

The Effect of Input-based and output-Based Tasks on the Intermediate Iranian EFL Learners' Writing Achievement in Terms of Coherent Writing

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ABSTRACT

The present study investigated the effect of form-focused (FoF) tasks on enhancement of Iranian EFL learners' coherent writing. In this regard, the researchers compared the effectiveness of dictogloss (DIG) task as an output-based task and consciousness raising (CR) task as an input-based task on teaching writing coherent text. Prior to the experiment, the researchers divided 60 Iranian Intermediate EFL learners based on their scores on the Preliminary English Test (PET) into two groups. Throughout the research a pretest and a posttest which had the same format but different topics were run. The instructional treatment continued for 10 sessions which each session lasted 15 minutes. The required texts which consisted of some cohesive devices were taken from "Elementary Steps to Understanding" book, while the method of teaching, as the name of each group is revealed, was different. After analyzing the gathered data via independent sample t-test, findings revealed that significant, though, the treatment of each group on writing was, there were no significant difference between the posttest of these two groups. So there were not any significant difference between the performance of CR group and DIG group on producing cohesive devices in a text.

Key words: Form-focused Tasks, Input-based Tasks, Output-based Tasks, Coherent Writing

INTRODUCTION

Although both writing and speaking are considered as a skill for production in learning a foreign language, writing is considered as a more competent skill rather than speaking, due to the lack of immediate feedback as a guide from the addressee. So, the writer should project the readers' reaction and try to write a text which according to Grice (1975) "is clear, relevant, truthful, informative, interesting, and memorable". To achieve this act of communication, effectiveness, accuracy, presenting ideas clearly, and well-organized ideas should be considered. Apart from following those factors, learners have problems in conveying their message clearly, yet. Thus, some learners' problems are related to the text organization and ideas to make a coherent one, although they have a good knowledge of English. This lack of connection stems from the fact that learners are not able to utilize connecting devices appropriately.

This inability in the writing skill may have various reasons. One might be the result of inefficiency of the teaching materials and the error correction techniques. EFL teachers mostly apply this productive approach in their classrooms and encourage their students to write down on the proposed topic individually. According to Elley, Barham, Lamb and Wyllie (1976) if the instruction is taught based on the traditional approach, motivation will be lost by learners, and

writing classes would be found as difficult and boring. To address this issue, a different view is required towards writing instructions and collaborative tasks employed as supported by the social constructivist view of Vygotsky (1978).

It is bound to be difficult to understand the ideas connection without conjunctions. English language learners find this aspect of writing very problematic. Based on a research by Dublin and Olshtain (1980) although cohesive devices might be learned and used as the aspects of the language by native speakers of English, it seems difficult for students of English language to acquire them.

In addition to the above reasons, the ambiguous method of teaching might be another reason. In fact, these cohesive devices are provided to students just in a list not in a context by many text books and methods. To put this issue into consideration, since teaching cohesive devices in a list could not demonstrate the suitable usage of these words, the students have difficulties in recognizing the real use of them. To tackle this issue, conjunctions should be introduced to learners in a context-based way by teachers. One of these context-based methods is task-based learning. Based on Ellis (2003), the learner, researcher and the syllabus designer dealt with it recently, which could be addressed some traditional approaches drawbacks. Many instructors and researchers argued that the mental grammar of learners will improve if they involve

in task-based instruction which according to Ellis (2003) the tasks are divided into input based or output-based activities.

Statement of the Problem

Despite the importance of writing task as a productive skill in learning a new language, a few studies have been so far conducted on the effectiveness of different tasks on this skill. Although the impact of output-based activities has been investigated on writing, there are not any contrastive researches among different types of task-based activities on the skill. The present study aimed to focus on the effectiveness of the use of two different tasks on Iranian learners' writing. More specifically, in this study the researcher was determined to find out whether there was any significant difference in learners who learn the appropriate use of conjunctions by using input-based tasks and the learners who learn the usage of conjunctions in writing by output-based tasks.

Research Questions

As a result, the following research questions were investigated in this study:

1. Do input-based activities affect Iranian EFL learners' writing improvement in terms of producing coherent texts?
2. Do output-based activities affect Iranian EFL learners' writing improvement in terms of producing coherent texts?
3. Which approach is more effective in the production of a coherent text, output-based activities or input-based activities?

Research Hypothesis

Based on previous researches and the above-mentioned questions, the following non-directional hypotheses were formulated:

1. Input-based activities do not affect Iranian EFL learners' writing improvement in terms of producing coherent texts.
2. Output-based activities do not affect Iranian EFL learners' writing improvement in terms of producing coherent texts.
3. There is no difference in production of a coherent text who conduct input based instructional activities and learners who conduct output-based activities.

LITERATURE REVIEW

In language learning, 'input' refers to what a student receives or hears from which one can learn. Krashen's Input Hypothesis tries to explain how learners acquire a second language. So, Input Hypothesis is only referred to 'acquisition' not 'learning'. Krashen (1981) claims that there are differences between acquisition and learning. 'Learning' is an explicit/conscious process which leads to metalinguistic knowledge whereas 'Acquisition' is an implicit/subconscious process. On the other hand, 'output' is what a learner produces i.e. the

product. According to The Output Hypothesis, successful second language acquisition needs comprehensible input as well as comprehensible output. This is because when learners try to communicate their messages (pushed output), it is more possible for them to notice the gap in their knowledge.

The process of turning input into intake is called input processing. Input is considered as the linguistic data that learners receive through reading and listening. The next process includes accommodation and restructuring which during this, learners are able to internalize the linguistic data and therefore build a developing system (Lee and VanPatten, 2003). The last process of SLA (second language acquisition) is output processing, in which learners produce language output in speaking and writing.

The second language learners first have to be exposed to the target language through both listening and reading. All the linguistic data heard and read by the learners will not be understood. The linguistic data which can be understood is the intake that will be further processed. The learners can then accommodate and reconstitute the linguistic knowledge they perceive to make one own system to assign the target language. Finally, the learners are going to be ready to resort to ones internalized scheme to supply the target language in each speaking and writing. During that process, learners ought to be assisted with more to enhance SLA. As a matter of fact, whether or not learners should work more with input or output has been a debatable issue within the field of SLA (Lee and VanPatten, 2003; Krashen, 1985; Swain, 1998; Swain and Lapkin, 1995).

As a matter of fact, there has been research which demonstrates that producing output has a major role in enhancing SLA in L2 (second language) learners. In Erlam's (2003) study, she examined the impact of structured-input instruction and out-put based instruction in L2 French learning. The L2 learners of French who participated in her study were 66, around age 14. Learners were assigned into three treatment groups: structured-input group, output-based group, and control group. The target structure of Erlam's study was the French direct object pronouns. The result shows that meaning-oriented, output-based instruction can result in better performance on both comprehension tests and production tests than structured-input tests. And therefore, it may not be necessary for instructors to postpone output activities, if output-based activities are planned to be significantly meaning-oriented.

The result of Erlam's (2003) study indicates clear differences among treatment groups. However, the limitations of her study might affect the validity of the result negatively. This type of activity can be identified as "enhanced input" activity. According to Sharwood Smith (1993), "enhanced input" activity, also referred to as "input enhancement", is a type of input manipulation with the purpose of producing certain features more noticeable in input to grab attentions of L2 learners. And thus, the output-based group did input-based activities that end to this conclusion that output-based instruction is superior to input-based instruction less convincing. Also, participants of the output-based group were asked to perform oral pair work. By doing this, there

was an occasion that the subjects gained input from listening to others' speaking. In conclusion, there were limitations within the style of output-based activities in Erlam's study that produces it troublesome to examine whether or not it was the output-based activities that cause higher gains in participants' language ability or the input-like-based activities that were occurred in the output-based group that helped subject to get better.

Apart from Erlam's study, there are many experimental studies demonstrate the same results. In Nagata's (1998) study, the subjects were divided to three treatment groups: computer-based structured-input group, control group, and output group. The target form of the study was the Japanese honorific system. The study indicated that the output group outperformed the other treatment groups, particularly on the production tests.

Output based tasks is outlined as "focused tasks directed at eliciting production of specific structures" (Ellis, 2003, p. 350). The DIG task is defined by Wajnryb (1990) as "a procedure that requires learners to reconstruct a short text after listening to it twice. The text is specifically designed to focus attention on a specific grammatical feature so it constitutes a type of focused task" (as cited in Ellis, 2003, p. 341). A number of studies including Swain (1998) and Kowal and Swain (1994, as cited in Ellis) reported that as a result of the implementation of the DIG task, students both noticed and produced the target features. Swain's and Lapkin's (2001) study demonstrated no significant differences in the number of 'language related episodes' observed in the dialogue resulting from the implementation of the DIG and jigsaw tasks (as cited in Ellis).

According to Doughty and William (1998), the DIG task is unfolded in three phases of lesson, modeling, and reflection. To make it compatible with the pragmatic teaching purposes, the researchers implemented the task as follows: (a) presenting a request letter with a focus on the pragmatic and sociopragmatic features (i.e., lesson), (b) students' reconstruction of the same or similar text (i.e., lesson), (c) the comparison of the students' production (i.e., modeling), and (d) students' reflections on their own and peer productions and then metapragmatic discussion on the pragmatic and sociopragmatic features (i.e., reflection).

Among the significance number of studies on form instruction, perhaps the most interesting ones are those that in light of Vygotsky's (1978) socio-cultural theory of learning and output hypothesis, have taken into account the value of meaningful social interaction in language learning process (Swain, 1998, 2000; Swain & Lapkin, 1995). Based on the sociocultural theory which is about the role of collaboration in language learning and psychological area, the present study used dictogloss for developing learners' writing as a type of focus on form collaborative task.

According to Wajnryb (1990), while involved 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" (p. 12).

For many "input hypothesis" proponents, language output is simply nothing but an evidence of the occurrence of SLA. It has no effect on internalizing linguistic system, or developing SLA (Krashen, 1985; Krashen, 1989). And thus, language instructors out to focus on providing L2 learners with sufficient and comprehensible input, and serving to learners to process such input. In terms of output, proponents of "input hypothesis" do not believe it has any role in developing SLA. And thus, there is no need for L2 learners to produce language output in writing and speaking throughout language instruction and practice. Many researchers have enforced a good variety of experimental studies with results supporting the "sufficient function" of input, and therefore the inessential of producing language output in L2 teaching and learning.

Input-based tasks plans "to obligate learners to process a specific feature in oral or written input" (Ellis, 2003, p. 157) since Ellis (2003) believes that acquisition lies rooted in input processing or, in different words, intake is the branch of consciousness to linguistic form in the input (ibid). Moreover, Ellis place CR tasks in a separate class, it is still thought to be as an input-based task.

In VanPattern and Cadierno's study (1993), they compared the efficacy of the traditional form-focused instruction with the efficacy of the input processing instruction in L2 Spanish learning. The study was conducted on 129 L2 learners of Spanish which were divided into three treatment groups: the control group which received no instruction, the traditional instruction group, and the input processing instruction group.

The target structure of their study was the Spanish object pronouns. The result of their research demonstrated that input processing instruction led to larger gains in learners' comprehension and production than traditional form-focused instruction. And thus, in order to develop second language acquisition in learners, rather than pushing learners to produce grammar forms immediately after explanation, language instructors would possibly want to assist learners work with sufficient input first. In this way, learners are given opportunities to convert the maximum amount of input into intake, and thus naturally acquire the target language.

The result of VanPattern and Cadierno's (1993) study was ground-breaking in the field of SLA. However, there were limitations and restrictions of their study that could significantly affect their research result. For example, test items that aimed at assessing participants' comprehension ability were quite similar to the activities used during the instruction of input processing. Participants from the control group and the traditional instruction group were not familiar with the format of such test items. Therefore, the unfamiliarity of test items might negatively affect participants' performance. Besides this limitation, activities employed in the traditional instruction group were rather mechanical drills than meaning-focused tasks. Such drills are unlikely to promote L2 learners' ability on either comprehending or producing the target language. And therefore, the conclusion of VanPattern and Cadierno's (1993) study was not quite clear in terms of whether participants' relatively poor performance was due to output-based instruction or mechanical drills.

After VanPattern and Cadierno's (1993) study, many researchers duplicated and carried out more comparative studies that proved the validity of "input hypothesis". In Shin-tani's study (2011), 36 Japanese children were assigned to three groups – input based, control, and production-based group – to receive English vocabulary instruction. Results of the pretest and two posttests, each including four types of vocabulary test items, indicated that children from both input-based and production-based groups gained productive vocabulary knowledge. But the input-based group outperformed the production-based and the control groups on the task-based comprehension tasks.

In Cadierno's study (1995), 61 L2 learners of Spanish were assigned to three treatment groups: traditional instruction group, processing instruction group, and control group. Participants' performance was measured by a pre-test and a post-test, which consisted of one comprehension task and one production task. Results of Cadierno's study demonstrated that the processing instruction group made significant progress on both production task and comprehension task; while the traditional instruction group only made progress on the production task.

In Erlam's (2003) study, she evaluated the effect of structured-input instruction and out-put based instruction in L2 French learning. There were 66 L2 learners of French, around the age of 14, participated in her study. Participants were assigned to three treatment groups: structured-input group, output-based group, and control group. The target structure of Erlam's study was the French direct object pronouns. The result of Erlam's research indicated that meaning-oriented, output-based instruction resulted in better performance on both comprehension tests and production tests than structured-input tests. And therefore, it might not be necessary for instructors to delay output activities, if output-based activities are designed to be considerably meaning-oriented.

The result of Erlam's study (2003) demonstrated clear differences among treatment groups. However, there were limitations of her study that might negatively affect the legitimacy of the result. For example, the output-based group was given sentences in which the target form was underlined. This type of activity can be identified as "enhanced input" activity. According to Sharwood Smith (1993), "enhanced input" activity, also referred to as "input enhancement", is a type of input manipulation with the intention of making certain features more evident in input to grab the attention of L2 learners on the target form. And therefore, the output based group did input-based activities, which makes the conclusion that output-based instruction is superior to input-based instruction less convincing. Also, participants of the output-based group were asked to perform oral pair work. By doing this, there was a possibility that participants gained input from listening to others' speaking. In conclusion, there were limitations in the design of output-based activities in Erlam's study that makes it difficult to examine whether it was the output-based activities that led to better gains in participants' language ability or the input-like-based activities that were taken place in the output-based group that assisted participants to achieve better.

Thus, this study examined and compared the effectiveness of input-based activities and output-based activities in terms of whether these two types of activities led to a difference in the usage of conjunctions and writing coherent texts in Iranian EFL learners at the intermediate level.

METHOD

Participants

The number of participants, who were all females, were 60. They were chosen among language learners at a private Language Institute in Karaj, Iran, and were homogenized for their level of language proficiency based on a PET test. Then the students were assigned randomly to two groups of 30, namely the CR task group and the DIG task group. The age range of the study subjects was between 15 and 20.

Instrumentation

To reveal the effect of C-R and dictogloss task on writing performance, the following instruments were used:

Preliminary english test (PET)

A Pack of PET exam for Intermediate learners (2011) was used to homogenize the level of the participants. *Cambridge English: Preliminary* is an intermediate level qualification which shows the EFL learners' ability to communicate using English. Three parts of listening, writing, and reading were used for this study. The participants took part in PET within the time limit allotted to this section. There are 35 questions in reading part, 25 questions in the listening part, and 8 questions of writing.

The pre-test writing

After the subjects were homogenized based on their marks on the PET test, they were asked to write a text of approximately 100 words about a given topic by the researcher. The purpose of the writing pre-test was to determine whether the subjects were homogeneous concerning their writing ability. The topics were chosen by the researcher herself after considering the cognitive and linguistic difficulty of the topics.

Elementary steps to understating

The materials for both group activities were taken from a book titled *Elementary Steps to Understanding* (L.A.Hill, 1980). All the texts were taken from this book. The students' background knowledge and likely interests on the topic was a matter of text choice. The content was also important due to the focus of the study which is on conjunctions. Thus, the priority belongs to those texts including more conjunctions. Texts ought to be short since the students in the DIG group had to remember and rewrite them.

The post-test writing

Learners wrote composition writings prior to and after the experiment. The pretest and the posttests of writing had ex-

actly the same format but different topics. The time allotted to the students to write the texts was 30 minutes.

Procedures

In order to investigate the effect of applying dictogloss and C-R technique in classrooms on improving learners' writing coherent texts and also compare them with each other, two experimental groups were used to carry out this study. At the first step, the subjects participate in the PET test as the proficiency test. The students did the reading, writing and listening part of the test within 120 minutes. After, they were divided to two groups: the CR task group and the DIG task group. Then, the procedure for the groups was followed by a pre-test which was a writing task based on a given topic in order to figure out whether the participants were homogeneous regarding their writing ability and finally by comparing the marks of pretest and posttests, the effectiveness of treatment could be examined. During the treatment phase which lasted for about 10 sessions, for DIG group, each session, which lasted 15 minutes, the teacher read one short text twice at normal speed which included some cohesive devices. While the teacher was reading the text for the second time, the students were allowed to take notes and then discussed the topic after listening and taking notes to be sure about what they understood. After these steps, they wrote their own texts in pairs by reconstructing the original texts and handed them to the teacher. In order to inform students about their misuses and mistakes, the teacher just highlighted them and gives the texts back to the students with the original one. In this way students are able to compare their texts with the original one and correct the mistakes by using the indirect clues. The feedbacks are referred to cohesive devices errors.

C-R tasks were designed based on Mohamed's (2001) model of indirect C-R tasks based on reflecting Ellis's (1997) guidelines in their design and their frequency of use in different studies (Takimoto, 2012). Based on the model, during the treatment of C-R group, an attempt was made to isolate specific linguistic features which were cohesive devices in this case for focused attention. Then, the data illustrating the target form were presented to the learners and they were asked to articulate the rule describing the cohesive devices. In each instructional session, students in the C-R group received a text of the "Steps to Understanding" followed by a table with three columns. The table included incorrect and correct samples of the target structure. Then the teacher read the text and students compare the two samples and discuss about the reasons of the incorrect ones. After that, an explicit rule was conducted by the students.

After this step, all students took the post-test. The teacher scored Students' compositions based on the number of required number of conjunctions to render a coherent text. The scores were fractions in which the denominators shows the number of conjunctions which the students have to use to write a coherent text and the numerators were the number of conjunctions which were used by the students. Therefore, if a student has to use five conjunctions to produce a coherent text but she used 3 of them appropriately, her score was as 3/5. Then the teacher changed the fractions to percentages to

compare them easily. In order to avoid subjectivity and have reliable scores 3 raters gave their score to each composition. As a result, there were two sets of scores for each students.

Design

Using the following research design, the researcher answered the research questions to meet the objectives of the study. The aim of this study was to investigate the impact of teaching two form-based tasks which were dictogloss and C_R task as the independent variables on writing a coherent text as the dependent variable of this research. This study was a quasi-experimental research consisting of two experimental groups. Because of the difficulty of random selection of samples, the researcher decided to choose quasi-experimental non-randomized, pretest-posttest design. To analyze the data, SPSS Software was used. The performance of the two groups on the pre-test and immediate and delayed post-tests was analyzed using the statistical procedure of t-test.

RESULTS

In order to testify Null Hypothesis 1, the researcher ran a paired-sample T-test between CR group scores on Pre-tests and Post-tests.

As Table 1 shows, Paired sample T-test found a statistically significant increase in the writing improvement to produce coherent texts from pre-test to post-test since the significant level of test (0.02) is less than research confidence interval level (0.05), as a result, CR task is determined to have had positive effects on student's producing cohesive devices.

As a results of the analyses show, the first null hypothesis of research is rejected and the alternative hypothesis is confirmed, meaning that Input-based activities affect Iranian EFL learners' writing improvement in terms of producing coherent texts.

In order to testify Null Hypothesis 2, the researcher runs a paired-sample T-test between DIG group scores on Pre- and Post-tests. As Table 2 shows, Paired sample T-test found a statistically significant increase in the writing improvement in terms of producing coherent texts from pre-test to post-test since the significant level of test (0.01) is less than research confidence interval level (0.05), as a result, DIG task is determined to have had positive effects on student's producing cohesive devices.

To examine the null hypothesis three, at the first phase, it is required to show that there is no significant difference between the pre-test of both group, in this regard an independent sample T-test was run. As it is demonstrated in table there was no significant difference between pretests of groups since the Significance level of test (0.76) is more the research confidence interval, it means at the first step of running this project there was no significant difference between the participants of CR and DIG groups.

To investigate which group was out performed in using cohesive devices in writing, results are displays on Table 4. As it is indicates the significant level of the test (0.10) is more than the research confidence interval. This means that

Table 1. Paired samples descriptive statistics on the effect of CR task on writing achievement

	Mean	Standard deviation	Paired differences		T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	
			Standard error mean	95% confidence interval of the difference				
				Lower				Upper
Pair 1								
PreCR- postCR	-10.90	15.57	3.11	-17.32	-4.47	-3.50	24	0.02

Table 2. Paired samples descriptive statistics on the effect of DIG task on writing achievement

	Mean	Standard deviation	Paired differences		T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	
			Standard error mean	95% confidence interval of the difference				
				Lower				Upper
Pair 1								
PreDIG – postCR	-9.70	17.66	3.53	-16.99	-2.41	-2.74	24	0.01

Table 3. Independent sample T-test on pre test for CR and DIG

	Levene's test for equality of variances		t-test for equality of means						
	F	Sig.	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean difference	Standard error difference	95% confidence interval of the difference	
								Lower	Upper
Pre									
Equal variances assumed	0.91	0.34	-0.29	48	0.76	-1.19	4.03	-9.29	6.91
Equal variances not assumed			-0.29	46.80	0.76	-1.19	4.03	-9.30	6.91

Table 4. Independent sample T-test on post test for CR and DIG

	Levene's test for equality of variances		t-test for equality of means						
	F	Sig.	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean difference	Standard error difference	95% confidence interval of the difference	
								Lower	Upper
Post									
Equal variances assumed	0.02	0.87	-1.64	48	0.10	-6.99	4.24	-15.52	1.53
Equal variances not assumed			-1.64	48.00	0.10	-6.99	4.24	-15.52	1.53

there is not any significance difference between the performances of both groups in posttest. So the null hypotheses three cannot be rejected.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Discussion

This section discusses the findings referring to the research questions. The findings are discussed with references to the

literature review and theoretical framework relating to task types and coherence writing issues.

A quasi-experimental pretest-posttest design was used to find the effect of CR task as an input based-task and DIG as an output based-task on producing a coherent text.

Based on Namazi (2007),Ghoroghi (2006), Ghafoori (2009), Talebzadeh Shooshtari (2005), etc. Iranian EFL learners face with many problems in English writing. Furthermore, in the context of task-based language teaching,

numerous studies have been carried out and the present study was evoked by many research studies on the field of focus on form, the importance of using task-based assessment (Namazi, 2007), the effect of structured-input instruction and output based instruction (Erlam, 2003), DIG task as an output based-task (Kooshafar, Youhanaee & Amirian, 2012; Kim, 2008; Kuiken & Vedder, 2002a; Swain, 1998; Swain, 2000; Swain & Lapkin, 2001) and CR task as an input based-task (Takimoto, 2009; Fotos, 1994; Fotos & Ellis, 1991) which signify the prominent role of tasks in language learning.

The findings of this study indicated that utilizing CR task as an input based-task is effective significantly in production of a coherent text by learners. Shook's study (1994) was one of the earlier studies which examined the effectiveness of input enhancement in two target features of Spanish language among its users. At the end of the treatment, it was understood that the input enhancement affect students' learning significantly. In VanPattern and Cadierno's (1993) study, they compared the efficacy of the traditional form-focused instruction with of the input processing instruction in L2 Spanish learning. The result of their research demonstrated that input processing instruction resulted in more learners' comprehension and production than traditional form-focused instruction. Furthermore, in both Shintani's (2011) and Cadierno's (1995) studies the input enhancement group performed better than the other group. In the domain of SLA, a number of studies (e.g. Fotos, 1994; Fotos & Ellis, 1991) have declared the effectiveness of CR tasks in the learners' enhancement of L2 explicit grammar.

Also the present research indicated that using DIG task as an output based-task pronounced impact on using cohesive devices in a text. Dictogloss has been examined in a number of studies that supported the use of tasks (Kooshafar, Youhanaee & Amirian, 2012; Kowal & Swain, 1994; Nabei, 1996; Swain & Lapkin, 1995). (Kuiken & Vedder, 2002a; Swain, 1998; Swain, 2000; Swain & Lapkin, 2001). According to Kooshafar et al. (2012), the results of the use of dictogloss technique to produce a coherent text through using cohesive devices showed the fact that dictogloss task group had a profoundly better performance in the post test.

Although there was not any significant difference between the scores of the students in the post tests of DIG and CR groups which means that none of them has priority over the other one, most of the studies conducted demonstrated that there are significant differences between performance of output-based and input-based groups.

For instance, in Shintani's (2011) study, the input-based group performed better in receiving vocabulary English construction than the production-based and the control groups on the task-based comprehension tasks. Moreover, Cardiano (1995) examined three treatment of traditional instruction (grammar explanation and output-based practice) group, processing instruction (grammar explanation and input-based practice) group, and control (no instruction) group on 61 Spanish students which revealed that processing instruction group progressed more significantly than traditional instruction group.

Erlam (2003) evaluated the effectiveness of input-based instruction and output-based instruction in L2 French learning. The findings of the research showed that meaning-oriented, output-based instruction resulted in better performance on both comprehension tests and production tests than input-based tests. However, there were limitations in the design of output-based activities which makes it difficult to examine whether it was the output-based activities that resulted in better performance or the input-like-based activities taken place in the output-based group which helped participants to achieve better.

In Nagata's (1998) study, participants were divided into three treatment groups: computer-based structured-input group, control group, and output group. The results of this study demonstrated that the output group gained more than other treatment groups, especially on the production tests.

Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to examine the effectiveness of an output-based task and an input-based task on Iranian intermediate EFL learners' writing referring to using cohesive devices. In order to answer the research questions, the statistical data were collected with 50 Iranian Female EFL learners at intermediate level of English proficiency. They were non-randomly assigned into CR and DIG groups. The PET Exam was used to make them homogenized and the pre-test in this study to eliminate the initial differences among the participants. Participants in CR groups received isolated cohesive devices and tried to produce the rule describing cohesive devices and also in DIG group learners listened to a text twice and attempted to reconstruct the text in pairs. After conducting the treatment, the post-test was conducted.

In conclusion, the results of the study can be summarized as follows: The first null hypothesis (H1) was rejected, and it was concluded that using input based-tasks significantly affects cohesive devices production in the students' writing. The second null hypothesis (H2) was rejected and it was concluded that using output based-tasks significantly affects cohesive devices production in the students' writing. The third null hypothesis was not rejected, it was concluded that neither input based nor output-based tasks outperformed the other group.

The present study provided information for language teachers about dictogloss as an output-based task and CR as an input-based task with Iranian students at intermediate level. The teachers might be provoked to use different tasks, such as the dictogloss and CR. Teachers need to know if different kinds of tasks like dictogloss and CR can be used successfully to develop learners' production especially in Iranian context.

Firstly long-term effects of the tasks and techniques should be investigated as long-lasting effects since this study was carried out within a short-term period of about 8-10 sessions. Secondly, we need to do other researches that document long-term effects of CR and DIG on using cohesive devices in writing.

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