CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

This chapter includes the summary of the findings, implications, recommendations from the study, and suggestions for further study.

Summary of the Findings

According to the results relevant to research question 1: Is there any difference in language-related episodes (lexis-based LREs and form-based LREs) of participants from the two different groups: Group J and Group D?, it was shown in the previous chapter that no significant difference was found in language-related episodes. Comparing total LREs, form-based LREs and lexis-based LREs between the Group J and Group D, revealed that no significant differences were found. This shows that task differences were not reflected in the degree of attention students paid to form and vocabulary in their discussion and writing as the number of form-based LREs in the J group was not significantly different from the D group, and the number of lexis-based LREs also was not different between the two groups. Teachers can apply both tasks to motivate students to discuss form and vocabulary usage.

Comparing these results with the study by Swain and Lapkin (2001), the result of their study in comparing the average number of LREs between the students in the dictogloss group and the students in the jigsaw group, also showed no significant differences between the two different groups. They provided the reasons of the similarity in numbers of form-based and lexis-based LREs that occurred in students from the two different groups that jigsaw and dictogloss tasks had a common goal for the students to work collaboratively to produce written work. While the students worked with their peers, they discussed their language use and questioned about the form and the vocabulary that they thought might be appropriate. During the discussion the students considered the gaps that occurred between the using of their first language and the target language.

Based on Swain and Lapkin's (2001) ideas, the gaps led to participants' discussion within the tasks about the comparison between Thai sentence structure, and vocabulary with English sentence structure and vocabulary. The participants tried to solve the language problem gaps through hypothesis formulation and testing, trying out rules by using their output as a way of trying out new language forms, new language structures, and vocabulary. Both task types are of value in generating collaborative dialogue about language. The tasks motivate the participants to share and discuss their ideas with their peers, as

within pairs they reflected on their own and their interlocutor's language use.

The similarity of the discussion processes which occurred while the participants from the two different groups were working collaboratively to finish their written work might be the cause of the finding that no statistically significant differences were found between the pairs of participants doing the dictogloss task and the pairs of students doing the jigsaw task.

The similarity in LREs generated by the participants from the two different groups may relate to the results of learning progression assessed by comparing the core post-test scores and written works between the students from the two different groups as will be discussed later.

For the research question, "Is there a difference in the performance of Groups J and D in the post-test?", the result showed no significant difference in the core post-test score of the students from Groups J and D. Although the results revealed that no group showed greater learning progression, this does not mean that the participants did not show any improvement in their learning. The participants from both groups got higher scores in the core post-test scores than the core pre-test scores. The improvement of the core post- test scores of two groups of participants may be accounted from the students' discussion in the two collaborative tasks, suggesting that tasks that have a goal

to encourage participants to work collaboratively can improve their ability of using simple past tense and sentence structure.

In Swain and Lapkin (2001) research, no quantitative differences in the students' core post-test scores were observed and also no improvement from pre-test to post-test scores was observed. They stated that because relatively few of the LREs were captured in the core test items, so the language learning they had hoped to test with the pre-test/post-test design could not be revealed in those items. Furthermore their students spent just only 10 minutes on a task, a very brief period indeed to lead to quantitative differences on a test. Moreover they found that the students' interlanguage was relatively stable. In this point Bygate (1998 cited by Bygate, Skehan, & Swain 2001, p. 112) suggested that "another possibility is that language that was learnt in the context of task formats either was only partially learnt at the point; or else the learnt material was available within the context of the task, but was not available for access in test contexts." However, Swain and Lapkin (2001) still believed that both of the tasks seem to have had the effect of focusing students' attention on their own language use with the effect, in some cases, of providing occasions for language learning to take place.

With respect to the research question, "Is there a relationship between the collaborative dialogue that emerges

when participants are doing tasks and language learning as assessed by performance on tailor-made post-test items?", the result showed no association was found between the decisions made in the collaborative dialogue and scores in the tailor-made post-test. No significant differences were found in observed scores and expected scores with the three types of test items. The scores for type C test items were as high as the scores of test (A) item. Actually if the participants benefited directly from dialogue that leads to correct decision, they should get high scores in test (A) item 5, as the items come from the discussion that pairs came to the correct decision, and they should get low scores in test (C) items, since the test came from the discussion where the pair came to an incorrect decision. The result may, in part, be accounted from the fact that after the participants finished their written work, they received the original text, so in pairs they had the chance to discuss and compare their written text with the original. Through this, the participants may have learned the correct sentence structure, past- tense forms, and vocabulary. Moreover, they had a chance to ask the teacher about the vocabulary, the sentence structure and form that they were not clear. The task demands might have helped them notice gaps in their ability which were then closed after the task, when learners had the chance to study the original texts and have questions answered. In other words, the opportunities for learning were

not restricted to the collaborative dialogue when doing the task. This might be a reason why the participants got scores as high in the tailor-made post-test in test items (B) where the pairs did not agree about the problem and test items (C) where pairs came to an incorrect decision as with type (A) items where the pairs came to a correct decision. Another factor that may have affected the results in the tailor-made post-test scores of Groups J and D, may be the students' background knowledge of learning simple past tense in their regular classes. They may have used their language background knowledge to help them when they were doing the test. So, again, there were opportunities for learning other than those arising through participation in these tasks.

The participants finished doing jigsaw and dictogloss tasks in week 3. They had to do the tailor- made post- test one week later to see whether the collaborative dialogue had any effect on their language learning. The tailor-made post-test items made use of the context of the story. Therefore it is possible that these items were, to some extent, measuring their recall of the story rather than the participants understanding of tense usage or sentence structure. However, this effect is likely to have been reduced given the gap of one week between the task and the test. Further research could look at how understanding of language is generalized to contexts beyond those used to elicit the collaborative dialogue.

As stated before, the similarity in LREs generated by the participants from the two different groups may be reflected in the quality of the written work the participants from the two different groups. For research question (4), "Is there any difference in the quality of written narrative of the participants from the two different groups?", no statistical differences were found in the their written works. Moreover, the participants from the two different groups got low scores in their written works as shown in the average mean scores for content, organization, vocabulary, and morphology and syntax. This may be accounted for by the background knowledge from their language learning discussed in Chapter 3 that they had few chances to practicing paragraph writing.

Implications and Recommendations

Although the results did not show one task to be better than another, the teacher can still apply the tasks to be used in their teaching. The values of the tasks might depend on the language skills and instructional goals that the teacher wants to focus on and teach their students. For example, if the teacher wants the students to practice telling stories, writing, and discussion skills, jigsaw tasks might be appropriate to apply in class. Dictogloss tasks might be suitable for the teacher to practice the students listening, writing, and discussion skills.

Texts selected should be related to the teaching topic during that period. Moreover, students' proficiency level is also an important condition for selecting appropriate texts to apply in class. The text should not be too easy or too difficult for the student. It might be good if before the teachers use texts to teach in class, they should consult for appropriate texts with other teachers who teach at the same level.

Since dictogloss and jigsaw tasks are new for Thai students, the teacher should provide a clear explanation about the definition and task process to the students and make sure that the students understand how to do them. The good way is that the teacher should show them the example of doing each task. The teacher may be prepares the example on video in which two students are working together on the relevant tasks, which serve as a model for the students to follow the task process.

Classroom management is also important. Collaborative tasks have a goal to encourage the students to participate and work collaboratively in class. The students have to help each other to finish their work. In order to reach the goal of implementing collaborative tasks in class, teachers should let the students work and discuss with their peers or within their groups independently. The teacher's role is to observe and encourage students to work collaboratively.

Suggestions for Further Study

There are some suggestions for further study. Similar studies should be conducted with different group of students who study at the same proficiency level, or different group of students who study in public school in order to confirm the results in this study so that they can be better generalized. More variables should be included in studies. For example comparing output that emerges in two different groups of the students' collaborative dialogues, counting the parts where students notice the gaps, formulate and test their language, and students' conscious reflection on their language use. More type of tests should be constructed and added to examine students' learning progression whether they could learn language via collaborative tasks. For example post-test that goes beyond the context of the grammar presentation. Moreover the reason that no statistically significant differences were found in the data analysis may be accounted for the size of the target group, so including larger target groups might lead to some change in the result findings.