The Effect of Using Task-Based Activities on Writing Performance of Iranian Introvert vs. Extrovert EFL Learners

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ABSTRACT

A significant part of the meaning-focused instructions is task-based syllabuses, policy makers and curriculum developers have commonly developed the programs based on Task-Based Activities however for making maximum progress with learning styles of students, their individual differences has attracted the attention of L2 researchers. The present research is an attempt to provide new evidence for the efficacy of Task-Based Activities on writing performance of Iranian Introvert vs. Extrovert EFL Learners. The primary focus of the study is to investigate the effect of task-based activities as like tasks of class discussion and mind mapping which may develop EFL learners' writing of English as a foreign language. In the second place, it tried to scrutinize the amount of effect of these activities on writing proficiency of Extrovert vs. Extrovert learners. For this purpose, 100 male intermediate Iranian EFL learners were chosen from a total number of 133 and assigned into four groups (2 experimental and 2 controls) through their performance on a sample pre-test of Nelson (Homogeneity Test). The target learners of this research are learners of Amiri's foreign languages institute in Kermanshah, Iran. Data were collected through pre and post-test writing descriptive essays to find any progress at end of the treatment session. Data were analyzed through two-way ANOVA and Paired Samples t-tests. The results of the statistical analysis demonstrated that the task-based activities as like mind mapping and class discussion groups outperformed the writing proficiency of both studied groups but it has more impact on extrovert than introvert learners. The results of the study can have significant implications for EFL teachers, learners, researchers, policy makers and syllabus designers.

KEYWORDS: Task-Based Activities, Introvert, Extrovert

INTRODUCTION

Writing today has become very important in the daily lives of much of the world's population and speakers of globally dominant languages are surrounded by written materials. Writing is an important and, at the same time, demanding activity, particularly in a foreign language context in which learners are exposed to language just for few hours a week (Kim & Kim, 2005). Question arises on the need of making language classrooms a place where genuine and meaningful communication takes place and not simply one where students "practice" language for its own sake. This emphasis on making meaning the priority in syllabus design and methodology underlies many aspects of contemporary approaches to language teaching, e.g., CLT, Task-based language teaching, and Content-based instruction. Task-based language teaching is an approach seeking to provide learners with a natural context for language use. As learners work to complete a task, they have abundant opportunity to interact. Such interaction is thought to facilitate language acquisition as learners have to work to understand each other and to express their own meaning (Larsen- Freeman 2000).

On the other hand for second language learners to make maximum progress with their own learning styles, their individual differences must be recognized and attended to. A number of theories hold that personality factors significantly influence the degree of success that individuals achieve in learning a second language (Gass&Selinker, 1994) based on the assumption that some features of the learner's personality might encourage or inhibit second language learning (Cook, 1996) by enhancing certain facets of language learning while impeding others (Larsen-Freeman & Long, 1991). In order to provide effective sensitive instruction, teachers of second or foreign languages need to learn to identify and understand their students" significant individual differences. Among personality factors, Extroversion and, its counterpart introversion, are also potentially important factors in the learning of a second language. This study will deal with Iranian EFL learners writing assignments specifically both personality

types i.e. extrovert vs. Introvert. It will focus on the influence of task-based language learning on the growth of their productive skill of writing in both studied groups.

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

In recent years, several studies have focused on task-based activities. TBLT presents a way to realize communicative language teaching at the syllabus design and methodology level. Second Language Acquisition (SLA) researchers and teachers who were dissatisfied by teacher-oriented, form-based language teaching method, developed the theory of Task -Based Instruction (TBI) in the 1980s (Samuda&Bygate, 2008).Task-based language teaching is an approach seeking to provide learners with a natural context for language use. As learners work to complete a task, they have abundant opportunity to interact. Such interaction is thought to facilitate language acquisition as learners have to work to understand each other and to express their own meaning (Larsen- Freeman 2000). Cheng (2011) investigated the influence of Post task Activity on EFL writing performance. He studied how the revision of learner's written texts made by the teacher enhances the accuracy, fluency, and complexity of his/her writing. The findings of this study demonstrated that although instruction is a good method to provide input, the modification of written passage if used appropriately can be sources of alternative input to enhance writing outcome.

However a number of studies have been conducted in order to investigate and explore how the personality of the learner can be of influence on his/her second language acquisition. According to Wright and Taylor (1970), personality refers to those relatively stable and enduring aspects of the individual which distinguish him from other people, and at the same time from the basis of our predictions concerning his future behavior.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Most of the learners mentioned that the writing is the most complex and hard to learn skill among other language skills. When it comes to writing, teachers may encounter certain problems on the part of the learners such as lack of participation and motivation. Boring teacher-center method and self-guided books didn't play an effective role on writingproficiency of EFL learners. Moreover, most of the teachers didn't pay much attention to personality types of learners in learningprocess. It is assumed that a better understanding of the genuine and meaningful teaching method as like Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) and how does it effect on writing proficiency of extrovert vs. Introvert EFL learners may help us for designing of meaningful communication learning base on personalitydifferences. The research problem can be identified in the students' poor mastery of the necessary EFL writing skills that need to be developed.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND HYPOTHESES

The following research questions have been addressed in this study:
RQ1. Does using Task-based activity have any effect on writing performance of Iranian EFL learners?
RQ2. Does using task-based activity have any effect on writing performance of introvert learners?
RQ3. Does using task-based activity have any effect on writing performance of extrovert learners?
RQ4. In case of any effect which of introvert vs. Extrovert learners benefit more?

With regard to the research questions, the following null hypotheses can be formulated:

H01. The use of task-based activities does not have any significant effect on Iranian learners writing ability.
H02. The use of task-based activities does not have any significant effect on writing performance of Iranians introvert learners.
H03. The use of task-based activities does not have any significant effect on writing performance of Iranians extrovert learners.
H04.The use of task-based activities does not have any significantly different effect on writing performance of Iranian extrovert and introvert learners.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

Because task-based teaching of EFL writing is left rather untouched, the present study attempts to investigate the role that task-based writing can play in language acquisition of Iranian EFL learners. More specifically, this study aims at examining the effects of task-based activities on personality differences of EFL learners' writing ability. In other words the main aim of this study was to investigate the impact of task-based activities as like class discussion and mind mapping on writing proficiency of Iranian EFL learners and measuring this impact on two personality

types of extroverts vs. Introverts. In other words if this kind of teaching method has impact on learners which group benefit more from that extrovert learners or introvert learners?

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Now days regarding the applying Task-based activities in most EGP and ESP, students" personality analysis has been considered to play an imminent role in learning and teaching processes. The present study attempts to investigate the role that task-based writing can play in language acquisition of Iranian EFL learners. More specifically this study was conducted to investigate the impact of Task-based activates on both personality type i.e extroverts and introverts. The actual target learners of this research are learners of English language in Iran. They have not enough chances to use English outside the classes. Thus the learners do not usually experience English language use in authentic contexts; this affects maintaining learners' motivation and recognition of their achievement. Therefore, EFL teachers seem to need to modify curricula, syllabuses, methods, etc., considering the contexts of their learners.

Because the entire human divided into category of personality differences of extroverts and introverts this study benefits all learners. It became clear that foreign language learners are different in language learning, their learning style, motivation, attitude, etc. This study helps teachers to provide opportunities for students to raise their level of motivation and effort to do their best in writing skill. To help instructors in this field, this study used discussion and mind mapping tasks as an approach which will motivate learners. The results of the study can have significant implications for EFL teachers, learners, researchers, policy makers and syllabus designers.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

In recent years, there has been an increasing amount of literature on task-based activities in Iran.Marashi and Didari (2012) studied the influence of task-based writing on EFL learners' writing performance and creativity. They found out that learners gained advantages from task-based writing regarding writing and creativity. According to their results, it is very necessary for writing teachers to apply various kinds of tasks, offer opportunities by increasing amount of input, actively involve them in the class procedures, and encourage them to be more creative in their writing and write their first draft freely without any concern for formal linguistic features.

A similar study was conducted by Rezaei(2014) in his article titled as "Writing in Task-based Class for EFL Learners" found out that teaching writing by using TBLT can enhance the student's ability. According to their results, in order to enhance the writing ability, TBLT is useful for students. TBLT offers the students' material which they have to actively engage in the process of teaching-learning in order to achieve a goal or complete a task. It can enhance the student's ability in representing ideas, encourage the students to write, and make the class situation more alive.

Another study was executed by Khodabakhshizadeh and Mousavi (2012) investigated the effect of post-task activities on the TEFL students' fluency and accuracy in oral production. According to their results, various types of repeated performance (i.e., public and private) as post-task activities effect on fluency and accuracy of oral production.

Zohrabi and Abasvand(2014) studied the influence of task repetition on increasing Iranian EFL learners' accuracy and complexity in writing proficiency. The results of an immediate post-test demonstrated that task repetition positively influenced the accuracy and complexity of the participants' writings in the experimental group.

Rahimpour and Safari (2011) studied the influences of pre-task planning (PTP) and on-line planning (OLP) on descriptive writing of EFL learners. According to their results, planning time didn't influence the complexity and accuracy of participants' performance but it had affected positively the fluency of PTP group.

Ghavamnia et al. (2013) studied the influence of pre-task and online planning conditions on the complexity, accuracy, and fluency of EFL learners' written production. They suggested that the pre-task planning group generated the complex and fluent writings, while the online planning group generated more error free clauses representing a more accurate writing performance.

METHOD

PARTICIPANTS

In this study, 100 EFL students in six classes were conveniently sampled from among 133 intermediate, male and female EFL learners aged from 16 to 21 at Amiri Language Institute in Kermanshah, Iran. The homogeneity of the participants was assured as they had been placed in that level through administration of Nelson Test (Homogeneity

Test) after that by administering Questionnaire of Extroverts vs. Introverts. These 100 students were assigned into four class's base on their personality: two experimental groups and two control groups.

INSTRUMENTS

In this study four instruments were used: (1) Nelson Test (Homogeneity Test) (2) Questionnaire of Extroverts vs. Introverts (3) Writing pre-test (4) Writing post-test. In this study the course book College Writing used as the material. The aim of the book was to develop the students' ability to write a cohesive paragraph that has a topic sentence and supporting details with minimal grammatical, spelling, punctuation, and indentation errors. Class discussion, mind mapping and information-gap tasks (jigsaw) were practiced by the experimental students in the classroom during the course of the study. The first and the last composition written by the participants regarded as pre-test and post-test. At the end of the course, the students in both control and experimental groups took a post-test and answered 10 questions. They were asked and scored by two raters.

PROCEDURE

As we mentioned before, 100 male and female intermediate Iranian EFL learners were chosen from a total number of 133 and assigned into four groups (2 experimental and 2 controls) through their performance on a sample pre-test of Nelson (Homogeneity Test) and Questionnaire of Extroverts vs. Introverts. At first session we had a pre-test which is writing one-paragraph essays that consisted of three topics, scoring their essays and marking their errors and turn them back to students considered as feedback, and post-test administration which was writing essays with the same topics as written in pre-test. They received feedback in the classroom. In this way, male and female English learners of the experimental group experienced a set of productive tasks in which, language is not regarded as an object of study or manipulation but as a means of communication. In contrast, students of the control group mostly experienced memorization, repetition of conversations and blank-filling exercises of the book. while the experimental group practice the *Authentic tasks* (sometimes also called real life tasks) such as writing a letter to manager or write essay how to lose a weight by using Task-based Activities as like class discussion ,mind mapping and information-gap tasks (jigsaw)were fulfilled throughout the term in order to improve the writing proficiency of the experimental group students. In addition to it, they did an activity considered as post-task after each writing task. The duration of treatment in experimental group was 12 sessions. At the end of the course, the students in both control and experimental groups took a post-test and wrote a same topics as like pre-test. They were scored by two raters.

RESULTS

The abovementioned hypotheses were analyzed using the paired-samples t-test. The analyses assume normality of the data.

Table 1.*Normality AssumptionDescriptive Statistics*

Group	Personality		N	Skewness			Kurtosis		
			Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Ratio	Statistic	Std. Error	Ratio
Experimental	Extrovert	Pretest	25	-.251	.464	-0.54	-.491	.902	-0.54
		Posttest	25	.033	.464	0.07	-1.026	.902	-1.14
	Introvert	Pretest	25	-.451	.464	-0.97	-.537	.902	-0.60
		Posttest	25	-.084	.464	-0.18	-.461	.902	-0.51
Control	Extrovert	Pretest	25	-.206	.464	-0.44	-1.297	.902	-1.44
		Posttest	25	-.132	.464	-0.28	-.704	.902	-0.78
	Introvert	Pretest	25	.050	.464	0.11	-.806	.902	-0.89
		Posttest	25	.698	.464	1.50	-.025	.902	-0.03

PRETEST OF WRITING

A t-test was run to compare the experimental (task-based group) and control groups' performance on the pretest of writing in order to prove that they were homogenous in terms of their writing ability prior to the main study.

Table 2. *Descriptive Statistics; Pretest of Writing by Groups*

Group	Mean	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval	
			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Experimental	14.400	.237	13.930	14.870
Control	14.080	.237	13.610	14.550

Table 3.*Descriptive Statistics; Pretest of Writing by Groups by Personality Types*

Group	Personality	Mean	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval	
				Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Experimental	Extrovert	14.280	.335	13.615	14.945
	Introvert	14.520	.335	13.855	15.185
Control	Extrovert	14.480	.335	13.815	15.145
	Introvert	13.680	.335	13.015	14.345

Table 4.*Independent Sample t-test, Pre-test by Groups*

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
score	Equal variances assumed	.123	.727	.043	45	.966	.01449	.33848	-.66724	.69623
	Equal variances not assumed			.043	44.583	.966	.01449	.33887	-.66821	.69719

As the results indicate there was not any significant difference between the experimental and control groups on the Nelson proficiency test (F (.123) = .72, p > .05 (Table 4). Thus it can be concluded that the experimental and control groups enjoyed the same level of general language proficiency prior to the main study.

TESTING RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

H01. The use of task-based activities does not have any significant effect on Iranian learners writing ability.

Table 5.*Descriptive Statistics; Posttest of Writing by Groups*

Group	Mean	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval	
			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Experimental	16.120	.227	15.669	16.571
Control	13.960	.227	13.509	14.411

Table 6.*The Results of t-test of the Effect of task-based activities on writing*

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means					95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
Score	Equal variances assumed	.214	.645	-11.032	75	.000	-3.63333	.32934	-4.28942	-2.97725

The results of the tables above (Tables 5&6) show that task-based activities have a significant effect on students' writing ability. Thus the first null hypothesis was rejected.

H02. The use of task-based activities does not have any significant effect on writing performance of Iranians introvert learners.

Table7.*Descriptive Statistics; Posttest of Writing by Groups by Personality Types*

Group	Personality	Mean	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval	
				Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Experimental	Extrovert	16.920	.321	16.282	17.558
	Introvert	15.320	.321	14.682	15.958
Control	Extrovert	14.480	.321	13.842	15.118
	Introvert	13.440	.321	12.802	14.078

An independent-samples t-test was run to compare the experimental and control groups introvert learners' means on the post-test of writing in order to probe the second null-hypothesis. Based on the results displayed in Table 7, it can be concluded that the experimental introvert learners had a higher mean (M = 15.320, SD = .321) on the posttest of writing than control introvert (M = 13.440, SD = .321).

Table 8.*The Results of Independent Samples Test between Experimental and Control Introvert learners*

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means					95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	t	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
score	Equal variances assumed	1.173	.284	3.081	45	.004	1.27717	.41459	.44215	2.11220
	Equal variances not assumed			3.062	40.770	.004	1.27717	.41712	.43463	2.11972

The results of Table 8 indicated that the experimental introvert learners had a significantly higher mean on the posttest of writing than control introvert learners. Thus the second null-hypothesis **was rejected**.

H03. The use of task-based activities does not have any significant effect on writing performance of Iranians extrovert learners.

An independent-samples t-test was run to compare the experimental and control extrovert learners' means on the posttest of writing in order to probe the third null-hypothesis. Based on the results displayed in Table 8, it can be concluded that the experimental extrovert learners had a higher mean (M = 1692, SD = 1.34) on the posttest of writing than control extrovert (M = 14.48, SD = 1.38).

The results of independent-samples t-test (Table 9) indicated that the experimental extrovert learners had a significantly higher mean on the posttest of writing than control extrovert learners. Thus the third null-hypothesis was rejected.

Table 9.*Independent-Samples t-test; Posttest by Experimental and Control Extrovert Learners*

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means					95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
	F	Sig.	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
Equal variances assumed	1.738	.193	3.253	58	.002	4.233	1.302	1.628	6.839
Equal variances not assumed			3.253	55.386	.002	4.233	1.302	1.625	6.841

Table 9 indicated that there was a significant difference between the two groups' mean scores on the posttest of writing. Thus the third null-hypothesis was rejected. The experimental extrovert group significantly outperformed the control extrovert group on the posttest of writing.

H04. The use of task-based activities does not have any significantly different effect on writing performance of Iranian extrovert and introvert learners.

Table 10.*Independent-Samples t-test; Posttest by Experimental Introvert and Extrovert Learners*

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means					95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
	F	Sig.	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
Equal variances assumed	2.935	093	7.832	48	.000	3.16667	.40433	2.35370	3.97963
Equal variances not assumed			8.232	46.724	.000	3.16667	.38465	2.39272	3.94061

Table 10 indicated that there was a significant difference between the two groups' mean scores on the posttest of writing. Thus the forth null-hypothesis was rejected. The experimental extrovert group significantly outperformed the control introvert group on the posttest of writing.

INTER-RATER RELIABILITY

The subjects' performance on the pretest and posttest of writing were rated by two raters. Based on the results displayed in Table 11 it can be claimed that there were significant agreement between the two raters on pretest (r (98) = .66, p = .000 representing a large effect size) and posttest of writing (r (98) = .73, p = .000 representing a large effect size).

Table 11.*Pearson Correlations; Inter-Rater Reliability*

		PreR2	PostR2
PreR1	Pearson Correlation	.665[**]	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	100	
PostR1	Pearson Correlation		.732[**]
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N		100

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

DISCUSSION

To summarize the major findings of this study and by looking at these group's means it is indicated that the experimental group significantly outperformed the control group on the posttest of writing. Thus, the first general null-hypothesis was rejected. The obtained results also indicated that the experimental introvert learners had a significantly higher mean on the posttest of writing than control introvert learners. Also the results showed that the experimental extrovert learners had a significantly higher mean on the posttest of writing than control extrovert learners so it can be say that Task-Based activities had a great impact on performance of both experimental groups of extroverts and introverts learners. The results of the study are in line with studies that investigated effects of Task-based activities on EFL writing(e.g. Marashi and Didari, 2012; Rezaei, 2014; Khodabakhshizadeh and Mousavi, 2012; Zohrabi and Abasvand, 2014) that found out learners gained advantages from task-based writing regarding writing and.

At the end the main harvest of this study come to an end with the scores obtained by participants indicated that the extrovert subjects significantly outperformed the introvert group on the posttest of writing. What is interesting in this data is that that implying task-based activities had a positive effect on both studied groups but it has more and better effect on extrovert learners. This can be due to the different task-based activities as like tasks of class discussion and mind mapping which may develop EFL learners' writing of English as a foreign language that were used during the treatment period. The findings are in contrast with the finding achieved by Astika, Carrol, and

Moneta (1996) which indicates no significant relationship between extroversion-introversion learners performance. The result are in line with Vehar (1968) found no such significant difference in the performance between extroverts and introverts.

CONCLUSION

In this study it was demonstrated that experimental groups outperformed control groups while the experimental extrovert EFL learners were significantly better at writing tasks than the experimental introvert ones. Therefore, by studying the difference between extroverts and introverts and their probable effect on language skills like writing, teachers can predict what kinds of activities and tasks students will enjoy, what sort of teaching methods they require and what their learning styles are. Therefore it can be concluded that using tasks for teaching writing to extrovert students is a useful approach but it does not mean that using these tasks for instructing writing to extroverts is not useful. Thus, it is felt that this study has made some important contributions towards a better understanding of the extroversion-introversion personality variable and its relationship to some learning outcomes (i.e., performance on writing tasks).

Conflict of interest
The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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