The Impact of Pair Work on Promoting Noticing among EFL Learners

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the effect of pair work on promoting noticing among EFL learners. The participants in this study were 31 Iranian intermediate EFL learners. Tthe participants were first asked to narrate a story in written form. Then, at the second stage, the participants collaborated with a self-selected peer to provide feedback on each other's linguistic problems. Finally, at the third stage, the participants renarrated the story after a week's interval. While completing the task at the first and second stages, the participants had to make notes on their linguistic problems. Their notes were regarded as the operationalised form of noticing. The results revealed that written output was influential in promoting noticing among the participants. The participants mostly noticed lexical problems at both stages. However, the quality of noticing was low and as a result did not lead to retention and learning at the third stage.

Key words: language related episodes; noticing; output; peer feedback; lexical problems

INTRODUCTION

Noticing is now considered one of the most important factors contributing to the process of acquiring a second language (Schmidt, 1990, 1993, 1994, 2001; Robinson, 2003). Schmidt (2001), for example, has argued that "people learn about the things they attend to and do not learn much about the things they do not attend to" (p. 30).There are two types of noticing widely discussed in the literature of second language acquisition (SLA): *noticing the gap* and *noticing the hole* (Swain, 1995, 1998, 2000). The former occurs when learners notice a difference between their interlanguage (IL) and the target language, and the latter takes place when they realize that they do not have the linguistic means to say what they want to say.

An important consideration in this respect is with activities that enhance either type of noticing. As Williams (2005) has argued, getting learners to notice a gap is a more difficult goal to achieve than having them notice a hole in that "learners may believe they already 'know' the word or form and they must now notice that they do not, at least not exactly or completely" (p.682). Based on the premise that noticing plays a crucial role in the process of SLA, second language teaching researchers have proposed various techniques and activities to promote it. Consciousness raising (Ellis, 2003; Rutherford, 1987) and input enhancement (Sharwood Smith, 1993) are typical activities used to promote noticing through focusing on the input the learners receive. Nevertheless, recent research, propelled by Swain's Output Hypothesis (1985, 1995, 2005), tends to examine the impact of written output tasks on noticing (Izumi, 2002; Izumi & Bigelow, 2000; Song & Suh, 2008).

OUTPUT AND NOTICING

More than two decades ago, Swain (1985) was attracted by the role of output in the context of Canadian French immersion programs. In these programs, English - speaking children are placed as early as kindergarten age at schools where French is the sole medium of instruction. Thus, learners in these programs are provided with an acquisition-rich environment. Swain's meticulous observation revealed that many of the children attending immersion programs were fully proficient in receptive skills; however, their productive skills were far from native - like. Swain (1985) attributed this to lack of enough opportunities for output in immersion classes. Therefore, she concluded that comprehensible output is as important as, if not more important than, comprehensible input in the process of SLA. Swain (1995) indentified three functions for output: noticing, hypothesis testing, and metalinguistic reflection. Swain's notion of noticing refers to the learners' noticing of their problems in production while trying to say what they intend to say. Output may be the trigger that forces learners to pay attention to the means of expression needed to successfully convey his or her intended meaning. In Swain's words, "the activity of producing TL may prompt L2 learners to consciously recognize some of their linguistic problems" (1995, p. 129).

As mentioned earlier, the linguistic problems that the learners notice are of two general types: the forms that are absent in their IL, i.e. holes and the forms that are different from TL norms, i.e. gaps. The second role of output involves hypothesis testing, whereby learners take an active part in their learning by trying out forms and testing their hypotheses about L2. Hypothesis testing occurs in two forms. If learners are in a situation with no external feedback, then there is no way to test their hypotheses against except their own internalized knowledge (Swain, 1998) or they may collaborate with others. The third function of output is its metalinguistic function. In this case, the learners show an awareness of something about their own or their interlocutor's use of language. This suggests that they use language to reflect on language use. In metatalk, learners' working hypothesis while working toward solving a problem is being observed.

PAIR WORK, PEER FEEDBACK AND NOTICING

It is now widely assumed that the use of pair work and small group activities promotes learner-learner interaction (Ellis, 2003; Long & Porter, 1985; McDonough, 2004; Storch, 2007). Long's update of the Interaction Hypothesis (1996) maintains that negotiated interaction promotes second language learning in that it not only helps them to comprehend input but also pushes them to modify their output through the corrective feedback they receive from their interlocutor (Gass & Mackey, 2006, 2007; Mackey, 2002, 2007; Philp & Tognini, 2009). From a Swainian perspective (Swain, 1995, 2000), the collaborative attempt between the learners, particularly when they are involved in a form-focused task, results in what she has termed collaborative dialogue, i.e. "dialogue in which speakers are engaged in problem solving and knowledge building" (Swain, 2000, p.102). There are now a number of studies that suggest that form-focused tasks involving collaboration between learners promote negotiation of form (Baleghizadeh, 2009, 2010; Kuiken & Vedder, 2002; Storch, 1999, 2007, Swain & Lapkin, 1998). Obviously, the peer feedback created as result of such negotiation aids learners to notice holes and gaps in their IL.

Kuiken and Vedder (2002), employing a pre- and pot-test design, investigated the effect of collaborative dialogue on recognition and production of the passive structure by 34 Dutch EFL

learners working in pairs and individually on a dictogloss. Quantitative analysis of the data showed no significant difference between the performances of the two groups. Nevertheless, the qualitative analysis indicated that pair work resulted in more noticing of the passive structure.

In an ESL context, Storch (1999) found that pair work had a positive effect on overall grammatical accuracy when 11 intermediate to advanced learners in Australia completed a series of grammar-focused exercises (a cloze exercise, a text reconstruction, and a short composition). There were two isomorphic versions to these exercises (i.e., they featured the same theme, the same genre and were the same length and had approximately the same number of similar grammatical points to attend to). The first version was done individually and the other was completed in pairs. In the cloze exercise, accuracy improved in verb tense/aspect choice (from 58% to 78%) and particularly in morphology (from 35% to 84%). In the text reconstruction exercise, a greater proportion of items were detected and correctly amended when working in pairs than when working individually (72% vs. 63%). With respect to the composition, those written in pairs demonstrated a lower average number of errors than compositions written individually (7.75 vs. 13.6) and a greater proportion of error-free clauses (61% vs. 47%). However, as Storch (1999) admits, "Given the small-scale nature of this study, these findings are suggestive" (p. 371).

In another study, Storch (2007) investigated the effect of pair work on a text-editing task in the same ESL context, i.e. Australia. The text selected for this study contained 19 errors, which dealt with the use of verbs, articles, and word forms. Unlike the findings of her previous study, this study revealed a modest difference in the mean accuracy score for those who worked in pairs and those who did the task individually (68.05% vs. 62%). Considering the fact that the pairs had spent more time on completing the task, one would have expected a greater level of accuracy compared to those who did the task individually. Nevertheless, as Storch (2007) maintains, "these results may be due to the small number of items included in the task itself, and the small number of tokens of some features such as articles and word forms" (p.155).

More recently and in an EFL context, Baleghizadeh (2009) compared Iranian intermediate learners' performance on a conversational cloze task under two conditions: individually versus collaboratively. The conversational cloze task consisted of three types of gaps, namely articles, prepositions, and coordinating conjunctions. The findings showed that the learners' overall performance in the collaborative mode was significantly better than their performance in the individual mode. However, further analysis indicated some differences across the three given grammatical forms. While the learners who had worked in pairs outperformed their peers in the individual mode on articles and prepositions, their performance on coordinating conjunctions did not significantly differ. It is concluded that this might be due to the complex nature of grammar rules related to articles and prepositions compared to the simpler rules governing the use of coordinating conjunctions. "Apparently, more complex grammatical items (e.g., articles and prepositions) are better candidates to benefit from pair work than those which do not encompass a wide range of complicated rules" (Baleghizadeh, 2009, p.8). Another argument posed to account for this difference is the developmental readiness of the learners to negotiate over more challenging forms like articles and prepositions, which has naturally resulted in their better performance through collaborative work.

Finally, in another recent study, Baleghizadeh (2010) compared the performance of 40 Iranian EFL learners on a word-building task again under individual versus collaborative conditions. The results confirmed that two heads are better than one, and hence, students who had worked collaboratively were able to attach more accurate prefixes and suffixes to the given root words

than those who had done the task individually. Thus, it was concluded that the more students provide each other with feedback and elaborated explanations through collaborative attempts, the more they are likely to learn from each other.

THE PRESENT STUDY

The above studies lend support to the fact that when learners work in pairs and provide each other with feedback, they are likely to resolve more problems on the assigned task. However, due to lack of studies, which focus on the type of linguistic forms learners notice, there is clearly a need for studies that attempt to investigate what learners notice both quantitatively and qualitatively when they work in pairs. To this end, the present study is an attempt to answer the following research questions:

1. What aspects of language will Iranian L2 learners notice while composing a narrative task on their own?

2. What will Iranian L2 learners notice while collaborating with a peer on a written narrative task and to what extent will this noticing be effective?

3. What will be the effect of peer collaboration on Iranian L2 learners' subsequent output?

METHOD

The present study follows a pre- and post-test quasi-experimental design. The participants had to work collaboratively and provide each other with feedback on their written output.

PARTICIPANTS AND CONTEXT

This study was conducted at one of the branches of Islamic Azad University in Iran. The participants were 31 EFL freshmen (19 females and 12 males), whose age ranged from 18 to 27. Based on the scores obtained from a sample of the *Nelson English Language Test* (Fowler & Coe, 1976), a widely-used test in the context of the present study, the participants' English language proficiency was recognized to be at the intermediate level. All the participants were members of an intact class taking a course on paragraph writing, which was held once a week for an hour and a half over 16 sessions in fall 2008.

INSTRUMENT (PICTURE PROMPT)

The picture prompt taken from Hanoka (2007) was used to elicit the data for the study. This is a picture with two frames, requiring learners to write a narrative paragraph. A picture eliciting a simple narration was selected as the participants were not highly proficient in English. The picture showed various emotions on the characters' faces, which helped the participants, use a wider range of vocabulary. The narrations written by native speakers were available to the researcher to be used as a basis for comparison.

PROCEDURE

Before conducting the main study, the second researcher distributed a sample of the *Nelson English Language Test* (section 300 B) among the participants to determine the English language proficiency of the participants. The main study, consisting of three stages, began at the following session.

In the first stage, which appeared to be the main part of the study, the second researcher spent ten minutes teaching the learners how to make notes. She provided them with a sample picture prompt and relevant examples (see the Appendix). It should be noted that all the instructions were given in the participants' native language, i.e. Farsi. Making sure that everything was clear to the participants, the second researcher then distributed the printed picture prompts among them. They were asked to write their names on all of the sheets. They were required to write a narrative paragraph in no more than 20 minutes. The allotted time was sufficient as indicated by the result of a pilot study made earlier.

The procedure for the second stage of the investigation was different. At this time the participants were asked to select a partner to collaborate with and provide each other with feedback on their written productions. The participants were supposed to read out their texts to their partners and raise questions regarding their language-related problems during the first stage. The partners were instructed to listen carefully and find the errors in their peer's text even if the problems were not mentioned by them. In addition, they were required to solve their partner's problem mentioned in their notes. Needless to say, the participants had already been taught how to give feedback and record their thoughts at this stage through examples (see the Appendix). Since giving feedback would take a longer time than the composing stage, the participants were given 20-25 minutes to complete this stage. The participants were asked whether they needed more time and they all confirmed that the given time had been sufficient.

In the following week, during the third stage of the study, the second researcher asked the participants to write the narrative paragraph about the same picture for a second time. They were given 15 minutes to complete this task. The participants were not told they would have to renarrate the picture story on purpose. This was done to sensitize them about the points they had previously taken note of. It should be mentioned that the interval between the second and the third phases was only a week as the class was held once a week every Tuesday.

THE SCORING PROCEDURE

For analysis purpose, noticing was operationalised through the participants' verbalized language related episodes (LREs). The number of LREs was interpreted as the frequency of noticing. Swain (2005) defined LREs as any part of the verbal report where learners talk about the language they are producing or produced, question or reflect on their language use, or correct themselves or others. The criterion adopted for this research was developed by Qi and Lapkin (2001) with some modifications. The LREs are usually divided into three broad categories of lexical, form, and discourse. In the present study the LREs were categorized as follows: (1) lexical: adjectives, adverbs, nouns, verbs, phrases and expressions; (2) form: articles, plurals, sentence structures, verb forms, tenses, prepositions, pronouns, comparatives and superlatives, punctuation, and spelling; (3) discourse: logical sequencing (cohesion and coherence), inter-sentential relationships, and cohesive devices; (4) content: whatever information depicted in the picture (impression of the story of the task in this study) and (5) other: unrelated issues. The last

two categories (4 and 5) were added by Hanaoka (2007). In addition to specifying the LREs, each LRE at the composing stage was categorized into solving the problem ***correctly*** (when learners were doubtful whether they used linguistic items correctly or not) or ***incorrectly*** (when learners' guess was wrong or they avoided using the linguistic items) by raters. In order to determine the quality of noticing at the comparing stage (research question 2), they were divided into two categories of (1) noticing only (the case where a participant just noticed a certain aspect of texts without giving any reasons) and (2) accepting the model with a reason (the case where a participant accepted the superiority of the model by pointing out specific reasons). At the last stage, the revision stage, the second researcher was determined to check whether such noticing had any effect on the participants' learning. Thus, the raters meticulously read the participants' previous compositions to see whether they used the noticed points in their revision or not. The inter-rater reliability for identification and coding of the LREs was 91%.

RESULTS

Research question 1 investigated the effect of output on promoting noticing among learners.

TABLE 1**:** Frequency of LREs' subcategories at stage 1 and 2

LREs category	Subcategory	Frequency		Percentage	
		Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 1	Stage 2
Lexical	Verb	29	23	23.77	33.82
	Adjective	21	17	17.21	25.00
	Noun	20	9	16.39	13.24
	Adverb	9	5	7.38	7.35
	Phrase	39	10	31.97	14.71
	Other	4	4	3.28	5.88
	Subtotal	122	68	100.00	100.00
Form	Verb tense	31	27	46.27	51.92
	Verb form	4	3	5.97	5.77
	Preposition	11	9	16.42	17.31
	Pronoun	2	4	2.99	7.69
	Punctuation	5	0	7.46	0.00
	Spelling	14	6	20.90	11.54
	Others	0	3	0.00	5.77
	Subtotal	67	52	100	100.00
Discourse		4	0		
Content		15	13		
Others		11	6		
Total		219	139		

As displayed in Table 1, the phrase subcategory with the highest percentage (31.97%) drew most of the participants' linguistic focus to it. Regarding the form category, the proportion of the verb tense subcategory was the greatest, which accounted for 46.27%. It seems that the participants' involvement in writing made them pay attention to spelling as well. This subcategory with the proportions of 20.90% became the second popular one. Except for the

preposition as the third significant subcategory, the rest of the subcategories with well under 7% proportion were insignificant to the participants of the study.

Moreover, this study explored whether the participants were successful in coming to the right linguistic solutions as shown in Table 2.

TABLE 2: Number of LREs resolved correctly or incorrectly by the participants without a peer's assistance at the first stage

LREs category	Incorrectly resolved	Correctly resolved
Lexical	84 (68.85%)	38 (31.15%)
Form	52 (73.24%)	19 (26.76%)
Discourse	1 (25%)	3 (75%)
Total percent	137 (69.54%)	60 (30.46%)

It clearly shows that the participants in the lexical and formal categories were not highly successful in solving their linguistic problems. Approximately 69% of the participants resolved their problems incorrectly. Just above 30% of the noticed problems were solved correctly. The analysis of each category of LREs in particular, revealed that over 68% of the lexical problems were resolved incorrectly, which is 5% below the form category. Of the four LREs stated about discourse, three of them were resolved correctly. Thus, it can be concluded that a large number of the participants at the intermediate level of language proficiency were not successful in solving their language difficulties. It was apparent that appropriate feedback was needed to fill the participants' linguistic gaps.

Research question 2 explored the effect of peer feedback on promoting noticing. As Table 3 clearly shows, the participants grew in their noticing of the verb subcategory from 23.77% to 33.82%. In contrast, the proportion of the phrase subcategory dramatically fell to 14.71%, which was roughly half of its proportion at stage 1. To illustrate the results of the form subcategories, it should be pointed out that no sharp increase in the participants' noticing was observed. The most popular subcategory was the verb tense, which accounted for 51.92% with a 6% rise in noticing. There was less than 5% increase in all subcategories of the form episode except for the spelling subcategory, which dropped to half from 20.90% and the punctuation subcategory which fell to 0% from 7.46% at stage 1. To sum up, collaboration among the participants was particularly effective at promoting noticing of lexical problems but less effective for noticing grammatical points. The following table provides more information while comparing the participants' noticing at two stages of narration and comparison. The obtained significance levels are below 0.5, indicating that peer feedback was influential in promoting noticing among the participants.

TABLE 3**:** Comparison of the participants' noticing quantity between stages 1 and 2

LREs category	PF group	N	Mean	SD	t	df	Sig
Lexical	Stage 1	31	3.94	1.436	6.096	30	0.000
	Stage 2	31	2.19	1.014			
Form	Stage 1	31	2.16	.860	2.092	30	0.045
	Stage 2	31	1.68	.979			

Research question 2 also pointed out the participants' quality of noticing as shown in Table 4.

TABLE 4: Quality of noticing at stage 2

LREs category	Noticing Only by the writer	accepting with a reason by the writer
Lexical	47	22
% in row	(68.11%)	(31.88%)
Form	32	21
	(60.37%)	(39.63%)
Total	79	43
	(64.75%)	(35.25%)

It should be stated that the majority of the participants with 68.11% and 60.37% for the lexical and the form episodes respectively only noticed language items in comparison with 31.88% for the former and 39.63% for the latter category for the participants who accepted the noticed items with reason (Table 4). It can be concluded that the participants at this level did not trust each other since their noticing was approximately twice as common as accepting with the reason in lexical category. Such an increase is also available in the form category.

Research question 3 investigated the effects of the participants' noticing of their problems and new linguistic items at the previous stage (stage 2) on their revision at stage 3.

TABLE 5: The relationship of quality of noticing at stage 2 with changes at stage 3

Quality of noticing	Total Number of LREs at stage 2	Relationship to changes in stage 3		
		Better percent	same percent	No relation percent
NO	79	10 (12.65%)	40 (50.65%)	29 (36.7%)
AWR	43	15 (34.88%)	9 (20.93%)	19 (44.19%)

NO= noticing only
AWR= accepting with reason

Table 5 reveals that of the 79 noticed only LREs, 10 (12.65%) contributed to the improvement at this stage (S3), suggesting that they used noticed items in their revisions, whereas 40 (50. 65%)

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of them were similar to what mentioned previously in compositions. It means that the participants used the same words they wrote in the second stage and not the ones, which they noticed. In addition, 29 (36.7%) of noticed only LREs did not relate to the revision stage meaning that they used neither the items they mentioned earlier in their composition nor the words that they just noticed. They applied quite different items at their revisions. However, of the total of 43 LREs at the level of accepting with the reason, 15 (34.88%) contributed to changes with improvement (the items which they accepted with reason) and 9 (20.93%) of them were the same (the exact LREs they used earlier) in addition to 19 (44.19%) LREs unrelated to stage 2 (neither the items mentioned in the original composition or the ones they noticed and accepted). It is quite clear that although the participants noticed some language related issues, the noticing did not lead to uptake of those items in their revision.

DISCUSSION

The above-mentioned results indicated that producing the TL surely leads to the noticing of linguistic holes and gaps in one's IL. However, the majority of the participants focused on the lexical problems specifically the phrases and expressions subcategory, which includes collocations. In this part, some examples of the participants' verbal thoughts regarding the lexical problems are mentioned. It should be pointed out that the participants wrote their thoughts in their L1 (Farsi), so the researchers had to translate their notes into English. The italic phrases or words are the participants' problems and bolded phrases or words are their answers.

I didn't know how I can express "*he thinks with himself*" in English, so I used "**he thinks in his mind**".
I didn't know what phrase to use for "*as always*" in English, therefore I use "**like before**".

The findings of this study support those of Qi and Lapkin (2001) and Hanaoka (2007). Williams (2001) also mentioned that about 80% of LREs involving classroom interaction is lexically oriented. Van Patten (1989) also pointed out that learners at early and intermediate stages of SLA cannot attend to both form and meaning in the input due to the limited capacity of memory and serial nature of conscious processing.

Results obtained for research question 2 show that peer feedback fostered the participants' noticing of the holes or gaps. There was an increase in the proportion of noticing at the second stage. However, the participants were not skillful enough to fill the lexical *holes* regarding the noun subcategory created in their knowledge since the proportion of it decreased at the second stage (see Table 1). They mostly gave feedback in the subcategories of verb and adjective. A large number of the participants, who collaborated with their partners tried to solve form problems especially in the area of the verb tense subcategory. The following are some of the examples, which the participants provided to their partners.

The first two examples are the ones where the participants were unable to give feedback. Therefore, learners' holes were not filled. So not all the holes created at the first stage are going to be filled at the second stage through cooperation with other learners.

I don't know what is *sneer at* in English. My friend didn't know either.
I was not sure whether to use *a for traffic* or not, neither was my partner.

The next examples include those that the participant provided their partners appropriate feedback.

I was not sure about the accuracy of he lates; and my friend told me it is he is late.
I didn't know whether "ran the bike" was right or wrong". My friend told me it is "rode the bike".

However, the last group of examples includes the ones that the participant provided her/his peers with wrong answers, which show that they were not knowledgeable enough to give feedback.

I used **"he was in a traffic jam"**, but my friend told me "*traffic is uncountable"* and I should have not used "'a' *with traffic".*
I used the sentence **"she shakes her hand for him"** but my partner told me it should be "shaked".

As shown in Table 4, the participants mainly noticed the difference, but they did not accept their peers' opinions since the percentage in the 'noticing only' category is nearly twice as common as the other category.

One explanation for this phenomenon is individual differences. Some learners are reluctant to accept peers' opinions or even work with them in a pair or a group. Another explanation is the level of proficiency. Since they were all at the intermediate level, they did not have sufficient knowledge to give feedback, especially in the area of the form category. Learners should be able to provide their partners with convincing reasons regarding the accuracy of the forms they negotiate over. In fact, they have to employ their metalinguistic knowledge, namely knowledge about language, while testing their hypotheses collaboratively. Since these learners are at the intermediate level, they are not capable enough to provide feedback metalinguistically. The results of such cooperation might have changed if they were paired with advanced learners, who played the role of a teacher for them because they are knowledgeable enough to test the hypotheses metalinguistically. Almost all the related studies (Abe, 2008; Hanaoka, 2007; Qi & Lapkin, 2001; Storch, 2001) have found out that proficiency affects noticing. Watanabe and Swain (2007, 2008) also pointed out that perceived proficiency affects the nature interaction between learners.

However, the issue of metalinguistic feedback is mostly correct about grammatical points, not lexical problems. The participants' noticing of lexical episode increased at the second stage. The findings seem to support Brown's (1993) contention that it is pedagogically useful to create a gap by having L2 learners "[experience] a need for a word form before they encounter it" (p. 266). Therefore, items learned in this way may be better retained in long-term memory. Swain (1998) argued that noticing holes not only serves as an important stimulus for noticing gaps but also facilitates the retention of the solutions in short-term as well as long-term memory. Furthermore, note taking as a measuring tool to operationalise noticing might help to notice gaps and holes. It is possible that the process of taking notes allowed the participants to engage in metalinguistic reflection and thereby enhanced the entire learning process investigated in this study. Note taking might amplify the positive effects of output by providing the participants with an opportunity to further process what they noticed through output and improve the retention process. Russo, Johnson, and Stephens (1989) pointed out that thinking-aloud causes reactivity defined as the changes of mental processes due to thinking-aloud itself and eventually affects learners' learning outcome. Learners might also refer to other sources to search for the solution and confirm them. All these factors might lead to the retention of noticed items in the mind. However, the issue of noticing quality is very significant in the process of retention and learning since the participants of this study were not highly successful in retention after a week interval due the nature of

their noticing. Hence, noticing quality has special importance in retention besides many other factors mentioned above.

Regarding the risk of receiving erroneous feedback, as it is likely to be registered in the learners' mind, and hence, result in fossilization, it should be pointed out that the learners in the present study did not blindly accept their partners' feedback, which apparently reveals their distrust toward the accuracy of the provided information. Therefore, there would be no need to be concerned about fossilization.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this research showed that the picture task, as a prompt to produce language, managed to elicit a homogenous response from the majority of the participants. This means that the participants mostly narrated the story correctly. They were quite similar in expressing the content of the story. If they had not had a similar impression of the story, then they would have most probably discussed the content of the story. The participants noticed various aspects of language, specifically the lexical episode. The findings also confirmed that producing language makes learners aware of their linguistic problems and they try to look for solutions to fill those gaps. However, it needs to be pointed out that note taking may have an important effect on learners' awareness and their learning. Pair work as a source of feedback was successful in filling some lexical gaps and promoting noticing of new lexical gaps in their knowledge. However, pair work among learners of intermediate level was not influential in filling grammatical gaps. Apparently, the learners at this level did not have the linguistic means to be able to provide structural feedback. Therefore, the element of trust, most probably absent among them, might have impeded the process of retention in long-term memory. In spite of the fact that pair work among intermediate learners was beneficial in promoting noticing of lexical gaps, teachers are not recommended to use pair work as a sole source of feedback. If pair work is accompanied by other means of providing feedback such as the use of native models, supervision of teachers or highly proficient learner, the results may differ. Learning, the final goal of all existing teaching strategies and techniques, may not occur through collaboration between intermediate level learners inasmuch as they are not able to promote noticing with high level of awareness as an essential prerequisite. As a result, the noticed items may not be registered in long-term memory. On the other hand, sometimes teachers need to provoke learners' noticing at the low level (detection) as an influential factor to prepare their mind to teach a grammatical structure. Therefore, pair work for such a purpose can be effective among intermediate learners.

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APPENDIX

THE RESEARCHERS' EXPLANATION OF THE NOTE TAKING PROCEDURE

In order to inform the participants how to take notes about their problems, the second researcher used another picture prompt and distributed it among the participants. She asked them to look at the picture carefully and think what the picture narrated. The picture showed a clerk in an office who was going to play tennis after work. The manager gave him a project to finish on that day. Therefore, he had to work overtime and could not play tennis. In the end, the man realizes that he was not paid for the project. There were some special activities or facial expressions in the picture which require particular adjectives, adverbs, verbs or phrases. The researcher asked the participants whether they knew which word to use in order to express those facial expressions and activities or not. If not, they have to write:

I wanted to say "   " [punching the clock] but I did not know the word. So I wrote "he put the card in the machine and left the office.

They had been asked to mention what they wrote at last. In the above example, it was written "so I wrote he put the card in the machine and left the office". Even if they wanted to avoid writing it, they should have pointed out:

Because I did not know how to express "………" in English, I avoided talking about it.

This was just an example of lexical episode. Regarding the form episode, the researcher mentioned other examples.

I did not know what the past form of the verb" ought to" was. I wonder it exists or not. Therefore, I used "had to".

I am not sure what the correct preposition for "morning" is. I used "at".

This note taking instruction was for the first stage. Some examples were also presented to them for the second stage (pair work). They were told to write about the points they asked their partners with the solutions or the points that their partners noticed about their text. It was also insisted by the researcher that they have to give their ideas about the provided feedback. They had to point out whether they think their partner was right or not and accepted their feedback or not. Here are the examples translated into English.

I was looking for the work "punching the card" in English. My peer did not know it either.

According to the picture, I used the word "project" for offering paper sheets to the co-worker, but my peer used the word "document". I think "document" is more suitable in this context.