In the name of God

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English Language Department

M.A. Thesis in Language Teaching

EFL Learners Perceptions of Joint Composition:

A Qualitative Study

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Dedicated to:

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Abstract

Joint composition (JC), as a form of collaborative learning, is seen as a social activity where the learners collaborate to build up and develop their ideas. Collaboration, as a main factor of social activities, is a way of idea development. Joint composition (JC), as a form of collaborative learning, is seen as a social activity where the learners collaborate to build up and develop their ideas. Collaboration, as a main factor of social activities, is a way of idea development. This study aims at exploring the perceptions of the EFL learners doing joint composition tasks about what they have already experienced and what constitutes doing this sort of task. This study is based on the implementation of the grounded theory in an EFL learning context in Iranmehr Institute in Babol, Iran. For the purpose of this study, 10 learners participating in joint composition writing course were interviewed. The qualitative data were then transcribed, coded, and analyzed using the principles of constructivist grounded theory (Charmaz, 2006). The findings of this study showed that joint composition is a promising writing task in that it can help learners learn target writing skills in a stress-free and effective environment. In addition, it was found that to successfully implement this task, the teachers have to prepare the context or the pre-requisites for its success including preparing a motivating classroom environment, satisfying the learners' needs, making a sort of difference from traditional product-oriented classes the learners had already experienced. The findings of this study also indicated that it is necessary that EFL teachers take care of the core element identified in this study while conducting a joint composition task: cooperation in writing. This study has significant implications for EFL teachers and teacher trainers in that there are a number of pre-requisites that have to be met prior to implementing joint composition tasks such as motivating the learners to do writing tasks in groups or pairs, and focusing on learner's immediate needs.

Keywords: Joint composition, EFL learner, Perceptions, Writing, Qualitative study

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List of Abbreviations

EFL   English as a Foreign language

ESL   English as a Second Language

L2   Foreign or Second Language

JC   Joint Composition

Chapter One

Introduction

1.1. Overview

After several decades of research in the field of teaching and learning languages, it has been found that the best way to learn interaction is through the interaction itself. Rivers (1987) states that students can increase their language reserves through interaction by listening to or reading authentic language material or by joining their fellow students in discussions, joint problem-solving tasks or dialogue diaries. In the interaction, students learn language by expressing real meaning in real life.

Vygotsky (1978), psychologist and social constructivist, laid the foundation for the interactionist vision of language acquisition. According to Vygotsky (1978), social interaction plays an important role in developing the zone of proximal development (ZPD), in which students construct the new language through socially mediated interaction. Learning is viewed as a variable that can be partially explained by the characteristics of the interaction and social context (Littleton & Howe, 2010). The individual and his environment (physical and social) are in a dialectical relationship to one another. Consequently, the actions of the individual are seen as part of the social construction of common understanding (intersubjectivity) (Wert, 1991). Teachers play a key role in the communicative interaction of students by teaching them to ask and answer, how to learn, to argue, to examine topics, to explain one's thinking and to solve problems together to make one Reach consensus on an agreed topic. (Gillies, Nichols, Haynes, 2012).

According to Alexander (2008), in a dialogic classroom, teachers use overarching questions that examine students' thinking and encourage them to analyze and speculate ideas. Exchanges between students and teachers take longer when students build on other people's ideas or question different

suggestions with evidence. Through the dialogical exchange with the teacher, the students learn to develop their analytical and critical thinking skills. The paradigm of this form of learning, as argued by De Larios and Murphy (2001), is "the doctrine in which a budding writer learns the craft of writing from a more experienced and knowledgeable writer" (p. 278).

Joint composition (JC), as a form of collaborative learning, is seen as a social activity where the learners collaborate to build up and develop their ideas. Collaboration, as a main factor of social activities, is a way of idea development. Learners' preliminary and undeveloped ideas are successfully enhanced via social interaction with more knowledgeable members. In other words, learners with a higher level of experience provide less knowledgeable learners with the needed support to stretch their peers beyond their present level of knowledge. That is, higher level learners scaffold learners with low writing ability and help them achieve their potential levels of development (Storch, 2005).

Collaborative writing, realized as JC in this study, is defined as "writing involving two or more writers working together to produce a joint product" (Anderson, 1995, p. 195). It is now a common way of conducting writing tasks in different educational contexts. Generally, in a JC task, the skilled learners spend most of their time on completing a writing task, and that all the learners in a class actively negotiate with one another to decide how to do finish a task. Meanwhile, unskilled learners try to keep up with the skilled ones. It has also been shown that the skilled learners mostly initiate many language-related episodes, as described by Swain and Lapkin (1998) which is "any part of a dialogue where the students talk about the language they are producing, question their language use, or correct themselves or others" (p. 19) during a

JC. The results of the past studies show that although the joint text by the skilled group still contained some writing errors, its quality was much better than the careless production by the other group (Swain & Lapkin, 1998; Zhang, 2018).

In line with this theories, joint composition has been introduced to second or foreign language classrooms in order to help the learners develop their level of interaction, both with their teachers and with their peers. It is assumed that the collaborative nature of joint composition tasks and the writing instruction in which cooperation among the learners are reinforced would help them master the craft of writing in a foreign language better. This study was an attempt to probe the context in which joint composition tasks were applied in terms of the learners' perceptions.

1.2. Statement of the Problem and Purpose of the Study

Although joint composition task is growing in popularity among EFL teachers, little research has been done on this type of writing task. This study unlike many previous studies, such as Zhang (2018) who showed the effects of L1 and L2 use in collaborative writing tasks, goes beyond measuring the effects of using this instructional method or probing the process of developing the joint text through studying the conversation and interaction which occurs among the learners in a JC task. Instead, adopting a grounded theory approach, this study is primarily interested in exploring the learners' perceptions of JC, this is especially important because the learners are the main participants of the writing process in a JC task and little is known about how they see the process and what variables they find affecting their success or failure in accomplishing such a task.

This study was inspired by the existing gap in the body of research on JC in the field of teaching writing in EFL contexts. To be more specific, this study mainly focused on the EFL learners' perceptions of doing JC tasks to promote their writing ability. This was not precisely researched in previous studies and forms the basic objective of this study.

1.3. Significance of the Study

Writing has always been discussed as an important skill and expression of thinking, emotions, and needs. Students would face a great challenge if they were unable to express their thoughts in written language. Emig (1977) correspond to powerful learning strategies "(p.122).

Writing is a cognitive process and serves as a means of learning and expanding ideas. Almost everyone agrees that a good language learner is metacognitively aware of the language learning process and uses the appropriate strategies (Cary & Reder, 2002). The writing process arises as a result of the interaction between the students and the teacher in the form of dialogical interaction.

It is believed that the results of this study which is going to explore the perceptions of the learners about an interactive approach to writing instruction, that is, joint composition writing would be beneficial to the teachers who are at the front line of writing instruction. It is assumed that if they knew about their learners' perceptions and priorities when implementing such a task, they would be in a better position in terms of implementing the task so that they would have a better chance to put joint composition tasks into practice in their EFL classes. In addition material developers and syllabus designers would benefit from the results of this study since the findings of this study would open a vista

for them in terms of the how promising writing instruction task is perceived in an EFL contexts and what expectations and needs exist while implementing this task in an EFL class.

1.4. Research Question

This study was guided by this research question:

- How do EFL learners perceive joint composition?

1.5. Definition of Key Terms

1.5.1. Joint Composition Tasks

Flower and Hayes (1981) propose that collaborative or joint composition writing is a cognitive process that can be defined as a group effort towards performing a text. Hayati & Ziyaeimehr (2011) also stated that in joint composition with the help of the teacher as a facilitator and students get involved in joint construction tasks which act as a scaffolding technique that could stimulate learners' motivation and develop their confidence in writing composition. Vass (2007) also believed that episodes reflecting the joint planning of the composition are the valuable element in joint composition tasks.

1.5.2. Writing

Writing is a way of communication that involves "the expression, interpretation, and negotiation of meaning" (Lee & VanPatten, 2003, p. 244). In this study this definition was limited to the process of writing the students were engaged when completing joint composition tasks.

1.6. Limitations and Delimitations

The first limitation of the study was restricted time at the researcher disposal; so, it was not possible for the researcher to probe the perceptions of the students over time and investigate the possible changes which may occur in their perceptions of joint compositions tasks. The second limitation of the study was the fact that the participants of the study were selected from an intact class where the researcher was the instructor, too. That is, there was no chance to select and access the students from a variety of contexts and EFL backgrounds.

With regard to the delimitations of the study, it has to be noted that the study was delimited to the learners' perceptions of the joint composition and the researcher was not interested in investigating its effect on the learners writing performance. In addition, this study was delimited to the scope of investigation defined within grounded theory framework to determine the factors contributing to the learners perceptions of the joint composition tasks.

Chapter Two

Review of the Literature

Overview

The main function of this chapter is to provide a review of the related literature and pave the ground for the introduction of this study in terms of its significance in feeling the existing gap in the literature about joint composition task. The chapter begins with defining writing in L2 as a process. Then, joint composition task is defined and framed theoretically. Finally a set of related studies are reviewed and the current gap in the literature is highlighted.

2.1. Process Approach to Writing

Although there are several approaches to teaching and evaluating writing and traditionally, written language has focused on product creation approaches that deal with the flawless end product (Nunan, 1999), process approach to writing is currently gaining greater superiority than the product writing approach. The process-based approach relates to the process of discovery and organizational development (Mastuda, 1998). According to Matsuda (1998):

> "The concept of writing as a process was introduced by Vivian Zamel (1976) in L2 studies. Reproduction of previously learned syntactic or discursive structures, the process-based approach emphasized the vision of writing as an organizational and meaning development process. (P. 21).

> Kroll (1997) states that the "process approach is now used as a generic term for many types of writing courses ... rather than a one-shot approach. They are not expected to prepare and submit complete and polished responses to their writing assignments without going through the writing stages and receiving feedback on their drafts, either from their peers and / or the teacher, followed by a review of their evolving texts' (p. 220). In written language, the

cognitive processes that students go through while writing can arise from the dialogical interaction between teacher and student.

According to many researchers (Murray, 1987), a distinction is made between the writing process and the written product. If the goal is to improve the product, they should help the students in a way that enables them to improve the process they are going through to establish the product.

The writing process is important because the written language does not make sense just by looking back at the finished pages. Meaning is achieved when students learn to focus on the process (Nunan, 1999). Therefore, writing classes should begin so students know the different stages of writing. There are three phases in the writing process: pre-writing, actual writing, and post-writing (Nunan, 1999).

When it comes to process writing, most secondary or foreign language writing teachers and researchers agree that process writing provides an opportunity for multiple revisions and this results in the teacher's feedback being most effective at making corrections in providing the intermediate stages of the writing process (Ferris, 2007). During this process, students can act on feedback from teachers when doing debriefing. To make this process easier, writing teachers encourage students to practice writing the same articles multiple times by reviewing multiple drafts.

During the writing process, teachers can provide different types of feedback between drafts and focus on different topics as students write. In the meantime, students may have ample opportunity to experience the process, discover what they want to express in writing (Ferris & Hedgcock, 2005), receive feedback, and revise their writing based on feedback from teachers.

Writing multiple drafts emphasizes proofreading so that student misuse of grammar elements or inappropriate choice of words is not viewed as a mistake as it is judged against a single draft of an assignment or an end product. Rather, as Matsuda (1998) suggests, process writing offers the opportunity to clarify and refine between intended meanings and what is written. Multiple draft writing, along with other strategies such as discovery strategies and formative feedback from teachers and peers, is becoming an important part of writing in a second language (Matsuda, 1998).

2.2 Sociocultural Theory (SCT)

According to Lantolf and Thorne (2006) "This view has profound implications for teaching, schooling, and education. A key feature of this emergent view of human development is that higher order functions develop out of social interaction. Vygotsky argues that a child's development cannot be understood by a study of the individual. We must also examine the external social world in which that individual life has developed. Through participation in activities that require cognitive and communicative functions, children are drawn into the use of these functions in ways that nurture and 'scaffold' them" (pp. 6-7). Lantolf and Thorne (2006) state that" Vygotsky described learning as being embedded within social events and occurring as a child interacts with people, objects, and events in the environment" (p. 287).

Despite the original conceptualization of SCT in the L1 context, it also has remarkable contribution in L2 acquisition in the formal context. This social approach to SLA emphasizes the causal relationship between social interaction and cognitive development, including language learning. The central claim of SCT in investigating cognition requires us not to isolate it from social context

(Vygotsky, 1978). SCT views learning not an 'individual endeavor', rather it introduces the dimensions of social interaction and collaboration into learning.

In both Vygotsky's (1978) and Bruner's views (1975, 1983) learning possesses a 'transactional' nature, namely, it primarily occurs through interaction with more experienced guides who can support the actions of the novice learner. And that is the part of the process through which language is used as a 'symbolic tool' to clarify and makes sense of new knowledge, with learners who are highly dependent on the discussions with the expert. The more the new knowledge is internalized, the more learners use language to present and comment on what they have learned. In the whole process, language plays the role of a symbolic tool which mediates interpersonal and intrapersonal activity: this occurs within the ZPD (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006).

Vygotsky (1978) claimed that each psychological function occurs twice in a child's development. Its first appearance takes place at the social level (that is, in the interaction of the child and other people), the second at the individual level (at the level of internalized psychological processes). Vygotsky believed that there is a strong connection between thinking and speaking, and that whatever a child might say is internalized and becomes part of her thinking later on.

Accordingly, Vygotsky (1978) introduced the term zone of proximal development, which describes the difference between what a child can do without the help of a teacher and what a child can do with the help of a teacher. This scheme assumes that good teaching is ahead of what a child can do at any given time. Therefore, teachers and students communicate on matters that are a little out of the reach of students, and it is believed that students internalize the guidance they receive. In short, what comes from the outside (be it a competent

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teacher, a parent, or a talented peer) is absorbed into the cognitive structure of the child's mind.

Vygotsky's (1978) emphasis on verbal interaction between a less competent child and a more competent adult was developed by Bruner in the metaphor of education as framework (Bruner, 1985). The scaffold metaphor implies the short-term assistance of a teacher to a student with the aim of acquiring a particular skill or type of knowledge. It is understood that achieving the desired goal would not be possible without the support of the teacher (Wells, 1999). As soon as a child begins working on a task, the competent adult steps in to restrict the child's freedom to perform the task, leading to the child becoming more focused on the desired goal. An additional benefit of scaffolding is the reduction in student failure rates (Mercer, 2000).

The scaffold metaphor works well in the classroom. Since language is a central source of a child's cognitive development, the dialogue between the teacher and the child is understood as a possible framework. Education is then perceived as a dialogical process that both teachers and students enrich by adding meanings, on which they then reflect and process. However, this does not mean that all communication is dialogical. Nystrand et al. (1997) state that teaching cannot automatically be seen as dialogical just because there is an exchange of communication. Because, according to Bakhtin (1987), real dialogue implies a change in different mental perspectives. This means that each participant brings something unique and original to the communication. The constant mixing of different elements creates a dialogue. Furthermore, the so-called dialogic space opens up when different perspectives and opinions are compared with each other.

The opening of dialogic spaces is fundamental for the development of thought, creativity and the ability to learn, since it allows the child to better understand a problem. Therefore, dialogue can be understood as a desirable form of communication. Scott, Ametller, Mortimer, and Emberton (2010) differentiate between dialogue and interactivity. If communication in the classroom takes the form of a dialogue between a teacher and a student, then it is interactive. This is not the case with the teacher's continuous monologue. It follows that communication is only dialogical when it is open to students' ideas. However, if the teacher directs the dialogue to a previously defined end point, which the students cannot influence or enrich with their thoughts, the situation is understood as the exact opposite of a dialogue.

Different authors use different terms to describe lessons that use dialogical forms. Wells (1999) used the term dialogical investigation, while Skidmore (2006) preferred the dialogical pedagogy and dialogical teaching of Alexander (2006). The meaning of the terms is very similar; however, this study uses the Alexander delineation because it is clear and well-designed. Dialogic teaching uses communication and student work with language to encourage activity, deepen thinking, and enrich understanding (Alexander, 2006). The central feature of dialogic teaching is the use of a form of communication that promotes higher cognitive functions in the students. Other important features of dialogic teaching are committed students, their autonomy and the ability to at least partially influence the course of the lesson.

According to Alexander (2006), all communication situations can be divided into different genres. However, only a few of these meet the criteria for dialogic teaching. Alexander's typology is as follows: (1) The lesson is a monologue by a teacher who explains the facts that students are supposed to

learn. The lessons are aimed at all students present in the classroom; (2) memorization is the mechanical repetition of learned information in which all students generally participate; (3) Teachers use recitation to test whether students have learned certain information that the teacher previously taught them; it is based on closed questions of lower cognitive order addressed to individual students; (4) The discussion includes an exchange of ideas and opinions between the teacher and the students; Its aim is to exchange information and generate ideas, whereby the questions used are open and the participation of the students is voluntary; (5) Teachers use dialogue not to control learned knowledge but to acquire new knowledge; The scaffolding dialogue uses structured questions that build on each other to solve a problem that is too difficult for students.

Dialogic questions are aimed at individual students or the class as a whole. Although all of the types listed have their place in education, Alexander claims that discussion and dialogue in scaffolding have the greatest potential for student learning (Alexander, 2006). Therefore, when we use the term dialogical teaching, we understand it as a teaching based on discussion and dialogue.

2.3. Feedback and Writing

One of the main problems with the dialogical approach to writing lessons is providing feedback to students of English as a foreign language. As this approach is essentially based on sociocultural theory in general and on the Vygotskyan concept of interaction and scaffolding, the role of feedback is emphasized when this approach is implemented in relation to teaching materials and teaching methods. The following paragraphs provide a brief overview of the concept of feedback and also recent research attempts to

examine the effectiveness of feedback both in the context of Iranian EFL and abroad.

Al Jarrah (2007) defines feedback as "information from a reader to an author with the effect of providing the author with information for their review. reader-based prose "(Flower, 1979) as opposed to" writer-based prose "(p. 294). Bos (1988) offers a broader definition. He states that feedback is" any response to written writing or informal, written or oral, by teachers or colleagues until a draft or final version" (p.5). From these two definitions we can see that feedback can come in different forms, from different readers and at different stages of the writing process, to the writing process. Students improve.

Feedback is an important part of an instructional design template. Darayseh (2003) states that feedback is a teaching method that can lead to cognitive learning. He also cites an example from Instructional Design Theory called "Theory One" described by Darayseh (2003) and explains that an instruction must include informative feedback as well as other methods such as clear information, reflective practice, and strong motivation. Grabe and Kaplan (1996) affirm that feedback has a central position within a theory of instructional design.

In his theory, feedback can take place during the practical and / or developmental phase. Feedback was also recognized as the most important form of student orientation. To confirm the important position of feedback, Grabe and Kaplan (1996), cited by Shorofat (2007, p. 4), state that feedback belongs to one of the objectives of systematic teaching, namely, the improvement of the teaching process evaluation "by the" certain components

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and sequence of events, including feedback and review events, inherent in systematic classroom design models."

The role of feedback in English as a Second Language (ESL) or English as a Foreign Language (EFL) has been a key issue in several studies on writing teaching. The large number of research studies that focus on different types of feedback and how they affect student writing shows that many academics and researchers believe that feedback plays an influential role in the writing process. Feedback on writing from students can make learning more effective, as Grabe and Kaplan (1996) found. The more feedback students get about their performance, the better they understand what they can do to correct their mistakes. Understanding why they made mistakes and how they can be corrected will help students correct their mistakes and improve their performance. Writing students who receive comments are given information about which parts of their texts need to be corrected and improved. Shorofat (2007) confirms that students who receive feedback during the writing process have a clearer idea of how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve. Feedback can also change how students think or behave towards their work, and draw their attention to the purpose of the writing. In addition, feedback can provide an assessment of how well students are doing their job or a particular task (El Abed, 1991), as feedback is intended to help students narrow or close the gap between their actual performance and desired performance. Teachers are responsible for helping students develop their ability to achieve their learning goals through feedback from teachers.

Feedback increases the students' awareness of the linguistic, rhetorical and informational expectations of the reader. As Williams (2005) suggests, written feedback can promote the explicit knowledge of student writers.

Thuoesny (2010) describes explicit knowledge as knowing the rules of language that students can articulate and justify why certain rules should be applied. Students who receive feedback use their previous knowledge of the language and writing rules they have learned. When writing, student writers use explicit knowledge that is stimulated through feedback on their writing.

Feedback can increase student awareness of the topic they are writing about. Students receiving feedback pay more attention to what they have written than to the standards they must meet. The feedback they receive will draw students' attention to the aspects of their writing that need correction, and teach them how to improve their performance. Increased attention leads to an improvement in writing, which can be defined as a gain in formal and content-related precision in writing, as demonstrated by Bello (1997).

2.4. Learning Principles of Joint Composition Task

2.4.1. Peer-Assisted Instruction

Peer-assisted learning means gaining skills and knowledge through active support in the same situation or with the same peers. Active learning also includes any type of learning that engages the learner during the learning process; in other words, active learning requires learners to perform learning activities meaningfully and think about them (Sohrabi & Iraj, 2016).

There is another part of learner-centered learning in Foot and Howse (1998) theory that has provided the basis for drawing communication in peer learning. In particular, they refer to constructivism and participatory learning in Piaget's theory of cognitive heterogeneity and collaborative learning of Vygotsky's theory of the zone of proximal development (Foot & Howse, 1998).

In fact, these theories are the basis of Kolb's learning styles (Bishop & Verleger, 2013). Learner-cantered learning activities, according to the topics raised in the learner-centered learning literature, are compatible with the theoretical foundations of the flipped class. It should be noted that the connection between these theories is due to their growth over time. Learner-centered learning activities derived from the learner-centered learning literature include peer-to-peer learning activities, collaborative learning, problem-solving learning, and interactive learning, and all of these activities fall under the umbrella of active learning. It should be noted that learning styles justify learning activity variety, but do not necessarily provide a framework for how these activities are organized (Bishop & Verleger, 2013).

2.4.2. Active Learning

Prince (2004) considers active learning to include any teaching method that engages learners in the learning process. The scope of this definition includes many traditional classroom activities, including lecturing. Activities such as feedback, taking notes, asking questions. Thus, active learning acts in a supportive role through peer-to-peer learning and problem-based learning.

As noted, the flipped classroom model also seeks to engage learners in the learning process and adopt active learning practices (Prince, 2004). Chen et al. (2016) believe that the flipped classroom environment should provide an active and interactive learning environment in which the instructor guides learners to apply concepts and creative engagement to the subject matter. In the flipped classroom, lectures and assignments can be done outside the classroom, while in the classroom, active learning activities take place (Chen et al., 2016).

Flipped classroom model as an educational approach recommends using classroom time to convey simple information and other goals such as small group formation and active learning exercises (Liebert, et al., 2015; Moffett 2014). McNally et al. (2017) also consider flipped classroom activities to include in-classroom activities that focus on high-level cognitive activities such as active learning, reading, and problem solving. McNally, et al. (2017) also believe that teachers in the flipped classroom should be responsible for preparing pre-classroom materials, assignments, recorded lectures, and active learning activities in the classroom.

Flipped classroom training requires learners to master basic pre-classroom knowledge and be able to develop high-level learning exercises during the classroom. In-classroom-based active learning activities are designed to enhance learners' discussion of complex lessons and to develop collaborative and interactive learning skills through peers and instructors, enabling instructors to advance learners' learning (White, et al., 2015). In the flipped class, learners make use of active learning strategies such as debating current topics, case studies, concept map development, problem solving, and lectures. Using short and small group discussions are common during class. This approach provides instructors with the ability to engage learners at high levels of Bloom's cognitive classification such as application, analysis, and composition (Lento, 2016; Gilboy et al., 2015).

2.4.3. Cooperative Learning

Cooperative learning refers to a set of processes that involve people interacting with each other to achieve a specific goal or develop an end product (Foot & Howe 1998). In cooperative learning, learners participate in group work and

play an equal role with others, and the instructor oversees the proper performance of tasks and responsibilities assigned to each group member (Zainuddin & Attaran, 2016). Cooperative learning consists of three key parts: 1) learners' teamwork to achieve lofty goals 2) division of labor among learners so that everyone takes responsibility for achieving a goal; and 3) individual collaborations to ensure the achievement of the goal.

Doolittle (1995) points out that the combination of different views and theories shows that there is no consensus on collaborative learning, but considers five factors important in this regard: 1) interdependence, 2) face-to-face interactions, and 3) individual accountability, 4) small group and individual skills, and 5) group self-assessment. So what is important in cooperative learning is the commitment to learn with others and the part of learning community that seeks to make sense of the subject (Doolittle, 1995).

Learners should also be involved in the learning process and take responsibility for achieving their learning goals (Bergmann & Sams, 2014). Hence, the theoretical evidence of the flipped class considers the principles of involvement and responsibility in learning to be important and necessary for success in classroom activities. The underlying logic of the flipped class approach is that it increases learners' engagement with the content, improves teacher-learner interaction, and enhances learning (Rotellar & Cain, 2016). In the reverse classroom, the transfer of ownership and responsibility of learning from instructor to learner is done through participation in interactive activities.

Thus, some of the factors that may improve learner participation include: comprehensive interaction with pre-classroom learning materials, formative assessment during the classroom, and interactive activities in the classroom

(Pierce & Fox, 2012). Therefore, aspects of the flipped class that are perceived by the learner include case studies, interaction with classmates, application of knowledge, self-directed learning, and small group learning (Tan et al., 2017). This model is used to transfer the content of educational materials out of the classroom and classroom time for the cooperative application of concepts with the support of classmates and teachers (Galway et al., 2014).

Therefore, according to the theoretical evidence, what constitutes the indisputable and necessary principle of classroom activities in the flipped classroom approach is the emphasis on accepting responsibility for learning and engaging the learners in the learning process, which facilitates the transfer of learning in individual and group interactions under teacher supervision.

2.4.4. Problem-based Learning

Problem-based learning is the way in which the learning process takes place as a result of trying to solve or solve a problem. In this type of learning, the learner is the center of the learning process and learners work together in small groups to solve a problem or case. They retrieve their previous knowledge, seek new knowledge to solve problems, argue with each other, and hypothesize, research, and combine possible solutions to solve problems based on the topics discussed (Torp & Sage, 1998).

Hmelo-Silver (2004) outlines five goal-oriented learning goals: helping learners grow in flexible knowledge, effective problem-solving skills, self-directed learning skills, and effective participatory skills and intrinsic motivation. Barrows (1996) also characterizes problem-solving by inclusive learning, group learning, facilitating and mentoring, motivated learning, and directional learning.

In this regard, various studies emphasize problem-based learning activities in the reverse classroom. For example, DeLozier and Rhodes (2017) state that the flipped class is known through characteristics such as lesson plan, instructional content (pre-recorded lectures, and assignments before entering the classroom. Arnold-Garza (2014) identifies some of the features of the reverse pattern, including focusing on the effective use of classroom time, adapting to learners' differences, engaging with problem-based learning, and increasing inclusive learning. Also, this approach allows learners to take responsibility for their own learning so that they can transfer these skills to textbooks (Arnold-Garza, 2014).

McNally et al. (2017) also consider flipped classroom learning activities to focus on high-level cognitive activities such as pre-reading and problem solving. McNally, et al. (2017) as well as Abeysekera and Dawson (2015) equate flipped class activities with active learning, peer-assisted learning and problem solving. Therefore, in the flipped classroom model, by creating challenging situations and activities, learners are confronted with problems, and then their thinking and efforts are directed towards solving that problem. Therefore, the design of problem-based learning activities in this model is the basis of learner-centered and active learning activities.

2.4.5. Collaborative Learning

The basis of the collaborative method is the opinions of people like Piaget and Vygotsky. Collaborative learning is a type of learning in which learners learn in small groups with the help of each other. Features of this method are forming heterogeneous small groups, having clear and achievable goals for all members, offering rewards for group success, dependence of members on each

other, teacher as a leader, individual responsibility of learners, and evaluation of the individual (Dillenbourg, 1999). In this regard, various researches and experts have emphasized the collaborative learning activities in the flipped classroom. The flipped class is more described as an inverted learning model and aims to create a collaborative learning environment in which learners participate in issues with the help of the teacher and classmates (Shimamoto, 2014; Findlay-Thompson & Mombourquette, 2014).

The flipped classroom is an educational model for improving inclusive engagement in a variety of subjects and fields, including language teaching. In this method, learners outside the classroom take responsibility for understanding the basic concepts of the lessons and classroom time to effective high-level active activities such as collaborative and problem-oriented learning with the instructor guiding the teaching materials transferred out of the classroom (Rossi, 2015).

In a flipped classroom, learners can access learning content related to new topics, they can learn through instructional materials such as lecture videos outside the classroom, and instead they can absorb new instructional material within the classroom. Moreover, through collaborative learning methods in the classroom, work project and group discussions they can enhance their learning outcomes (Yilmaz, 2017). This educational method promotes learning through collaborative and interactive learning activities, stimulates high-level thinking such as high levels of Bloom's cognitive classification of learning and enhances long-term memory and learning.

Thus, in a general sense, the flipped classroom is a blended learning model that provides learners with online access to course content prior to the

classroom and allows the teacher to engage learners through discussion, engage them in purposeful and collaborative group activities and interactive learning activities in the class. This approach tries to create challenging situations and activities in the classroom, confront learners with the problem, then engage their thinking and efforts to solve the problem.

The indisputable and essential principle is to acknowledge the responsibility of learners and learners' involvement in the learning process, which by identifying and strengthening learning strategies helps learners to improve their performance in learning by relying on their abilities. Therefore, this educational method uses any method to engage and activate learners in the process of teaching and learning.

2.5. Joint Composition Tasks

2.5.1. Joint Composition Tasks as a Cognitive Process

In its broadest sense, collaboration refers to the act of labor-sharing and thus JC is a collective cognitive process where multiple writers negotiate and share co-authority and responsibility for the production of a text (Storch, 2013). Therefore, JC builds on the notion of cognitive process in single-author writing by involving multiple people (Lowry et al., 2004).

Such cognitive process of JC was described by Flower and Hayes (1981) as a process consisting of three main stages: a) planning stage (prewriting stage), interpretation or translation stage (writing stage), and reviewing stage (post writing stage). Planning is the initial stage where learners work collaboratively in order to organize information, set goals, and generate information needed for the writing task. Interpretation is the intermediate stage that links the first stage to the final stage. It is also known as the drafting stage

where learners in groups start collaboratively to interpret plans and research notes into a written document. Finally, reviewing stage consists of revising the original ideas and goals, evaluating the written draft, and editing the text. Thus, Flower and Hayes (1981) propose that collaborative writing is a cognitive process that can be defined as a group effort towards performing a text. Hayati & Ziyaeimehr (2011) also stated that in in JC with the help of the teacher as a facilitator and students get involved in joint construction tasks which act as a scaffolding technique that could stimulate learners' motivation and develop their confidence in writing composition. Vass (2007) also believed that episodes reflecting the joint planning of the composition are the valuable element in JC tasks.

2.5.2. Difficulties in Defining Joint Composition from Cognitive Perspective

Defining JC as a cognitive process of group effort towards performing a text is conditioned by some scholars. For example, Tammaro et al. (1997) and Lowry et al. (2004) argue that many collaborative written documents being executed by group effort contain activities which are often divided and conducted on an individual basis that might not undergo the term "collaboration". In addition, Storch (2013) claims that defining JC as a process carried out through group effort, involving peer planning, peer evaluating or peer editing does not qualify as JC. He justified that contribution of the peer who plans, evaluates, or edits the text occurs only at one stage in the writing process. On the basis of this understanding, Storch (2013) stated that JC does not include editing tasks where learners are required to reconstruct or edit a text which they did not compose. His view is in agreement with Hirvela (2007) who proposed that JC does not refer to the act of peer editing or peer planning. Instead, he used the

term collaborative approach to describe this act. Thus, Tammaro et al. (1997) and Lowry et al. (2004) insistently opined that JC in the true sense takes place only when all individual members of the group have reached a consensus and practice the whole stages of the writing process together including planning and editing stage.

Moreover, Lowry et al. (2004) stated that although JC is cognitive, dynamic and often nonlinear, it can be carried out in a sequential order where there is a starting point and an ending point. Such exchange in the order of collaborative writing as a cognitive process may add complexity in providing a precise and common definition for JC. What might add complexity to come up with a common definition is also that JC is a composite of dynamic components such as the goals, strategies and roles of students within the writing group (Miller et al., 2004). These components are exchangeable among the students throughout the writing process (Horton et al. 1991). Another factor of complexity in defining JC is that documents in JC can possibly be composed by multiple writing activities, work modes, and document control modes (Posner & Baecker, 1992; Calvo et al., 2011).

2.5.3. Difficulties in Defining Joint Composition from Social Perspective

What might add difficulty in reaching a common consensus in defining JC is that many scholars have defined it as a social interactive process rather than a cognitive process. They emphasize the social nature of JC (Galegher & Kraut, 1994, Lowry et al., 2004; Storch, 2005; Shiri Aminloo, 2013). They defined JC as an act of processing a document where learners produce a written-shared document based on certain social concerns. These social concerns are negotiation about the meaning of facts related to the topic, fair and equal division of roles during writing, coordination of individual contributions,

seeking one another's points of views about their writing and resolution of questions about co-authorship (Galegher & Kraut, 1994).

This social view of JC is clearly reflected in the definition of other scholars like Lowry et al. (2004. p.75). They argue that JC is "...an iterative and social process that involves a team focused on a common objective that negotiates, coordinates, and communicates during the creation of a common document". Moreover, other scholars extremely advocate socialism in JC. They claimed that writing is inherently social (LeFevre, 1987; Faigley, 1982; Blyler & Thralls, 1993). Accordingly, Nystrand (1989) defined JC as a social act that combines more than negotiation or discussion between learners when they write. Instead, it is an "episode of interaction". He further argues, "Writing involves more than the generation, organization, and translation of ideas into text … each act of writing is an episode of interaction" (p. 70). Although many scholars strongly support the social view for JC, it seems that they are also unable to reach a consensus about the nature of socialism in JC. They are unable to provide a clear and interdisciplinary definition based on whether JC is a social interaction process, a social act process, a social binary process or a social activity.

2.5.4. Social Interaction in Joint Composition

The social interaction notion for JC has been supported by scholars like Colen and Petelin (2004) who stated that JC is inherently a social interaction where learners can reach a consensus. They propose JC is "… production of a shared document, substantive interaction among members, and shared decision-making power over… the document" (p. 137). Such social interaction view is also reflected in other scholars' definitions as a social process. For example, Henderson and Silva (2006) stated that JC is a social process that comprises

more than two authors writing together in producing a single text by and seeking one another's point of view about their written text. In addition, the social interactional view of JC has been seen largely as a platform where learners can create and develop their knowledge-pooling for writing. It also allows them to gain more understanding about social networking in writing. Based on this understanding, Rex et al. (2002) and Ritchie, Stephen and Donna (2007) argue that JC is an interactive process of understanding of self and others' thoughts within social relationships were interpreting these thoughts collaboratively into a written document have the potential to reflect our self-understanding and understanding for others in this writing-partnership.

2.6. Empirical Findings on Joint Composition

2.6.1. Review of the Related Empirical Studies

JC has not been extensively researched in the realm of foreign language teaching. It seems that there is still a need for a plethora of research to be done to explore different aspects of the learning and teaching dynamics occurs during the task.

Haneda (2004) described the joint construction of meaning in particular in one-on-one teacher–student interaction in writing conferences arguing that it is not the formal properties of the interaction, but how they are used to achieve a particular instructional purpose determine the pedagogical effectiveness of the interaction. He indicated that the teachers made flexible use of triadic dialogue, evident in the manner of exchange initiation and the options selected in follow-up moves, in order to achieve particular pedagogical goals in the moment.

Limbu and Markauskaite (2015) conducted a phenomenographic study investigating learners' conceptions of Online Collaborative Writing and of an effective learning environment for OCW tasks. The findings showed that OCW is perceived in four distinct ways, namely: a) as a way to divide work between participants in order to complete writing tasks efficiently; b) as a means to combine expertise to produce a good end product; c) as an activity involving the fusion of ideas and insights to enable a deeper understanding of content; and d) as a means to develop new skills and attitudes for collaborative work and interaction.

In addition, they showed an effective OCW environment was seen in three distinct ways, namely: a) as a directed space prearranged by teachers; b) as a scaffolded and interactively guided space; and c) as an open space co-created by learners. University students' perceptions of OCW tasks and of effective OCW environments were broadly connected, although some students considered scaffolding and active teacher support to be essential irrespective of their conceptions of OCW.

Hermansson et al. (2019) conducted a quasi-experimental intervention study examining the effects of Joint Construction, in which teachers and students work together to co-construct texts. Joint Construction has been put forward as the most powerful part of the Teaching and Learning Cycle. The authors challenge this argument, presenting findings that are inconsistent with this widely held belief. They showed that the Joint Construction stage did not significantly improve the quality of students' narrative writing or increase the text length of their writings.

Vass et al. (2008) focused on collaborative creative writing to understand young children's creativity, and describe ways in which peer

collaboration can resource, stimulate and enhance creative writing activities. The results emphasize the significance of emotions throughout the shared creative writing episodes, including joint reviewing. In addition, collaboration increased joint focus and intense sharing, thus facilitating mutual inspiration in the content generation in writing activities.

2.6.2. Summary of the Empirical Findings

As reflected in the summary of the previous major studies in JC tasks, the majority of the studies were conducted to discover the cognitive and interactional aspects of teaching writing based on this method. However, few studies were conducted to explore the other side of the learning-teaching continuum which is the learners' perceptions of the task. In other words, it can be concluded that the canonical purpose of the previous studies was to add to the existing evidence on the effectiveness of JC in teaching EFL writing and little attention has been paid to the identification of factors leading to its successful implementation in EFL contexts, especially from the learners' perspectives.

Chapter Three

Method

Overview

This chapter presents the details about the methodology of this study. In order to do so, different sections of this chapter are dedicated to different aspects of the method of inquiry in this research, which was mainly based on grounded theory approach.

3.1. Research Context

This study was done in Iranmehr institute in Babol where a communicative course of English as a foreign language was offered through a term-based syllabus. Each term of twenty sessions is dedicated to a single textbook from Top Notch Series which was covered in accordance with the principles of communicative language teaching approach.

The teacher has also been trained in a teacher training course developed for the purpose of presenting the aforementioned material and has been supervised during the presentation of the material. The students covered the content of the course book via a mix of individual, pair, and group activities, as planned for material presentation in the program. The purpose of the research was to introduce a new method of doing writing tasks, especially the ones presented in the Writing Booster section of the textbook via joint writing approach. To this end, a shift was made in the presentation routines of the course in order to present the writing section of the five units of the course book according to JC principles.

3.2. Participants

This study aimed at conceptualizing EFL learners' perceptions of JC. Thus, the researchers implemented this technique to a group of EFL learners who were selected based on convenient sampling method. That is, the researcher relied

on the accessible learners of intermediate level in an intact EFL class in a private language institute. It is worth mentioning that the students' proficiency level was verified based on their score on a placement test.

To meet the objective of the study, a group of 10 female intermediate learners who were attending the institute and were learning English for general purpose were asked to participate in this project. Their ages ranged 15 to 21. Moreover, they all have been learning English in the institute at least for 2 years and their mother tongue was Persian (see Table 3.1). The learners were selected based on convenient sampling method from an intact class.

Table 3.1. The demography of the participants

Participants	Age	L1	Level	Years of Studying English in institutes
Shiva	17	Persian	Inter -1	3
Noora	21	Persian	Inter-3	4
Sahar	15	Persian	Inter-1	2
Melika	18	Persian	Inter-2	2.5
Armita	17	Persian	Inter-2	3
Hoda	16	Persian	Inter-1	2
Nasim	16	Persian	Inter-2	3
Monir	15	Persian	Inter-1	2
Neda	18	Persian	Inter-3	4
Bahar	19	Persian	Inter-2	3

3.3. Material

The study began with designing JC tasks based on the content of the course held at the institute where data collection was conducted. In order to so, the teacher's book and additional teaching content accompanied the textbook, Top

Notch series were consulted. In addition, the teacher consulted the teachers who have taught the textbook for further ideas on how and what to present as task content so that the JC task would be interesting and motivating for the learners.

The tasks were developed and piloted in an intact class the students of which were not participating in this research. They were piloted for two sessions and the necessary changes were made in the task material so that it would be catchy enough for the learners of the similar background who were supposed to take part in this study. In addition, the pilot phase helped the researcher who was going to present the material later as the teacher to gain mastery of the task implementation.

The learners were then informed about the details they needed to know about JC task implementation, the steps they need to take, the rituals teacher follows and the outcome they expected to achieve. Furthermore, in order to help learners, gain mastery of the task which was new to them, the teacher-researcher spent the first two sessions practicing JC task implementation and guiding the learners in terms of grouping and manners of collaboration. For example, the researcher asked the students to team up with different members each session and use English for communicating their ideas within their groups.

3.4. Data Collection

Essentially, grounded theory has its origins in symbolic interactionism, a paradigm which holds that individuals engage in a world that requires reflexive interaction as averse to environmental response. As a result, grounded theory is an appropriate way of studying any behavior that has an interactional element.

More specifically, this approach is used in exploring topics of a social nature. "It is an inductive theory that allows the researcher to develop a theoretical account of the general features of a topic and simultaneously grounding the account in empirical observations or data" (Martin & Turner, 1986, p. 141). Additionally, this method aims at theorizing the perceptions of a group of learners who experienced JC as an alternative intervention.

Accordingly, this study followed Charmaz (2006) and collected the qualitative data on students' perceptions on joint writing using a semi-structured interview. The researchers interviewed the 10 EFL learners who participated in the course to explore their views concerning the manner in which the JC approach was implemented in the class during this twenty-session course. At the end of the course, the participants were all interviewed and their perspectives were analyzed in line with the coding scheme presented by Charmaz (2006).

After the instruction phase, the learners were expected to take part in interview which were conducted according to Charmaz (2006) and Mills et al. (2006). In order to conduct the interview, they were first informed about the purpose of the interview and the goals of the study, in simple and brief words. They were asked to take part in interview and they were promised that this phase was not related to their assignments, scores and the manner they were evaluated.

The interviews were held on one-by-one basis and the learners were consulted to set an interview appointment which lasted about 20 minutes, according to Mills et al. (2006). Each interview session began with welcoming and warm-up episode which lasted about 5 minutes. The interviewer (the researcher) then shifted on main phase of the interview which was the

investigation of the learners' perceptions on JC tasks. This main phase of the interview lasted for about 15 minutes. The interview was held in the learners' mother tongue, Persian, so that they can comfortably and thoroughly discuss the issues and related topics.

3.5. Research Method

As shown in Figure 3.1, the first step was initial or line-by-line analysis, which helped to identify provisional explanatory concepts. In this step, the unit of analysis was sentences. Furthermore, the researchers were focused on learner's words as they reflected any aspects of their actions and thoughts with regard to their experience of JC writing as they experienced in the course. In the second stage, the emerging codes were classified under different categories.

Figure 3.1. Coding Scheme (Charmaz, 2006)
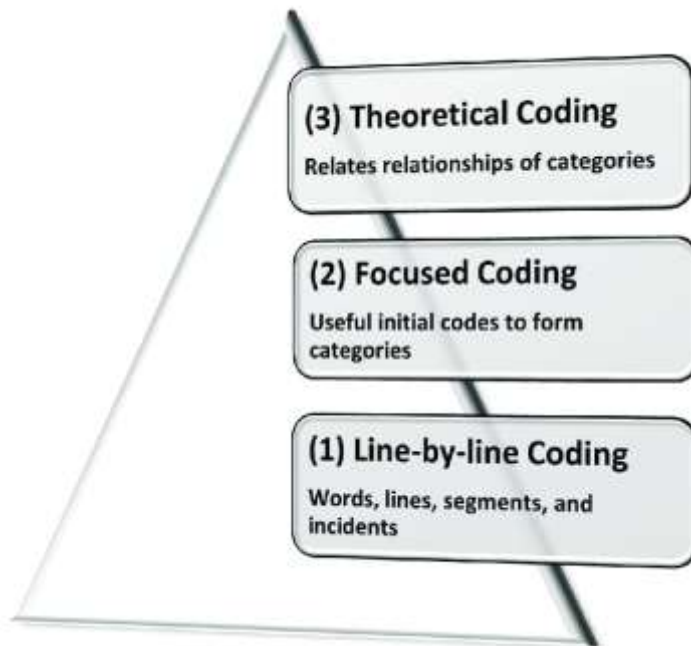
The codes were reviewed in order to make sure that the codes belong to only one category and the established categories of themes do not overlap in

one way or the other. Finally, the categories were connected to form a theoretical model according to the learners' perceptions of JC. In the first phase of the study, line by line coding, the researcher covered the transcription line by line and sentence by sentence to draw words or expressions recurrently repeated in the script. For example, the words like stimulate, motivate, encourage, and help were the instances which were highlighted to be form a focal category of motivation. In the same line, other related words and expressions were grouped into other themes which were then grouped into themes to form the overall model presented in the following chapter.

3.6. Credibility of the Findings

The credibility of the findings was established through comparing the provisional concepts and categories emerged from the transcripts in order to guarantee consistency. In addition, another expert than the researcher went through the emerged categories and the final conceptualization to guarantee the best fit. Finally, with regard to theoretical saturation (Mills et al. 2006; Ostovar-Namaghi, 2015), the researchers continued sampling and interviews until theoretical saturation was reached.

3.7. Ethical Considerations

The sampling procedure, in this study, was based on the convenient sampling method, according to which the learners were first informed about the purpose of the study before the interviews were conducted. They were asked to take part in the interviews that were taken after the course if they were willing to do so (Charmaz, 2001). They were asked to voluntarily take part in this study and express their ideas in response to the questions so that they were not willing to answer a question they could easily decline (Charmaz, 2001). The researchers

asked the institute where the data were collected for permission to make the necessary shifts in the program.

Chapter Four

Results

Overview

This study was inspired with the fact that joint composition has been shown to be a promising writing instruction task. However, previous research which has shown its effectiveness in foreign or second language writing instruction did not investigate the learners' perceptions of the task. Accordingly, this study set to fill this gap using a constructivist approach of grounded theory proposed by Charmaz (2006).

Following the data collection procedures described in the previous chapter, the researcher collected qualitative data in several stages following the guidelines proposed by Charmaz (2006) and accomplished coding based on the steps proposed within constructivist grounded theory approach. This chapter presents the results of analysis.

4.1. Results

Iterative data collection and analysis yielded a set of propositions which reflect the participants' perceptions of JC. What follows aims at presenting these propositions, explaining them and then grounding them in excerpts from the participants' perspectives.

4.2.1. Joint composition improves learners' level of motivation

It seems that learners' motivation has an important role in the success of the JC program put into practice in this class. Based on the analysis of the qualitative data, it was shown that the participants of the JC class were generally satisfied with the course. The sources of satisfaction were the motivating atmosphere, as highlighted in excerpt 1 by one of the participants:

Excerpt1: Shiva

And I was always interested in learning English and the [JC task] was motivating for me because I think I need it in future. It motives me in a way that I could write with my all power and also, I could check it with my partner. In this way I was more motivated to write because I could use my peers' knowledge. Generally, my interest in writing grew.

The type of motivation identified in the interview are also listed below. This is stated by one of the participants as follows:

Excerpt 2: Noora

The way you taught made me more interested and motivated in doing writing tasks and now I really understand that I have to take them more seriously in the future. Before that, I wasn't really interested to write but, in this way I could be more interested and more motivated because I wasn't on the pressure. The way I could in JC tasks showed me the importance of writing and also interested me to write more in the future.

Based on the findings of the study, it was concluded that both intrinsic instrumental motivations identified in language learning literature are important for learners' success in JC courses. However, considering the frequency of each type of motivation, it can be concluded that the instrumental type of motivation is more important since more participants mentioned it. Different learners have different goals which necessitates learning English. Despite the fact that they range from occupational success to attaining a degree, they have the instrumentality of English proficiency in common. It can be inferred from what one of the participants stated as follows:

Excerpt 3: Shiva

I think I could understand the importance of writing and I think I certainly need it in the near future since I am preparing myself for the IELTS which I have to take in near future. This is what I need to achieve my goal. That's why I mentioned it motives me more. In a JC task, I could clearly learn how to write and what to write. It seems my processing machine works better so that I could compose better and finally reach my purpose.

The fact that JC and group writing tasks can significantly improve the learners' language learning motivation, in general, and writing motivation, in particular is not a new point (Mauludin, 2020). As mentioned by Pajares and Valiante (2001), different types of motivation are all considerably influential in developing the learners' interest in doing writing task, either individual or group ones. However, different factors such as age, gender, and the learners' preferences are the determinant factors. Based on the findings of this study, instrumental motivation is more dominant than the other types.

4.2.2. Joint composition helps learners realize the importance of writing

Generally, students compared this JC English writing class with their previous English classes and the role of writing in those classes. It seems that this was also a contributing factor in forming and developing their perceptions to the writing class. The emerged codes are enumerated below. In comparison with their prior experiences in language learning, especially those they had in different language institutes so far, the learners were aware of the differences the JC program implemented in this study could make. The difference between the JC course and the ones the participants had before is reflected in what one of the participants stated as follows:

Excerpt 4: Shiva

Writing was not taken seriously in other classes I had before. This class helped me understand the system and principles of writing in English. Previously, teachers didn't mention the role of writing in class but now we know how important it is. In a way teachers taught before we escaped to write but, in this class we were really eager to compose a piece of writing. This way of writing is really enjoyable and interesting. Previously, whenever a teacher asked us to write we were depressed but now we know how important it is so that we can write conveniently.

The learners were aware that the previous activities were mainly product oriented in which they were expected to provide the teacher with an example of their language performance which was not going to be commented but was going to be graded only. As mentioned by Storch (2019), the interaction created in the context of joint of composition is a fertile field of peer and teacher corrective motivation. It is found that this is significantly powerful in forming the learners' positive attitude toward JC in this study. So, it shows how important a writing is compared to previous ways and it is mentioned by one of the learners in the excerpt below:

Excerpt 5: Sahar

We did the writing exercises, if we did them, as if we were some machines doing some language exercises. We just created a piece of writing in order to get a score or to be commented only by a teacher. Here we talked and collaborated to do the task. There was a teacher or there was a peer whom we could ask about the details or reasons why something is wrong.to compare it with the previous ways, here we can make an accurate writing full of details

that is really important in writing classes and it this way we can really understand the vital role of writing in English learning.

4.2.3. Joint composition creates a relaxed classroom atmosphere

One of the main differences between JC program and previous classes the learners had was an increase in the amount of feedback the learners received from the teacher and by the learners. One of learners explained how they receive feedback in an excerpt below:

Excerpt 6: Sahar

The way we receive a feedback in this class was different. Previously, only a teacher commented on our piece of writing but here we were first commented by our groupmates and then a teacher added something more. We had a discussion with our groupmates to create a better piece of writing. Sometimes this feedback was on our grammar parts and sometimes we received a feedback on our content. The way first we shared our knowledge and commented by learners were really interesting and relaxing. We weren't under the pressure and we could first check our tasks before the teacher see or score.

Previously, teachers believed that learners had to rely on teachers as the main source of knowledge and instruction and she was responsible for providing them new material and content as well as correction; however, in JC program, it seems that this responsibility is shared among the students as well. This what was previously mentioned in previous studies on joint writing tasks and collaboration is writing classes (Wigglesworth & Storch, 2012). The findings emphasize the role of learners' participation as the determining source of their positive perception toward joint writing tasks. Another learner also mentioned the way they get a feedback in excerpt 7:

Excerpt 7: Melika

In a JC class, at first, we had to work together in order to comment on our groupmates' ideas. When we wrote we tried our best to share our knowledge to make it better. Sometimes our teacher asked us to pass our writings to another group to receive a feedback from other groups as well. Finally, we could read our writing aloud or give it to our teacher in order to get a feedback from our teacher. This way of commenting really lessen the pressure we had before and created a more relaxing atmosphere because here in this class we could talk and discuss more about our problems to our groupmates without any stress and also a teacher was really kind. A teacher only gave a feedback when we really missed something. At the end, she checked our writing to see if there is a need to add more.

4.2.4. Joint composition encourages cooperation among learners

The participants' perceived cooperation was the key difference as well as the key of their writing development. The aspects of the collaborative nature which led to their writing development is mentioned below. Generally speaking, cooperative nature of the JC program was welcomed by the participants in this study. The following lines reflect the details regarding their perceptions on the writing process conducted in the actual class. With regard to the effect of JC on the promotion of the learners' cooperation, one of the participants argued:

Excerpt 8: Armita

The writing task could make us feel indulged in the process of writing. Every step included the participation of the group members and the evaluation and comparison of the ideas [of different members]. The final product was not just

mine; it was for all of us. We only focused on the final result of our tasks and everything we did related to us not an individual.

The learners did not perceive the cooperative manner of JC program to be linguistically rich. In other words, the program could not help them develop a better shared linguistic repertoire for their learning. This implies that they were either dependent on their teachers or relying on their textbooks as the sources of linguistic knowledge. This was the key aspect regarding the implementation of the JC program in that affective support from peers helped them experience a more stress-free, secure and supportive atmosphere for learning a less emphasized skill of writing. One of the main challenges of the learners when coming to writing tasks were the required ideas for accomplishing the tasks. They suffered from either the lack of ideas or lack of their relatedness. The mutual nature of pair work or group work in doing writing tasks in this class was the strong point of this instructional method which could provide them with as many ideas as they needed for accomplishing the task. Mentioning the significance of cooperation in JC task, one of the participants argued:

Excerpt 8: Hoda

It is like you have a companion to fall back on when you are short of ideas or even words. We helped and supported each other. We were sure that there would be a solution when we did not know how to write. It made us feel relax since there was a cooperation among us. We never got upset or helpless. Always there was a hand to help. This cooperation gave us more details and information. Here in this class, we felt that we are really helpful and we were interested to cooperate and collaborate.

The issue of mutual inspiration and cognitive support highlighted by the learners in this study has recurrently been mentioned in previous studies done on collaborative and joint writing (Vass, et al., 2008). Accordingly, through promoting learners' interaction and negotiation with their peers, joint writing tasks are potentially more fruitful in terms of helping learners produce richer products. As Karell (2002) mentioned this inspiration may result in collaboration in pre-writing phase and later each student can produce his or her individual product, or the collaboration can even continue in the writing and post writing phases.

4.2.5. Joint composition helps learners use their prior knowledge and skills

A further source of development in writing was the opportunity to transfer the writing skills in L1 to the writing Task in L2. The emerged codes and their descriptions are listed below. With regard to the role of transfer in doing JC task, one of the participants stated:

Excerpt 9: Nasim

Because my Persian essay was good, I think I could write well in English as well. Actually, I think the process of writing is similar in Persian and English; however, the words and sentences are different. I formulated what I was going to say and the order, for example, in Persian, then I stated them in English with the help. This was helpful because when I stated something in Farsi my groupmate could help me transfer it to English. I could rely on my Persian essay and my groupmate could rely on her accuracy in English and as result we created a beautiful piece of writing.

It seems that in a JC program, the learners are not only rely on their peers, especially in terms of their general background knowledge and cognitive

support, but also depend on their knowledge of L1 and the way L2 writing system works. They generally borrow from the patterns and the repertoire of the strategy they have when doing L1 writing tasks. In addition, the results of the interview implies that English writing is equal to the translation of the same content knowledge from L1 to L2; that is, the same content that is presented in a different form decorated by English words. Zhang (2018) also pinpointed the fact that translation and L1 use are the inevitable part of the interaction and negotiation which occurs in collaborative and joint writing tasks. He further stated that such an instance of L1 use is welcomed since it creates more learning opportunities in language classes. Another participant also explained the role of transfer below:

Excerpt 10: Melika

When I wanted to write first, in my mind I thought in Farsi. I used my background knowledge about the subject of writing. The second step was to transfer it in English. In this class the big difference was the discussion I had with my groupmate in order to change it to English. Both of us had an idea and had some shared background knowledge and with the help of each other we composed a piece a writing based on transferring.

4.2.6. In joint compositions tasks, the final writing product is clearly stated.

Students perceive that the expected product needs to have a number of defining qualities. These characteristics are enumerated below. With regard to the role of JC in having a clear defining example of the final product, one of the participants argued:

Excerpt 11: Nasim

We clearly know what the composition has to look like. We had examples on how to begin the composition or how to write a conclusion. We could see how to use our new ideas and meet the teacher expectation, for example, about the imaginary readers of our compositions. The reason is that, always cooperation leads to a better conclusion. We worked together so we could put our heads together to make a piece of writing with a beautiful and correct final picture. The way we collaborate was not just to check the accuracy. We discussed to create a perfect final picture of writing.

It was also stated that the clarity of teacher's expectation with regard to what is expected after the task is done was one of the sources of the learners' positive perception toward JC. One of the learners stated it as follows:

Excerpt 12: Melika

The clarity of the product was very helpful to me. I knew well what I am expected to produce. Actually, comparing my draft with the example the teacher set for me was of great significance for me which made the whole process of doing writing assignments easier for me.

4.2. Summary of the Findings

This study investigated the intermediate EFL learners' perceptions of JC. The results showed that JC was considered to be a motivating task and entails cooperation and collaboration which in turn emphasizes peer scaffolding and constructive teacher-student interaction and dialogue. One of the emerging line of concepts regarding the learners' perceptions of writing in English was the way in which they defined the ultimate product they had to build up after doing

the task in pairs or in groups. Their views on acceptable writing are summarized as follows:

1. Organization: One of the key factors they mentioned regarding the final draft handed to the teacher was that the ideas that have been put into a paragraph have to be interrelated. In other words, the coherence of the ideas was of great significance.

2. Considering audience priorities: The interviewees were aware of the social function of the text and that each text is interpreted within a socio-cultural context in which it is going to be read. Although the socio-cultural aspect of a passage entails a variety of factors, the students interviewed in this study highlighted the receiver of the message the most significant aspect of the context in which a text is going to be interpreted.

3. Creativity: A tertiary definitive aspect of the product was the extent of innovation in terms of content which is going to be produced. It seems that the learners consider creativity and imagination as the complementary source of producing an acceptable written product in addition to their background knowledge they mainly acquire through reading.

It is believed that collaborative writing or joint writing promote process-oriented writing tasks and activities in an EFL classroom (Storch, 2005) and from what we learnt in this study, it is absolutely true. However, defining what we mean by the final product is also a part of this process (Storch, 2005) and as Chen and Yu (2019) pointed is where the process begins since it sets the ultimate goal and determines the roadmap for the learners. That is, after setting the goals end determining the expected product the learners can rely on their creativity to shape the content and the organization of the ideas while they are not deviating from expected frames.

Chapter Five

Discussion

Overview

This chapter aims at interpreting the results of the study in the light of the previous research done within the field. In addition, beyond the discussion of the results, pedagogical imlications of this study are elaborated. Finally, a number of suggestions are made for those researchers who are interested in pursuing this line of research.

5.1. Discussion

Based on the results of the analysis done on the qualitative data from the interview on the learners' perceptions on JC, it has to be argued that the writing instruction process has been viewed as two layers model comprising of the preliminary instructional process and core instructional process. The JC instruction process has to be delivered on two layers. The first one labelled as the primary level is needed to pave the ground for delivering the core process of instruction. The preliminary stage is performed in order to establish a different learning atmosphere from the previous traditional classes and learning atmosphere the learners experienced. The learners need to be familiarized with what is going to encounter and be prepared for them. In addition, the sources of their motivation have to be identified and more is done to invest in motivating activities so that the learners enter the course with an adequate level of motivation and interest. Finally, satisfaction with instruction has to be maintained and monitored. That is, the teacher has to establish these conditions before introducing the core stage and has to maintain them all the course long since if these principles fail the core unit will not function.

The core instructional process encompasses four elements to be taken care of. First, the writing tasks have to be connected with reading, either the

reading activities available to the learners within their textbooks or the ones borrowed from extensive reading sources. The second element is the collaboration and cooperation of the learners when doing the task. It has to be assured that the learners know how to accomplish task goals in pairs or in groups. The teacher has to make sure if the learners can organize a teamwork activity independently; if not, she has to teach them what steps they have to take. Finally, the teacher has to make the learners to know how to invest in their L1 competence when translating their ideas and to what extent put their L1-L2 transfer into practice.

The result of the study, in line with Mauludin's (2020) study, confirmed the fact that JC and group writing tasks can significantly improve the learners' language learning motivation through developing their interest in doing writing task (Pajares & Valiante, 2001). Moreover, in line with Storch's (2019) argument, the interaction created in the context of joint of composition is significantly powerful in forming the learners' positive attitude toward JC. In line with what Wigglesworth and Storch (2012) concluded, the findings of this study emphasize the role of learners' participation as a source of their positive perception toward joint writing tasks. Furthermore, mutual inspiration and cognitive support as highlighted by the learners in this study is also in agreement with previous studies done on collaborative and joint writing (Karell, 2002; Vass, et al., 2008). In addition, with regard to using L1, this study is in line with Zhang's (2018) who sees L1 use as the inevitable part of the interaction and negotiation in collaborative and joint writing tasks. Finally, similar to what was concluded in previous studies, it can be argued that collaborative writing or joint writing promote process-oriented writing tasks

(Storch, 2005) and as Chen and Yu (2019) argued sets the ultimate goal through determining the roadmap and ultimate product for the learners.

The results of this study is also in line with the constructivist approach to language learning and the socio-cultural theory which is rooted in Vygotsky's (1978) thoughts. As stated in the previous chapter, one of the main factors contributing to the pedagogical strength of JC in teaching writing is the interaction, cooperation and collaboration occurs within the task phase. As perceived by the learners, it can be argued that collaboration and the interaction generated through negotiation of meaning among the learners is of utmost significance not only in providing a fruitful learning environment but also in motivating the learners to pursue their attempts toward finishing the task (Littleton & Howe, 2010; Wert, 1991).

In addition, the interaction among the learners is of great significance in developing the appropriate zone of proximal development not only between the students but also between the students and teachers (Alexander (2008). It seems that joint composition tasks of writing has the potential to link a novice and an expert in an effective way so that the learners are constantly within an appropriate zone of writing skill development (Gillies, Nichols, & Haynes, 2012).

5.2. Conclusion

This study aimed at exploring the perceptions of the EFL learners doing JC tasks about what they have already experienced and what constitutes doing this sort of task. The findings of this study highlighted two main layers which lead to a successful implementation of this sort of task. The findings of this study have a number of implications for the teachers and instructors administering

EFL courses and covering writing skill in their classes. First and foremost, it has to be argued that based on the learners' general perception, JC seems to be promising writing task in that it can help learners learn target writing skills in a stress-free and effective environment. In addition, the findings of this study also highlighted the fact that in order for this task to be successfully implemented, the teachers have to prepare the context or the pre-requisites for its success. This step includes preparing a motivating classroom environment, satisfying the learners with the instruction (e.g. preparing a supportive environment), making a sort of difference from traditional product-oriented classes, as the ones the learners had already experienced.

5.3. Pedagogical Implications

The findings of this study have significant implications for the EFL teachers in terms of implementing JC tasks, too. Based on the perceptions of the learners in this study, it is necessary that they take care of the four core elements identified in this study while conducting a JC task: reading-writing connection, cooperation in writing, defining the ultimate writing product and transfer of writing competence. They need to bookmark these sets of key steps and maintain them throughout the whole task. In addition, they need to raise their learners' awareness with regard to these main identified principles of successful JC task implementation so that the learners can automatically conduct the task over time.

The findings of this study major implications for teachers. In-service teachers are responsible to take innovative methods to their classes. Considering the current emphasis on using process-oriented methods of writing instruction in EFL classes, teachers need to raise their awareness of the factors contributing to successful task implementation. Accordingly, the results of this

study are informative for those who are willing to introduce both collaborative process-oriented tasks into their classes. They need to emphasize cooperation in writing, defining the ultimate writing product and transfer of writing competence from L1 to L2 in addition to training their students how to team up and collaborate.

5.4. Suggestions for further Research

Considering the limitation of this study in terms of the number of the learners as well as their level of proficiency, further research is needed to testify the emerged model among the larger body of EFL learners and the ones from a different proficiency level. In addition, further research is needed to explore the perceptions of the learners to the other types of collaborative writing tasks in terms of their potentials for successful implementation and the barriers inhibiting their effective use in EFL classes. In addition, further studies are needed to explore how teachers perceive the implementation of such tasks.

Moreover, further research is needed to probe the perceptions of teachers with regard to the implementation of JC or other types of collaborative tasks in EFL classes in Iran. This is also of ultimate significance due to the fact that the most of the research has been conducted so far has focused on learners, either in terms of their achievements after using this type of task or in terms of their perceptions. However, teachers have not been the cannon of research and their perceptions of using collaborative tasks, in general, and JC in particular, have not been researched.

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چکیده

ایده‌پروری مشترک در نوشتار نوعی یادگیری مبتنی بر همکاری و فعالیتی اجتماعی است که فراگیران در آن با همکاری به پیشبرد و پرورش ایده‌هایشان می‌پردازند. همکاری که عامل اصلی فعالیت‌های اجتماعی است روشی برای پرورش ایده محسوب می‌شود. این مطالعه به بررسی احساس فراگیران زبان انگلیسی آشنا با ایده‌پروری مشترک نوشتار، نسبت به آنچه تجربه کرده‌اند و آنچه که انجام چنین فعالیتی لازم دارد می‌پردازد. مطالعه پیش رو براساس بهره‌گیری از نظریه داده بنیاد در محیط فراگیری زبان انگلیسی به‌عنوان زبان خارجه در موسسه ایرانی ایرانمهر بابل انجام شده است. برای انجام این مطالعه با ۱۰ زبان‌آموز حاضر در کلاس نگارش مبتنی بر ایده‌پروری مشترک در نوشتار مصاحبه شد. سپس داده‌های کیفی با استفاده از چهارچوب‌های نظریه داده بنیاد ساختارگرایانه ۲۰۰۶ «چارماز» رونویسی، علامت‌گذاری، و تحلیل شدند. یافته‌های این مطالعه نشان دادند که ایده‌پروری مشترک در نوشتار فعالیت نگارشی ثمربخشی است چون با ایجاد محیطی بی استرس و تاثیرگذار به فراگیران در یادگیری مهارت‌های نگارش کمک می‌کند. به علاوه، یافته‌ها نشان دادند که ثمربخشی استفاده از این فعالیت به آماده‌سازی بافت یا پیش‌زمینه‌ها توسط معلمان بستگی دارد. ایجاد محیطی انگیزه‌بخش در کلاس، ارضاء نیازهای فراگیران، و فاصله گرفتن از کلاس‌های محصول‌محوری که فراگیران تاکنون تجربه کردند ازجمله اقدامات لازم هستند. یافته‌ها همچنین نشان دادند که معلمان باید حین انجام فعالیت ایده‌پروری مشترک به عنصر مهم همکاری در نگارش توجه کنند. این مطالعه نشان داد که معلمان زبان انگلیسی به‌عنوان زبان خارجه و معلم‌آموزان پیش از اعمال فعالیت‌های ایده‌پروری مشترک به چند پیش‌شرط نیاز دارند که انگیزه دادن به فراگیران جهت انجام فعالیت‌های نگارشی به‌صورت گروهی یا دونفره و توجه به نیازهای فوری فراگیران ازجمله این پیش‌شرط‌ها هستند.

کلمات کلیدی: ایده‌پروری مشترک در نوشتار، فراگیران زبان انگلیسی به‌عنوان زبان خارجه ، احساس، نگارش، مطالعه کیفی

گروه زبان انگلیسی

پایان نامه کارشناسی ارشد آموزش زبان

احساس فراگیران زبان انگلیسی به‌عنوان زبان خارجه نسبت به

ایده‌پروری مشترک در نوشتار: مطالعه‌ای کیفی

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