited in Abbasian & Mohammadi, 2013, p. 1371). Dictogloss task can be used to focus equally on form and meaning as they collaboratively constructed the texts and produce complex syntactic structures (Lapkin & Swain, 2001).

2.2 Collaborative Dictogloss Task

Collaborative Dictogloss is one of the output-oriented activities that can be used both individually and collaboratively. It was first proposed by Wajnyrb in 1990 which represented dictogloss as a noticeable change from traditional dictation (Jacob, 2003). According to Wajnyrb, in the task of dictogloss "students individually try to write down as much as they can, and subsequently work in small-groups to reconstruct the text; that is, the goal is not the goal to reproduce the original, but to 'gloss' it using their combined linguistic resources" (as cited in Pishghadam, Khodadady & Daliri Rad, 2011, p. 181). Dictogloss task encourages leaners to attend cooperative work because they compare their answers to each other and the teacher offers the adequate explanations when needed (Golshan & Ramachandra, 2012). During the reconstruction in dictogloss task learners can take more risks in production; they can feel more intimidated and develop the responsibility and positive collaboration when they work in a group (Storch, 2002). Storch also realized that by helping their own member of group, learners consequently will become more confident and less dependent on the teacher.

It is worth mentioning that the motivation is not something which the teacher can effect on learners directly; it can be developed by using some motivational tasks through learning process (Iwanaka, 2011). Pishghadam and Ghadiri (2011) believed that doing a collaborative activity and being a member of collaborative groups may increase the motivation of the students especially the shy ones for a better performance. Besides, Lim and Jacobs's (2001) investigation focused on the collaboration aspect of the dictogloss task and proposed that a collaborative output task such as dictogloss can help learners be pleased, have high motivation and better feelings when they are working in groups and therefore learn better. Therefore, there seems to be good reason to believe collaborative dictogloss task can increase learners' autonomy, motivation and create a friendly relationship among them through team work (Iwanaka, 2011).

To make sure, for years, the effectiveness of collaborative output tasks has been investigated through various technique. In the case of collaborative output task of dictogloss, the focus has been on grammatical structures such as verb tenses, prepositions, adjective and conjunction (Abadikhah & Shahriyarpour, 2012; Collins, 2007; Kooshafar, Youhanaee & Amirian, 2012; Nasaji, 2010). Collins's (2007) study considered the impact of the mother tonguue and common developmental patterns in the domain of verb tense and aspect through dictogloss and observed that that dictogloss and interpreting contexts would be effective for verb tenses in a Japanese classroom. Furthermore, in a more recent study Kooshafar et al. (2012) focused on the use of cohesive devices to create a coherent text through dictogloss technique. Two techniques of dictogloss and explicit teaching were used to examine which group was more successful in using correct conjunction in their writing composition test. The results of the study pointed to the conclusion that dictogloss technique seems to be more effective. In spite of a fair number of studies on the effectiveness of dictogloss activity on language learning

process, there is a lack of studies investigating its effectiveness in promoting learners' EI through collaboration.

2.3 Emotional Intelligence

In 1990 EI became one of the most talked-about topics in the field of psychology and was known as an essential element in one's success in work place and family life. While the root of EI was first put forward by Thorndike's (as cited Fatt & Howe, 2003, p. 345) social intelligence defined as the ability to understand people, the notion of EI was published for the first time by Salovey and Meyer (1990). They put forward a hypotheses to describe a set of skills as "relevant to the accurate appraisal and expression of emotion in oneself and in others, the effective regulation of emotion in self and others, and the use of feeling to motivate, plan, and achieve in one's life" (Kerr, Garvin, Heaton & Boyle, 2006, p. 265). Recent studies show that IQ alone predicts little of achievement at work or in life (Fatt & Howe, 2005) and only 20 percent of a person's success depends on IQ, while 80 percent of person's success in life is continued by EI (Goleman, 1995); therefore, "emotional and social intelligences were better predictors of success in life" (Baron, as cited in Abdolrezapour, 2012, p. 331).

As Goleman (1998) succinctly stated, it is accepted that EI is increasingly relevant to developing individual and people's personality, behavior and feeling. Many studies supported the usefulness of EI in making the second language learning easier in classroom framework. Thus, it might be possible for people who have low emotional competencies to educate and improve their abilities such as expressing, regulating and managing their feelings (Mayer & Geher, 1996). When Goleman realized the importance of EI for business, it introduced "a new area of study in the field of business, human behaviors, job development, leadership and psychology" (as cited in Maizatul Akmal, Norhaslinda, & Norhafizah, 2012, p. 304).

At this moment, EI has been widely popularized by Goleman (1995) in work place area as an outgrowth of management or leader effectiveness movements. He placed emphasis on EI as a set of management principles and character traits to be applied by members within an organization. Recent studies also have put forward EI as a good predictor in higher education and job position (Bar-on & Parker, 2004). Then many businessmen understood that the success of a person at the workplace depends substantially on EI. Besides intellect, an employee needs other qualities as well: self-control, motivation, interpersonal skills and so on. In the last two decades there are a growing number of research studies on the positive and strong relationship between emotional intelligence and job position, leadership (Goleman, 1995), academic success and learning skills (Aghasafari, 2006; Fahim & Pishghadam, 2007; Maizatul Akmal et al., 2012; Stottlemayer, 2002).

Barchard (2003) and Pau et al. (2007) have considered the effects of EI on academic success in undergraduate students. They found that successful students are those with higher intra-personal abilities and better adaptability. Successful students are also those who have the ability to manage stressful situations in a calm and proactive manner. Downey, Mountstephen, Lloyd, Hansen and Stough (2008) found that high EI enrich decision-making, goal achievement, motivation and eventually has a profound influence on academic achievement Maizatul Akmal et al. (2012) reported the effectiveness of EI in academic

achievement. The results of the study revealed that two domains of the EI, that is, self-emotion appraisal and understanding of emotion were significantly and positively associated with the students' academic achievement.

Despite a substantial body of research on EI supporting the strong relationship between emotional intelligence and language skills (Abdolrezapour, 2012; Badakhshan, 2008; Ghasemi, Behjati & Kargar, 2013; Motallebzadeh, 2009; Valizadeh & Alavinia, 2013), not so many studies is currently focused on the ways of increasing EI in educational settings (Weare and Gray 2003). A number of studies investigated the effectiveness of literature response activities in enhancing the emotional intelligence. Abdolrezapour and Tavakoli (2012), for axample, utilized some pieces of literary work including short stories with highly emotional content to develop learners' emotional intelligence. Results indicated that literature responses activities can increase their EI. Besides, Abdolrezapour, Tavakoli and Ketabi (2013) applied emotionalized dynamic assessment to develop the learners' EI and they found the potential of emotionalized dynamic assessment in promoting EI.

Another potentially appropriate option may be the use of collaborative output task in the classroom. As Weare and Gray (2003) pointed out that appropriate activities include group works nurture mental and emotional health in educational setting, there seems to be a good reason to investigate the probable of collaborative output dictogloss activity as a kind of group and an appropriate tool for raising learners' EI. No study to date has been devoted to the investigation of the influence of collaborative output task of dictogloss on emotional intelligence. Since, EI is known as one of the important factors of developing learning and academic success (Aghasafari, 2006), present study can inspire teachers to provide appropriate stimulus to their students by using collaborative tasks.

3. Purpose of the Study

Therefore, the present study is to examine the impact of collaborative task of dictogloss in Iranian EFL learners' EI. Accordingly the following research question was posed:

Does collaborative output task of dictogloss have any significant effect on Iranian EFL learners' emotional intelligence?

4. Methodology

4.1 Participations

A total of 40 students in Sama language institute (SLA) in Iran participated in this study. The students, aged 13-16, were Persian native speakers and had taken English for three to four years. There were two pre-intermediate classes, randomly assigned as the experimental group with 20 students and the control group with 20 students.

4.2 Instrumentations

To answer the research question of present study and to reveal the effect of collaborative dictogloss task on EI, the following instrumentations were used:

4.2.1 TEIQue Questionnaire

In order to assess learners' emotional intelligence before and after the treatment the short form of TEIQue (Petrides & Furnham, 2003) comprised of 30 items was used. TEIQue-ASF is short form of the TEIQue designed for adolescents varied in age from 12 to 18 years. All items are based on the 15 subscales of the adult trait EI. It is worth noting that scores on EI facets do not reflect cognitive abilities (e.g., IQ), but rather self-perceived abilities and behavioral dispositions. The questionnaire employed a seven point Likert scale in which respondents specify their level of agreement or disagreement to a statement. The participants are typically asked whether they are strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, or strongly disagree with an attitude statement.

4.2.2 Dictogloss Texts

The second instrument employed in this study was dictogloss texts which were taken from the book *Anecdotes in American English* by Hill (1980). Besides, in preparing the texts, great care was taken to choose all texts appropriate for pre-intermediate level students in terms of their level of difficulty and the vocabulary. To this end, two experienced teacher were asked to examine all the texts to check whether students at this level would know the meanings of most of the words in the texts.

4.3 Procedures

First, the TEIQue questionnaire was administered to all subjects one week prior to the treatment. The participants in two groups were required to answer the statements of the EI questionnaire within 15 minutes. Then collaborative dictogloss was used in experimental group. The treatment contains four major steps:

4.3.1 Preparation/warm-up: Learners were randomly divided into 3-member groups by the teacher before the dictogloss task began. All the students were given small pieces of paper to individually write down bits of information. Each group was given a single sheet of paper on which one of the members of the group would write the final version of the reconstructed passage. Students then were prepared for the dictogloss activity by introducing them the topic of the dictogloss text. Any new words in the text would be paraphrased and clarified at this step.

4.3.2 Reading the text: The short text was read twice at natural speed to the students by teacher. While in the first time students just listened to get familiar with the topic, in second time they were expected to note some key words needed to reconstruct the original text.

4.3.3 Reconstruction: The small-groups worked together, pooling their notes to reconstruct the story they had heard and teacher monitored their interaction to make sure that every student was contributing. Students were supposed to pay more attention on structures and meaning. One member of each group is responsible for writing the text. The time given for students to reconstruct the text was around ten minutes.

4.3.4 Analysis and correction: Finally, the texts were compared to the original text, analyzed and corrected by all the students with their teacher's assistance. The teacher would randomly

ask a student from each group to read what they had written and the rest of the class listened and expressed their opinion on whether the reconstructed sentences were semantically and syntactically similar to the original text. During the correction, the teacher asked them to correct the text. When the students were not able to offer correct answers and explanations, the teacher explained the mistakes. The modified sentences were put on the board and the students were asked to edit their own text. The teacher and students had some defined role in the class which are shown separately in Table 1.

Table 1. The roles in treatment group

Step	Teacher	Students
1	Introduces the main idea of the texts and key words	Realize the main ideas
2	Reads the text twice at normal speed and ask them to focus the meaning of the text	For the first time, Listen extensively; but for the second time listen and note down.
3	Asks them to reconstruct the passage and monitors the participants' discussion and interaction	Work in a group and rewrite the text.
4	Gives the original passage to the students and ask them to compare their constructed passage to the original passage. Then, correct and explain students' mistakes	Compare the two texts and edit their own writings.

In the control group, teacher used the conventional method of writing. Firstly, the teacher introduced and presented to the learners some information on a new topic in each session. Students were supposed to write a composition on the topic individually in 6 to 7 lines for 30 minutes individually. Then teacher checked the texts and scored them. The procedure of conventional method is summarized in Table 2.

Table 2. The roles in control group

Step	Teacher	Students
1	Introduces the topic	Listen
2	Asks students to write an essay	Write about the proposed topic individually
3	Checks the participants' writing and rate them.	Correct their mistakes

Finally the TEIQue was administered to both groups of students in Week 10 as the post-test. The posttest was given to both groups with the intention of examining how collaborative dictogloss may effect on their EI.

5. Results

To check the reliability of the EI questionnaire, the internal consistency reliability of EI was checked by calculating Cronbach's alpha coefficient and it was found that the reliability index was 0.91.

Testing research hypothesis

The research question was to examine if collaborative dictogloss technique had a significant

effect on learners' emotional intelligence. Table 3 shows the descriptive statistics of the pre- and post-test EI in the experimental and control groups. As the table indicates, the emotional intelligence test scores in both experimental and control group are 3.91 and 3.88, respectively and post-test scores of experimental and control groups are, respectively, 5.33 and 3.98.

Table 3. Descriptive statistics for EI pre-test and post-test

		Experimental	Control
Pre-test	Mean	3.90	3.88
	SD	.482	.433
Post-test	Mean	5.32	3.97
	SD	.510	.337
		20	20

A comparison of the means of pre-test and post-test of the experimental and control group demonstrates a gain score of 1.42 (5.35 - 3.90) for experimental and a gain score of 0.09 (3.97 - 3.88) for the control group. Therefore, the initial look at the mean differences of experimental and control groups indicates that the experimental group outperformed the control one.

Next, an independent samples t-test was carried out to determine whether any significant differences might be observed for the EI pre-test of both groups. The results as indicated in Table 4, indicate that there is not any significant difference between experimental and control groups' scores on the EI pre-test (t (38) = .16, P = .87> .05). Any changes in the mean scores of the groups in the post-test meant that it could not be related to preexisting differences between the groups but to the different intervention they received separately.

Table 4. Independent samples test of EI pre-test and post-test

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		T-test for Equality of Means							
	F	Sig.	t	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		
								Lower	Upper	
Pre-test	1.96	.16	-.16	38	.87	-0.23	.14	-.31	.27	
Post-test	3.29	.07	-9.8	38	.00	-1.34	.13	-1.62	-1.07	

Then, an independent samples t-test was carried out to see if there was any significant differences post-test of both groups. The results, as presented in Table 4, indicate that there is a significant difference between experimental and control groups' mean scores on the EI post-test (t (38) = -9.86, P = .00< .05).

6. Discussion

The main objective of present study was to examine the effect of collaborative output task of dictogloss on learners' EI. Comparing collaborative dictogloss task and traditional method indicated clear differences in leaners' EI. That is, the findings revealed that collaborative dictogloss task can promote learners' EI. While, to date, no study has been focused on the

effect of any kind of collaborative activities on EI, some other studies investigated the relationship between collaboration and EI. Cox (2011) for example, was who propounded that there is a close relationship between collaboration and emotional intelligence and these two directly can affect each other. Further, Yost and Tucker's (2000) investigation showed a strong relationship between successful teamwork and emotional intelligence. This may be due to the fact that when students know that the overall success of the project relies on the mutual collaboration, they take care for one another and show empathy to each other, consequently, all these positive feelings and energies positively influence the attainment of group goals (Johnson & Johnson, 1999).

It is to be noted that that, as learners have the crucial role in the learning process, they need to have a more active role and a good chance to participate and also work collaboratively with a clear aim which will give them a relatively strong sense of responsibility for success of their group. In the third step of collaborative dictogloss, learners feel free to share their notes and information about the texts with other member of group. In the next step, they should also express their personal opinion on the other groups' texts whether they are correct or not. Working in groups, learners will have opportunity to speak, be heard and gradually be more engaged in showing their competence to the members of the team and be responsible for the achievement of the group. Therefore they try to develop the individual and social relationships with each other in the classroom.

The second point is that collaborative dictogloss task may motivate EFL learners to see language classrooms in a fearless and friendly atmosphere. According to Gregreson "the level of learners' anxiety can be decreased and the frequency of classroom participation can be increased through cooperative learning" (as cited in Ghaffari, 2013, p. 144). Thus, the interaction and collaboration among the learners through group work decrease the large amount of stress and anxiety and enrich their self-confidence, motivation to learn and the individual's ability to solve the learning problems.

7. Conclusion

Previously, some researchers asserted that EI can be nurtured through activities such as literature response "by providing emotional experiences that help the brain for empathy" (Ghosen, as cited in Abdolrezapour & Tavakoli, 2012, p. 3) and emotionalized dynamic assessment (Abdolrezapour, Tavakoli & Ketabi, 2013). However, present study provided evidence for the effectiveness of collaborative task on learners' EI and propounded collaborative dictogloss activity as a proper option for raising EI in educational settings. When students work in a group the amount of stress and anxiety can be decreased whereas the motivation and self-confidence can be increased. Furthermore, they try to control their negative feelings and control their behavior and expand their relationships with others; all these factors surely enrich leaners' EI. Therefore it can be concluded, working in collaborative dictogloss can positively affect the development of the relationships and EI.

Present study provided language teachers with information about dictogloss tasks with Iranian students at pre-intermediate level. Language teachers might be encouraged to try out a variety of form-focused collaborative activities, such as the dictogloss. It is essential for

teachers in Iranian context to know whether various types of collaborative activities like dictogloss can be successfully used for developing learners' motivation, positive self-image, risk-taking. As the study and research on the influence of different types of collaborative tasks on emotional intelligence is young, extensive explorations should be conducted in this field. Further studies can be conducted with any other type of collaborative tasks such as jigsaw. Besides, the number of participants in this study also was limited so it might be advisable to conduct the same study both with more number of learners and for students at upper levels of learning English e.g. advance level.

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