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Autonomously Noticing Incorrect Language Use: Does it Improve EFL Learners' Grammatical Accuracy?

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Abstract

Promoting communicative interactions, while simultaneously drawing students' attention to language form, is considered as a potentially significant area of research in second language acquisition. This study focuses on the effect of transcribing task, as an autonomous noticing activity, on intermediate and advanced EFL learners' grammatical accuracy. The study was conducted in two advanced and two intermediate adult EFL classrooms, with one class in each level of proficiency serving as the control group and the other as the experimental group. Every session, over a period of 20 weeks, a classroom oral discussion task was assigned to both intermediate and advanced learners. For this purpose, learners were divided into groups of three or four in each class. Students were asked to record their groups' conversations each session. Students in the control groups gave their recorded conversations to the teacher without any post-task activity. Unlike the control groups, the students in the experimental groups were engaged in the post-task activity. Working individually, learners in the experimental groups first transcribed the recorded classroom speaking task and autonomously tried to find and correct their own and their peers' grammatical errors. Subsequently, working collaboratively, learners were engaged in further discussion and reformulation of these inaccurate utterances. The results obtained from one-way ANOVA indicated that transcription of oral

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output with a follow up self and peer correction significantly enhanced the accuracy of EFL learners' oral production.

Keywords: autonomy, grammatical accuracy, group discussion task, transcription

During the last few decades, one of the most significant and influential developments in the area of second language education has been a shift of perspective, at an ontological level, from a cognitive orientation toward social dimensions of language learning and teaching (Benson, 2011; Block, 2003; Firth & Wagner, 1997). This paradigm shift has paved the way for the emergence and development of new approaches to language learning and teaching (e.g. sociocultural theory) which attempt to promote cooperative classroom activities and intend to maximize social interactions among language learners (Swain, 2005). It is well-documented that classroom tasks where students work together and produce collaborative output are far more effective in terms of meaning negotiation (Kowal & Swain, 1994, 1997; Lapkin & Swain, 2000; Swain, 2001a, 2001b, 2005). In this respect, Swain (2005) argues that such activities not only can motivate learners to produce further output but also may provide them with opportunities to receive further instructional scaffolding and peer correction.

However, for effective language learning to take place, students should ideally be engaged in communicative interactions which can draw their attention to the form of the language (e.g., Doughty & Williams, 1998; Ellis, 2003, 2005; Lightbown, 1998; Long, 2006; Nassaji & Fotos, 2007; Pica, 2007, Nassaji & Tian, 2010; Williams, 2005). Learners often complete communicative tasks "without noticing much of anything about the language they use or encounter" (Stillwell et al., 2010, p. 445). Moreover, as Cooke argues "students seldom incline to reflect upon their output and unless guided to do so by the teacher, may miss opportunities to develop their language competence by themselves" (2013, p. 76).

Granted the fact that noticing may not always be undertaken by language learners, Thornbury (1997) suggests that as part of their pedagogy, teachers in second language classrooms must attempt to encourage noticing among learners. Similarly, Little (1997) emphasizes on the importance of consciousness raising by highlighting the differences between

communicative language teaching and more traditional approaches toward language education. In particular, he discusses that the Grammar-Translation method did focus on language awareness and knowledge about the target language, but did not provide learners with any opportunity to practice spontaneous target-language use in the classroom. However, the strong version of the communicative approach exclusively emphasizes on language use, and rarely attempts to develop students' language awareness. On this basis, Little (1997) concludes:

> [w]e need a pedagogical approach that effectively combines language learning with learning how to learn; one that insists on the use of the target language as the normal medium of classroom communication, but at the same time encourages reflection on the target language both as medium of communication and as rule-governed system; in short, one that develops both kinds of language awareness in the pursuit of learner autonomy. (p. 103)

To achieve these goals in language education, Second Language Acquisition (SLA) researchers have identified special tasks that help learners autonomously focus on their L2 output and recognize their inaccurate language use. These tasks that promote focus on form on the part of the learners are argued to develop students' communicative competence and foster their autonomy as well. To help learners to notice cases of inaccuracies in their own output, transcription exercise has been recognized as a useful post-task activity (Cooke, 2013; Lynch, 2001, 2007; Mennim, 2003, 2012; Stillwell et al., 2010). According to Lynch (2001) asking learners to transcribe their own output help them to notice incorrect language use and to reflect on formal and semantic aspects of their output. Post-task activity of this kind which takes place after the communicative task, provides learners with offline feedback and "relieves the pressure on speakers, allowing them to spare more attention to their L2 output, as they are no longer preoccupied with formulating meaning" (Lynch, 2007, p. 312). To date, a growing number of studies have been conducted on the effects of transcription of students' own output on second language development (Cooke, 2013; Lynch, 2001, 2007; Mennim, 2003, 2007; Stillwell et al.,

2010,). Empirical investigations show that transcription exercise provide learners with an opportunity to reflect on their oral output after communicative task. Studies also indicate that when transcription exercises are used, L2 learners not only tend to notice the incorrect language uses in their output, but also their accuracy improve after a while (Mennim, 2003, 2007, 2012).

There have also been theoretical speculations about the beneficial effects of this post-task activity on noticing incorrect language use by L2 learners as well as their language development. However, no systematic study has, thus far, compared the effect of using this task on the performance and language development of EFL learners with different levels of language proficiency.

Learner Autonomy: The Social Dimension

In light of the recent developments in ELT and a shift of perspective from cognitive to social-orientation, proponents of learner autonomy have also started to pay more attention to the social aspect of autonomy. As Benson (2011) maintains the 'social turn' in language teaching and learning has turned researchers' attention from viewing autonomy as an individual learning to collaborative learning. In the 1990s, SLA researchers recognized that studying language in isolation from language teachers would not necessarily result in learner autonomy (Benson, 2006; Oxford, 2003; Oxford, 2015). For instance, Little (1991) considered the concept of autonomy as a feature of learning situation and not as a feature of learner. In addition, Holliday (1999) by emphasizing the vital role that socialization plays in language learning, proposed the notion of social autonomy and asserted that, "autonomy resides in the social worlds of the students, which they bring with them" (p. 117). Similarly, Littlewood (1999) contended that language learners, by taking the opportunity of communicating with other learners in English and by accepting responsibility for their own learning, can develop their autonomy in an interpersonal environment.

Researchers who emphasized the social dimensions of 'learner autonomy' (e.g. Dam, 1995; Esch, 1997; Feryok, 2013; Little, 1991, 1999; Trinh, 2005) argued that L2 autonomy is a matter of 'independence' as well

as ‘interdependence’. Trinh (2005) suggests that interdependence is undertaken in the process of negotiating meaning, scaffolding between teacher and learners and among learners themselves. This social interaction which helps L2 learners in the development of learner autonomy is also evident in Vygotsky’s formulation of sociocultural learning (Little, 1996). Therefore, concepts such as scaffolding, collaborative learning, and reciprocal teaching that are related to sociocultural theory of learning have been given momentum in fostering learner autonomy (Sinclair, 2009). Development of learner autonomy in this view is considered as a socially mediated process (Benson, 2006).

Alongside collaborative interactions, reflection on the use of language has also been assumed to play an important role in developing learner autonomy. Smith (2003) suggests that the main aim in fostering autonomous learning should be based on awareness-raising and reflective skills. This entails that thinking about language and reflection on the use of it plays a crucial role in the development of learner autonomy. Similarly, Little (1997) speculates that in order to develop autonomy language learners should be encouraged to negotiate and evaluate their learning process, through making attempts to learn English by using it. This would help them to develop “their language awareness in the psycholinguistic sense” (p. 103). Therefore, in order to help learners to receive considerable linguistic benefit from classroom interactions teachers should ideally encourage learners to reflect on their output (Lynch, 2001).

To this end, in the present study EFL learners were initially engaged in a collaborative work where they were required to negotiate meaning in their groups. Second, to promote language awareness and reflection on L2 output a follow-up post task activity was designed and the learners were asked to transcribe their conversation and then focus on erroneous utterances they and their partners produced while negotiating meaning. This self- and peer-correction provided learners with an opportunity to notice their own and their peers' errors and allowed them autonomous reformulation of these inaccurate utterances (Lynch, 2001, 2007). Then, working collaboratively, learners were engaged in further discussions and reformulation of these

errors. During this procedure, thus, the following research questions were addressed:

1. What is the effect of individual and group autonomous activities (self- and peer-correction, collaborative reflection and reformulation of incorrect utterances) on intermediate and advanced EFL learners' grammatical accuracy?
2. What incorrect language components would intermediate and advanced EFL learners notice via self and peer correction?
3. What are the intermediate and advanced EFL learners' opinions about the use of transcription and self- and peer-correction tasks?

Method

Participants

The participants of this study were a total of 77 EFL learners who were assigned to two groups of intermediate (N = 39) and advanced (N = 38) levels, studying English at a language institute in Zanjan, Iran. The institute presented courses for various levels of proficiency, ranging from elementary to advance. The main course book taught in the institute was Top Notch series (second edition). For the purpose of this study, four intact classes were chosen, two at intermediate level, and two at advanced level, with one class in each level of proficiency serving as the control group and the other as the experimental group. All of the participants were female, ranging in age from 17 to 21 years old. To assure the homogeneity of the groups in each level of proficiency, Oxford Placement Test (OPT) was given to the participants at the beginning of the research.

Procedures

Following a similar teaching methodology, all four groups were instructed by the same teacher (one of the authors). Throughout the course, along with the regular pedagogical activities, in each session, an oral discussion task was assigned as part of the classroom activities to the students in both intermediate and advanced learners. Students were supposed to do this activity collaboratively in groups of three or four. The topic of the oral discussion activity was the same across all groups of

students and it was chosen by the teacher in order to create spontaneous output on the part of the students. Each group was responsible for the recording of the conversation (by their smartphones), which lasted about 10-15 minutes. Students in the control groups (intermediate and advanced) were supposed to hand the recorded discussion to the teacher without doing any post task activity. Unlike the control groups, students in the experimental groups (intermediate and advanced) were provided with an access to their group's recordings outside of the class time. The students were individually asked to transcribe the first five minutes of the spoken interactions of their groups, to identify and highlight their own and their peers' errors, and correct them. Before each subsequent recording, each session, the students were asked to conduct a feedback session in their own groups to share their comments regarding the accuracy of their transcription and the identified errors and discuss on the best way of reformulating and editing their committed errors. If an unnoticed error remained in learners' transcripts the teacher would correct it. The students were also asked to keep a learning diary for themselves during the course where they could write down their groups' committed errors and their reformulated forms. Following Cooke (2013), in this study also, a levy of 30 percent of the learners' final score was placed on the completion of these post task activities to assure that all members of the class were engaged in performing these tasks during the course. In addition, interviews were conducted with volunteered students in the experimental groups to explore their opinions about the use of transcription and self- and peer-correction tasks.

Data Analysis

At the end of the twenty-week research period, twenty recorded discussion tasks were collected from each group. The first five minutes of the control groups' recorded files were transcribed by one of the researchers and the accuracy of students' outputs was calculated. Since students in the experimental groups transcribed their own groups' first five minutes discussion each session, there was no need to transcribe these recorded files. The researchers just checked for the accuracy of the transcriptions made by the students. Then, the transcriptions were examined in terms of

grammatical accuracy. Following Mehnert (1998), in this study grammatical accuracy was measured in terms of the number of errors per 100 words. As Mehnert stated (1998) this kind of measurement is more accurate than the other measures of overall accuracy that take account of the number of errors per clause, since clauses can be of different lengths. For this purpose, all syntactic, morphological, and lexical errors were taken into account. The learners' recorded group feedback sessions in which learners discussed their mistakes with their group members were helpful in recognizing some of the mistakes made by learners. The scores obtained from all four groups of participants were analyzed by using SPSS IBM version 21.

Results

The results of the mean scores of the mistakes and the grammatical accuracy for each group (in a period of twenty weeks) are presented in Table 1.

Table 1

Mean Scores of Errors and Accuracy for Four Groups of Participants

Groups	N	Errors		Accuracy	
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Advanced / Experimental	19	15.93	.95	6.43	.37
Advanced / Control	19	21.13	.63	7.78	.82
Intermediate / Experimental	19	21.94	.77	8.82	.28
Intermediate / Control	20	28.40	.08	9.94	.27

Descriptive statistics, as shown in Table 1, indicate that compared to advanced learners, intermediate learners made more errors in their productions. Moreover, the experimental groups made fewer errors compared to their counterparts in the control groups. In order to measure students' accuracy, the researchers tallied the number of the errors made by students per 100 words. Thus, whereas the lower the scores indicate more accurate the performance, the higher score show less accuracy. Analysis of

the data showed that the performance of the students in the experimental groups in each level of proficiency was more accurate than that of their counterparts in the control groups. This implies that learners in the experimental groups benefited from the use of self- and peer-correction tasks.

To examine the statistical significance of the difference in the mean scores of the four groups, in terms of accuracy, a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was carried out. The results showed a statistically significant difference among the learners in four groups, F (3, 16) = 45.35, p<.001. It appeared that, the self- and peer-correction task activities had a positive effect on the performance of the experimental groups. In addition, both intermediate and advanced learners benefited from the use of this post-task activity. In order to further investigate the effects of the instruction and to examine the differences among the four groups, a Scheffe post hoc analysis was conducted on students' accuracy score. The results showed that the performances of the participants in the experimental groups were significantly higher than their counterparts in the control groups. In addition, the difference between intermediate and advanced groups was also significant (p<.05). Thus, the results suggest that transcription of oral output with a follow up self- and peer-correction enhances the accuracy of EFL learners' oral production.

Learners' noticed and unnoticed mistakes. As was already mentioned, unlike learners in the experimental groups, learners in the control groups handed their recorded discussion to the teacher without performing any post-task activity. Working individually, learners in the experimental groups, first transcribed the recorded classroom speaking task and autonomously tried to find and correct their own and their peers' grammatical errors. Subsequently, working collaboratively, learners were engaged in further discussions and reformulations of these errors. The data shows that participants were able to notice and identify their inaccurate language uses during the research period. The noticed errors as well as the unnoticed ones were counted and the mean scores were calculated for intermediate and advanced learners in the experimental groups. The summary of the results

are presented in Table 2. (Both noticed and unnoticed errors were regarded as the total errors made by these groups of participants which were reported in Table 1).

Table 2

The Mean Scores of Noticed and Unnoticed Errors Made By Intermediate and Advanced Learners in the Experimental Groups

Groups	Noticed errors		Unnoticed errors	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Intermediate / Experimental	11.04	.65	10.90	.31
Advanced / Experimental	10.65	.30	5.28	.33

Descriptive statistics presented in Table 2 indicate that intermediate learners noticed almost half of their errors and advanced learners noticed around two-third of their errors. Although learners had noticed many mistakes related to their grammar and vocabulary, some of these mistakes were left unnoticed. For instance, learners noticed their inaccurate language uses related to the use of past tense instead of present tense but in some cases the same error was not realized.

In order to answer the second research question, learners' transcriptions in experimental groups were examined in detail. From the total number of 1195 committed errors by advanced learners, 799 were noticed and corrected and 396 were left unnoticed. In addition, from the total number of 1645 committed errors by the intermediate learners, 827 were noticed and corrected and 818 were unnoticed. The identified errors were also classified. The detailed classification of the errors was turned out to be somehow difficult since in some cases it was difficult to say to which category the error belonged. Therefore, a general classification (following Lynch, 2001) was conducted. The percentages of corrected mistakes by learners and teacher are presented in Table 3 (Examples of participants' noticed and corrected errors are presented in the Appendix section).

Table 3
Corrected Mistakes by Learners and Teachers

Groups	Grammatical corrections		Lexical corrections		Reformulations	
	by learners	by teacher	by learners	by teacher	by learners	by teacher
Advanced	487 (61%)	224 (56 %)	195 (25 %)	98 (25 %)	117 (14 %)	74 (19%)
Intermediate	652 (79%)	490 (60 %)	70 (9 %)	195 (24 %)	105 (12 %)	133 (16 %)

As it is clear from Table 3 learners mainly focused on errors related to grammar. Lexical errors received were also attended by the participants. Compared to advanced learners, lexical errors received scant attention by intermediate learners. Lots of omissions and additions were also undertaken in correcting and reformulating the words, phrases and sentences. The unnoticed errors were also corrected by the teacher. Although the participants were not able to solve all the problems they had in their speaking, the post-task activities made them aware of their weaknesses and encouraged them to critically evaluate their own language use.

Interview results. In order to answer the third research question, interviews were conducted with volunteered students of the experimental groups. When participants were asked about the effectiveness of the post-task activities, almost all of the learners, both advanced and intermediate, perceived the post-task activities useful and beneficial in their learning, especially in terms of identifying their mistakes in their speech. In what follows we present a summary of the students' responses to the interview questions. We have made particular attempts to provide relevant quotes from their responses in order to convey the key ideas and what they typically said about the post task activities.

The comments below were expressed by some of the advanced learners. (Pseudo names have been selected to preserve the anonymity of the participants):

> *Mina: It was always important for me to know my mistakes when I was speaking, but I was provided with no opportunity to notice them.*

Parisa: I always thought that when I'm speaking in English I don't make any mistakes. However, the transcription exercise helped me to realize that it was not the case.

Mojgan: When I noticed my mistakes, I was surprised. Then, I tried not to repeat the same mistakes in my later productions.

Some of the students also indicated that they found the post-task activities useful since it helped them a lot in setting a goal for the activities they were engaged in:

Neda: I found these activities useful in my speaking class. It gave me an incentive to follow the tasks more seriously. Although we had group discussion tasks in our previous speaking classes, we received no feedback on the accuracy of our productions. It seemed to me that we were just wasting our time without following any objective.

A few of the learners pointed to the effectiveness of the follow up activities not only in reminding them some previously learned knowledge of language, but also in learning new knowledge:

Maryam: I already knew the correct rules, but when I was speaking I didn't notice that I was making a mistake.... I've forgotten some of the grammar points I've learned previously. This activity helped me to remember them and practice them by using the correct form in my next productions.

Leila: I've learned a lot from my friends. They made me aware of my mistakes with respect to grammar and pronunciation. I learned some new words and grammar rules from my group members.

Reflection on L2 output both individually and in group engaged learners in effective problem solving which engendered enthusiasm among learners. This was also frequently highlighted by some of the participants.

Nazanin: It seemed like a puzzle. Each time I tried to find more mistakes and correct them.

Fateme: It was interesting for me to spot my own mistakes and become aware of my problems. I've never engaged in such a kind of activity before.

During the interview sessions, some of the intermediate learners expressed similar ideas toward post-task activities, albeit in less elaborate ways:

Fariba: The follow up activities helped me to realize that my grammar is not good and I have problem in making accurate sentences. I need more practice to improve my speaking.

Zahra: I found the activity beneficial since it helped me to notice my incorrect language. I've learned a lot from my friends.

Shiva: When I compared my own performance with other members of my group, after completing the correction task, I decided to do my best in my later performances.

Some of them scathingly pointed to the problems they faced in performing the tasks at the beginning of the term.

Samane: For the first time, it was difficult for me to identify mistakes. Gradually I've learned from my group members how to spot them.

Elahe: At first I found the activities quite bizarre. We were not familiar with the task. We didn't have this activity in our previous education. But then we found it useful.

Although the participants emphasized that they were not able to solve all the problems they had in their speaking, their comments showed that the post-task activities made them aware of their weaknesses and encouraged them to critically evaluate their own language use.

Discussion

The present study aimed at examining the effect of individual and group autonomous noticing activities on intermediate and advanced EFL learners, grammatical accuracy. The findings provided adequate evidence in favor of considerable benefits of the engagement in these post-task activities. Statistical analyses of the results revealed significant difference between the experimental and control groups, both for intermediate and advanced EFL learners. This suggests that transcription of oral output with a follow up self- and peer- correction enhances the accuracy of EFL learners' oral production. These results are in line with the findings reported in some of previous studies showing that encouraging L2 learners to transcribe their

oral output after communicative task not only helps them to notice the incorrect language uses in their output, but also enhances their accuracy in the use of these noticed forms in later productions (e.g. Lynch, 2001, 2007; Mennim, 2003, 2007; Stillwell et al., 2010).

An important point which should be noted here is that in dealing with the incorrect language use of L2 learners, one should make a distinction between 'mistakes' and 'errors'. According to Corder (1967) an 'error' results from a lack of knowledge of the correct rule. However, a 'mistake' occurs when learners fail to use their underlying knowledge of the language. The former arises as a result of lack of competence, and the latter as a result of performance conditions. As the interview data suggested, learners were able to correct those inaccurate language uses for which they had previously developed the required competence (noticed mistakes). In case of errors the teacher played a key role in identifying and editing learners' incorrect language productions (unnoticed errors). According to Ellis (2003), noticing activities of these kinds, can be implemented as a follow-up task to direct learners' attention to language forms that have been used incorrectly in the main task. In this respect, explicit knowledge "serves to prime the intake through noticing and to feed the internal monitoring that arises when learners notice the gap between their output and what they know consciously" (Ellis, 2003, p. 149).

From a sociocultural perspective, the findings of this study can also be explained with reference to Vygotsky's theory of zone of proximal development. As it was explained previously, in feedback sessions, the participants of this study negotiated their identified mistakes and tried to reformulate them in their own groups. Although the data from recording of these feedback sessions were not reported in this paper, collaborative correction and reformulation of mistakes resulted in learners' engagement in meta-talk which was beneficial for all members of the groups. Since different learners were competent in different areas of the target language they were able to act as experts on those areas in their groups (Lynch, 2007; Mennim, 2003). This provided learners with opportunities for interaction and negotiation of form. In feedback sessions, the language itself turned to be the content of the task. Thus, learners were prompted to interact in order to discover how some features of language work. From a sociocultural

perspective (Vygotsky, 1978, 1986), this kind of interaction and collaboration not only helps less capable learners to expand their language competence, but also provides an opportunity for more capable ones to consolidate their current knowledge when using it to provide educational assistance to other members (Nassaji & Tian, 2010). Moreover, these social interactions, undertaken in the process of negotiating meaning, contribute to L2 learners' autonomy development (Little, 1996; Trinh, 2005), which is considered as a socially mediated process (Benson, 2006). In addition, the interactions can provide further opportunities for instructional scaffolding.

This study highlighted that unlike the meaning of the term, *autonomy* is both self-directed and socially-mediated learning. Collaborative activities in which learners tried to negotiate meaning in their groups with a follow up individual as well as collaborative post-task activities were helpful in promoting reflection and autonomy in EFL learners. These practices, not only aid learners to evaluate self and peer performances but also, as Burket succinctly argue, help them to "step out of their shoes of passive recipients of knowledge and take a different perspective looking at their learning from a meta-level" (Burkert, 2011, p. 145). They can also potentially enable learners to become independent thinkers and problem-solvers. As Little (2007) rightly pointed out in educational as well as natural contexts, communicative competence can be obtained through engagement in a mutually interactive process Therefore, if learning autonomy is our educational objective, we need to devise an interactive and dynamic procedure where we can help our learners *simultaneously* develop their communicative proficiency and their learning autonomy. In other words, "autonomy in language learning and autonomy in language use are two sides of the same coin" (Little, 2007, p. 26). According to Little, in language education, learner autonomy cannot be considered as an 'optional extra', but it must be placed at the heart of language teaching both in terms of theory and practice. Therefore, the serious challenge for the researchers in future is to move beyond theoretical proposition of autonomy towards an empirically-grounded understanding of it in language learning and teaching (Benson, 2006).

Conclusion

In this study attempts were made to examine the effects of transcription of oral output, individuals' self- and peer-correction, and collaborative reformulation of incorrect language uses on accuracy of intermediate and advanced EFL learners' oral production. Quantitative results indicated that these post-task activities positively enhanced the accuracy of both intermediate and advanced EFL learners' oral production. Qualitative results further revealed that both advanced and intermediate learners perceived the post-task activities useful and beneficial in their learning, especially in identifying their weak points.

The self-corrections as well as group discussions on reformulation of identified mistakes encouraged learners to think about their own language use, to become aware of their weaknesses, and to consolidate their previously learned knowledge by practicing the correct forms in their later productions.

The findings of the present study have important implications for language pedagogy in EFL contexts. First, the individual and collaborative post-task activities used in this study were implemented to counterbalance the risk of developing fluency at the expense of accuracy (Ellis, 2003). Part of a good teacher's responsibility is correcting learners' mistakes. This is often considered as "a vital part of the teacher's role" (Harmer, 2007, p. 62). However, it is worth remembering that too much corrective feedback and constant interruption from the teacher, while students are deep in their conversation, may destroy the main purpose of the speaking activity and discourage learners from attempting to speak (Harmer, 2007). Nevertheless, if learners' mistakes are ignored and left uncorrected fossilization may to happen (Brown, 2007). Discussion task with the follow-up post-task activities used in this study provided learners with ample opportunities for both attention to meaning and attention to form.

The second implication of this study is that teachers must be cognizant that autonomous learning is a learnable skill in the same sense that other academic skills are. Therefore, they should encourage the development of this skill, by embedding it within their process of language teaching and evaluation. Putting differently, this means, that teachers need to teach learners the skills required to become an effective autonomous learners, in

the same way that they do other generic and discipline-specific skills (Railton & Watson, 2005; Scott, Furnell, Murphy & Goulder, 2015).

Moreover, according to Abednia and Izadinia (2013), the educational system in Iran is primarily transmission-oriented and memorization-based. Currently, in most of the EFL classes in Iran, learners are regarded as passive recipients of knowledge and the main focus of language teaching in these classrooms is based on learning language through grammar, memorization, and vocabulary (Riazi & Mosalanejad, 2010). Although in some classes where communicative tasks are utilized for promoting communication among language learners, teachers take students' mistakes for granted. Although in the Iranian context there are numerous constrains that can seriously impede implementation of autonomy-supportive strategies, the researchers in this study believe that, there is still room for the teachers to make various attempts in order to promote learners' autonomy maneuver (Nasri, Vahid Dastjerdy, Eslami Rasekh & Amirian, 2015). EFL teachers by assigning autonomy-supportive activities, like the post-task activities used in this study, can help learners to realize that they themselves should assume responsibility for their own learning and also make them aware of the fact it is not just the teacher who should take the responsibility for whatever goes on in the classroom (Burkert, 2011). Drawing a distinction between the teacher as a mediator and teacher as an instructor, Williams and Burden (1997), encourage teachers to play the role of mediator in order to help their learners to become autonomous, to take control of their own learning, and to enable them to become independent thinkers and problem-solvers.

Despite the above mentioned points, it should be indicated that the present study is not without its limitations. First, the topics of the discussions were already decided by the teacher. This might have affected learners' willingness and motivation to fully engage in the discussion at hand. Future studies will be undertaken to examine learners' reactions to the various topics proposed by the teacher as group discussion task and include topics of learners' interests into consideration. Second, group performances may have been affected by individual performances within each group. In future research, it might be worth investigating, via videotaping, the impact of participation of individual speakers on group dynamics.

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Appendix 1

Examples of noticed mistakes and corrections for better by advanced learners

A. Grammatical corrections

verbs and tenses

Never I saw that city. (I've never seen that city)

It refer to... . (It refers to...)

In last Norooz roads are very crowded and... . (were)

Once I have math exam... . (had)

articles

I think having __ happy life is the ability to pay attention to __ positive points of our life. (a, the were added)

In the Isfahan there are lots of old mosques. (the is omitted)

In spring the trees are the green and full of blossoms. (the is omitted)

At first he was a teacher, then he became __ manager of a company. (a was added)

prepositions

Once I cooked Fesenjan. It was very delicious and we ate it with together. (with is omitted)

People who eat sea food have a longer life than people who eat from cow meat. (from is omitted)

... and I will help to them. (to is omitted)

I hate from fast food. (from is omitted)

plural nouns

I have four sister (sisters) and we are like close friends.

Many accident happen in Norooz holiday. (accidents)

Most of the womans wear black... . (women)

There are many kinds of foods. (food)

pronouns

Yes. His father is an actor too and her daughter... . (his)

Today technology helps English students to improve his or her language. (their)

... and I don't like they to laugh at me. (them)

... you should slice potatoes and then add it to... . (them)

question formation

How you mean by happy life? (What do you mean by happy life?)

How you spend your holiday? (How do you ... ?)

What plans for Konkoor Exam? (Do you have any plans for Konkoor Exam?)

How you make Tahchin? (How do you make Tahchin?)

negatives

I hadn't enough time to study... . (didn't have)

... .It looks not dirty... . (It doesn't look dirty...)

The children that doesn't have father or mother... .(don't)

... She don't honest with me. (she doesn't seem to be honest...)

adverbs and adjectives

My brother is computer engineer and a skill computer programmer. (skillful)

Musicians use special music instruments for... . (musical)

... You can send photos and videos, and speak open about anything you like. (openly)

If I have a problem with my friend I try to forget about it and make a good relative with her. (relationship)

B. Lexical corrections

I don't wear showy (bright or light) color. I think dark colors suit me best.

Which one is unsuitable for our health? (harmful or bad)

When I have a problem in money.... .(financial problem)

When my last friend in secondary school... . (old)

C. Reformulation of the sentences or phrases

I and my mother watch comedy films. (my mother and I)

I like spring because grounds and trees become green ... . (nature is green)

We have a lot of reasons about these accidents. (There are a lot of reasons why these accidents happen)

Not telling a lie... is a good personality of a good friend. (This is one of the important characteristics of. ..).

D. Editing

I think a good friend is someone who helps me I when I have a problem and helps me when… . (the underlined was omitted)

But I think in my opinion, I think home- made food is better than fast food... . (the underlined was omitted)
My mother is a good cook and my mother can cook everything… . (the underlined was omitted and replaced by she)
… When my father and my mother are at work I cook lunch… . (the underlined was replaced by my parents)

Appendix 2

Examples of noticed mistakes and corrections for better by intermediate learners

A. Grammatical corrections

verbs and tenses

But I think it is depended on the driver... .(it depends)
My father drive fast... . (drives)
... and she want to travel to... . (wants)
When I was a student I go Mashhad with my friends. (went)

articles

My father is __ good driver. (a was added)
…I'm __ only child… . (an was added)
Most of __ people understand the importance of… . (the was added)
… It's important to have a money… . (enough)

prepositions

sometimes for lose weight I eat... . (to)
I want to travel all of the world… . (over)
… I will help to them. (to was omitted)
We should pay attention with rules. (to)

plural nouns

… How many money?... . (much)
Naughty childs make their mother angry… . (children)
… and young boys and mans … . (men)
A few day ago I … . (days)

Possessives

I think clothes shows our country culture. (country's)
Elnaz usually wears black and she's shoes are… . (her)

My daughter name is … .(daughter's name)
My mother cooking is very good. (mother's cooking)

Pronouns

I think in your life without money we cannot do anything… . (our)
I like to finish our study and be an English teacher. (my)
… and we can help their by buying food and clothes… . (them)
… and if we ask her why do you like it, it will say… . (she)

question formation

What do you make you happy?(How do you make yourself happy?)
Ok. Do you like to go what place?(Which city do you like to go?)
For lunch eat Borani? (Do you eat Borani for lunch?)
What your wish in your life? (What is your wish)

negatives

I prefer to don't travel by train . (I don't like to travel…)
When I am angry I not control myself… . (can't control)
I haven't any sister. (don't have)
I haven't enough time to… .(don't have)

adverbs and adjectives

When I'm angry I become silence and don't speak with anyone. (silent)
… and it has fat, sugar, and excess salt… . (extra)
… and we should pay attention to its important and … . (importance)
… my sister types quick … . (quickly)

B. Lexical corrections

I eat plant food and... . (vegetables)
I think technology has changed our life very. (a lot)
Have you ever exam vegetarian food? (tried or eaten)
Some people have up expectations in their life… . (high/ a lot of)

C. Reformulation of the sentences or phrases

I happy with red flower and eating chocolate... . (I become happy by receiving red flower and by eating chocolate
I like to have my family happy... . (I like to have a happy family)
Iranian I don't know they like Gorme Sabzi all of them. (I don't know why all of the Iranians like Gorme Sabzi)
One of the my father friend is a teacher... . (my father's friend is a teacher)

Editing

My wishes, one of my wishes is to... . (the underlined was omitted)
Mashhad is frequently always crowded. (the underlined was omitted)
I want I wish to be a Badminton coach… .(the underlined was omitted)
… and for example like playing with children makes you happy. (the underlined was omitted)