

ON THE EFFECTIVENESS OF PARTICIPATORY APPROACH ON EFL LEARNERS' ACHIEVEMENT: EFL LEARNERS' PERCEPTIONS IN FOCUS

SOBRE A EFICÁCIA DA ABORDAGEM PARTICIPATIVA NA CONQUISTA DOS ALUNOS DE EFL: AS PERCEPÇÕES DOS APRENDIZES DE EFL EM FOCO

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ABSTRACT: The present study aimed to investigate the potential effects of participatory approach on EFL learners' academic achievement. Moreover, the effects of applying participatory approach on learning English from the learners' perspective were also explored. The participants of the study were 60 Iranian EFL learners from two intact classes. These two classes were randomly assigned to one control group and one experimental group. For fourteen sessions, the researcher in the control group class followed her regular teaching practice through the conventional book-based method of conducting an English class. In the experimental group class; however, the researcher adopted participatory approach tasks and activities, in which she applied various participatory approach-based techniques, activities, role play, and problem solving activities, group work and collaborative tasks in the classroom instruction. Results of the comparison of the effects of the experimental participatory group and the control conventional group revealed that although the students in both groups improved their scores on the IELTS posttest, there was no statistically significant difference between the experimental group's overall performance and that of the control group. Results of the analyses conducted on separate skills on the IELTS exam; however, revealed that the experimental group had higher scores on the speaking skill in comparison of the scores of the control group. Results of the interview with the students revealed that they held positive attitudes towards implementing the participatory approach and they were willing to be exposed to at least some of the tasks and activities in their future courses. Based on the findings of the current study, teachers are encouraged to use the activities and tasks associated with participatory approach. **KEYWORDS:** academic achievement; collaborative task; EFL learners; participatory approach.

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RESUMO: O presente estudo teve como objetivo investigar os efeitos potenciais da abordagem participativa no desempenho acadêmico dos alunos de EFL. Além disso, os efeitos da aplicação da abordagem participativa na aprendizagem do inglês, da perspectiva dos alunos, também foram explorados. Os participantes do estudo foram 60 alunos de EFL iranianos de duas classes intactas. Essas duas classes foram aleatoriamente designadas para um grupo controle e um grupo experimental. Durante quatorze sessões, a pesquisadora na turma do grupo de controle seguiu sua prática regular de ensino através do método convencional baseado em livros de conduzir uma aula de inglês. Na aula do grupo experimental; no entanto, a pesquisadora adotou tarefas e atividades de abordagem participativa, nas quais ela aplicou várias técnicas, atividades, atividades de dramatização e resolução de problemas baseadas em abordagem participativa, trabalho em grupo e tarefas colaborativas na instrução em sala de aula. Os resultados da comparação dos efeitos do grupo experimental participativo e do grupo controle convencional revelaram que, embora os estudantes de ambos os grupos tenham melhorado seus resultados no teste pós-IELTS, não houve diferença estatisticamente significativa entre o desempenho geral do grupo experimental e o controle. grupo. Resultados das análises realizadas em habilidades separadas no exame IELTS; entretanto, revelou que o grupo experimental apresentou maiores escores na habilidade de falar em comparação aos escores do grupo controle. Os resultados da entrevista com os alunos revelaram que eles tinham atitudes positivas em relação à implementação da abordagem participativa e estavam dispostos a serem expostos a pelo menos algumas das tarefas e atividades em seus futuros cursos. Com base nas conclusões do presente estudo, os professores são incentivados a usar as atividades e tarefas associadas à abordagem participativa.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: realização acadêmica; tarefa colaborativa; Alunos de EFL; abordagem participativa.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Problem

Given the rise of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach, which emphasizes the development of language learners' communicative abilities, the term participatory approach or collaborative language teaching and learning have been in wide use in L2 acquisition. This has resulted in the development of the so-called process-oriented syllabi along with the development of communicative tasks that contribute to the enhancement of language learners' practical language use (Nassaji & Tian, 2010). The idea of the participatory approach draws on the constructivist theory of learning. In fact, Ellis (1999), Krashen's (1985) Input Theory and Long's (1985) Interaction Hypothesis form the theoretical foundation of participatory approach. As

mentioned by Swain (2005), the current increasing interest in tasks and group activities, by far, is due to the communicative approach to language instruction. In the view of Ellis (2003), participation is viewed as an essential component of the L2 learning environment. It has a pivotal role in L2 learning process. Consequently, it is of enormous importance to uncover students' interests and provide them with different methods and techniques to solve their proficiency related problems.

It can be concluded that taking a participatory approach to the instruction of English skills can uncover the issue at stake. This investigation seeks to study the probable impact of participatory approach on L2 learners' academic achievement in a group of EFL learners enrolled in Kerman Azad University. A large number of studies have probed the collaborative learning models in L2 learning classrooms and there have been few studies examining the impact of the participatory approach on EFL students' academic achievement.

As discussed by Kalyuga, Mantai, and Marrone (2012), encouraging students to get involved in collaborative group activities and establishing an appropriate setting where they can engage in collaboration practices and teamwork is not easy. In fact, it takes many procedures to perform problem-solving tasks in L2 instruction. Traditional teaching methods yielded the graduates who lacked the kinds of skills they required to be effective engineers (e.g., team working; putting to use their scientific and engineering theory and principles; providing solutions to unstructured, practical problems, and engaging in communication with others (Bjorklund, Cabrera, Colbeck, Parente, Terenzini, 2001).

Language scholars often argue that the learner cannot acquire knowledge passively. In order to learn, people need to engage deeply in the thinking process. That is, their mere presence in the class doesn't suffice. According to Lord (1994), collaboration among the small group provides the

students with an opportunity to think for themselves with limited or no input from the teacher. The collaborative learning has been shown, in some of the previous investigations, to positively influence students' attitudes and enthusiasm towards their L2 (Kohonen, 1992). Therefore, it is claimed that the results can have important implications for how to perform collaboration in teaching an L2 in order to help enhance motivation and enthusiasm for further research in the related area.

1.2 Objectives of the Study

In accordance with the underlying principles of the socio-cultural theory, this study is aimed at investigating the potential effect of the implementation of participatory approach on EFL students' academic achievement and performance as well as its impact on teaching and learning from the perspective of both teacher and students. This study also seeks to explore the potential impact of different kinds of collaborative tasks (the tasks used by Swain, 2000, 2001, 2005) and Nassaji and Tian (2010) on the improvement of Iranian EFL learners' academic achievements and the development of their language proficiency. The results of this study might improve teachers and adult learners' understanding of these findings with the aim of improving classroom learning. Furthermore, the findings of this study might encourage a better understanding of the impact of participatory approach on the development of English language skills among adult learners.

1.3 Research Questions

Following the results of the previous studies in the related literature and in line with the objectives of the study, the following research questions have been formulated:

RQ1. Will the employment of Participatory Approach in EFL classes be effective in terms of improving intermediate EFL learners' academic achievements?

RQ2. Are all four skills of language positively influenced through the implementation of Participatory Approach?

RQ2.1 Will the employment of Participatory Approach have a positive effect on intermediate EFL learners' reading skill?

RQ2.2 Will the employment of Participatory Approach have a positive effect on intermediate EFL learners' speaking skill?

RQ2.3 Will the employment of Participatory Approach have a positive effect on intermediate EFL learners' writing skill?

RQ2.4 Will the employment of Participatory Approach have a positive effect on intermediate EFL learners' listening skill?

RQ3. What are the effects of applying Participatory Approach on learning English in intermediate level from the learners' perspective?

1.4 Significance of the Study

The contribution of this study can be envisioned from both theoretical and practical perspectives. When it comes to theoretical perspective, given that participatory strategies are employed for the instruction of English skills, the focus is on reading and writing process as well as the ultimate performance of L2 students. Yet, despite the fact that an effort has been made to investigate the theoretical underpinnings of collaborative language pedagogy (e.g., Bygate, Skehan, & Swain, 2000; Skehan, 1998; Willis, 1996), the results are conflicting.

Therefore, an assessment of whether participatory approach can make any contribution to the enhancement of EFL learners' performance is viewed as a tentative factor influencing the pedagogical theories related to the participatory teaching of EFL students. As for practical significance, participatory learning strategies can be claimed to be applied in a lot of universities and colleges all over the world. Yet, teachers and students voice serious concerns regarding the practical impact of these learning strategies.

Consequently, the findings of this study might contribute some new insights to the nature of participatory strategies with respect to their impact on EFL learners' academic achievement. The present study can also be helpful in another way. That is, it adopts a sociocultural perspective regarding the incorporation of collaborative tasks. The aim is to practice the participatory approach to the enhancement of language proficiency among Iranian EFL learners.

1.5 Literature Review

Findings of research conducted on second language acquisition have revealed that collaborative learning can contribute to the improvement of L2 learners' interdependence (Bruffee, 1999), interpersonal skills (Rymes, 1997), responsibility assumption (Totten, Sills, Digby, & Russ, 1991), and their cognitive and critical thinking capability (Johnson & Johnson, 1986). Moreover, the research results (e.g., Doughty & Williams, 1998; Ellis, 2003, 2005; Williams, 2005) have indicated that language classrooms need to incorporate the tasks which encourage and push for communicative interaction among L2 learners. Accordingly, classroom tasks where language learners practice together and produce output in collaborative tasks have been found to result in the creation of helpful opportunities not only for peer feedback but also for scaffolding (Lapkin & Swain, 2000; Swain, 2001, 2005).

In accordance with the sociocultural theory, the social interaction and collaborative tasks are viewed as inseparable constituents of L2 learning. In the view of Vygotsky (1986), isolated learning cannot yield the cognitive development given that learning is essentially a social enterprise. ZPD (zone of proximal development) constitutes an important component of Vygotskian sociocultural theory. As Vygotsky (1978) maintains, ZPD has to do with the gap between the current, actual level of development (specified through independent activities including autonomous problem solving) and that level of

development that can be achieved by the learners through problem solving by receiving help from more knowledgeable people or in collaboration with other more capable peers.

According to the principles of ZPD, the collaborative activities need to be emphasized given that through entering collaborative tasks within their ZPD, learners draw on their existing knowledge to enhance the things over which they have not yet gained mastery independently (Aljaafreh & Lantolf, 1994; Nassaji & Swain, 2000). Furthermore, thanks to this kind of interaction with the so-called more knowledgeable individuals, learners will be provided with the chance to make use of the resulting supportive environment, where the less capable interactants can be helped to strengthen their language skills in order to reach higher levels of competence (Appel & Lantolf, 1994). In turn, the more capable interlocutor is likely to be provided with the opportunity to corroborate his or her current knowledge while putting it to use to offer support to the other participant. The theories put forth by Piaget and Vygotsky (Dillenbourg et al., 1996) have inspired many researchers to conduct study in the field of collaborative activities and participatory approach. In effect, the developmental phases and stages developed by Piaget have been drawn on by many researchers with the aim of describing children's cognitive progress. This is also the case for Piaget's ideas concerning the concept of cognitive conflict. This is related to the notion of dissonance which learners experience upon being aware of the gap between their already acquired knowledge and the new data or experiences to which they are exposed. In keeping with sociocultural perspective, this study is aimed at exploring how involvement in collaborative learning tasks can influence EFL learners' academic achievement as well as their language performance. In so doing, the researcher seeks to study the issue from the L2 learners' perspectives.

2. METHODS AND PROCEDURES

2.1 Design of the Study

The study is a mixture of both qualitative and quantitative research method (Mixed Method). In fact, a triangulation procedure has been adopted through using TOEFL, IELTS, and Teacher made tests, and interviews to collect data. The study involves a mixed method design, including an experimental phase pre-test, treatment, post-test, plus a qualitative procedure that includes an interview with the students participating in the study.

2.2 Participants

This study was conducted with a total of 39 EFL students extracted from among 60 students in two intact classes. The participants were EFL students at Azad University of Kerman, English department. Both male and female students participated in the study, and all of them had studied English translation at the Azad University for one academic year. Students' age, gender, social and educational backgrounds were not taken into consideration. Moreover, the attitudes of the students who participated in the study were considered in an interview.

2.3 Instruments

2.3.1 Proficiency Test

Before the treatment sessions began, all participants took part in a paper-based TOEFL proficiency test from ETS administrated in 2004. This test was used to check the homogeneity of the groups in terms of their entry proficiency level. The test comprised of 50 multiple-choice listening comprehension tests, 40 multiple-choice questions of structure and written expression and 50 multiple-choice reading comprehension questions.

2.3.2 Pre-Test and Post-Test

As the main purpose of the study was to investigate the effects of participatory approach on the academic achievement of Iranian EFL learners in terms of their language proficiency test, a standard IELTS test was used as the instrument for pre-test and post-test to collect data on their performances. The IELTS test comprised of four sections that contained 40 questions on listening, 40 questions on reading, a three-part interview section and two tasks on writing. Since the test comprised of four separate sections, it was used to examine the participants' improvement with regard to the four main language skills.

2.3.3 Student Interviews

Drawing on the previous studies in the related literature, a set of interview questions were designed by the researcher for the learners who participated in the study in order to include their attitudes towards the implementation of the participatory approach in the Iranian EFL context. The questions were designed carefully by the researcher and checked by the members of the English Department at the same university where the study was conducted.

2.4 Data Collection Procedure

As it was mentioned earlier, two intact classes took part in the study. As mentioned above, out of the original 60 students, 39 participants whose scores on the language proficiency test fell within ± 1 standard deviation of the mean score, attended all treatment sessions and completed all test booklets were included in the final analyses. In the first step, before the treatment sessions began, all participants took part in a paper-based TOEFL proficiency test. The test was used to check the homogeneity of the group in terms of their entry proficiency level. Then, in the experimental phase of the study, the participants completed the four sections of the IELTS test. The test was used as the pre-test

to examine their entry-level proficiency in English. Before they completed the test booklet, however, the researcher gave them an orientation to the test as to how to complete the different sections on it.

The two classes were then randomly selected as the control group and the experimental group. For the next fourteen sessions, the researcher in the control group class followed his regular teaching practice through the conventional method of conducting an English class. In the experimental group class, however, the researcher adopted the participatory approach tasks and activities for the next fourteen sessions until the end of the semester. First, she gave them a thorough introduction to the basic principles of the approach and tried to make them familiar with different types of activities they were supposed to have in the following sessions.

For the following fourteen sessions, breaking away from the traditional book-centered method of teaching language skills, the researcher applied various participatory approach-based techniques, activities, role play, problem solving activities, group work and collaborative tasks in the classroom instruction. In order to include the attitudes of the teachers in the study, five members of the English department at the same university were invited to regularly observe the participatory class so that they could share their ideas about this approach.

In the next step, the students in the control and experimental group took part in the IELTS post-test in order for the researcher to examine their comparative achievement at the end of the project.

Finally, half of the students took part at the interview designed to elicit the learners' opinion about the effectiveness of the participatory approach.

3 RESULTS

3.1 Results Related to Research Question One

In order to test the hypothesis, the researcher compared the pretest and posttest scores of the participatory group and the control group. Moreover, the pretest and posttest scores obtained from each group were compared. The results are shown in the following tables.

Table 1: Descriptive statistics for IELTS pretest scores

	Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error
IELTS Pretest	Experimental	19	3.8947	.20943	.04805
	Control	20	3.8000	.37697	.08429

The mean score for the participatory group was 3.89 on a nine-point scale and the standard deviation was 0.20. Moreover, the mean score of the control group on the same test was 3.80 and the standard deviation was 0.37. The results show that the control group's mean score is slightly lower than that of the participatory group and the standard deviation statistic shows that the control group is a little more heterogeneous than the participatory group.

Table 2: Descriptive statistics for IELTS posttest scores

	Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error
IELTS Posttest	Experimental	19	4.2632	.53667	.12312
	Control	20	4.0250	.63815	.14269

The mean score for the participatory group was 4.26 on a nine-point scale and the standard deviation was 0.53. Moreover, the mean score of the control group on the same test was 4.02 and the standard deviation was 0.37. The results show that the control group's mean score is lower than the one of the participatory group and the standard deviation statistic shows that the control group is more heterogeneous than the participatory group.

3.2 Results Related to Research Question Two

To test the hypothesis, the pretest and posttest scores collected from the participatory group and the control group were compared with regard to each language skill separately. In addition, the pretest scores and posttest scores of each group were compared with regard to each language skill.

Table 3: Descriptive statistics of the pretest scores for each language skill

	Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error
Reading Pretest	Experimental	19	3.8684	.36675	.08414
	Control	20	3.8750	.35818	.08009
Speaking Pretest	Experimental	19	3.4737	.31063	.07126
	Control	20	3.4500	.64685	.14464
Writing Pretest	Experimental	19	3.3947	.48816	.11199
	Control	20	3.3000	.47016	.10513
Listening Pretest	Experimental	19	4.1316	.43596	.10002
	Control	20	3.8750	.60426	.13512

The mean score for the participatory group's reading test was 3.86 on a nine-point scale and the standard deviation was 0.36. Moreover, the mean score of the control group on the same test was 3.87 and the standard deviation was 0.35. The results show that the control group's mean score was very similar to that of the participatory group and the standard deviation statistic shows that the control group was identical to the participatory group in terms of score variation. The mean score for the participatory group's speaking test was 3.47 on a nine-point scale and the standard deviation was 0.31. Moreover, the mean score of the control group on the same test was 3.45 and the standard deviation was 0.64. The results show that the control group's mean score was very similar to that of the participatory group and the standard deviation statistic shows that

the control group was more heterogeneous than the participatory group. The mean score for the participatory group's writing test was 3.39 on a nine-point scale and the standard deviation was 0.47. Moreover, the mean score of the control group on the same test was 3.30 and the standard deviation was 0.40. The results show that the control group's mean score was very similar to the one of the participatory group and the standard deviation statistic shows that the control group was less heterogeneous than the participatory group. The mean score for the participatory group's listening test was 4.13 on a nine-point scale and the standard deviation was 0.43. Moreover, the mean score of the control group on the same test was 3.87 and the standard deviation was 0.60. The results show that the control group's mean score was less than that of the participatory group and the standard deviation statistic shows that the control group was more heterogeneous than the participatory group in terms of score variation.

Table 4: Descriptive statistics for the language skills scores on the posttest

	Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Reading Posttest	Experimental	19	4.0526	.59849	.13730
	Control	20	4.0250	.54952	.12288
Speaking Posttest	Experimental	19	4.1053	.63637	.14599
	Control	20	3.6635	.61375	.14464
Writing Posttest	Experimental	19	3.5526	.59849	.13730
	Control	20	3.5000	.51299	.11471
Listening Posttest	Experimental	19	4.5526	.62126	.14253
	Control	20	4.1750	.81556	.18236

The mean score for the participatory group’s reading test was 4.05 on a nine-point scale and the standard deviation was 0.59. Moreover, the mean score of the control group on the same test was 4.02 and the standard deviation was 0.54. The results show that the control group's mean score was very similar to that of the participatory group and the standard deviation statistic shows that the control group was identical to the participatory group in terms of score variation. The mean score for the participatory group’s speaking test was 4.10 on a nine-point scale and the standard deviation was 0.63. Moreover, the mean score of the control group on the same test was 3.66 and the standard deviation was 0.61. The results show that the control group's mean score was less than that of the participatory group and the standard deviation statistic shows that

the control group was similar to the participatory group in terms of score variation. The mean score for the participatory group's writing test was 3.55 on a nine-point scale and the standard deviation was 0.59. Moreover, the mean score of the control group on the same test was 3.50 and the standard deviation was 0.51. The results show that the control group's mean score was very similar to that of the participatory group and the standard deviation statistic shows that the control group was nearly as homogeneous as the participatory group. The mean score for the participatory group listening test was 4.55 on a nine-point scale and the standard deviation was 0.62. Moreover, the mean score of the control group on the same test was 4.17 and the standard deviation was 0.81. The results show that the control group's mean score was less than that of the participatory group and the standard deviation statistic shows that the control group was more heterogeneous than the participatory group in terms of score variation.

3.3 Results Related to Research Question Three

In order to answer this research question, the qualitative data from the interview were analyzed. This interview consisted of six items and results are shown below according to each item posed in the interview.

1. Was the teacher's feedback during group activities perceivable during the course?

As for the first question of the interview, it is worth noting that the feedback was constructive to L2 learners in the dialogic group. Three out of five students expressed that they had never experienced in being exposed to feedback in their classes.

Several participants found the feedback unclear, with some others finding their feedback to be comprehensible so that they could follow them easily. For instance, a student reported the feedbacks to be at the normal level as expected from such courses; Put it other way, some of these feedbacks were

reported as useful while to him other feedbacks were a little vague. In contrast, another student said that feedback was so clear to her that she could immediately pinpoint the errors made by her followed by the correction of these errors. Generally, most of the learners were content with feedback they were provided with during classroom tasks.

2. To what extent were your errors corrected?

Four participants said that they could fully figure out the potential source of their errors. They reported that they could work out the grammatical points better through engaging in dialogic interaction with their teacher and peers. They understood how meaning of a sentence influenced the grammatical structures in a given sentence. For instance, a student reported that the length of time devoted to the clarification of the reason behind the errors was unique in this participatory course as she had been provided with adequate time to analyze her errors in collaboration with the teacher.

According to three students, feedback was highly important for them in case of the vocabulary use. They asserted that the feedback provided to them regarding word usage impacted their attitude to how they should learn lexical points to be used in their speaking and writing tasks in future. For instance, one of the interviewees said that it influenced how she would use dictionary and other learning strategies to be used by her in future. In addition, another student reported that his attitude to English writing structure has changed thanks to the role of feedback he received.

3. In the future classes what type of instruction do you prefer to receive?

Four learners reported that they found descriptive feedback in their writing tasks more useful than the mere right or wrong check marks employed in similar courses. For instance, according to a student, check marks along with scores from the tests were beneficial for final achievement judgment though they do not contribute to learning. Another student reported that given the

shortage of time or the large number of learners in a class, teachers are likely to use scores which are not helpful in learners' understanding why they need to make use of a specific form. Seemingly, the majority of learners found the exploratory nature of the dialogic interaction between the teacher and learners very useful.

4. In the future classes what type of feedback do you prefer to receive?

The majority of the learners sought to explore the reasons behind the errors they made in writing and speaking activities. They felt confused when it comes to the reason behind the employment of a specific structure or word in a specific situation. A student reported that if they were not provided with the source concerning the specific grammatical point like the use of verb tenses, they made the same error in their future assignments. It follows that the learners taking part in such courses find the feedback through interaction helpful as it could enhance their knowledge about the ways in which phrases and sentences and the overall meaning are developed in a writing task or in a speaking activity.

5. Which areas do you prefer to be more emphasized in such classes?

The results showed that no participants chose the content of the paper. But, all the interviewees put emphasis on grammar and vocabulary. For instance, according to a participant grammar and vocabulary constitute the building blocks of the meaning which I will transfer to my readers. In fact, it would not be possible to envision paper writing without knowledge of grammar and vocabulary. Furthermore, two learners took notice of the contribution of organizational feedback to writing.

Another student maintained that this course provided him with a chance to discover the different functions of the paragraphs in English. It also helped him to know how and where to start and finish the ideas or how to provide

examples or reasons. One participant elaborated on the role of feedback he had received with respect to the important role of phrasal verbs and idiomatic expressions in the clarification of meaning during classroom interactions. According to an interviewee, it seems that English punctuation is confusing to me; but, this course allowed me to work out how it works. Seemingly, exposure to dialogic feedback could encourage learners to focus on organizational content of their writings regarding coherence and cohesion.

6. Did you achieve your expectations in this course?

Four learners reported that they found the course constructive and they like to participate in such classes if available. According to a student, given such types of group tasks are not commonly used in the university, for sure he will take part in future courses if they were available. However, the other two participants expressed no deep satisfaction but were felt satisfied with what they learned, stating that the course had many new things for them. For instance, a participant stated she found the course informative especially with respect to the use of vocabulary in circumstances using grammatical points in contexts.

Generally, the findings of the interview indicate that most of the students felt satisfied with various group activities, their interactions with the instructor and their peers and especially, the feedback they were provided during classroom interactions. The ideas are consistent with the principles of Swain's (1985) Output Hypothesis. One of participants reports that one of the influencing factors of the output is its role in helping the learners to understand the gap between what they say and what they should say, learning from the native speaker, their teacher or their peers. The results are also in keeping with the principles of Vygotsky's socio-cultural theory, claiming that learners learn through interaction with other better knowers, be it a native speaker, the teacher, or their peers in group activities.

4. DISCUSSION

As it has been shown above, the effect of the participatory approach alone was not strong enough to result in a statistically significant difference on improving the overall scores on the proficiency test. The approach, however, led to better improvement of the speaking skills and better knowledge of vocabulary and grammar.

The results of studies have shown that collaborative work is more effective than individual activities tasks when it comes to the completion of the output tasks. This led to more negotiations among the learners in this investigation. In fact, there are many other factors that can impact the nature of interaction including the members of the group (Bennett & Cass, 1988; Tocalli-Beller, 2003), the purposes and assumptions shared by learners, the types of strategies used by them and their readiness with respect to their cognitive and developmental aspects (Leeser, 2004; Nassaji & Cumming, 2000).

It is likely that these factors all interfere with the efficacy of collaborative group work. Therefore, they must be incorporated when one designs, researches, and uses group activities in L2 learning. All these imply that either the collaborative work (or the individual work) itself, and the way in which it is performed determines its beneficial outcomes for language learning. However, these results should be further corroborated by future research in the related literature.

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