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Original Article

Collective Efficacy of TEFL Students in Collaborative Content Learning Classroom

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Abstract

Collaborative content learning (CCL) has recently gained prominence in the research literature as a process of learning that contributes to effective learning of the content of the courses in EFL contexts. This quantitative ex-post facto research was conducted among TEFL students at the MA level selected based on purposive and convenience sampling. It was an attempt to investigate the attitudes of TEFL students toward the contribution of CCL to collective efficacy (CE). To this end, sixty male and female participants in the master's program participated in the study. The participants have already been exposed to implementing CCL based on its principles and have been familiar with the underlying assumptions of CCL. Statistical analysis of students' responses to the CE questionnaire revealed that most learners believe that CE in CCL is important in EFL teaching and learning context, and learners have positive attitudes towards working collaboratively on the content. They stated that working collaboratively on the content positively changes their group members' learning and leads to successful learning because it encourages them when a similar group successfully conducts a task. The study's findings suggest the beneficial role of CCL in raising students' awareness of skillful collaboration for maximum learning of the content and for their CE.

Keywords: Collaborative content learning, Collective efficacy, TEFL students

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1. Introduction

Collaborative learning (CL), according to Wang and Wang (2022), is defined as a situation where people in groups of two or even more try to learn together more specifically to solve problems. When pupils learn collaboratively, they actively participate in the procedure of teaching and learning, not just absorbing what the teacher says. They dynamically act throughout the process and have ongoing interactions and communication. There are numerous methods for CL. All of them are predicated on a set of learning process assumptions derived from Smith and MacGregor (1992). According to Smith and MacGregor (1992), learning is an active procedure in which pupils assimilate the received information and get different perspectives from others. They believed that learning could be expanded in social settings where learners interact and communicate with others. Through that intellectual support, students can give meaning and put a frame for their learning environment. and connect it to a background of previous knowledge. In addition, they state that in order to learn, a learner needs a challenge that allows them to interact with others and analyze material rather than memorization and regurgitation.

As Johnsons and Johnson (2014) state, CL has four major benefits. They can be put into four categories: social, psychological, academic, and assessment benefits. The social advantages of CL include helping learners to expand their social feedback, constructing differences among learners with respect to their understanding, setting up a favorable context for displaying and implementing CL strategies, and creating learning groups. In addition, Psychological benefits include increasing students' self-confidence, decreasing the students' uneasiness, and creating positive ideas toward instructors. Moreover, academic profits include advances in critical thinking abilities, dynamic participation of the learners in the teaching and learning process, improved learning outcomes, and suitable problem-solving strategies (Busch et al., 2021). Finally, different types of evaluation and assessment can be used in CL procedures.

In the context of teaching English as a foreign language (EFL), there is growing attention toward CL and learners' attitudes, respectively (Vega-Abarzúa et al., 2022). In most EFL contexts nowadays, educators and pedagogical curricula try to stimulate teachers to engage learners in the teaching and learning process in order to take responsibility for their own learning. However, in some situations, this engagement leads to different challenges. One problem in some EFL contexts is that

teachers focus on themselves rather than the students. In addition, EFL classrooms may not focus on students' needs because teachers have to deal with many issues, which leaves no space or time for trying new things (Espinoza & Arias, 2020). This means some problems make it hard to teach classes well and use CL strategies that focus on the students.

Another concept related to CL is CCL. During the CCL, in order to understand and master the content of the courses, the classes should be managed into small groups. As Sharan and Sharan (1992) state, CCL was a very influential motion in the educational context. Some studies suggest that a number of benefits can be gained from a well-managed CCL compared to the traditional method of teaching and learning process (e.g., Slavin, 1991). Some of those benefits can include better educational outcomes, higher interactions within groups, more positive attitudes regarding the teaching and learning process, and increased self-confidence. Students learning outcomes in different subject areas can be enhanced through CE. Working- group dynamics through greater creativity and productivity affects the team's overall performance. When CE exists, educators focus on student learning; students try to learn collaboratively and collectively (Abedini & Chalak, 2017).

On the other hand, CE is a concept related to collaborative learning, contemplating, improving themselves, and acting (Bandura, 1997). When academics share a common understanding of CE, it shapes an institution's culture with high expectations for learner outcomes (Lanfear, 2022). The theoretical framework underlying CE is Bandura's (1997) social cognitive theory. The social cognitive theory considers personality as an agent-related phenomenon. Also, the social cognitive theory acknowledges that personal agency operates within a network of socio-cultural influences. Thus the theory extends human agency to collective agency—people's shared beliefs that they can work together to produce effects. That is, people make causal contributions to their own physiological functioning through mechanisms of personal agency. According to Goddard et al. (2000), humans (through the collective actions of group members) exhibit their agency through their choices.

Besides, students' attitudes toward CCL are critical parts of the instructive procedure because of two rationales. Firstly, students' attitudes can be used to show the quality of their learning. Being aware of the importance of the learners' attitudes regarding the effectiveness of CCL can facilitate the method of applying collaborative work in the classroom. It also can facilitate the teachers' understanding of the fact that how this methodological approach

enhances students' learning. Secondly, the students' attitudes are believed to impact learning behaviors. It is possible that negative attitudes toward collaboratively working may endanger the communication between the learners, along with their learning. Attitudes impact the learners' ideas, emotions, and behaviors (Slavin, 1991). Moreover, practitioners' attitudes toward the usefulness of group learning can be used to investigate the possible relations between the nature of the CCL context and the learners' cognitive and affective results (Anderson et al., 2023).

Research has been conducted in the broader education literature on the effectiveness of CCL (e.g., Slavin, 1991), but its contribution to the students' CE has remained unquestioned by researchers. Also, to the best of the researchers' knowledge, there have been no studies to examine the learners' attitudes toward CE. As the research literature indicates, more focus has been on SE rather than CE (e.g., Linnenbrink & Pintrich, 2003), while CE, which is closely linked to CCL, deserves to be researched widely because it has shown illuminating results in students' learning achievement (Wang & Eccles, 2011). Therefore, this study was an attempt to investigate the extent to which Iranian TEFL students have positive attitudes toward the contribution of CCL to CE.

2. Literature Review

2.1.CL

CL is defined as a process in which learners get information from other learners through collaborative activities to have joint outcomes. Its origin comes from Vygotsky's (1978) social development theory and zone of proximal development (ZPD), both emphasizing the role of interactions and social activities. CL is central to crucial thinking abilities. It implies that through collaborative activities, spoken interactions, self-organization, and management abilities can be fostered. As Vygotsky (1978) believes, an individual's actual development level happens when they become capable of doing it on their own, while their potential development level occurs when they seek help from others. ZPD, As Vygotsky (1978) stated, is the difference between a person's actual level of development as considered by their capacity for independent problem-solving activities and their level of potential development as determined by their capacity for problem-solving activities while being assisted by an instructor or working with a more experienced peer. As a result, Vygotsky (1978) focuses

on what people can accomplish with the assistance of others rather than what they can accomplish on their own. Whether or not there is a peer who is more competent than the learner, by working together, students can solve difficulties that they might not be able to solve if they were working on them alone. CL and putting learners in groups to detect and master the content of the courses were influential improvements in the academic context. Slavin (1991) believes that learning the content of the courses through collaboration may lead to better achievements and increases social interactions in the classroom context. It leads to positive attitudes toward learning.

Collaborative education aids learners in overcoming the obstacles to learning encountered while working independently. It aids various learners and increases content comprehension. Students support one another by asking questions, sharing ideas, and discussing them thoroughly (Atman & Durak, 2022; Chen et al., 2021). Through collaboration, learners can have higher degrees of reciprocal actions and higher levels of association. So, professionals can observe and change the learning and teaching workouts planned and performed to elevate interactions between the student. As Chen et al. (2021) state, social communication techniques have a positive influence on students' communication skills.

Based on the above-mentioned issues, it can be said that performing activities collaboratively in the classroom contribute to students' problem-solving and management proficiencies. Schnaubert and Bodemer (2019) believe that CL stimulates productive communication in the learning process.

2.2.CCL

One aspect that is closely related to CL is CCL. According to research, using diverse CL groups has a favorable impact on content creation. The fact that mixed-ability groups use group members' differences as resources to strengthen various aspects of the material is an influential element in the success of CCL (Järvelä & Järvenoja, 2011). For instance, peer-mediated learning helps learners from all backgrounds and abilities overcome their challenges while trying to acquire information on their own in a general education classroom. As students collaborate to overcome obstacles (such as disagreements within the group or task requirements) to accomplish an assignment, the social circumstances of CL

can also increase students' willingness to gain certain information (Järvelä & Järvenoja, 2011). Additionally, CCL encourages students to become more conscious of their usage of particular tactics and more metacognitive strategies to learn the content of a specific course. By participating actively in their own learning process on a metacognitive, motivational, and behavioral level, students are concurrently gaining the ability to self-regulate their individual learning.

Positive interdependence is a defining characteristic of CCL, where students believe that improved individual achievement leads to improved total group performance (Johnson & Johnson, 2014). It is believed that CCL optimizes student involvement and learning. It may be formal or informal but frequently involves a particular instructor's intervention. As Johnson and Johnson (2014) state, CCL is one of the best teaching methods available to instructors; it is infinitely adjustable and operates in both small and populated classes and under diverse disciplines.

According to Andriessen et al. (2016), to complete the assignment, a CCL team must reach a joint comprehension of the task and produce a single text as a unified one. There is no doubt that this setting presents many opportunities to learn about the various viewpoints of other group members as well as about the methods they used to approach the writing work, but not every participant will definitely benefit from these chances. At least some of the participants will quickly learn that collaborative text production produces positive outcomes without requiring excessive personal effort and involvement. This is because only the final product matters. In other words, the text quality is assessed in the end and not the personal advances of each group member in learning to produce a good text. They further state that this product-centered view of cooperation in teamwork can therefore be seriously misleading in the educational context. The ultimate result, whether an answer to a problem or the successful completion of a particular activity, must only serve to promote the learning procedure. However, collaborative comparisons and assessments of these outcomes also present significant learning opportunities, particularly in encouraging self-evaluation.

On the level of internal organization, several CCL models or approaches provide additional support for learners by choosing an organized order of learning steps and/or roles for social interactions among team members. Alternatively, as Kegan (1982) puts it, these internal CCL structures govern students' social interactions practically independently of the

particular content or domain of the subject matter by prescribing a series of stages along with the proper learning behavior.

2.3. CE

Bandura (1997) states that a team's belief in its skills appeared to be linked with greater accomplishment. It means that the trust given by a member of a group has an effect on the group's overall success. Since then, scholars have found this to be used in many fields. When a team of individuals shares the belief that together they can overcome problems and achieve the intended results, the group becomes more effective. For example, communities in which neighbors share a belief that they can connect with each other to decrease crime have much-reduced violence. Creativity and productivity can be increased when team members within an organization have positive beliefs about their team's abilities. Also, academic performance improves significantly in schools when educators believe in the collective capability to affect student performance (Bandura, 1997).

Bandura (1997) called this pattern of behavior CE and described it as a group's joint idea in their ability to control and carry out the course of action needed to achieve a particular level of performance. Models of CE in the educational contexts have been approved and developed, and researchers have found that while success and support increase the teachers' belief in their team, students' achievements have the same function as well.

Success and failure in student learning are more about what they did or did not do, and they place value on solving problems of practice together in CE. Donohoo and Katz (2020) discuss the importance of mastery in the development of CE and believe that it is an end in itself and an attribute to be developed to drive educational improvement. In addition, as Donohoo and Karts (2020) state, the CE positively predicts the learners' satisfaction in the learning process. Evidence has been obtained that students' satisfaction can increase and burnout can be prevented when CE is achieved.

Empirical studies in psychology supported claims that CE is a characteristic of groups (Bandura, 1997). For example, according to Bandura (1997), being effective is an important idea among learners because it can forecast future performance. In the same manner, Goddard et al. (2000) demonstrate that CE has a higher impact on student accomplishment

than their race, though they controlled the students' previous attainments, race/ethnicity, and gender.

2.3. Empirical Background of the Study

A survey on pair/group work by Long and Porter (1985) revealed that students generate more and use longer sentences in group projects than in teacher-fronted classes. Studies on CL demonstrate the importance of teamwork in subject-matter learning. Based on a meta-analysis by Lou et al. (1996), group learning generally had a more favorable impact on learning and subject attainment. Their study was conducted with the participation of school-aged children. They used pretest, posttest, and comparison group design. The overall results suggested that within-class grouping improved their reading comprehension.

In addition, Jalilifar (2010) had a mixed-methods research design; 62 intermediate EFL learners out of a population of 79 English language learners were randomly selected and divided into experimental and control groups, with 31 participants in each group. The results of his study discovered that student teams significantly improved their performance on a standardized English language competency test as compared to English language learners receiving traditional classroom training. The analysis of the interviews and classroom observations provided important themes which revealed that the students found collaborative assessment a very fruitful and practical way of promoting their reading skills and strategies mainly metacognitive strategies.

To consider the effectiveness of CCL on course learning, Musuraca (2019) predicted that participating in group learning activities would enhance students' comprehension of the course material. She provided some examples of exercises in CL. The first was CollabU, a collection of online programs focusing on conflict resolution and communication skills. The second one was giving constructive peer criticism before providing formal feedback to teams on their interviewing skills. Her study found that when evaluating final exam performance, students who participated in cooperative active learning practices to understand the material outperformed their peers who did not have the same experience. The group cohesiveness and students' positive attitudes about the value of cooperating on tasks are key factors in the growing acceptance of CL in language teaching.

In the same way, ElMassah's (2019) study posited that the determinants of students' attitudes toward CL are affected by their relationships with other group members. His study applied structural equation modeling (SEM) to use primary data gathered from a sample of 443 university students; the SEM results revealed that students' attitudes toward CL are determined by their relevant past experiences. He also demonstrated that whilst group work held significant learning benefits for students.

According to Bouffard-Bouchard et al. (1991), as stated earlier, learners with greater CE utilized their knowledge more consistently and successfully; they tried to continue doing the tasks and did not like to refuse accurate solutions together in their joint efforts. In order to consider this ability, Gully et al. (2002) examined 67 empirical studies that looked at CE and performance and discovered a significant connection between these two. Meta-analytic techniques were used to examine the level of analysis study and interdependence as moderators of observed relationships between task-specific team efficacy, generalized potency, and performance. The results of their study showed that interdependence significantly moderated the relationship between CE and performance. The relationship between CE and performance was stronger.

Furthermore, Salas-Rodríguez and Lara Ros (2022) found that CE was significantly associated with the learners' performance. Rosander et al. (2020) showed that, generally, CE increases the learners' learning outcomes.

A recent study by Qadach et al. (2022) examined whether CE is appropriate for the participants' learning. Their study evaluated the resources available to develop the CE of the participants. The results obtained from their study indicated that CE enhances the participants' satisfaction in the educational context, influences student achievement, and promotes a positive school climate.

To meet the objectives of the study, this research aimed to answer the following research question to fill the gaps in the research literature:

To what extent do Iranian TEFL students have positive attitudes toward the contribution of CCL to CE?

3. Methodology

3.1. Design and the Context of the Study

This quantitative ex post facto research was conducted among TEFL students at the MA level. Ex post facto design, also known as after-the-fact research, is a research method that looks into how an independent variable (groups with certain qualities that already exist prior to a study) affects a dependent variable. This research design was used to examine the cause-and-effect relationship between variables. However, the researcher cannot manipulate variables or randomly assign research subjects to different groups (Harris et al., 2006) in ex post facto research. It was conducted at Islamic Azad University, Tabriz Branch, during two semesters of the 1399-1400 academic year. The participants were at the MA level. This specific context was chosen because the instructor of the participants had implemented the CCL procedure among them. The selection of the participants was based on purposive and convenience sampling, as among those classes which were exposed to CCL, the participants of the classes which were available were selected. Before conducting the study, the instructor got permission from the participants. Also, they had the right to decide if they want to participate in the study. The instructor ensured the participants about keeping anonymous. The variables of the study were CE and CCL. In order to test the validity of the Questionnaire, a pilot study (N=15) was used. The content validity of the Questionnaire was ensured through the expert views (Two EFL teachers with professor and associate professor ranking, with above 25 years of teaching at the university level at BA, MA, and PhD levels) and the internal consistency of the Questionnaire calculated through Cronbach's alpha was .905. The Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin (KMO) was .71. The Bartlett test was at a significant level (.000 < 0.05) which was smaller than .05 for the research variables.

Descriptive statistics were used to answer the research question. The data was analyzed by SPSS software version 26.

3.2. Participants

This study was conducted with the participation of 30 male and 30 female students. The participants' age range was 23-35, and they were at the MA level. They majored in TEFL at Islamic Azad University, Tabriz Branch. Since the participants were at the MA level, with high language proficiency, they easily became familiar with the underlying assumptions of

CCL. Most of the participants were teachers at English institutes and schools enjoying the experience of language teaching. The participants were selected through purposive convenience sampling. That is from among those classes which experienced CCL, the available participants were selected to participate in the study. The professor of all of the participants was the same and applied the same method of teaching in all the classes involved in the study. They had the experience of CCL for two semesters during their MA program for three courses (a) Principles of Teaching Foreign Languages, (b) Teaching of English Language Skills, and (c) Measurement, Assessment, and Evaluation of Language. The participants were native speakers of the Azari and Persian languages.

3.3. Instruments

A questionnaire was used to measure the participants' perceptions of the efficacy of the CCL in CE. Its detailed descriptions are as follows.

A questionnaire was used to measure the CE of the group (Appendix A). This Questionnaire was developed by Bandura (2006). According to Bandura (2006), the CE is high if the group has formerly successfully completed the same or a similar task. The second most fundamental source is vicarious experience. Again, when a group sees another group that they perceive as similarly successfully completing a task, they will have a higher CE. The third factor is social persuasion. When someone in an identified position of competence, such as a teacher, is able to persuade the group that they will succeed, the emotions of the CE are high. The final source is probably effective. This means that group members' feelings while performing tasks are important for CE. When a group shares feelings of high CE, the members are more likely to work long-term and sustainably toward group objectives, even in the face of significant problems.

The CE questionnaire was designed to measure the perceived CE of the group. It was based upon guidelines from Bandura (2006); however, it was modified by the researcher to apply to the particular context of the present study. Some sample items of the Questionnaire include: "Collaborative content learning promotes successful content learning because in a group work, the class activities can be conducted successfully" (item 1), "Group members have common values to achieve content related goals, which encourages to work hard" (item 18), and "Performance in the class can be promoted by collaborative activities, which

encourages students to be more active in the group work" (item 6). In all the items, the words collaborative content learning was added. In items 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 17, and 18, the word 'content' was added. Students completed the 20-item Questionnaire on a 5-point Likert scale, which included a) Strongly Disagree, b) Disagree, c) Undecided, d) Agree, e) Strongly Agree. The content validity of the Questionnaire was ensured through the expert views (Two experienced teachers of TEFL teaching at BA, MA, and Ph.D. levels), and the internal consistency of the Questionnaire calculated through Cronbach's alpha was .905 and KMO for CE was .714, which was higher than the proposed minimum value of .6 . The results of Bartlett test ware at a significant level (.000 < 0.05).

3.4. Data Collection Procedure

First of all, TEFL students at the MA level of Islamic Azad University, Tabriz Branch that had passed courses of (1) Principles of Teaching Foreign Languages, (2) Teaching of English Language Skills, and (3) Measurement, Assessment, and Evaluation of language and had gone through CCL experiences participated in this study. They were provided with a full description of the research aims and processes to make them familiar with the content and the aim of the study.

During the first sessions, before implementing the CCL, the instructor made the students familiar with the underlying assumptions of CCL based on Smith and MacGregor (1992). She encouraged the participants to become active learners, think critically, and develop social skills to cooperate with classmates and develop independence. As a facilitator, she monitored the performance of the groups and controlled the quality of the content. She also helped the learners to be skillful in cooperation with each other by giving feedback to them. She has announced how she will assess their performance while supporting their efforts. To motivate students for the utmost effort for CCL, she mentioned that the assessment would be based on group performance, as well as individual performance within the group. She emphasized the role of organization and planning of the group work and the role of positive feedback.

Participants established groups of 3-5 members alphabetically but were free to change their groups. Even though they were classmates, some of the students did not know each other well before creating groups, but gradually, they started getting to know each other. The

main collaborative activities included forming study teams for preparing and presenting PowerPoint presentations of the lessons, doing research and projects, and preparing for the final exams. Their main focus was content mastery of the courses. There was a head in each group selected voluntarily to handle duties. The head put different responsibilities, such as summarizing, finding supplementary materials, and designing PowerPoint presentations for group members according to their consultation, decision, and personal abilities. The assigned responsibilities were not fixed. If there was a problem for one of the group members, the others tried to cover their duties to stop group failure, and the duties were circulated among the group members once a month. They were in sustained contact with each other and discussed course content issues, related projects, and the quality of their group work. These activities lasted for two semesters to gather the required data.

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the Questionnaire was administered through the WhatsApp application. After creating the Questionnaire in Google Docs, the researcher created a group in WhatsApp and made it available to the participants by providing the URL to them. They were asked to send the Questionnaire within three days. The CE questionnaire was used to elicit the participants' attitudes toward the CE of the group. This Questionnaire was based on guidelines from Bandura (2006). Prior to use in the current study, the Questionnaire was piloted with a cohort of students from the same context (N = 15). They were similar to the target group and were selected based on purposive and convenience sampling. It was conducted before the main research to check the clarity and comprehensibility of the Questionnaire, as well as its procedure. It helped design the research methods and protocol. After the pilot study, the main research was conducted. The participants filled out the Questionnaire and sent it back to the researcher's private chat.

3.5. Data Analysis Procedure

Before conducting the main study, the researchers validated the modified Questionnaire through a pilot study (N = 15). From the same context, 15 students were selected based on purposive and convenience sampling by the researcher and participated in the pilot study. The researcher put the Questionnaire in the participants' group on WhatsApp, and they had three days to fill it out and send it back to the private chat of the researcher.

The content validity of the Questionnaire was ensured through the expert view. These experts were two teachers of TEFL (with the ranking of professor and associate professor) with more than 25 years of experience teaching at the university level. The internal consistency of the Questionnaire calculated through Cronbach's alpha was .905, indicating the high reliability of the CE questionnaire. Also, the KMO for CE was used to measure the sampling adequacy. The data showed that KMO was .714, which was higher than the proposed minimum value of .6 (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013). It was sufficiently large to perform exploratory factor analysis. The Bartlett test was also employed to confirm the data's relevance. The correlation matrix adopted in the analysis was not zero in the population. The results revealed that the Bartlett test was at a significant level (.000 < 0.05) which was smaller than .05 for the research variables. It showed the satisfaction of the correlations.

4. Results

The research question investigated to what extent Iranian TEFL students have positive attitudes toward the CE in CCL, for which a questionnaire was used. This Questionnaire was developed by Bandura (2006) and modified by the researcher based on the context.

4.1. Construct Validity and Reliability

Firstly, the collected data from the 20 items on the learners' attitudes toward the contribution of CCL to the CE questionnaire was entered into the SPSS software to run the exploratory factor analysis (EFA) to establish the validity of the Questionnaire. Table 1 shows the results of KMO and Bartlett's Test.

Table 1.

KMO and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity for the Items of CE Questionnaire

KMO and Bartlett's Test		
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin		.714
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	227.858
	Sig.	.000

The results that are depicted in Table 1. indicate that the Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin (KMO) for CE was used to measure the sampling adequacy. The data showed that KMO was .714, higher than the proposed minimum value of .6 (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013). It was sufficiently large to perform EFA. The Bartlett test was also employed to confirm the data's relevance. The correlation matrix adopted in the analysis was not zero in the population. The results revealed that the Bartlett test was at a significant level (.000 < 0.05) which was smaller than .05 for the research variables. It showed the satisfaction of the correlations.

On the other hand, Table 2. indicates the results of the total variance of the items of the CE questionnaire.

Table 2.

Total Variance Explained for Items of CE Questionnaire

Component 1	Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
	16.535	71.675	71.675

Regarding the results of Table 2, the results of the parallel analysis for the Questionnaire showed only one factor with Eigen-values exceeded the corresponding

criterion values for a data matrix of the same size. The one-factor solution explained a total of 71.67 % of the variance of CE. The factor's rotating matrix is shown in Table 3.

Table 3.

Rotated Component Matrix for the Items of CE Questionnaire

Attitudes of Participants towards the Contribution of CCL to CE	Component
	1
Item1	.758
Item2	.797
Item3	.686
Item4	.626
Item5	.742
Item6	.688
Item7	.667
Item8	.708
Item9	.691
Item10	.791
Item11	.837
Item12	.600
Item13	.640
Item14	.782
Item15	.634
Item16	.781
Item17	.652

Item18	.613
Item19	.702
Item20	.707

As the results of Table 3. show, each variable in this matrix has a factor load (factor score) greater than 0.5 and is classified under the umbrella of the desired factor. The contribution of the relevant factor to the overall variance of the target variable is greater when the coefficient's value is larger. According to Table 3, all of the questions belonged to one factor.

Table 4. displays the results of the reliability estimation of the CE questionnaire.

Table 4.

Reliability Statistics of the CE Questionnaire Items

N of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Attitudes of the Learners Toward the Contribution of CCL to CE 20	.905

As indicated in Table 4., the internal consistency of the Questionnaire, calculated through Cronbach's alpha was .905, indicating the high reliability of the CE questionnaire.

To answer the research question, descriptive frequencies and percentages, and the mean of the responses, were used to compute the items of the Questionnaire (Table 5.).

Table 5.

Descriptive Statistics Regarding Participants' Attitudes towards the CE

Contributions of CCL to CE

Item Numbers	*Not at all true* *f(%)*	*slightly true* *f(%)*	*somewhat true* *f(%)*	*quite true* *f(%)*	*true* *f(%)*	*very true* *f(%)*	***M(SD)***
Item1	5(8.3)	6(10.0)	7(11.7)	14(23.3)	14(23.3)	14(25.3)	3.22(1.44)
Item2	5(8.3)	10(16.7)	6(10.0)	11(18.3)	11(18.3)	17(28.3)	3.49(1.45)
Item3	9(15.0)	6(10.0)	9(15.0)	10(16.7)	13(21.7)	13(21.7)	3.27(1.58)
Item4	6(10.0)	7(11.7)	11(18.3)	12(20.0)	11(18.3)	13(21.7)	3.42(1.54)
Item5	2(3.3)	5(8.3)	8(13.3)	12(20.0)	16(26.7)	17(24.3)	3.37(1.34)
Item6	4(6.7)	5(8.3)	8(13.3)	13(21.7)	14(23.3)	16(26.7)	3.25(1.49)
Item7	5(8.3)	6(10.0)	10(16.7)	14(23.3)	12(20.0)	13(21.7)	3.45(1.48)
Item8	6(10.0)	11(18.3)	6(10.0)	11(18.3)	12(20.0)	13(21.7)	3.53(1.50)
Item9	4(6.7)	10(16.7)	9(15.0)	12(20.0)	13(21.7)	12(20.0)	3.22(1.51)

Item10	3(5.0)	5(8.3)	9(15.0)	12(20.0)	15(25.0)	16(25.2)
2.80(1.41)						
Item11	5(8.3)	8(13.3)	5(8.3)	12(20.0)	16(26.7)	14(23.3)
	2.88(1.52)					
Item12	5(8.3)	8(13.3)	9(15.0)	10(16.7)	14(23.3)	14(23.3)
	3.10(1.54)					
Item13	5(8.3)	11(18.3)	5(8.3)	14(23.3)	12(20.0)	13(21.7)
	3.47(1.44)					
Item14	6(10.0)	6(10.0)	10(16.7)	11(18.3)	13(21.7)	14(23.3)
	3.38(1.51)					
Item15	9(15.0)	6(10.0)	11(18.3)	11(18.3)	10(16.7)	13(21.7)
	3.23(1.52)					
Item16	3(5.0)	7(11.7)	7(11.7)	8(13.3)	17(28.3)	18(13.0)
	3.00(1.45)					
Item17	5(8.3)	6(10.0)	16(26.7)	12(20.0)	13(21.7)	8(13.3)
	3.42(1.43)					
Item18	6(10.0)	7(11.7)	10(16.7)	12(20.0)	12(20.0)	13(21.7)
	3.40(1.52)					
Item19	7(11.7)	10(16.7)	7(11.7)	11(18.3)	13(21.7)	12(20.0)
	3.17(1.53)					
Item20	8(13.3)	7(11.7)	12(20.0)	13(21.7)	12(21.7)	8(13.3)
	3.57(1.57)					
Total : **3.29(1.49)**						

As is indicated in Table 5., the highest percentage of the efficacy of CE was related to item 16 (30.0%), stating that working collaboratively on the content makes positive changes in group members' learning, followed by item 2 (28.3%), saying that collaborative content learning leads to successful learning because when a similar group successfully conducts a

task, it is encouraging, item 6 (26.7%), performance in the class can be promoted by collaborative activities; for example, successfully delivering lectures about subject matters leads to better learning of the content of the course. And item 1 (25.3%) proposes that collaborative content learning promotes successful content learning because, in group work, the class activities can be conducted successfully.

In conclusion, it can be found that most of the learners (71.0 %) "item16" believe that CE in CCL is important in EFL teaching and learning context. Learners have positive attitudes towards working collaboratively on the content that makes positive changes in group members' learning. However, a few numbers of learners "items 9, 14, 17, and 19" (30.0 %) disagreed by stating that learners are not interested in collaborative and group work, as well as they believe that it is not necessary to work with their classmates and peers in a group in order to improve their content learning.

Concerning the mean of the responses to the items, the highest mean score (M= 3.57, SD= 1.57) was related to item 20, "In collaborative content learning, group members encourage each other to solve the problems in facing challenges," and the lowest mean score (M= 2.80, SD= 1.41) was related to item 10 "the community of a group as a whole is capable of making positive content learning experiences." The mean range of the responses was between the lowest mean (2.80) and the highest mean (3.57), considering the scale range, which is between not at all true (1) and very true (6). The total mean score of 3.29 with a total standard deviation of 1.49, which is more than the average mean rank, indicates the positive attitudes of TEFL students towards the CE.

5. Discussion

The present study was an attempt to investigate the extent to which Iranian TEFL students have positive attitudes toward the contribution of CCL to CE. The study's findings showed that the participants had positive attitudes toward the contribution of CCL to CE. According to the results, the participants believed that working collaboratively on the content positively changes group members' learning. In addition, they stated that collaborative content learning leads to successful learning because when a similar group successfully conducts a task, it is encouraging. According to Gerlach (1994), during the CL, active participation of the participants, associations, creating, and performing socially happens. Learners have student-

focused outcomes and learn easier through communications and associations, enhancing their problem-solving abilities in the teaching and learning process. This gives them positive skills in appropriate social interaction, like cooperation, listening to others, formulating opinions, and compromise. This is in line with the CE definition. As Donohoo and Katz (2020) define CE, it refers to the shared belief that by implementing joint activities, educators could affect the students' learning results and increase positive educational outcomes for all learners. According to Chen et al. (2021), collaborative work results in learning better, having positive perspectives, and performing wise. This confirms the results obtained from the present study.

Tian and Lu (2017) examined the relationship between externalizing behavior and academic engagement and tested the class CE attitudes. The study's results revealed that students believed that working with others can positively affect their learning, which in turn, positively affects their CE. This also confirms the results of the present study in that it showed working collaboratively on the content makes positive changes in group members' learning. Another study conducted by Tian and Lu (2017) tried to investigate the effects of CE on the participants' academic engagement. Their study was a multilevel study conducted with the participation of 1034 students. The results obtained from their study revealed that engagement behaviors were a product of the interaction between the class environment and the individuals, and CE had effects on students' learning. In addition, most of the participants showed their satisfaction regarding CE. It is in the same vein as the findings of the third research question that revealed students' positive attitudes with respect to CE.

Similarly, the participants' attitudes regarding CE in group work were examined in a study conducted by Tucker (2014). The overall results indicated the participants' positive perceptions respectively. They believed that CE can be an important predictor of the participants' academic achievement. These findings correspond with the present study's findings in that about 71% of the participants believed that CCL positively contributes to CE.

A finding different from the present study was presented by Rosander et al. (2020), who investigated the effects of a short educational intervention on the relations between efficacy beliefs and attitudes towards being assessed in teamwork. The older participants' attitude towards CE assessment was the least positive. Johnson and Johnson (2014) also state

that CL can better work in the ideal classroom setting. Their study's findings showed that most participants failed to fully appreciate CL strategies. It contrasts the findings of the present study. The authors concluded that the intervention may be dependent on gender and age. Thus, learner variables, such as gender, age, and learning styles might contribute to the successful implementation of CCL and assessment based on it, creating a positive or negative attitude towards CCL, which waits for further research to suggest illuminating strategies.

6. Conclusions

This quantitative research investigated the extent to which Iranian TEFL students have positive attitudes toward the contribution of CCL to CE. The study's findings showed that the participants had positive attitudes toward the contribution of CCL to CE. The positive perceptions of the participants suggest that by providing learners with experience of CCL, we can improve understanding, which offers support for the social cognitive theory of learning. Researchers within EFL need to consider the context of learning and be aware of the benefits of collaborative work in the classroom as the interactions can influence learning productivity. Through interaction and negotiation of meaning, students can improve problem-solving and retention in content learning. As Martinez et al. (2016) state, there is a connection between CL, enjoyable environment and activities, and academic achievements.

In addition, CE refers to the joint idea that educators working together can affect student achievements and improve the performance of all students. Studies show that CE is one of the most influential factors affecting pupil accomplishment. It is more important than financial status, domestic environment, and parental inclusion (Donohoo & Eells, 2018). Where there is CE, teachers choose strategic drivers for change and focus on improving student learning by learning together and attaining results. However, CE involves collaborative activities that can affect student learning.

For CL to be useful, the educator should see teaching as a process of boosting students' capability to learn. In the broad context of CL, an important element for learners may be consciousness-raising about what the group is accomplishing in content goals, how it is being accomplished, and whether it could be accomplished more satisfactorily. Learners should reflect on what it is about group learning that is supposed to help them learn the

content. Individual expectations have to be negotiated with those of each group member, especially regarding gender differences (Chen et al., 2021), as they have different challenges in CL.

Some limitations were imposed on this study. First, only participants within the age range of 23 to 35 were available to the researchers. Future researchers are encouraged to carry out the study with other age groups since respondents of participants at different age groups may see the collaboration in content learning through a different lens. Second, because of the administrative problems based on online classes imposed by the Coronavirus epidemy, collecting data was online.

The third limitation of the present study was the limited sample size, with only 60 students at the MA level since the number of MA students is limited at our university. Greater sample sizes are more able to sensitively reflect participants' attitudes toward CCL.

Furthermore, this study had some delimitations. First, this study was conducted on TEFL students at the MA level. Therefore, generalizations about other communities would not be appropriate without further research. Second, collecting data to investigate students' attitudes toward the contribution of CCL to CE was in the questionnaire format according to the Likert scale; therefore, in order to have more reliable data, other means of data collection, such as interviews, could give a comprehensive view that awaits further research.

Future studies on different variables that can be influential in the CCL can have illuminating results, such as Group combination, incongruous versus congruous group work, group size, CCL construction, and teacher interposition. Further comparative studies in different EFL/ESL contexts would provide a fruitful line for future research. Moreover, this study focused on MA students; future research should include other proficiency levels to check the differences among the different learners in comparative studies. Additionally, a list of sociological factors can be involved in CCL and CE, providing new insights into the role of CCL in the EFL context.

Incorporating new variables and using different analytical models will be of interest in investigating other factors and activities that may influence CCL skills acquisition and enhancement. Respectively, variables such as cultural background, cross-cultural

experience, students' learning areas, and the presence of specific CL teaching courses within the curriculum can provide valuable insights.

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Appendix

The Questionnaire for measuring students' attitudes toward the contribution of collaborative content learning to collective efficacy

How well do you believe your group can perform in a course based on collaborative content learning (CCL): Rank your answers on the following statements:1 (Strongly Disagree), 2 Disagree), 3 (Undecided), 4 (Agree), 5 (Strongly Agree)

1. Collaborative content learning promotes successful content learning because in a group work the class activities can be conducted successfully.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree
2. Collaborative content learning leads to successful learning because when a similar group successfully conducts a task, it is encouraging.					
3. The teacher in collaborative content learning more readily convince the learners that they will learn the content successfully.					
4. Collaborative content learning creates a feeling of group efficacy.					
5. Collaborative content learning encourages groups to fluently take part in discussions.					
6. Performance in the class can be promoted by collaborative activities,					

which encourages students to be more active in the group work.					
7. Working collaboratively on the content makes it difficult to manage all the content assignments with group members.					
8. When there is a problem in collaborations to understand the content, students come together to discuss how it should be solved, which is very encouraging.					
9. Working collaboratively in the group promotes positive thinking of you can contribute to the group performance, and makes content learning more enjoyable.					
10. The community of a group as a whole give you the feeling that you are capable of content learning.					
11. Working in harmony with group members most of the time enhances content learning, and makes you believe that you can.					
12. Group members share common ideas about issues related to content and how to manage them collectively.					
13.It is impossible that group members have equal access to resources, and opportunities about learning of the content.					

14. Working collaboratively on the content can't improve the groups' content learning development.					
15. Every member in the group doesn't have the ability to contribute to the group's content learning development.					
16. Working collaboratively on the content makes positive changes in group members' methods of learning.					
17. It is not necessary to work together on the content to develop your methods of learning.					
18. Group members have common values to achieve content related goals, which encourages to work hard.					
19. Working collaboratively on the content doesn't bring enjoyment in learning.					
20. In collaborative content learning, group members encourage each other to solve the problems in facing with challenges.					