

THE EFFECTS OF FOCUS-ON-FORM TASKS ON
YOUNG LEARNERS' COMPREHENSION AND
ACQUISITION OF THE SIMPLE PAST TENSE IN ENGLISH

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KUALA LUMPUR

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**THE EFFECTS OF FOCUS-ON-FORM TASKS ON YOUNG LEARNERS’
COMPREHENSION AND ACQUISITION OF THE SIMPLE PAST TENSE IN
ENGLISH**

ABSTRACT

This study is conducted to investigate the comparative effectiveness of two Focus-on-Form (FonF) tasks namely dictogloss (DG) and consciousness-raising (C-R) on young learners’ English simple past tense. The participants were divided into three experimental groups (DG group, C-R group and control group) where they received their respective treatment. Prior to the treatment, they sat for their pretest. Immediate posttest and delayed posttest were conducted after the treatment cycles. Results of the tests have shown significant intragroup effects of dictogloss and consciousness-raising on participants’ comprehension, writing tasks and also their knowledge retention of English simple past tense over time. However, only comprehension test have shown significant intergroup (between groups) results with DG group performing better than C-R and the control groups. Interview with selected participants had also been conducted to look at the other factors that might influence these outcomes. These factors include motivation, learning styles, their affective filter and also their ‘noticing’ awareness.

Keywords: FonF, dictogloss, consciousness-raising task, English simple past tense

**TAHAP KEBERKESANAN ‘FOCUS-ON-FORM TASKS’ TERHADAP
PEMAHAMAN DAN KEMAHIRAN MURID MENGENAI ‘SIMPLE PAST
TENSE’ DALAM BAHASA INGGERIS**

ABSTRAK

Kajian ini dijalankan untuk mengkaji perbandingan keberkesanan dua jenis aktiviti “Focus-on-Form” (FonF) iaitu “dictogloss” dan “consciousness-raising” ke atas pemahaman dan kemahiran murid mengenai “English simple past tense”. Semua peserta kajian telah dibahagikan kepada tiga kumpulan eksperimental (DG, C-R dan kumpulan kawalan) dimana setiap kumpulan menerima aktiviti masing-masing. Ujian awal (pretest) telah dilaksanakan seminggu sebelum aktiviti kajian kumpulan berjalan. Ujian pasca (posttest) dilaksanakan sejurus tamat kajian terhadap tiga kumpulan tersebut manakala ujian pasca tangguh (delayed posttest) dibuat satu bulan selepas ujian pasca. Keputusan ujian pasca dan pasca tangguh menunjukkan keberkesanan signifikan aktiviti dictogloss dan consciousness-raising secara intra-kumpulan (intragroup) ke atas ujian pemahaman, kemahiran bertulis dan pengekalan pengetahuan “English simple past tense” peserta. Walaubagaimanapun, hanya ujian pemahaman menunjukkan keberkesanan signifikan antara kumpulan (intergroup) dengan kumpulan “dictogloss” mengatasi dua kumpulan lainnya. Temubual juga telah dijalankan ke atas beberapa peserta untuk mengkaji faktor luaran lain yang mempengaruhi keputusan ujian tersebut. Antara faktor tersebut adalah tahap motivasi, gaya pembelajaran takat penapis afektif (‘affective filter’) dan juga tahap kepekaan (‘noticing’) para peserta.

Kata kunci: FonF, dictogloss, consciousness-raising task, English simple past tense

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LIST OF SYMBOLS AND ABBREVIATIONS

C	:	Control
C-R	:	Consciousness-Raising
DG	:	Dictogloss
FonF	:	Focus-on-Form
FonFs	:	Focus-on-Forms
L1	:	First Language
L2	:	Second Language
PI	:	Processing Instruction

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

The landscape in English language classrooms has seen many changes throughout the years. Grammar-based teachings which dominated language learning in the earlier decades have seen a shift to the use of more communicative approaches. However, it was observed that communicative-oriented language classroom per se was not able to produce learners with native like proficiency of the language (Yeo, 2002). Proper and accurate grammar use reflects the English language proficiency of the learners. Focusing only on the communicative aspect might produce fluent learners who are able to communicate to a certain extent using the language, but fail to organize and convey their message effectively.

With respect to the above matter, language instructors (teachers, tutor etc.) should emphasize on the language structures as well, instead of only on the communicative ability. Undeniably, English language learners have more difficulties in learning grammar compared to vocabulary. While lexical items carry concrete contextual meanings, grammar is more of an abstract concept that regulates and rules the language process. Direct lexical comparison between languages are mostly found and easily matched. However, language forms and structures (i.e. grammar) differ and vary across languages.

1.2 Background of the Study

In relation to the above issue, the Malaysian education system has taken various initiatives to push its learners towards a better English command and proficiency. This includes the recently abolished ETeMS policy, native speaker programs, English teachers enrichment courses (Yamat, Fisher & Rich, 2014) as well as the latest “Highly

Immersive Program” (HIP) in 2017 (Sumber Pendidikan, 2017), which is still under the initial phase in selected national schools around Malaysia. Despite these various measures, learners’ proficiency level including those of university graduates still leaves a lot to be desired (Naidu, 2017).

Looking at the general trend of English teaching in Malaysian national primary schools, grammar, specifically, is still taught in isolation. Language teaching through rote-learning and the mastery of specific language skills (Musa, Koo & Azman, 2012) are the common approaches to teach language structures. However, measures to incorporate inclusivity of grammar into English topics are evident in English school textbooks and workbooks. In order to help students to focus on the target language structure without the expense of comprehension and communicative opportunities in the classroom, Focus-on-Form should replace the traditional form-focused instruction where linguistic items are taught in isolation without meaningful context.

Of late, Focus-on-Form (FonF) has gained the interest of language instructors and researchers alike in order to push learners towards higher level of language proficiency, (Ellis, 2015; Shak & Gardner, 2008; Storch, 2001; Yeo, 2002). First introduced by Micheal Long (1991), it is a form of pedagogical intervention to develop learners’ grammatical accuracy by encouraging them to focus on the target language form within a meaningful and communicative context of language classroom (Storch, 2001). Instead of relying solely on input provision, FonF tasks assist and train learners to notice the linguistics feature(s) of the language during language learning process. Thus, looking at this quality, this study attempts to explore the effects of two FonF instructions on learners’ English simple past tense.

There are many types of FonF tasks such as dictogloss, consciousness-raising, grammaring, and grammar interpretation (Shak & Gardner, 2008). However, this study

will only focus on two FonF tasks namely dictogloss (DG) and consciousness-raising (C-R) tasks. The selection of these two tasks (DG and C-R) is based on their adaptability to be incorporated into the local English language classrooms. This is to ensure that the tasks chosen could be incorporated within the topics in the English subject syllabus of the national primary schools in Malaysia. Besides, DG and C-R are also chosen based on their advantages and benefits to learners' learning process, which are elaborated in Chapter 2; Literature Review.

As a mean to ease reference, throughout this study, Focus-on-Form will be referred to as 'FonF', dictogloss as 'DG' and consciousness-raising as 'C-R'. Before exploring these variables terminologies, the next section will look at the problem statement of this study.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

Although most learners in Malaysia have spent 11 years of learning English in their primary and secondary school, many newspaper reports and articles have lamented and discussed the dwindling proficiency of the language among learners (Musa, Koo & Azman, 2012; Naidu, 2015; Ooi, 2016; Yamat, Fisher & Rich, 2014;). Even with the current principle of English language teaching which emphasized more on communicative approach, learners still produce evidence of structural inaccuracy and faults in their target language grammar (Darmi & Albion, 2013). Thus, it is important to direct learners' focus to the language forms (i.e grammar) within a communicative and contextual learning environment. Therefore, FonF tasks are seen to have the qualities and potentials in helping learners to comprehend the language rules without forsaking the contextual element of language teaching in class.

1.4 Purpose of the Study

FonF tasks have large potential and beneficial role in language classroom. Based on this, the objective of this study is to investigate the effects of two FonF tasks namely dictogloss (DG) and consciousness-raising tasks (C-R) on young learners' comprehension and writing tasks (production) of the English simple past tense as well as the other factors that might influence their English simple past tense acquisition.

1.5 Research Questions

This study is guided by these questions:

- 1) To what extent do young ESL students' performances in comprehension of English simple past tense differ between students who received dictogloss and consciousness-raising task?
- 2) To what extent do these students' performances in the writing tasks of the English simple past tense differ between those who received dictogloss and consciousness-raising task?
- 3) To what extent do dictogloss and consciousness-raising task influence students' performances in comprehension and writing tasks of English simple past tense over time?
- 4) What are the other factors that influence the overall outcomes of the comprehension and writing tasks of English simple past tense among the young learners in this study?

1.6 Significance of the Study

English as a subject has been the centre of limelight in the education policy shift in Malaysia. Despite the basic 11 years of learning the language in primary and secondary

schools, learners' English proficiency is still disputable (Naidu, 2015; Yamat, Fisher & Rich, 2014).

This study hopes to explore the potential of FonF tasks namely DG and C-R in teaching the target language form to young learners in the local classrooms, consequently improving the English proficiency among the young learners. The emergence of FonF has enabled teachers to explore and utilize tasks that direct students' attention to language structure and engage with the lesson without forsaking meaningful and communicative class orientation.

The findings of the study also hope to expand the informative pool of the local research regarding FonF instructional approach. The local language researchers and language instructors alike could use the information based on this study's findings when developing and planning their English language strategies and lessons.

1.7 Scope and Limitations of the Study

This study only involves 60 participants from a national primary school in Rawang. Thus, this quasi-experimental pretest-posttest research does not warrant any generalization of the research results to a bigger population. Given that Malaysia is a racially diverse, multi-ethnic country, the participation of only Malay participants also provides another research gap for future research.

Besides, the single focus is only on one of the English language structures which is the simple past tense. Due to this, it might not be sufficient to tell about the effectiveness of the two FonF tasks on the English language structures in general. Different focus of the English grammar, for example, the use of passive voice or the construction of subject-verb agreement (SVA) might yield different results.

Another limitation is in regard with the time restraint of conducting the research. Learners especially the young ones will surely benefit from longer and more practice time of using the language. However, this study could only manage three treatment cycles as the participants were primary school children and the researcher had to adhere to the school's administrative policy. For further research, longer and more treatment cycles should be conducted so that the effectiveness of the tasks on learners' performance could be analysed better. The following section will explain the terminologies involved in this study briefly.

1.8 Research Terminologies

1.8.1 Dictogloss (DG)

Dictogloss is an upgraded approach to dictation activity. This task was introduced by Wajnryb in 1990 and includes four steps: 1) preparation, 2) dictation, 3) reconstruction and 4) analysis/feedback. This activity allows learners to direct their awareness to the structural differences of their interlanguage and the target language through noticing-the-gap process. The attempt to reconstruct text may also trigger learners to be more conscious of their current language competence (Shak & Gardner, 2008).

1.8.2 Consciousness-Raising (C-R)

Consciousness-raising task on the other hand are activities which provide learners with data that clearly illustrate the target language form. Ellis (2002) defined C-R as "... an attempt to equip the learner with an understanding of specific grammatical feature – to develop declarative rather than procedural knowledge..." (p.168). This type of FonF task promotes 'noticing' to learners regarding the specific linguistic form presented. As learners are required to attend to how certain grammatical structure works, their awareness of the form-meaning relation of the target language begins to increase.

Detailed explanation of FonF, DG and C-R will be elaborated in Chapter 2; Literature Review.

1.8.3 English Simple Past Tense

The target language structure chosen for this study is English simple past tense. Verbs in English are marked by tenses to indicate when an action happens. The regular English simple past tense form of the verbs usually ended with ‘-ed’. However, beginner learners will make the common mistake of adding ‘-ed’ to all verbs to indicate the past tense when irregular forms should be used instead. Furthermore, the copula verbs (am, is, are) also posit the same problem to learners.

These forms of English simple past tense (regular and irregular) have always confused and affected learners’ English language learning especially to the beginners. They are evident particularly in their communicative and writing skills. A study by Saadiyah Darus and Kaladevi Subramaniam (2009) conducted on 72 Form Four essays of Malay students has shown English verb tenses as the second most committed error after singular/plural forms. This goes to show the relevance of using English simple past tense as the target language form of this study. The emphasis on this grammatical structure among students in Malaysia perhaps needs to be initiated early in the learning process.

1.8.4 Learners’ Comprehension

When we talk about learners’ comprehension, it is often linked closely with the reading skills. More importantly, comprehension is seen as the goal of reading. The term reading comprehension thus can be defined as “... an interactive developmental process of simultaneously constructing and extracting meaning from text” (Kieffer & Lesaux, 2008, cited from RAND, Reading Study Group 2002: p. 785). When learners

encountered text in the second language, they are silently 'interacting' with the text. The outcome of this silent interaction is determined on their level of vocabulary, syntactic and structural knowledge of the target language.

Studies have shown the importance of grammar in assisting learners' reading comprehension. Over the years, researches have shown a myriad relationship between syntactic or grammatical sophistication and reading comprehension (Kieffer & Lesaux 2008; Lee, 2007; Paribakht & Wesche, 1993). As students learn to employ more complex sentences in their oral and written language, their ability to make sense of what they read increases, too.

In this study, the students' comprehension of English simple past tense is tested using comprehension test designed based on the said specific target language. Based on the experiment carried out on the groups in this study, it is speculated that the FonF tasks (DG and C-R tasks) have either positive or negative effects on their level of English simple past tense comprehension.

1.8.5 Writing Task

Writing task is one of the common measures to gauge learners' language proficiency level and analyse their language errors. Across the academic institutions, many courses evaluate students through some forms of written text (e.g essay, open-ended questions, research papers) and it is generally accepted that the ability to write well is essential to academic success (Leki & Carson, 1994).

Translation, one of the most controversial tools of language learning (Dagiliene, 2012) could also be utilized as a measure of writing tasks. As a pedagogical tool, it can be employed to learners at any level of proficiency, from school pupils to university students (Leonardi, 2011). According to Leonardi (2011), translation also supports and

strengthens the four language skills – reading, writing, speaking and listening. Regardless of the types of writing tasks, writing, thus, is a very important skill for learners to ensure not only their academic success but also to demonstrate that achievement.

Furthermore, through learners' writing, language instructors and teachers will also be able to detect their written language insufficiencies, especially in the structural aspects, and provide necessary intervention. Thus, the writing tasks set as one of the test components in this study aimed to measure the efficiency of the FonF used to teach the English simple past tense on the participants.

Based on their performance in the writing tasks regarding the English simple past tense, the participants will not only reveal how much they understand the mechanics of using the correct language structure, but also their familiarity of the L2. Less proficient learners are likely to commit structural errors in their L2 writing, which upon further inspection, are written following the structure of their L1 (Leki & Carson, 1994; Qi & Lapkin, 2001; Schleppegrell, 1998). Helping learners identifying the language gaps between their L1 and L2 will increase their 'noticing' between the differences of the two languages and assist them in improving their overall L2 proficiency in the long run.

Writing task, therefore, is the most adept measure to see the differences in the participants' English simple past tense production performance before and after the treatment sessions. For the purpose of this study, there are two components of writing tasks set up for the tests. For the first task, participants were required to build simple sentences and for the second task, they had to translate Malay sentences into English simple past tense sentences correctly.

1.9 Chapter Summary

Grammar is one of the fundamental aspects of language learning and teaching. Improper use of grammar reflects the learners' English level proficiency and it might influence others opinions and views towards the particular speaker or learner. This is especially true in the current working environment where English proficiency is regarded as the main selection criteria for employability.

Without downplaying the importance of communicative and contextual aspects of language teaching and learning, language structures also need to be emphasized in the language lessons. In order to combine both communicative and the grammar teaching aspects in language class, FonF tasks perhaps, could be utilized to join those aspects together. Directing young learners' attention to language structures helps them to understand the rules better rather than using abstract concept which is usually employed in communicative language class approach. This study hopes to explore the effects of two FonF tasks on young learners' comprehension and writing tasks of English simple past tense.

The next chapter will look at the literature review of this study. It will explain the key points of this research as well as the other related past studies which have been conducted previously.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter is divided into several sections. First, it introduces the general development in second language teaching/learning throughout the years. Next, it moves on to explain the instructional qualities of the two FonF tasks in bringing language learners' attention to the grammatical features. Subsequently, the theoretical framework behind this study which is based on Comprehensible Output hypothesis is elaborated and established.

Explanation on some of the major factors that influenced second language (L2) learning among learners is also elaborated in this chapter. Lastly, relevant past studies which are identical to this study are also reviewed.

2.2 Development of L2 Teaching

Instead of 'acquiring' the second language, learners who are introduced to another language after they have already mastered their mother tongue are said to 'learn' the language. It is observed that the acquisition of the first language which happens as a natural process in growing infants and children could hardly come, in most cases, as natural in the second language learning especially when the new language is taught at a later age (Krashen, 1981; Lightbown & Spada, 2006). This has been an intriguing aspect of research interest to the linguists and poses a challenge to language instructors and teachers over the decades, as to how it is best to teach the new language to the learners. The area of language learning has thus, seen many changes and development throughout the era, with new practices and techniques of presenting the language. Some of the later techniques seem to supplement the former ones while some might seem to or even override the others. It is important to understand, however, that all the changes in the

approaches and teaching techniques do not happen in a clear transition. Instead, depending on the conditions and circumstances in the language classrooms, all these techniques, in current time, happen simultaneously across the language teaching and learning field.

Based on the book 'Technique and Principles in Language Teaching' by Diane Larsen-Freeman (2000), the language classroom throughout the years have seen various teaching methods and practices. For the longest time, learning a new language is associated with translation where the text of the new language is dissected and rendered word by word. This is the key principle of the grammar-translation method in which utmost emphasis is put on learning the grammar rules and vocabulary of the new language.

However, as this method neglects the utilization and communicative aspects of the language, other learning methods which focus on the communicative aspect of the language have emerged (Larsen-Freeman, 2000). Such language learning methods are the direct method and the audio-lingual method. The ability to communicate using the target language is being the superior motive in learning the language (Krashen, 1981; Larsen-Freeman, 2000). Compared to the grammar-translation method, learners are directed and drilled to the vocabulary and everyday speech patterns over grammatical rules.

Additionally, the other succeeding methods have also considered the non-linguistic aspects of the language as well. Such aspects are the learners' feelings, the nature of interaction in class (i.e. student-student, student-teacher) and the classroom settings. This seemingly more holistic approach to language learning promotes active participation from the learners and thus, will hold them responsible to their own learning. In opposition to traditional teaching where the teacher is the center of the

class, the current methods put the learners at the center stage of learning. Examples of these language teaching methods are desuggestopedia, community language learning and communicative language teaching (Krashen, 1981; Larsen-Freeman, 2000). In these methods, grammar is taught inductively and the language learning focuses on meaning over form. This, in a way, hopes to encourage learners to practice and communicate using the new language, despite the structural mistakes that might transpire in their early attempts of using it.

The current learning methods have also seen the use of more content- and task-based teaching, which incorporate the use of computer assisted learning. With technological advancement, many language classrooms have adapted to the modern learning method with the aim of communicative competence which is important in this globalised era. As good English communicative competence is highly regarded especially to enhance the chance of employability, language learning in Malaysia (especially) has seen the focus on contextual and communicative learning (Darus & Ching, 2009).

However, the lack of structured and systematic learning of grammar in communicative language classroom has led learners to make unstructured and ungrammatical expressions (Yeo, 2002). Without proper and appropriate sentence construction, it might confuse the listener and disrupt the real meaning being conveyed across, during the conversation.

Thus, in order to help learners to focus on the target language structure without the expense of comprehension and communicative opportunities in the classroom, a measure that incorporates both elements should be utilized. One of the measures is using FonF tasks (Long, 1991). Over the years, FonF has gained the interest of language instructors and researchers alike in order to help learners achieve higher level of language proficiency (Ellis, 2015; Shak & Gardner, 2008; Storch, 2001; Yeo, 2002).

FonF thus, could be utilized as an alternative approach to replace the traditional form-focused instruction where linguistic items are taught in isolation without meaningful context (Doughty & Williams, 1998; Lightbown & Spada, 1990; Storch, 2001). The next sections will elaborate regarding FonF and the two types of FonF tasks which are the focus of this study. Subsequently, the theoretical framework which grounds this study will be introduced and discussed.

2.3 Focus-on-Form (FonF)

These last few decades have seen L2 classrooms emphasizing more on communicative and contextual learning aspects rather than the language forms. This, in part, could be related to the argument initiated by Krashen (1982) which proposed formal instruction in grammar would not lead to the acquisition of L2 knowledge. Furthermore, proponents of communicative language learning approach also argued that learners can acquire L2 grammar naturalistically through practice in meaning-focused tasks (Prabhu, 1987). Even in Malaysia, due to the concern of the university graduates' dwindling English language competency, educational institutions and systems are expected to include a more communicative and contextual language elements (Yamat, Fisher & Rich, 2014).

As the trend of second language learning recently is seen to have been given more priority on communicative and contextual elements of the language, teachers such as the researcher herself, has witnessed that focused grammar teaching has become less prominent over time. However, it is noted that learners often face difficulty to express themselves accurately due to their inability to employ the proper linguistic device, in which it could affect the overall comprehension in communication. This could result in a breakdown in communication. Such scenario can be improved if some focused degree of attention is paid to form (grammatical structure). In relation to this issue, FonF which

has the prospect to overtly draw students' attention to the linguistic elements can be one of the solutions. Following the language learning trend, learners' attention to grammar and language structure can still be directed during English language classes "as they arise incidentally in lessons whose overriding focus is on meaning or communication," (Long, 19991, cited in Doughty, 2001). Without downplaying the importance of input, these kinds of tasks combined the necessity of integrating output practice such as learners' interaction and language production to improve learners' overall English proficiencies (Amirian & Sadeghi, 2012; Schmidt, 1990). Thus, FonF tasks can be seen as pedagogical instructions that could help to direct learners' attention to the target language feature(s) (i.e. grammar) but not in the expense of contextual and communicative learning.

Within a communicative approach, FonF refers to learners and teachers addressing formal features of language that plays a role in the meanings that are negotiated (Carter & Nunan, 2001). Hence, in general, FonF tasks can be regarded as pedagogical interventions to push learners towards higher proficiency in their second language (Shak and Gardner, 2008). However, it must be noted that Focus-on-Form (FonF) needs to be firmly distinguished from Focus-on-Forms (FonFs). The following sections will distinguish these two terms.

2.3.1 Focus-on-Form (FonF) vs. Focus-on-Forms (FonFs)

In contrast to FonF which derives grammar teaching from meaningful and contextual aspects, Focus-on-Forms (FonFs) emphasis only on formal aspects (i.e language structures) of the language (Carter & Nunan, 2001). Long (as cited in Groove, 1999) had differentiated between FonF and FonFs:

“... a focus on forms in instruction, or the systematic attention to grammatical aspects of the TL in a traditional sense, and a focus on form, or instruction that endeavors to contextualize attention to the formal properties of the language within communicative interactions” (p. 817).

Based on the statement, it can be concluded that FonFs, in simpler version, is the traditional grammar teaching methods (which is also referred to form-focused instruction), as opposed to FonF. The table below explains some of the differences between FonF and FonFs:

Table 2.1 Differences between FonF and FonFs

Focus-on-form (FonF instruction)	Focus-on-Forms (form-focused instruction)
The word ‘form’ refers to language form in general	The word ‘form’ refers to discrete, isolated, language forms
Learners first engage in meaning, then explore some linguistics features	Primary attention to form (grammar)
Occasional shift of attention to form	Most attention to form
Linguistic features are explored in contexts	Forms (grammar) are taught in isolation

The table above contrasted the language teaching approaches between the FonF and FonFs. Based on the table, FonF seemed to have a more holistic approach by integrating meaning-based and contextual approach in teaching English compared to FonFs. FonFs which isolated grammar teaching might cause learners to see the second language in separate ‘blocks’, therefore, besetting their L2 learning process as they might not be able to see the link between the grammar lessons and the language context.

In relation to these prospects, this study hopes to explore the possibility of two FonF tasks in improving students’ English simple past tense comprehension and writing tasks (production). Among the varieties of FonF tasks, DG and C-R are selected for the

purpose of this study. The selection of these two tasks (DG and -R) is not only based on their adaptability in the local English classroom context, but also their beneficial roles in language learning. The next section will elaborate on the link between DG, C-R and FonF.

2.3.2 Dictogloss (DG)

Among FonF tasks are dictogloss and consciousness-raising (C-R) tasks. DG is an upgraded approach to dictation activity. Introduced by Wajnryb in 1990, this task requires learners to reconstruct their version of text they have heard previously. Reconstruction of the text is done individually and then collaboratively with peers. The reconstructed texts which the learners produced are then compared among them. In short, the four steps in conducting DG are 1) preparation, 2) dictation, 3) reconstruction and 4) analysis/feedback.

During the steps as stated above, learners not only focus on the target language structure per se but also the reconstruction of the sentences. The reconstruction phase requires them to interact and communicate (i.e language use) with each other even within their limited language skills. In order to reconstruct the text, they will be 'forced' to maximize their linguistic knowledge.

According to Vasiljevic (2010), some of the advantages of using DG are; it is an effective way of combining individual as well as group activities and it also facilitates the development learners' communicative competence. DG activity allows learners to direct their awareness to the structural differences of their interlanguage and the target language through noticing-the-gap process. The attempt to reconstruct text may also trigger learners to be more conscious of their current language competence (Shak & Gardner, 2008).

2.3.3 Consciousness-Raising (C-R)

Consciousness-raising on the other hand is an activity which provides learners with data that clearly illustrate the target language form. This type of FonF task promotes ‘noticing’ to learners regarding the specific linguistic form presented. Compared to traditional grammar teaching methods, C-R task engages learners in meaning-focused use of the target language within grammatical activity/problem (Fotos, 1994).

As learners are required to attend to how certain grammatical structure works, their awareness of the form-meaning relation of the target language begins to increase. C-R benefits learners by providing implicit and explicit knowledge where it allows learners to make assumption and see examples of form through the given text (implicit knowledge) and then to form rules from the patterns in the text (explicit knowledge) (Bankier, 2009). Another benefit of C-R is, it also works for learners with different learning styles and intelligences as learners are able to work on the authentic language (text) presented during the activity (Bankier, 2009).

There are two types of C-R tasks; deductive and inductive (Mohamed, 2004). In deductive tasks, explicit explanation of a grammar structure is presented to learners whereas inductive tasks warrant learners to discover the grammar rules for themselves.

Similar to DG, C-R task also requires learners to utilize their communicative language skills. Although they are not obligated to do so directly (if they are not ready), they are encouraged to articulate the rules describing the specific grammatical structure which they focus on (Ellis, 2002). For example, if the focus of the grammar lesson is English simple past tense, learners are expected to deduce the grammar rules based on what they understand using a contextual text given. For instance, using the given text, a particular learner might reason “simple past tense is used because the word ‘yesterday’

is stated in the text". Although the reasoning seems simplistic, it shows that the learner understand the time indication aspect of English simple past tense. Teachers and language instructors will facilitate learners through further explanations and examples.

Based on the elaboration given, both DG and C-R tasks involve varying degree of interaction and require learners to utilize the noticing and hypothesis-testing functions of the Comprehensible Output hypothesis. In relation to the qualities of output practice which is assumed to help improve learners' English language proficiency, the Comprehensible Output hypothesis (Swain, 1985) is referred as the theoretical framework of this study. Section 2.4 will elaborate on the Comprehensible Output hypothesis.

2.4 Comprehensible Output Hypothesis

Undeniably, English language learners have more difficulties in learning grammar compared to vocabulary. While lexical items carry concrete contextual meanings, grammar is more of an abstract concept that regulates and rules the language process. Direct lexical comparison between languages are mostly found and easily matched. However, language forms and structures (i.e. grammar) differ and vary across languages. Thus, even though ample exposure of the target language has been received, the language structural inaccuracy in most learners' writing and communicative ability (i.e. language production) is still evident.

Pertinent to the above issue, it is not a surprise when Merrill Swain (1985) came up with her Comprehensible Output hypothesis as a complementary alternative to Krashen (1982) Comprehensible Input hypothesis. Although comprehensible language input is imperative for L2 learning, the absence of language practices (language output), will result in learners with low level of language proficiency. Swain's (1985) observation on

the Canadian immersion program has proven that comprehensible input alone is insufficient for learners to attain high level of language proficiency.

Swain (1985, 1995) had suggested three basic functions of output in L2 acquisition: 1. noticing function 2. hypothesis-testing function 3. metalinguistics function. The first function which is the noticing function, describe the possibility of learners to be aware of their language gap. Through output practice, learners could recognize, therefore 'notice', their current ability to utilize the language, for example, what they want to say with what they are able to say. This somewhat self-assessment tool, presumably, will be able to assist learners to be more efficient in their learning.

The second function which is the hypothesis-testing, describes the opportunity the learners get through output practice with their hypothesis, for example, on the language rules. By having the chance to use the language, learners are able to test whether their hypothesis regarding certain language rule is acceptable or not. The feedbacks or corrections that they received help them to reprocess the new information with the previous ones or substantiate the early hypothesis made.

The last function is the metalinguistic function. In addition to noticing and testing their hypothesis through output practice, learners are also reflecting about the learning process that has taken place. In other words, not only will the learners be able to understand and use the language learned, they will also able to explain and justify the rule behind it. Besides the three functions, comprehensible output could also help learners to develop language fluency and enable learners to move from a semantic to a syntactic use of language (Swain, 2005).

According to Swain (1985), it is also necessary to 'force' learners to produce language. The 'forcing' is motivated by the learning tasks that encourage them to

interact and obtain feedback from their language instructors and peers (Donesch-Jezo, 2011). Through the ‘forcing’, learners will unconsciously utilize any of the three basic functions and consequently improving on their language construction and accuracy, which relates to the focus on language form.

Although the teaching approaches (explained in Section 2.2) and the amount of language practice (explained through FonF and the Comprehensible Output hypothesis) are important, these technical aspects of language learning are not sufficient. There are also other factors that influence the success of learners’ language learning. The next section will discuss on some of these factors.

2.5 Factors that Influence L2 Learning

Looking through the evolution of the language learning methods throughout the years (Section 2.2), it has shown us all but one thing; language learning is not a standardized, definitive process. There is no one learner who experiences similar language learning process like the others. Teachers who teach a language not only deal with the strategy to teach the linguistics features of the language but also have to consider the complex psychological and sociological aspects of the learners (Boey, 1975, Lightbown & Spada, 2006). This section will discuss about the factors that influence the learners’ language learning.

Several factors have been identified to contribute to learners’ learning of the second language. Based on a paper by Siti Khasinah (2014) and Krashen’s (1987) Affective Filter hypothesis, some of the major influencers are explained next.

2.5.1 Motivation

The association of motivation and the outcome of language learning achievement has long been a field of interest among researchers in second language learning (Dörnyei, 1994, 2003; Dörnyei, & Csizér, 1998; Guilloteaux & Dörnyei, 2008). This interest was originated from the study of Robert Gardner and Wallace Lambert in 1972. Their study which grounded motivation research in social psychological framework had initiated the formulation of the influential Attitude/Motivation Test Battery (AMTB) (Gardner, 1985 cited in Dörnyei, & Csizér, 1998). However in the 1990's, researchers specifically in the second and foreign language fields have started to call for "a more pragmatic, education-centered approach to motivation research," (Dörnyei, 1994). Motivation thus, is seen as one of the key factors that contribute to language learners' attainment in their second language.

There are two types of motivations which are integrative and instrumental motivations (Gardner & Lambert, 1972). Integrative motivation stemmed from the interest of the learners towards the people and culture of the new language which motivate them to learn the language themselves. Instrumental motivation from the other hand has more functional purpose for the learners as they seek material gain and benefit (e.g. passing exam, better job position) from learning the target language. Motivation can also be categorized into intrinsic and extrinsic motivations where the former is similar to integrative motivation and the later is associated with instrumental motivation.

Motivation is not something linear with one type of motivation expels the influence of the other. Most of the time, learners are influenced by both type of motivations but to a different degree, depending on learners' condition and circumstances. Also depending

on circumstances, the degree of effectiveness of one type of motivation over the other type might change over time.

2.5.2 Attitude

Attitude in general can be defined as a set of beliefs an individual has towards his/her influential surroundings. In a classroom setting for example, a learner's attitude might influence how he accepts the teacher, the classroom activities and even the learning tasks provided. Language attitude thus, can be defined as the perception of the speaker towards the other language, as well as the people and the overall culture of that language.

Attitude of the learner towards the new language (be it positive or negative) will reflect on the learner's ease or difficulty of learning. It might also provide impression of the linguistic difficulty or simplicity, degree of importance and even social status (Richards, 1985, cited in Khasinah, 2014) of the learner. Base on this, it could be implied that learners with positive attitude towards English language, for example, will gain more than their peer who have less positive attitude during English language lesson.

2.5.3 Age

It is generally believed that young children learn language better than adults. It was observed that children who learn a new language achieve more native like fluency and grammatical accuracy compared to the adults who learn the same language (Oyama, 1976; Patkowski, 1994). As children are observed to acquire the first language effortlessly, it is assumed that learners who are exposed to a new language in the earlier years within naturalistic environment gain better language proficiency level than those who are exposed later in formal learning setting.

This issue could be related to Eric Lenneberg's (1967) Critical Period hypothesis which, among other language theories, tried to explain the first language acquisition phenomenon. This hypothesis claimed that there is a critical timeframe for a child to attain a language mastery of which, after the said critical period, will render the brain function of that faculty to be inefficient. The period starts from infancy until puberty and if language acquisition does not happen until then, a child might still learn aspects of the language but will not attain full mastery of the language. Thus, extending this hypothesis to second language acquisition, there are those who feel that the younger the age one is exposed to the second language, the better. However, this might be partly true especially in term of attaining the native like accent of the language, but in other aspects such as the grammatical accuracy and pragmatic elements, adult learners have been found to display excellent competence than children (Singleton & Lengyel, 1995).

2.5.4 Learning Styles

In the education field as well as L2 area, studies have been conducted to identify factors that might contribute to successful learning and the differences in how students learn (Felder & Henriques, 1995; Oxford, 2003; Reid, 1987). Learning styles have been one of the factors that contribute to the overall success of learners' learning.

In L2 field, learning styles is commonly defined as a "... general approaches to learning a language," (Oxford, 2003, p.2). Specifically, the term 'learning style' is used to describe 'an individual's natural, habitual, and preferred way of absorbing, processing and retaining new information and skills,' (Reid, 1995 cited in Lightbown & Spada, 2006, p.59). Classroom instructions and teacher approach which could cater to learners' learning styles seemed to have positive relation to students' academic achievement, attitudes as well as their behavior (Felder & Henriques, 1995). This

outcome is only natural as students' cognitive, affective and psychological traits are made compatible with their learning environment.

There are many concepts and terms to describe and categorized the dimensions of learners' learning styles in which, it depends on the respective research field (i.e. psychology, education, L2). However, Oxford (2003) has particularly reviewed a comprehensive set of learning styles on L2 learning which serves as the point of reference of this study.

Similar to motivation, learning styles are not dichotomous and it spread across a continuum throughout a learners' language learning process. Learners also might exhibit more than one learning styles preference and the strength over one preference to the other varies from time to time.

According to Oxford (2003), there are four dimensions (which are divided into sub-areas) of learning styles most likely associated with L2 learning. These dimensions are; 1) sensory preferences, 2) personality types, 3) desired degree of generality and 4) biological differences. (Refer to Appendix A for the table of summary of the four dimensions of learning styles, Oxford (2003).

Sensory preferences refer to the physical and perceptual learning channels learners exploit the most during learning (Oxford, 2003). It can be divided into visual, auditory, kinesthetic and tactile. On the other hand, personality types relate to learners psychological tendencies in a learning environment. This include extraverted vs. introverted, intuitive-random vs. sensing-sequential, thinking vs. feeling and closure-oriented/judging vs. open/perceiving. The third dimension which is desired degree of generality is similar to field dependent (FD) and field independent (FI) cognitive learning styles (Witkin, Goodenough & Cox, 1977). According to Oxford (2003),

degree of generality can be categorized into two which are social/global (learning while focusing on the main idea or the big picture) which is commonly associated with field dependent type and analytic (focusing on the details and small components of the lesson) which is associated with the field independent type. Lastly, biological differences indicate the biological factors that are adapted by the learners. They are biorhythms (related to the time of the day they perform the best), sustenance (food intake while learning) and location (related to the learning environment and conditions).

All these types and categories are not meant to daunt language instructors as to tailor the language lessons to accommodate each learner's preferences of learning styles. However, by having the knowledge of these different styles, language teachers and instructors have the advantage of designing a multistyle approach, instead of the same singular modes, in language classes. In other words, language teachers should balance the instructional methods so that all learning styles are accommodated for the benefit of the students. FonF tasks, thus, might be used as one of the platforms to provide this multistyle approach of learning styles to cater to students L2 learning needs.

2.5.5 Affective Filter Hypothesis

Stephen Krashen in his influential Second Language Learning Theory (1987) has laid five hypotheses in which he claimed to explain how learner could acquire the second language. The hypotheses are; i. Acquisition-Learning hypothesis ii. Monitor hypothesis iii. Natural Order hypothesis iv. Comprehensible Input hypothesis and iv. Affective Filter hypothesis.

While the other hypotheses touch on the technical and teaching aspects of the language, the Affective Filter hypothesis relates heavily on the learners' personal perceptions and tendencies of the language learning. This is because the hypothesis

concerns on the affective variables such as motivation, self-confidence and anxiety of the learners. Krashen (1987) claims that when the affective filter is 'up', it will inhibit the acquisition from taking place as it means students are less motivated, have low self-esteem and have high anxiety level. Thus, in order for effective acquisition to take place, learners' affective filters must be reduced as to avoid the formation of the mental block.

In relation to this research, learners' affective filters most likely will be affected as the FonF tasks require and greatly encourage learners to utilize the language. The connection between the tasks and their affective filters might, partly, explain the outcome and performance of the learners in the tests of this study.

2.6 Studies Related to Focus-on-Form Tasks; DG and C-R

Studies regarding FoF tasks have been widely researched by researchers in the language acquisition field. However, in Malaysia, little attention has been given on this potential language approach based on the limited journal articles and research conducted on this topic. Therefore, references for this research are mostly taken from the studies conducted in other countries.

Many research findings have shown positive results in relation to the use of FonF in enhancing learners' attainment of English forms during class activities. Yeo (2002) in his paper has reviewed several studies that show the positive effects of FonF on L2 acquisition. The effects can be seen on different language forms and to learners of different age levels. Among those cited are Doughty and William's (1998) which investigated acquisition of English past tense on children aged 11 to 14 and Harley's (1998) which focus on French article acquisition on children aged seven to eight.

In their study, Doughty and Williams (1998) had conducted FonF tasks using output enhancement and corrective feedback. Their investigation on the effectiveness of the tasks on English simple past tense has shown positive outcome from the experimental group (FonF groups). Accordingly, Harley's (1998) study on three classes of grade 2 students (7-8 year-old) had also indicated positive results. The FonF administered group performed comparatively better than the two other groups. Harley's (1998) study which focused on the target structure of the French articles (masculine or feminine; 'un' or 'une', 'le' or 'la') had found that participants in the FonF group understand the target structure better. However, she also mentioned that although adequate practice (output) need to be presented to children (e.g through FonF), sufficient input enhancement and learners' interest should also be considered.

An extensive review on research literature on the teaching and learning the target language structure of L2 has found that purely communicative approach of grammar teaching is not as effective (Macaro, 2003). Teaching instructions such as FonF is needed to assist and direct the learners' focus on the L2 grammar in the course of meaning-based language classrooms (Tajeddin & Jabbarpoor, 2014). As this research focus on the two types of FonF tasks, the next discussion will look exclusively on DG and C-R previous studies.

Studies which focused on DG have produced convincing findings in term of learners' language form production. Research which looked upon the effect of FonF on the aspects of cohesive devices (Kooshafar, Youhanaee & Amirian 2012), metadiscourse elements (Donesch-Jezo, 2011), passive voice (Qin 2008 and Uludag & VanPatten, 2012) and participial adjective (Yeo, 2002) all have indicated positive results of administering DG to teach the target language form.

First, we will look at the effect of DG on the aspect of cohesive devices. In their study, Kooshafar et.al. (2012) compared DG with explicit instruction on learners' coherence in writing. The test subjects were 19 university students in Iran. Based on the analysis results of the two groups, both DG and explicit instruction have helped learners to improve their writing coherence but, DG is more superior than the explicit instruction in intergroup comparison. On the other hand, Yeo's (2002) study on Korean university students which compared DG with input enhancement group had also found similar findings in which DG instruction outperformed the input-based group. According to Yeo (2002), output-focused practice which is DG, enabled learners' to draw their attention to the target language form (participial adjective). Other studies by Qin (2008) and Uludag and VanPatten (2012) both looked at the passive voice as the focus of the target language form. Their participants were Chinese secondary students and Turkish university students respectively. Using processing instruction (PI) as a treatment along with DG, it was found that both PI and DG were useful in helping participants improve on their English passive voice although intergroup results for both studies indicated PI as being superior to DG. Participants in DG group also demonstrated higher and longer retention of the particular language aspect during remote post-test (Donesch-Jezo, 2011; Kooshafar et al., 2012).

Simultaneously, research on C-R tasks on various grammatical aspects have also produce positive result albeit modestly (Idek, Fong, & Sidhu, 2013; Nosratinia & Roustayi, 2014; Yarahmadzahi, Ghalae, & Sani, 2015). Idek and his colleagues (2013) looked at the subject-verb agreement (SVA) performance of 28 secondary students in Sabah. The two types of C-R tasks which have been used in their study have helped the participants to notice the English subject verb agreement (SVA) although the production task group performs better than the comprehension group (Idek et al, 2013).

Learners also benefit on their English grammatical proficiency, reading comprehension and writing ability through C-R tasks (Nosratinia & Roustayi, 2014; Yarahmadzahi et. al, 2015). In their study, Nosratinia and Roustayi (2014) have tested 60 female participants in a university in Iran on their reading comprehension and writing ability. The study consists of two groups; experimental (C-R) and control. The results of the data analysis have shown that improvement on participants' reading comprehension and writing ability was significant in part, due to the C-R treatment. Similarly, Yarahmadzahi and his colleagues (2015) have also looked at the effectiveness of C-R on 66 secondary male students in one of the high schools in Iran regarding their grammatical proficiency. The experimental C-R group had made significant gain (< 0.05) in term of improving participants' overall grammar proficiency based on the data analysis results. In relation to all these studies reviewed, C-R, along with DG, seemed to have the potential and quality to consolidate learners' grammatical accuracy and develop their explicit knowledge of grammar.

2.7 Research Gap

Many of the past studies reviewed have compared the effectiveness between input-related tasks such as processing instruction (PI) or traditional grammar teaching with output-based FonF tasks (Donesch-Jezo, 2011; Kooshafar et al., 2012; Nosratinia & Roustayi, 2014; Qin, 2008; Yarahmadzahi et. al, 2015). Instead of comparing an input / traditional grammar teaching to an output based language learning strategies, this study intends to compare the effectiveness of two output-based FonF tasks, namely dictogloss (DG) and consciousness-raising task (C-R). Thus, this study will look upon the effectiveness of DG and C-R on young learners' acquisition of English simple past tense.

It is also noticeable that most of the latest studies mentioned above were conducted on secondary and tertiary students. By having young learners (primary schoolers) as the participants, this study may provide a fresh dimension on looking at the effectiveness and the feasibility of FonF to different age-level participants.

2.8 Chapter Summary

This chapter explains the general scenario of English learning in Malaysia and why FonF tasks such as DG and C-R should be attempted in language classroom. The explanations regarding the theoretical framework and the tasks used in this research have also been established and justified. Lastly, this chapter has covered the other factors that might influence language learning, the past studies which are related to this research and also the research gap. The next chapter will explain the methodology and the study design.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This study intends to investigate the effects of two FonF tasks, namely dictogloss (DG) and consciousness-raising (C-R) on young learners' comprehension and writing tasks of English simple past tense. In order to do that, this research has followed a systematic data collection procedure to obtain valid and reliable results to explain the matter. In this chapter, the research design, participants, research instruments, treatment procedures, data collection and analysis as well as the ethical procedure will be explained in details in the subsequent sections.

This research uses the mixed method research design in order to explore the effects of FonF tasks on young learners' English simple past tense. There are several types of mixed methods research but the one used by this research is known as explanatory sequential design (Creswell, 2012).

As the name implies, mixed methods research combine the statistical informative data of the quantitative research with the valuable insightful perspectives of qualitative research. Some of the reasons why this type of research is gaining popularity among the researchers are, it provides better understanding of the research problem from two perspectives and it helps strengthen the results and findings of one type of research (either quantitative or qualitative) with another source of data to help “explain, elaborate and extend the first database,” (Creswell, 2012).

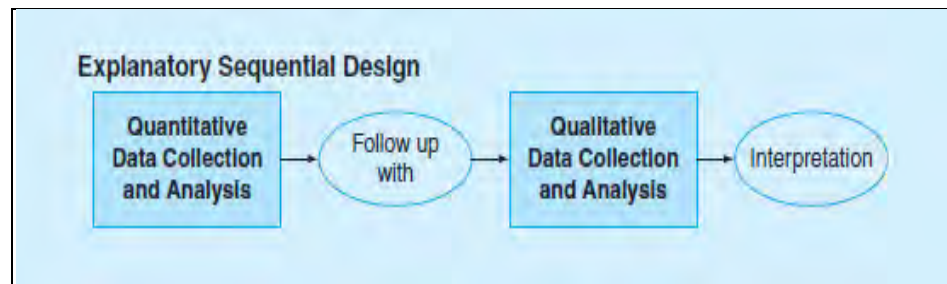


Figure 3.1: Mixed method- Explanatory sequential design

The explanatory sequential design utilized in this research focuses more on the research's quantitative aspect and employ the qualitative measure as a follow up to support the quantitative findings. This will help to elaborate and refine the interpretation of the research data results.

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3.2 Research Design

Figure 3.1 below shows the chronology of this research design:

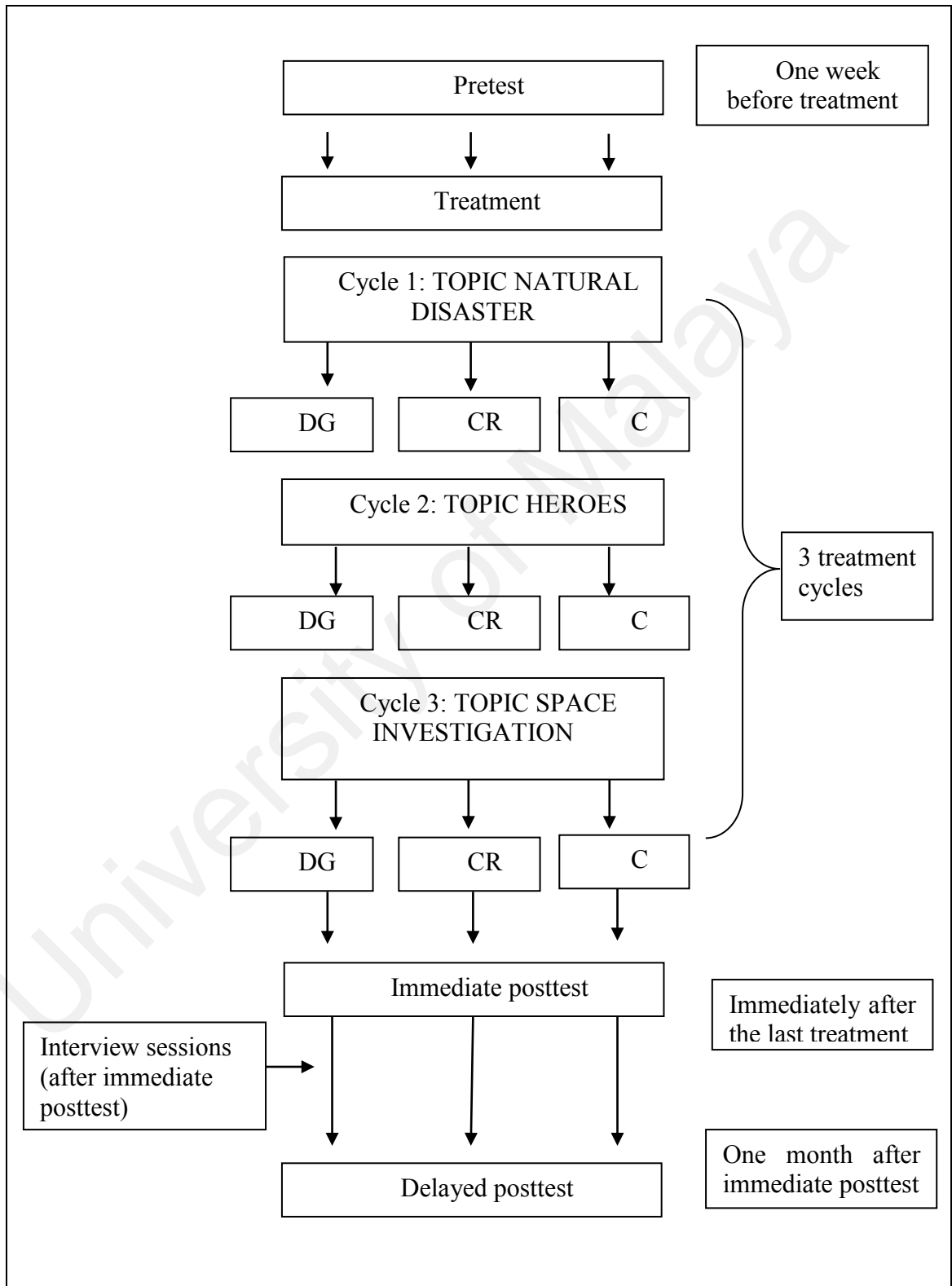


Figure 3.2: Research Design

The quantitative design of this study is based on a quasi-experimental approach that involves a pretest – posttest design (Figure 3.2). Participants were divided into three groups; dictogloss group (DG), consciousness – raising group (C-R) and control group (C). The pretest was given one week before the instructional treatment. The instructional treatments were conducted in three cycles, each cycle lasted for a week. Each treatment focuses on different topics which were selected based on the topics in Year 5 English primary school syllabus. The topic for Cycle 1 of the treatment is “Natural Disaster”, followed by “Heroes” and “Space Investigation” in Cycle 2 and Cycle 3.

Immediate posttest was conducted after the three cycles of treatment (a day after the last treatment). It helps to determine the immediate effect of the tasks (DG and C-R) on the participants’ tests performance. The delayed posttest, on the other hand, was carried one month after the posttest. Based on experimental research which also conducted the delayed posttest (Donesch-Jezo, 2011; Luan & Sappathy, 2011; Qin, 2008) one month is a duration which was deemed adequate to measure the effect of each treatment on participants’ knowledge retention over a prolonged period of time.

The qualitative approach used interview as the main source of data. The interview sessions were conducted right after the participants completed the immediate posttest. This was done to reduce the loss of any important insight from the respondents regarding the treatment they received prior to the immediate posttest. Respondents for the interview were selected based on purposeful sampling. This purposeful qualitative sampling chooses people or sites that can best help the researcher to understand the case/problem. As a follow up to the quantitative data, interview sessions were conducted. The interview data might enrich the study by providing useful information, therefore, helping the researcher to “learn” about the phenomenon deeper as well as to

give “voice” (Creswell, 2012) to the young learners regarding their perspectives throughout the research process which they have participated. The next section elaborates on the participants of this research.

3.3 Participants

For the purpose of this study, the participants for the quantitative data were selected from the intact classes of the school. As a general sampling guideline, the procedures of selection follow Abdul Fattah and Mohamad Majid (1993) study;

1. Define your population
2. Obtain a complete and accurate list of the population
3. Select a representative unit from the list
4. Obtain an adequate size of sample to represent the traits of the population

This study was conducted in a national primary school in Rawang, Selangor. All the participants (n=60) were Year 5 students of the national primary school. They had at least four years of formal exposure to English language. Participants were of Malay ethnicity, lived in suburban area and used Malay language as their main language of daily communication. These young learners were seldom exposed to English and rarely used English outside of the class.

All the participants were divided into three respective groups (DG, C-R and C groups) equally. Participants who were selected were those with the average score ranged from 50-60 marks out of 100 in their two monthly tests and midyear examination papers. This selection was to ensure all of them were homogenous and were comparable in their language performance. It also facilitates the researcher to trace the changes in their language performance. Any indication of differences in their performance afterward can then, be related to the treatment they received.

In the following section, the target language structure (i.e. English simple past tense) chosen for this study is discussed. The reasons to use this specific language structure are also be explained.

3.4 Target Language Structure

The target language structure chosen for this study is English simple past tense. Verbs in English are marked by tenses to indicate when an action happens unlike Malay language which uses aspectual verbs such as '*sudah*', '*telah*' and '*pernah*' to show past action (Nik Safiah Karil et al. (2006) in Soo & Haniza Hasan (2014).

The regular English simple past tense form of the verbs usually ended with '-ed'. However, most beginner learners will usually make the common mistake of adding '-ed' to all verbs to indicate the past tense form when irregular forms should be used instead. These two forms of past tense (regular and irregular) as well as the copula "was" and "were", have always confused and affected learners' English language learning especially to the beginners. Thus, although this target language structure is not that complex, the differences in the forms have always confused the beginner learners (Frear, 2009).

The choosing of English simple past tense as the grammatical target form of this study is due to several reasons. First, it suits the age and level of the participants (Year 5 primary school students) and it is inclusive in Malaysia English education syllabus. Second, English simple past tense is among the earliest target language structure that language learners encounter when learning English as a second language. It is also one of the most common errors produced by English language learners when they use the language due to the overgeneralization of forms and the absence of similar structure in their first language (Malay language). Using English simple past tense hence, helps

provide clear indication of students' improvement (or decline) in the tests used in this research. Next, we will look at the instruments used in this study.

2.5 Instruments for Quantitative Data

In order to conduct this quasi-experimental study and obtain the quantitative data, two sets of instruments are designed. According to Creswell (2012), "An instrument is a tool for measuring, observing or documenting quantitative data... the instruments may be a test, questionnaire, tally sheet, log, observational checklist, inventory or assessment instruments" (p.151). It is important to note that the quality of the instruments used in research will highly affect the reliability and validity of the research's results and findings. Preparing and designing the instruments thus, must be of utmost care hence, established works and past studies are credible sources of references.

In this study, the first set of instruments is designed for the groups' treatment purpose (treatment). The other set is devised to test the groups' performances before and after the treatment cycles (test instruments – pretest, immediate posttest and delayed posttest).

3.5.1 Treatment

For the treatment cycles, the treatment materials used during the treatment cycles were designed based on the established principles for each DG and C-R (refer to Section 3.5.1.1 and 3.5.1.2). The treatment materials for both activities were adapted from established grammar workbooks namely Grammar Dictation (Wajnryb, 1990), Focus on Grammar Workbook: A Basic Course for Reference and Practice (Eckstut, 1994) and Total Grammar (Foo, 2016). The following subsections will look at the steps carried in the experimental groups' treatments (i.e. DG and C-R).

3.5.1.1 Steps in DG Group Treatment

Dictogloss in general is a fairly simple language class activity. It is an activity where learners listen to a text and make their own inference of the text in their own words afterward. (Refer to Appendix B for DG sample text).

There are four steps (Wajnryb, 1990; Qin 2008) in every DG treatment session.

Table 3.1 shows the DG steps conducted in this study:

Table 3.1: Steps for DG Treatment

Steps	Tasks	DG principle
1	Prepare learners for the text they will be hearing and the vocabulary of the text. Ensure they know what they are expected to do at each stage of the procedure and organize them into pairs before the dictation.	Preparation
2	Learners hear the dictation twice; first, listen for comprehension without taking notes, second, they should write down words that will help them piece together the text in reconstruction stage.	Dictation
3	Learners working in pairs, proceed to gather their notes and reconstruct their own original text. The pair checks their reconstructed text for grammar, textual cohesion and logical sense.	Reconstruction
4	Students are encouraged to compare the various versions of the text (produced by other pairs) and also the original text. They are also encouraged to discuss the language choice made. Teacher helps in pointing out and assists students to identify their mistakes.	Analysis and correction

Based on the steps above, during DG treatment, the participants' attention is directed to the target language structure (which is English simple past tense) in a contextual manner (listening to a text and dictate using their own words). Furthermore, as there is also pair work (reconstruction step), the communicative aspect of the language is also utilized during this activity. Teacher could also assign group work during reconstruction step instead of pair work, which ever seems feasible with the class. It is unlike the conventional grammar teaching where language learners are drilled with grammar input

through rote exercise and memorization. This is in line with the principle of FonF and the Comprehensible Output framework investigated in this study. The other treatment group (C-R) also employs the same FonF principle which is explained next.

3.5.1.2 Steps in C-R Group Treatment

Consciousness-raising (C-R) task is a language activity where learners gain and understand a specific information of a language structure (e.g English simple past tense) and then are prompted and encouraged to give reasoning(s) of the same language structure found in a given text (Fotos, 1994; Ellis 2002). (Refer to Appendix C for C-R task sample text). Ellis' (2002) had listed the five main characteristics of C-R task:

- 1) isolate specific language structure for focused attention,
- 2) data and explicit rule provision
- 3) learners are expected to utilize an intellectual effort to understand the targeted feature,
- 4) clarification in the form of further data and description or clarification, and
- 5) learners may be required (not obligatory) to articulate the rule describing grammatical structure.

Based on the characteristics listed by Ellis (2002), Table 3.2 shows the steps used in this study C-R treatment:

Table 3.2 Steps for C-R Treatment

Steps	Tasks	C-R characteristic
1	Prepare and introduce learners about the lesson's specific target language structure. Explain the functions of the structure and bring their attention to the form. Organize them into pairs	Characteristic 1 and 2
2	Learners are given a text which clearly utilizes the target language structure. In pairs, they have to discuss and identify the target language correctly and provide their deduction (reasoning) based on the words they have identified. The pairs write down their deduction using their own words.	Characteristic 3 and 4
3	Each pair is encouraged to compare their findings with the other pairs by sharing their answers to the class. Teacher mediates the process and provide feedbacks/corrections of their findings	Characteristic 5

The most important aspect which differentiates C-R with traditional grammar teaching is that it pushes and prompts learners to not only understand but provide justifications of their understanding of the target language structure learned. It requires learner to tap into their metalinguistic component which is missing in traditional grammar teaching methods. Another group, which is explained next, is the control group which serves as the basis of comparison for the two treatment groups.

3.5.1.3 Control Group

Instead of zero treatment for control group, participants went on their regular class. Other than that, they did not receive any specific treatment. The lesson during the regular class focused on the topic in the textbook and not on the target language structure of this research (i.e English simple past tense).

In other words, this group serves as the baseline group and received neutral treatment. Control group is important in experimental research as it determines the significant changes of the intervention in the treatment groups which this group does not receive.

The effectiveness of the two earlier treatments (DG and C-R) in improving learners' English simple past tense and the control group performance are compared using the subsequent tests. The next section will elaborate on this.

3.5.2 Test Instruments

The test instruments are the most important instruments in this study as they are the main “tools” to measure the participants' performance prior and after the treatment cycles were administered to them. The tests are conducted in three phases; pretest, immediate posttest and delayed posttest.

The three tests (pretest, immediate posttest and delayed posttest) are adapted and developed by referring to two books, Grammar Dictation (Wajnryb, 1990) and Focus on Grammar Workbook: A Basic Course for Reference and Practice (Eckstut, 1994). The components of the test materials are adapted from Qin's (2008) study sample tests. It comprises of seven tasks with five tasks focus on participants' comprehension (consist of 24 items) of the target language form and the remaining two on their production which are the writing tasks (sentence writing and translation). (Refer Appendix D for the test sample).

The comprehension section comprises of matching, sequencing, identifying, multiple-choice questions and cloze test. These varieties of assessment tasks help to assess the participants' comprehension of English simple past tense. Furthermore, the design of these comprehension tasks is also in line with the comprehension level of Bloom's (1956) educational taxonomy.

Sentence writing (based on picture stimuli) and translation task in the production section of the test are used to detect learners' awareness of the target language structure of the assessment (i.e English simple past tense). While sentence writing is a common

measure to test learners' writing, linguists and language teachers might criticize the use of translation as a production measure. However, translation is still a valid method as it is regarded as a "pedagogical tool" to teach a language (Dagilienė, 2012). Some of the benefits of translation in language teaching are; it helps to improve learners' understanding on how languages work and consolidate their L2 structures for active use (Schaffner, 1998). Furthermore, considering this study's participants' age and proficiency level, it is more helpful and practical for the young learners to use translation than writing a short essay as the production measure. Based on their English proficiency level, having them to write an essay (albeit a short one) in a limited test time frame will be unfruitful. Translation, which can also be seen as a more guided task, will therefore help these average level learners to display their writing ability regarding English simple past tense better.

In relation to this, study by Dagilienė (2012) has found that translation have helped the participants (Kaunas University students in Lithuania) to, among others, enhance their understanding of the structures of the two languages and strengthen their grammatical competence. Other study such as Qin's (2008) has also used translation. Translation was used as one of the measures to assess the participants' production performance of English passive voice. With due regard, as this current research also focuses on one of the language structures (i.e. English simple past tense), the use of translation as a part of the writing test in this study is justified.

Through these two types of writing tasks, participants are made aware of the structural differences of their L1 and English language. These structural differences assist learners to improve their understanding of the target language better, how the language works thus, increase their metalinguistic properties (Schaffner, 1998; Dagilienė, 2012). Therefore, the production section of the test utilizes these tasks in

order to test learners' production of the target language feature beyond their declarative knowledge (Qin, 2008).

In order to assess the tests results of the comprehension and production sections for the data analysis, a scoring rubric is used to standardize the markings. The details will be explained in the following part.


3.5.2.1 Scoring Rubric

The main instruments for the quantitative data of this study are the three tests (pretest, immediate posttest and delayed posttest). Thus, it is very important to have a scoring rubric to standardize the assessment of the three tests for the data analysis.

Scoring of the test will use point score for correct answers. The comprehension tasks consisted of 24 items with 1 point score each, thus the total score will be 24. The two tasks in the production section use 3 point score for a correct response.

The first production task consists of sentence writing based on picture stimuli. There are five questions. If an answer or requirement is met, 3 points will be awarded. However deduction of points will take place for incomplete or inaccurate response (2 or 1 point) and 0 point for wrong response. Participants have to write in correct simple past tense sentences in which the subject-verb-object (SVO) must be in order. The total score for this task is 15.

For clear illustration of the marking example, below are the samples:



Response samples:

(a) Aminah cut the meat.	= 3 marks
(b) My mom cutted the carrot.	= 0 mark
(c) The man cut the vegetable.	= 2 marks
(d) Aunties cut in the kitchen.	= 1 mark

Explanations:

- 3 marks given for the response in (a) as the correct simple past tense verb and the SVO are present.
- 0 mark given for the response in (b) as the simple past tense is wrong ('cutted') even when the subject and object are correct.
- 2 marks given in response (c) as the subject is inaccurate ('the man') although simple past tense verb and the object are present.
- 1 mark is given in response (d) as the subject is inaccurate (plural-'aunties') and object is missing.

Figure 3.3: Marking Samples

The second production task (translation) also give 3 points score for each requirement met (one correct translation equal to 3 points). Participants are given a short Malay text comprised of five sentences. They have to translate the sentences into English simple past tense. The marking is similar to the samples above. The maximum score for this task is 15 points, if they managed to translate all of the sentences correctly and accurately into English simple past tense. Based on this scoring system, adding both the scores of the production tasks (sentence writing and translation), the total score for production tasks will yield 30 marks maximum.

3.6 Interview

As stated earlier in the chapter, this study is a mixed method explanatory sequential design. As a follow up to the quantitative data, this study seeks to explore the other factors that might contribute to learners' performance in the tests.

3.6.1 Criteria for Selecting Respondents for Interview

In this study, four participants are selected from the three groups (a total of 12 interviewees). They are selected based on their performances in the three tests. Two from each group are selected based on their increasing performance in every test while the other two are selected if they underperform or have poor results in the tests. From these two different perspectives, factors that might contribute to the acquisition and comprehension of English simple past tense can be identified and addressed.

3.6.2 Interview Process

Qualitative research data helps to inform us about the detailed knowledge and substance that might be lacking in quantitative research method. Contrary to quantitative data that generalize findings and based mostly on numerical values to support evidence, qualitative data provides personalized and authentic first-hand information regarding the phenomena studied (Creswell, 2012). For the purpose of qualitative data of this study, interview with selective participants are conducted.

The most important aspect of qualitative research is not to generalize findings but to understand the reasons behind the phenomena. The bigger number of participants does not necessarily mean better findings as it might "become unwieldy and result in superficial perspectives," (Creswell, 2012, p.209). As analyzing qualitative data is a rigorous practice, the larger the interview pools, the lengthier the transcriptions and the

consequent analysis process will be. Besides, personal bias and perspective may also be imminent. Subsequently, this study only uses 12 participants as the interviewees.

The interview sessions were conducted one day after the immediate posttest. This is to ensure the participants still retain the important aspects of the instructional treatment they had been through. It also helped them to explain parts of the treatment that proved to be beneficial or unbeneficial to their understanding of English simple past tense. The interviewees' data, in turn, provide the researcher a better insight of the qualitative factors that contributed to participants' improved or deteriorated tests performance.

For the purpose of this study, the interview questions were adapted from Shak and Gardner's (2008) study entitled "Young Learners Perspective on Four Focus-on-Form Tasks". Some of the open ended questions of the study were:

1. What do you feel when you are doing the activity/task?
2. Which part of the activity/task that you like the most? Why?
3. Which part of the activity/task that you dislike the most? Why?
4. Do you think the activities/tasks help you to understand and improve your English simple past tense? Explain.
5. If given a chance, is there any part of the activity/task that you want to change? Which part and why?

Because the participants are basically young learners of English language, they are not restricted to respond to the interview questions in English. To ensure that they are comfortable during the interview session, questions are also translated into Malay so that they can answer truthfully and provide rich information regarding the questions asked in Malay. The selected interviewees were called one by one. The researcher will

ask them the questions and listen to their responses. All of their responses were audio recorded and then transcribed for analysis.

3.7 Data analysis

3.7.1 Data Analysis for Tests

A Levene's test for equality of variance was used on pretest data to determine compatibility level of both groups prior to instructional treatment. Paired samples t-test and one-way between subjects ANOVA were used to analyse the immediate posttest and delayed posttest results for discussion. The data analysis was basically guided by the research questions. The subsequent table details the analysis process:

Table 3.3: Data Analysis Table

Research Question	Related Data	Data Analysis
1. To what extent do young ESL students' performances in comprehension of English simple past tense differ between students who received dictogloss and consciousness-raising task?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > 60 participants will be equally divided into 3 groups (n=20): treatment groups- DG and C-R; control group > Pretest on English past tense comprehension questions > Immediate posttest on the English past tense comprehension questions > Comprehension questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 24 items (1 point score for correct answer) - Similar test materials will be used for pretest and posttest 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Paired samples t-test (intragroup analysis) > One - way between subjects ANOVA (intergroup analysis) > Analyse students' pretest and posttest comprehension results to see the effect of the treatments on each group.

Research Question	Related Data	Data Analysis
<p>2. To what extent do these students' performances in the writing tasks of the English simple past tense differ between those who received dictogloss and consciousness-raising task?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > 60 participants will be equally divided into 3 groups (n=20): treatment groups-DG and C-R; control group > Pretest on English past tense writing tasks (production) questions > Immediate posttest on the English past tense production questions > Production questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Sentence writing questions based on picture stimuli (5 questions) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 3 points will be given for correct past tense sentence construction (a total of 15 points) - Points will be deducted for incomplete/partial sentence structure (1 or 2 points) - 0 point will be given for wrong simple past tense - Similar test materials will be used for pretest and posttest (b) Text translation task from Malay to English <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A 5 sentences text must be translated correctly into English simple past tense sentences - Each correct translation will be given 3 points - The total points for this task is 15 points - Similar test materials will be used for pretest and posttest 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Paired samples t-test (intragroup analysis) > One - way between subjects ANOVA (intergroup analysis) > Analyse students' pretest and posttest writing tasks (production) results to see the effect of the treatments on each group.

Research Question	Related Data	Data Analysis
3. To what extent do dictogloss and consciousness-raising task influence students' performances in comprehension and writing tasks of English simple past tense over time?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > 60 participants will be equally divided into 3 groups (n=20): treatment groups- DG and C-R; control group > Pretest on English comprehension and writing tasks (production) questions > Delayed posttest on English comprehension and production questions > Test materials for delayed posttest will be similar to pretest and posttest questions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Paired samples t-test (intragroup analysis) > One - way between subjects ANOVA (intergroup analysis) > Analyse students' pretest and delayed posttest comprehension and writing tasks (production) results to see the effect of the treatments on each group over time.
4. What are the other factors that influence the overall outcomes of the comprehension and writing tasks of English simple past tense among the young learners in this study?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > 4 students will be selected from each group to gain their responses and feedback regarding the treatment conducted on them > The selection will be based on the differences of their performance in the tests (two participants who performed the best and two who didn't do quite well) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Face-to-face interview > Data will be recorded and transcribed for analysis

3.7.1.1 Analysis for Question 1

In order to answer the first research question (Q1: To what extent do young ESL students' performances in comprehension of English simple past tense differ between students who received dictogloss and consciousness-raising task?), 60 participants were equally divided into three groups (n=20): Treatment groups- DG and C-R; control group.

Participants sat for the pretest (before treatment) and immediate posttest (after treatment) on simple English past tense comprehension questions. The comprehension questions consist of 24 items with 1 point score for correct answer. The results of the pretest and immediate posttest were analyzed using paired samples t-test and one-way between subjects ANOVA. Paired sample t-test was used to see the intragroup results of the effect of the treatments on each group pretest and immediate posttest performance. One-way between subjects ANOVA was used to look at the intergroup results of the effect of the treatments between the groups' pretest and immediate posttest performance. The significant intragroup results will show the effectiveness of the treatment (DG and C-R) as a pedagogical task. The intergroup results, on the other hand, will compare the effectiveness between the tasks in order to see which of the tasks is better and effective on participants' English simple past tense.

3.7.1.2 Analysis for Question 2

In order to answer the second research question (Q2: To what extent do these students' performances in the writing tasks of the English simple past tense differ between those who received dictogloss and consciousness-raising task?), participants in the treatment groups- DG and C-R as well as the control group have to answer the writing tasks (production questions).

Participants sat for the pretest (before treatment) and immediate posttest (after treatment) on English simple past tense production questions. The writing tasks consist of two tasks; (a) sentence writing based on picture stimuli (five questions) and (b) translation task. Based on the scoring rubric stated in the previous Section 3.5.2.1 (Figure 3.3), the maximum total score for the production questions is 30. The results of the pretest and immediate posttest were analysed using paired samples t-test and one-way between subjects ANOVA. Paired sample t-test was used to see the intragroup

results of the effect of the treatments on each group pretest and immediate posttest performance. One-way between subjects ANOVA was used to look at the intergroup results of the effect of the treatments between the groups pretest and immediate posttest performance. Similar test materials were used for the pretest and immediate posttest to all three groups.

3.7.1.3 Analysis for Question 3

In order to answer the third research question (Q3: To what extent do dictogloss and consciousness-raising task influence students' performances in comprehension and writing tasks of English simple past tense over time?), participants in the treatment groups- DG and C-R as well as the control group sat for the delayed posttest (one month after posttest). The delayed posttest consists of English simple past tense comprehension and production questions.

The same tests were used for the delayed posttest to all three groups. The comparison of the results between the pretest and the delayed posttest were analysed using paired samples t-test and one-way between subjects ANOVA. Paired sample t-test was used to see the intragroup results of the effect of the treatments on each group pretest and delayed posttest performance over time. One-way between subjects ANOVA was used to look at the intergroup results of the effect of the treatments between the groups' pretest and delayed posttest performance over time.

3.7.2 Interview Analysis

The interview analysis followed the six steps involved in qualitative data analysis laid out by Creswell (2012):

1. Prepare and organise the data
2. Explore and code the database
3. Describe findings and forming themes
4. Representing and reporting findings
5. Interpreting the meaning of the findings
6. Validating the accuracy of the findings.

The interview data were first transcribed and then analysed manually. Since the interview data consisted of only a small database, manual analysis was used instead of computer software. As Creswell (2012) maintained, analyzing a small database which is fewer than 500 pages of transcripts will still allow the researcher to keep track and locate important passages.

After the transcription, the data were read through as to get the general sense for the data coding process. These codes were then developed into descriptions or themes in which explain the factors that contribute to the issue investigated. These rigorous and detailed steps are required as to avoid the researchers to make their own presumptions and to analyse the data more objectively as to prevent bias.

3.8 Ethical Consideration

Since the site of this research is a national type primary school in Selangor and the samples of this planned research is primary school children, certain ethical considerations process were put in place.

First, this research has gained approval from the Education Ministry through their Education Planning and Research Department (EPRD) of the Higher Education Ministry. Official consent letter was obtained. Next, permission from the state education department (Jabatan Pendidikan Selangor) was attained before finally, the school administrators were informed. Besides, formal consent from the participants' guardians has also been obtained prior to the research conduct. (Refer to Appendix for E, F, G (i)

and G (ii) for all of the official documents). All these processes are due in accordance to ethical practices of good research conduct, in which this study was set to adhere to.

3.9 Chapter Summary

This chapter has presented the overall research materials and procedures conducted in this study. Starting with the research design, data collection and analysis up until the ethical consideration required to legally carry out this study in the national type primary school. Each of this process needs to be planned and organized systematically from the start to ensure the validity and reliability of the research findings and outcomes. The next chapter will look at the analysis and the results of this study.

University of Malaya

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS AND FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter the results and findings of the data are presented after the analysis. The study intends to investigate the effects of two FonF tasks namely dictogloss (DG) and consciousness-raising (C-R) on the young learners' English simple past tense comprehension and writing tasks (production). A control group which received no instructional intervention (treatment) is used as a baseline to be compared to the two experimental groups and assess the effect of the intervention.

The quantitative data were collected through the three tests (pretest, immediate posttest and delayed posttest) subjected to the three different groups (DG, C-R and C). The scores of the three groups' tests are analysed using paired samples t-tests (for intragroup analysis) and one-way between subjects ANOVA in SPSS version 23 (for intergroup analysis).

Paired samples t-test is used to determine the differences in the test performances of each group (indicating any increment or decline in students' results of the tests). The basic changes in the tests performances can be easily discerned through the raw mean scores of the groups between the tests. From the results of the paired samples t-test, comparison of the groups' performances between each test is clearly established.

ANOVA (or analysis of variance) on the other hand is performed to assess mean data of the three different groups simultaneously. Thus, ANOVA is used to analyse and determine if there is any statistically significance difference in the means of the groups' tests scores to indicate and distinguish the intergroup performance of the English simple past tense. Results from ANOVA, thus, help to discern which among the three groups perform the highest in the respective tests (pretest, immediate posttest and delayed

posttest). Subsequently, it determines which treatment/group is more superior in their test performance compared to the rest.

This chapter is divided into several sections. First, the assumption of homogeneity of the three groups is established using Levene's test (Section 4.2). Next, the results and findings of the data analysis of the tests are presented in accordance to the research questions. The statistical interpretation and report of the data are also presented and explained. Finally, the qualitative data (interview) are presented in the last section.

4.2 Analysis of Pretest

In order to determine the homogeneity of the participants in each group, a Levene's test of homogeneity of variances is conducted. Levene's test (1960) is used to establish the ground that the three groups' performance prior to the treatment is of equal variance (i.e all three groups share similar level of English simple past tense). The results of the groups' pretest (which was conducted one week prior to their treatment) were used to run the test.

The overall scores of the pretest of the three groups are subjected for analysis. Table 4.1 and Table 4.2 present the descriptive summary of the groups' pretest score and the Levene's test respectively:

Table 4.1 Descriptive Summary of Pretest

Pretests scores

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
					DG	20		
C-R	20	19.60	5.56682	1.2447	16.9946	22.2054	8.00	31.00
Control	20	19.35	5.94072	1.3283	16.5697	22.1303	9.00	31.00
Total	60	19.38	5.58476	.72099	17.9406	20.8260	8.00	31.00

Table 4.2 Test of Homogeneity of Variances (Levene's Test)

Pretests scores

Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
.272	2	57	.763

Table 4.1 presents the descriptive summary of the means (M) and standard deviation (SD) of each group. Based on the table, C-R ($M = 19.6$, $SD = 5.567$) scored slightly higher than the other two groups (DG: $M = 19.2$, $SD = 5.521$; C: $M = 19.35$, $SD = 5.940$). The significance level alpha is specified at .05.

Based on table 4.2, the F value of the of the pretest scores for Levene's test is .272 with a Sig. (p) value of .763. In ANOVA, the F value shows whether the means between two or more populations are significantly different. As the Sig. value is greater than the alpha of .05 ($p > .05$) the assumption of homogeneity of variance is retained. This means, there is no significance differences between the three groups' variances. The results shown on both Table 4.1 and Table 4.2 indicate that the participants in the three groups possessed similar level of English simple past tense proficiency. Thus, the three groups were deemed homogenous and comparable prior to the treatment. Any changes in their performance later can be attributed to the treatment they received. Next, we will look at the data analysis and the results of Research Question 1.

4.3 Analysis of Question 1

Research Question 1: To what extent do young ESL students' performances in comprehension of English simple past tense differ between students who received dictogloss and consciousness-raising task?

Comprehension relates to the receptive skills of the participants. In order to see the effectiveness of the treatment on participants' comprehension, they were subjected to an immediate posttest (a day after the treatment cycles end). The results of the comprehension scores of this immediate posttest are then compared to their previous pretest scores. Paired sample t-tests are used to determine if there is any significance difference prior and after treatment (intragroup analysis). Table 4.3 displays the descriptive results of each group's pretest and immediate posttest of the comprehension tests.

Table 4.3 Paired Samples Statistics for Comprehension Test

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	DG Compre. Pretest	14.450	20	2.23548	.49987
	DG Compre. Imm. Posttest	17.600	20	2.89100	.64645
Pair 2	C-R Compre. Pretest	14.350	20	3.31305	.74082
	C-R Compre. Imm. Posttest	16.800	20	4.58372	1.02495
Pair 3	C Compre. Pretest	13.100	20	2.78908	.62366
	C Compre. Imm. Posttest	14.600	20	3.60409	.80590

Based on the mean (M) results displayed in the table, all three groups show improvement in the immediate comprehension posttest results compared to the results of pretests. This implies that the students benefit from the instructional treatments given to them. However, it is clear that DG (pretest $M = 14.45$, imm. posttest $M = 17.60$) group performs better than the C-R (pretest $M = 14.35$, imm. posttest $M = 16.80$) and C (pretest $M = 13.10$, imm. posttest $M = 14.60$) groups in English simple past tense comprehension. The differences in the mean scores between the pretests and immediate posttest indicated that DG group improves the highest with the raw mean scores difference of 3.15, followed by C-R with the difference of 2.45 and C group with 1.50 raw mean scores difference. In order to see whether the gains made by the groups are significant, we look at the paired samples t-test 2-tailed values in Table 4.4:

Table 4.4 Paired Samples Test (Comprehension Test)

	Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
				Lower	Upper			
Pair 1 DG Compre. Pretest - DG Compre. Imm. Posttest	-3.15000	2.45539	.54904	-4.29916	-2.00084	-5.737	19	.000
Pair 2 C-R Compre. Pretest - C-R Compre. Imm. Posttest	-2.45000	3.06894	.68624	-3.88631	-1.01369	-3.570	19	.002
Pair 3 C Compre. Pretest - C Compre. Imm. Posttest	-1.50000	4.60549	1.02982	-3.65544	.65544	-1.457	19	.162

According to the two-tailed p-values indicated in Table 4.4, only DG ($t(19) = -5.74$, $p = .000$) and C-R ($t(19) = -3.57$, $p = .002$) can be said to have significance difference since the sig. (two-tailed) is less than .05 ($p < .05$). The results of C ($t(19) = 1.457$, $p = .162$) group are not statistically different as the p-value is more than .05.

Obtaining .05 or lower significance means “the results are real” (VanVoorhis & Morgan, 2007) and not due to the chance factors alone. Setting the significance level to .05 warrant 95% confidence that the result is of non-chance finding (Aron & Aron, 1999). This is very important as it determines the true effectiveness of the instructions (independent variables) on participants’ English simple past tense and in turn, the validity of the research outcomes.

Paired samples t-tests have provided the intragroup analysis of the three groups and revealed that DG and C-R tasks have the significant effect on participants’ comprehension. However, in order to look at the intergroup analysis to determine which of the three group is the most effective, the immediate posttests data are subjected to one-way between subjects ANOVA. Table 4.5 displays the analysed results.

Table 4.5 Descriptives (Comprehension Test Immediate Posttest Results)

Imm. Posttest Scores

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
					DG	20		
C-R	20	16.80	4.58372	1.0249	14.6548	18.9452	6.00	23.00
C	20	14.60	3.60409	.80590	12.9132	16.2868	8.00	21.00
Total	60	16.33	3.90856	.50459	15.3236	17.3430	6.00	23.00

Based on the descriptive results in Table 4.5, DG ($M = 17.60$, $SD = 2.89$) fared the highest followed by C-R ($M = 16.80$, $SD = 4.58$) and C ($M = 14.60$, $SD = 3.6$). Yet, to determine whether the differences between the condition means are significant, the result of significant (sig) value in Table 4.6 (ANOVA) is presented as below:

Table 4.6 ANOVA (Comprehension Test Immediate Posttest Results)

Imm. Posttest Scores

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	96.533	2	48.267	3.418	.040
Within Groups	804.800	57	14.119		
Total	901.333	59			

The significance level is determined at .05 level of significance. Since the sig value in the table above is lesser than alpha at .05 level of significance ($p = 0.04$), this means the treatments which the groups received do have significant intergroup effects on their comprehension of English simple past tense. There was a significant effect of the treatment on the participants' comprehension immediate posttest result at the $p < .05$ for the three groups [$F(2, 57) = 3.42$, $p = 0.04$].

Although it is concluded that the treatments the groups received do have effect on participants' comprehension, it is important to discern the significance of each treatment

condition with all the other conditions (between groups comparison). The analysis above yielded a main effect for the groups, $F(2, 57) = 3.42$, $p = 0.04$, thus, a post hoc (multiple comparisons) test was conducted. The post hoc test enables the researcher to contrast the effect of one instruction with the other two instructions simultaneously (Benati, 2005; Uludag & VanPatten, 2012; VanPatten, Inclezan, Salazar & Farley, 2009). The post hoc analysis results using Tukey HSD is presented in Table 4.7.

**Table 4.7 Multiple Comparisons
(Comprehension Test Immediate Posttest Results)**

Dependent Variable: Imm. Posttest Scores

Tukey HSD

(I) Groups	(J) Groups	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
DG	C-R	.80000	1.1882	.780	-2.0594	3.6594
	C	3.00000*	1.1882	.038	.1406	5.8594
C-R	DG	-.80000	1.1882	.780	-3.6594	2.0594
	C	2.20000	1.1882	.162	-.6594	5.0594
C	DG	-3.00000*	1.1882	.038	-5.8594	-.1406
	C-R	-2.20000	1.1882	.162	-5.0594	.6594

*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

In Table 4.7, the multiple comparison analysis indicates that there is a significant difference between the DG and C groups. The results show that the effect of instruction was due to the following contrast: DG better than C ($p < .05$) at sig. value of .038, but no difference between DG and C-R ($p = .780$) and C-R and C ($p = .162$). For this reason, it can be concluded that the participants in DG and C groups are significantly different in term of their comprehension of English simple past tense. C-R level of comprehension on the other hand is not significantly different from DG and C groups.

Based on the one-way between subjects ANOVA analysis, there was a significant effect of the treatments conducted on the three groups' (DG, C-R and C) comprehension

of English simple past tense at the $p < .05$ level of the three conditions [$F(2, 57) = 3.42$, $p = 0.04$]. Taken together with the post hoc comparisons test, the results suggest that the FonF tasks (DG and C-R) which the participants received during the experimental cycles do have a significant effect on their comprehension. Specifically, the results suggest that using DG in teaching young learners English simple past tense improve their comprehension better than using C-R.

Results from past studies regarding this area have indicated positive findings. In a study conducted by Donesch-Jezo (2011) on tertiary students regarding English metadiscourse items, DG group has outperformed the explicit instruction and input enhancement groups. Another study by Qin (2008) which looked on the effectiveness of DG on Chinese learners English passive voice has shown the effectiveness of DG on learners' comprehension of English passive voice. These studies indicated that DG has the potential in term of improving learners' comprehension on grammatical aspects.

Comparatively, studies on C-R have also indicated positive results. Nosratinia and Roustayi (2014) used C-R on learners' reading comprehension and writing ability. In their result section, there is a significant difference between the experimental and control groups' mean scores on the posttest of reading comprehension, indicating the effectiveness of C-R to assist learners' comprehension in reading, as well as their writing ability. Abdalla's (2014) study has also shown similar results on learners' comprehension of English simple present and past tense. The research which was conducted in one of the university in Sudan yielded significant gain of the C-R group results, which proved the effectiveness of C-R on learners' grammar knowledge.

However, as study which compares two FonF tasks have not been thoroughly investigated before, past studies references regarding this matter is very limited. Instead, previous studies have compared input-based tasks with output-based tasks (FonF).

Examples of such studies are Qin (2008), VanPatten, Inclezan, Salazar and Farley (2009) and Uludag and VanPatten (2012). These studies have looked at the comparative effect of DG and input-based Processing Instruction (PI) task. Each study which looked at English passive voice (Qin, 2008; Uludag & VanPatten, 2012) and object pronoun and word order in Spanish (VanPatten et. al., 2009) has found that both DG and PI improve learners' comprehension in their respective grammatical feature. However, in term of intergroup result, PI has shown greater significant gain than DG. Despite falling behind PI for the intergroup results, the fact that DG still yielded significant comprehension intragroup result in these studies indicate the effectiveness of DG to improve learners' language structure in general.

To summarize, in answering Research Question 1, it appears that the two experimental groups made significant gains in the immediate comprehension test compared to pretest. Thus, both can be said as effective to teach learners English simple past tense. However, the gains made are not equal. Among the three groups, the gains made by DG group outperformed the gains made by C-R and C groups (based on intergroup differences). Furthermore, looking at the statistical significance figure determined through the analysis, we can firmly attribute the gains made by the DG group to the treatment the group received and not due to chance.

The results of Research Question 1 have shown the effectiveness of FonF tasks namely DG to enhance participants' comprehension (which is related to the receptive skill) of English simple past tense. The next research question will look at the effectiveness of FonF in enhancing learners' productive skill of English simple past tense. The next section will discuss about the data of Research Question 2.

4.4 Analysis of Question 2

Research Question 2: To what extent do these students' performances in the writing tasks of the English simple past tense differ between those who received dictogloss and consciousness-raising task?

Compared to Research Question 1, Research Question 2 looks at the effectiveness of DG and C-R in the participants' productive skill. The test to measure this skill is through writing tasks. In order to see the effectiveness of the treatment on participants' writing tasks (production), they were subjected to an immediate posttest (a day after the treatment cycles end). The results of the production scores of this immediate posttest are then compared to their previous pretest scores. These scores (pretest and immediate posttest) are analysed using paired sample t-tests to determine if there is any significance difference prior and after treatment (intragroup performance). Table 4.8 below displays the descriptive results of each group's pretest and immediate posttest of the production tests.

Table 4.8 Paired Samples Statistics for Production Test

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	DG Prod. Pretest	4.7500	20	4.33923	.97028
	DG Prod. Imm. Posttest	11.6500	20	7.08055	1.58326
Pair 2	C-R Prod. Pretest	5.2000	20	3.25415	.72765
	C-R Prod. Imm. Posttest	11.6500	20	5.31408	1.18826
Pair 3	C Prod. Pretest	6.2500	20	4.27816	.95663
	C Prod. Imm. Posttest	8.4500	20	4.17354	.93323

Based on the mean (M) results displayed in the table, all three groups show improvement in the immediate production posttest results compared to the results of pretests. This implies that the students benefit from the instructional treatments given to them. However, it is clear that DG (pretest $M = 4.75$, imm. posttest $M = 11.65$) group performs better than the C-R (pretest $M = 5.20$, imm. posttest $M = 11.65$) and C (pretest

$M = 6.25$, imm. posttest $M = 8.45$) groups in English simple past tense production test. The differences in the raw mean scores between the pretests and immediate posttest indicated that DG group improves the highest with mean scores difference of 6.90, followed by C-R with the difference of 6.45 and C group with 2.20 raw mean scores difference. In order to see if these gains (between the production pretest and immediate posttest results) are of significant difference, the two-tailed p-values are specified in Table 4.9.

Table 4.9 Paired Samples Test (Production Test)

	Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
				Lower	Upper			
Pair 1 DG Prod. Pretest – DG Prod. Imm. Posttest	-6.90000	5.32027	1.18965	-9.38996	-4.41004	-5.800	19	.000
Pair 2 C-R Prod. Pretest – C-R Prod. Imm. Posttest	-6.45000	4.43046	.99068	-8.52352	-4.37648	-6.511	19	.000
Pair 3 C Prod. Pretest – C Prod. Imm. Posttest	-2.20000	4.75284	1.06277	-4.42440	.02440	-2.070	19	.052

Based on Table 4.9, similar to the comprehension test (Table 4.4), only DG ($t(19) = -5.80$, $p = .000$) and C-R ($t(19) = -6.51$, $p = .000$) gains can be said to have significance difference since the sig. (two-tailed) is less than .05 ($p < .05$). The results of C ($t(19) = -2.07$, $p = .052$) group are not statistically different as the p-value is more than .05. This analysis indicated that the increase in DG and C-R production performances in the immediate posttest can be attributed to the treatment they received. This means, DG and C-R are both effective in enhancing participants' production skill (writing) of English simple past tense. The same cannot be said to the control group as it demonstrate the sig. value higher than .05 ($p = 0.052$).

Next, in order to assess whether there are statistically significant differences of the three groups' production results (intergroup analysis), the immediate posttests data are subjected to one-way between subjects ANOVA for intergroup analysis. Table 4.10 displays the analyzed results.

Table 4.10 Descriptives (Production Test Immediate Posttest Results)

Imm. Posttest Scores

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
					DG	20		
C-R	20	11.65	5.31408	1.188	9.1629	14.1371	.00	21.00
C	20	8.450	4.17354	.9332	6.4967	10.4033	.00	16.00
Total	60	10.58	5.75868	.7434	9.0957	12.0710	.00	28.00

Based on the descriptive results in Table 4.10, DG ($M = 11.65$, $SD = 7.08$) and C-R ($M = 11.65$, $SD = 5.31$) shared the same mean value followed by C ($M = 8.45$, $SD = 5.76$). Yet, to determine whether the differences between the condition means are significant, the result of significant (sig) value in Table 4.11 (ANOVA) is presented as next:

Table 4.11 ANOVA (Production Test Immediate Posttest Results)

Imm. Posttest Scores

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	136.533	2	68.267	2.138	.127
Within Groups	1820.050	57	31.931		
Total	1956.583	59			

The significance level is determined at .05 level of significance. Since the sig value in the table above is greater than alpha at .05 level of significance ($p = 0.127 > .05$), the result do not yield a main effect for the three groups. In other words, the effectiveness of

the tasks (DG and C-R) in improving the participants' production of English simple past tense is equal. Because of the lack of the main effect, the post hoc test is not required. The post hoc test is done if only the sig value is lower than the .05 significance level. Compared to the comprehension test results (Table 4.6) in which the sig. value stands at 0.04 (lesser than .05) and require a post hoc test, the production test results do not yield the same value.

Based on the production results of the tests, the two experimental groups (DG and C-R) have made significant gain in their production immediate posttest. This is based on their significant 2-tailed values depicted in the paired samples t-test (Table 4.9). According to the mean comparison scores in Table 4.8, it is also clear that DG group has more advantages in helping learners' to perform better in the production tests as compared to C-R and C groups. However, as there is lack of main effect in the result of the one-way ANOVA (Table 4.11) for intergroup comparison, the treatments received by the two groups are deemed similar in their effectiveness on learners' production of English simple past tense. In other words, the significant effectiveness of any one of the experimental task in helping learners' to improve their production of English simple past tense in this study is not evident statistically.

Undeniably, production test which requires learners to utilize the specific target language feature learned, pose more difficulties for them to score compared to comprehension test. In term of intragroup effect, many studies have shown positive results by using DG and C-R in the production test. Studies by Benati (2005), VanPatten et. al. (2009), and Uludag and VanPatten (2012) have shown the effectiveness of DG in learners' production. Benati (2005) has experimented in using DG on Chinese and Greek participants. Using English simple past tense as the target language structure, output-based group indicated significant improvement on the

learners' production test. VanPatten et.al (2009) and Uludag and VanPatten (2012) in their research have also imitated similar results where learners made significant intragroup gains in their production test. These researchers looked at object pronoun and word order in Spanish and English passive voice respectively.

Studies which use C-R have also indicated favorable results. A study by Gondziola (2013) has provided positive result in using C-R on learners' English present perfect and simple past tense. From her studies, learners of different backgrounds and age levels (23 to 69 year-old), have benefited through the C-R instruction given. The same can be said on studies conducted by Idek, Fong and Sidhu (2013) and Amirian and Abbasi (2014). While Idek et. al. (2013) looked at English subject-verb agreement (SVA), Amirian and Abbasi (2014) looked at learners' grammatical knowledge. In term of intragroup results, both studies indicated positive gain of the C-R group on learners' production of their respective language structure.

Nevertheless, comparative to comprehension test, many of the studies mentioned above did not yield any significant intergroup results. It means, similar to the results of this study, all the instruction and tasks (i.e. DG, C-R, PI) shared similar effectiveness on learners' production in the writing tasks. However, a study by Qin (2008) has shown PI (an input-based task) to be more effective than DG from the study's intergroup results. Perhaps, in order for DG and C-R to produce any significant intergroup results, participants need to sit for longer treatment cycle. As productive language aspect requires higher cognitive demand, learners need more time to be able to use the language correctly. Rather than having immediate effect, FonF (DG and C-R) most likely will have a delayed effect on learners (Ellis, 2002).

Based on the findings of the previous studies reviewed, compared to comprehension test, it is harder for DG and C-R to yield a statistically significant difference between

the groups production performance although gains are made based on their raw intragroup scores. Following this trend, it means in term of production, DG and C-R share similar level of effectiveness on learners' English simple past tense writing tasks.

To summarize, in answering Research Question 2, significant gains are made by DG and C-R groups based on the intragroup results. Both DG and C-R groups fared quite similar to each other. The gain made by the C group is modest in contrast to the two experimental groups. However, based on the intergroup analysis, all three groups produced no significance statistical figure to satisfyingly confirm any intergroup effect. Consequently, on comparison basis, it is concluded that DG and C-R groups in this study shared similar effectiveness on participants' production of English simple past tense.

The effectiveness of FonF tasks (DG and C-R) to assist learners' comprehension (receptive skill) and writing tasks (productive skill) has been measured in Research Question 1 and 2. The next section will see whether these tasks are effective to help learners retain the knowledge of English simple past tense over a period of time.

4.5 Analysis of Question 3

Research Question 3: To what extent do dictogloss and consciousness-raising task influence students' performances in comprehension and writing tasks of English simple past tense over time?

In order to assess participants' overall performances of English simple past tense over a period of time, a delayed posttest (one month after the immediate posttest) was conducted. The total scores of the pretest and delayed posttest of the three groups have been analysed using paired sample t-tests to determine any significance difference for

the intragroup performance overtime. Table 4.12 displays the descriptive results of each group's overall pretest and delayed posttest results.

Table 4.12 Paired Samples Statistics (Pretest and Delayed Posttest)

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	DG Pretest	19.2000	20	5.52125	1.23459
	DG Del. Posttest	28.7000	20	8.87990	1.98561
Pair 2	C-R Pretest	19.5500	20	5.55807	1.24282
	C-R Del. Posttest	28.4000	20	8.46914	1.89376
Pair 3	C Pretest	19.3500	20	5.94072	1.32838
	C Del. Posttest	23.2000	20	9.72571	2.17474

Based on the mean (M) results displayed in the table, all three groups show improvement in the delayed posttest results compared to the results of pretests. This implies there is improvement in their performance over time. However, from the table, it is clear that DG (pretest $M = 19.20$, del. posttest $M = 28.70$) group performs better than the C-R (pretest $M = 19.55$, del. posttest $M = 28.40$) and C (pretest $M = 19.31$, del. posttest $M = 23.20$) groups in the overall English simple past tense test. The differences in the mean scores between the immediate posttest and delayed posttest indicated that DG group improves the highest with mean scores difference of 9.50, followed by C-R with the difference of 8.85 and C group with 3.85 raw mean scores difference. To determine whether their increases are significant or not, we look at the 2-tailed values displayed in Table 4.13.

Table 4.13 Paired Samples Test (Pretest and Delayed Posttest)

	Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
				Lower	Upper			
Pair 1 DG Pretest -	-9.50000	6.79396	1.51918	-12.67967	-6.32033	-6.253	19	.000
DG Del. Posttest								
Pair 2 C-R Pretest -	-8.85000	5.85145	1.30842	-11.58856	-6.11144	-6.764	19	.000
C-R Del. Posttest								
Pair 3 C Pretest -	-3.85000	9.46614	2.11669	-8.28029	.58029	-1.819	19	.085
C Del. Posttest								

Based on Table 4.13, as the two-tailed p-values indicated, only DG ($t(19) = -6.25$, $p = .00$) and C-R ($t(19) = -6.76$, $p = .00$) can be said to have significance intragroup difference since p is less than .05. The result of C ($t(19) = -1.82$, $p = .085$) group is not statistically different as the p-value is greater than .05. This means that DG and C-R are effective in helping the participants to retain the knowledge of English simple past tense over time.

Even though the paired sample t-tests help to indicate the intragroup differences, it was not able to analyse the three sets of data simultaneously to find the intergroup analysis performance. In order to assess whether there are statistically significant difference of the three groups overall results over time, the delayed posttests data are subjected to one-way between subjects ANOVA. Table 4.14 displays the analyzed results.

Table 4.14 Descriptives (Delayed Posttest Results)

Del. Posttest Scores								
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
DG	20	28.70	8.87990	1.9856	24.5441	32.8559	15.00	48.00
C-R	20	28.40	8.46914	1.8937	24.4363	32.3637	12.00	43.00
C	20	23.20	9.72571	2.1747	18.6482	27.7518	7.00	41.00
Total	60	26.76	9.24317	1.1932	24.3789	29.1544	7.00	48.00

Based on the descriptive results in Table 4.14, DG ($M = 28.70$, $SD = 8.88$) fared the highest followed by C-R ($M = 28.40$, $SD = 8.47$) and C ($M = 23.20$, $SD = 9.73$). Yet, to determine whether the differences between the condition means are significant, the result of significant (sig) value in Table 4.15 (ANOVA) is presented as below:

Table 4.15 ANOVA (Delayed Posttest Results)

Del. Posttest Scores					
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	382.533	2	191.267	2.340	.105
Within Groups	4658.200	57	81.723		
Total	5040.733	59			

The significance level is determined at .05 level of significance. Since the sig value in the table above is greater than alpha at .05 level of significance ($p = 0.105 > .05$), the result does not yield a main effect for the group. Because of the lack of the main effect, the post hoc test is not necessary (similar to Research Question 2).

Looking at the analysis, all of the groups (DG, C-R and C) have made gains in their overall performance between the pretest and delayed posttest. This is based on their raw mean scores depicted in the paired samples t-test (Table 4.12). However, in term of

significant differences in their intragroup performance, only DG and C-R yield significant results whereas C group did not. According to the mean comparison scores in Table 4.12, it is also clear that DG task seemed to have more advantages in helping learners' to perform better in their comprehension and production tests as compared to C-R and C groups. Even so, as there is lack of main effect in the result of the one-way ANOVA (table 4.15), the instructional treatments (DG and C-R) given to the experimental groups are said to share similar effectiveness in learners' overall comprehension and production of English simple past tense over a period of time. The significant effectiveness of any one of the instruction in helping learners' to improve their overall English simple past tense proficiency over time in this study is not evident statistically.

Thus, in answering Research Question 3, it could be said that all three groups have made gains in their overall comprehension and production of English simple past tense over time. DG and C-R have shown significant intragroup results which mean on its own, both tasks are effective on learner's overall performance of English simple past tense over time. However, as there is lack of any significant intergroup results, one of the tasks cannot be said to be superior than the other

The qualities of FonF tasks to help learners' retain any specific grammatical feature over time have produced different outcomes. However, it is noticed that some of the previous studies in which this current study referred to did not conduct the delayed posttest. For examples, previous studies on C-R in which this current study referred to did not include delayed posttest in their design and thus past reference are not available. On the other hand, other referred past studies that conducted delayed posttest have used DG and PI as comparison such as in the researches by Qin (2008), VanPatten et. al. (2009), Donesch-Jezo (2011) and Uludag and VanPatten (2012).

Similar to the results of this current study, the studies mentioned have all shared similar delayed posttest results. Qin (2008) has found her high school Chinese participants made significant gain in the delayed posttest results regarding English passive voice. Spanish and Turkish participants have also benefited in using DG to help them retain the grammatical knowledge of object pronouns and word order in Spanish as well as passive voice in the studies by VanPatten et. al. (2009) and Uludag and VanPatten (2012) respectively. However, in term of intergroup performance, DG and the other experimental group, PI, shared the same effectiveness for delayed posttest results. As an exception, only one of the past studies in which this study referred to has indicated significant intergroup performance. The study by Donesch-Jezo (2011) have shown intergroup difference where DG have the upper hand than the other experimental groups (explicit instruction and input enhancement groups) in helping learners to retain their knowledge of English metadiscourse items.

In summary, for Research Question 3, on their own, DG and C-R are effective in assisting participants to retain their knowledge of English simple past tense over time based on their significant intragroup results. However, on comparison ground, both are said to share similar level of effectiveness on participants in this particular aspect as there is no significant intergroup results based on the data analysis.

The three research questions have presented the quantitative results of this study on the effect of DG and C-R tasks in comprehension and production of young learners' English simple past tense. However, the numerical data only represents half the story. The three tests conducted on the participants only managed to measure participants' technical cognitive performance of the specific grammar feature without disclosing the reasons of either their improvement or decline in the tests. The next research question

attempts to look at the factors that might influence their varying performance in the three tests.

4.6 Analysis of Question 4 (Interview)

Research Question 4: What are the other factors that influence the overall outcomes of the comprehension and writing tasks of English simple past tense among the young learners in this study?

As described in the previous chapter, this study is a mix-method research which combines the quantitative and qualitative aspects. While the three tests provide quantitative data to answer Question 1 to 3 of this research, interview sessions were conducted to gain information on the possible factors that influence the participants' performance on the tests.

The interview was conducted on 12 participants, four, from each group. They are selected based on their performance in the three tests. Two from each group are those who scored the highest and the other two scored the lowest based on their three tests performance. Such selections were done to help the researcher gains the understanding whether there is any connection between the FonF tasks (DG and C-R) and the participants' test scores. Responses from these selected participants might reveal any insightful cause-and-effect connection between the two.

All four respondents in each group (DG, C-R and C) were labeled A, B, C, and D. For example, 'DG: A' refers to respondent A from DG group, 'C-R:B' refers to respondent B in the C-R group, and so on. Table 4.16 shows the list of all interview respondents.

Table 4.16 List of the Interview Respondents Labels

Groups	Respondents	Label
Dictogloss (DG)	Student A (High scorer)	DG: A
	Student B (High scorer)	DG: B
	Student C (Low scorer)	DG: C
	Student D (Low scorer)	DG: D
Consciousness-Raising (C-R)	Student A (High scorer)	C-R: A
	Student B (High scorer)	C-R: B
	Student C (Low scorer)	C-R: C
	Student D (Low scorer)	C-R: D
Control (C)	Student A (High scorer)	C: A
	Student B (High scorer)	C: B
	Student C (Low scorer)	C: C
	Student D (Low scorer)	C: D

As all of the respondents are young Malay English learners, the interview sessions were mostly conducted in Malay. All 12 respondents admitted to have no experience of being interviewed and some looked initially nervous. Two of them responded bilingually but none had tried to respond in full English. The interview questions were translated in Malay and the researcher provided many prompts to assist the respondents in expressing their thoughts and views. These were done so they are comfortable and able to provide salient and original opinions and responses.

It must be noted however, that the responses from the C group respondents were very limited as they did not receive any specific treatment. As they went through normal, regular class, they were not able to supply much responses to the questions asked. Most of the relevant responses which the findings are derived of come from the experimental groups respondents.

After all the interview recordings were transcribed, the transcripts were read several times to get an idea of the emerging themes. The transcripts were coded individually

and potential themes were assigned with specific codes. Then, the codes and their corresponding sub-themes were analysed to identify the major themes in the interview data.

Based on the interview data, four major themes were identified. The themes are 1) DG and C-R activities motivate learning; 2) DG and C-R help to accommodate learners' learning styles and interest; 3) The effects of DG and C-R tasks on learners' affective filter and 4) DG and C-R help learners to notice their language gap and enforce them to use the target language. The following subsections will elaborate on these four themes.

4.6.1 DG and C-R Activities Motivate Learning

By looking at the three groups (DG, C-R and C) test results as well as the interview sessions with the selected participants have revealed that the language activities do have influence on learners' attention and interest. This consequently affects their motivation of learning, which in turn, helps to stimulate their willingness and eagerness to master the language proficiently.

Based on the interview data, most respondents from the two experimental groups mentioned '*seronok*' (fun), '*best*' and '*exciting*' when asked about their feelings in doing the FonF (DG and C-R) activities in class. One of them elaborated;

'... selalunya tengok buku teks, baca, lepas tu cikgu terangkan.. yang ni lain la...'

(...usually we look up and read the textbook, then the teacher will explain... but this [activity] is different...)

(C-R: B)

The above excerpt was taken from respondent B from the C-R group. The participant explained that the approach used during the treatments has provided her with something new. Instead of only using the textbook and being 'spoon-fed' with information, she had to think and force herself to utilize the knowledge received during the activities to

complete the tasks given. Another respondent also mentioned her initial nervousness during the DG task but felt rather accomplished afterward;

'... mula tu macam rasa susah la... tapi lepas tu senang je rupanya...'

(... at first I thought it was difficult... but afterward it was not that difficult after all...)

(DG: C)

Respondent C from the DG group provided the excerpt above. Although at first the participant felt quite intimidated by the new approach, she was able to overcome it and managed to do well during the activities. Once the initial block was erased, the accomplishment when she was able to fulfill the language task becomes a source of motivation to her. It could be assumed here that this particular participant was motivated to complete the task given after she underwent the DG treatment.

According to Gardner (1985), there are two types of motivation orientations; integrative and instrumental. While integrative oriented motivation refers to the learners' positive disposition and desire to interact with the L2 group and culture, instrumental oriented motivation relates to the potential tangible gains provided by the L2 (e.g. better job or higher salary). However, it is important to note that the distinction between the two motivation orientations is not clear-cut. Instead, most of the time, both orientations appear in a continuum throughout a learner's L2 learning process.

Besides providing (and thus motivating) learners with a new medium to learn the target language structure, the general observations during the treatment cycles and the interview data also have shown that participants in the two experimental groups are more participatory in the language learning process. It could be assumed that, as their motivation heightened (as the results of learning through DG and C-R), they were more eager to share their answers and attempted to complete all the tasks even when it was a bit challenging.

The evidence of the matter above can be detected through their responses on one of the interview questions. One of the interview questions asked the respondents regarding which part of the activities (of their respective group) that they like the most. Although their answers vary, all eight respondents from the experimental groups pointed to the production part of the task:

1. '*... yang masa bina ayat balik tu...*'
(...the part which we have to rewrite...) (DG: C)
2. '*... masa awal kena dengar betul-betul lepas tu buat balik...*'
(...at first we have to listen carefully then we have rewrite...) (DG: A)
3. '*... bila kena tulis tu pastu boleh discuss dengan kawan...*'
(...when we have to rewrite and then we can discuss with friends...) (DG: B)
4. '*... nak kena cari verb pastu kena bagi alasan...*'
(... [we] have to find the verbs and give the reasons...) (C-R: B)
5. '*... nak tau berapa banyak verb yang betul dengan alasan...*'
(... [we] want to know how many verbs are there [in the text] with the reasons...) (C-R: D)

Respondents 1-3 are from the DG group whereas 4-5 are the C-R group. These responses implied the quality of DG and C-R tasks in motivating learners and helping them to utilize the target language form that they have learned. However, learners' readiness to use the language does not equal to their proficiency of the language. Learners might seem to be eager and motivated to use the language but it does not mean they will be able to use it correctly. They will need more time and practice to be able to do so. In fact, FonF tasks are not aimed for learners to have immediate ability to use the target language structure taught, but more of focusing their attention to the technical

aspects of the language (Fotos, 1994). This helps them build their consciousness and awareness of how the specific language works, subsequently facilitate their written and communicative language performance.

The excerpts above also suggest that FonF tasks, specifically DG and C-R, have the potential to stimulate learner motivation to use the target language during class. Dörnyei and Csizér (1998) which have focused their research on the classroom dimension of L2 motivation have included in their paper, a list of motivational component in pedagogic specific settings. The components are categorised into three main dimensions: the 'Language Level', the 'Learner Level' and the 'Learning Situation Level' (Dörnyei & Csizér, 1998). Based on the three main dimensions, it could be assumed that DG and C-R support learners' motivation on the learning situation level.

According to Dörnyei and Csizér (1998), the learning situation level is "associated with situation specific-motives rooted in various aspects of language learning in a classroom setting." (p. 206). There are three main types of motivational sources within this level which are 1) course-specific motivational components, 2) teacher-specific motivational components and, 3) group-specific motivational components. One of the components which is related with the study's first theme is the course-specific motivational components. It is related to the syllabus, the teaching materials, the teaching method and the learning tasks. These components, therefore, will influence learners' level of interest, relevance, expectancy and satisfaction (Keller, 1983 cited by Dörnyei & Csizér, 1998). Thus, by looking at the responses from the interviewees previously, this would suppose that FonF tasks (DG and C-R) have the potential to provide learners with course-specific motivational components.

Motivation has always been one of crucial parts in ensuring learners' success of the target language, but it is not a fun and game process all along. As it relates heavily on

learners' psychological wellbeing, the motivation level is not always constant. A learner might feel motivated to do the language task today but he/she might not be the next day. Therefore, it is important for language teachers to always try different approaches and techniques to keep learners' motivation high. Next, the interview reveals another factor that contributes to the results of the students' tests.

4.6.2 DG and C-R Help to Accommodate Learners' Learning Styles and Interest.

During the interview sessions, the respondents talked about which part of the activities they did not like and wanted to change. Their responses have suggested to the indications of their preferred learning styles and interest. There are many types of learning styles (refer Chapter 2, Section 2.5.4). These learning styles will influence how it is best for a learner to learn and take in new information. Learning styles are unique to each individual learner. Thus, teachers must always vary the approaches in class from time to time to cater to this issue.

Based on the responses gathered, the respondents have indicated their inclination on collaborative work and structured learning styles. One respondent has also shared how his interest in story helped him to be more attentive and learn better in class.

First, we look at their preference in collaborative work. The treatment sessions for the two experimental groups were conducted in pair work. Participants chose their own pair and worked together during the treatment activities. Because FonF tasks (DG and C-R) require interaction of students, they were encouraged to do the tasks either in pair or group so they can discuss and analyse each other's work.

Six out of eight respondents from the experimental and all four respondents of the control groups agreed that doing the task with their partner helped to complete the work

better as they are more comfortable with each other. The excerpts below are some of the examples:

<i>'... seronok bila dapat bincang dengan kawan...'</i>	
(...it is fun when you get to discuss with your friend...)	(DG: D)
<i>'... senang sikit nak faham...'</i>	
(...easier to understand...)	(C-R: A)

These types of responses indicate that these respondents preferred social learning which is associated with Oxford's (2003) dimension of desired degree of generality. The students feel that they will gain more when they are able to discuss the tasks with their peer. However when asked if they would prefer group work, many said that they would prefer pair work over group work. This is based on these responses:

<i>'... pair work okay, kalau group nanti bising susah sikit...'</i>	
(...pair work is okay, group work is noisy so it will be difficult...)	(C-R: C)
<i>'... group nanti banyak main...'</i>	
(...[you] will play [if it is done in] group [instead of learning]...)	(C: A)

Looking at the above excerpts, it seems that these respondents (although quite young) understand that some measures of restriction (i.e. class rules) need to be taken in order for them to complete the tasks. As much as a teacher intends to apply the appropriate learning styles to her students, simultaneously, she must also consider and maintain the class dynamic (e.g discipline, organization, etc). In many occasions, language teachers and learners will face unexpected interruptions during class sessions. Consequently, there are times when teacher have to employ the less preferred modes and pose restriction, but it should never be subjected over extended period of time.

Although most of the respondents agree that pair work is better than individual work, there are those who are less enthusiastic about the pair work and prefer to do the task individually. Responses ranged from problem with their partner to their own attitude.

‘... I am very competitive, I always like to be the first...’ (DG: B)

‘... I like my pair... but he always want to look at my answers only... he should do it by himself first...’ (C-R: D)

‘... lagi baik buat sendiri...sebab kawan saya bukan buat apa-apa, dia tiru saya je...’

(...it is better for me to do it myself... because my friend did not do anything, he only copies [the answers] from me...) (DG: B)

Based on the excerpts, depending upon the circumstances, these two respondents indicated that individual work suits them the most. They are able to understand better and most likely feel free of guilt at not helping their ‘sleeping partner’ if the task was assigned individually. Other from solitary and social learning styles, findings from the interview also exposes other type of learning strategies employed by the students while doing the tasks.

Apart from their preference between pair and individual work, the interview data also revealed other dimensions of their learning style preference. As mentioned earlier, learning styles in individuals differs and is subject to personal reorientation throughout the learning process. Undeniably, learners’ age is one of the variables that influence the learning styles preference. The following part will look at their preferred style of structured learning.

Language learners especially the young ones (beginner learners) benefit from a more structured and concrete instructions compared to an abstract ones (Ellis, 2015; Shak, 2006). Before the starts of DG and C-R in this study, learners were introduced to the target language feature (English simple past tense) planned for the lesson. They were given adequate information of the specific grammatical feature and the activities ensued

were designed within contextual and communicative elements of the language. Thus, DG and C-R are not traditional grammar approaches per se but it encourages learners to use the language as well.

As they have been placed in different groups, participants received different treatment. Each treatment was conducted based on the specific steps to the FonF tasks (refer to Chapter 3, Section 3.5.1). The steps always begin with the introduction of the grammatical feature which is the English simple past tense using the ‘grammar notes’. Respondents have cited the advantages of repeating the steps and using the grammar notes:

‘... nota tu lagi senang la nak ingat...’

(...the notes help me remember [about English simple past tense]...)

(DG: C)

‘Saya lagi senang nak faham sebab tahu regular irregular, copula semua...’

(It is easier for me to remember [about the English simple past tense] because I know about regular, irregular, copula [forms])

(C-R: B)

‘... cara teacher ajar boleh faham.. ajar perlahan-lahan lepas tu ulang-ulang.’

(... the way you teach [me] helps me understand... [you] teach slowly and then [you] repeat [the steps].)

(C-R: C)

By having notes and repetition of the steps in each treatment, it provides learners with structured condition in which they learn to expect during the lesson. This process provides them with a sense of security and familiarity during the treatment. This type of preference is pointed to the sensing-sequential aspect of personality types learning styles. Such students prefer facts, needed guidance and specific instructions from the teacher and also look for consistency in the class (Oxford, 2003).

The interview data also provides other example of how FonF tasks, specifically DG, assisted one learner by accommodating to his personal interest which is story.

'I like story, so bila cikgu baca teks tu macam story...teks tu tak la susah sangat jadi bila kena tulis tu boleh buat la...'

(I like story, so when you read the text it is like a story... the texts are not difficult so when I have to rewrite, I can do it) (DG: D)

This particular respondent found the DG task which includes listening to a story (text) interest him more and thus, he could focus better during the lessons (treatments). In the DG treatment of this research, one of the steps is where learners have to listen to a text read by the teacher (refer to Chapter 3, Section 3.5.1). This particular learner appeared to love to listen to the story (in which the teacher selected from one of the topic chosen previously) and used his interest with story to his advantage.

Based on the excerpt, it seemed that respondent D from DG group was quite content with the DG task. As part of his interest was met, it has helped him to do well in his treatment task. Lenore Ganschow and Richards Sparks (2001) have reviewed studies on learning difficulties and foreign language learning. In general, the findings from these studies have suggested that with great effort and instructional support, students who find foreign language learning exceedingly difficult are able to eventually succeed in spite of their difficulties. This proves to show that knowing learners' preferred learning styles and try to accommodate it in classroom teaching will greatly help learners to improve in their language and achievement. Therefore, through this 'instructional support', it promotes more efficient language learning experience. As for the language instructors and teachers, this also means the challenge lies in finding instructional approaches that could meet the needs of learners with a variety of aptitude and learning style profiles.

4.6.3 The effects of DG and C-R Tasks on Learners' Affective Filter

The interview reveals a mixed data on the effect of DG and C-R tasks on learners' affective filter. Affective filter, most notably originated from Krashen's (1985) Affective Filter hypothesis, relates to learners' own personal perception of themselves and the language learning. It includes several variables such as motivation, self-esteem and anxiety. Listed next are some of the interviewees' responses which could be linked to these variables.

1. [Teacher (T) and DG: D respondent (S)]

T: *Apa yang kamu rasa bila buat aktiviti tu?*

(What did you feel when you were doing the [dictogloss] activity?)

S: *Rasa best... like...*

(It feels great... [I] like [it]...)

T: *Seronok?*

(Fun?)

S: *Yes*

T: *Kenapa? Sebab apa?*

(Why? What are the reasons?)

S: *Sebab dulu saya tak pandai sangat, dulu...*

(Before this I don't really know, before...)

T: *Apa yang tak pandai tu?*

(What is it that you don't know?)

S: *Pasal simple past tense, tapi bila teacher explain... repeat simple past tense boleh faham...*

(Regarding simple past tense, but when you explain... repeat the simple past tense [I] can understand [now]...)

Excerpt 1 is taken from interview conducted with DG participant. This student felt quite grateful that he was able to understand the English simple past tense better than he was before. Thus, it could be assumed that the DG activity conducted has the potential to lower this particular student's affective filter and had enabled him to grasp the learning. Krashen (1987) claimed that by lowering learners' affective filter, it could prevent the mental block situation and thus assist second language acquisition. However, not all participants have gone through the positive experience. Other respondents have also shown responses which indicate the opposite. Excerpt 2 and 3 are some examples.

2. [Teacher (T) and C-R: C respondent (S)]

T: *Apa kamu rasa bila buat aktiviti tu?*

(What did you feel when you were doing the [consciousness-raising] activity?)

S: (No verbal response, smile) Hmmm... aaa...

T: (Prompts) *Masa kelas teacher tu rasa apa? Takut ke? Seronok ke?*

(During my class, what did you feel? Scared? Fun?)

S: *Macam biasa-biasa je la...*

([I think] it is okay...)

T: *Lagi?*

(Anything else?)

S: *Tak tau...*

(I don't know...)

3. [Teacher (T) and C-R: A respondent (S)]

T: *Aktiviti tu boleh faham ke? Cara yang cikgu ajar tu?*

(Can you understand the activity? [Are you able to follow] the way that I teach?)

S: *Boleh la...*

([I] think so)

T: (Prompts) *Boleh la? Kena buat latihan lagi la? Nak bagi faham?*

([You] think so? [You] have to do more exercise? [For you] to understand?)

S: (No verbal response, nodded)

Excerpt 2 and 3 above are taken from the interview data conducted on C-R participants. Reading from both of the excerpts, the participants appeared to be quite reluctant to respond and relied more on short answers and body cues/gestures (smiling/nodding). Although the interview was conducted in Malay and prompts were given, they did not seem eager to share. This reluctance might be assumed for their inability to participate well during class due to their heightened affective filter. One possibility is that, they might have problem directing their attention simultaneously to the task at hand and identifying the form (simple past tense). At their level, these participants might not be able to demonstrate some of the characteristics of the C-R task, such as to utilize an intellectual effort to understand and articulate the rules of the grammatical structure (Ellis, 2002) (Refer to Section 3.5.1.2 on five characteristics of C-R task). In turn, they might not feel motivated enough during the activity. At times when the C-R activity was deemed too difficult for them, it was unfortunate that most likely, it had raised their anxiety level.

Based on the interview excerpts presented, DG and C-R tasks used in this study have shown different effects on participants' affective filter. However, it is observed that

participants from DG group are more positive towards their group activity as compared to the C-R group. Perhaps DG activity is more interesting to this particular age group than C-R activity. As one of the steps in DG requires students to reconstruct a text read to them in prior, it was a chance for these young children to recreate a story. C-R activity however, asks the participants to identify and state reasons for the focused grammatical feature in a given text which might not be as interesting as DG. Young children in primary school need stimulating and visually attractive materials in order for them to gain interest and pay more attention during lesson. Harley (1998) mentioned that presenting such materials during teaching will promote attention and this eventually could relate to learners' intrinsic interest in the activities.

A study conducted by Juliana Shak and Sheena Gardner (2008) on young learners' perspective on FonF tasks has seen 78 children in one of the primary school in Brunei took part in the research. DG and C-R were among the four FonF tasks used in the research. In general, it was reported that participants have found all the tasks to be enjoyable and easy. Specifically, Grammar Interpretation (GI) task and DG has shown to be a "...cognitively stimulating, yet not overly demanding and that presented lesser production demand..." (Shak & Gardner, 2008, p. 403) compared to C-R and Gramming tasks. Based on this study, it could be assumed that more young learners might prefer DG over C-R task while learning English. As also shown in this study interview data, DG participants seem to have more interest in their activity than the C-R group.

Even though it seems like DG is better than C-R in term of lowering learners' affective filter through the activity, it must be reminded that this criteria alone is never enough to guarantee successful learning or acquisition to take place. The affective variables might be necessary to facilitate language learning, but they play only as a non-

causal role to the overall learning and acquisition. In short, although the positive effects of the affective variable are necessary, on its own, affective filter alone is not sufficient for acquisition to take place. The following subsection will look at how DG and C-R help learners to notice their language gap.

4.6.4 DG and C-R Help Learners to Notice Their Language Gap and Enforce Them to Use the Target Language

During DG and C-R treatments, it was observed that initially, some of these young participants were struggling with the language structure presented to them. Although English simple past tense is not a relatively new aspect of language structure to them, many had wrongly used it by assuming English continuous tense as English simple past tense.

In the first cycle of the treatment, almost all participants mistakenly added ‘-ing’ to the base words. For example, instead of putting ‘ate’ and ‘walked’ as the past tense for the verb ‘eat’ and ‘walk’, they used ‘eating’ and ‘walking’. The DG and C-R tasks provided to the students in the experimental groups has enabled them to notice the mistakes and differences, therefore assisted them to understand the English simple past tense form correctly. As the treatment progressed to the third cycle, such mistake was minimized. The following excerpt 1 and 2 exemplified the noticing function from C-R and DG respondents.

1. [Teacher (T) and C-R: A respondent (S)]

S: *Saya keliru pasal* past con..con...

(I [was] confused with past con... con..)

T: Continuous?

S: Haa... continuous tense... confuse...

T: *Keliru sebab apa?*

(Why are you confused?)

S: *Sebab tak tau nak tambah yang mana 'was' and tambah '-ing'...*

(Because I did not know when to use 'was' and added the '-ing'...)

T: How about now? Do you understand simple past tense?

S: [Nodded] past tense *guna* simple.

([Nodded] past tense has simple [form]).

In excerpt 1, the respondent was confused between the English simple past tense and the English continuous tense. He noticed that it was wrong to use the form of continuous tense to indicate simple past tense, as the verbs of English simple past tense has different forms. This was also an indication where this learner was hypothesizing and testing his knowledge of the target language during treatment.

In one of the steps of C-R group activity (refer to Chapter 3, Section 3.5.1), the participants were required to identify the past tense verb before they discussed with their pair regarding the reason(s) for their particular selections. Then they shared their answers by reading them aloud to the class. This step has helped this particular learner to differentiate the different form of simple past and continuous tense of the English verbs. It could also be assumed as they were more aware of the structural differences, they can even come up with their own conclusion. In the excerpt 1 above, when respondent C-R: A responded '...past tense has simple form,' it means this learner was able to generate his own deduction of one of the English simple past tense rules.

2. [Teacher (T) and DG: C respondent (S)]

T: ... *maksudnya* it is kind of challenging *la untuk kamu? Mencabar la?*

(...it means it is kind of challenging for you? It was a challenge?)

S: *Rasa susah sikit la...*

(It was quite difficult...)

T: *Kenapa?*

(Why?)

S: *Sebab... apa ni... sebab kadang-kadang tu tersilap tulis... cakap salah jawapan...*

(Because... because... sometimes I write it wrong... I say the wrong answer...)

T: ... *tersilap dengar la...*

(...you didn't listen properly...)

Excerpt 2 above shows one of the respondents from the DG group mentioned the task was quite difficult for him. The line 'It was quite difficult...' in this excerpt could be implied that this respondent noticed the gap between his then, current language capacity and the language proficiency needed to complete the task. During DG treatment, among the steps in the activity was to listen to a text and reconstruct the text (refer to Chapter 3, Section 3.5.1). Participants did the activity in pair and then, they have to read aloud their reconstructed text to the class. The other pairs and the teacher, then, commented their work. Through this activity, not only learners notice their language gap, they were also forced to hypothesize the rule of the language and test it with others. The feedbacks gained will consequently improve their language learning and skills.

Besides helping the learners to notice and hypothesis-testing their language, DG and C-R also enforce them to use and discuss about the target language. In this research,

although learners did not apply the full use of the target language (i.e. English) during their discussion in the treatment process, their discussion about the language rules in order to complete the tasks are evident:

'Pair saya, saya suka... dia selalu tolong... idea... saya tanya dia explain...'

([My partner], I like him... he always helps me... [give me] ideas... when I [have questions he will] explain...) (DG: A)

'Bincang dengan kawan sebab if I don't know boleh tanya dia... kalau dia salah boleh betulkan dia...'

(Discuss with friend because I can ask him if I don't know about it... and when he is wrong I can correct him...) (C-R: C)

Considering their age (11 year-old) and limited English language background (average Malay students), their partial use of English language during the treatment sessions was quite an achievement. Moreover, as to maintain and create a less threatening treatment environment to these young learners, rather than making English as compulsory during the treatment, they were greatly encouraged to use it instead. However, if it could be regarded as a form of compensation, at least during the sharing session, they read and provide full English answers for the activities.

Based on the excerpts, it is quite apparent that the noticing and hypothesis-testing functions related to the Comprehensible Output hypothesis have enabled the learners to perform better in the subsequent posttest. The comprehension and writing task tests as well as the delayed posttest results have all showed significant gain in the intragroup results of the DG and C-R tests. By encouraging learners to use and produce target-like language output, it could also promote their achievement of the grammatical competence necessary in academic tests (Donesh-Jezo, 2011). Thus, if learners are taught to be able to notice and greatly encouraged to test their language knowledge, it will beneficially influence their performance of the language learned.

4.7 Chapter Summary

This chapter has presented the results and findings of the quantitative and qualitative data of this research. The quantitative data (Section 4.2 to 4.5) in overall have shown that the two FonF tasks (DG and C-R) have the quality to improve learners' comprehension and production of the English simple past tense. This is especially true in comprehension section where DG group outperform the C-R and control groups.

The interview data has also shed some lights in the factors that might have influence on learners overall performance of their English simple past tense comprehension and production tests. Motivation, their preferred learning styles, affective filter and also noticing are the four main themes that transpired as factors that influenced their performance. The next chapter will discuss and summarize the results and findings of this study, its implication as well as providing suggestions for future research.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

5.1 Introduction

This chapter attempts to summarize the quantitative and qualitative findings of the study discussed in the previous chapter. The first section will present the summary of the findings. It is subsequently accompanied by the methodological and pedagogical implication of the research in the following sections. Next, suggestions and limitations of the research are provided and identified. Lastly, a brief conclusion will be presented in the last section.

5.2 Summary of the Findings

This study focused on the effects of FonF tasks, which are dictogloss (DG) and consciousness-raising (C-R), on young learners' comprehension and writing tasks of English simple past tense. Participants were put under instructional treatment cycles designed according to the respective tasks. All participants were subjected to three tests throughout this study to measure the effectiveness of the tasks to help learners acquire the specific target language structure.

The results from the quantitative data and the findings from the interview of this study revealed the possible effects of the two focus-on-form tasks on young learners' comprehension and production of English simple past tense. Figure 5.1 summarizes the key findings of this study.

The effects of Focus-on-Form tasks on young learners' comprehension and acquisition of the simple past tense in English

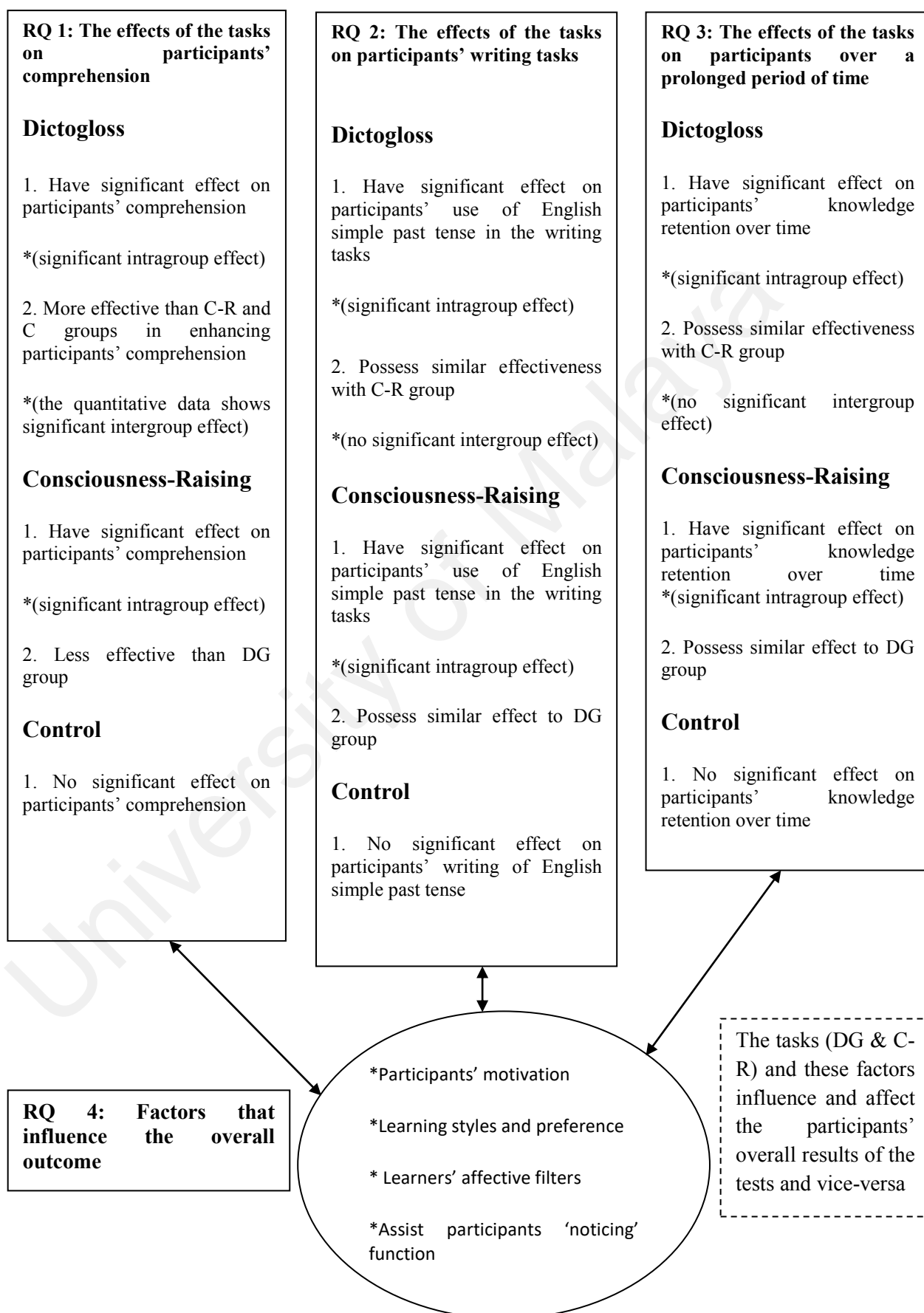


Figure 5.1: Summary of the study

5.2.1 Summary of the Quantitative Findings

Based on the tests results, the two experimental groups in this study appeared to benefit from the instructional treatment they received. In other words, the FonF tasks (DG and C-R) could be assumed to help the participants improve their comprehension of the English simple past tense as well as its use in the writing tasks. Additionally, it also appears that these tasks have the ability to help the participants to retain the knowledge of English simple past tense over a period of time (one month).

In the comprehension tests, DG group has shown greater gain than the C-R and control (C) group for the intergroup results. The gain which was made by DG group could be indicated to be effective as there is significant difference in the data results. Thus, based on the results, DG has superior impact on the participants' comprehension of English simple past tense compared to C-R and control group.

On the other hand, the results from the writing tasks (production) test did not yield any significant intergroup results in the data of the three groups. Thus, although the experimental groups showed significant improvement in their intragroup immediate posttest, there is no distinctive effectiveness of the two tasks in assisting participants' production of the English simple past tense. In short, DG and C-R groups possess the same level of effectiveness in this regards.

For the third research question, similar results are also found in term of the tasks ability to influence the participants' performance over time. The data have shown increment on participants' delayed posttest performance (intragroup results). However, due to the absence of the significant difference in the intergroup data, DG and C-R groups could be said to possess the same effectiveness in influencing the participants' performance of English simple past tense over time.

Based on the three research questions, DG and C-R seem to share similar effectiveness on learners' overall English simple past tense performances. In fact, according to the quantitative results of this study, it is only in comprehension aspect that DG has the upper hand than C-R. In term of writing tasks and learners' performance overtime, both tasks share similar effect of effectiveness on participants. Additionally, it must be reminded that both DG and C-R do not serve as a full course of language teaching. The tasks should be treated as supplementary activities (Ellis, 2002) within the language lessons to enhance learners' grammar where teacher assist to make the tacit explicit.

The summary has briefly explained the quantitative questions of this study. Next, the qualitative findings will be summarized in the following section.

5.2.2 Summary of Qualitative Findings

Interview sessions have been conducted to investigate the other factors that might influence the results outcome. Four major factors have been identified and they are related to participants' motivation, their learning styles and interest, affective filter and DG and C-R ability to assist the participants to notice their language gap.

During the interview sessions, most participants needed prompts and assistance from the researcher in order to give longer and detailed response. Many of them prefer to give one word response such as 'yes' and 'no' to the interview questions asked. Some of them did not give adequate response even when prompts have been provided. This might be due to their young age and the unfamiliar setting of the interview process. Thus, the data collected were quite limited.

However, some of the responses gained have enabled the researcher to establish the four themes. Firstly, the responses from the interviewees have revealed motivation as

one of the factors that influence their overall performance. Several interviewees pointed that the novel ways of presenting the lesson using the FonF tasks excite them, initiating their interest to do well. Some of them find the tasks helped them to understand better than the normal, regular classroom teaching and felt 'fun' during the treatment sessions.

However, there are those who find the class a bit intimidating as they were not able to familiarize themselves to the new process. As they were not really able to follow the process, they felt less capable and this, in turn, de-motivates them. Reconstructing step during DG activity and deducting the grammar rules during the C-R activity most probably posed quite a challenge to these average level participants. As learners carry more responsibility of their own learning in these activities, teacher must slowly build their confidence and interest during lesson. For example, the texts and materials should start with lower English level depending on learners' proficiency.

Regardless the benefit of DG and C-R tasks in helping learners in their language learning, in a few cases, they also has been shown to have the opposite effect. In a study by Storch (2001), due to unsatisfactory experience of using DG, the researcher instead, used a 'text reconstruction' task as a replacement. The study looked at three tasks (short descriptive composition, editing task and reconstruction task) to raise learners' awareness and accuracy of the grammatical items such English articles and tenses. Even though the participants in Storch's (2001) study were in their tertiary level, the pilot study has shown that it did not provide the desired impact on the participants. As mature students have better memorization, they simply rewrite the text instead of reconstructing a new text during the steps in DG, in which it defeat the purpose of the task. Therefore, in relation to this finding of this study, it is not baseless to say that DG task has the potential to intimidate and interfere in learners' learning. Thus, to apply the task on even

younger learners, it will require considerable materials preparation as to keep their motivation on a satisfactory level.

Besides, based on the interview data collected, the outcomes are also affected by the participants' learning styles and interest in which it has much to do with motivation, too. Learning styles vary among individuals and it is suggested that learners will perform better in their study when they learn according to their learning styles (Felder & Henriques, 1995; Oxford, 2003; Reid, 1987). As different individuals have different tendencies, educators who can tailor to the right approach and utilise multi-type learning styles will most notably enhance the performance of the students.

DG and C-R tasks which consist of different levels of activity prove to have the potential to meet part of the learners' learning styles and interest. Some of the interviewees have cited that they enjoyed the dictation activity during DG sessions which means this activity had helped to pique learners' interest and the reasoning activity during the C-R sessions had helped the analytic type learners to enjoy the lesson. Nevertheless, it is almost impossible for language instructors to cater to each individual learning styles and preferences. Thus, rather than sticking to one method of teaching, the least they could do is to always improvise and varying the activities/styles during each lesson, so that more students are engaged and do not feel left out (Felder & Henriques, 1995; Oxford, 2003). The more variety of styles used to teach the learners, the more and better they will learn.

Other than learners' learning styles and interest, their affective filter is also one of the factors that influenced the learners' tests outcome. The higher the level of their affective filter, the harder they will be able to grasp the language concept taught to them (Krashen, 1985). DG and C-R have shown varying effect of the tasks on participants' affective filter. Based on the findings discussed in Chapter 4, it can be assumed that

some participants have their affective filter up, especially in the earlier phase of the treatment cycle and gradually loosen up as the cycle progressed. Allowing them to work in pair also helped to lower their affective filter (McNicoll & Lee, 2011). The participants can rely on each other in completing the activity of the treatment therefore reducing their anxiety and level of stress.

Lastly, the findings of the interview also point out the benefit of noticing learners' language gap and their hypothesis-testing of the language learned. This is specifically linked to the Comprehensible Output hypothesis (Swain, 1985) which is the framework of this study. Swain (1985) has suggested the three basic functions of output in L2 acquisition which are noticing, hypothesis-testing and also metalinguistic.

The FonF tasks (i.e DG and C-R) require the participants to use and utilize the target language learned. As part of the basis and criteria of the DG and C-R tasks can be linked to the Comprehensible Output hypothesis, ones have to showcase the exploitation of the language during language learning instead of only relying solely on input. Participants have shown to notice their language gap as they went through the DG and C-R treatment activities. They have also notice their improvement prior to undergoing the treatment and post treatment (see Chapter 4, Section 4.6.4). Consequently, to fill in their language gap, participants also have shown to hypothesize and test about the language rules (i.e. simple past tense) during their discussion with partner and sharing answers with the class. These functions not only became very useful self-learning processes, but also valuable experiences as they learn it firsthand themselves (Donesch-Jezo, 2011).

However, the last function which was discerned as a metalinguistic one was not clearly apparent on the participants of this study. As this study involved young English learners, the metalanguage used was very limited. "Metalanguage is used by learners

when they collaboratively try to solve linguistic problems and, as a result, extend these learners knowledge about the forms and rules of a language.” (Donesch-Jezo, 2011, p. 14). Most participants discussed about the rules in their mother tongue (Malay) due to their limited English proficiency. Due to this, it was also difficult to assume whether they were able to reflect the learning process academically. Therefore, the significant of this function on the participants was the least detected. Perhaps, on higher proficiency or more matured learners, this function (metalingistic) could be clearly identified.

These qualitative findings have also indicated that both DG and C-R share similar influential factors. Although in certain regards it seems that DG respondents revealed more positive reviews regarding the DG activities compared to the C-R respondents, in general, respondents from both groups display identical responses and opinions about the two tasks. Therefore, it is quite unnecessary to determine which of the two groups have more positive influence on the participants. Furthermore, as the two groups are originally based on the same output-based (FonF) tasks, the degree of similarities on the respondents’ opinions are unsurprisingly expected.

In a nutshell, the interplay between the participants’ motivation, their learning styles, level of affective filter and the noticing function have somehow affected their learning of English simple past tense introduced through the DG and C-R tasks. These, in turn, become the factors that influence their overall treatment process which affected the way they perform in the subsequent two tests (immediate posttest and delayed posttest). However, instead of looking at the factors and the groups’ results in a single direction, it should be viewed as a two-way interaction between all of the factors and the groups’ results outcome (the arrows in Figure 5.1 are double pointed to show the two-way effect). It reflects that language teaching and all these factors are seamlessly interwoven

in order to determine learners' proficiency of the language. The next section will look at the implications of the study.

5.3 Implications of the Study

The implications of this study are divided by two; methodological and pedagogical implication.

5.3.1 Methodological Implications

While conducting this research, there are some methodological implications that need to be addressed carefully. Firstly, the concern is on the selected participants. Participants selected for this study are young learners at the age of 11 and they were of the average English language proficiency. Compared to older and more matured learners in high schools and universities, the class dynamics especially discipline and order need to be fully established prior to conducting the real research. This is to ensure the limited timeframe of the treatment cycles can be fully utilized. Without proper planning, the limited duration of doing the research will be cut even shorter to organize and disciplining the young learners during the real conduct.

Secondly, learners need to be provided with materials that not only suit their level of English language proficiency, but closely related to them as well (contextual element). In the DG treatment for example, providing them with a short text about flash flood regarding the topic of natural disaster (refer to Figure 3.2: Research Design) is better than earth quake. The school had experienced a very minor flash flood during a thunder storm where the rain water exceeded the drain height. Based on that experience, the participants showed more reactive response as they learned something in context. Earth quake which has never been experienced by them might not be easily grasped by these participants. Introducing learners with something that they can relate to not only help to

reduce their anxiety of learning a new language, it could also signify the consideration and preparation on the teacher's part regarding learners' language progress.

Lastly is in regard to the control group. The participants of this group should receive zero treatment. Instead, they were assigned to the regular English classes. As the premise of this research was in a national primary school, the participants must engage with some sort of learning process. Perhaps, in such cases, art or music lessons can replace the regular English classes in order not to tamper with the of the control group' tests performances.

This section has listed some of the methodological implication of this research. The next section will look at this study's pedagogical implications.

5.3.2 Pedagogical Implications

Grammar is one of the fundamental aspects in learning a language even when the shift in language teaching has seen the current trend of a more communicative and contextual English classroom. The emphasis on grammar or any target language structure should be done in an organized and systematic way especially if it is going to be presented to young learners with low /average level of English proficiency (Ellis, 2015; Shak, 2006). Rather than presenting the specific target language structure in an abstract, communicative approach, such learners will benefit more through clear and organized instructional tasks.

Although advocates of the communicative and contextual based language classroom might disregard this way of teaching, a lot of factors need to be accounted and considered to determine the learners' success in language learning. This is even more palpable in the case of Malaysian context, as many students in national primary schools have limited exposure and practice of English language outside of the classroom. A

large number of students per class (maximum 40 students per class) also pose a great challenge for teachers to ensure the effectiveness of solely communicative and contextual approach in the class. Due to this, integrated methods which combined communicative and contextual approach with systematic grammar presentation should be considered.

Based on this study, DG and C-R tasks have shown quite a potential to be utilized by teachers to teach English grammatical structure, specifically the English simple past tense, to young learners. This study has shown the effectiveness of these tasks in term of enhancing learners' comprehension of English simple past tense. The two FonF tasks, are useful to help the participants comprehend the English simple past tense well, with DG being superior than C-R. The results have also indicated the effectiveness of these tasks on participants' writing as well as the ability of these tasks in helping them to retain the knowledge of the target language structure in a period of a month.

The structure of the instructional tasks used in this study, which incorporates communicative and contextual learning with grammar teaching, have benefited the participants. Consequently, it is suggested that rather than imbuing learners with the grammatical information only (input), opportunity and encouragement to utilize the language learned should be provided in the class as well. As Swain (1985) has accentuated, input only will not guarantee the proficiency of learners towards the language. However, it is also noticed that learners especially the low level proficiency ones, need to be given adequate time and enough space for them to be ready to use the language, given that they might be reluctant and intimidated if they are 'untimely' forced to do so.

Translated into pedagogical perspective, language instructors and teachers in Malaysia could use and emulate these DG and C-R tasks in classroom teaching. Still

following the English language syllabus set up by the Malaysian Ministry of Education, the grammatical aspects of the language can be seamlessly integrated into the contextual and communicative language teaching. Depending on the language proficiency level of the students, the teacher can vary the text materials to be simpler or more challenging. Besides, materials could also be of non-linear types (non-text i.e. diagrams, graphics, maps etc.) to diversify the context.

Teachers could also opt to change and upgrade the activities while conducting these tasks during lessons. Rather than having pairwork in the like of this study, teachers could have the students to do it individually or in group. These varying teaching styles, over time, will benefit different students, thus, helping teachers to reach out to more students in the class.

However, teachers have to be aware and cautious as to when to ‘force’ students to utilize the language verbally. Output practice is very necessary in language learning but it should be conducted in discretion especially to young learners. Although many students are more prepared to display their current proficiency in written form, less are likely ready to orally express themselves especially those of low proficiency level. Considerable practice and time are needed to be given to students beforehand prior to the ‘forcing’ phase, so as to ease them to utilize the language. With appropriate execution overtime, students will eventually familiarize themselves with the tasks and are more cooperative during the lesson. In the following section, we will look at some of the limitations and suggestion for future research.

5.4 Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research

This research is not without its limitations. This section discusses the limitations along with the suggestions for future research.

5.4.1 Sample Size

The limited sample size (20 participants per group) clearly would not enable the results of this study to be generalized to the population. As a rule of thumb for statistics used to detect differences, the ideal number should be 30 or more participants per group (VanVoorhis & Morgan, 2007). As this study was conducted in an official premise (national primary school), many factors need to be considered in order to gather larger participants without being seen too intrusive.

Besides, the nature of experimental study which usually requires considerable amount of time from the participants might not rest comfortably with the premise administrators. Furthermore, as it was carried out by an individual researcher, it will be difficult for the researcher to control a large number of participants without additional assistance.

Thus, for future research, although larger sample size is greatly recommended, it is suggested that a good group research and better planning need to be established beforehand in order to handle the larger sample. By having a large sample, it increases the validity and reliability of the results and consequently, the outcome of the research can be generalized to the population.

5.4.2 Language Structure

This study only focuses on English simple past tense and does not cover other grammatical aspects of the English language. The effectiveness of the focus-on-form tasks on other aspects of English grammar (in this research context) is thus uncertain. Further research on different linguistic aspects will be able to further prove or refute the potential of the effectiveness of FonF, especially in the local context. It will also add to the literary and informative pool regarding FonF.

5.4.3 Sample Selection

The participants in this study are Malay students with the average proficiency level of English language. As Malaysia is a multiracial country consisting of various ethnicities, it will be beneficial to see whether different language background will contribute to different results. The probability that different language background might affect the effectiveness of FonF could be an interesting discovery.

Other than language background, research on the effectiveness of FonF on participants with different English proficiency level should also be considered. High level and low level proficiency participants might present different and valuable insights regarding the effectiveness of FonF in teaching English grammar in general.

5.4.4 Interview Sessions

The research gained quite limited data from the one-on-one interview sessions. Partly, this is due to the participants' reluctance or their inability to share and express their opinions regarding the matter. Prompts and suggestions were mainly provided by the interviewer as the participants were mostly comfortable to give short responses with 'yes' and 'no' as their favorite answers. Some did not respond and only smiled when asked. Perhaps, their young age added with their unfamiliarity of the interview process, have left them quite timid and intimidated. For future research, it is suggested while conducting interview with such participants, the sessions should be done in group or at least in pair. This is to reduce their level of intimidation and encourage them to share with the help of their peers.

5.5 Research Conclusion

This chapter has presented the summary of the study, its various implications as well as the limitation and suggestion for future research. Based on the discussion, it is found that to a certain extent, the focus-on-form (FonF) tasks which are the dictogloss (DG) and consciousness-raising (C-R) do assist students to comprehend and improve their production (writing) of English simple past tense. FonF also has the ability to help students retain the knowledge over a period of time.

Findings from the interview conducted have shown indications that these tasks do affect students' motivation and affective filter and vice-versa. Moreover, based on the findings, it could also be assumed that to a certain extent, the tasks could cater to some of their learning styles and enhance the noticing of their language gap (between L1 and L2). Having these seemingly useful roles in English grammar teaching, teachers and language instructors alike might consider implementing DG and C-R as a part of activity in their English language classes.

As language teacher myself, I could really reflect on some of the essential ideas that I encountered in completing this research. As much as I want to prove and convince myself and the others (through this study) about the advantages of DG and C-R tasks in helping learners to learn the structure of a language, I must realize all language teachers have their own beliefs and views on how best to introduce language to their respective learners. Instead of using the term 'convincing', this research aimed to enable language teachers and instructors to make informed decision about methods and ways they can approach grammar within their lesson in class.

Undeniably, language teaching and learning is a very subjective and relative process, depending on the ones who teach it and the ones being taught. To produce a proficient

language learner is not a mere linear process of memorizing cold, hard facts, but it involves arrays of multi-layered factors as well (Lightbown & Spada, 2006). By considering all these factors, we should realize that there is no one theory, technique or method of language teaching that will be able to fit all. The results and findings of this research might suggest teachers to try the two FonF tasks (DG and C-R) and see how they could influence the students' performance. There are times when teachers might feel they are rather conditioned regarding the ways and methods to teach the language. By adding this study into the literary pool, it could add up to their selection of informed language teaching and learning choices.

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