ENHANCING EFL LEARNERS' QUALITY OF INTERACTION THROUGH GROUND RULES INCORPORATED IN COLLABORATIVE STRATEGIC READING

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Article Info	Abstract
Article History *Received: April 2021* *Revised: May 2021* *Published: July 2021*	*The present research tries to investigate the impact of teaching Ground Rules (GRs) on EFL learners' quality of interaction while they are implementing Collaborative Strategic Reading (CSR). To this purpose, five Iranian EFL intermediate learners who were learning English language in an institute in Iran were selected. In this study,*
Keywords *Ground Rules;* *Collaborative Strategic Reading;* *Quality of interaction;*	*after three sessions of implementing CSR, 5 GRs were explicitly taught to the learners, and learners' interaction was analyzed for three subsequent sessions to investigate whether teaching GRs has influenced learners' quality of interaction during the implementation of CSR. The study was done on the platform of adobe-connect. The researcher recorded learners' interactions during six sessions for further analysis. A qualitative research design was applied in this study to examine the changes in the quality of learners' interaction. The result of the study indicated that teaching GRs promoted the quality of learners' interaction during the implementation of CSR.*

INTRODUCTION

Reading has been considered as the most important skill for second and foreign English learners in an academic setting (Azizi et al., 2020; Khonamri et al., 2020; Khonamri & Salimi, 2010; Khonamri & Kazemian, 2014, Khonamri & Kazemian, 2016, & Kazemian et al., 2019). Hampton (2009) defines reading as a process of message-getting, and comprehension occurs as the reader strives to construct meaning (Jafri & Jufri, 2014). Thus, readers need to be active in finding meaning, ideas, or information in the passage they are reading and get the information from printed materials (Khonamri, 2009). As Ferris (2009) declared, reading is a complex interaction of cognitive processes and strategies use and various types of information which exist in the text (Khonamri &Mahmoudi, 2011; Jafri & Jufri, 2014). This means that in reading activity, not only readers get some information from the text, but also they use some strategies to find the information. Strategies are flexible actions readers use to construct meaning from the text (Duffy & Roehler, 1983 as cited in Fan, 2009). Almasi (2003) defined strategies as actions an individual chooses to achieve a specific goal.

Nowadays, reading comprehension instruction gives special attention to strategic reading for learners' reading comprehension (Karimabadi et al., 2015). According to Aarnoutse and Schellings (2003), strategic reading refers to applying reading strategies as a guidance that can promote reading comprehension and overwhelm comprehension breakdowns. Strategic readers

are believed to use different strategies to accomplish a purpose in reading (Zoghi, Mustapha, & Maasum, 2010), and they know how to use these strategies in a proper time (Afflerbach, Pearson, & Paris, 2008). Among various reading strategy approaches, Collaborative Strategic Reading proposed by Klingner and Vaughn (1998) which is one type of comprehension strategy instruction, has been used in a large number of research studies.

Collaborative Strategic Reading (CSR), presented by Klingner and Vaughn (1998), is a research-based study that includes comprehension strategies created to promote learners' reading comprehension cooperatively. As Klingner and Vaughn (1999) stated, during the implementation of CSR, learners work in cooperative groups to guide one another using reading strategies to facilitate their comprehension of the text they are reading. CSR is a wonderful strategy for building vocabulary, promoting learners' reading comprehension, and helping them to work together cooperatively (Klingner & Vaughn, 1998). During the implementation of CSR, learners have different roles in the group, which are called: leader, gist expert, clunk expert, question expert, and encourager (Klingner et al., 2012), and each of these roles has their responsibilities in the group work. The leader of the CSR group helps other members by telling them the actions and strategies that need to be done. The gist expert helps the group through giving the most important information of the text. The clunk expert helps the group members in finding the meaning of difficult words. The question expert guides the group in discussing critical questions to improve their comprehension and memory. And the encourager looks at the group and searches for behaviors to encourage the group members to participate in the discussion.

Results of some studies have shown that CSR improves learners' reading comprehension (Buckley & Boardman, 2014; Fan, 2010; Klingner, Vaughn, & Schumm, 1998). Furthermore, CSR has positive outcomes in the improvement of learners' content learning and language acquisition (Klingner et al., 2012), and it has positive effects on learners' engagement and motivation (Klingner & Vaughn, 2000; Klingner et al., 2012). Also, collaboration and strategies which exist in CSR help learners in overcoming the vocabulary problems which they face with during reading in EFL classes and increase their vocabulary knowledge (Karabuga & Kaya, 2013; Klingner & Vaughn, 2000; Klingner et al., 2015).

Results of many studies showed the efficacy of CSR compared with the traditional way of teaching reading; however, it also has some problems as it is implemented in the group. In fact, Iranian learners' attitude regarding group work causes some problems for implementing CSR. Group activities are not so acceptable for Iranian language learners because they are unfamiliar with these kinds of activities, and they prefer individual work rather than group work (Khonamri & Karimabadi, 2015). In fact, the traditional educational system, which is teacher-centeredness, is dominant in schools with little or no opportunity for learners' collaboration (Khonamri & Karimabadi, 2015).

As Long (1996) declared, learners can gain more target-like language when they have the opportunity of interacting with a more knowledgeable partner, and when they have to correct their language during the negotiation of meaning while trying to solve their communication problems. The instructional purpose of language classroom interaction is to involve the learners in conversations that enhance their language learning and language use, and also shape their language in the classroom (Yesid & Alméciga, 2016). Allwright (1984) called interaction an essential aspect of classroom pedagogy because everything happens through a process of person-to-person interaction in the class. During this kind of interaction, learners try to produce

comprehensible output, which will be sources of input for other interlocutors. Thus, according to these studies, interaction has an important role in learners' learning.

The researchers' observations and also the results of CSR studies showed that during the implementation of CSR, learners do not have much interaction in their groups and they just do their part of the activity without collaborating with other members despite teachers' insistence to do so (Khonamri & Karimabadi, 2015, Soleymani, 2019). In fact, CSR does not lead to collaboration as it is expected. The reason might lie in two issues. One might be that learners are not aware of teachers' expectations or how they can meet those expectations. The other reason might be related to their lack of knowledge regarding effective engagement in CSR activity which is a group activity. In fact, simply providing an opportunity for group activity and collaboration is not sufficient as learners are different from each other, and some learners may dominate the task and limit or eliminate the participation of other members of a group. In order to solve interactional problems and increase collaboration in CSR, this study attempted to integrate the instruction of GRs into CSR activity.

GRs include some rules which indicate learners what they should do, why, and how they can do that, and teaching GRs guides the learners to have effective collaboration (Mercer & Littleton, 2007). Edwards and Mercer (1987) described GRs as implicit rules for operating in specific situations that participants normally suppose them as 'ground rules of conversation'(as cited in Mercer & Littleton, 2007). As Edwards and Mercer (2013) stated, GRs are required for a good dialogue to take place as it helps learners to have shared understanding. Ground rules make the expectations clear and organize norms of behavior that act as references for process diagnosis when problems arise (Peterson, 1997). The results of some studies showed that when teachers bring GRs for discussion of their classes, the learners' performance and motivation improve (Prentice, 1991; Steel, 1991; Dawes, Fisher & Mercer, 1992, Mercer, 1996).

Due to the fact that CSR provides a good opportunity for learners to use language to comprehend the text (Boardman, et al., 2015; Vaughn et al., 2011), it is important to create a good condition for learners to have more learning opportunity through their interaction. However, as mentioned above, CSR has not been successful in creating much collaboration in the groups and learners seem to just focus on their part of activity without having real collaboration with other members of the group (Khonamri & Karimabadi, 2015; Soleymani, 2019). As some studies showed the effectiveness of GRs on learners' engagement (Fung 2014; Mercer et al., 2003; Rojas-Drummond & Mercer, 2003), this study attempts to find whether teaching GRs affects learners' quality of interaction during implementing CSR. To this end, the research question was posed and investigated: Does the teaching Ground Rules improve EFL Learners' quality of interaction?

RESEARCH METHOD
Research Design
A qualitative research design is employed to explore the role of teaching GRs on the quality of interaction in a group of learners who are using CSR. The participants of the present study were five 23-28-year-old intermediate learners of a language institute in Iran. Learners met two times a week for 90 minutes in an online platform. However, the time spent on each session was slightly different as the learners spent less time on implementing CSR before teaching ground rules and spent more time after teaching GRs. Every session was recorded by the researcher in the adobe-connect for further analysis. The learners formed one group to implement CSR and they took different roles, including leader, gist expert, clunk expert, question expert, and encourager.

Instruments

The instruments of this study include; first, class observation: the researcher participated in the online classes as a teacher and observer to observe the learners' interaction and collaboration during the implementation of CSR. Second, video recording: all the six sessions of the study were video recorded, and they were transcribed by the researchers for further analysis.

Ground Rules (GRs)

As it is stated earlier, teaching GRs helps learners to have a successful collaboration. According to Dawes, Mercer, and Wegerif (2000), the GRs that were chosen to be taught to the learners in this study were: Asking questions and listening to the answers; Letting group members initiate; Having contingent and extended talk; Sharing ideas about the group member's talk; and Asking group members to justify their answers through providing more explanation for their ideas

Procedure

At the beginning session, the learners took Oxford Placement Test (OPT) to determine their language proficiency levels. From the total of 12 EFL learners in the class, five intermediate learners were chosen to participate in the study. The learners were informed about the research purposes and consented to the recording of the sessions. Learners worked in a CSR group for six sessions according to the CSR roles they had. Prior to every session, the learners were assigned to read a short story and they should have prepared themselves for the specific roles that they had. The roles were not fixed; in fact, the roles circulated among learners. After three sessions of carrying out CSR, the researcher taught the GRs to the learners explicitly, and she continued her observations for three more sessions after teaching GRs to examine whether learners' quality of interaction was increased after teaching GRs to them. The researchers considered some criteria for analyzing the quality of learners' interaction based on the five GRs taught to learners including asking questions, initiation, contingent and extended talk, sharing ideas, and asking group members to justify their answers. Every session was video-recorded and transcribed for further analysis.

Data Analysis

As this study aimed to investigate the incorporation of teaching GRs into CSR in order to improve quantity and quality of interaction, the sources of data included the transcribed group talk during these six sessions of research. For analyzing the quality of interaction, the transcriptions of those six sessions were coded based on those five GRs of this study which were: asking questions, sharing idea, having initiation, having contingent talk, and asking group members to provide more explanations.

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Research Findings

To investigate whether teaching GRs affects intermediate Iranian EFL learners' quality of interaction during the implementation of CSR, five learners' video-recorded interaction were analyzed according to the five criteria that are explained earlier including asking question, initiation, contingent and extended talk, sharing ideas, and asking group members to justify their answers. Analysis of the learners' interaction showed that after teaching GRs learners collaborated actively in their group. In fact, 5 GRs encouraged learners to ask questions, take initiative, share their idea, have a contingent talk, and ask learners to provide more explanations.

Analysis of the learners' interaction showed that before teaching GRs when learners worked in a CSR group, they rarely had true collaboration and participation during the group work. The following extracts show learners' interaction before teaching GRs.

Before Teaching Ground Rules
Asking questions and listening to the answers

Extract 1

1. L2:→ ok. The first vocabulary is throne. Throne means the specially chair used by ruler especially a king or queen; for example umm… a queen come to the throne when her father unfortunately die. And the next vocabulary is knight. The knight is a man give a rank of honor by a queen or king because of his special achievement. And umm If I want to meaning it in Farsi because maybe it's a little hard to explain, it means سلحشور. [And cheering]

7. L1: [شواليه]

8. L2: yeah شواليهor سلحشور. And march means walk like soldier. Companions is a person who is with another person. Fetch means go and bring back somebody or something. Axe is clear but I added in this list umm maybe we need. And Armour is the metal cloth that men wore long ago to cover their body in fight. It's very heavy, but it make the soldiers safe when their enemies… fighting with them with swords or arrows. And… spear is a long stick with a sharp point at end…at one end. We have a phrase river bank is a land along the edge of a river. And at the end we have their heart sank… it means their heart drop to their feet because of the fearing of something. Finished=

17. L3: → =thank you so much. Both of them was very perfect

18. L2: [thank you]

In extract 1, line 1, L2 started to explain the clunks without asking group members to ask their questions about the clunks or share their ideas if they encountered any clunks. She just told all the clunks that she found and finished the activity. Other group members did not tend to participate in the discussion as they did not ask any questions or shared their ideas. Moreover, when L2 finished, in line 17, L3 as a leader blocked the possibility of asking questions by thanking as she wanted to jump to the questions that L4 prepared as a question expert. In fact, L3's thanking or positive feedback were harbingers of sequence closing and no one could initiate after that (Waring, 2008). In fact, As Nystrand, Gamoran, & Heck (1993) stated the learners worked in a group but they did not work as a group.

Letting group members initiate

Extract 2
1. L5: =yeah thank you. And if you were instead of Horatious and his two companions what would you do?
3. L1:→ I… Parisa you answer
4. L4:→ $answer$… $you answer$… $continue Setare$
5. L1:→ Parisa? (2)
6. L4: ok I think all of us loved their our country and our people, and in the hazardous or dangerous situation… we try to save and survive other person from the enemy and if I was instead of Horatius and the companions I think I like them but I'm not a knight and I'm not a soldier maybe I try to encourage the other soldiers or umm army to fighting bravely face of the enemies.

Extract 3
1. L4: the first question is how two man get into the house? How?
2. L1: can you repeat Parisa?
3. L3: [yes]
4. L4:→ [how two men get into the house?]
5. L3:→ sorry Setare can I ask you to talk loudly?

Extracts 2 and 3 indicate learners' lack of knowledge regarding initiation. In Extract 2 line 3, L1 asked L4 to take the turn; however, in line 4, L4 rejected and she did not take the turn until L1's insistence, in line 5, for giving turn to her. In fact, L4 expected L1 to be silent and give her enough time to initiate, and she was waiting for her group members' invitation to participate in the group. Moreover, in extract 3, when the leader who was L4 asked a question, L3 who was the gist expert, in line 5, instead of initiating and answering, gave the turn to L1 by asking her to talk louder, and she did not try to initiate at all. Generally, it seems that learners were not aware of the importance of taking initiative during interaction which is considered an important aspect of classroom interaction (Garton, 2002).

Having contingent and extended talk

Extract 4

1. L5:	umm… they did something bad? Somethings that can bother other people?
2. L3:	no they were good people but our characters were completely different to each other… yeah
4. L5:	but I think I have a very interesting experience. Umm when I was child especially when I was teenager when each person in our family or our friend passed away... they really connect with me and they send some messages for their family and their friends and… sometimes they warned for example their children or their husbands and I saw them in my dreams. And when two or three times I saw a dream and after that I see that happens for their family or their friends I decided to whenever I see it I tell them maybe something bad or something wrong happens for them but now it doesn't happen for me. Sometimes it happens if I really have a good relationship to someone that unfortunately he or she died but I don't see a lot of things about people who die… yeah. It was my experience.
14. L3:	$yes it was interesting$
15. L1:→	Parisa? Me and you have a story like Maryam said
16. L4:	what Maryam said? Aha aha… ok ok (laughing) yeah

Extract 4 indicates that L1's talk was not contingent with her group members before teaching GRs, and it is shown in line 15, as she said somethings which were not related to her group members' current discussion. In fact, L1 was thinking about their previous discussion, not the current one; thus, her talk led to the lack of contingency as it was not related to her group members' talk. Therefore, it seems that L1 did not know about the contingency of talk which is an important factor in meaningful collaboration (Kramsch, 1985).

Sharing ideas about the group members' talk

Extract 5

1. L4:→	=I have an idea and my mother taught it to me that when you fear of something you had to do that. If fear of something for all your life, you never be successful in that part of your life. If you fear of something you have to do them with all your fear. And I try to did it in each part of my life. Sometimes I became successful and sometime not but in my mind and in it`s very hurting my confidence that I think I did everything that I can do.
7. L3:	yes you`re right
8. L4:	what do you think Maedeh?
9. L5:	Yes yes you are right

In extract 5 when L4 shared her idea, in line 1, her group members did not share their ideas at all and they just confirmed her without elaboration. Confirmation is a feature of cumulative talk, not exploratory talk which is considered as the best kind of talk. Exploratory talk is the active engagement of the learners with each other ideas and it improves the quality of

conversations (Littleton et al., 2005). However, in this extract, learners confirmed each other, and their discussion was uncritical.

Therefore, these extracts show learners' unwillingness to contribute in discussions. In fact, learners just did the activity and finished it. Not only did they not share their ideas and initiated, but also they expected their group members to invite them for participating in the discussion, and sometimes they gave the turn to others instead of initiating. Moreover, they did not work on each other's ideas critically. Also, in some parts their talks were not contingent with other group members' talk; thus, true collaboration did not occur in their group discussion.

After Teaching Ground Rules
Asking questions and listening to the answers

Extract 6

1. L1:→	ok now about the clunks in the story first do you have question about the word? Or is… are some parts clunk for you?
3. L2:	no I found the difficult words in the dictionary
4. L3:	me too
5. L4:	but you start and if we have any question we will ask you Setare
6 L1:	ok I will tell some of the clunks then you can ask your questions or say your clunks
8. L2:	ok
9. L1:→	The first word I found is intermix that means to mix or become mixed together… compound means something consisting of two or more different parts. Tidal connected with or influenced or powered by the rise and fall of sea. Related to tide for example a tidal river. civilization means a society or country at a particular period in time… did you get?
14. L5:	yes
15. L1:	could you please make an example?
16. L5:	for example umm… I read a book that was about civilization of Greece.
17. L1: →	yes thank you. And others did you get?
18. L3:	yes Setareh
19. L1:	The next word I found is bloom. When a flower blooms it opens and when a plant or tree blooms it umm produces flower. Protest is a strong complaint expressing disagreement or… disapproval or opposition and slacken means to cause to because to become slower or less active… the other word I found was staring. It means umm looking at something for a long time with the eyes wide open especially when surprised… frightened or umm thinking.
25. L4: →	it`s staring?
26. L1:	yes
27. L4:	aha yes I thought you are talking about glance

In extract 6, line 1, L1 as the clunk expert, before explaining the clunks asked other members to ask their questions or share their ideas about the clunks they found; moreover, in lines 13 and 17 she asked her group members a question in order to assure that they got the meaning of the world she told. Furthermore, learners asked their questions regarding the clunks, like line 25, but before teaching GRs learners did not ask any questions. As it is shown in extract 1, before teaching GRs, L2 told all the clunks without asking others anything and letting them ask their questions. And generally, in comparison with before teaching GRs, the sequence of turns increased after teaching GRs.

Letting group members initiate

Extract 7

1. L1:→   aha before Parisa start to tell about gist… I have some questions. As you know these days we are suffering from bad situation because of the corona virus and of course we all have some strange decisions these days. I want to know what was the strangest decision which you have heard?

5. L4:→   heard? aha ok. I saw the people that really need to eat restaurants' food they decided to make different masks that it has it opens… from the middle off the mask and they can eat the food without they put off the mask and it was really funny and I didn't think so if we can put it in a real situation, they did it just for fun. And they put the food umm they opened their mouth with mask and put the food in their mouth and close their mouth and the mask form came back to the normal form of the mask. It was very funny and strange for me. It's cheating

In extract 7, unlike extract 2 which showed that L4 did not tend to initiate and she waited for other's invitation to participate in the discussion, after teaching GRs she always initiated as it is shown in extract 7, line 5; and sometimes she even tended to manage the discussion. Moreover, before teaching GRs, learners started the discussion through asking the gist expert to tell the gist of the story, without warm-up. In fact, they just played their roles and finished the activities. However, after teaching GRs learners tried to have at least a short warm-up as it is shown in this extract as the leader started the discussion by asking a question.

Having contingent and extended talk
Extract 8
1. L2:   so… the next word is conscience, conscience is the part of your mind that tell you whether your action are right or wrong and the very clear example of this word is Shirfarhad's conscience in… umm
4. L1:   Shabhaie barare
5. L2:   yeah in Shabhaie barare series. Conscience means وجدان. The next word is despise, despise is to dislike and have no respect for somebody or something for example she despise gossip in any form.
8. L1:→ what is gossip?
9. L5:   umm… I know but I don't know how to tell it… it means telling bad things about somebody yeah?

In extract 8, line 8, L1 asked about a clunk that she found in the clunk expert's talk which shows that she was an active listener as she listened carefully and asked her question at the moment. However, before teaching GRs no question was asked during the clunk expert's explanation, as it is shown in extract1, but sometimes L1's talks were not contingent with other group members, as it is shown in extract 4. However, that kind of incontingency did not happen after teaching GRs. For real collaboration to take place, speakers must learn to listen to the previous speakers' talk, process it as it is spoken, interpret it, create an answer as they listen, find a natural completion point in the speakers' talk and take the turn at a suitable moment (Kramsch, 1985). In fact, in our study, real collaboration took place after teaching GRs.

Sharing ideas about group members' talk

Extract 9

1. L3:→ and another thing I wanted to mention is that in this story writer showed the foolishness of youth. Maybe if the lawyer was older he wouldn`t accept this bet. But as he was young he accepted this bet.
4. L2:→ aha yes maybe he impressed about that atmosphere and he accept

5. L4:→ yes you are right but most of the time a fifty or forty years old woman won`t be impressed by the atmosphere to accept a bet like this

7. L1:→ =yes A forty or fifty year old person don't have the… the proud of a young person but he was impressed by the atmosphere too as Parisa said

9. L3:   yes

10. L2:→   =about the family there are some forty or fifty year old people that have family and they have children but they… they gambling all their money all their umm… and all their achievements with other

Extract 9, in lines 1, 4, 5, 7, and 10, learners shared their ideas regarding each other's talk. Unlike before teaching GRs shown in extract 5 that learners did not tend to share their ideas on each other's talk, and they just wanted to finish the activity, after teaching GRs learners collaborated actively and critically in the groups, and as it is shown the sequence of turns generally increased.

Asking group members to justify their answers through providing more explanation for their ideas

Extract 10

1. L2:   yes correct because they want to set up civilization. I have a question about it what do you think? Do you think they came to Venus from the other planets? Or they came to Venus from the earth and umm many years ago? And the Margot parents decided to move to this planet after them or their really different from each other? What do you think about it?

6. L3:→   I think they were different with each other and I think Margot's parents lived on a earth… and they just sent their daughter to the Venus =

8. L2:→ =Aha you think the Margot parents are in earth and they sent just their daughter?

9. L3:   yes

10. L2:→   why? Why did… do you think about they sent?

11. L3:   umm… it was a sentence in the story I think it was that it takes many cost I think I can't remember the number of that exactly?

13. L5:   [umm… I think…]

14. L2:   →   [what?]

15. L5:   I think umm

16. L2:   hold on please… I asked the Maryam do you repeat your sentences?

17. L3:   yeah umm… umm the Margot parents are decided to take their daughter back to the earth

19. L2:→   no you have a question you said you don't know about the number?

20. L3:   yeah and umm…

21. L2:→   do you think they have to pay thousand dollars to pay?

22. L3:   aha yes sorry

After teaching GRs, learners became more accurate and they noticed each other's talk. They never left anything out unless they fully understood it, and extract 10 is an example of this claim. In line 6, when L3 shared her idea with others, L2 asked her several questions in lines 8, 14, 19, and 21 to know how she found out that idea and she continued up to the part that she understood what L3 tried to convey. In fact, through clarification requests, L2 wanted to make L3's output comprehensible and it led to more meaningful interaction between learners (Garton, 2002). Although some interruptions can be seen in the learners' interaction, they are supportive rather than breaking down the contribution (Walsh, 2011). In fact, there was a mutual engagement between the group members as they listened carefully and extended each other's contributions. This feature of talk did not exist before teaching GRs in learners' talk.

Thus, after teaching GRs, learners collaborated actively. In fact, 5 GRs encouraged group members to ask questions, share their idea, take initiative, have contingent talk, and ask group

members to justify their answers through providing more explanations. Therefore, using these five GRs leads to learners' fuller participation.

Discussion

Although many studies have been done about CSR, few studies have attempted to improve learners' interaction during the implementation of CSR. CSR has a theoretical foundation in cognitive psychology and sociocultural theory (Vaughn et al., 2011). During the implementation of CSR learners work in cooperative groups and help each other to facilitate their comprehension of the text. Although the purpose of CSR is improving learners' comprehension through collaboration, research has shown that learners do not have much collaboration and interaction in their CSR groups and they just concentrate on their part of activity without real collaboration with other members (Khonamri & Karimabadi, 2015; Soleymani, 2019). Thus, this article has tried to investigate whether learners' interaction can be enhanced during the implementation of CSR through teaching GRs to them.

Analysis of the transcriptions of learners' interaction showed that after teaching GRs learners' interactions got more contingent and extended, they initiated more, asked their questions, shared their ideas, and they asked their group members to justify their answers through providing more explanation for their ideas. Also, after teaching GRs, learners spent more time on implementing the CSR activity. in fact, teaching GRs leads to learners' fuller participation. However, before teaching GRs, learners concentrated more on implementing their roles and finishing the activity, so that they would unintentionally neglect the interaction management skills (Goh & Burns, 2012). Furthermore, as learners just attempted to play their roles and complete the activity, they did not focus on the quality of their interaction, and they just completed the activity in a short time. However, learners might have not known about the qualities of an effective interaction; in this case, as Galton and Williamson (1992) stated, learners must be taught how to collaborate; thus, they will get a clear idea of what exactly is expected of them and what they should do to fulfill these expectations; otherwise, they may become deprived of the opportunity of learning that they could attain through collaboration (Mercer & Littleton, 2007).

Analysis of the learners' interaction has revealed that after teaching GRs learners' talk was mostly exploratory, as the learners of the group worked with each other's ideas critically and constructively. In fact, GRs caused greater exploratory talk which is considered as a useful talk (Mercer, 1996). Therefore, this study's findings were in line with previous studies on GRs which proved that teaching GRs leads to more exploratory talk among learners and has positive effects on learners' talk (Fung, 2014; Littleton et al., 2005; Rojas-Drummond & Mercer, 2003). Moreover, the results of this study were consistent with some studies that have proved that when teachers teach GRs to the learners in their classes, their learners' motivation and performance enhance (Brown & Palincsar, 1989; Prentice, 1991; Steel, 1991; Dawes, Fisher & Mercer, 1992, Mercer, 1996; Mercer et al., 2003).

Thus, just asking learners to make a group will not cause learning opportunities automatically (Bennett & Cass, 1989; Leki, 2001); as learners, like the current study, might not know what they should do in the group, and therefore, they may lose the opportunity of learning through collaboration (Davis, 1997, Mercer & Littleton, 2007). In this study, before teaching GRs, learners were not aware of having beneficial engagement in the group work, and they considered the outcome of the activity more significant than the process of doing the activity

(Mercer & Littleton, 2007); however, after teaching GRs, the number of the instances of five GRs enhanced in the learners' talk, and their level of performance generally increased; thus, learners considered the process of doing the activity instead of finishing the activity.

The results of the current study were in line with some studies which have indicated that GRs enhance learners' levels of performance and lead to learners' fuller participation (Prentice, 1991; Steel, 1991; Dawes, Fisher & Mercer, 1992, as cited in Mercer, 1996; Littleton et al., 2005; Rojas-Drummond & Mercer, 2003). Also, the results of some studies have indicated that learners who are taught GRs explicitly perform better and it is consistent with the result of this study as the GRs were taught to learners explicitly (Mercer, Wegerif, & Dawes 1999; Mercer et al., 2003; Rojas-Drummond & Mercer, 2003). However, the results of this study are inconsistent with Lambirth (2006) who claimed that teaching GRs forbids useful talk in the class and diminish learners' talk in a mono-cultural context.

Today, as there is a growing trend toward using group work among teachers, the findings of this study will be beneficial for EFL teachers who use CSR activity in their classroom. It provides the teachers with teaching techniques to create more learning opportunities for group members through promoting their collaboration and interaction during the implementation of CSR. Also, the results are beneficial for EFL learners who are working in CSR groups or generally are working in a group. It provides them with effective techniques to promote their interaction, and as a result, it provides more learning opportunities for them. Furthermore, it will help those who decide about language learning. It provides them with a new pedagogical technique for promoting learners' interaction in group works.

CONCLUSION

This study focused on the contribution of teaching ground rules during the implementation of CSR to enhance EFL learners' quality of interaction. Analyses of the transcriptions indicated that teaching GRs during the implementation of CSR improves learners' quality of interaction. In fact, this study indicated that teaching GRs could be considered as a useful pedagogical technique to enhance group members' participation in a way that every member of a group benefits from their interaction.

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